Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

Priests, Deacons, and Brothers — Apostles of the Eucharist

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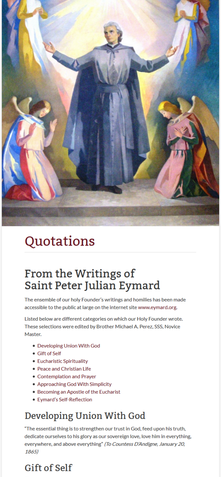

Quotations

From the Writings of Saint Peter Julian Eymard

The ensemble of our holy Founder's writings and homilies has been made accessible to the public at large on the Internet site www.eymard.org.

Listed below are different categories on which our Holy Founder wrote. These selections were edited by Brother Michael A. Perez, SSS, Novice Master.

- Developing Union With God
- Gift of Self
- Eucharistic Spirituality
- Peace and Christian Life
- Contemplation and Prayer
- Approaching God With Simplicity
- Becoming an Apostle of the Eucharist
- Eymard's Self-Reflection

Developing Union With God

"The essential thing is to strengthen our trust in God, feed upon his truth, dedicate ourselves to his glory as our sovereign love, love him in everything, everywhere, and above everything." *(To Countess D'Andigne, January 10, 1865)*

Gift of Self

"The inner gift of self is the real gift, because then our Lord becomes our Saviour … by giving us his own form of life," *(To Mme. Leroyer, February 4, 1865)*

"Belong entirely to God through love, entirely to your neighbor through a gracious charity, entirely to the divine Eucharist by the offering and sacrifice of your whole self. Bow with yourself to the patience of our Lord."

(To Mrs. Stephanie Gourde, October 22, 1859)

Eucharistic Spirituality

Now please pray so that I may respond to such a beautiful vocation; that, like the bread of the sacrifice, I may lose my life, my substance, my personality, to be changed into the spirit and life of Jesus, retaining only a human appearance, humiliation and poverty, so that the virtue of Jesus may dwell in the midst of my infirmities." *(In the request St. Eymard made of Mme. Thollin-Bost for prayer; the beautiful vocation he speaks of is his own as a Religious of the Blessed Sacrament. May 18, 1856)*

"When we work hard, we must eat well. What a joy, that you can receive Holy Communion often! It's our life and support in this life — Receive Communion often, and Jesus will change you into himself." *(To Mme. Giraud, January 13, 1855)*

"Have a great love for Jesus in his divine Sacrament of Love; that is the divine oasis of the desert. It is the heavenly manna of the Israelites: It is the Holy Ark, It is the life and Paradise of love on earth." *(To the Children of Mary, November 21, 1851)*

"Live on the divine Eucharist, like the Hebrews did on the Manna. Your soul can be entirely dedicated to the divine Eucharist and very holy in the midst of your work and contacts with the world." *(To Mme. Isabelle Spaziter, Nov. 3, 1859)*

Peace and Christian Life

"Keep your soul at peace, in order to be able to be attentive and very faithful to the inner movement of the Holy Spirit." *(To Mme. Stephanie Gourde, November 25, 1850)*

"People are afraid to be powerless and so are off their path. We are neither natural nor supernatural. What can we do? Follow grace. Let the mind become accustomed to the truth which God's grace is offering. It takes a week or two for a truth to become natural and habitual, but we must make it the center of our piety and let everything converge toward it." *(From a letter written in 1868 to Mme. Mathilde Giraud- Jordan)*

Contemplation and Prayer

"In order to succeed in it (prayer), it should be done when we first awaken, when our whole being is calm and recollected. We need to make our meditation before anything else.

"As far as possible, you should pray in quiet and silent devotion. Try to have a favorite topic of prayer, such as a devotion to the passion of Jesus, the Blessed Sacrament, awareness of the divine presence; go directly to Jesus without too much fuss.

"Before prayer begins, leave aside any duties which would distract you." *(Excerpt from an 1857 letter to his sister (as well as godmother) Marianne)*

"I have confidence in prayer. It is the unfailing power which God has given us. By means of it you will obtain the salvation of the dear souls whom God has given you and all your loved ones." Ask and you shall receive,"Our Lord says. Be yourself with the good Lord." *(From a letter written on January 4, 1864 to Mme. Mathilde Giraud- Jordan)*

"We must know where mediocrity of spirit comes from. The first is the worst: It's a scattered mind, a life which is too active. Nothing can cling to it. It's like the seed of the Gospel falling on the open road. The remedy is to bring the mind back to natural reflection by some reading or serious meditations which strike it and help it to be focused. In general, it's better to choose a topic and then a pious feeling. The work of truth is to refocus our attention, reflection, and finally, devotion.

"The second source of mediocrity of spirit is mental boredom toward what is serious and positive. This illness can only be healed by openness to divine love, since it is based on discouragement.

"The third source is laziness of the mind which fears to consider the truth. The fourth source is when we counteract the grace, the attraction of the moment. The mind becomes closed and foolish. We must follow the need and light of the moment." *(From a letter written in 1868 to Mme. Mathilde Giraud- Jordan)*

Approaching God With Simplicity

"Go to the good Lord very simply, with the surrender of a small child. Tell the good Lord what you are thinking, what you want, what is upsetting you. Oh! How happy we become when we discover this interior conversation with our Lord. We carry our treasure (Jesus) with us everywhere. He becomes the center of our heart and life." *(In a letter dated January 29, 1848, St. Eymard wrote to Miss Stephanie Gourd at a time when she was in the thick of caring for her sick and aging parents, telling her how to converse with Jesus whom we carry as a treasure within)*

"Be serious about the presence of God, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, a definite thought of some virtue, and you will have a center of strength and consolation." *(From a letter written in 1868 to Mme. Mathilde Giraud- Jordan)*

Becoming an Apostle of the Eucharist

"Be the apostle of the divine Eucharist, like a flame which enlightens and warms, like the Angel of his heart who will go to proclaim him to those who don't know him and will encourage those who love him and are suffering." *(To Mme Antonette de Grandville, July 4, 1859)*

Eymard's Self-Reflection

This is from the life of St. Peter Julian Eymard. His words are drawn from *Peter Julian Eymard- Apostle of the Eucharist* by Father Andre Guitton, SSS.

Imagine if you will, a death-bed conversation between Saint Peter Julian and his favorite Archangel: Raphael. In the early afternoon hours of Saturday, August 1, 1868, the bells began to ring in the little town of La Mure. Everyone asked each other: "Why are the bells ringing?" They were very quickly given the answer: "Our Father Julian is dying." All the townspeople ran towards the house, 67 Rue du Breuil. As many as could fit inside started to pray; the rest stood outside. In all the rush and commotion, no one noticed the entry of the Archangel Raphael who went to the second floor room where Peter Julian Eymard lay in bed.

As Peter Julian opened his eyes, he saw the figure of a young man dressed in white who looked at Peter Julian and said, "Peter Julian, I am the Archangel Raphael. Since you have used me as an example of a true adorer of God and one who has always served him to edify the people you have inspired, I have been sent to assist you in remembering the touch of God in your life." Peter Julian answered, "Thank you for coming to help me. What a joy for me, I am moved to say 'O Jesus, receive my spirit, my body, my heart, my entire being!'

"O Raphael, I can remember very clearly that afternoon when I ran out of this room, down the stairs, and out the front door. I ran into the church with all the energy of a five-year- old. It was empty. I did something so out of place. I climbed and sat on the table of the altar and I just leaned my head against the tabernacle. My sister, Marianne, asked me, "What are you doing there?" I quickly answered, 'I am near Jesus and I'm listening to him.' Marianne had a difficult time explaining this to our dear mother.

"As I grew older I desired to receive communion but I knew I had to wait until I reached the age of twelve years to do so. In the meantime, I would go to Mass with my sister and, when she returned from receiving communion, I would sit close to her and put my head on her chest. I would say to her in joy and wonderment, 'Godmother! I can feel his presence.'

"I prepared myself for the great day of my first communion by going on foot to the shrine of Notre Dame du Laus. When I stood in front of the statue of Our Lady, I kept repeating, 'How beautiful you are. I came to know and love Mary.' That was the grace I received there.

"On the evening before my first holy communion, I wrote a little book of Acts in the presence of my Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. As I remember them now, I must say that the sloth act has been the guiding light of my life: 'My dear Jesus, I give myself to you as you have given yourself to me.' On the following morning, Passion Sunday, March 16, 1823, I had the happiness of receiving Jesus into my heart. I immediately told him, 'I shall be a priest, I promise you!'

"Raphael, the shrine of Notre Dame du Laus has been very special to me. I received so many graces there. The Blessed Virgin was so good. I can still see the column against which I leaned when I promised to be a Religious.

"I remember the day I entered the novitiate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate as if it were yesterday. The founder, Father Eugene de Mazenod, was very sick and we prayed for his recovery. Before I entered, there had been a sacrilegious profanation of the sacred species. Because of this, we as novices made adoration or reparation for these sacrilegious acts that occurred. It was here in the novitiate that I learned to make the Eucharist the center of my life and I grew in deeper love of Jesus in the Eucharist. My health began to deteriorate and I was sent home to die. Throughout the illness I kept repeating, 'I shall be a priest some day and will celebrate Holy Mass.'

"I finally realized my dream and fulfilled my promise to Jesus when I was ordained on July 20, 1834. With great joy and happiness, I celebrated my first Mass at the Shrine of Notre Dame de L'Osier on July 22, the feast of St. Mary Magdalene.

"I was sent home to rest for the months of August through October. On October 17, 1834, I was assigned as a diocesan priest to the parish of Chatte by Bishop de Brouillard. I realized at the very onset of my pastoral ministry that I would 'first nourish myself on Sacred Scripture and the Eucharist, and then feed others.'

"I would also have to 'learn to speak to the hearts of people.' I have lived this all my life.

"Raphael, after being a diocesan priest for about five years my heart was yearning for the Religious life and community. I had the great fortune of hearing about the Society of Mary founded by Jean Claude Colin. My Bishop was very understanding and gave his permission for me to enter that community. I remember packing quickly and leaving the same day, for as I told my sister: 'Tomorrow will be too late.'

I entered the novitiate August 20, 1839. During my retreat reflecting on the Rule I felt a strong attraction to live the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to study constantly her obedience and her divine love … I shall … storm heaven to obtain the spirit of the Society of Mary.' Because of our scarcity in membership, I was assigned to be Spiritual Director of the College of Belley on November 27, 1839, despite my short time in the Society.

'In the past. … I hardly noticed the priests in minor seminaries and colleges who were responsible for the hidden and arduous work of educating young people. I came to appreciate all those who engaged in the work of education. I likewise saw and experienced the graces God had given me, as I was able to work with the local people, parents and priests This was also the fertile ground for many conversions.'

Having entered a recently founded Religious order, I had constant access to the Founder, Fr. Colin. In 1845 I was named Provincial and this is how I described my work:

"I am the Provincial, which means that I'm in charge of our houses in France, and even abroad. This new responsibility places me in front of everyone. Since all my actions become public knowledge, I must make many sacrifices contrary to my character. Now I must be serious, constantly thinking, and disciplined In everything because my life is on display. It's hard at times, because you know how I'm naturally rather joyful and, above all, simple.' Through this position in my community, I also came to see the religious indifference of the world alienated from the church in France at that time. I would often say to myself, 'I wish the world was full of zealous apostles to shake it from its lethargy and indolence. …'

In December 1845 I was entrusted with the direction of the Third Order of Mary, an association of lay people who worked closely with the mission of the Society of Mary. In one of my letters to a friend, I said, 'Here in Lyons, I'm directing the Third Order of Mary which already includes more than three hundred members who are very dedicated, among whom there are a certain number of clerics, and especially of men.' Raphael, I do believe this was the mission God gave me while I was a Marist, I gave myself completely to organizing this branch of the Society which was the wish of Fr. Colin. Much later on I learnt that he had prayed that the Lord send someone to assist him in realizing this goal. I little did I know then, that I was that person.

My zeal for the work with the Third Order led to difficulties and misunderstandings with my superior. As a result, I was appointed Superior of the College of La Seyne-sur-mer on September 12, 1851. My first thoughts were, 'Here I am in the midst of children, and I bless God, since it is his will that send me here, and that is what gives me strength and a bit of good will … what is so difficult for me is this renunciation at every moment of the day. I must be concerned with a thousand things so far from my taste and attraction! God wants it: that is my only consolation in the midst of all these young people and their parents.'

My term as superior of the College of Belley came to a close in September 1855."

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About Us

We are a Catholic religious congregation of priests and brothers whose mission is to share the riches of God's love manifested in the Eucharist.

Learn More

"Called to live as a Eucharistic community, we seek, by our vocation and way of life, to give a more explicit witness to the life of Christ which springs from the Eucharist," (Rule of Life, 21).

Be on the Adventure of a Lifetime from SSS Vocations on Vimeo.

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Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament
5504 Wilson Mills Road
Cleveland, OH 44143

Main Office: (440) 442-6311
Vocation Office: (440) 442-7243

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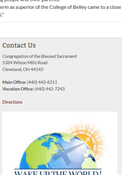

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