

RETREAT NOTES

St. Peter Julian Eymard

First Retreat of Rome

May 17-25, 1863

From the French critical edition

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FOREWORD

On the occasion of the centenary of St. Peter Julian's death, His Holiness Paul VI honored him - and us - with an autograph letter, dated July 19, 1968. He praised our Founder and his life work, and expressed "wonderment at what, under the pressure of a certain supernatural instinct, he accomplished for the glory of God and for the good and honor of the Church." Furthermore, the Holy Father viewed this centenary as a providential occasion for our filial piety to honor our Legislator by greater fidelity to his way of life, to set greater store by his example and ideals, and above all to make the most of the spiritual legacy he has left us.

It remains for us to comply with the counsels of the Vicar of Christ by implementing them. I suggest that the best way to do. So is to *begin* by acquiring a more complete knowledge and deeper understanding of who St. Peter Julian is and what he stands for. We can get off to as good a start as any by familiarizing ourselves with St. Peter Julian's RETREAT NOTES. As he meant them for no eyes other than his own, he jotted them down with utmost candor and merciless honesty. Nowhere else does he reveal so clearly the key thoughts and sentiments which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, oriented his soul to God and to sainthood.

To understand these NOTES and profit by them, we should read and study them in the spirit in which they were written. They are not the studied expositions of a professor bent on exploring or solving theological problems; they are merely the authentic record of what St. Peter Julian experienced in his soul as he communed with his Eucharistic Lord and of what he resolved to do for Him. If only for that reason, these NOTES should prove of untold value and interest to us; for in committing them to writing, St. Peter Julian was unsuspectingly painting a faithful likeness of himself and of what a Blessed Sacrament religious should be.

We are all aware that although our sanctification and salvation depend on our free acceptance of grace, they are primarily the work of God. As St. Augustine has it, "God begins by moving our will to act, and while our will is acting, He perfects, its action by working with it."

The RETREAT NOTES read like a running comment on this Augustinian principle of "holiness in action." They tell us of the promptings, of the Holy Spirit in St. Peter Julian's soul and of the latter's active response. Neatly outlined for us to see are the ways and byways along which St. Peter Julian plodded resolutely to the summits of holiness. As we follow him step by step, we cannot help but wonder to what divine lengths God's love is ready to go to transform any clot of a man into a saint; indeed, the basic ills and problems of our Founder, as catalogued in these NOTES, are recognizedly very much our own. We need not think less of St. Peter Julian because of that; for much of what he had in common with us at the outset, he gradually transformed or discarded before crossing the finishing line. Neither for that matter should we think less of ourselves; we may be "of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot," but what is impossible to man can be the speciality of the "Designer Infinite" - if only we let Him knead and model the clay.

I profit by the publication of the RETREAT NOTES to express my sincere appreciation to those who have made it possible. I am referring first of all to Father Eugenio Nuñez, who devoted months to painstaking study of the original manuscript and to often thankless research into the history of these three retreats. I also have in mind Father William LaVerdiere; he alone knows the countless hours spent in trying to convey in English the exact thought of St. Peter Julian Eymard. To Fathers Nuñez and LaVerdiere, this has been a labor of love; perhaps that is what accounts for the excellence of their work. While congratulating them, I also pray that these meditations may be a source of light and strength to all our religious.

Roland Huot, S.S.S.
Superior General

Rome, August 3, 1968

FIRST RETREAT OF ROME

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FIRST RETREAT OF ROME

INTRODUCTION

1 - Historical background

The year 1863 was marked by important projects and events in the life of St. Peter Julian Eymard. The outstanding historical event was without any doubt the Papal Approbation of the Congregation on the 8th of May, which provided the occasion and the grace for St. Peter JuliaWs First Retreat of Rome.

Here is the schematic historical background of this retreat.

March 9 - Father Eymard boarded ship at Marseilles, accompanied by Father de Cuers and the Abbé de Leudeville.

March 12 - He landed at Civitavecchia, arrived in Rome and - probably on the 13th - sought the hospitality of the Holy Cross Fathers, who were then in charge of the small church of St. Bridget on Farnese Square.

March 18 - First audience with Pius IX: “He was kind as usual. As we were three together (Father de Cuers and Abbé de Leudeville), I could not bring up anything confidential.... The Holy Father has referred our approbation to the Congregation of Regulars; that is all I had to ask of His Holiness. I have just been assured that everything was favorably received” (Lett. V, p. 139 - March 28; see Lett. I, p. 220 - April 11).

March 31 - In his report to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Father Eymard wrote: “What the Congregation now humbly but confidently asks is its constitutive Decree in order to become the obedient and devoted - daughter of the Holy Roman Church, the apostle of the liturgy and especially of faith and love towards the adorable Sacrament of the altar.”

April 8 - Second audience, concerning which Father Eymard has left few details; he mentioned only a grant of indulgences (Lett. I, p. 220, 267; V, p. 206).

April 11 - He wrote: “We are still uncertain about our project and our stay here” (Lett. V, p. 140). “Perhaps we may again be granted only a Decree of Commendation; God be thanked! Perhaps nothing; may He be thanked still more” (Lett. V, p. 206).

May 8 - In an audience granted to Monsignor Stanislas Svegliati, Pro-Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Pius IX approved and confirmed the Congregation.

May 16 - Father Eymard wrote: “Our affair was submitted to the Pope, who approved the project. They are now drawing the report and the Decree.... We are told that everything will be completed by Corpus Christi. God grant that it be so! The Holy Father is absent until the 20th” (Lett. I, p. 268). The statement made in this letter and the expressions we come upon in the retreat notes lead us to surmise that Father Eymard had received semi-official information about the approbation.

While waiting for the official Decree, he left Father de Cuers and the Abbé de Leudeville in order to make, as it were, the first retreat of the Congregation after its becoming a Congregation of Pontifical Right; the retreat exercises took place from the 17th to the 25th of May.

June 3 - The document was duly signed.

June 10 - Father Eymard received the Decree of Approbation, which he was to call “our religious christening” (Lett. V, p. 350). “We are then christened; but fidelity and the perfection of our holy state have yet to come.... It is our Lord who has thus willed to stimulate our weakness; the nobly born must nobly do” (Lett. V, p. 297); “We are then approved, but not sanctified” (Lett. V, p. 308); “We are then religious of Holy Church by this wonderful approbation” (See letter to Father Chanuet, June 10, 1863, Lett. I, p. 223).

June 17-18 - Departure from Rome. After having thanked the Blessed Virgin at the Laus and at La Salette, he visited his sisters at La Mure and was back in Paris on July 12.

2 - The Place of the retreat

On the 30th of May (Lett. 11, p. 253), Father Eymard wrote: "I went into hiding in a convent before Pentecost to make a retreat, and I came out Monday" (May 25). That was the convent the Passionists occupied at the time and still occupy today. It is located on the Caelian Hill, next to the Basilica of Saints John and Paul, an old titular church already mentioned in the fifth century as that of Byzantius and Pammachius who, around the year 398, erected that church where stood the residence of Saints John and Paul, two officers at the court of Constantine.

In the course of recent explorations and restorations (1949-51), archeologists discovered what seems to be remnants of a monastery of the fifth century. Destroyed by barbarian invaders in the year 410 and again by an earthquake in 442, it was rebuilt as a monastery at the end of the 12th century. It was occupied successively by the Monks of St. Pammachius until the end of the 13th century; by the Canons Regular until 1454; by the Jesuits of Blessed John Colombini until 1668; by the Sisters of St. Philip Neri until 1671; by the English Dominicans until 1687; by the Priests of the Mission or Lazarists until 1773.

On December 9, 1773, St. Paul of the Cross took possession of the convent, where he died two years later on October 18, 1775. It serves presently as the International House of Studies and as the Generalate of the Passionists. Incidentally, this Basilica was the titular church of Cardinal Spellman, as it had also been of Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII. Cardinal Spellman financed the explorations mentioned above.

Situated in what had been the heart of Imperial Rome but transformed by the barbarians and an earthquake into a desert and isolated spot, which it still is, this convent became from the start, like all the *Retreats* of the Passionists, a center for spiritual exercises made either collectively or individually. The guidelines, for these exercises as applied today are substantially the same as the Regulations of 1805. The title of these Regulations may offend against the rules of brevity but it is complete: "Instructions and regulations which, by order of the Very Reverend Superior General, are to be observed during the formal as well as particular Exercises made in the course of the year by Ecclesiastics, and Seculars, who shall come for that purpose to this holy Retreat of Saints John and Paul of Rome. 1805."

The register of the retreatants has been preserved since the year 1814. In the "Register of the retreatants received in this Retreat of Saints John and Paul from 1854 to 1876," on pages 148 and 149, under the letter E, is the following entry: "Year, 1863; date of entry, day - 17, month - May; family name and name, Eymard D. Peter; country, Paris; condition, Founder of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament; state, Priest; residence, St. Bridget; came on his own or by whom sent, on his own; date of leaving, day-25, month-May; remarks, celebrated every day."

There was no group of retreatants in the Retreat-house from the 17th to the 25th of May. Only three others were on retreat, each one by himself-a somewhat incongruous trio: a boy of 13, Giuseppe Micheletti, a Roman employed in a soap-factory, on retreat preparatory to his First Communion (May 20-24) ; a lawyer, 37 years old, Carlo Scotti (May 18-24) ; a customs agent from Ferrara, Stefano Velpiano, aged 52 (May 17-27).

We may conclude therefore with certainty that Father Eymard made his retreat privately. The Retreat-Master, who saw to the observance of the regulations, was Father Gaspar of St. John the Baptist (1814-1872). We can, however, take it for granted that if Father Eymard sought the help and counsel of any priest in the convent, he went to Father Basil, a friend of his (1826-1900), who spoke French and English and was in charge of retreatants from foreign countries. Did he make his confession to him on Saturday, the 23rd? We can only conjecture that he did.

In keeping with the regulations, Father Eymard must have assisted at the diurnal choral Office of the religious, as also at the rosary. He took his meals in the refectory of the religious and at the same time as they. - In 1863, the Community of the convent of Saints John and Paul numbered 32 priests and about 15 brothers.

As to the personal schedule of Father Eymard, we learn from his notes that he made a meditation morning and evening. In spite of the prescription made to the Retreat-Master by the regulations, "Let him suggest discreetly to the priest the praiseworthy custom prevalent in all the houses of retreat, according to which the priests refrain from offering Mass for the first three days in order to prepare themselves with greater fervor of soul for the celebration of so tremendous a sacrifice" (Regulations, 1805, p. 8), the Register states that Father Eymard "celebrated every day."

We find no mention of daily adoration or of the Stations of the Cross, the latter a regular exercise of the retreatants.

Neither is there evidence of his writing any letters from the 17th to the 25th of May. The chronological list of all his letters, published or unpublished, mentions letters only on the 6th, the 16th and the 30th of May, 1863. Besides it was forbidden to write letters, during the retreat. There is likewise no indication of his going out to visit some shrine or other.

We have no details concerning the books used during these exercises. The retreat-house had a "list of books to be given for purposes of meditation or of reading to the persons of any state or condition who come to make the holy exercises in this sacred Retreat" (Regulations, 1805). That list in, eluded a section "for religious ecclesiastics, meditations and spiritual reading." Did Father Eymard make use of these books?

3-The Retreat in itself

a - The *occasion* of the retreat was the Papal Approbation of the Congregation. The delays and snail's pace of ecclesiastical procedure account in part for Father Eymard's idea of making a retreat; what probably influenced his decision the most, however, was his wish to ponder before God all his responsibilities, especially those of a spiritual nature, consequent on the approbation of his Institute by the Holy See.

b - The *unity* of the retreat lies precisely in a consideration of the divers aspects of the founding of the Congregation, which was to be granted official approbation by the Sovereign Pontiff; a consideration especially of the holiness required of the Founder as a result of that approbation. Hence, we may call this First Retreat of Rome, the *Retreat of the Founder*.

c - As he viewed the Congregation *in the Lord*, Father Eymard saw a series of graces, an assistance bordering on the miraculous, a constant flow of blessings. The meditation of the second day is a hymn of gratitude to the goodness of God.

d - Examining the Congregation *in its members*, he was confronted with a tableau that was not only dark but crucifying. An anticipation of suffering dominates the first two pages of the retreat-notes: "This death is of a nature to scare me; ... it is frightening! ... I sense that the time for this death has come" - meaningful expressions.

e - But Father Eymard saw the Congregation more particularly in his role as *Founder*: the consciousness of his responsibilities before God, before the Congregation, before his religious, that is, the consideration of everything that genuine holiness requires in a Founder, with all its inevitable consequences. Such is the dominant, integrating note of this retreat. To witness, the opening words: "I have come to make this retreat in order to become a saint. I feel that in order to do that, I shall have to die to everything."

4 - Principal Elements of the Retreat

a - Divine light penetrated deep into the soul of Father Eymard and revealed the *imperfections* which his humility undertook to depict in heightened colors and shades. Dealing with the same subject in the introduction to the Great Retreat of Rome, we stated that we should not take all such statements literally, and that we should keep in mind what humility may have magnified out of sheer need to do so or as a consequence of special inspirations from God, but that neither should we make the mistake of seeing therein nothing other than pious exaggerations or literary hyperboles. Holiness is a continual and constant victory over the heritage we received from Adam and, at least normally, it is anything but instantaneous. Thus we see Father Eymard accusing himself of vanity, of self-love, of spiritual sloth, of his lack of interior life, of his preoccupation with external things, of his lack of trust in God, of his immortification, of his levity of character, etc.

b - The work of *purification* of the soul of Father Eymard by suffering and pain takes up a significant portion of the retreat. In synthetic form, with short incidental clauses and implicit expressions, the First Retreat of Rome shows us the Saint sharing in the Cross of Christ: "I shall have to suffer from everybody without seeming to; in fact, I shall have to be affable, to be kind and obliging in certain things and let no one surmise my troubles.... The sight of it frightens me." He thanked God for his personal crosses and prayed for "joy in suffering."

c - From the very first page he spoke of *death to self* in no uncertain terms: "I feel that in order to do that (become a saint) I shall have to die to everything (This death) presents itself to me with all its sacrifices.... I sense that the time for this death has come."

d - With death only five years away, Father Eymard spoke of *conversion*, of "placing myself ... under the action of God's grace"; without doubt, he was speaking of conversion in the highest sense of the word, a conversion that calls for the practical triumph of holiness over his entire life.

e - He devoted two, meditations to the consideration of *self-love and mortification*, two subjects that are correlative, and he indicated concrete, positive and efficacious remedies for the acquiring of real and practical mortification.

f - The *positive elements* of sanctification. Over and above the virtues he spoke of in passing, such as trust in God, consciousness of God, humility, sincerity, desire for perfection, etc. he meant to concentrate his efforts on interior recollection, to see things in God, to entrust himself to God, to consult the Master before all: "Recollection in our Lord will be the consolation of my soul.... I must strive absolutely after interior recollection in our Lord so that He may be the truth and the rule of my life."

g - But the main point of his spirituality was his *spiritual interiorization in Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament*: "My counsel, my strength and my virtue are in Jesus alone.... I will bind myself, bolt myself to this divine tabernacle.... I, myself, the first servant of His adorable Person.... I have finally understood that God prefers an act of my heart, the gift of my person, to every exterior action, that an interior act is more glorious and pleasing to Him than all the apostolate in the world."

h - Father Eymard considered all this obligation of personal holiness in relation to his being the *Founder* of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The official acceptance of his lifework by the Holy Catholic Church was certainly one of the most important and moving historical events in his life, and it was only natural that as Founder he should be solicitous about holiness in the Congregation, about the eucharistic formation of its members, about the practice of the interior life in the Institute, etc. The retreat-notes give evidence of that - merely suggesting it at times: "I shall have to be more than a mother.... The better part of the (exterior) work of the Society is done; the interior remains to be looked after, and it will be *the* more difficult. I shall have to bear the brunt of it. Every vocation must cost me a death, and no one must be aware of it. It is by suffering that I shall serve the Society.... I must be both center and law.... The first principle of service: the law before individuals.... The eucharistic reign of Jesus Christ, His glory, such is the

food of my love, the *oportet Jesum crescere, me autem minui*” (Jesus must increase, but I must decrease - John 3, 30).

Outlining, so to speak, the spiritual perspective he glimpsed during this retreat, he wrote: “Liberty and strength through mortification; light through recollection; power through love.”

5 - The Text

The autograph manuscript consists of 22 pages. The pages are not numbered. The numbering, from 1 to 22, is the work of Father Tenaillon. In volume Four of Series 0 of the *Archives Eymard*, the First Retreat of Rome runs from page 403 to page 424.

The handwriting is legible and fairly well formed. In four places only is the meaning doubtful.

6 - An Apology - not a Vindication

We naturally run into, obscure passages and expressions - a failing common to private notes of this sort. These jottings were intended primarily for the use of the author, who is the only one qualified to define what is indefinite and bridge the hopeless gaps.

If we read these notes in the original french, we are free to settle for the over-all meaning of a meditation and leave it at that. But not so the translator. If he is to attempt a translation at all, he must try to define for himself the indefinite in order to come up with a definite rendering of the original. In other words, he has to fill in what is missing by inserting the missing links. Often enough it is anybody's guess but St. Peter Julian's, and he is no longer around to help. Keep this apology in mind for the Retreat of Saint-Maurice as well; the Great Retreat of Rome boasts an apology of its own. You may run into any number of wild guesses; feel free to indulge in some wild guessing of your own.

Rome, February, 1963
E. C. Nuñez, S.S.S.

FIRST RETREAT OF ROME

May 17-25, 1863

Sunday, May 17

Dispositions of my soul

I have come to make this retreat in order to become a saint.

1 - I feel that in order to do that, I shall have to die to everything.

I place my trust in God, who in His goodness has always spoiled me and always granted me what I desired, even natural graces.

This death is of a nature to scare me as it presents itself to me with all its sacrifices, with the shortcomings of each one of the brethren and the suffering resulting from them.

I shall have to be more than a mother to children who do not understand, who are egoistic and headstrong. What I will have to suffer from the SS!

What a burden! So many crosses! It is frightening! Personal crosses - suffering without help or sympathy; never free; doing good without glory, without honor, without success, without encouragement, without affection, without liberty.

2 - I sense that the time for this death has come.

The better part of the (exterior) work of the Society is done; the interior remains to be looked after, and it will be *the* more difficult. I shall have to bear the brunt of it. Every vocation must cost me a death, and no one must be aware of it. It is by suffering that I shall serve the Society.

3 - I also sense that the good Master will do me the great grace of converting me entirely to Himself.

All I have been is a man taken up with externals, little attentive to the Rule, too much so to the world. I thought, it necessary, but my soul lost out on it.

I shall therefore work at placing myself here and now entirely under the action of God's grace.

He has no intention of forsaking me after having made use of me - in spite of my being unworthy and unfit - to found the most beautiful, the most holy, the most lovable of Societies.

It is certainly He that has done everything. I would have been a spoil-all.

Second day (18 or 19?)

Two thoughts filled my day, a day of suffering.

The first thought. The goodness of God towards me from my childhood; how it guarded me from danger in my adolescence and led me by means of the Most Blessed Sacrament to the priesthood and the religious life. It is a tissue of prodigies!

The second thought. I understood clearly that the Society comes certainly from God; its foundation without patronage, without renown, without means, with obscure companions; I must have been an obstacle more than anything else; everything was against it before (it got started), even those who had encouraged me.

To God alone be the glory! On the day fixed by heaven, the 13th of May, 1856, at 1:30 in the afternoon, the Archbishop (of Paris), with his Council, gladly accepted it, granted us faculties then and there, allowed us to stay in a house he owned; and all those who could be of any help to us were at our disposal.

Survival of the Society

God gave still greater proof (that the Society came from Him) by blessing it.

Twenty times it should have perished because of me, because of its first members; it had false brethren.

The Society has survived; it is on a solid footing.

Growth of the Society

We laid its foundations on this trustful assumption: God wants it; it will procure His glory.

All we had at the start, it seems, was “God wills it.” Then everything came in due time.

Blessing of the Holy Father and of the Bishops

It is a fact that whenever a certain man was indispensable, God gave him to the Society at that particular moment.

The letters from Bishops were inspiring; the Papal Brief was a favor that bordered on the miraculous.

And now comes the Approbation of the Society, without patronage, without any personal merit or services rendered; it is the work of God.

Third day

What am I? What am I doing for the Society?

Here is the *record* of my failings.

I have been a slave to whoever were helpful or indispensable; I have been weak with them; I have feared or flattered them.

My first thought, before taking a decision, often had to do with the annoyance of the opposition or with the effort involved.

Cause of my failings.

1 - My weakness in not placing my trust before all in God alone, who has certainly given me enough proofs of His Providence.

2 - My sloth-anxious not to be disturbed but to be left in peace.

3 - Prizing exterior success too much; the remark has been made that the good, the success, the honor of the Society take precedence over the thought of our Lord.

There must be much self-love lurking at the bottom of all that.

Evening

Our Lord has clarified still more the truth of this morning's meditation, and the pitiable consequences this weakness, this servility has for authority and discipline.

I have seen still more clearly the distressing truth that I am taken up more with the material and personal aspect of the Society than with its law and its spirit, more with what *may be* of some use than with what *actually is*.

I have been too slavish to intellectual work which absorbed me to no purpose, too much devoted to strangers in order to make the Society better known, and not enough to its members; hence many regrettable consequences. I have not been the center of the community, but a schemer; a more devoted man could have drawn everything to himself.

I must be both center and law.

Causes: I have not been recollected.

I do not see things in God first of all.

I do not begin by consulting the Master.

I live too much by the mind, not enough by piety.

Fourth day

Our Lord made it quite clear to me that I lack what is essential and fundamental to the spiritual life: mortification, real and practical, of the eyes, of speech, at table; discomfort, the sacrifice of my liberty, forbearance, antipathies.

For some time, indeed for a long time, I have not given mortification a thought. In case of illness, I would take excessive care of myself.

Causes

1 - *Sloth.* I overwork and then I am worn out.

I forever want to get things done in order to be rid of them. Thence tension of the mind, neglect of other duties, bad humor when I am disturbed, fretfulness even during prayer; in my state of exhaustion I seek relief from pressure (an old defect).

2 - *False liberty.* I can no longer concentrate; my mind is flighty as a result of my headaches. My mind is really too eager, too alert; the imagination plays a major role in my life, and the heart only a minor one.

This levity of mind is one of the most baneful causes of my immortification; for I am hardly ever at home with myself. And so I live according to impressions, circumstances and the unexpected.

Remedies

1 - Keep my mind habitually occupied with a few sayings from the Imitation dealing with a virtue to be acquired that always worked out well with me; live with our Lord in my heart.

2 - Above all, I have to attend to my thoughts and actions, and keep a close check on all my actions of mortification until mortification becomes natural to me; nothing will take the place of this vigilance, which I must acquire at any cost.

Strength will come to me with virtue; the law will be my strength and my freedom; recollection in our Lord will be the consolation of my soul.

Our Lord is gradually opening my eyes.

1 - I saw that, in my state of sloth and my absorption with exterior things, having X ... around was a great grace; it checked and counteracted X.... God was leading me by means of difficulties and trials and not with His light, of which I was unworthy.

2 - I also saw that the lack of encouragement, of affection, of someone to confide in, always made me turn to God; I would have been too attached to creatures, too natural.

3 - I shall have to suffer from everybody without seeming to; in fact, I shall have to be affable, to be kind and obliging in certain things and let no one surmise my troubles, which I must keep to myself. The sight of it frightened me. I saw how difficult that virtue would be for me, and how much I would need self-control.

Fifth day – Friday

Self-love

I meditated on self-love.

I checked On My self-love since childhood.

This much I realized, that self-love and the vanity of doing better (than others) has always dominated me.

I wanted to surpass others for good or for ill. My ignorance, my deficiencies, my vanity made me obliging, then fawning and devoted.

By this means I won the goodwill and friendship of my superiors.

1 - I flattered the great. I affected greatness. I fell for the esteem and confidence of others.

2 - I made use of piety to win esteem and confidence.

3 - I surrounded myself with the extraordinary graces of others, with the friendship of the SS.

4 - I crowned myself with the graces and favors of the Society. I praised it to my own advantage.

5 - Examen on vanity:

of the mind - first or second intention;

in speech - I often speak of myself;

of the heart - I am touchy about the trust placed in me;

in my relationships - I look for the weaknesses of others and criticized certain groups just to show we did things differently.

Effects of self-love upon me

This meditation crushed me. I saw what I was stealing from God by making of myself an end; I saw this worm of spiritual pride working its way into all my actions, unnoticed at first, and I asked myself in terror: what have I done for God? And yet, what has God not done for me?

I would have wanted my eyes to be like streaming fountains, and my heart to be cleft in two. I cried for mercy; I will pray for mercy.

Evening meditation

Before God I examined my vows, my promises. Alas, I saw no change in my life.

Personal *poverty* – non-existent; poverty of the house, in the care of things - by fits and starts, now lavish now close-handed. So many things I have allowed myself that a poor man does without.

Chastity. The natural in me; the lack of vigilance over myself, over my eyes; the vanity of self-assurance.

Obedience to duty before all else, to the law of first of all.

So many failings from having insisted too much on finishing certain actions; I have failed miserably against silence.

Sixth day (Saturday)

Exercise of contrition and of love

I placed my troubles before our Lord. So many failings!

1 - *Concerning His service*.

He has not been my first law.

I have not observed my spiritual duties to the letter; I have been remiss in my preparation for Holy Mass; I have not been exact, to the minute, in my thanksgiving, nor have I done it properly.

I have not identified myself enough with the nature of the interior act (of thanksgiving).

Adoration has lost some of its original character of the Four Ends; it was not prepared, or it was vague or often taken up with my duties, with things to be looked into.

I was not explicit enough in my confessions and not properly prepared.

2 - Concerning my responsibilities.

The first principle of service is to place the law before individuals. I have not always lived up to it; I weakened on occasion. Respect for the law of silence; I often failed to observe it.

I should attend to the brethren before attending to strangers and my personal affairs.

I should be kind, charitable and supernatural.

Concerning the duties of my office.

a - Order in my personal life; for lack of it, I wasted much time. I must attend first to what is my duty, then to what is advisable, and lastly to what is optional

b - I should keep a record of my administration; I was slothful in that respect.

c - I neglected the visitation of my religious.

3 - Concerning myself.

Enslavement to study, which always proved detrimental in three ways: it ruined my health; it weakened my piety; it was the cause of my failing in exterior obligations, or of my fulfilling them badly.

Immortification. I experience much aversion for humiliations, for dependence on others, for putting up with unsympathetic characters. I have lost modesty of the eyes, mortification of taste.

Spiritual vanity. I have been conceited in praising the Society and my religious subjects; hypocritical in speaking slightly about myself, about the exterior gifts of others; critical of other groups by comparing them with ourselves.

Confession

I have confidence in the mercy of God and in the baptism of grace.

Charity has been much insisted upon as the principle of my life, of my dealings with others, of my way of life especially with the brethren; devotion to the Passion and to our Lady of Sorrows has been recommended.

Synthesis

1 - I must become mortified; it is the food of the life of Jesus Christ in me. To be mortified, I have to keep a close check on myself: therefore, vigilance, examen after every action - the only means - then a sanction.

2 - I must strive absolutely after interior recollection in our Lord, so that He may be the truth and the rule of my life; otherwise I will be as ever the victim of my imagination, of self-love and of enslavement to exterior things.

3 - The eucharistic reign of Jesus Christ, His glory. Such is the food of my love, the *oportet Jesum crescere, me autem minui* (Jesus must increase, but I must decrease - John 3, 30); liberty and strength through mortification; light through recollection; power through love.

Saturday night

Meditation - You are there; I am here; for what reason?

I saw and felt that all my troubles consisted in abiding outside Jesus; I abided in His creatures, in His service, in material things.

I was His messenger, his watchman at the gate, his aide-de-camp, while, alas, He wanted me close to Himself.

I wanted to be Martha while He wanted me at His feet, where alone I have found peace; my counsel, my strength and my virtue are in Jesus alone.

I thanked Him profusely for having kept me my place at His feet; my heart was moved over it.

It is settled: I will bind myself, bolt myself to this divine tabernacle.

Myself, the first servant of His adorable Person.

Oh! At last, my heart felt happy at His feet.

Pentecost (May 24, 1863)

Osculetur me osculo oris sui (Let Him kiss me with kisses of His mouth - Cant. 1, 1), *quod non est nisi infundi Spiritu Sancto* (which is nothing other than to be filled with the Holy Spirit - St. Bernard, 8th Serm. on Cant.) - *Insufflavit eis dicens: Accipite Spiritum, Sanctum* (He breathed upon them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit - John 20, 22).

I asked for the Holy Spirit, no longer for others but for myself.

I have finally understood that God would rather have an act of my heart, the gift of my person than any exterior action, that an interior act is more glorious and pleasing to Him than all the apostolate in the world.

I asked the Holy Spirit for the tears of Peter, the place of Magdalen, hidden love, no exterior gifts, nothing that could give me glory or make me esteemed, noticed or loved by men, charity towards my brethren, joy in suffering for them and in serving them.

Three flowers, therefore:

Modesty - to keep guard over my heart;

Vigilance over myself to observe restraint and mortification;

Life in Jesus, my abode and field of action.

Yesterday, our Lord revealed to me an incredible truth, that my love for Him and for the Society has been a love of vanity. There is something good there, and something too natural, especially a spiritual vanity.

Long live Jesus Sacramental!

APPENDIX

Public Worship of Adoration

A function performed in the very name of the Church

Letter of Pope Paul VI to the Very Rev. Roland Huot, S.S.S.

To Our Beloved Son:

Inasmuch as it contains truly, really and substantially the very Author of grace, the saving sacrament of the Eucharist is the center of the life of the Church. It so dominates the minds of the faithful that they understand less from lengthy argument than from a certain insight that the worship of adoration should be offered to it. Indeed, through the worship of latria of the Eucharist is fostered and intensified the virtue of religion, by which the faithful soul acknowledges the transcendence and dominion of its Creator over nature and strives in all humility to keep its rightful place as a creature.

This adoration is also manifested by the body, which is offered “as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Rom. 12:1); as St. Thomas Aquinas says, “Because in all acts of religion the external act is referred to the internal act as to the more important, exterior adoration is performed because of interior adoration; in other words, the bodily signs of humility which we perform increase our desire of submitting to God” (*11-IIae, Q. 84, a. 2*).

By making it their duty to adore Christ the Lord, present in the divine Sacrament, the religious of the Congregation you govern, Beloved Son, and of other like Societies, greatly strengthen the Catholic faith against those who deny God by their doctrine or their way of life, or who make light of the faith and belittle it while pretending to defend it.

But in order to set things in their true prospective, we should remember that adoration is not to be separated from the total Sacrament or Mystery of salvation “which is Christ ... the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27); in other words, the Eucharist should be considered not only in what pertains to the Real Presence, but “in all its fullness, both in the celebration of the Mass and in devotion to the Sacred Species which remain after Mass and are reserved to extend the grace of the sacrifice” (*Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, no. 3g*). Wherefore, adorers prolong Eucharistic worship even outside the sacrifice in order to gather more plentifully the fruits deriving from it and to share in it more effectively. But if our daily life is to benefit from a more copious flow of this heavenly strength, we must also practice the virtues; in point of fact, when we offer devout worship to Christ hidden in the august Sacrament, we receive an increase of the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, which dispose the soul more fittingly, “with all due devotion, to celebrate the Memorial of the Lord and receive frequently the bread given us by the Father” (*Instruction, no. 50*).

Moreover, this adoration - which, as already said, extends the grace of the Eucharistic sacrifice - is beneficial to the entire community of the Church. The prayers addressed to Him who is “Emmanuel” (*God with us*), exposed on the altar, are truly “catholic” inasmuch as they concern the universal Church and the whole world. We know this from history. For the prayers which the churches of Rome took turns in offering to this august Sacrament for 40 consecutive hours, in the year 1592, were approved and encouraged by Our Predecessor, Clement VIII, precisely to implore heavenly assistance for mankind in most difficult times (*Bull. Rom. V, 1, Rome 1751, p. 142*). Eucharistic adoration cannot therefore be satisfied principally with the furtherance of personal piety, but it “impels the soul to cultivate a ‘social’ love by which we give preference to the common good over the good of the individual, make our own the interests of the community, of the parish, of the Church, and extend our charity to the whole world because we know that everywhere there are members of Christ” (*Mysterium. Fidei, no. 69*).

Entrusted by a special and Church-approved charter with the mission of offering public worship of adoration to the sacrament of the Eucharist, let these Institutes and Societies keep in mind that they are performing a most excellent function, and are doing so in the very name of the Church. If

these religious live up to their vocation devoutly, faithfully and constantly, their life, no less than that of those who are dedicated exclusively to contemplation or to works of the apostolate, “appears as a sign which can and ought to attract effectively all the members of the Church.... To all men it shows ... the surpassing greatness of the force of Christ the King and the boundless power of the Holy Spirit” (*Cons. on the Church*, no. 44).

There is no reason therefore why the religious engaged in this super-excellent service of adoration should lose heart in our day as though - we hear it said time and again - such a service were an “obsolete devotion” and sheer waste of time when there is much more pressing work to do. Let them be assured that the Church stands in as great a need as ever of those who “worship ... in spirit and in truth” (*John 4:23*). And let them as much as possible endeavor with all due diligence to observe faithfully the rules and precepts We have laid down in this matter, whether in the encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* or in the *Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery*.

Accordingly, We hope that in the coming Roman Convention of those who are to take part in a special study of the worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, the excellence of the service of adoration will be rightly appreciated and even be seen, so to speak, in a new and brighter light, that appropriate resolutions will be adopted, and that spiritual energies, so very vital to the life of the Church, will be roused to action.

With these wishes, We cordially impart to you, Beloved Son, to the religious family you govern, and to all those who participate in this Congress, the Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of supernatural strength and consolation and as evidence of our benovolence and affection.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the 10th day of the month of January, in the year 1969, the sixth of Our Pontificate.

Pope Paul VI

APPENDIX

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament

Principal Patron of the Congregations of the
Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament and of the
Servants of the Blessed Sacrament

DECREE OF POPE PAUL VI

For the record in perpetuity

In a conversation with his religious on the subject of *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*, St. Peter Julian Eymard, the indefatigable apostle of the Eucharist canonized last year by Our Predecessor John XXIII, declared that although this title was recent, the reality of it was very ancient. With a keen spiritual insight, fostered by a life of close union with God, the author of this significant title had fully understood the many sublime and hidden relations that unite Mary with the Sacrament of love and, in consequence, he added this new name as a precious jewel to Mary's crown.

Doubtless, he had often pondered over the Church's invocation to the Eucharist as “the true Body, born of the Virgin Mary.” Indeed, when on earth, the Virgin was the living tabernacle of Jesus Christ whom she had borne and adored, and then offered and revealed to mankind. It seems then only right that she should be revered and invoked as a model of perfect worship by every adorer, and especially by priests who are the appointed ministers of this great Sacrament. On the strength of these considerations, St. Peter Julian opened a rich wellspring of piety to the religious

Societies he had founded; and shortly before his death, he left them Mary as a heavenly patron to be invoked under that title. He moreover directed the religious of his Congregations, whose purpose is the worship of the Holy Eucharist, to honor the name, the person and the virtues of Mary, who was the first to adore the Word of God made man. We note with satisfaction that the Congregation of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament has been, and remains, faithful to this prescription of their Father Legislator.

Recently, Our beloved Son, the Procurator General of the Society, at the request of its General Council and in the name of all its religious, humbly begged Us to give solemn and public approbation to this patronage of *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*. We resolved to comply with this request, confident that these religious, with the help and under the patronage of the glorious Mother of God, would thereby attain the perfection proposed to them and would endeavor to the best of their ability to promote the reign of Christ.

Having therefore consulted with the Sacred Congregation of Rites, with secure knowledge and after mature deliberation, in the full exercise of Our Apostolic Authority, by virtue of these Letters and for all time, We declare and constitute the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, as *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*, the principal and heavenly patron before God of the Congregation of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Society of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, with all the honors and liturgical privileges attached by law to the principal patron of associates, everything to the contrary notwithstanding.

We publish and determine and decree that the present Letters are and will be final, valid and binding in perpetuity; that they shall define and secure their effects in their fullness and integrity; that they shall benefit to the fullest extent, in all things and through all things, those presently concerned as also those to be concerned in the future; that they ought to serve as a norm in making and clarifying decisions; and finally that if any authority whatever should, knowingly or not, attempt anything contrary to these Letters, its decisions are null and void. Given at Rome at St. Peter's under the Fisherman's ring, the 12th day of September, 1963, the first year of Our Pontificate.

Secretary of State
A.J. Cicognani