

## **Worship and Eucharist:** ***Devotion and Service from the Example of Saint*** ***Peter Julian Eymard***

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### **Introduction**

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread and declared it was his body and after the meal he took a cup of wine and declared it was his blood for the forgiveness of sin. “Do this in memory of me”. All Christians recognize that these words declare that his gift of self is for the ransom of humanity from sin and their resurrection when Jesus comes in glory on the last day.

Catholics believe that the Eucharist is a sacrament, a sacred liturgy. It is also a sacrifice, not a new one, but a sacramental one. The celebration of this liturgy is worship. It is the same sacrifice as the one that Jesus offered on Golgotha by the Son of God, the Servant of God, the Lamb of God who died and rose in glory, body and soul.

Worship is the blessing, praising, adoring, glorifying and thanking offered for the glory of the almighty Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is prayer, religion, service. It is “communion” with God, who created heaven and earth, and universe, and all that is and will be. Worship is required by the four first Commandments of God: Only God can be adored, once each week (originally on Saturday, now on Sunday – the LORD’S Day) we are to worship God. Indeed, we worship God with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit, who like the Father and Son is in us, is one God in the divine Trinity. Without this *communion*, there is no prayer or worship.

The Eucharist is worship, religion and liturgy. It is the celebration and reception of the sacrament instituted on the Last Supper of Jesus

Christ. The word Eucharist means *thanksgiving*, one of the facets of worship and religion. The Jewish word is *berakah* which means both bless and thank.

There are several words and concepts that are related to the word worship. Saint Thomas Aquinas uses the Latin word *servitium* (service, the virtue religion). The word service is in the writings of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the founder of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. The relation of religion and worship to the Eucharist is important and will be explained. Also related to these concepts and words are love and devotion which are very central to the Eucharist.

### **What is Worship?**

We should define the word worship: it is made up of two Old English words, *worthy* and *ship*. “Worthy” means reverence to someone, particularly reverence, love and adoration. “Ship” is service, e.g., friendship.<sup>1</sup> In the *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament* and many in correspondence and other publications by Eymard, he speaks of service. Aquinas points to the connection with the theological virtue of love. Hughes Oliphant Old has a whole chapter on the term and the entire book is devoted to the wide dimensions of the word “worship”. He writes, “We worship God because God created us to worship him. Worship is at the center of our existence, at the heart of our reason for being.”<sup>2</sup>

We are created to worship God because God has made us at his image so that we can worship God. Saint Thomas Aquinas described worship

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<sup>1</sup> “Worship”, *Webster/Merriam Dictionary 11<sup>th</sup> edition*, Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Incorporated, kindle, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old (HOO). *Worship: Reformed according to Scripture* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press), 2002, Kindle edition.

as *servitium* (service) which is also called the virtue of religion.<sup>3</sup> Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the *Apostle of the Eucharist*, saw worship of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist in its three facets of celebration, sacrament (Communion) and prayer. Hughes Oliphant Old, and all three men see a necessary connection between worship and love of God. The word worship emphasizes its connection with love.

### **The Virtue of Religion**

The best treatment of the virtue of religion can be found in the IIa IIa of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* (q. 80-100). The Latin word for religion is *servitium* (service). It could also be translated as *worship*. This article uses the word worship, as I have indicated, and with the help of various authors, the many facets of worship and the Eucharist will indicate its richness.

Theology points out first that there are two kinds of virtue, natural and supernatural. Natural virtue is what one might do naturally. That is, while being good, is not considered to need the help of grace from God. Supernatural virtue means the action requires the help of the grace of God.

There are also virtues that are called theological virtue: love, faith and hope. These virtues not only require the grace of God, they also are required for salvation. The virtue of religion is not a theological virtue, but Aquinas says it is the first moral virtue. He says it belongs to the virtue of justice. It normally is related to love/charity and, Aquinas, speaking of religion, points out that one of the facets of religion is *devotion* (*devotion*). The virtue of religion is not only something of the will and mind, it also involves the body. Gestures, words, postures, are helps to express religion and worship. This is obvious in liturgy, prayer, sacraments and other facets of religion.

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<sup>3</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIa, q. 80-100, *De religione*. Also see Ernest Falardeau, SSS. "Religion (*Virtue of*)", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America) 1967. Vol. 12, pp. 270-271.

## **Saint Peter Julian Eymard, Apostle of the Eucharist**

Saint Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868) founded the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in Paris, France, on May 8, 1856. Pope John XXIII called him the Apostle of the Eucharist. Eymard is recognized for eucharistic spirituality, preaching, letters and publications.

Eymard wrote a number drafts of the *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament*. In 1863, he published the first *Constitutions* which clearly expresses his insights on the relation of worship and the Eucharist:

### CHAPTER X. THAT TO WHICH THEY SHOULD COMMIT THEMSELVES WITH A SPECIAL PROFESSION OF THE VIRTUE OF RELIGION

1. May the virtue of Religion be the royal crown of our men, the character and the mark of their entire life, so that, if others may surpass them in poverty, science, external zeal, they will never be outdone by anyone in the service of the Lord.
2. May they realize that, by the profession of this greatest virtue, they are committed and consecrated to the service and profession of the literal and general worship and consequently they should direct everything towards the perfection of this worship.
3. A worship, even golden, would be dead if it lacked true life of love - may the adorers burn then like the rays coming from the sun; may they immolate themselves in this way to the sacramental glory of Jesus so that what remains are not even the ashes of the victim, but may their life fly towards their King like the flame of pure love.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Saint Peter Julian Eymard. *Œuvres complètes, Vol. VII, Constitutions. RR 51t,11 (Chapter X)*, Rome: Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, <http://www.eynard.org>. For further comment, see Ernest Falardeau, SSS. *Eucharistic service in the writings of Blessed Peter Julian Eymard: a theological analysis. Excerpts from a dissertation for a doctorate in the Faculty of Theology* (Rome, Italy: Pontifical Gregorian University), 1959, 61 pages.

The virtue of religion is foundational in the spirituality of Eymard. In earlier drafts of the *Constitutions*, he uses the term “vow” to described an additional one dedicated to the “gift of self”, but the Holy See was not favorable to additional vows for religious. Eymard begins to use the idea of the virtue of religion as a special virtue for his disciples. Eymard’s spirituality touches virtues, prayer, contemplation of the Blessed Sacrament solemnly exposed or in the tabernacle. He had an insight of the centrality of the Eucharist as sacrament and prayer before the exposed Blessed Sacrament encouraging for clergy and laity.

Numbers of the 1984 *Rule of Life* (RoL) of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament echo Vatican II as can be seen in number 3:

Our mission is to respond to the hungers of the human family with the riches of God’s love manifested in the Eucharist. Drawing life from the bread given for the life of the world, we proclaim in the thanksgiving prayer the Passover of Christ and we welcome the Lord Jesus in his Eucharistic presence by a prolonged prayer of adoration and contemplation. Formed by the Sacrament of the New Covenant, which frees us from the domination of sin, we commit ourselves to building up the Body of Christ. United in the Spirit with those who are poor and weak we oppose everything which degrades human dignity and we proclaim a more just and brotherly world as we await the coming of the Lord.

Similarly, RoL 4, “The Spirit of the Congregation”, develops the virtue of charity/love. Devotion and love, as Aquinas indicates in his *Summa Theologica*, virtue of religion, devotion is the virtue that is fundamental to the virtue of religion:

We cannot live the Eucharist unless we are animated by the spirit which led Christ to give his life for the world. When he proclaimed the New Covenant by the gift of his Body and Blood to his disciples, it was out of love that the Lord gave himself up. Sharing in this gift of himself to us, we place ourselves of the service of the Kingdom, fulfilling the words of

the Apostle: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”.

A third number, RoL 25, “The work of salvation”, states:

Each time we celebrate the Memorial of Christ’s Passover we enter into the work of salvation. Through sharing in his Body and Blood we are progressively wrenched from the forces of evil. The Lord reveals to us the presence of sin in our selfishness in our apathy or complicity in injustice, while drawing us toward a new life. In this same movement, we offer the Father our own lives along with the hopes and sufferings of all those with whom we are working to build society based on justice and love.

### **Worship: Reformed Tradition According to Scripture**

Hughes Oliphant Old has volumes on the word and history of worship. He is a theologian of the Reform Church and professor teaching at Princeton University, New Jersey, USA. He wrote many books and articles about worship and his second edition of this book on the theology of worship was published.<sup>5</sup> I would like to summarize his treatment of the topic. First of all, he points out that we need to worship God. God does not need our worship. Indeed, we must worship God because he is the creator of all that is. The first three commandments tell us we must worship God. We must worship God on the sabbath (Sunday for Christians). And we must not use the name of God without reverence. Oliphant Old, like Aquinas, includes sacraments as worship, especially baptism and Eucharist. Prayer, praise and the use of God’s words (e.g., Psalms) are worship. Good deeds and alms are also worshiping God because they are the observance of the love of neighbor. “*What you do for your neighbor, you do for me*” (See Mt 25:42).

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<sup>5</sup> HOO, especially chapter 1.

## Devotion and Service

Devotion: We have said that the interior acts of the virtue religion are the more important and this is evident. God is a spirit and those who will to worship God must worship in spirit and truth. Indeed it is the spirit of humanity that is noblest and it is this, which first and last must be given to God. It is also true that humanity's will is the first motor force. It is the will that rules us. It is therefore the will which must first and foremost submit to God. And the first act of the will in the exercise of the virtue of religion is the act of devotion. Devotion is nothing else but promptitude in God's service. It is that and yet much more. It is through devotion that the whole human is offered consecrated to God. What is to be noted here is especially Aquinas' development of the causes of devotion. Devotion is caused proximately by love. And this love (*dilectio*) is in turn inspired by meditation and contemplation. It is by consideration of God's perfections and his goodness to us that love, the proximate cause of devotion, is inspired; by a consideration of our misery and our utter dependence our subjection to God is assured. The underlying principle is single psychology's "*bonus intellectus est objectum voluntatis*".

Fr. André-Ignace Mennessier OP translates from *Summa Theologica* (French reference book) to French:

Devotion plays in fact relatively for its subsequent acts which are for us as many ways to affirm our homage and to realize our service, the role of a first willing, giving the will to the rest. It is the point of view of the **principal** act of religion. Not only in the sense, that the spiritual actions are principal in relation to the sensible acts but principal because they are the fertile source of all the others, of prayer itself which is a spiritual act. By devotion, religion, a virtue of the will begins and by necessity will activate itself.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This devotion section comes from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica IIa IIa*, q. 82, Ernest Falardeau, SSS *Eucharistic Service in the Writings of Saint Peter Julian*, part 3 and Thomas Aquinas, *Service in Theology* - Chapter 3: Saint Thomas Aquinas, p.193-4. Additionally, André-Ignace Mennessier OP "Somme

## Service

Worship is service to God. Service deserves to be studied. Thomas Aquinas and Peter Julian Eymard have much to say for us. Thomas Aquinas emphasizes that we do not worship God because he needs it. It is we who need God and worship. We do not change God's mind; it is we who must change our mind and our will for "Thy will be done". Because we our both body and spirit we must worship God with body and soul. It is because we are human that we need Jesus Christ because Christ, by his grace, helps us to transfigure from our humanity into the holiness of God by his example. The saints also help us in that transfiguration. Aquinas points out that prayer and contemplation are essential because they are acts of the soul, our spirit. We are moved by our body; this is the sensitive part of our humanity.

Eymard in his correspondence, frequently shows how important our humanity is in our relationship with Jesus and God. He tells them to have a conversation with God. Tell him what is on your mind, ask him for what you need. Tell him you love him and know that he loves us. Contemplation is even more important than vocal prayers. It is thinking of God. It is silently we give him time and attention for understanding and changing our attitude. We thus are transformed spiritually and as Christians.<sup>7</sup>

## Love and service

The first published Blessed Sacrament *Constitutions* in 1863 emphasizes the power which love has in the Eymardian spirituality. Aquinas uses the word *devotion* to point out how love "causes" religion (worship) and thus shows the relation of the two virtues.

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Théologique - La religion" Ed. Rev. des Jeunes tt.1, p. 249, (translated in English by Ernest Falardeau, SSS).

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica* IIa IIa q. 82 a 3, and E. Falardeau, SSS *Eucharistic Service in the Writings of Saint Peter Julian Eymard*, pp. 203-211.



Obviously, Eucharist has much to do with love. It is the sacrament and memorial of the death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the love of the Father and the sacrifice of the Son who died and resurrected and is now in the glory of heaven. The Holy Spirit is the power of the Trinity and the *epiclesis* (invocation of the Holy Spirit) and *anamnesis* (remembering of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ) in the Eucharist.

The virtue of religion has devotion which stresses the willing and promptitude to serve God. Devotion has the context of love, i.e., **worship** readily suggests love, service, and responding to the love and goodness of God and Jesus Christ. Jesus calls us friends because he wants to be our friend. Eucharistic spirituality and Christian spirituality require the humanity of Jesus to transform us into the divinity and holiness and action as Jesus and saints, like Peter Julian Eymard, respond to the friendship and love of the Son of God.

We should add that service/religion is an outstanding virtue of Eymard. He speaks of the Eucharistic Kingdom of Our LORD, the hours of Adoration before the exposed in the monstrance or before the tabernacle, as an important part of the devotion/worship that is encouraged for all who believe in the real presence of Jesus Christ the Eucharist.

### **God and Humanity – Scripture**

*“God created humans in his image; in the divine image God created; male and female God created them”* (Gen 1:27). We learn that from the first chapter of Genesis God created the entire universe to share. God’s word tells us that God created us so that we might worship God in many ways; that is who we are and why we are.

Saint Paul tells us more about worship and its relationship to the Eucharist:

For I received from the LORD what I also handed onto you, that the LORD Jesus, on the night he was handed over took bread, and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he also took the cup, after the supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the LORD until he comes (1 Cor 11:23-26).

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so Christ. For in one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now you are Christ's body and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the church to be, first, apostles; second prophets, third, teachers; then, mighty deeds then gifts of healing assistance, administration and varieties of tongues. Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12: 12, 13, 27, 28, 31).

We worship with Christ and the Holy Spirit, and we worship the Father as well. There is one God in the Trinity. Karl Rahner, SJ reminds us that because we are created in the divine image and from our humanity, we can know God, and from the divinity of God we know our humanity. Indeed, we learn about God from the universe and we learn about the universe by what we learn about God and universe in Scripture.

### **Individual and Group Worship**

Michael Schmaus raises the question of individual and group worship. Schmaus writes:

Much attention has been paid to the question as to whether worship is always offered by a group or whether it can also be the act of the individual. Most theologians and historians of

religion incline to the former view But one can hardly deny that the individual can also perform cultic acts. But such individual worship, like the whole life of the individual, is inspired and stamped by the social setting.

It is clear from Scripture that worship is both. However, group worship is more important because we are a people and body. Jesus Christ and Saint Paul stress the importance of Jesus Christ dying and rising to an eschatological which is now and yet to come. In heaven we will continue our worship to God. The Holy Spirit has much to do with the transformation of the church on earth and the saints of heaven. Schmaus develops this facet of worship.

Vatican II's Constitution on the Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) and the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) make it clear that the theology of the Church as the Body of Christ and the people of God, emphasizes the communion that we have with Jesus Christ and the Trinity, as well as the angels and saints, and the whole human race.

Schmaus writes a paragraph of contrary philosophers and theologians who do not believe in God or worship. Indeed, they say the only worship and reality is humans. The transmission, the moral reality and necessity for human existence has been recognized by most of humans since the dawn of civilization. The greatest minds and artists and scientists have recognized the awesome universe and nature of the world created by God. Indeed, in art and music, history and medicine, thinkers and writers have shown the way we can worship God in countless ways in psalms, poems, paintings, architecture, and countless cultures and creative ways allow us to express what we believe, love and thank God for all that exists.

## **Prayer and Contemplation**

Thomas Aquinas points out the value of prayer. It is not to change God's mind. He knows what will be prayed by the human person. He knows it from all eternity. Indeed, the Holy Spirit prays within us and with us, as the Scripture says. Prayer is an act of the intellect and leads to an act of the will and transforms us spiritually. Put simply, we are changed by prayer. It is part of the virtue of religion and worship. Aquinas also indicates the worth of vocal prayer, i.e., it is both body and soul. Its value increases if it is group prayers, as we mentioned.

### *Contemplation*

Contemplation is not always understood. Saint Eymard says we should be ourselves when we enter the church or chapel to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. But he also points out that contemplation requires silence. Its reason is because it gives us the possibility of "hearing" the words or ideas of what Jesus Christ wants us to know. For example, we take the texts of the Mass we have shared and we now contemplate what God is telling us and explaining to us what Jesus or the saints are saying and what we ought to conclude from the text.

Mystics readily move from vocal prayers or borrowed prayers, e.g., from the saints. They not only find that time passes quickly, but they have a conversation with Jesus and the Trinity.

### *Adoration*

Saint Peter Julian Eymard taught his Congregation and his associates with the four-ends of the Mass: adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition. Adoration recognizes the glory, majesty, goodness, mercy of God. Thanksgiving (Eucharist means thanksgiving (*eucharin* in Greek)). We recognize the gifts God has given to us: life, baptism, faith, hope, love, and all we have received on a day or throughout our life. Reparation can be an act of recognition of our sinfulness. It can be asking for God's mercy for persons have done to us, or others can be prayer telling God that we are sad about sinful wars, injustice and other inhuman actions in a country, or in the entire

world. Prayer is our effort to ask grace, virtue and improvement for ourselves or others. We are encouraged to pray for the Church, including the pope, leaders in the church, laity, government of the country or of other parts of the government. The time that one prays in adoration [prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament] need not be for all four-ends of the Mass. Prayer can be one or more of these four-ends.

Fr. Eugenio Nuñez Goenaga, SSS sums up this reflection based on Thomas Aquinas and Saint Peter Julian Eymard's spirituality in these words:

The thought of the Doctor of the Eucharist on Eucharistic worship can be reduced to the following conclusions:

1. Eucharistic worship is a practical recognition and consequences of our faith in the integral presence of Jesus Christ, a presence that is content and a substitute for the terrestrial presence of Jesus Christ.
2. Eucharistic worship (commanded by charity) is the exercise of friendship with Jesus Christ.
3. Eucharistic worship is the school of faith.<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusion

This article has followed the developments of various insights and facets of worship and its relation to the Eucharist, the virtue of religion and the eucharistic spirituality, particular of Saint Peter Julian Eymard. Worship, service, virtue, liturgy, sacraments, actions and great deeds are some of the words that have a relationship. This relationship is foundational in love or charity related to worship.



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<sup>8</sup> Eugenio Nuñez Goenaga, SSS. *El valor y funciones de la presencia real integral de Jesucristo en el Sacramento, según la doctrina eucaristicologica de Santo Tomas*. Tolosa, 1949, pp. 120-124.