



Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus

Nîmes, Sunday november 20, 1870

### On communion and adoration

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Dear daughters,

I would like to talk to you about how we should receive God's graces, which are always so abundant for us, and in this house more than in any other. I told you recently how lovingly and reverently we should receive the Word of God, which is his Word communicating Himself to our intelligence, illuminating it with His light, the Word that enlightens every human being, coming into the world.

Today, I want to speak to you more particularly about Holy Communion and the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and about the need to often renew our fervor in the ordinary exercises, but especially in these two actions because of their greater saintliness. We live in the abundance of God's graces, and we must fear that we sometimes receive them with routine and by habit. To avoid this risk, we must remember the greatness of God's gift to us in the Eucharist.

Think of how many souls, who love God with all their heart, can rarely take communion. Look at Blessed Mary the Egyptian, who only comes out of the desert once a year to receive the Body of the Lord from the hands of the priest Zozime, and who prepares for it from one year to the next by a life of prayer and penance. Just look at what the Jesuits of Paraguay required from the natives before admitting them to partake of the Eucharist, and how they counted the harshest trials as nothing when they were finally given the Bread of Angels.

We, Sisters, who are fortunate enough to receive Communion three or four times a week, and sometimes more often, what preparation, what attention, what fervor do we bring to it? We often need to renew ourselves in the greatness of this grace. Think of the preparation you made for the reception of this Bread at a particular time in your life, your first Communion or other solemn days that you remember most vividly, and each time, the thoughts of faith that we arouse in ourselves at those moments should become just as vivid and just as strong.

Communion must sanctify us. Our Lord gives himself entirely to you; his flesh and blood become our food. This divine nutriment must transform our souls and even our bodies, exerting an influence of peace, recollection, modesty and purity on our whole being, and imbuing it with that *je ne sais quoi* which distinguishes the Christian virgin.

Communion deposits in our bodies a seed of resurrection and future glory. As Our Lord said: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, I will raise up on the last day."

Finally, it gives your body the strength it needs to resist. It was this Bread of Angels that gave the martyrs the strength to endure such terrible torments for the love of the One they carried in their hearts. You don't have martyrdom to endure, but you do have trials, fatigue and contradictions. May Communion always be your strength. The Holy Fathers compare the intimate union you enter into with Our Lord in Communion to that of two pieces of wax melted together and no longer distinguishable from one another. Hence the name Christian, another Christ, a religious, that is to say, a being wholly devoted to God, consecrated to His service, made a holy thing like a chalice.

What won't Jesus Christ do in your soul, dear sisters? He is not only the light of your intelligence, the food of your soul; he becomes its blessed guest, its dweller, and this is one of the reasons why we do not desire visions nor extraordinary favors.

Communion is a grace twenty times preferable to a vision. If the Child Jesus was placed for a few moments in your arms, you would certainly be very happy, but we must be much happier to receive him in our hearts, because there is a true union there. And see by the way how the Church gives her children the best she has: other particular gifts are given to a few, but the most excellent, the most substantial, is shared by all.

There is another great grace you are blessed with: that is Adoration and the constant presence of Our Lord. Let's not get used to this presence of Jesus Christ in our midst. Remember, when you were in the world and you were given the opportunity to go and adore Our Lord in a chapel where he was on display, how happy you were. What a feast it was for you, but it only happened three or four times a year. Here, you have this happiness every day. Our Lord wants to make a feast of every day of your life, so try to make all your days a feast to God. There's a saying in the Psalms that has always touched me deeply: "The rest of your thoughts are a feast to the Lord".

Yes, my dear daughters, God delights in the leftovers we give him! When our mind is absorbed in distractions, preoccupied with worldly nothings, if we turn to God for a moment, he's content with that leftover! Instead of the leftovers, let's give him everything. Keep close to him in your work, promise yourself the joy of going to worship him soon, and never leave his presence for a moment.

A holy priest told me that when he was entering a church, he was so seized by the presence of God that it seemed to him that someone was touching him on the shoulder and that a voice was saying to him: "He's here. He is there, sisters, the One who is everything for you, the Father, the Master, the Bridegroom, the One from whom you come into and to whom you go. He is there, adore Him, bless Him for wanting to dwell with you all the days of your life. Nothing is as certain as the presence of Jesus Christ in the tabernacle.

Perhaps there is one among you who has the prayer of quietude, but perhaps she doesn't have it either. Another thinks she has a virtue, but she's mistaken. She says to herself: "I am obedient", because she usually does as she is told, and believes she has achieved the perfection of the virtue of obedience. But, in addition to the fact that the virtue of obedience is much more extensive than the vow, perhaps this sister is only very mediocre in obedience, and I have often seen obedient daughters lack it at a given moment, for not having taken enough care of themselves. Let's not rely on our virtues, even when we have reason to think we've acquired the habits; let's rely on the grace of Jesus Christ, on the union of our prayer with His in the Blessed Sacrament.

At times when the Church needs greater help, when she wants to cry out to the Lord for the alleviation of a plague or calamity, she takes Jesus Christ into her Tabernacle, exposing him on the altar. Likewise, to make reparation for the offenses of sinners, she established the "Forty Hours Adoration" before the start of Lent. Jesus Christ exposed is the Church's supreme resource, and prayers united to that of Jesus Christ then rise all-powerful to God in heaven, appeasing his justice and drawing his mercy on the Church and the places favored by this grace. Esteem then, dear daughters, this grace which is yours.

Here I address more particularly the sisters of this Prieuré in Nîmes. More than any other Sisters in the Congregation, you need to imbibe this habitual presence of God among you. You must be more daughters of prayer because of the special favor you have of being placed in a house where Jesus Christ associates you with Him to adore continually His Father.