

6<sup>th</sup> June 1880

## OUR LORD IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

### **Saint Marie Eugenie of Jesus**

My dear Daughters,

Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is our model of self-surrender, and asks our consent to work miracles of almighty power in our hearts.

I was very sorry, Sisters, that I could not speak to you about Our Lord during the octave of Corpus Christi or on the eve of the Sacred Heart. But can't we say, that for us, with daily Exposition it is always a Feast of the Blessed Sacrament? Our mind and heart must go to Him there, and everything in our life must be centred in a special way round His presence.

Today I want to speak to you about two thoughts concerning the Blessed Sacrament. No words, no praise can ever be adequate for this, as we have been repeating these days in the Sequence:

*Dare all you can, you have no song,  
Worthy his praises to prolong,  
So far surpassing powers like yours.*

The Blessed Sacrament can be looked at under many aspects, since it is the epitome of all God's wonderful works. One could talk about it endlessly and never exhaust all that might be said. Today I shall only consider how Our Lord stripped Himself and surrendered Himself so as to live among us in this state. Not only ought we be touched and deeply moved by the love that makes Him accept such a state, but we should also strive to imitate this love and return Him love for love.

Our Lord has chosen to live in our Chapel and to look like bread which no longer exists. It is not bread any more: it is the very body of Our Lord that is in the Tabernacle and that is why the Tabernacle must be the centre of a Religious house, the place towards which everything is directed and from which everything comes. A man's heart is the centre of his body, as it is from the heart that everything starts and to which everything goes: as every time we breathe the blood flows to the heart and then spreads to the whole body to give it life so it must be with our Tabernacle where Our Lord makes Himself our very own. He must be the center, the heart of the Congregation to which we belong, and of the Convent where we live. And in this Our Lord has chosen to be wholly dependent on us.

The Sacred Vessel that contains Him, the Tabernacle where He is enclosed, the curtain that hides the Tabernacle, the Altar He rests on, the candles and flowers that surround Him, are all our responsibility. Our Lord has nothing; He surrenders Himself to us, puts Himself in our hands, so that for all He needs materially He depends upon us. He depends on us even more for the homage and love and devotion that ought to surround Him, that will console His Sacred Heart. What food for thought, Sisters! The conclusion we must come to is, first, that we must go to Him as often as we can, and secondly, that when we cannot, our heart and our love must be with Him.

We could not bear it if the linen and silks that surround the Blessed Sacrament were stained or had been used for some other purpose: we would not dream of putting faded flowers on the altar or using old candle-ends: we would not accept that Our Lord should be given what is so unworthy of Him. But we ourselves when we go to Him, are quite pure? Is our heart like the blest altar linen? like a veil shutting out all else so that we are wholly attentive to Him? Do we take to Holy Communion and adoration and

prayer, something that will correspond as far as in us lies to the immense love and holiness of Him who comes down to us? Our Lord is not only thus surrendered and stripped to be a model of what we should be here below by the poverty and surrender with which we abandon ourselves by love into His hands, He is also the Almighty. In this Sacrament, His power is as great as His renunciation and submission. What a mysterious Power is here infinite and yet dependent.

This has always been a feature of God's plans in His dealings with man. When the time came for the Incarnation God made it depend on Our Lady's consent. God's glory in the whole world depended, for a moment, on her consent, on her "Fiat". And likewise, Sisters, all the mysteries of the power of the Blessed Sacrament within us depend on our consent, and on that subject there is a point of view to which I want to draw your attention. In the Blessed Eucharist, life eternal and divine is brought into human life. I am not speaking of eternity when we enter it, of the moment when we are on our deathbed, and this Sacrament will open the door of eternity for us. I am speaking now, of the present time. Our Lord brings us eternal life now, immortal life now, divine life now.

When Our Lord was on earth He was, like us, a traveller through life; but at the same time He was the Eternal, the Almighty, reigning at the Father's right hand. That is what happens in the Blessed Sacrament. There, Our Lord is poor, destitute; under the appearance of bread He feed us on our life's journey; but He is the Eternal and when He comes to us, we have in us, Eternal Life. This is not temporal life in which moment follows moment, in the succession of time, made up of an indefinite number of successive days, but the everlasting day of Eternity. That is what we have in us at the moment when Our Lord comes down within us. And in the Tabernacle, what we see and adore on the altar is Jesus Christ, risen, immortal, almighty, King of Ages. Here we have the Lamb who was immolated on Calvary in His mortal life, the Lamb whom the Angels and Saints adore and will adore for all Eternity, and He it is, the very same, who brings into this world the Divine State, the Risen and Glorious State, the Heavenly State.

All that, Sisters, happens in our hearts. And there, Our Lord asks our consent to make of this wonder both a grace and a state. He comes not only so that we should know Him by Faith. No, He comes so that there should be a transformation in us corresponding to the Eternal Life that has come down into our souls. Because, I ask you, won't the state of our souls be transformed by often receiving Him who is the God of Eternity? Shall we go on being concerned with the things of this passing life? (I do not speak of its aspect as our journey to Eternity, because that is God's Will for us), but shall we trouble our heads about one thousand ups and downs of this shabby, inferior life on earth, when two, three, or four times a week Eternal Life comes down into us and for a time that we cannot measure Our Lord stays within us substantially present in His Sacred Humanity? "Nobody can come to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6), He says. But by Him we go to the Father. When He is in our breast, we can, with Him, rise up even to the inaccessible throne of the Blessed Trinity. Lifted up by Him who is the Omnipotence of the Father, the Word of the Father, we can reach even to the foot of God's throne to adore the Blessed Trinity with the Angels and Saints. Taking all that into consideration, can you believe that Our Lord does not want our everyday life to be transformed? Can you believe that He does not want us to give our consent, to say "Fiat", "Amen", constantly, so that our whole life will be refashioned and become more like Eternity than time?

About us Religious it has been said by both our friends and foes that we are citizens of Eternity. Strictly speaking, we do not belong to this passing time. We belong to Eternity and that is why we are hated. What can one do with people who live on this earth but without the preoccupations and affections and

ties of this earth? “They are good-for nothing” say our enemies. In the eyes of the ungodly what is the use of living for Eternity? People who hate God, also hate those who live for Him and for Eternal Life.

Alas! Sisters, do we deserve this hatred? How happy we should be if we did! How happy we should be if of every event we made a starting point for Eternity, not only at the solemn moment when we have Our Lord in our heart, but often during the day, if we went upstairs with Him to take our love, our adoration, and our dependence to the throne of God where stand the Angels and the Saints. How happy we should be if after Holy Communion we continued saying to Him: “Yes, Lord: yes, for all you will, in all you will!” That, Sisters, would be the perfect life, with Jesus as its centre, as the heart of our heart.

Here comes in devotion to the Sacred Heart. If Our Lord is to be the heart of your heart, you must draw from His Divine Heart your desires, your affections, your acts of choice; for all other things the work of your life must be to learn detachment from them and to let them drop.

There is a passage in our Rule that clearly gives us St. Augustine’s thoughts on this: “If anyone grumbles because the clothes she is given are not as good as what she had before, or if she is indignant at wearing what has been worn by another Sister, judge from that how much your soul’s interior garment is lacking in sanctity, since you fret about bodily garments”. What is meant by the holiness of the soul’s interior garment? It means that habit of not complaining about food or clothes: the habit of making Our Lord the heart of your heart, of holding to Him alone, of rising above the things of here below, of always having your soul in your hands and offering it to Him ceaselessly, consenting constantly to all His plans for you. By these dispositions we give God freedom to work in us miracles of His Almighty power. If the good acts we do for God are transitory, the fervour of a moment, He will not be satisfied. What He wants to see in us is an enduring likeness to Our Lord, who was on earth a traveller, but constantly occupied with His Father’s life.

It is a common opinion that Our Lady lived on earth especially from the moment of Incarnation, with her attention always fixed on the Blessed Trinity. This was an eminent grace. But many theologians think that St. Teresa, from a certain moment of grace and holiness, was nearly always conscious of the presence of the Blessed Trinity, not to such an eminent degree as was Our Lady, but by a union of grace.

That state is not for us. But we can work at forming an habitual state of adoration in our hearts, a state in which everything will be handed over to God, abandoned to Him in such a way that our soul will always submit, always love, always obey, always seek God’s good pleasure, like the servant whose eyes are always on her mistress’s hands. “As the eyes of the handmaiden are on the hands of her mistress, so our eyes are on the Lord our God” (Ps 122:2).

That, I think, is the great power of the Blessed Sacrament. In this temporal life it opens to us a door on to Eternal Life, and brings Eternal Life for us to live by. Those are the two things I wanted to say to you today. How good it is to talk about the Blessed Sacrament, since, I repeat, we are adorers. And any thoughts that can draw our minds to it and teach us to adore better are thoughts that we should welcome with love and joy.

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