

# Recollection in Our Lord Through a Spirit of Love<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament  
Paris, Friday, May 11, 1860

The month of Mary is moving on, my good Sisters; we must do something [special]. Be careful to keep silence. In your work, if you must speak, speak softly and only when necessary. **Silence is the soul of recollection, the soul of the presence of God.** It is hard to keep it when we are bearing some suffering and when we are distracted. Take a good resolution.

**I will return to what I was talking about last time, on recollection. I told you that there are three kinds of recollection: through conscience, through grace, through our Lord.**

**How should we be recollected in our Lord?** The important question is, how? This is difficult to explain and even more difficult to accomplish. What is this recollection? It means to go out of self to be entirely in our Lord. It is no longer recollection in oneself; rather it is to lose oneself in God. To reach that point, self-denial is necessary; as our Lord said, *Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself* (Mt 16:24). Evidently, no one can ever go to someone else's house without first leaving her own house. Similarly one cannot do the will of another without setting aside one's own will and way of seeing things. There must be self-denial, and self-denial calls for self-sacrifice.

**What means must we use to arrive at this recollection?** We must leave ourselves: not be concerned about self, leave the self at the door, go to our Lord with our will and our heart, and leave everything else behind. It is not easy to do this in a spirit of faith, to be detached from all natural and even spiritual feelings. We can make a few acts, but we don't remain in them. Yet, we must remain like Moses on the mountain (cf. Ex 24:18) – we find God by losing ourselves.

**How must one proceed?** In this way: **Go to our Lord in a spirit of love.** Love begins by acting, by doing. It immolates itself, not by talking about it ahead of time, but only after it is done. Begin by doing everything for the greater glory of our Lord, out of love for him. This will be your way in: your heart will enter first, and everything else will follow, your memory and your imagination. You cannot go by means of the mind. The more you repeat these acts [of love] more you will enter into our Lord. Love has its own language; it's a very different life from the life of virtues. Whoever does not have this recollection through the spirit of faith, but only through virtues, will seem to be dragging herself. The spirit of love runs to our Lord: it leaves behind its mixed ideas, leaving everything at the door. The more a soul repeats its acts of love, the deeper and more habitual the feeling of love becomes, and finally it will receive an impression of love. This impression of love is not enlightenment, but we receive it, similar to receiving light and heat. I suggest that you repeat these acts often, do everything for our Lord, as being with him. You will end up doing it spontaneously, instantaneously.

Coming from out-doors, to a darker interior, we are momentarily blinded. After a while, we see things clearly. Enter into the mystery of love: gradually you will see an indescribable light, and you will be astounded to discover so much beauty. This means that you must pay attention to our Lord, not to yourself: throw yourself into our Lord, don't go there step by step. This guiding principle goes very far, changing the entire life of a person. For example, when you are in adoration, practice making acts of

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love: be honest, polite, mortified and loving. [Our human nature] does not want this, it prefers to work. The mind and the imagination should be put outside. We must not be always reckoning with the Good Lord by saying: Pay me. The less we work for ourselves – the more we disengage ourselves from our senses and our misery – the greater our perfection.

**Learn to recollect yourself at the feet of our Lord:** the less natural work you do, the more that grace will be effective. Think of a large fire: first you see it, but don't feel it. The closer you come, the more you will feel the heat. If you come very close, it will burn you. Likewise, the closer you come to our Lord, the more you feel the warmth of his love. Be wise; instead of throwing rags on the fire, throw some wood: set aside the straw. How happy you will be if our Lord makes you understand this recollection through a spirit of love in actual practice! Love never wastes time: you will proceed strongly and gently. Love is the all powerful action *par excellence*, but we have not learned to disengage ourselves from our selves.

**How to feed this recollection?** I'm very sure that you give thanks to our Lord: do homage by making a beautiful bow like a child who knows very few words. Elders teach them by memory so they will say more. Don't be like children! See what nourishes love: **contemplate the beauty of our Lord** – do not always focus on your self; go there occasionally, but not always. If you contemplate well, you will witness a scene that will delight you. Look at his beauty, not the external, but the beauty of his soul, the graciousness of his love, the gentleness and kindness of his love. That's what gives love its attractiveness and power. Then go on to his goodness. Look at it in practice: examine his entire life, all his mysteries. Time will pass quickly: you will go from one fruit-laden tree to the next. You will not fear to run dry in a moment. But, if you do this on your own, you will just babble [empty words].

If you are concerned with your defects, you will jump from the first to the last. If you think only of the virtues, you will run through the alphabet several times. If you use this way, the rosary will not be long enough. All this is good for beggars; it is not for you. Begin, as I told you often, by being a little more polite, more loving. Talk to our Lord about his kindness and his love – you will be in [the way of your] grace. In the other ways, you are often stay in your [human] nature. Ah! The *Imitation* says: If only you could have one good experience of going to the interior of Jesus Christ! We should make this our life – what a paradise! – the paradise of love.

You are no longer beginners; you are no longer crude souls: open the curtains; leave your baggage behind; enter with your heart and your will – the Lord asks only this. Be a little like [Mary]. She was more perfect, because of her patience to listen to what our Lord says – Martha did not have the patience to sit down. This is the most beautiful recollection – it resembles a little of paradise: yes, there is suffering, but this is true recollection, because it is entirely in God.



**Points for reflection:**

What is the link between silence and recollection? This instruction suggests several spiritual and practical ways to become recollected. What are they?