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“ABIDE IN MY LOVE”

*being excerpts from
the writings of*

**BLESSED
PETER JULIAN
EYMARD**

APOSTLE OF THE EUCHARIST



**COMPILED BY
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Blessed Peter Julian Eymard

Born in 1811 at La Mure d'Isere, in the Diocese of Grenoble, Peter Julian Eymard was ordained a priest in 1834. After ordination, he entered the Oblates of Mary, then recently founded. In 1845 he became Provincial of that Congregation, but in 1856, in complete harmony with his brethren in religion, severed his connection with it to found the Society of Religious of the Blessed Sacrament, the object of which was to glorify the Blessed Eucharist by means of perpetual adoration. "We must preach the Divine Eucharist in season and out of season, here, there and everywhere," he told his priests. "The Blessed Sacrament is a mine in which you dig forever. Let your hour of adoration bring forth fruit." He never preached without first spending a long time before the tabernacle. His principal work, apart from the foundation of the Society of the Religious of the Blessed Sacrament, was the foundation of the Priests' Eucharistic League, which is now world-wide. He founded also the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, a society of nuns, whose spirit is the same as that of the Religious of the Blessed Sacrament.

Like all the saints, he suffered greatly in body and soul. The sensible joy he had always experienced in the Eucharist left him, and he felt in his soul all the pains of seeming abandonment by God. Unaccountably, precious friendships were broken, and he was overwhelmed with calumnies and misrepresentations. Moreover, the horror of terrible sacrileges against the Eucharist were revealed to him, and caused him untold suffering. But he bore all with heroic resignation, and died in 1868. He was beatified in 1926.

"Abide in My Love"

THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNION

Of all the means of holiness, Communion is supreme, and we ought to profit by it more than by any other spiritual act. But that this may be so, Communion must be our dominant thought, the end of all our study and endeavour and prayer. All our works, even the least of our daily actions, should tend to our Communion as to their end, or flow from it as from their principle.

Jesus Veils Himself

Shall we allow the thought of the greatness of the God Who comes to us to crush us with the sense of our own nothingness? No, this greatness of God seems not to exist in Communion, so closely has Jesus veiled Himself therein, so that He may not frighten us, so that we may draw near to Him, and treat with Him without any feeling of shame or dread. Here Jesus hides His own greatness, His holiness, to show us only His goodness, His love. "Come to Me, all . . ." is what He says, and that is all. He makes no conditions. It is not your own merits, your own virtues, which open to you the door of the Cenacle, it is Our Lord's own love for you.

The Weaker You are the More You Need Him

If you are cold or tepid, that is the very reason why you should come and throw yourself into this glowing furnace of love. Fear not that you are repulsive to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the tender Father, more of a Father than all earthly fathers; the weaker you are, the more you need Him, for He is the Bread of the strong, and of the weak.

You Have Sins on Your Conscience?

You have sins on your conscience? . . . If after a reasonable examen you discover no serious sin, your soul is living. If you forgive those who have injured you, you are already forgiven. As for your daily negligences, slothfulness, distractions, impatience, vanity, self-love, bind together these small weaknesses like a faggot, and throw them into the fire of the love of the Heart of Jesus. What is forgiven by love is thoroughly forgiven.

But if you do not want to communicate for yourself, communicate for the sake of Jesus.

Consoling Jesus

To communicate for Jesus is to console Him for the neglect of His creatures; it is to tell Him that He made no mistake in the institution of this Sacrament of spiritual refection. It is to make fruitful the treasures of grace shut up in the Eucharist for the sake of men. It is to give to Our Lord's Sacramental Love the expansion He desires, to His goodness the means of doing good, to His royal generosity the chance of displaying His bounty. In communicating, you fulfil the end of the glory of the Eucharist, for without communicants this great river would flow in vain, the King would be on His Throne without any subjects.

Jesus Lives Again in the Communicant

Not only does Communion give Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament the means of satisfying His love, it gives Him, as it were, a new life, which He can consecrate to the glory of His Father. In His Glorious Life, He can no longer honour His Father by a free and meriting life, but by Communion He can unite Himself to man. Thus does the Christian give to His Lord human

faculties, a human organism, a liberty capable of meriting. The Christian is transformed, Jesus lives again in him. A Divine metamorphosis takes place in the communicant. Man works, and Jesus gives grace to his work; man has the merit, the glory is Our Lord's. Jesus can now say to His Father: "I love Thee, I adore Thee, I suffer once again, I live anew in my Member, the communicant." Thus does Communion become, as it were, a second and perpetual Incarnation of Jesus; it is for Him a second life.

A FUNDAMENTAL DISPOSITION FOR COMMUNION, DESIRE

We often, alas, communicate with only a half-hearted desire, and a very feeble appreciation of what we are doing. God has given us a natural appetite for the ordinary food of our bodies, and to food itself a pleasant taste, in order to urge us to eat. So must we have a spiritual hunger and a relish for the Bread of Eternal Life. It is God Who must give us this supernatural hunger, for, without it, we should not dare to communicate. So great do we feel the distance to be between God and ourselves that we should not dare to aspire to the Holy Table, where God Himself is our Food, did not grace excite in us a hunger which makes us forget the infinite dignity of Jesus Christ, and leaves us thinking only of our own great need.

Man Lives on His Desires

Man lives on his desires, and could never do anything great or arduous were he not urged on by desire. Our hunger for God justifies our temerity. A starving man is not held guilty of theft if he takes food, his imperative need excuses him.

You may say: "I do not feel this desire." That is possible, if you do not communi-

cate, but if you do, God Himself awakens in us this desire. The great motive for Communion is, then, desire. All of us can have this desire for Communion. It is the craving of the sick man for his cure, the longing of the penitent to overcome his tendency to evil. After purity of soul, the feeling we have of our need of Our Lord is a sufficient disposition for Communion. The poorer and weaker we are, the more vehement should be our desire. In His earthly life, Jesus went most willingly to the poor and the afflicted, and He has not changed. He comes most willingly in Holy Communion to those who feel most deeply their extreme need of Him. Therefore, once more, come to Him, not because you think you have deserved to, but because you need Him.

COMMUNION THE CONTINUATION OF THE INCARNATION

In Holy Communion, the great mystery of the Incarnation is renewed and continued. What took place in Mary, at the angel's word, now takes place in the Christian at the priest's word. The Word was not content with uniting Himself to the purest of Virgins alone, and in her to the whole human race. He wishes, moreover, to unite Himself to every individual Christian. The Holy Ghost, Who was the Divine Worker in the Incarnation, prepared Mary to be the Mother of God, and poured forth on her soul His choicest graces. Therefore, let us make our preparation for Communion in union with the Holy Spirit. By Communion, we are associated with the glory and the joys of Mary's Divine Maternity. If I am left to myself to receive Jesus, ah! what am I? . . . What is my poor preparation? But the Holy Ghost dwells in me, and it is He Who will receive Jesus in me. Unite yourself, then, to the

Holy Spirit when you go to Communion. The one disposition He asks of us is that of Mary in the Incarnation: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. It is Your Divine Spirit, O Lord, who will receive You for me. Your reception will then be worthy of You."

The Holy Ghost Will Speak to Jesus for You

To know the Holy Ghost we must be interior. His operations are all interior. Those who live only on the surface, may indeed know His gifts, they will never understand His language of love and sweetness. That is the lot of silent and recollected souls. Pray often to the Holy Ghost, unite yourself to Him, let Him prepare you for Communion, let Him speak to Jesus for you, thank Jesus for you. Practically, what are we to do about this? Let the Holy Spirit work in our souls, and form Jesus therein. Let ourselves be moulded by His Divine Hands, as wax receives all impressions stamped upon it. Prepare for Communion, pray, and make our thanksgiving in union with the Holy Spirit. If we call Him to our aid, we shall please our Heavenly Father, Who can then give us His Son without fear that He will be ill received.

MARY, OUR MODEL IN HOLY COMMUNION

The Incarnation of the Word in Mary foreshows to us the Eucharist. The glorious Sun of souls rises at Nazareth, and He will shine in full noonday splendour in the Eucharist, the zenith of God's Love here below. The Heavenly Grain of Wheat is sown in the Incarnation. It will germinate and ripen. It will be crushed and ground on the Cross into finest Flour to make the Bread of the Eucharist. The Word was

made Flesh. All was glory for Mary in the Incarnation, all is glory for us in Communion, where we share in Mary's glory. Communion is our share in the Incarnation. The priest is our angel, who announces to us the coming of Jesus.

I am Not Worthy

Virginity was the condition of the Incarnation; purity, that of Communion. God also asks of us humility. I am not worthy: that is all God asks of us. How wonderful was Mary's humility in the Incarnation! One day of Communion does more for God's glory than a whole life without it. Mary, in the midst of all this glory, sees only her own lowliness. She is our Model in Communion.

We receive more than Mary did at the Incarnation. She only bore within her the passible Body of Jesus. We receive Him Glorious and Risen. She only bore Him for nine months within her, we can renew our privilege daily till the end of our life. Each time Our Lord comes with all His graces and gifts, as the Sun rises with equal glory every day.

The Word was made Flesh, there is Mary's glory; the Word was made our daily Bread, there is ours.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

Christ is our Bread in His Life, Death and Resurrection. On the Cross He is ground and crushed as flour; after His Resurrection, He will be to us what bread is to the body, the very Food of our life. Bread is the basis of food; bread alone could keep the body alive. The life of the soul is immortal, but the life of grace needs food, needs Jesus in the Eucharist. He who eateth Me, shall live by Me. Food communicates its substance to him who eats of it. Jesus, our Food, changes us

into Himself. The Eucharist received in Communion is to our body the germ of its resurrection.

The Eucharist Alone Gives Strength

To practise virtue and draw near to God we have to fight, and therefore to keep up our strength, and it is the Eucharist alone which gives this strength, prayer and piety languish without it. The life of piety is a continual crucifixion to nature, and we cannot continually embrace the Cross without support. Piety without Communion is dead.

Bread has a certain savour of which we never tire; we can eat bread every day, and never get disgusted with it. Where shall we find this unfailing sweetness spiritually, but in the Eucharist?

Piety without the Eucharist is austere, not attractive. It would go to God by the way of self-denial only. Self-denial is good, but taken alone it is discouraging. No, without Communion, we should be very lonely on the path of pain and sacrifice; we should not know the mysterious attractiveness of virtue, the joy of working not for self-improvement merely but for the pure glory of God, for love.

Even after sacramental forgiveness, there is left in us the mark of our chains, the inclination to relapse. The demon keeps as it were an ally within us; he has as it were spies in the citadel. Jesus comes to destroy the last traces of our sins, to counter-balance our inclination to evil, and to chain up the demon and keep us from falling once more into his power.

Communion is more than a remedy, it is a power, by which we become holy, virtuous, good.

The Best School of Virtue

It is a hard thing to acquire a virtue. A virtue is a quality of Jesus, which we make our own. It is a divine education, by which we acquire the ways and manners and mind of Jesus. Jesus awakens in us the desire to be like Him, He gives us the foretaste of the happiness there is in imitating Him, and living His life. Sweetness, charity, penance, sacrifice seem to come naturally in the train of Jesus; we are drawn to these things, naturally hard to us, by His attractiveness.

The Christian is more quickly formed in the Cenacle than in any other school. It is because there we are penetrated with the very life, the warmth of Jesus Himself, and all the virtues of the Saviour are reflected in our souls when we possess Him thus in Body and Soul, in Communion. Communion is a fusion of two lives, one same life in two persons.

COMMUNION, JOY OF MIND

Communion is happiness. It is peace. With one word, Jesus quells all storms; with one look, He scatters our enemies.

Communion is sweetness, because Jesus is all sweetness.

The humble and recollected soul is thrilled by the presence of Jesus; she experiences a well-being, an agility, a sweetness, a strength of union and adhesion to her Lord, the King of Love.

Our good Master knew that we need to taste from time to time the sweetness of His Love. We cannot live always on the battlefield, nor always on Calvary.

In the Eucharist We Must Live, Dwell and Die

Virtue, without Communion, is like the strength of the lion; it is the result of battle, of violence. But we must drink the

Blood of the Lamb—the figure of sweetness and gentleness—in order to have sweetness in the practice of virtue.

Happiness leads to love; we can only love what makes us happy. Our Lord has not put this Divine happiness in virtues, nor in His other Mysteries, He has put it in Himself only. We have to eat His very Self in order to taste fully of His happiness. Taste and See. The virtues of Our Lord are but the Way, the various Mysteries of His Life, even the Passion, are but various paths, all ending in the Eucharistic Supper Room. There alone has Jesus set up His abode here below; there must we live, dwell, and die.

Joy of mind is also in Holy Communion. God has willed to feed our mind, He has given us its special food. It is the Holy Eucharist, which is announced in Scripture as the food of the mind. He fed them with the bread of life and of the intellect.

The Reward of Recollection

There are no greater joys on earth than those of the mind. Even contentment of heart is not so lasting, it depends so much on sentiment, which easily changes. True joy is that of the mind, which consists in the peaceful knowledge of the truth. Earthly minds cannot rejoice spiritually. People who are not recollected cannot experience true spiritual joys. Dissipation of mind is the greatest obstacle to the reign of God in a soul. If you really want to taste God, and to rejoice in His Presence, you must be recollected, and make mental prayer. But if Holy Communion is not the foundation of your prayer, it will not make you truly happy; you will only feel the cost of the perpetual sacrifices you are making.

Our Lord reserves for Himself the right to make us experience true joys. The soul

who communicates but seldom does not give God the chance to dwell in her heart in an efficacious way. But the soul who receives Him often finds herself longer in His Presence. She can see and contemplate Him at leisure, and ends by really getting to know and enjoy Him. In Holy Communion we have intimate and personal relations with Our Lord, which give us a deep and true knowledge of Him, for it is there that Jesus manifests Himself most fully and clearly.

Faith is a light. Holy Communion is a light and an experience! This manifestation of Jesus opens the mind, and gives it an aptitude to know ever more and more clearly the things of God. In Communion Jesus increases our power of knowledge. This joy of spirit, which we experience in Holy Communion, gives us a taste for God, an attraction for the Blessed Sacrament; this is the special grace of Communion. It is a grace of recollection.

The Short Cut to Knowledge of God

Be persuaded of this. Life is too short to arrive at a knowledge of God by reasonings only. But we can get to know a person by sympathy. We can recognise good and evil by an impression. In Communion we get an impression of the goodness of God. We learn therein God's perfections—by contemplation and by intercourse. It is a mistake made by many to reason too much in their thanksgivings. By too much speaking they paralyse the effects of their Communion. Listen to Our Lord. Then is not the time to seek, but to taste, to experience Him. Jesus **Himself** then teaches us.

You may indeed communicate without any feelings of spiritual joy. But just wait! . . . The Sun may hide Himself, but He is truly within you. By degrees

you will be aware of a kind of peace stealing over you, a desire to work for God comes into your heart, you long to give Him glory. What is this, but the beating of Our Lord's Heart within you?

A soul who has once known Our Lord, and enjoyed Him in Communion, can find no true joy out of Him, apart from Him. God has put into that soul a need that no created person or thing can satisfy.

God Alone the Source of Happiness

The oftener we communicate, the happier we are spiritually. God has reserved for Himself the right to give us happiness in Himself. And thus it is that we do not find happiness in human beings. A priest, even, cannot give you happiness. He can make you share the benefits of Redemption, can forgive your sins, and give you peace of conscience, but he cannot give you joy and happiness.

Our Lady, the Mother of Mercy, can appease God's anger against you, but it is God alone Who puts happiness into your soul. The angels said: Good tidings of great joy, there is born to you a Saviour. That same Saviour dwells on our altars that he may pour into our hearts joy and happiness in Holy Communion.

CONFIDENCE, THE TRUE PREPARATION AND THANKSGIVING FOR COMMUNION

The Holy Eucharist gives us confidence. Intimate conversations are the mark of familiar friendship. The grace of preparation for Communion is a grace of confidence, not a grace of examination into your spiritual state, not even a grace of prayer. These are good, but confidence is the right preparation, a confidence inspired by Jesus saying: "Come, I am the God of

your heart. It is I, be not afraid." This confidence honours God far more than if you were to prostrate on the ground in despair.

Perhaps you say: "I am so dry at Communion, I can produce no acts, nothing." But when you are eating, you are not at work! The Heavenly Bread you are to receive is the Word of Life, you must listen to it in repose, in tranquillity. Thanksgiving should be even more recollected than preparation. It is childish to begin at once feverishly to produce acts. Later on, yes; if you are not recollected, have some plan or method to recall your wandering thoughts. But just at first wait. . . .

The Short Cut to Humility

You have a Friend within you. you should first hear what He has to say! But unhappily, that is just what you will not do. You keep thinking that Our Lord has come to reproach you for your faults. No! a friend does not visit us in order to find fault. In any case, he would never begin his visit thus.

Remember this. Never does Our Lord make reproaches at the moment of Communion. It is the devil who represents Him as a severe Master, an implacable Judge. What the devil wants is to make us shorten our thanksgiving to escape this imaginary fault-finding. No, that is not Our Lord's character. You begin by: "I am so poor, such a sinner, so weak." But wait. . . . Your heart will begin to expand in the presence of Our Lord, and then one glance at yourself will humble you more than all these forced efforts at self-abasement.

Would a rich benefactor, coming to visit a poor sick man, begin to show off his own riches, his high position, his grandeur, the minute he enters the sick man's wretched little abode? Would he compare his own

advantages with the misery of his protegee? No, it would be better not to come at all, than to humiliate him thus. On the contrary, the benefactor tries to make the poor invalid forget all about the difference in their conditions, he consoles him and humbles himself in order to establish a bond of sympathy between them.

Jesus Wants Our Intimacy

If you do not experience in Communion the consolations of Jesus, it is because you give Him no time, no room, in your heart. Open your heart to Him Who is your friend, and wait. . . . Jesus cannot do all Himself. Our Lord comes to us, we must get into touch with Him in the way which is in keeping with the grace of the moment. This is a grace of familiar friendship and intimate intercourse, for in Communion the characteristic of Our Lord is sweetness, goodness, kindness, familiarity. It is not even the same kind of goodness as that of God in heaven or in Our Lord's earthly life, but a quite special intimacy and kindness and humility, which belong to His Sacramental state alone, where what Our Lord wants from us is an intimate intercourse as between friends.

O how sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, Who, that Thou mightest show unto Thy children Thy sweetness, givest them sweetest Bread from Heaven, and fillest the hungry with good things, sending away empty the rich and self-sufficient. (Antiphon at Magnificat, First Vespers of Corpus Christi.)

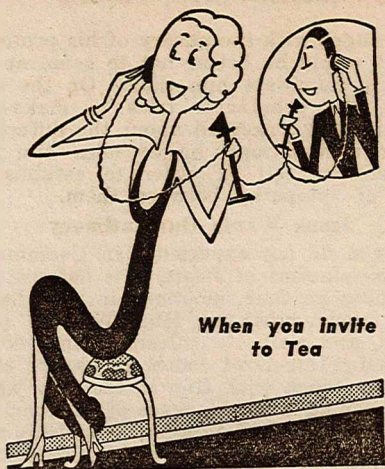
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