

The Eucharistic Passion ¹

St. Peter Julian Eymard to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
Paris, Tuesday, February 19, 1861

[...].

My Sisters, during this holy Lenten season only one thought should occupy your mind, namely, the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. It must become your major focus, your great devotion. Your love of God will not be great or strong, unless based on the Passion. You will not understand our Lord's love, since one understands love only through sacrifices. Our Lord's greatest proof of love was the passion itself. For this reason St. Paul says that he loves *only Jesus and Jesus crucified* (cf. 1 Cor 2:2). Anyone who does not base his devotion on the passion of our Lord lives in illusion, or his love is still in its infancy. Our Lord said, No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends (cf. Jn 15:13). Since we were all his enemies, he could even have included enemies in his love.

What should you do to honor the passion of our Lord and make this devotion fully alive? Two things are involved: the real sufferings that our Lord endured at the time of the passion, and what he suffered for us. He loved us so much that he was led to sacrifice all that he had. On Calvary he gave us his humanity, his entire life. As St. Paul said: *Jesus Christ has loved me and has given himself up for me* (Gal 2:20). The great St. Paul is eager to suffer to profess his complete love for Jesus Christ, ever so small compared to God's love. In his letters, he is always speaking of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, as he does to the Corinthians: Have you forgotten the sufferings of Jesus Christ? Didn't I speak in so vivid way that you could practically see him on the Cross? When they argued among themselves: *I belong to Apollos; I belong to Cephas*, St. Paul told them: *Is it Apollos or Cephas who was crucified for you, who loved you to the point of crucifixion?* (cf. 1 Cor 1:12-13) Not at all.

Therefore, my Sisters, **meditate on the mysteries of the passion of our Lord**. Take them one at a time, so that your love can mature beyond that of a child. Otherwise, you will be accused of not honoring our Lord in the greatest proof of his love; you will not love suffering and mortification.

What is the Eucharist? Let us never forget why our Lord is present on the altar. What did our Lord Jesus Christ say? *This is my body, take and eat; this is my blood, take and drink;* in memory of what? Of his passion, because these words of consecration are the very words that our Lord used to foretell that he would be handed over to his enemies. In the Greek, the present tense is used instead of the future: *Take and eat, this is my body; this is my blood that is poured out for you* (cf. Mt 26:26-27), as though announcing two mysteries that are really one.

The Holy Eucharist is the memorial of the passion of our Lord. It continues the life of our Lord in our midst, his passion of love. His bloody passion is finished, offered for our redemption; but his Eucharistic passion is a passion of love, with our Lord still the victim. Risen to new life, he can no longer really suffer and die. But he takes on the form of a victim, and leaves us do the rest. When we now suffer in union with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, we return to him so to speak his redemptive life. Furthermore, we complete his Eucharistic life. St. John says : *I saw a Lamb that seemed to have been slain* (cf. Rev 5: 6), but not dead. Why? In order to tell us that we must die for him. He cannot die because of his resurrection; he must die in his members to continue his mission of redemption. To

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understand this, you should enter into the Eucharist. The details will become clearer. Enter into the Eucharist, and you will see our Lord continuing his passion there in a most loving way.

In the Garden of Olives Jesus is betrayed and sold by Judas (cf. Mt 26:48). How many other Judases still betray and sell him? Reflect on the time of the Institution of the Eucharist until today. Formerly catholic nations have become heretics by hundreds of thousands. Later, the Mohammedans spread in Asia, rather took over half of Africa and Asia. These heretics and Mohammedans had been catholic. And the Protestants, numbering in the millions, were all catholic. Among the Catholics themselves, how many are unfaithful Christians, unfaithful priests! There are plenty!

This is the broader passion of our Lord, much greater and sadder than that of Calvary. Our Lord is no longer sad, because he is in his glory; but if he could weep, he would have reason to do so. [...] Don't the angels have reason to be sad? Doesn't Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament seem to be more abandoned than in the Garden of Olives? His apostles were present, even if not very helpful. Nearby he had the Blessed Virgin, his mother.

Don't you notice that Jesus is alone? Even with perpetual exposition, isn't it scandalous that practically no one comes to adore our Lord? They say that's our responsibility. When there is exposition, the king is on his throne and a plenary indulgence can be gained... Our Lord **is not recognized**, everyone stays home. People of faith would all arise. Various devotions take precedence over our Lord. If there is no one of note, people stay away. Do they come only for the sake of persons? Today, churches are empty. People want personages, not our Lord. All would be attracted if there were beautiful music or some famous preacher. Here, there are a few people who come regularly, but in the provinces churches are closed in many places because there is no one coming. Our Lord is alone. Why doesn't he leave? Some day he will.

Think of the wicked treatment he received before Annas and Caiphas (cf. Jn 18:12ss). Does he not receive similar treatment in the Eucharist? With the evil blasphemies of newspapers and secret societies, no one has ever been persecuted and maligned like our Lord. This is the hour of hell, very different from the Passion when the Jews had to put him to death because they had no faith in our Lord. Today, some Catholics abuse him. Other wicked treatment and sacrileges also thrive. Sacred hosts are trodden under foot, used for magic, given to animals and to the Jews, without our knowledge. If we became aware of the passion of our Lord in the Eucharist, it would suffice to make us die of sorrow. Although our Lord foresaw all this, he accepted it to come to his children.

He is insulted before Annas and Caiphas. This reminds us of the scandals of priests and religious, since all heresies began with bad priests and bishops who went astray, who were unfaithful to their mission to guide the Church. Heresy never started with the faithful, but with priests. **Before Herod: our Lord** has been scoffed at for eighteen centuries by learned men. Even today, profane science robes him, so to speak, with a robe of ignominy and disdain (cf. Lk 23:8ss). **Before Pilate** (cf. Jn 18:28ss), he is confronted with force. For three hundred years, the emperors used force against Christians. All heresies used the same means. Who supports our Holy Father today? No one; his only help is in prayer. There are so many Pilates!

Many hold their positions, fearing to confront wicked men. They have no fear of good men, but still hand our Lord over to the crowds! Will they kill him? No. They have already drawn his blood to the last drop on the Cross. They can blaspheme and insult our Lord, but they can no longer kill him, since he is risen, and will remain until the end of time.

What can we do? Honor the crucified life of our Lord in his Eucharistic passion. The first Calvary led to the second, and we were all there. Let us honor our Lord, with the sentiments of the Blessed Virgin.

She was constantly concerned with the sufferings of her divine Son. She knew each of his sufferings from the time of his birth to his death on Calvary. Join her, and St. John. He was the only apostle there. Join St. Mary-Magdalene and the holy women gathering the blood and tears of our Lord (cf. Jn 19:25-27). Like a family member of all who were there, you can easily take on their thoughts and feelings. The Church no longer sings *Alleluia* and sets aside its festive garb. The Church repents, suffers, groans, lamenting over her children who have done wrong. The devil is very active at this time, and many evil men refuse to recognize our Lord!

Points for reflection:

Meditation on the Passion of our Lord is one way of allowing ourselves to be touched by his Love. It leads us to the mystery of Eucharist. Reflect on the Eucharistic Passion of Christ as it unfolds even in today's world. What aspects of today's society do you see being referred to?