

Saint John Eudes

Presentation

Selected Texts

by
Paul Milcent

Nihil obstat:

Paris, 12 July 1963.
A. Guérandel, C.D.

Imprimatur:

Paris, 14th May 1964.
J. Hottot, V.G.

Imprimi potest:

Paris, 14th May 1964.
A. Le Bourgeois,
Sup. Gen. of the Eudists.

Printed in Great Britain by
JOHN S. BURNS & SONS

25 Finlas Street, Glasgow. G22 SDS

Contents

PRESENTATION

	Page
1. LIFE	
Childhood and youth - - - -	3
The Oratory - - - - - - - -	6
His achievements - - - - - - - -	10
 Struggles and death - - - - - - - -	 18

II. DOCTRINE

Origins - - - - - - - - - -	21
Principal themes -- - - - - - - -	31

III. "AND THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN"

Chronology - - - - - - - - - -	51
Bibliography - - - - - - - - - -	54

SELECTED TEXTS

I. THE MYSTICAL BODY OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Christ is all in all things - - - - -	57
2. The mystical body - - - - -	58
3. The states and mysteries of Christ -- -	60

II. ENTRY INTO THE MYSTICAL BODY

4. Faith - - - - -	62
5. Life of faith - - - - -	63
6. Baptism is a new creation	64
7. Baptism is a death and a resurrection - -	65

8. By baptism God allow us to enter into communion with himself 66

9.-10. The baptismal "character" . . . 68

V1

CONTENTS

III. DEATH AND NEW LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

11. Death to sin - - - - -	69
 12. Renouncement of the world	 69
13. Freedom from self - - - - -	71
14. Detachment even from God	73
15. Formation of Jesus in us - - - - -	75
16. How to form Jesus in us - - - - -	76
17. A beautiful prayer - - - - -	77
18. ---Come, Lord Jesus',	78

IV. TO CONTINUE THE VIRTUES OF JESUS CHRIST

19. The Christian virtues	79
20. An example	80
21. Humility and confidence - - - - -	81
22. Humility of mind - - - - -	81
23. Humility of heart - - - - -	83
24. Confidence - - - - -	84
25. Acts of love of Jesus - - - - -	85
26. Submission to the divine will -- - - -	88
27. The divine will: Letter to Sr. Mary of the Nativity Herson	90
28. The divine will: Letter to Sr. Mary of the Assumption Taillefer - - - - -	91
29. Fraternal charity	91
30. Paraphrase of St. Paul - - - - -	94

V. TO CONTINUE THE PRAYER OF JESUS CHRIST

31. Prayer - - - - -	95
32. Mental prayer	95
33. Vocal prayer	96
34. To do all actions in a spirit of prayer -	96
35. Spiritual reading - - - - -	97
36. Speaking of God-	97
37. To begin our actions with Jesus- - - -	97
38. In daily life - - - - -	98
39. Example: leisure - - - - -	99
40. Journeys - - - - -	100
41. Mary in Christian prayer - - - - -	100
42. A typical prayer	102

CONTENTS vii

VI. TO CONTINUE THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST

43. Jesus, high priest - -	103
44. Participation of the laity in the Mass	103
45. Martyrdom - - - - -	105
46. The spirit of martyrdom - - - - -	106
47. The vow of martyrdom - - - - -	107
48. Mary, perfect model of a Christian life - -	109

VII. THE SANCTITY OF THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD

49. The priesthood and the mystery of the Holy Trinity	110
50-51. The holy order of the priesthood of Jesus	- 111

VIII. MISSION OF THE PRIEST

52. Mediator, judge and saviour with Jesus Christ	116
53. ---Thus has Jesus loved souls . . . "	- -
54. Advice to preachers - - - - -	- 118

- 55-58. "John Eudes, missionary priest ... 11
 To Richard Le Mesle and Thomas Pigeon inviting them
 to come and make their promise of incorporation -119
 To the staff of the college of Lisieux - - - - 120
 To M. Blouet de Camilly at Paris -- - - 121
 Obedience given to M. Sesseval for the foreign missions 122
59. A liturgical prayer 124

IX. THE HEART OF MARY

60. The mystical body took birth in the heart of Mary -125
 61. In the heart of Mary we meet Jesus - - - - 127

X. THE HEART OF JESUS

62. A new heart to be your bean - - - - - 130
 63. The heart of Jesus and Mary - 132

Presentation

1.- LIFE(1601-1680)

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

It was in the time of good King Henri. France was breathing freely after thirty years of bitter wars, the Dauphin Louis was just born, commemorated by the fine Place Dauphine built, at that time, on the outskirts of the city. At the beginning of the century everything seemed new.

In the district of Argentan in Normandy, the people had just begun again to cultivate their productive soil. There, in the village of Ri, lived a peasant family, a little different from the rest. Isaac Eudes, the father, had had some education: he had even thought of the priesthood. And he combined his skills on the land with the skills of a surgeon (which, at that time, required sheer strength). A genuine strict Christian, he was always a man of prayer, saying the Office like a cleric. His wife, Martha, shared his uncompromising faith. She had character. One day, so they say, one of her relatives was killed in a duel; if the law were to discover the body, the family would be disgraced and would lose their possessions. . . so Martha decided to bury the body in a field and ploughed up the entire tract during the night to efface all trace of it.

Long desired and the fruit of prayer, John was born to this Christian household on 14th November, 1601. He grew in the faith and the fear of God. No doubt his education was austere but his rather reserved temperament seemed to open out with the years, under the influence of charity. However, his faith lacked solid nourishment in this parish "where there was very little instruction to strengthen it, and

where very few people communicated more frequently than at Easter time".

His brother, for example, the historian Eudes de Mézeray, could hardly be called devout. But, in John, grace was at work and he submitted to its guidance. Early on, this boy, far outstripping the "morality" that was inculcated, entered into a loving relationship with God. At the age of six or seven, they thought he was lost; his mother, worried, found him in the church at prayer. At the age of nine, he offered the other cheek to a comrade who had struck him on the face. Already he took the gospel literally. That was to be the stamp on all his life. After the age of twelve, he communicated every month. The love of Christ drew him to action, for example to the conquest of his character which could not have been easy, also to the mastery of his body. Even before he left his village to study at Caen, he consecrated himself to God by the vow of chastity.

In the college at Caen, he was trained by the Jesuits for whom he always retained a great reverence. He never forgot the Rev. Father Robin, his first prefect, who had him in hand for three years; "he often spoke to us of God and with extraordinary fervour". John was open to anything that brought intimate personal knowledge of God. And here he joined the Sodality of Our Lady, in which God gave him very great graces. This was in 1618.

The same year, there died at Pontoise a holy Carmelite, Mother Mary of the Incarnation, in the world, Mme. Acarie. In contact with every fervent trend in the Paris of that time, she was like the symbol of a great movement of renewal which at the turn of the century began to stir up the Christians of France. It was in her company that Peter de Bérulle, her young cousin, developed a

thirst for God, and where he first met the Bishop of Geneva, St. Francis de Sales. Again it was she who urged him to bring to France St. Teresa's Carmel where she would one day enter. In

PRESENTATION

5 -

her spiritual circle could be met the Carthusian, Dom Beaucousin, who was Bérulle's director, the holy Capuchin Benoit de Canfeld, and the celebrated Père Coton, Jesuit. In this fervent milieu, was conceived the project of the Oratory of Jesus, realised by M. de Bérulle in 1611. For a while, in fact, young M. de Paul (who was to become St. Vincent) thought of joining the new congregation.

At Caen, the spiritual movement was developing too. For example, the Reformed Carmelites were installed there in 1616, and the Oratory in 1622. But perhaps John Eudes had heard tell much earlier of Pierre de Bérulle and glimpsed something of his "spirit of grace". It was said that a holy widow in the neighbourhood of Ri, Mme. de Sacy, the owner of Bazoches, had noticed the alert yet reflective glance of little John Eudes, and enjoyed talking to him like a grown up. Now, as it happened, madame had chosen for her director Père de Bérulle, whom she used to visit in Paris. In any case, there was John Eudes thinking about the priesthood and turning his eyes towards this young congregation of priests just established in Caen. He would always love, in works done for God, what was new, boldly turned to the future. And then, the spirit of Bérulle---or as much as he could perceive of it---that faith, spellbound by the incarnate Word, that high esteem for the Christian priesthood, would inevitably attract his soul, already sensitive to the unseen mystery of grace. From this time, he seemed to long for the priesthood lived in all its richness, and in community but without the vows of religion.

He would have to leave borne. If we are to credit tradition the departure was dramatic. Isaac Eudes had accepted, not without difficulty, the notion of the priesthood for his eldest son. John had received minor orders at Séez. But the Oratory, Paris, never! After pleading in vain, one morning John saddled a horse and left. Sure of himself, obstinate, he had made up his mind. But he did not go far! The beast

6 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

refused to move. He had to go back, plead anew, abandon himself to the will of God. At last his father gave in and on 25th March, 1623, John Eudes was received by Bérulle in the Congregation of the Oratory in the house of St. Honoré, Paris". There he celebrated for the first time the sacrifice of the Mass on Christmas Day, 1625.

THE ORATORY

The Bull of Institution signed by Paul V in 1613 expressed exactly Père de Bérulle's aims in declaring that the Oratory had "for its first and principal purpose to tend wholeheartedly towards the perfection of the priestly state; to have a special devotion to Our Lord Jesus Christ, eternal high priest and source of priesthood in the Church . . . The fathers may perform all the functions and all the works truly and essentially belonging to the sacerdotal state." This, to the end, would be the line taken by St. John Eudes. And to the end, he put into it an ardent faith "corde magno et animo volenti". When did he find in the Bible this formula which he loved so much and lived so well? Between 1648 and 1680, he cites it at least fifteen times in his printed works. He also wanted to make a rule of this joyful generosity for his sons. . . "to honour God and do his will with a great heart and a great love - colere Deum et facere voluntatem ejus corde, magno et animo volenti". But this great heart was not his alone; it was, in him, the heart of Christ the high priest.

A priest, he would be a shepherd with the Good Shepherd. Now, in the flock, some sheep were hard hit; plague broke out in the Argentan district, his own country. He must go, he must leave Paris where he is preaching and studying. The superior refuses, he insists tenaciously. At his fourth request, Bérulle gives the permission and appoints him to the Oratory at Caen. He left on foot, and with the permission of his superior at Caen, set out for Argentan and Vrigny. For

PRESENTATION 7 -

two and a half months, indifferent to danger, almost without rest-he sleeps fully dressed-he helps, nurses and buries. Carrying hosts in a tin box hanging round his neck, he absolves and gives communion to the dying. Four years later, in 1631, he repeated this service at Caen. He lived in a barrel in the middle of the fields so as not to infect his brothers, but three of them were stricken. He came back to care for them, and then returned to his ministry among the poor. That is really taking the gospel seriously! He thought he would die of exhaustion, and joyfully recited the "Laetatus sum", but he recovered and took up again his priestly work.

A priest, he preached the gospel of Christ. From 1632, he was engaged in giving missions. He preached two or three of them nearly every year, over a period of forty-five years: in all, more than a hundred. He spoke not, as now, to crowds partly cut off from the faith, but to people "who already know the good God whom we adore, and who make profession of believing the great truths which we have come to proclaim to them". Yes, they had the faith but they were extraordinarily ignorant Of the contents of that faith.

The descriptions that have come down to us give us the impression of extremely powerful preaching, of a voice, a glance, and appearance that took hold of souls and laid them open to God irresistibly. He was conscious of this power, received at birth and which his burning faith increased. He himself gives evidence-in order to refer all to grace - of the prodigious success of his missions, of the "great effects of grace", of the "marvellous blessings" God was operating through them, of the crowds drawn by his words. At Valognes in 1643, "the crowd was so great" says he, "that I was obliged to preach every day outside the town, behind the castle, and they reckoned there were 40,000 people on Sundays and feasts". In 1671, when he was seventy, he preached at the Palace of Versailles. "The Blessed Sacrament being exposed, God gave me the grace of

8 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

preaching two powerful sermons in the presence of the queen, while holding the monstrance in my hand, and a third even more powerful before the king.(55 to 58.)

The witness of others confirms his own. ---This great preacher, Father Eudes, the prodigy of his century- noted M. Olier in his private diary in 1642. And from this date, he asked him to preach in the parish of St. Sulpice. And M. Vincent, in 1660: "Some priests from Normandy, led by Father Eudes of whom I think you have heard, came to give a mission in Paris, wonderfully blessed. The square at Quinze-Vingts is really large but it was too small to hold the crowds who came to the sermons."

John Eudes, always practical and productive, published some little works for use on the missions, convenient "tools" for his brethren: *Pious Exercises*, a manual for daily Christian life (1636). *The Mission Catechism*, (1642)- simple instructions which he gave the children and many parents during the missions, for which he had a particular charism: and lastly, *Instructions for Missionary Confessors* (1644).

A priest, John Eudes lived in the constant hope of awakening souls to the faith and the love of Christ. A great number trusted him and came to him for advice, the laity-men and women-the happy and the tormented; the faithful Mine. de Camilly, a good mother of a family, as well as Marie des Vallées, the strange and holy mystic of Coutances. Religious in great numbers came to him. Astonishing is the spiritual authority with which, from 1629, this young priest of twenty-eight years, coming from the country, addresses Mme. de Caen, Laurence de Budos the great reforming abbess of the Abbaye-aux-Dames, famous both by birth and position, In exchange for spiritual direction, John Eudes found in her, moreover, an efficacious support for his apostolic action. At Caen and in Paris, he counselled, directed and vivified with his own infectious faith, communities of Carmelites, Benedictines and Ursulines.

PRESENTATION

9 -

This ministry also led him to write and to publish. His first great work and masterpiece, was destined for the souls who sought God under his direction, *The Life and Reign of Jesus in Christian Souls* (1637). It is dedicated to Mine. de Budos as "something which is all yours" but speaks to "all Christians who want to serve God in spirit and in truth" since "to be Christian and to be holy is one and the same thing". It teaches "by a very easy, very sweet and very powerful means" how we can live holily "accustoming ourselves to see, to love and to glorify Jesus in all things" (1 to 48).

Another book, published much later, is dedicated to "all religious employed in the instruction of little girls": Ursulines, Visitandines, Congregation of Our *Lady-The Admirable Childhood of the Most Holy Mother of God* (1676). It is perhaps this book which best reveals the concrete, vivid knowledge of souls and of life that John Eudes had acquired during his long years of ministry. Certain pages are worthy of Molière: "I speak . . . of many who call themselves Christians, but who are more pagan than Christian ... those who spend more than half their life in sleeping and eating, and the rest in worshipping themselves before a mirror, in gambling for huge sums of money, in balls and dancing and reading romances, in foolery and the frequenting of comedies, in worldly visits where raillery and mockery of one's neighbour are die fashion, with the tearing to pieces of reputations by backbiting and calumnies. These are the ladies whom St. Jerome calls 'Amazons of the Devil', fully armed to make war on chastity, who, with their hair curled with so much artifice, by their lips, by their bare arms, shoulders and bosoms, kill this heavenly princess in souls ... These ladies who can be seen sitting in the twilight with young fops, or strolling with them till ten or eleven at night."

10 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

So much for Célimène and the "world" she loved so much. The «prude Arsinoé» also hears some home-truths - a little further on one seems to read her portrait ... But we must not linger any longer nor cite at length the very pointed questions which another book, *The Good Confessor*, puts to the conscience of financiers, army personnel, bailiffs, innkeepers, butchers or apothecaries ... Yes, John Eudes, missioner and director of souls, well knew the heart of man; he knew the sins which bind it, and also the mysterious ways of grace which little by little lead it to love.

A priest, he felt himself more and more to be the brother of all other priests, called more and more to help them humbly in their sacerdotal life, and here we find the master key of his vocation: it opened the way to the great decisions we must now study.

HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

Congregation of Jesus and Mary

John Eudes was a man of action. From the beginning of his formation, he had imbibed from Père de Bérulle a great esteem for the priesthood, a keen sense of the priest's mission in the service of the people, whom he must make a holy people—a wholly priestly people. This conviction was to be very quickly translated into action. Priests were numerous, too numerous, but often mediocre, sometimes unworthy. Benefices were sought for motives other than spiritual; ignorance was profound, but who could be surprised since there existed no institution for the formation of future priests? His missions gave Father Eudes cruel evidence of this lack of formation. From 1641, he made a habit of gathering priests together each week during a mission, and he could point to the evident results—growth in knowledge or even profound conversion. This teaching given to priests is met with again in books written and published later,

PRESENTATION 11 -

The Good Confessor (1666), *The Memorial of Ecclesiastical Life* and *The Apostolic Preacher*. These are two posthumous works, (1681 and 1685). On the other hand, in the course of his missions he acquired experience of fraternal collaboration with other priests, and some of them became his true co-workers, beloved and often admired. The benefits which priests could expect from a common life became manifest.

An institution of some kind was imperative. Already, it is true, the Council of Trent had raised the alarm with the decree "Cum Adolescentium Aetas" (1563) and seminaries had been opened here and there, taking boys from the age of twelve. Priests, too, were grouping themselves for the same purpose. Moreover, the Oratory had opened such seminaries: one of the very first was that of Luçon at the request of Richelieu, the young bishop of twenty-two. But these attempts were only half satisfactory, producing practically no priests. Entering too young, aspirants did not persevere. Certain experiments were not pursued for long. Something else was needed and several apostles searched for the answer. In this field, as in many others, M. Vincent was, without doubt, a pioneer. He preached a new formula: "The Ordinance of the Council should be respected as coming from the Holy Spirit. Experience has shown, however, that from the way it is being carried out regarding the age of the seminarists, the thing is not a success... It would be better to take them from the age of twenty up to twenty five and even thirty."

And he transformed his college Bons-Enfants for young boys into a seminary for ordinands. It would seem that, on his part, Père de Condren, Bérulle's favourite disciple and beloved master of John Eudes, had entertained the same thought but in secret and with his usual caution. The Oratorian seminaries were of the first type; he knew them from experience having directed that of Langres for a few months, then St. Magloire in Paris. It is known that he care

12 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

fully prepared, in view of a new work—precisely the one we are considering—a little group of priests who were not Oratorians: an easy task, as he explained to one of them, "provided one receives only young men of formed judgment so that it may be possible to discern whether they were called to the altar". M. Olier was one of these priests.

There is no doubt, too, that these ideas were spread abroad by the fervent circles of the "Company of the Blessed Sacrament". M. Vincent and Père de Condren were definitely among the initiators. M. Olier was an active member and Father Eudes at Caen was, in conjunction with Baron de Renty, one of the most active workers. These ideas reflected those of Richelieu, and in 1642 the cardinal took the initiative of an interview on the subject with John Eudes. Anyway there was a chain reaction: M. Olier at Vaugirard, M. Vincent in Paris and Father Eudes at Caen.

John Eudes, however, was not free. His project, matured in secret according to Père de Condren's principle, did not find favour with deCondren's successor, Père Bourgoing. Why? Did he fear, quite wrongly, that this work would divert Father Eudes from preaching? Did the Oratory refuse to envisage the new type of seminary advocated by the members of the Company of the Blessed Sacrament? At all events, Father Eudes decided to go his own way. This was not done lightly. He knew well all that he risked losing-the friendship of his brethren at Caen where he was superior; the esteem of the Oratory, already a powerful congregation; a position humanly speaking already brilliant and full of promise (he had just been named Superior of the Missions in Normandy by the Archbishop of Rouen)---all this in order to launch himself into an adventure full of hazards and insecurity. But for a long time now he had prayed, taken counsel and reflected. He had also, without any doubt, according to his declared principles, "renounced completely and forever all personal desires, will and inclinations" as

PRESENTATION

13 -

we must do -when we have undertaken any pious plans or when we do some holy action for the glory of God", always ready---to interrupt or drop immediately this plan or that action" without loss of peace to one's soul, if such be the holy will of God(14). He did not drop this plan nor delay this action; he left the Oratory. Never afterwards, even in the hardest moments of the struggles in which this decision involved him, did he express the least regret for having done so. In fact, at the conclusion of *The Admirable Heart* (1680) -a kind of testament-we find these solemn words: - - - In order to withdraw me from a clearly perilous situation where I would have been lost, you led me to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary which you and your dear son established in the Church." It was a daring, heartbreaking decision taken for the good of the kingdom of God. Once again, he had taken the gospel seriously.

So John Eudes founded at Caen a seminary for ordinands. A few young priests had chosen to follow him, and on 25th March, 1643, had made with him a pilgrimage to La Déliverande, three leagues from Caen, to entrust the new undertaking to Our Lady. In a humble, rented house, called the Mission at Caen, they began to receive candidates for the priesthood, who did not at first follow ecclesiastical studies as we know them now. Before orders, they made a more or less lengthy stay there for a spiritual retreat combined with a pastoral formation session (administration of the sacraments, plain chant, cases of conscience, practical knowledge of scripture); they boarded there while following courses at the university. Many priests came to be formed or to be reformed. Other foundations followed-Coutances, Lisieux, Rouen, Evreux, Rennes. The stay preparatory to ordination gradually lengthened. The fathers began to give courses properly so-called, especially in towns without a university. Thus was born the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, a society for priests at the service of the diocesan

14 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

clergy. "Its state is ecclesiastical% says the constitutions, "and its aim to remain in the Church's hierarchy . . . It recognises no other founder than he who instituted holy orders, he who is the sovereign priest, Jesus Christ Our Lord. It adores him as founder, superior and father." Its spirit "is no other than the spirit of the high priest, Jesus Christ Our Lord which ecclesiastics must possess in its fullness so as to give it to others."

Here, indeed, was an enterprise after the spirit of Bérulle. Its end was precisely defined. "The first and principle aim is that its sons apply themselves carefully, through seminary training, to prepare irrefragable workers for the Lord's vineyard . . ."

So it was that Father Eudes founded his congregation expressly for the work of seminaries.

Our Lady of Charity

Our Lady of Charity began in much the same way. In devout circles, the problem of finding the means of helping repentant prostitutes was discussed. The Company of the Blessed Sacrament encouraged this concern, studied projects, compared experiences. At Paris, Nancy, Marseilles, experiments had been tried by opening houses of reform - "refuges". Now, in the course of his work, John Eudes had come across a number of these girls who wanted to lead a good, stable life, and he had seen personally how difficult this was for them! The problem of the conversion and rehabilitation of these strayed sheep tormented the shepherd. He discussed it with M. Bernières of the Company about 1634 and while waiting for something better he had placed some of these "penitents" in the care of good hearted people. One day, in 1641, one of these persons saw him walking down the street in company with his devoted friends. Roughly, she called to him "Where are you going? Doubtless to church to mumble to the statues there! Then you'll

PRESENTATION

15 -

imagine you are really holy. Well, you won't catch your hare like that! You'd do better to found a house for these poor women who are lost for lack of means and guidance." Immediately, Father Eudes sprang into action, without a preconceived plan, but taking into account possibilities and previous experiments which his gift for producing results was to develop and improve. Also he went about it without vanity and what was more costly, conscious as he was of his own powers, he accepted reproaches and advice and imitated humbly what others had done, even to taking the name of a house in Nancy, "Our Lady of the Refuge".

He did not at first envisage a religious institute-he was in fact, against it. Difficulties encountered with the first group of collaborators led him to the idea. It was a long time before it came to pass. For ten years, he depended on the help, precious but sometimes trying, of a group of Visitandines. Mère Patin, who was in charge, was a soul of prayer and generosity but possessed of a sharp and obstinate character. At last, under the title of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, the new institute took wings, being approved by Rome on 2nd January, 1666. Contrary to experiments tried elsewhere, Father Eudes did not admit penitents among the religious; on the other hand, he endowed this new family with solid constitutions. They were the work of a good craftsman. Alone of all contemporary experiments, John Eudes' institute survived, weathered the French Revolution and afterwards knew, in its two branches (Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge and Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd), great prosperity of which we are still the witnesses.

Liturgical feasts

These monasteries Of nuns and communities of priests had to be spiritually nourished. Christians in whom the missions had reawakened faith and hunger for God, had to have

16 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

easier access to the love and bread of Christ. With this in mind, John Eudes composed liturgical offices. Bérulle had given the example by having the Solemnity of Jesus celebrated at the Oratory. In the same way, Father Eudes composed the text of a feast in honour of the divine priesthood and of all holy priests and levites, to be celebrated in the seminaries of his congregation. The date was fixed for 13th November so that its octave ended just in time for the renewal of clerical promises on the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady (59).

But above all, the offices in honour of the heart of Mary were for him means of apostolic action. What was their origin? From his Childhood, John Eudes had sensed that the Christian cult "in spirit and in truth" is, above all, an interior offering, a gift of the heart, that love alone counts. By grace we have intimate and personal bonds with Christ and the Blessed Virgin - bonds of the heart. It is in the heart of Christ, in the heart of the Virgin where Christ is all, that the sacrifice of perfect love is offered to God. John Eudes had read that in the Bible, in the fathers, in the mystics; also nearer to his own day, in his dear St. Francis de Sales who dedicated his treatise on the love of God to "the most lovable heart of the Virgin Mary", or in the books of his venerated Père de Bérulle: "O Heart of Jesus living in Mary and by Mary! O heart of Mary living in Jesus and for Jesus!»' He was ready to become the "prophet of the heart".

Sometime after 1640, Father Eudes composed the salutation to the heart of Jesus and Mary (63). In the course of his missions, he gave the text to souls in search of God. About the same time, he undertook the composition of his first office in honour of the heart of Mary. This office had been drafted some years when, with the bishop's approval, it was celebrated for the first time in public, on 8th February, 1648, at Autun. In the following years, despite relent

PRESENTATION

17 -

less opposition from the Jansenists, many monasteries and convents in Normandy, Burgundy and Ile-de-France adopted it - Visitandines, Ursulines, Carmelites and Benedictines. It was even granted to whole congregations like those of the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament. Many bishops approved it and parishes were able to adopt it in the dioceses of Autun, Soissons, Lisieux, Evreux, Coutances and Toul. During his missions, Father Eudes organised lay confraternities dedicated to the heart of Mary who were authorised to celebrate the feast. So much so that he was able, in 1672, to rejoice in seeing it already spread "through the whole of France" and to express the hope that it would be celebrated one day "very solemnly throughout the world---. Meanwhile, the logic of his faith had led him to compose another office - in honour of the heart of Jesus. He had not at first felt its appeal because all devotion and all Christian liturgy are turned towards the Word incarnate. But he had experienced the benefits of his first office, so warming for the faith at a time when the cold wind of Jansenism prevailed. Then, isn't the heart the sign of love, and isn't love the supreme mystery, principle of all the others, source of our salvation, the essence of sacrifice? In 1672, the Mass and office were drafted and had obtained approval from several bishops. John Eudes sent a circular to all the houses of the Congregation bidding them celebrate this solemnity. He did the same for all the communities of which he was the spiritual director, who were, in fact, already celebrating the feast of the Heart of Mary. Among the most fervent were the Benedictines of the ancient Abbey of Montmartre: so it is that, since 1674, the feast of the Sacred Heart has been solemnised on the Martyrs' Hill (64).

This is why John Eudes merited to be proclaimed, by Pius X, 'Father, doctor and apostle of the liturgical cult of the Sacred Heart".

18 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

STRUGGLES AND DEATH

Of John Eudes' apostolic work, we have only indicated the main lines, the peaks. It was uninterrupted, widespread and intense. Into these labours he put the rich nature of a man of action at the service of the kingdom of Jesus. In them, he found - he must have found - a sort of sublimation of his human possibilities. Sometimes he voiced this enthusiasm: "I have never tasted such perceptible consolation as here, where I see such crowds coming to the sermons and thronging the confessionals."

Enthusiasm due to his faith, yes! But also born of his character so well fitted to create and to fight. M. de Renty who knew him well wrote to him during a mission: "How happy you are to be reaping such an abundant harvest! And how I sense the fervour of your heart which longs to open and expand in order to make the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ known everywhere!"

But it was essential that this activity should be lived in great purity for the love of Christ alone-that it should be more and more a sacrifice of himself, entirely disinterested and united to the cross. This despoliation, this interior poverty he acquired little by little in the course of very bitter, very wounding struggles. At times it meant a kind of death to his heart. The first opposition came from his brethren whom he had left to establish the seminary at Caen. They felt justified by strict right to consider him a turncoat who refused to obey. For many years in Rouen, Paris and Rome, they used their power-which was considerable-to hinder his works and to prevent their approbation. Then there were the Jansenists who fiercely opposed the cult of the heart of Mary, attacking him for his belief in «his holy» Marie des Vallées. Sometimes the Church's authority was pitted against him: in 1650, under Mgr. Molé, Bishop of Bayeux, he was forbidden to say Mass at Caen, and seals were placed on the door of his chapel. In his letters

PRESENTATION

19 -

and his diary, we can trace his reactions. Sometimes grace makes him, as it were, indifferent: "God allowed me to be scorned, pulled to pieces and calumniated to an extraordinary degree, which however upset me very little by a special grace of his divine goodness." At other times, he refers to all this with a smile, even a faint tenderness: "The big dogs in these parts", he writes from Rouen,---have so far as I know, neither bitten nor barked at the little white dog with black ears. But at Caen they bite, they attack, they tear it to pieces ... It belongs to a master who knows quite well how to defend it when he wants to. If it pleases him to see it knocked about and eaten up, fiat, fiat! I hope all the same, that he will defend his poor little dog, and give it the strength to bite, to overcome and to kill its master's enemies, the sins of men."

On occasion, however, he is overwhelmed: "I have suffered", he notes, «from some people who were very dear to me, and who, for many months, caused me the deepest pain and anguish I have ever suffered in my whole life».

This was in 1661: he was to meet with even worse, after. One of his hardest trials was to fall into disgrace with the king. He was accused-in a petition drawn up and presented without his knowledge-of having promised the Pope unconditional obedience even contrary to the king's rights, and from 1674 to 1679, this disgrace menaced the existence of the Congregation. During all this, he kept profound peace of heart and always forgave "his benefactors-".

Unjustly calumniated by the Abbé d'Aunay (they charged him with thirteen heresies in his relationship with Marie des Vallées), he refused to defend himself: "Because I can find nowhere in the gospel that our divine and adorable master ever employed the means pointed out in your letter-, he wrote to the Superior of Rouen who asked him to defend himself, "I am unable to do otherwise than remain silent in imitation of his patience: 'Jesus remained silent . . . 9 "

20 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

And he adds: «I beg God to pardon me and those who persecute me.»

Humbly, he linked himself with his persecutors in asking pardon. Such, in the face of injustice, was the magnanimity taught by the spirit of Jesus to this soul so sensitive and proud and

by no means indifferent to his rights and personal dignity. The last pages of his diary are full of references to his crosses. But that did not hinder him from working on valiantly for the salvation of souls. He continued to preach; at seventy-four years of age, at St. Lô, he spoke in the open air before a huge audience with extraordinary force. But the following year came a fresh purification for the old fighter-the shaking of a coach on a very stony road caused a hernia, a painful infirmity for the body but, he notes "much worse from the point of view of the spirit, because it robs me of my power of working on the missions for the salvation of souls!"

This old man was possessed of a limpid humility. After a grave illness he wrote: "God has cured me in order to give me time to convert and begin a new life ... May Our Lord and his holy mother grant that I may begin to love them as I ought, for I don't know whether I have begun to do so yet . . ." He had lived only for them! And he went on living and working for them.

His last years were devoted to writing. He finished, with how much tenderness and enthusiasm, the great book he had meditated on for so long-*The Admirable Heart of the Holy Mother of God*.

He put all his affairs in order, made sure of his successor at the head of the Congregation, then after a short illness "during which he spoke of heaven as though he were already there", on 19th August, 1680, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, in union with Jesus Christ dying on the cross out of love, he gave back his soul to God. He died as he had served Christ and his Church-"Corde magno et animo volenti".

11-DOCTRINE

St. John Eudes was not really a writer. As we have seen, he was a missionary. Nevertheless, he wrote a great deal. His complete works edited in 1905-1911 number twelve volumes.

Letters, offices, treatises, he wrote for use without much preoccupation with style, and always more or less harassed with other work. He wrote, for example, his notes for preaching, using again what he had already composed, and in his written style, deprived of the living warmth of his voice, there is something lacking.

The best texts, and those of literary value, are the pages in which he concentrated his thought, capturing it in brevity; thus the beautiful contemplative prayers of the morning exercises, the antiphons and responses of the liturgical offices and certain more carefully wrought pages of *The Kingdom of Jesus*.

But even when they do not attain to this sober breadth, his writings are always quickened by a vigorous spirit; they reveal very rich concepts of faith. It is these insights into faith, these great spiritual themes, that we shall now bring into the fight.

ORIGINS

Bérulle

The better to understand these themes we shall go back to their source—the thought of Bérulle. All his life, John Eudes professed the deepest veneration for Bérulle. It was,

of course, Bérulle who had received the young cleric in Paris in 1623, and he seems to have directed his first year's novitiate in so far as important business would allow. Obviously, John Eudes had read his books, he had nourished his faith on the "elevations", he had absorbed Bérulle's thought and even his vocabulary. Certainly he made these riches his own. However, his strong personality, his own research, the pull of his apostolic life coloured them, and he was bérullian in his own way. But truly Bérullian he was, and to sum up the master's thought will not be to depart from our subject; it will pick out the web upon which John Eudes wove his own material.

It certainly seems that the themes characteristic of Bérulle may be reduced to four: a spirit of reverence before the greatness of God; a mystical Christocentrism; a sense of the sovereignty of Mary; the exaltation of the priestly state.

When he was quite young, Bérulle had been penetrated by a sense of the *greatness of God*. From that time, his life and his work had unfolded in a climate of adoring contemplation. He never ceased to ponder with astonishment the condition of the creature utterly dependent on his creator, pure image and reflection of God, (in whom he has his «archtype») looking to him and glorifying him by his very being. «Whatever proceeds from God, looks to God, and gives homage to God». Thus, little by little, throughout the realm of grace and of the first creation, from the purest of Creatures to the most material elements, everything that is created diffracts and retells to infinity the primal beauty which it reflects. But among all beings, those who are spiritual have to ratify, in a freely given love, this impulse to return to God, which is inscribed in every creature; even sinful men must «consent to their origin», willingly accept their "servitude", that is, the absolute dependence of creaturehood,

being limpid reflections destined to glorify their sun by giving back his glory. If they succeed in fully

PRESENTATION

23 -

ratifying their creaturehood, not only by repeated acts, but in a more lasting way, they will be in a "state" of adoring God. This is the ideal to which we must ceaselessly tend. However, since its attainment is completely outside our limitations, we must let the spirit of God accomplish it in us by ways he knows and we do not. We must let him dispossess us of ourselves to fill us himself. The mystic life develops logically in this way, and Bérulle, disciple of the Flemish mystics and Pseudo Denis, was not afraid to envisage it.

But only Jesus Christ, in his humanity, fully realises this surrender of himself to God. He is "the perfect, the supreme, the divine adorer". This by a double title: not only does the adoring love of Jesus for the Father perfectly realise the desire of every being come from the hand of God-to look to God, to give oneself to God-but more, the humanity deprived of its own "subsistence" and assumed by the person of the Word, is, in its very essence, in a state of radical dispossession and dependence on God. Bérulle never tires of admiring this divine adoration by "state", or rather by "being", which is Christ's. That is why, when he contemplates the different events in the life of Christ, he has a predilection for those which are lasting, which honour God by "state", like the infancy or the missionary life of Jesus. In these historical events (from the Annunciation to the Ascension) or in the trans-historical-like the birth of the Word in the bosom of the Father-&Bérulle contemplates with deepest faith the grace they contain and which eternally prolongs the reach of their power. The "mysteries of Jesus" are all these happenings or "states" of the Word inasmuch as they have power, by the grace proper to them, to glorify God and sanctify all the happenings and "states" of our lives: in fact, every human being is called to imitate and continue the events and "states" of the life of Jesus-birth, infancy, manhood, death and resurrection (3).

24 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

Jesus Christ did not accomplish this interior and exterior activity only for himself. God-man, he is henceforward the centre of the universe. All created beings must adore him; by will, as their lord; and by "being" as the unique and ultimate splendour of the Father's glory, the perfect exemplar whose image they bear. All must renounce themselves and share as much as possible in the homage of the perfect servant, reproducing in themselves his attitude of dependence and self-offering. It is in this way that he restores the original spiritual vigour of creatures completely given to God. Copernicus, in astronomy, revolutionised current theories by declaring the sun to be the constant centre of the universe. Bérulle claimed to have achieved the same reversal with regard to the spiritual doctrine of his time. "God-made-man is the true centre of the world, and the world must move continually towards him." That is the foundation of all Bérullian ascetical doctrine. Christians seek to strip off self by abnegation, and to adhere to Christ in order to reproduce, continue, and achieve in themselves his "states" and mysteries. "In losing ourselves we possess Jesus, and Jesus is more ours than our own selves." It is the grace of Christ which brings this about. Jesus draws to himself all men, knits them to his divinised humanity, making them members of his mystical body. This mystical body is, then, the full and perfect restoration of the universe, taken back and offered in the perfect homage of the only and beloved Son. So, this doctrine of the mystical body which he came progressively to understand, became for Bérulle the keystone of all his religious thought.

It illumines the mystery of Mary. For Mary is she who, without any reservation, allowed Jesus to become all in her. "Pure capacity for Jesus filled with Jesus", gazing limpidly towards Jesus, the virgin is at the heart of the mystery of the Word incarnate. Fully living her condition of servitude *ecce ancilla . . . fiat*-she is united to the man-God, her

son. Her lowliness is her grandeur, liberating her utterly for the high mission God reserved for his servant, the eminent role of mother of Christ. Mother of the creator by that very title, she is sovereign of all creation, closely associated with the reign of her son. We cannot unite ourselves and look to Jesus without uniting ourselves to and looking to Mary, «queen of hearts and souls consecrated to Jesus». That is the meaning of the «vows of servitude» to Jesus and Mary which Bérulle proposed to Oratorians and Carmelites. Misunderstood, these vows drew upon him sharp attacks: in fact, they are only a transposition of the baptismal consecration.

In the front rank of these "souls consecrated to Jesus are priests, the Order of Jesus". In a sense, Bérulle's whole life tended to one end-to give back its dignity to the priesthood, to make it clear that the priestly state exacts holiness and produces holiness. That is why he founded the Oratory, a society of priests whose common life had no other purpose than to help them to give the grace of the priesthood to the full. We find again, with regard to the priestly mystery, that attitude so essential in the eyes of Bérulle: to be dispossessed of self in order to refer all to Jesus, sovereign priest, unique priest, and to be no more than «living instruments moved by the Spirit of Jesus to do the works of Jesus on earth». The «works of Jesus» and, above all, the eucharist, mean the bringing together and consecration of all creation, to offer it to the Father in a movement of loving adoration. Moreover, priests will only be fully faithful to their vocation if, beyond their efforts to leave self, they allow the Spirit of Jesus to achieve his work in them and to lead them in obscurity to the divesting of passive mysticism. To consent to that is to tend to the most profound unity between their personal life and the sacerdotal function. Such in broad outline is the doctrine that John Eudes imbibed from his master, Bérulle.

Condren

Should we not also consider what Condren gave him? It is certain that John Eudes knew and admired him. In 1625, Condren was called to the Oratory of Rue St. Honoré. Doubtless, the young Father Eudes found himself then, at Paris or at Aubervilliers, under his direction. In any case, he certainly fell under his influence. Then in 1629, Condren became superior general of the Oratory. It was he who, eleven years later, named Father Eudes superior of the house at Caen. When the latter, shortly after Condren's death, left the Oratory, he carried with him such an admiration for his old superior that he wished P&E de Condren's life, published by Amelote, to be read every year in the refectory, throughout his Congregation.

Truth to tell it is difficult to distinguish the influence of Condren from that of Bérulle. One can, however, underline one idea. Condren's special charism was to contemplate and to make known the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Now, we shall see that the notion of sacrifice held a great place in John Eudes' thought. More precisely, there are to be found in him aspects very characteristic of Condren's doctrine. For example, the latter's notion of sacrifice by annihilation "God alone has the right of existence; the universe should be destroyed for his glory"- seems to emerge here and there in St. John Eudes, although in a very blurred way. On the other hand, while Bérulle expressed himself more easily in terms of adoration, Condren developed very powerfully the much more traditional idea of love as the bond and soul of sacrifice. We shall see that this is also one of the Eudist themes.

Holy scripture

But John Eudes worked himself. He re-fashioned on his own account the Bérullian synthesis

and stamped it with his personal reactions. This work continued all his life: a

PRESENTATION

27 -

sign of it can be found in the succession of his works-one can recognise in them the progression of his thought. But the time when he made the most personal effort was during the two years of enforced rest after his ordination. These were given to him, he said, "to use them for a retreat, and to give himself to prayer and the reading of spiritual books". What books did he read? One can assert, at least, that he worked on the fathers of the Church (certainly St. Augustine, and most probably the Greek fathers as well); his masters in the Oratory, so versed in patristics, could only have encouraged him there, and besides, the proof is to be found in his writings. It would be interesting to find out, by a close study of his works, which authors influenced him most.

It is certain that, whether through the fathers or directly, he acquired a profound knowledge of scripture, and in particular, of St. Paul. Once he confided to M. Finel, one of his first companions, that he had received from God a great understanding of the Pauline epistles. And, in fact, he makes continual reference to them. His text is often interwoven with scripture, as much in *The Kingdom of Jesus* (1637) as in *The Admirable Heart* completed in 1680. His vocabulary is much more scriptural than Bérulle's. If one frequently finds in him terms familiar to Bérulle, (to honour, to refer, "states", mysteries, appropriation . . .) the absence or the rarity of certain words typical of Bérulle, is all the more striking. Thus "capacity" and "subsistence" are scarcely ever used by him- they are too far removed from scripture. Inversely, the "formation of Jesus in us- inspired by Gal. IV. 19 have in his work the value of a technical expression (15). Some familiar texts, most often Pauline, come unceasingly from his pen by citation or by allusion. Thus "all things are yours" (62) or, "Christ is all in all things" (1) and, "this divine oracle", one reads in the *Kingdom of Jesus*, "by which I began this book and by which I wish to finish it

28 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

one feels that this is not by chance. John Eudes quotes Augustine on the holy books; "they are like the heart of God which contains his decrees and which is the source of life for his children". And he put this into practice. This continual drawing on scripture is not the least of the riches of Eudist thought (1, 2, 3, 7, 8).

St. Francis de Sales

John Eudes had also read the spiritual authors nearer to his time. There is no question of making a detailed study of them here, but at least one could cite, as an example, the thirteenth-century nuns, Gertrude and Mechtilde of Helfta, already known to Bérulle. There is however, one with whom we should stay a little longer for his influence was important-St. Francis de Sales. St. John Eudes did not know him personally, for the Bishop of Geneva died in 1622, but he read his books, above all, *The Treatise on the Love of God* (1616). Bérulle, on the other hand, had known Francis de Sales and thought highly of him. He had read him, too, but at a time when his own thought was already formed. John Eudes, on the contrary, was profoundly impressed by him. One can find in *The Kingdom of Jesus*, expressions that are definitely Salesian, for example, "king of hearts . . . live Jesus . . ."; where Bérulle speaks of "religion", John Eudes, like Francis de Sales, says rather, "devotion". One can even find, here and there, Salesian themes transposed almost word for word, as in a passage on our belonging to God. The end of *The Kingdom* is manifestly an echo of the last lines of *The Treatise*. In writings like *Directions to Missionary Confessors* or the constitutions of Our Lady of Charity, it is difficult to distinguish sometimes what is from St. Francis de Sales and what is from St. John Eudes. One thought of the holy bishop seems to have been decisive in the development of the

Eudist doctrine of the heart: '11 the first Christians were said to have but

PRESENTATION

29 -

one heart and one soul . . ." with how much more reason surely, Christ and his mother shared but one heart. John Eudes cites this text many times, and he eulogised among souls devoted to the heart of Mary, "this great saint who was all on fire with the flame of love for God and his holy mother---.

Furthermore, it would seem that St. Francis de Sales influenced the Bérullian John Eudes to proclaim more explicitly than his master the essential role of love in Christian life. Not indeed that Bérulle minimised the role of love; we have read with joy in M. Cochois' book that it could be "a surprising misunderstanding" to think that Bérulle substituted adoration for love ----he identifies them, rather", inasmuch as the bérullian adoration is a movement of the whole being to God alone. But it is true that Bérulle *speaks* more often of adoration than of love. John Eudes, as we have said, is very faithful to Bérulle. Eudist thought is profoundly religious, adoring, contemplative; the expressions ---to adore, to glorify, to honour", are familiar to him. But we must point out that he throws more light on the place of love; he speaks more often than Bérulle of "charity, love, union---. A remark of Dom Huijben seems to us suggestive in this context. He notes that Bérulle, when he counsels us to do a certain action "*in honour of* a certain mystery of Christ" seems to transpose, into another key, the formula dear to St. Mechtilde "to act in all things *in union* with Christ". Whatever may be the worth of this hypothesis, we can scarcely fail to realise that the Eudist formula so often used, joins precisely these two terms: -0 Jesus, I offer you this recreation *in honour of and in union with* the holy recreations and divine joys which you had . . ." Faithful to this attitude of adoration typical of Bérulle, he throws more light on its rich content of theological charity. St. Mechtilde furnished him with formulae, but undoubtedly St. Francis de Sales did much to set him on this road (38, 39, 40).

30 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

Personal vocation

It was not, however, merely a matter of books and influences. The impact of personal temperament and the call to action must not be overlooked. Now, John Eudes was a man of action wholly turned towards others, driven by the desire of helping them on in their journey to God. And these others of whom he ceaselessly thought because he was sent to them, were not only the devout already initiated into the interior life; there were also and above all, crowds of Christians more or less ignorant, more or less tepid, in whom he strove to awaken and stimulate faith and love. He tried to speak to their hearts; he sensed and sought to sense still more clearly, just what to say and what to leave unsaid, in order to convert and instruct them without bewildering them. All his thought is stamped by this aim. Faithful to Bérulle, he would nevertheless choose and keep, from his teaching, what, above all, could appeal to and touch the mixed audiences listening to him. He did not possess, and he knew it well, the highly speculative intellect of his master. He scarcely ever ventured into the realm of sublime but difficult contemplation on the relationships in the Trinity or the hypostatic union. Rather, he developed what, for example, pertained to the sacraments. He also avoided words which were too theological; if as noted above, he preferred scriptural terms, it sprang, partly at least, from this apostolic orientation.

He also avoided carefully the views and formulae which could disconcert beginners or provoke the ill-disposed- those ill-disposed who attacked Bérulle with such bitterness. (When John Eudes arrived in 1623, the former had scarcely overcome his difficulties with the Carmelites.) Notice, for example, how John Eudes uses a beautiful page from his master on the Christian's profession of

adherence to Jesus Christ. He puts aside all that refers to the "vow of servitude"

PRESENTATION

31 -

(although, as a young Oratorian, he had made it on 25th March, 1642, and intended remaining faithful to it) and only keeps-almost word for word-what treated of baptism. In fact, he made baptism one of his major themes (6 to 10). His baptismal doctrine, very rich and nourished by the fathers, continues that of Bérulle, but it occupies a much more important place and that is revealing. As for Bérullian speculation on the mystic life, however discreet, John Eudes, who probably welcomed them with joy for his own part, scarcely echoes them in his own writings. He contents himself in his teaching on prayer (14, 31, 32) and docility to the Holy Spirit (27) with inviting generous souls to open themselves without reserve to divine grace. As an apostle, he wished to speak to all, to be understood by all; he always longed to touch hearts and to convince them. If he wrote, it was to show what should be done to please God. The plan of *The Kingdom is* significant. The first part contains "some exercises for Christian and holy living and to form Jesus and make him live and reign in us---; the second, "what is necessary throughout our whole life"; the third, "what must be done each year, then, each month, etc." This practical plan is typical of him, He wanted even the book the most removed from any practical aim *The Admirable Heart of the Mother of God* to be one which "preached", which "powerfully invited and effectively attracted" all hearts to love better and to live better. That is the spirit of all his work.

PRINCIPAL THEMES

Eudist thought, then, germinated in the furrow of bérullian thought. We have to present its main lines. But since St. John Eudes never exposed his thought in the form of an organised system, we would be more faithful to his spirit if we studied successively a few of the themes which are most intimately his.

32 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

First, there is faith in the Word incarnate, gathering together all redeemed humanity in the unity of the mystical body. The ascetic principles of John Eudes are directly connected to this theme.

Then follows the place of the Virgin Mary in the plan of God.

After that, the primacy of love underlying everything. A view of sacrifice as offering and consummation of love.

Lastly, completing and synthesizing the whole, the doctrine of the heart.

The mystical body of Christ

As we have said, St. John Eudes goes back unceasingly to those grand words of St. Paul which reveal the invisible life of Christ in his Church, and mysterious union which is established between him and redeemed mankind, in order that all should be reunited in Christ and that Christ should be all in all. The expression of St. John Eudes is often so Pauline that, in reading a resume~, we can well ask if it is not taken direct from the thought of St. Paul. It suffices to recall that Christians, members of the mystical body, have a twofold relationship with their head. Jesus is, at the same time, the way and the end of their journey; at the same time, the saviour, source, perfect model, living principle of their holiness, and the Lord-unique object of their adoration, of their service and their love, whom they must glorify by their whole life; at the same time, the means and the end of their return to God.

They owe total loyalty to Jesus Christ by faith (1 to 5, 15, 18, 25), and Christ gives them his grace, which saves and conforms them to him. The whole Christian life, therefore, becomes a continuation of Christ's life. This mysterious exchange is accomplished first in the sacrament of baptism.

Faith is the "first foundation of the Christian life". We

PRESENTATION

33 -

shall cite the whole passage (4 to 5) in which an original thought of St. John Eudes shows us that "faith is a participation in the light and divine knowledge which was infused into the holy soul of Jesus at the moment of his incarnation---. In this light we discover first the double nothingness of man-pure creature who holds all being from God, and sinner who refuses the gift of love. St. John Eudes, disciple of St. Augustine like his masters of the Oratory, cannot find words expressive enough or images striking enough to describe our nothingness and our original fall (7 to 11). The same gaze of faith however, reaches to the grace manifested in Christ Jesus and the marvels of the salvation offered to us.

It is baptism, sacrament of faith, which introduces us into the mystical body of Christ. St. John Eudes never tires of invoking the grandeurs of baptism, of detailing its richness.

Baptism is a new birth which makes us children of God, members and brothers of Jesus, made alive by his Spirit. It is a birth which has "as model and prototype the generation and eternal birth of the Son of God in the bosom of the Father, and his generation and birth in the virginal womb of Mary" (6).

Baptism establishes between the Holy Trinity and the Christian a marvellous alliance (a "contract" according to the title of his little book-a word common to his contemporaries which later he seems to have dropped). In this alliance, God binds us to his only Son in a union which is --- the living image" of the divine unity of the Father and Son, and with his Son he gives all. As for us, renouncing Satan and clinging to Jesus Christ, we give ourselves to God (8).

Renouncement and gift are rooted in a still deeper mystery -the mystery of Easter. Baptism, in fact, makes us participate in the death and resurrection of Christ: death to sin, and life for God in love (7 to 10).

34 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

This view underlies all *the ascetic teaching* of John Eudes,

a', 1 his practical counsels for Christian living. What he asks of us in different ways is always:

1 . to renounce sin, the world and ourselves. Sin which denies the creator's love: the world (in the sense in which St. John uses the word in the gospel), for that world is the enemy of God and the instrument of Satan: ourselves, that is, of course, whatever is already sin in us, but also the egotistic possession of ourselves under the form of self-love and self-will. Jesus, of whom we are the continuation, did not belong to himself, he did only the beloved will of his Father (11 to 14).

2. to give ourselves to Christ, that he may free us by his grace and come "to form himself in us", and be himself our holiness and complete in us his -states and mysteries". Here, John Eudes follows his master, Bérulle, very closely, and his vocabulary is much the same.

The liturgical year places in turn all these states and *mysteries* before the eyes of faith, better, it again makes present and active the grace of these mysteries and allows each of us to take part in them according to the measure of his faith and his own vocation. So each passing year should find us a little more conformed to Christ in his various mysteries, which are no more than different aspects of his one mystery; each year, Jesus comes to live his mysteries in us more fully, accomplishing in this way the growth of his mystical body. But it is not only liturgical actions *which permit* Christ to complete his mysteries in us. Every action of our daily life imitates the actions of Christ, and so gives him honour and unites us to him, in the measure that we do them with him and for him "in honour of and in union with him". Better, the different states in which our vocation places us lead us to participate in the states of Jesus. The apostle continues the missionary life of

PRESENTATION

35 -

Jesus, the sick "fill up in themselves" his passion, souls in anguish live his agony (3, 16 to 18, 37 to 40).

Our efforts at moral progress take on the same perspective. In these efforts we do not look to ourselves, our faults, our progress nor our personal ideal. We look at Jesus Christ; *the Christian virtues are the virtues of Jesus*, we do not count on our own efforts. Of course they are necessary to give ourselves to the grace of Christ and then it is him alone that we ask, with humility and confidence, to communicate his virtues to us. The motive of our efforts must not be the desire of our own perfection, but the desire of making room within us for Jesus and of living the virtues of Christ in the same spirit in *which he* lived them (19 to 24). In short, to try and make "Jesus live and reign in us" is the sole---end to which all our life, our Christian piety and devotion tend".

Of all our activities, the one which binds us most closely to Christ is prayer. Our prayer is the prayer of Jesus in us; all our effort should be to renounce ourselves in order to unite ourselves to him praying in us. Such is the nature of Christian prayer.

As for its object, that again should be, nearly always, a looking towards Christ, a union of love and faith with him. Our desire to answer the call of God should lead us to contemplate the holiness and virtues of Jesus, to give ourselves to him so that he may continue and perfect in us those virtues and dispositions of his holy soul, and put his Spirit and his heart in the place of ours (31 to 36).

John Eudes often evokes the *communion of saints* in an original way. We cannot close this outline of Eudist doctrine on the mystical body, without alluding to those mysterious exchanges of life *which bind* its members together. He repeats and meditates ceaselessly, from *The Kingdom of Jesus* to *The Admirable Heart* the great texts where St. Paul tells us: with Christ, God has given you all; everything is yours, the love and the heart Of the Virgin Mary and of all the

36 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

saints and of your brothers on earth, you may use it as your own---the works, the difficulties, the life of all men--- you may join them to yours, and offer them to Jesus in honour of his life (2, 60, 62, 64). Later, we shall show how faith in the communion of saints finds a rich expression in the doctrine of the divine heart.

The Virgin Mary, Mother of God

More than any other, the Virgin Mary has had her part in this communion. But did John Eudes

wish to venerate her as much as did his master, B~Bérulle? Here, let us cite two astonishing texts: - . . . of herself and by herself she is nothing, but her son, Jesus, is everything in her. He is her being, her life, her sanctity, her glory, her power and her grandeur. . ." And again: ". . . do you not know that Mary is nothing, has nothing, and can do nothing except of Jesus, by Jesus and in Jesus, and that it is Jesus who is all, who does all and is able to do all in her?" The first of these passages dates from 1637, the second from 1680. So it has certainly been a constant element in Eudist thought. Could it be, then, that John Eudes' devotion to Mary was minimal?

Quite the contrary. He vowed to Our Lady an exceptional love and respect. Recall that when only eighteen, he made a surprising gesture. He placed a ring on the finger of Mary's statue after having written out a "contract of holy alliance with the most holy Virgin Mary". Fifty years later, he took up this daring text again to complete it. There exists the copy of a touching letter written to Father Eudes in 1660 by a Jesuit priest who had heard tell of him "even in Quebec in Canada". Here is the beginning of it: "I have been consoled to hear from M. Torcapel of the holy ambition you have of *surpassing everybody, no matter who they may be*, in love of Our Lady. Would to God that you could communicate this spirit to all ambitious men in this world." And the good father asks his correspondent "to unite him as

PRESENTATION 37 -

the smallest of his young brothers" in his love for Our Lady. Indeed there are not many authors who have consecrated so many and such enthusiastic pages to Mary.

But there are not many either-and this is revealed by the texts quoted above - who have affirmed as resolutely the Christocentric character of true Marian devotion. And it is to follow this trend (of which we see the value more clearly in this season of ecumenism) that we have not reserved in our extracts a special section on Mary. We cite several texts, but regarding Christ or the Christian life, with the result that she is, as it were, always present, without however drawing attention solely to herself (41 to 42, 48, 60 to 61, 63).

John Eudes' Marian devotion can be summarised in a few simple points:

To contemplate Jesus in Mary and Mary in Jesus. The Lord Jesus lives in his mother because he reigns in her heart, perfect reflection of his own and united to him in total love. Mary lives in Jesus her son, because she lives by his life and is governed by his will. It is this intimate union of the mother to the son that constitutes her greatness and allows us to call her lady and queen (41).

To continue and complete in us the filial love of Jesus for his holy mother.

To beg Mary, mother of Jesus our head, mother of the whole mystical body of her son, to continue forming him in us (15 to 16, 60 to 61).

In fine, to go to her with our heart and learn that what matters in her is her heart, where she "kept and pondered" with purest love all that concerned the Lord Jesus her son; her heart which beats by the power of the maternal, tender and strong love with which she enfolds us all in her son. It is useful to make it clear,

as does St. John Eudes, that the word "heart" here covers a triple reality-in fact three in one:

It is first the -bodily heart- of the Virgin Mary, sign of love and (for the people of the seventeenth century) source of sensitive life.

Then, the -spiritual heart-, the innermost centre of the soul whence springs spiritual love. (Perhaps here we are not far from the "Pascalian" sense of the word "heart".) Love will indeed be the dominant note.

Lastly, the -divine heart~-the Lord Jesus Christ himself, reigning perfectly in his mother's heart: "Jesus, the most holy heart of Mary", as John Eudes often said (60 to 61, 63).

Such are the overtones of the word "heart" as understood by St. John Eudes. Our own attitude should be to reply to love with love, to admire this masterpiece of God, and above all to model our heart on hers-better still to love and to pray with our mother's heart which is also ours "everything is yours".

The primacy of love

God first loved us. Like Bérulle, John Eudes repeats this in wonder. The texts of Isaiah on the divine tenderness enchanted him: ---He has carried me always in his arms, yes, at his breast and in his heart, with more care and love than a mother carries her child.---Through love, God gave us his only Son. For love, Christ annihilated himself and died on the cross (24). Since then, our life has no other meaning than to repay love with love, to be a continual expression of love and praise to Jesus. John Eudes put into burning words the love of Jesus, and the humble desire to love Jesus. The "acts of love" in the fourth part of *The Kingdom of Jesus* are among his most beautiful pages. And we are encouraged to renew the expression of this love as often as possible so that it may transfigure all our living: with the

PRESENTATION 39 -

help of grace and "a little care and constancy on our part, it will become almost a second nature" (25).

But beware! If there is a certain happiness, even here on earth, in loving Christ, if the gift of ourselves sometimes makes us thrill with joy, it must never be for this happiness that we love Jesus, but for himself alone, and we must be ready to love him in difficulty and darkness, even in complete desolation, should he ask it. It is in the centre of the will that we really love, by the total and generous submission of our will to God's. We can recognise there the doctrine of ---pure love" dear to St. Francis de Sales, and untainted by quietist deviations. Attentive to renounce all self-seeking and self-satisfaction, we shall carry out our occupations, the most spiritual as well as the most humble daily duties, with the pure desire to be what God wants, and to live only for him; to love him is nothing else. This theme is often repeated, be it by way of instruction (13 to 14, 26), or as the expression of a personal attitude (27 to 28). Perhaps John Eudes, strong willed as he was, and who could well have been proud and domineering, felt more than others the necessity of renouncing the joy of "willing" and the pleasure of being master of himself and things. Without this detachment from self, there is no real love.

But this is not within the compass of our own powers. And so charity is given us by the Holy

Spirit: this is the very love of Jesus and his submission to his Father's will, which we must continue since we are his members. We must ask him to annihilate in us everything that is an obstacle to charity, and establish there his own heart and his own love, so that we may love him and in him all our brothers as he loves the Father and as the Father loves him. For St. John Eudes well knew that there is only one love: when we love our brothers it is the primordial love of the three divine persons that is at work in us. Therein lies the grandeur of fraternal charity. That is why it is laid down in the Eudist

40-

ST. JOHN EUDES

constitutions that the---rule of rules is charity". Its members must all see themselves "as members of one head and one body---. The common life is a realisation of the mystical body and an outpouring of trinitarian love (29, 62, 64).

Sacrifice and priesthood

The fulfilment of love is sacrifice. The Christian sacrifice is, first of all, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offering himself from the moment of his incarnation as ---host and victim wholly consecrated and immolated to the glory of his Father---. This total offering, made in love, led Jesus even to death for his Father's glory and our salvation (43).

But Jesus is also the Church. He wishes to continue his victim state in each of his members. We must, then, live and offer ourselves by love, and ask Christ ---that he may make us worthy to be victims who may be sacrificed with him, that he may draw us into his sacrifice, that he may immolate us with him for his Father's glory, that he may consume us in the sacred flames of his holy love" (43 to 44).

So, the perfect fulfilment of Christian life, the perfect realisation of baptism is martyrdom, the ultimate proof of love. Every Christian, as a member of Christ, ought to accept this eventuality and "live in the spirit of martyrdom". John Eudes offered himself under vow to submit to martyrdom if God wished it, or at least "to do all and suffer all for the love of him who did all and suffered all for us (45 to 47).

Sacrifice is the action of the *priesthood*. Christ is the "sovereign priest who immolates himself". From the very fact of the incarnation, Jesus the God-man, offered his Father the total and perfect homage of himself and all mankind in him. In the perfect act of this sacrifice were joined - these two qualities of priest and victim" (43).

Christ comprises redeemed humanity in himself; he acts as head and his members participate in his priesthood. The entire people of God are a priestly people. In the extracts,

PRESENTATION

41 -

we shall quote part of a beautiful text on the Mass where St. John Eudes explains to Christians that, "as members of Christ, priest and victim, they must assist in the capacity of priests or sacrificers, to offer there, with Jesus Christ sovereign priest, the same sacrifice as he offers: also as victims who are no more than a single host just as they are only one priest with Christ".

After that, St. John Eudes would be able to exalt and serve, as Bérulle and Condren, the "ministerial priesthood", that of priests who have received the sacrament of holy orders. That being said, we are quite sure that he would not for anything lower the baptismal priesthood. On the

contrary, all his life he sought to make Christians conscious of being a holy people, consecrated to the glory of God, to convince them that they were members of Christ the priest, and that, in Christ, everything belonged to them. This insistence throws into full light the participation of the whole Church in the priesthood of her head. So much so, to serve, as he did, the priesthood in his priests, was that not in fact seeking to restore sacerdotal holiness in the whole Church? His personal apostolic progression from missions to seminaries was guided by the strong feeling that without priests humbly conscious of the greatness of the priesthood, it was impossible for the community of the baptised to realise lastingly the mystery of baptismal consecration in their daily lives.

The sacerdotal priesthood is in fact another participation, more intimate and more mysterious, in the priesthood of Christ, and this in the service of the priesthood common to the whole Church. Their role is, through the preaching of the gospel, the celebration of sacraments, the guidance of souls and communities, to call to faith, to deliver from sin, to prepare people for the grace of salvation, to offer sacrifice, in short, to gather together and consecrate the people of God. It is true, John Eudes did not stop to analyse the nature

4 2 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

of the sacerdotal -character- conferred by the sacrament of holy orders, or to state *precisely the* mutual links between the ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the whole Church. By contrast, he wrote many pages, often very beautiful, *where he* showed priests-let us say, pastors charged with a direct mission to souls-on the one hand, the grandeur hidden in this priesthood of Jesus given to them, and *these mysterious* powers entrusted to them; on the other hand, and above all, the importance and holiness of their apostolic mission-to *co-operate with* Christ in the salvation of souls-"the most divine of all divine things". We know, besides, that at that time *there was* much to be done to instil into priests (and *even many* bishops) a humble pride and respect for their priesthood, and a clear sighted and courageous love for their pastoral functions. The extracts we shall quote deal with one or other of *these points* of view (49 to 59).

The heart of Our Lord

In the foregoing pages we have not spoken much of Our Lord's heart, yet we have already said almost all *there is* to say, for the sign of the heart is the *expression of* a very rich view of faith, and the focal point upon which all the lines we have followed *converge*.

It was in the Bible that John Eudes first read this word. In the *Old Testament*, the heart is the principle of conscious life, the source of all psychological acts, whether they are *affective, intellectual* or moral. It is also the source of love, though this aspect may be secondary. In the gospel, *however*, the human heart of Our Lord upon which St. John *rested* and which was *pierced by* the lance, is for us the sign of his love, and preceding texts find *there a* new illumination. This *theme became traditional*, and John Eudes read it in the burning words of St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, the German mystics and St. Francis de Sales. Finally, French usage, at

PRESENTATION

4 3 -

that period, doubtless, more marked by affectation, tended to stress the symbolism of love. It is the dominant note with St. John Eudes. But the aspect of the source of life, the depths of one's being whence life flows through the body, was also clearly marked, in part owing, no doubt, to the physiological concepts of the day. So, *there was* a word there rich in complex connotations, combining interior being, diffusion of life, and above all, love. In short, for St. John Eudes, the heart is the sign of the God of love, *revealing* and giving himself to the hearts of men in Jesus Christ.

On reflection, one can discern there three plans analogous to those indicated regarding the Virgin Mary: the bodily heart, the spiritual heart, and the divine heart. The very multiplicity of these aspects reveal something of the riches hidden under this symbol. The corporeal heart of Christ is, for John Eudes, the principal of his natural life, it makes life course through his sacred body. It is also, and above all, the sign of love since it beats to the rhythm of that saving love with which Christ loves us; on the cross it was pierced by the lance-perhaps it was broken by the violence of love and the blood and water which flowed from it are the symbols of the sacraments in our life. As for the Lord's spiritual heart, it is the innermost part of his soul, the centre and principle of his interior life, of his holiness- and so above all of his love.

We must stay a little longer on what St. John Eudes calls the divine heart of Jesus. Doing this we shall return to the theme already touched: that of the primacy of love. In reality, by the words "divine heart", the symbolism of love is shown in its purest state. The divine heart of Jesus is the love which unites the Word to the Father; and this love "which is only one with the heart and love of the Father, is the source of the Holy Spirit. Which is why when he gives us his heart, he gives us also the heart of his Father and his adorable Spirit." Furthermore, we can see that this love

4 4 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

of the Lord, turned towards the Father, is also directed to men. Paraphrasing the Gospel of St. John, Father Eudes says that the Son loves us with the same heart and the same love with which he loves the Father and by which he is loved by him. In other passages, he takes this love, inasmuch as it is a person, and then it is the Holy Spirit himself who is called the divine heart of Jesus, "by which his adorable humanity has always been moved and vivified more than by his own soul and heart". Finally, the divine heart of Jesus seems sometimes to signify essential love, identical with the very being of God, common to the three blessed persons. It is clear that this reflection on the heart of Jesus opens wide perspectives on the mystery of God and the life of the trinity which is love.

It throws light also on the mystical body of which Christ is the head. For if Jesus is the head of the body which is the Church, his heart. (which is to say, his love, the source of his sanctity), is the heart of the whole body and of each of its members. It is from it that each member receives life. This meditation was begun in *The Kingdom of Jesus*; it is based on the text already mentioned-"everything is yours". Yes, everything is mine, and I can love with the heart of Jesus, with the heart of Mary, with those of the saints; and it is from all these hearts together (by love and grace they form only one heart) that we must understand the biblical expression: "ex toto corde meo---with all my heart" (62).

This meditation, so often pondered was to be greatly enriched from the day St. John Eudes "discovered" the great text from Ezechiel XXXVI, and which was later to provide the reading for the Mass of the Divine Heart. There, God promises the Israelites: "I will give you a new heart, a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone, a new spirit." Dazzled, John Eudes read there: "I will give you the heart of my well-beloved Son, I will give you the spirit of love which is my own heart." He prolongs, while respecting, the sense

PRESENTATION

4 5 -

of this prophetic text. All the more, because the same text promises "pure water" (baptism) which would "bring together" a new people (the mystical body) and because St. Paul, for his part, seems to echo it: "The proof that you are sons is that God has sent into our hearts the Spirit (and the heart, St. John Eudes specifies in his Mass) of his Son crying, 'Abba, Father' ". What John Eudes celebrates is the love

which God gave us in the heart of his Son, that we, who are his members, might ourselves live in his humility and charity (62 to 64).

The third theme, that of sacrifice is not surprising if it be true that the heart is the sign of love. and that sacrifice is the total gift of love.---To give one's life for those we love-the gospel (if the Mass of the Heart of Jesus reminds us that this indeed is the summit of love. The picture John Eudes most often invokes is of fire. Our hearts must be offered to, and consumed by, the fire of love. The heart of Christ which is ours, is always at the centre of the cross (60 to 64).

Such is the spiritual doctrine of John Eudes. Always modest, of himself he created little. Often, even to the wording, he is akin to Francis de Sales, or else, more often to Bérulle, his master. Nevertheless, his synthesis is vigorous. He extends St. Francis de Sales in developing further, according to the Bérullian school, faith in the mystery of Christ continued in his Church. Less sublime and less eloquent than Bérulle, he expresses himself more simply. By the stress he places on love and the significance of the heart, he increases the penetrating power of Bérullian thought.

Application

John Eudes taught his doctrine. It had no other end than instruction in the science of salvation, and to turn hearts to Jesus. He taught it through his books destined, some for

46 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

priests, others for all Christians conscious of their baptism and searching for God. He knew these Christian men and women well. They were his penitents or collaborators, in Caen or on his missions. One such was the astonishing Gaston de Renty, his friend and support. A married man with a deep interior life, he was exercising a wide apostolic influence *throughout the kingdom* when, in 1649, he died at *the age* of only thirty-seven leaving five children. Extracts to be quoted from John Eudes' books give us an idea of what this kind of apostolate meant to him.

He also taught by his talks and his letters of direction. We still have many of these letters (27 to 28). Their doctrine is the same as the books, at times expressed in the very words of scripture. The tone is often very human, very cordial. When in 1661, Madame Camilly, "his special daughter" lost her husband whom St. John Eudes called "the dear brother of my heart" he shows her an anxious tenderness: "What are you doing, my poor dear afflicted child? ... It seems a long time since I received one of your dear letters. (It was not ten days!) I am always thinking of you . . ." But this letter is full of exalted teaching, where we find all the great Eudist themes. This Christian lady must repeat to God the words of "his Son Jesus Christ our head-, giving herself to the spirit with which he said them. These words, springing from the "loving heart of Jesus" are words of generous submission to "the adorable will of God"; they express the infinite love with which Jesus sacrificed himself for us. "In union with this same love- she must give him, and sacrifice with all her heart what was so dear to her; she will do it in union with Our Lady at the foot of the cross, who herself was totally united to her son's sacrifice . . . Indeed, if we had any need of a confirmation of our analysis of the main spiritual themes of St. John Eudes, this letter would more than satisfy us!

PRESENTATION

47 -

But, above all, John Eudes preached. Alas, we no longer have the text of his sermons, *although he* wanted them published. However, we can trace some fragments of them incorporated into his works. Above all, we possess one book, *The Apostolic Preacher*, where he explains, in detail, his principles of preaching. His first care was to adapt himself to the reach and capacity of the greater

part of his audience. So, before all else, he preached morality, the good to be done, and the faults to avoid, and the duties of each state of life. Yet he was not "moralising". He did not impose rules for their own sakes. He consistently preached the will of God, his holiness and love. Moreover, it was not his personal ideas that he preached: "the matter and the subject of all sermons must be holy scripture". Religious and scriptural, his preaching sought to announce, as far as possible, the mystery of Christ; he explained the sacraments, including the holiness of the sacrament of marriage, "*which* is a matter of the utmost importance" among those which must be preached. We have also a precious document, *The Mission Catechism which he* explained simply to the children and, if possible, to their parents almost every day of the mission. Now, this teaching, so simple, precise and practical boldly unfolded the mystery of our life in Christ. "Eternal life" we read there,---is what a Christian must live in this world"; the Church is "the mystical body of Jesus Christ of which he is the head"; marriage "represents the holy and divine union of Jesus Christ with his *Church*"; and the often uncouth Christians who followed this catechism are invited to offer their meals to Jesus "in honour of and in union with the meals which he and his blessed mother took while on earth". Here is popular preaching which is really typical of the French school! In any case, it is true Christian teaching, that of those genuine "servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries" of whom St. Paul speaks.

48 -

111. "And that your fruit should remain"

St. John Eudes has finished his mission. Did he leave any visible effect in his wake? We can note a few points.

To the institutes he founded he gave both the breath of life and the structures to ensure their continuance. In 1789, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary was directing thirteen seminaries and four colleges attached to them. The revolution dispersed them all. Reassembling belatedly in 1826, the Eudists took charge (>1 colleges. Then, at the request of Leo XIII, they went to the help of seminaries in Columbia. Today, their works are in full swing across the Atlantic in Columbia, Canada and Venezuela. They help, too, in the formation of future priests on the Ivory Coast. In the spirit of St. John Eudes, they seek to live the priestly life as fully as possible, giving themselves to any sacerdotal tasks side by side with secular priests. They want to serve the priesthood by giving their preference as much as possible to those functions helpful to priests -seminaries, houses of welcome, retreats for priests ... They try to carry out all these works in union with Christ the priest, and by their words and their lives to express something of that love which God gives us in the heart of Jesus, his Son.

The religious daughters of St. John Eudes work in the same spirit. They continue to pray as John Eudes taught them and to celebrate his offices in honour of the heart of Christ and the Blessed Virgin. They draw thence the strength necessary for their apostolate of mercy, which is itself so in

PRESENTATION

49 -

line with the Eudist tradition. The Order of Our Lady of Charity counted seven monasteries at the revolution. Less severely struck than the seminaries they quickly recovered their prosperity and multiplied in the nineteenth century. The house founded by St. Mary Euphrasia at Angers became the generalate for the new Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd. In 1835, Gregory XVI gave it his approbation. Under one form or the other, with 500 houses and 12 ' 000 religious, Our Lady of Charity today is spread all over the world.

Let us add that several other families were created in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, sometimes through the influence of the Eudist Fathers, sometimes through those other daughters of St. John Eudes. We cannot name them all. The oldest is, without doubt, that of the Bon-Sauveur in which, recently, two neighbouring congregations were united, having been born in Normandy almost in John Eudes' day. Their works comprise care of the sick, education and re-education. There are contemplatives like the Holy Family of Séez. But more numerous are the societies consecrated to instruction and parish assistance, like those of Coutances, St. Quay, Paramé~, dedicated to the hearts of Jesus and Mary, or the Providence of Évreux. The Sisters of St. Raphael welcome unmarried mothers in their homes. They have chosen to wear the image of the heart on their habits, and everybody knows the Little Sisters of the Poor and their mission of humble charity. All these institutes want to remain faithful to the memory of St. John Eudes. They appreciate retreats and spiritual sessions which help them to know and be nourished by his doctrine.

Yet these foundations are not all that remain of St. John Eudes. His message has also borne fruit. This is difficult to measure but may be discerned. There is first the doctrine of the heart, sign of that saying love which calls for and creates love. Rather than retrace its history, let us look at an event

50 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

where it can be seen. A recent study presented a manual published at Versailles in 1742 for a confraternity of the Sacred Heart, founded at the request of Maria Leczinska. Two converging paths at this point cause the action of St. John Eudes to blossom; on the one hand this manual, one of several manuals of a like nature, contains elements borrowed from the Office of St. John Eudes, mixed with other elements coming from the Jesuits, disciples of St. Margaret Mary (who in fact received her mission in a convent where the Eudist offices were celebrated); on the other hand the initiative of Mary Leczinski reminds us of the rapid spread of the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament in Poland who had carried there, at the end of the seventeenth century, the devotion to the hearts of Jesus and Mary received from St. John Eudes. Without trying to follow in detail the history of the Eudist doctrine of the divine heart, we mention only that Pius XII, in the encyclical *Haurietis Aquam* developed with richness the themes to which St. John Eudes has introduced us. His disciples there recognised with joy a wide scriptural and theological vision.

Less obvious but yet profound is the priestly influence of St. John Eudes. Here he takes his place with many others but with power, in a vast movement to restore the priesthood, essential to the restoration of baptismal holiness. His sons, whom the revolution dispersed or martyred, or those who continue his mission today, are not the only witnesses to it. For if the anxiety which haunted M. Vincent at the thought that one day, perhaps, our regions would be deprived of the faith, has not been wholly realised; if even we, today, through harsh purifications, are taking part in a renewal of the Christian faith, we owe it in great measure to those courageous apostles of the seventeenth century who believed, in spite of the then generally accepted attitudes, in the sanctity of baptism and of holy orders. And St. John Eudes was one of them.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1575 Birth of Peter de Bérulle.
1581 Birth of Vincent de Paul.
1588 Birth of Charles de Condren.
1598 Edict of Nantes: religious peace.
1601 Birth of Louis XIII.
14th November: *Birth of John Eudes.*
1608 & Birth of Jean-Jaques Olier.
1610 Assassination of Henry IV.
1611 Birth of Gaston de Renty.
Foundation of the Oratory of Jesus.
1612 Francis de Sales: Treaty of the Love of God.
1615 John Eudes at College du Mont, Caen.
1618 John Eudes in Congregation of Notre Dame.
Death of Mme. Acarie (Mère de l'Incarnation).
1621 John Eudes receives the tonsure and minor orders.
1622 Death of St. Francis de Sales.
1623 John Eudes at the Oratory, Paris.
1624 Richelieu joins the Council.
1625 M. Vincent founds the Congregation of the Mission.
20th December: *John Eudes is ordained priest*
25th December: he celebrates his first Mass.
1627 Birth of Bossuet; plague at Argentan; John Eudes
at Caen.
1629 Death of Bérulle; Condren superior.
1630 Foundation of the Company of the Blessed Sacra
ment.
1631 Plague at Caen.
1632 John Eudes preaches his first missions.
- 5 2 -
- 1636 Corneille publishes *The Life and Kingdom of Jesus
in Christian Souls.*
Descartes publishes discourse on method.
1638 Birth of Louis XIV; Imprisonment of Saint-Cyran.
1639 Revolt of the Va-nu-pieds in Normandie.
1640 John Eudes superior of the Oratory in Caen; Jansen
publishes Augustinus.
1641 Death of Condren; Bourgoing superior of the
Oratory; John Eudes meets Marie des Vallées,
he founds Our Lady of the Refuge at Caen; M.
Olier begins a seminary at Vaugirard.
1642 M. Vincent begins the Bons-Enfants Seminary;
death of Richelieu.
1643 Death of Louis XIII.
19th March: John Eudes leaves the Oratory to
found a seminary.
25th March: he establishes the Congregation of

ST. JOHN EUDES

Jesus and Mary at Caen.

Francis Eudes de Mézeray publishes his history of France.

1648 *First public celebration of the feast of the Heart of Mary* at Autun.

Beginning of La Fronde.

1649 Death of M. de Renty.

1650 Foundation of the seminary at Coutances.

1651 Our Lady of the Refuge becomes the Order Of Our Lady of Charity.

John Eudes preaches at St. Sulpice.

1653 Seminary at Lisieux.

1654 Publishes the *Contract of Men with God by holy baptism*.

1656 Death of Marie des Vallées.

PRESENTATION

53 -

1657 Seminary at Rouen.

Death of M. Olier,

1658 Molière settles at Paris.

1660 Death of Vincent de Paul.

Marriage of Louis XIV.

Dissolution of the Company of the Blessed Sacrament.

John Eudes preaches in Paris at Quinze-Vingts and Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

1666 2nd January: approval of Our Lady of Charity by Pope Alexander VII.

The Good Confessor published.

1667 Seminary at Évreux.

1670 Seminary at Rennes.

1671 John Eudes preaches at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

1674-79 He falls into disgrace.

1676 Our Lady of Charity at Hennebont and at Guingamp.

John Eudes' last mission at Saint-Lô,

1680 19th August: Death of John Eudes.

2nd-3rd September: Francois-Louis Hébert,

François le Franc,

Pierre-Claude Pottier,

Eudists, martyred at Paris.

1835 Approval of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd by Pope Gregory XVI.

1925 31st May: Canonization of St. *John Eudes*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

IN FRENCH

Oeuvres Completes by St. John Eudes.

(Twelve volumes-Vannes 1905-11).

IN ENGLISH

The Selected Works of St. John Eudes.

(New York, P. J. Kennedy & Sons) 1945-48 in six volumes:

The Kingdom of Jesus; The Sacred Heart of Jesus; The Admirable Heart of Mary; The Priest: His Dignity and Obligations; Meditations; Letters and Shorter Works.

Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism.

(Hyattsville M.D. Eudist Fathers 1961.)

Their Hearts be Praised.

(Life of St. John Eudes by Daniel Sargent.) (New York, P. V. Kennedy & Sons.)

St. John Eudes, A Spiritual Portrait.

(By Hérambourg.) (Westminster M.D. The Newman Press.)

These books can be obtained from:

The Eudist Fathers,
31 St. Florian Street, Buffalo.
N.Y. 14207,
U.S.A.

SELECTED TEXTS.**1. The mystical body of
Jesus Christ****1. Christ is all in all things. O.C. 1: 114.**

His Son Jesus Christ, is the first and principal, indeed the unique object of the regard, love and benevolence of the eternal Father. I say unique, for this divine Father wished that his Son--- Jesus might be all in all things" and "that all things might be in him and by him" (Eph. 1.23; Col. III: 11.17), according to the word of his apostle; and so he sees and loves all things in him, and he sees and loves only him in all things. And as the same apostle teaches us "that he has done all things in him and by him" so he teaches us " that he has done all things for him "; (Col. 1: 16; Heb. XL 100) and as he has put in him all the treasures of his wisdom and his knowledge (cf. Col. 11: 3) of his goodness and beauty, his glory and happiness, and of all his other divine perfections, so also he himself tells us clearly and many times, that he has put all his benevolence and delight in this unique and well-beloved Son. (Mt. III: 17; cf. 2 Pet. 1: 17.) Nevertheless, this does not exclude the Holy Spirit since it is the Spirit of Jesus and is only one with Jesus.

In imitation of this heavenly Father, whom we must follow and imitate as our Father, Jesus must be the unique object of our spirit and our heart. We must see and love all things in him, and we must see and love nothing but him in all things. We must do all our actions in him and for him. That is why he enjoins us to make our dwelling in him: "Live in me" (1n. XV: 4). And his beloved disciple reiterates this

bidding twice: "Live in him" he says, "my little children, live in him." (1 Jn. II: 27.) And St. Paul, to lead us to this, assures us "that there is no damnation for those who live in Christ Jesus." (Rom. VIII: L) On the contrary, it could be said that outside him, there is only perdition, malediction and hell ...

When I say that Jesus Christ must be our only desire, that does not exclude the Father and the Holy Spirit. For Jesus himself assures us: "Whoever sees me, sees the Father" (Jn. XIV:9); whoever speaks of him speaks also of the Father and the Holy Spirit; whoever honours and loves him, in the same way honours and loves the Father and the Holy Spirit; and he who sees him as his only end, sees at the same time, the Father and the Holy Spirit.

2. The mystical body. O.C. 1: 161.

Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, king of men and of angels, being not only our God, our saviour and our sovereign Lord, but even our head, and "we, being his members and his body", as St. Paul says, -bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh" (Eph. V:30), are consequently united with him in the most intimate union possible, like the union of members with their head. United with him spiritually by faith and by the grace which he has given us in holy baptism, united with him corporeally by the union of his most holy body with ours in the holy eucharist. As the members are animated by the spirit of their head and live by his life, so must we be vivified by the spirit of Jesus and live his life, walk in his footsteps, be clothed with his sentiments and desires, do all our actions with the dispositions and intentions with which he did his own; in a word, continue and complete the life, religion and devotion he exercised on earth.

This proposition is well founded for it is supported in many places by the sacred words of him who is truth itself. Can you not hear him say in several places in his gospel "I

SELECTED TEXTS

59 -

am the life- and---I am come that you may have life . . . I live and you shall live. In that day you shall know that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you." Qn. XIV: 6; X: 10; XIV: 19.) That is to say that, as I am in my Father, living the life of my Father, which he is communicating to me, so you are in me, living my life, and I am in you, communicating this same life to you, and thus I live in you and you will live with me and in me ...

Our Lord Jesus Christ has two sorts of body and two sorts of life. His first body is his personal body, which he took from the Blessed Virgin Mary; and his first life is the life he had in that same body while he was on earth. His second body is his mystical body, namely, the Church, which St. Paul calls "The Body of Christ"; and his second life is the life which he has in this body and in all true Christians who are members of this body. The passible and temporal life, *which Jesus* had in his personal body, has been accomplished and terminated at the moment of death; but he wishes to continue this same life in his mystical body until the consummation of the world, in order to glorify his Father by the actions and sufferings of a life, mortal, laborious and passible, not only for the space of thirty-four years, but to the end of the world. So true is this, that the passible and temporal life which Jesus has in his mystical body, that is to say in Christians, is not yet accomplished but is being accomplished from day to day in each real Christian, and it will not be perfectly accomplished until the end of time.

That is why St. Paul said "that he helps to complete what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ for his body *which* is the Church", (Col. 1: 24) and what he said of himself could be said of every real Christian when he suffers something in a spirit of submission to and love of God. And what St. Paul says of suffering, could be said of all other actions of a Christian in this world.

60 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

It follows that, when a Christian prays, he continues and completes the prayer Jesus made on earth; when he works, he continues and completes the laborious life of Christ; when he converses with his neighbour in a spirit of charity, he continues and completes the companionship of Christ.

Jesus being our head and we his members, having a union with him incomparably more close, more noble and elevated than the union between head and members of a natural body, we must be more especially and perfectly moved by his spirit and live his life than the members of a natural body are animated by the spirit and live the life of their head.

3. The states and mysteries of Christ. O.C. 1: 310.

We must continue and complete in ourselves the states and mysteries of Christ and pray often to Jesus, that he will consummate and accomplish them in us and in the whole Church. The mysteries of Jesus are not yet entirely perfected and completed. Although they may be perfect and completed in the person of Jesus, they are nevertheless not so in us who are his members, nor in his Church which is his mystical body. For the Son of God plans to give us a participation, and to make a sort of continuation and extension in us and in the whole Church, of the mystery of his incarnation ... of his birth and hidden life, forming himself, and as it were, incarnating himself and coming to birth in our souls, through the holy sacraments of baptism and the divine eucharist, making us live a spiritual

and interior life hidden with him in God.

He plans to perfect in us the mystery of his passion, of his death and resurrection, making us suffer, die and come to life again with him and in him. His design is to accomplish in us that state of glorious and immortal life which he has in heaven, making us live with him and in him, when we are in heaven, a life of glorious immortality. And so, he

SELECTED TEXTS

61 -

plans to complete and accomplish in us and in his Church all his other states and mysteries, by a communication and share which he wishes to give us, and by a continuation and extension which he wishes to bring about in us of those same states and mysteries.

The mysteries of Jesus will not be accomplished until the end of time, which he has determined for the consummation of his mysteries in us and in his Church, at the end of the world.

Now the life that we have on earth is given to us only that we may employ it in accomplishing these great designs which Jesus has for us. That is why we must employ all our time, our days, our years, in co-operating and working with Jesus in this divine work of the consummation of his mysteries in us; and we must co-operate in them by good works, by prayers, and by a frequent application of our mind and heart to contemplate, adore and honour the various states and mysteries of Jesus in the different seasons of the year, and give ourselves to him in order that he may do in us, through these same mysteries, all that he desires for his pure glory.

11. Entry into the mystical body

4. Faith. O.C. 1: 168.

The first foundation of the Christian life is faith. For St. Paul tells us that "if we wish to go to God and have access to his divine majesty, the first step that must be taken is to believe- and that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith", says the same apostle, "is the substance and the ground of all we hope for." (Heb. XI: 6.1) It is the foundation stone of the house and kingdom of Jesus Christ . . . It is a heavenly and divine light, a sharing in eternal and inaccessible light, a ray from the face of God; or, according to scripture, faith is like "a divine character by which the light from the face of God is imprinted on our souls". (Ps. IV: 6.) It is a communication and, as it were, an extension of the light and divine knowledge infused into the holy soul of Jesus at the moment of his incarnation. It is the knowledge of salvation, the science of the saints, and of God himself, which Jesus Christ drew from the bosom of his Father, and which he has brought to us on earth to disperse our darkness, to light up our hearts, to give us the necessary knowledge to serve and love God perfectly. It is the science which enables us to submit and subject our minds to the truths which he taught, and which he teaches us still through himself and his Church, and in that way to express, continue and accomplish in us the submission, docility and voluntary subjection in full clarity which his human soul had in regard to the lights his eternal Father

SELECTED TEXTS

63 -

communicated to him and the truths he taught him, so the faith which is given us to capture and subject our minds to belief in the truths announced to us by God, is a continuation and accomplishment of the loving and perfect submission which the human mind of Christ had for the truths his eternal Father had announced to him. If we look, then, at God with the eyes of faith, we shall see him in his truth such as he is, and as it were, face to face. For although faith may indeed be joined to obscurity, and may not allow us to see God clearly as one sees him in heaven, but in darkness and as though in a cloud, nevertheless it does not lower his supreme grandeur to the level of our spirit as does knowledge, but it penetrates through its shade and obscurity, into the infinitude of his perfections, and makes us know him as he is, that is to say infinite in his being and in all his divine perfections.

If we look at ourselves and everything in the world with the eyes of faith, we shall see very clearly that we are of ourselves only nothingness, sin and abomination, and that everything in the world is but smoke, vanity and illusion.

5. Life of faith. O.C. 1: 171.

As we must see all things in the light of faith to know them truly, so we must perform all our actions by the light of faith to do them holily. For, as God acts by divine wisdom, the angels by their angelic intelligence, men, deprived of the light of faith, by reason, people of the world by the maxims they follow there, the voluptuous by their senses, so Christians must act by the same light by which Jesus Christ, who is their head, acted, that is to say, by the faith which is a participation in the knowledge and light of Jesus Christ.

That is why we must endeavour by every means to learn this divine science, and not to undertake anything except by

its holy guidance. So, at the beginning of our actions especially the most important, let us kneel before the Son of God, adoring him as the author and end of faith, and as he who is the true light illumining every man who comes into this world and the Father of all light.

6. Baptism is a new creation. O.C. 11: 18.

Baptism is called in holy scripture regeneration and rebirth---by the water of new birth". "If a man be born of water and the Holy Spirit . . ." (Tit. 111: 5) Qn. 111: 5). Generation and birth which have for exemplar and prototype, the generation and eternal birth of the Son of God in the bosom of the Father, and his generation and temporal birth in the virginal womb of his mother.

For as at his eternal generation his Father communicates to him his being, his life and all his divine perfections, so in our baptism, the Father gives us, through his Son, a being and a life completely holy and divine.

And as in the temporal generation of the Son of God, his Father gave him a new being and a new life, but a life which, although holy and divine, was nevertheless clothed with mortality, passibility and all the miseries of human life, so the new life which God gives us by baptism, is surrounded and assailed by fragility, weakness, mortality, and all the infirmities of human life with which it is joined.

Furthermore, as the Holy Spirit was sent to form the Son of God in the holy womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so he is sent to form and bring him to life in the centre of our soul, that we may be incorporated in and united with him, and also be born and live in him.

And as the three divine persons together co-operated by the same power and goodness in the marvellous work of the incarnation, so these same persons are present in our holy baptism, and work together to give us the new being and the new life in Jesus Christ which is there bestowed upon us.

SELECTED TEXTS

7. Baptism is a death and a resurrection. O.C. 11: 182.

Baptism is a death and a resurrection. It is a death, for, says St. Paul, "If one died for all, it follows that all are dead." (2 Cor. V: 4): ~that is to say, all those who are incorporated in him as his members by baptism. For being members of a head who is dead and crucified, we must be crucified and dead to the world, to sin and to self.

It is a resurrection, since by baptism we leave the death of sin to enter into the life of grace.

Baptism is a death and a resurrection which has for its exemplar the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His death, for "we have been baptised into the death of Jesus Christ", says St. Paul; --- we have been swallowed up in death with Jesus Christ by baptism"; his resurrection, "for as Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and has entered a new life, so we must live by a new life". (Rom. VI: 1) So much so that by baptism we are obliged to die to all in order to live with Jesus Christ a heavenly life, and like persons who are no longer of earth, but of heaven, and who have all their heart and their soul in heaven, in the words of the early Christians speaking by the mouth of St. Paul, ---our conversation is in heaven-, and according to the same apostle, "if you are risen with Jesus Christ,

seek and love the things that are above, and not those which are of earth". (Phil. III: 20; Col. III: L)

Finally, by baptism we are obliged to verify in ourselves the words "you are dead and your life is hidden in Jesus Christ with God". (Col. 111: 1) We must be dead to all that is not God in order to live only in God and with Jesus Christ. "Risen from the dead", says St. Paul (Rom. VI: 13), Eke persons brought to life who, in consequence, must lead on earth the life of heaven, that is to say, a holy life adorned with all the virtues, in a continual exercise of love, adoration, praise of God and charity towards our neighbour.

66 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

8. By baptism God allows us to enter into communion with himself. O.C. 11: 184.

God, by an incomprehensible mercy and goodness, has delivered us from the evil alliance which we had with Satan, whose children and members we were made by sin, and he has made us enter into a marvellous association with him: "You have been called to fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ his Son We preach to you that you yourselves may enter into companionship with us, and that our companionship may be with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1: 9; 1 In. 1: 1)

What is this companionship? It is the most noble, the most perfect that can be. For this is not an alliance merely of friend with friend, brother with brother, child with father, spouse with spouse, but members with their head, which is the most intimate and closest of all unions.

But what is much more is the fact that, although the natural and corporate union of the vine branch with the stock, and of the members of the human body with their head, is the closest of all unions which we can imagine in the realm of nature, nevertheless it is no more than a figure and shadow of the spiritual and supernatural union which we have with Jesus Christ in baptism.

For things corporal and natural are but the shadow and figure of spiritual and supernatural things. And besides that, the union of the branches with the stock of the vine, and of corporal members with their corporal head, is in accordance with the quality and low material nature of the things which are joined together. But the union of the members of Jesus Christ with their head is in accordance with the excellence and holy and divine nature of the things which it joins together; and in consequence, the more the divine head and these sanctified members are elevated above the natural head and its members, so much more

SELECTED TEXTS

67 -

alliance which Christians have with Jesus Christ infinitely excel the union between head and members of the human body.

There is more. The fellowship we contract with Jesus Christ in baptism, and through him with the eternal Father, is so high and so divine that it merits to be compared by Jesus Christ himself to the unity which is between the Father and the Son, in the words, "in order that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me; that they may be perfectly one." (Jn. VII: 22.) So the unity of the Father with the Son is the exemplar of the union which we have with God in holy baptism, and this same union is the living image of this adorable unity.

Further, what elevates and ennobles so marvellously the alliance which we have with God by baptism, is that it is founded and rooted, if we may so speak, in the precious blood of Jesus Christ,

and that it is made by the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit, who is the unity of the Father and the Son, (according to the words of the Church: In unitate Spiritus sancti) is himself the sacred bond of the association and union that we have with Jesus Christ, and through Jesus *Christ*, with the eternal Father, shown in these divine words, "that they may be perfectly one . . ." (Jn. VII: 23)

Thus we see that by baptism we are but one with Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ with God, in the highest and most perfect manner possible after the hypostatic union of the human nature with the eternal Word. O incomparable alliance! On our part we presented, gave and consecrated ourselves to God by the hands of our godparents; we promised him to renounce Satan and all his works, that is to say, all kinds of sin; and his pomps, that is to say, the world, and to cling to Jesus Christ. For according to the ancient form of baptism, the catechumen turns towards the west saying "I renounce you, Satan." Then turning towards the east he says "I adhere to you, O Jesus Christ." And the

68 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

same thing is done today in other but equivalent terms. So that is the promise we made to God in our baptism—a solemn promise made before the Church, a promise enshrined in a great sacrament, a promise so binding that no one can ever dispense us from it, a promise, written, says St. Augustine, by the hand of angels, and upon which we shall be judged at the hour of death.

9. 10. **The baptismal "character"**. O.C. 11: 226.

"The priest traces a cross on the forehead and breast of the baptised." This exterior character of Christ, which is the cross, signifies another interior character of the same Christ, which is impressed upon the soul by the sacrament of baptism in such a way that it can never be effaced. Being thus marked with his seal on the body and in the soul, you no longer belong to yourself, but you belong to this divine redeemer who ransomed you by the infinite price of his blood and his cross. "But you are Christ's" so you have no right to live except for Christ who gave his life for you by death on the cross, according to the words of his great apostle: "Christ died for all, so that the living should live no more for themselves but for him who died and rose again for them." (Cor. VI: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 23; 2 Cor. V: 15.)

O.C. II: 231.

"After the baptism properly so called, the priest anoints with holy chrism." That means that Christ has made you a sharer in some degree in his divine priesthood in order that you may offer him a perpetual sacrifice of praise and love, and that you may immolate yourself unceasingly and all that belongs to you, to the glory (>I his divine majesty. This is why Christianity is called by St. Peter "a royal priesthood" and why all Christians carry the quality of king and priest as it says in holy scripture: "Thou hast made us a royal priesthood for our God." (1 Pet. II: 8; Apoc. 1: 6; V: 10.)

111. Death and new life in Jesus Christ

11. Death to sin. O.C. 1: 173.

As we are obliged to continue on earth the holy and divine life of Jesus, so we must clothe ourselves with his thoughts and inclinations, according to the teaching of the apostle: "Have the mind of Christ Jesus", (Phil. 11: 5). Now Jesus Christ had such an abhorrence of sin, that he came down from heaven to earth, annihilated himself, taking the form of a servant, lived thirty-four years on earth a life full of labour, scorn, and suffering, poured out his blood even to the last drop, and died the most shameful and cruel of all deaths, all because of the hatred he has for sin and the intensity of his desire to destroy it in us.

We must continue in these sentiments, we must carry on the war which he began against sin while he was on earth.

12. Renouncement of the world. O.C. 1: 177.

It is not enough for a Christian to be free from vice and to hold every kind of sin in horror; over and above that, you must work attentively and vigorously to establish yourself in freedom from the world and the things of the world. I mean, by the world, the corrupt and disordered life that is led in the world, the evil spirit that reigns there, the feelings and perverse inclinations that are followed there, and the laws and pernicious maxims which govern there. I mean, by the things of the world, all that the world esteems, loves and seeks so much, that is, the honours and praise of men,

the vain *pleasures and* satisfactions, the riches and temporal goods, the friendships and affections which are founded on flesh and blood, on self love and self interest.

The world has always been and always will be in opposition to Jesus; it has always persecuted and crucified him, and will persecute and crucify him unceasingly till the end of time; and the reactions, inclinations, laws and maxims, the life and spirit of the world are so opposed to the reactions, inclinations, laws and maxims, and to the life and spirit of Jesus, that it is impossible for them to co-exist. For all the *feelings and* inclinations of Jesus only tend to the glory of his Father, and our sanctification, and the feelings and inclinations of the world tend but to sin and perdition.

The spirit of Jesus is a spirit of light and truth, of filial devotion, love and confidence, of zeal and reverence in regard to God and all the things of God; the spirit of the world is a spirit of error, of unbelief, darkness, blindness and defiance, of murmuring and impiety, irreverence and resistance to God and the things of God.

The spirit of Jesus is a spirit of humility, of modesty and self-distrust, of mortification and abnegation, of constancy and firmness. On the other hand, the spirit of the world is a spirit of pride and presumption, of disordered self love, of lightness and inconstancy.

The spirit of Jesus is a spirit of pity and charity, of *patience, sweetness* and union with the neighbour; the spirit of the world is a spirit of vengeance, envy, impatience and anger, of scandal and division.

If you desire to be really Christian, that is to say, if you *desire to* belong perfectly to Jesus Christ, to live by his life, to be animated by his spirit, and to conduct yourselves according to his teaching, it is necessary to embrace a state of entire renouncement and say an *eternal farewell* to the world. I am not saying that it is necessary to quit the world by shutting yourself up within four walls, unless God calls

SELECTED TEXTS

71 -

you to that; but you must try to live in the world as though not of the world, that is to say, you must make a public, *generous and constant* profession of not living the life of the world at all, and of not conducting yourself according to its spirit or its laws.

13. *Freedom from self. O.C. 1: 184.*

It is much to have renounced the world in the way we have just said, but still that does not suffice to secure the *perfect detachment* which is one of the deepest foundations of the Christian life, for Our Lord declared very clearly "that *whoever wished* to follow him must renounce himself", (Matt. *XVI: 24*) And therefore if we wish to be a follower of Jesus and belong to him, we must renounce ourselves, this is to say, our own ideas, our own *feelings, our will, desires and inclinations*, and our self-love which causes us to hate and avoid all that can bring pain and mortification to our mind and flesh, and to love and seek all that can bring pleasure and satisfaction.

Two reasons oblige us to this abnegation and renouncement of ourselves:

1. Because everything in us is so unruly and depraved on account of the corruption of sin, that there is nothing in us, of ourselves, that is not contrary to God, which does not hinder his plans, opposing itself to the love and glory that we owe him.
2. *Because Our Lord Jesus Christ* who is our head and *exemplar, and* in whom there is nothing which is not completely holy and divine, nevertheless lived in such renouncement of himself, and in such annihilation of his human spirit, of his own will and regard for self, that he *never did* anything according to his own desire or human spirit, but acted always by the Spirit of his Father. He *never followed* his own will but always the will of the Father.

72 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

If we are truly his members, we must enter into his thoughts and dispositions~ and make a strong resolution to live henceforth in a complete separation, forgetfulness and hatred of self.

For this purpose, take care often to adore Jesus in this disregard of self, and give yourself to him, begging him to detach you entirely from self, from your own way of thinking, from your own will and self love, to unite you perfectly to him and rule you in all things according to his spirit, his will, and his pure love.

At the commencement of your actions, raise your heart to him thus: "O Jesus I renounce with all my heart myself, my own thoughts, my own will and self love, and I give myself entirely to you, to your Holy Spirit and divine love; free me from myself and lead me according to your holy will."

On those occasions of disagreement which occur so often through diversity of opinion, although you may seem to have reason and truth on your side, nevertheless, always provided the glory of God is not at stake, renounce your own ideas to those of others with serenity.

When you feel a desire or inclination for something, annihilate it at once at the feet of Jesus, and protest to him that you do not wish to have any other will or inclination than his.

As soon as you perceive in yourself any tender emotion or affection for anything, at that very moment, turn your heart and your affections towards Jesus in this way: "O my dear Jesus, I give you all my heart and all my affections. O sole object of my love grant that I love nothing except in you and for you."

When there occur for you occasions of mortification for soul or body, or times when you are deprived of some happiness (which happens very frequently) embrace them willingly for the love of Our Lord, and bless him for giving you the

SELECTED TEXTS

73 -

opportunity of mortifying your self-love and of honouring the mortifications and privations that he endured on earth.

When you feel some joy or consolation, turn to him who is the source of all consolation and say to him: "O Jesus I wish for no other contentment than your holy contentment. Dear Lord, it is enough joy for me to know that you are God and that you are my God. Ah,, Jesus, be always Jesus, that is to say, be always full of glory, grandeur and joy and I shall be always content!>'

14. **Detachment even from God.** O.C. 1: 187.

The perfection of abnegation or Christian freedom, does not consist merely in detachment from the world and self, but it obliges us to be detached in a certain way, even from God. Do you not remember that our Saviour while still on earth, assured his apostles that it was expedient that he should leave them in order to go to the Father and send them the Holy Spirit? Why should that be unless they were attached to the consolation which the visible presence and companionship of his sacred humanity brought them? That was a hindrance to the coming of the Holy Spirit in them, so necessary is it to be detached from all things, holy and divine though they may be, in order to be moved by the spirit of Jesus which is the spirit of Christianity.

That is why I say that we must be detached even from God in a certain way, namely, from the sweetness and consolations which often accompany grace and the love of God, from holy plans which we make for the glory of God; from desires for greater perfection and love of God; and even from the desire we may have to be freed from the prison of this body in order to see God, to be united with him perfectly and to love him purely and continually. For when God in his goodness grants us sweetness in our devotions, we must be on our guard lest we rest in that and become attached to it; we must, rather, humble ourselves and

74 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

consider ourselves utterly unworthy of all consolation, being ready to be deprived of it and protesting to him that we desire to serve and love him, not for the consolation he gives in this world or the next, to those who love and serve him, but for love of him alone and to please him.

When we have done some good work or holy action for the glory of God, although we must do our utmost to complete it, nevertheless we must guard against being attached to it, so that if by chance we are obliged to interrupt or leave it, we do not lose our peace of mind, but rest content in the thought of the divine will or permission which directs all things, and is, in all, equally welcome.

In the same way, although we must do our utmost to vanquish our passions, our vices and imperfections, and to be practised in all kinds of virtue, nevertheless we must work without worry or obsession so that when we cannot feel in ourselves as much love and virtue as we would wish, yet we remain at peace and without disquiet, humbling ourselves because of the obstacles that we ourselves create, and loving our own abjection, contenting ourselves with whatever God wills to give us, persevering always in the desire to do better, and being confident that the goodness of Our Lord will give us the graces we need to serve him according to the perfection he asks of us.

Similarly, although we must be in a continual state of longing for the hour and the moment of our happy separation from earth, sin and imperfection, when we shall be united with God in pure love; and though we must co-operate fervently for the accomplishment of God's work in us, so that as soon as it is done he will call us to himself, nevertheless this desire must be without over-eagerness or disquietude. If it should please God that we wait many years for the sweetness of the beatific vision, let us rest content in his holy will, even if he wishes us to bear this bitter privation to the day of judgement.

SELECTED TEXTS

75 -

That then, is what I mean by detachment from God and what is the measure of the perfect freedom which all Christians must have from the world, themselves and all things.

15. Formation of Jesus in us. O.C. 1: 271.

The mystery of mysteries and the work of all works is the formation of Jesus within us, indicated by these words of St. Paul: "My little children, for whom I am in labour till Christ be formed in you . . ." (Gal. IV: 19.)

The greatest of all actions which the eternal Father does from all eternity, is to continually bring forth his Son in himself. And outside himself he did nothing more wonderful than when he formed him in the pure womb of the Virgin Mary at the moment of the incarnation. It is the most excellent work that the Son of man operated on earth, when he formed himself in his holy mother and in the eucharist. It is the most noble operation of the Holy Spirit, who formed him in the sacred womb of the Virgin. She, too, has never done, nor will ever do anything more worthy than when she co-operated in this divine and marvellous formation of Jesus in her. It is the greatest and holiest work of holy Church, and she renders no loftier service than when she brings him to earth in some wonderful way through the lips of her priests, in the divine eucharist, and forms him in the hearts of her children, having no other end in any of her actions, but to bring forth Jesus in the souls of all Christians.

This must be our desire too, our care and our principal occupation, to form Jesus in us, that is to say, to allow him to reign and live in us, as also his spirit, his devotion, his virtues, his feelings, his inclinations and dispositions. That is the end to which all our religious exercises must tend. It is the work that God put into our hands at which we must labour continually.

76 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

Two very powerful motives urge us to work vigorously

at the accomplishment of this:

1. In order that the plan and intense desire the eternal Father has of seeing his Son living and

reigning in us may be accomplished. He loves this beloved Son so much, that he wishes to see only him in all things, and does not wish to contemplate, rejoice in, or love, anyone or anything else.

2. In order that Jesus, being formed and established in us, may there love and glorify worthily his eternal Father and himself, according to those words of St. Peter "so that in all that you do, God may be glorified by Jesus Christ". (1 Pet. IV: 11.) He alone is capable of worthily loving and glorifying his eternal Father and himself.

16. **How to form Jesus in us.** O.C. 1: 273.

We have four things to do in order to form Jesus in us.

1. We must take care to perceive him in all things, and have no other object in all our prayers and actions, than him and his states, mysteries, virtues and actions. For he is everything in all things; he is the essence of things which are, the life of living things, the beauty of lovely things, the strength of powerful things, the wisdom of the learned, the virtue of the good, the holiness of the saints. And we can scarcely do any action which he has not, in some way, done on earth, so that we must look at and imitate him in doing our own. By this means we shall grow in our understanding of Christ and we shall form him and establish him in our minds, by thinking often of him and discerning him in everything.

2. We must form Jesus not only in our mind by thinking of him and seeing him in all things, but also we must form him in our hearts by frequently making use of his divine love.

SELECTED TEXTS

77 -

3. We must form Jesus by an annihilation of self and of everything in us. For if we desire Jesus to live and reign perfectly in us, we must annihilate and put to death all creatures in our minds and hearts, and neither see them nor love them any more in themselves, but only in Jesus, and Jesus in them.

It is necessary also to work at the annihilation of ourselves, that is to say, our opinions, our own will, self-love, pride and vanity, our inclinations and perverse habits, the desires and instincts of depraved nature, and all that is of self.

4. But because this great work of forming Jesus in us immeasurably surpasses our strength, we must often pray the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints to help us by their prayers. Let us yield ourselves to the power of the eternal Father and to the love and ardent zeal he has for his Son, begging him to annihilate us entirely, and make his Son live and reign in us.

Let us offer ourselves also to the Holy Spirit for the same intention, praying to him in the same way.

Let us annihilate ourselves often at the feet of Jesus, begging him by the great love with which he annihilated himself, to use his power for this purpose and to establish himself in us.

17. **A beautiful prayer.** O.C. III: 287.

Christ Jesus was made, by God, our salvation, our justification and our sanctification. He died for us in order that the living might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and rose again in their name.

~ We desire, Lord Jesus
O That you reign over us.

Let us pray: Destroy totally in us, O God full of power and goodness, whatever is opposed to you.

78 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

Put forth your strength and take possession of our hearts and bodies, so as to establish perfectly there, the reign of your love. Through Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

18. "**Come, Lord Jesus . . .**" O.C. L 439.

Come, Lord Jesus, come, and reign fully in me: love and glorify yourself worthily, accomplish the designs of your goodness, perfect the work of your grace, and establish in me forever the kingdom of your glory and pure love.

Veni, Domine Jesu, veni in plenitudine virtutis tuae, in sanctitate Spiritus tui, in perfectione mysteriorum tuorum, et in puritate viarum tuarum. Veni, Domine Jesu!

Come, Lord Jesus, come to me in the fullness of your strength: destroy what displeases you and achieve in me what you desire for your glory.

Come, in the sanctity of your Holy Spirit: free me entirely from all that is not you, unite me perfectly with you, and guide me in holiness in all I do.

Come in the perfection of your mysteries: through them, work fully in me all that you desire, govern me according to their spirit and grace, glorify, accomplish and consummate them in me.

Come in the purity of your ways: fulfil in me, at whatever cost and without in any way sparing me, all the plans of your pure love, and lead me along the straight paths of love without allowing me to stray to the right or the left, or to give way to the inclinations and feelings of corrupt nature and of self-love.

Come, Lord Jesus!

IV. To continue the virtues of Jesus Christ

19. **The Christian virtues.** O.C. 1: 205.

Since we must accomplish and continue the holy life which Jesus had on earth, we must also continue and accomplish the virtues he practised there. There are some people who esteem virtue, who desire and seek it, employing all their care and trouble to acquire it, nevertheless, there are very few who possess true and solid Christian virtue. One of the principal reasons is that they walk in the paths of virtue, not so much in the spirit of Christianity, as in the spirit of pagan philosophers, heretics and politicians . . .

Would you like to see the difference between the two spirits in the practice of virtue?

1. Those who seek virtue after the fashion of the pagan philosophers, heretics or politicians, look at it simply from a human point of view, esteeming it as an excellent thing in itself, quite conformable to reason and necessary for the perfection of man, to distinguish him from the beasts.
2. They are sure they can acquire it by their own efforts, by dint of care, vigilance, meditation, resolutions and practices. Here they are quite mistaken, not understanding that it is impossible for us to make the least act of Christian virtue without divine grace.
3. They love virtue and strive to acquire it not so much for God and his glory as for themselves, for their own merit,

interest and satisfaction, and to become more outstanding and accomplished.

On the contrary, those who act in the spirit and grace of

Jesus Christ:

1. Regard virtue not only in itself but in its principle and source, that is to say, in Jesus Christ, who is the source of all grace, who possesses pre-eminently and in sovereign degree every kind of virtue, and in whom virtue is infinitely excellent;
2. Know well that they cannot exercise the least act of virtue by themselves; that, on the contrary, if God should leave them alone, they would fall at once into an abyss of every kind of vice; and that, virtue being the gift of the pure mercy of God, they must ask it of him, with confidence and perseverance;
3. Desire virtue, not for themselves, not for their own interest, satisfaction and reward, but for the good pleasure of God, and to be like their head who is Jesus Christ; to glorify him and to continue the exercise of the virtues he practised on earth; it is in this that Christian virtue properly consists. Christian humility is a continuation of the humility of Jesus Christ; Christian charity is a continuation of the charity of Jesus Christ, and so with all the virtues.

20. **An example.** O.C. III: 296.

Let us adore Jesus in his obedience, so exact, so prompt

and so perfect that he was obedient even to the death of the cross. Let us thank him for the honour that he gave his Father by this virtue. Let us ask his pardon for faults committed against it. Let us give ourselves to him to enter into his spirit of obedience, and beg him to annihilate our own will, and to make the divine will live and reign in us by our perfect obedience.

SELECTED TEXTS

81 -

For this, let us implore the assistance of the Mother of God, the angels and the saints.

21. Humility and confidence. O.C. 1: 214. a

If you have a real and perfect intention of living in a Christian manner, one of the greatest and most essential aims you must have is to deliberately ground yourself in Christian humility. For there is no virtue more essential and important than this. It is the ore that our Saviour recommends to us with the greatest insistence in these divine words, which we must often go over with love and respect in our minds and with our lips: "Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart and you shall find rest for your souls." (Mt. XI: 29.) It is this virtue which St- Paul calls par excellence the virtue of Jesus Christ. It is the virtue which is proper and special to Christians, without which it is impossible to be really Christian.

It is this virtue, joined to holy love, which makes saints great saints. For the true measure of sanctity is humility.

22. Humility of mind. O.C. 1: 215.

There are two kinds of humility-humility of mind and humility of heart, which together, make the perfection of Christian humility.

Humility of mind is a profound acknowledgement of what we really are in the eyes of God. For in order to know ourselves well, we must consider not what we appear to be in the eyes and mistaken judgement of men, or in our own vanity and presumption of mind, but what we are in the judgement of God. And to do this we must see ourselves in the light and truth of God with the eyes of faith.

Now if we consider ourselves in this heavenly light and with these divine eyes, we shall see that we have no way to salvation except to renounce Adam and all that we hold from

82 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

him, ourselves, our mind and strength, to give ourselves to Jesus Christ and enter into his mind and his virtue. "We cannot be free of the servitude of sin if he does not deliver us from it; without him we can do nothing at all; and after we have done all we can, we must say with truth that we are unprofitable servants. . . We are not sufficient of ourselves to do anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, and we cannot even pronounce the name of Jesus save by his Spirit." (In. VIII: 33 and XV: 5; Lk. XVII: 10; 2 Cor. III: 5.) This proceeds not only from the nothingness of the creature, which is nothing of itself and can do nothing, but from the subjection that we have to sin, because we were born of Adam who indeed engendered us but in his state of condemnation. He has given us nature and life, but in the power and captivity of sin, such as he had himself after the fall.

If you wish to please God and serve him perfectly, study with great earnestness this divine

science of the knowledge of yourselves. Be convinced of the truths considered above, pondering on them often before God and praying Our Lord every day to imprint them upon your very soul.

Realise, nevertheless, that although as man, child of Adam and sinner, you are such as I have described, at the same time, in as much as you are a child of God and member of Jesus Christ, if you are in his grace, you have within you a being and a life that is noble and sublime, and you possess a treasure that is infinitely rich and precious. Note too, that although humility of mind leads you to know what you are in yourself and in Adam, yet it should not hide from you what you are in and through Jesus Christ, and it does not oblige you to ignore the graces which God has given you through his Son—otherwise it would be a false

but rather to recognise that all the good you have is from the very great mercy of God, without any merit on your part. That is the true meaning of humility of mind.

SELECTED TEXTS

83 -

23. Humility of heart. O.C, 1: 221.

It is not enough to have humility of mind which makes us know our own misery and unworthiness; we must learn from our divine doctor, Jesus, to be humble, not only in mind but also in heart.

Humility of heart consists in loving our abasement and abjection, in being glad to be little and despised, to treat ourselves as such; to be glad to be esteemed and treated as such by others; not to excuse or justify ourselves without serious necessity; never to complain of anyone, remembering that as we have the source of all evil in ourselves, so we are worthy of every kind of reproach and ill treatment; to love and willingly embrace scorn, humiliations, disgrace and anything which can abase us.

Further humility of heart consists not only in loving humiliations, but also in hating and holding in abomination all grandeur and vanity, according to the divine word uttered by the sacred lips of the Son of God, which I ask you, to consider and engrave deeply on your mind: "What is great before men is an abomination in the sight of God." (Lk. XVI: 15) I have said all grandeur, for it does not suffice to condemn temporal grandeur, and to hold in horror the vanity and esteem of human praise, but still more, we must have a horror of that vanity which can proceed from spiritual things.

In fine, true humility of heart which Our Lord Jesus Christ wishes us to learn from him, and which is perfect Christian humility, consists in being humble as Jesus Christ was on earth, that is to say, being ready to wish to be treated not only as a sinner merits, but to bear all the ignominies and insults that are due to sin, since our head who is Jesus, the saint of saints and sanctity itself, bore them, and we merit them, being nothing but sin and malediction of ourselves.

84 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

24. Confidence. O.C. L 233.

Humility is the mother of confidence; for seeing that we are denuded of all good, of all virtue and of all power and capacity to serve God, and that we are a veritable hell full of every horror, we can find no support in ourselves but must go out of ourselves and our misery, and take refuge in Jesus, our paradise, where we will find in abundance all that is lacking in us. We must lean upon him

and confide in him as the one who has been given us by the eternal Father for our redemption, our justice, our virtue, our sanctification, our treasure, our strength, our life and our all. That is what he is leading us to when he invites us so lovingly and strongly to go to him with confidence, saying "Come to me all you who labour and are heavy burdened and I will refresh you", and relieve you of your weight of misery, assuring us that he will not reject any one of those who come to him. (Mt. XI: 28; Jn. VI: 37.)

To encourage us further in this holy confidence, our gentle and loving Saviour takes~ with reference to us, the most beautiful and lovable names that could possibly be. For he calls himself, and is so really, our friend, our advocate, our physician, our shepherd, our brother, our father, our soul, our spirit and the spouse of our souls; and he calls us his flock, his brothers, his children, his portion, his heritage, his soul, his heart, and our souls his spouses.

He assures us in many places in holy scripture that he has a care of us and a continual vigilance in our regard; that he carries us and will carry us always himself in his bosom, in his heart, in the depths of his being. And elsewhere, that while there might be a mother who could forget the child she had carried in her womb, he himself would never forget us. (1 Pet. V: 7; Is. XLVI: 3; XLIX: IS.) If we have offended him, he promises us that going back to him with humility, repentance, confidence in his goodness, and the resolution

SELECTED TEXTS

85 -

to give up sin, he will receive us, he will embrace us, he will forget all our sins, and we shall be clothed with the robe of his grace and his love, which we had lost through our own fault. (Lk. XV:22; Ez. XVIII: 21.)

Finally, confidence is a gift of God which follows humility and love. That is why you must ask it of God and he will give it to you. Try to do all your actions in the spirit of humility and love and you will soon taste the sweetness and peace which accompany the virtue of confidence.

25. **Acts of love of Jesus.** O.C. 1: 3835.

Among the duties and exercises of a truly Christian soul, the most noble, the most holy, the most exalted, and the one which God asks especially of us, is the exercise of divine love. That is why you must take great care in all your prayers and other actions to assure Our Lord Jesus Christ that you wish to do them, not for fear of hell, nor for the recompense of paradise, nor for merit, nor for your satisfaction and consolation, but for love of him, for his good pleasure, for his sole glory and for his pure love ...

Alas, it is true, I know it well, my Saviour, that this heart, so wretched and imperfect, is not worthy to love you; but you are very worthy to be loved and you created this poor heart only to love you; you even commanded it under pain of death, yes, eternal death, to love you. Ah, God of my heart, there is no need of commandment; that is what I wish, Lord, that is what I desire; it is what my heart longs for. Yes, my Jesus I wish ardently to love you. Yes, my Jesus, I would have no other thought, no other inclination, no other wish! I want only one thing, I want nothing else but to love Jesus.

86 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

O desire of my soul, please hear my prayer. Listen to the sigh of my heart and have pity on me. O Lord, you know well what I ask of you; my heart has said it so often. I ask nothing else but the perfection of your holy love. I desire nothing more than to love you and grow ever more and more in

this desire.

O divine love be the life of my life, the soul of my soul and the heart of my heart. May I live no longer except in you and from you. May I exist no longer save through you. May I have no thought, no word, no action, that is not by you and for you.

O eternal beauty, O endless goodness, if I had an eternity of life on earth, I ought to spend it all in loving you. How much then am I Obligated so to spend the little time that remains to me. O my Lord, I consecrate it wholly to your love. Grant that I may live only to love you, and that no moment of my life may pass that is not employed for your love! To die or to love! But above all, grant that I may love you for all eternity. Come what may, from now on I unite myself to all the love that will be given to you throughout eternity.

O Lord my God, how overflowing is your goodness to me, and how wonderful your love! You love me, you want me, you seek me with as much care and ardour as if I were really necessary to you. You want to possess me so much and fear to lose me as though in possessing or losing me you possessed or lost some great treasure. You seek my friendship with as much insistence as if your happiness depended on it.

SELECTED TEXTS 87 -

I wish, if it please you, that all my thoughts, words and actions, all the movements of my body and all the powers of my soul, my every breath, the beating of my heart, the pulsations of my veins, every moment of my life; that all the things that have been and will be in me and even my sins, in so far as that is possible by the power of your wisdom and your goodness, (which knows well how to make all things, even sin, work together for the good of those who love you); I wish, I say, that all these things might be so many voices by which I might cry to you continually and eternally, with all the love of heaven and earth: "I love you, I love you, yes, my Lord Jesus, I love you."

Mother of Jesus, angels of Jesus, holy men and women of Jesus, every creature of Jesus, have compassion on my sorrows; speak for me to the well-beloved of my soul; tell him that I pine for love Of him. Tell him that I want nothing in time or eternity but his pure love; not heaven, not the glories of heaven, not the grandeurs of paradise, not the sweetness of his grace, but only his most pure love. Tell him that I can no longer live without this pure love. Tell him that he may hasten to accomplish in me the designs and work of his grace, and to consume me wholly with his divine love in order to transport me soon to the eternal kingdom of this same love. Amen. Come Lord Jesus!

O Jesus, you are all love in every moment, state and mystery of your life; but above all, you are nothing but love and sweetness at the moment of your birth and in the state of your holy infancy. May I love you in this moment and in this state!

88 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

May heaven and earth love you with me and may the whole world be transformed in love for its creator and its God. who is completely transformed in sweetness and love towards his creatures.

O love of Jesus which triumphs in Jesus in all his states and mysteries, but especially in the state of his infancy and in the mystery of his cross, and which in these two mysteries leads in triumph his omnipotence in powerlessness, his plenitude in poverty, his sovereignty in dependence, his eternal wisdom in infancy, his joy and beatitude in suffering, and his life in death. Triumph in me, that is to say, over my self-love, over my self-will and my passions, and place me in a state of

powerlessness, poverty, dependence, of holy and divine childhood, and of death to the world and to self, thus adoring and glorifying the weakness, the dependence, the infancy and death to which you have reduced Jesus in the mystery of his birth and cross.

26. Submission to the divine will. O.C. 1: 245.

The continual submission which we must have to the holy will of God is the most all-embracing virtue, and should be the most commonly in use, for every moment presents occasions of renouncing our own will to submit to the will of God.

Jesus Christ Our Lord made profession from the first moment of his life and entrance into the world, of never doing his own will but always that of the Father according to the authentic witness of St. Paul writing to the Hebrews, "Jesus entering into the world said (speaking to the eternal Father), 'Behold I come; at the head of the book it is written of me that I should do your will, O God!'; and according to what he said of himself, "I came from heaven not to do my

SELECTED TEXTS

89 -

own will, but the will of him who sent me." (Heb. X: 5; in. VI: 38.) So, he never did it. Although his will was holy, divine and adorable, nevertheless he left it and annihilated it in order to follow that of his Father, saying to him incessantly in all things what he said on the eve of his death in the Garden of Olives: "Father, not my will but thine be done!" (Lk. 22:42)

If we consider that God ordains and arranges all that happens in the world, and that he disposes all things for his glory and our greater good, and that he is very just and lovable, we shall not attribute the things that happen to chance or hazard, or to the malice of the devil or men, but to the ordinance of God. And we shall love and gladly embrace it, in the conviction that it is all holy, all merciful, and that it will ordain nothing that is not for our greater good and for the greater glory of God, which we must love above all things, since we are in the world solely to love and procure his glory.

Not only did Jesus Christ Our Lord do perfectly the will of his Father and submit himself to him and to all things for love of him, but he also placed in that his whole contentment, pleasure and joy. "My food is to do the will of him who sent me", (M. IV: 34) that is to say, I have nothing more desirable, nothing more delightful, than to do the will of my Father. For in fact, he took infinite pleasure in all he did because it was his Father's will. He put his soul's joy and happiness into the sufferings he bore because it was his Father's pleasure. For this reason the Holy Spirit, speaking of the day of his passion and death, called it: "the day of the joy of his heart". (Cant. III: 2) Similarly, in all the events that happened and would happen in the world, he found peace and contentment of soul as he saw in all things only the beloved will of his Father.

So, as Christians who must be clothed with the sentiments and dispositions of their head, we must not only submit our

90 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

selves to God and to all things for the love of God, but we must put our whole contentment, our happiness and our very heaven in that ... It is the prayer we make every day to God: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

I am not saying that you should have a natural contentment and joy in all that you do and

suffer, and in all that happens in the world; that belongs only to the blessed! But I speak here of the joy and contentment of mind and will that you can easily have *through the* grace of God, since you have only to say: "My God, I wish, if it pleases you, for love of you, to place all my pleasure in willing, doing, suffering whatever may come, because it is your will and good pleasure."

And by this means you will have a contentment of mind and will in all things. Moreover, this practice repeated several times, will lessen and destroy the pain and natural repugnance *which you* will feel in certain things~ and will help you to find sweetness and contentment even in the senses, where formerly you found only bitterness and pain.

27. The divine will. O.C. X: 522.

Letter to Sister Mary of the Nativity Herson.

Rome, 7th January, 1660. My very dear Sister,

May the divine will be our guide in all things.

It is true that the months are sometimes long, and longer than I think, but not longer than I wish; for by the mercy of my Lord, it seems to me that I wish for nothing, neither in this world nor the next, except for one thing only, which is to leave myself wholly in the gentle hold of the most adorable will of God, in order that it may lead me wherever he pleases, and that it may do with me in every place and circumstance whatever shall seem best to him. That is why I am not able to tell you yet when I shall be returning to Caen; I know, however, according to the grace of Our Lord,

SELECTED TEXTS

91 -

it will be when I would wish, but I do not know yet when I would wish it, that is to say, I do not know when God would wish it.

You describe your interior life very well, my dear Sister; I have nothing else to say to you about it except that you must not be upset about your poverty and misery, but remain at peace, in humility, patience, submission and abandonment to the divine will, in obedience and trust towards your superior, in fidelity to the observance of your Rule.

28. The divine will. O.C. X: 537.

Letter to Sister Mary of the Assumption Taillefer.

Paris, 1660. I thank you a thousand times, my dear daughter, and all our very dear sisters, for your kind remembrance and sincere cordiality. I assure you that I never forget you before God, and I carry you every day, all, and each one in particular to the holy altar.

If I followed my own inclinations, I assure you I would be at Caen to talk to you sometimes of the incomparable goodness of our kind and adorable Saviour, rather than being here running the streets of Paris. May God keep us always from doing our own will and give us the grace to understand that we have no other business in this world than to do in all things and everywhere, his will, *corde magno et animo volenti!* O what joy to know that that is our only business and that all the powers of earth and hell are not only impotent to hinder us one single moment from doing this unique work, if with the grace of God, we so will, but the more they strive to prevent us, the more they help us to do it.

29. **Fraternal charity.** O.C. 1: 257.

Love of God and of neighbour are inseparable; they are not two loves but one and the same, and we must love our

92 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

neighbour with the same heart and the same love which we have for God, because we must love him, not in himself nor for himself, but in God and for God; or rather, it is God we must love in our neighbour.

That is the way Jesus loves us; he loves us in his Father and for his Father, or rather, he loves his Father in us and he wishes that we love one another as he loves us.---This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.---(M. XV: 11)

This is the essence of Christian charity, to love each other as Christ loves us. Now he loves us so much that he gives us all that he has--all his treasures, even himself, and he uses all his powers and all the resources of his wisdom and his goodness for us. His charity towards us is so limitless that he bears our faults with sweetness and patience, He is the first to seek us when we have offended him.

To encourage yourself to act like that, see your neighbour in God and God in him; that is, see him as one who has come from the heart and goodness of God, who is a participation of God, and who is created to return to him, He will be received one day into the bosom of God to glorify him eternally, and in him God will be in fact eternally glorified, either by his mercy or his justice. See your neighbour as one whom God loves in whatever state he may be; for God loves all that he has created, even the devils, in as much as they are his creatures, and he hates nothing that he has made; it is only sin, which he has not made, that he holds in horror. Look on your neighbour as one who has sprung from the same source as yourself, who is a child of the same Father, created for the same end, belonging to the same Lord, redeemed at the same price, the precious blood of Jesus Christ; one who is a member of the same head, Jesus, and of the same body, the Church of Jesus; who is nourished by the same food, that is to say, the precious body and blood

SELECTED TEXTS

93 -

of Christ; one with whom, in consequence, you must have but one spirit and soul and heart.

Oh, if we considered and weighed well the importance of these truths, what charity, what respect and honour we would show to one another! What fear we would have of offending against unity and Christian charity, whether by thought, word or deed! What would we not do and suffer for one another! With what charity and patience would we not put up with one another, and excuse all faults! With what sweetness, modesty and reserve would we not converse with one another! What care would we not take to "content one another and to please and edify all with well doing!" (Rom. XV: 2.)

In the services that you render one another and in all that you do for your neighbour, whether from necessity or charity, raise your heart to Jesus and speak to him thus: "O Jesus, I wish to do this action in honour of and in union with the charity you have for this person, and for love of you whom I desire to see and serve in this person."

When out of necessity you give some rest, nourishment or refreshment to your body, do it with this sort of intention, looking upon your life, your health and your body, not as your own, but as members of Jesus, as it says in sacred scripture, and as something belonging to Jesus according to

the divine words:---The body is for the Lord" which, consequently, you must take care of, not for yourself but for Jesus, as much as necessary for his service.

When you greet or do honour to anyone, greet and honour him as the temple of God, his image, and a member of Jesus Christ.

When you feel some repugnance or aversion or envy towards another, take care from the beginning to renounce it firmly, to annihilate it at the feet of Our Lord, praying him that he will annihilate it himself and fill you with his divine charity. Force yourself also to speak to your neighbour and

94 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

do exterior acts of charity, and do not cease to do this until you have overcome completely in yourself, this feeling of aversion and repugnance.

30. Paraphrase of St. Paul. O.C. IX: 218.

-Charity is patient and there is no kind of pain or obstacle that can make it complain. It is full of sweetness, and despite any injury done to it, it never thinks of vengeance. Charity envies no one. It is not malicious or hasty, or insolent in action. It opens no door to vanity; ambition never blinds it. Self interest never rules it; it is aware, rather, of its neighbour. Nothing can embitter it; nothing can make it angry. It never thinks of doing evil. When anyone commits a fault, it never rejoices; on the contrary, it takes great pleasure in the good it sees done. Charity bears all the burdens placed upon it without sinking beneath their weight. It believes what is said, not through weakness, but through a holy simplicity. If a neighbour does not amend, it hopes serenely that he will do so, and in that hope, there is nothing it will not put up with from him.

V. To continue the prayer of Jesus Christ

31. **Prayer.** O.C. 1: 191.

The exercise of prayer ought to rank among the principal foundations of Christian life and holiness, because the whole life of Jesus Christ was a perpetual prayer which we must continue and express in Our life. This exercise is so important and so absolutely essential, that the earth which carries us, the air we breathe, the bread which sustains us, the heart which beats in our breast are not more necessary to man for human survival than prayer is for a Christian to live as a Christian.

32. **Mental prayer.** O.C. 1: 194.

There are many ways of praying but I will mention five.

The first is called mental or interior prayer, in which the soul converses interiorly with God, taking for its subject one of the divine perfections, or some mystery, virtue or word of the Son of God, or something he did, or still does in the order of glory, grace or nature, in his holy Mother, the saints, the Church or the world. It first uses the understanding to consider, with a gentle and firm attention of the mind, the truths to be found in the subject capable of exciting love of God or hatred of sin. Then it leads the heart and will to produce acts and desires of adoration, love, praise, humility, contrition, oblation and resolution to fly from evil and to do good, and such thoughts as the Spirit of God suggests.

This manner of prayer is so holy, so useful and full of blessings, that it is beyond words to explain. That is why, if God attracts you to it and gives you the grace for it, you must certainly thank him for it because it is a great gift. If he has not yet given you this great grace pray for it and, on your side, do all you can to correspond with his grace and to exercise yourself in this holy action. God will teach it to you better than all the books and all the doctors in the world, if you throw yourself at his feet with humility, confidence and purity of heart, as I shall now tell you.

33. **Vocal prayer.** O.C. 1: 195.

The second manner of prayer is called vocal, like the divine office or the rosary, or any other such prayer. And this is almost as useful as the preceding, provided that the tongue is one with the heart, that is to say, that in speaking to God with the tongue, you talk to him also with the heart and mind. For in this fashion your prayer will be at the same time both vocal and mental. But if you accustom yourself to many vocal prayers by routine and without thought, you will leave God's presence more dissipated, colder, and more lacking in love than you were before. That is why, except for prayers of obligation, I advise you to use this form seldom and then do it well, with great attention and application to God, occupying your mind and heart with a few holy thoughts and affections, while your tongue speaks. Remember that you must continue the prayer which Jesus made on earth, giving yourself to him for this purpose, uniting yourself to the love, humility, purity and holiness, and to the perfect attention with which he prayed, begging him to fill you with the holy dispositions and intentions with which he made his own prayer.

34. TO do all actions in a ~t of prayer. O.C. 1: 196.

The third manner of prayer is to do all your actions, even the smallest, in a holy and Christian way, offering them to

SELECTED TEXTS

97 -

Our Lord when you begin them, and from time to time raising your heart to him while doing them.

35. Spiritual reading. O.C. 1: 196.

The fourth manner of prayer is by reading good books, reading them not in haste nor thoughtlessly, but deliberately and with application of the mind to what is read, stopping to consider, ruminate, weigh and taste the truths that touch you most, in order to print them upon your mind and to draw from them various acts and affections, as has been said for mental prayer. This exercise is very important and produces in the soul the same effects as mental prayer.

But be careful, when you begin to read, to give your mind and heart to Our Lord, and entreat him to give you the grace to gather from it the fruit he asks of you and to operate in your soul what he desires for his glory.

36. Speaking of God. O.C. 1: 97.

It is also a most useful and holy custom, and one which usually inflames hearts with divine love, to speak sometimes informally together of God and divine things. That is how Christians should spend part of their time, that should be their ordinary conversation, it is in that they should find their refreshment and joy.

It is what the prince of the apostles exhorted us to do when he said---If anyone speaks, let his words be as the words of God." (1, Pet. IV.)

37. To begin our actions with Jesus. O.C. 1: 97.

Jesus, only Son of God, only Son of Mary, being as his apostle says "the origin and crown of faith" and of Christian piety, and as he himself said, being the---Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end of all things" (Heb. XII: 2; Apos. XXII: 13), it is right that he should be the beginning and the end of all our life, all our years, all

98 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

our months, all our weeks~ all our days and of all our exercises. That is why, as we ought to have consecrated to him the beginning of our life if we had had the use of reason at that time, and as we wish to end it in his grace and in loving him, so, if we desire to obtain this favour from his goodness, we must take care to consecrate to him, by an exercise of devotion and love, the beginning and the end of each year, each month, each week, and especially of each day. It is a matter of very great importance to begin and finish each day well, but particularly to begin it well, filling our mind each morning with some good thought and offering our first actions to Our Lord because on that depends the blessing of the rest of the day.

That is why as soon as you awake in the morning, you should lift your eyes to heaven and your

heart to Jesus, and so consecrate to him the first use of your senses and the first thoughts and affections of your mind and heart.

38. In daily life. O.C. 1: 442.

It is very important -and I cannot stress it strongly enough-that everybody, not only religious but all Christians, of whatever state or condition they may be, should know that they are obliged, because they are Christians and members of Jesus Christ, to live the life of their head. This means a completely holy life, doing all their actions, great and small, in a Christian manner. What does Christian mean? It means doing all in a holy and divine way Christ did, that is to say in Christ and for Christ.

For him, in as much as the actions belong to him, for all that is in the members belong to the head. In him, that is to say, in his spirit, according to his dispositions and intentions, because the members must follow and imitate their head; they must not be moved except by his spirit and they must never have intentions or dispositions other than his.

SELECTED TEXTS

99 -

This is very important because the greater part of our life consists of small actions like eating and drinking, sleeping, reading, writing, talking, and so on, by which if we take care to do them well, we shall render great glory to God and advance much in the ways of his love. Our negligence, however, deprives God of the glory which we ought to give him, and so we lose the graces which he would have given us.

That is why St. Paul exhorts us that, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, no matter how small or indifferent it may be, we should do all for the glory of God and in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. What does it mean to do our actions in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ? It is to do them in the spirit of Jesus Christ, or, to put it another way, with the dispositions and intentions with which Jesus Christ did the same actions while he was on earth, and with which he would still do them if he were in our place.

Take care then at the beginning of your actions, at least the important ones, to raise your heart to Jesus and declare to him:

1. That you renounce yourself, your vanity, your own spirit; that means, all your own dispositions and intentions.
2. That you give yourself to him, to his holy love and divine spirit, and that you want to do your actions with the dispositions and intentions with which he did his own.

39. Example: leisure. O.C. 1: 447.

O Jesus, I offer you this recreation in honour of and in union with the holy recreations and divine rejoicings which you had during your mortal life with your eternal Father, with your Holy Spirit, with your mother and with your angels and saints. For you, speaking of yourself, said this: "I rejoiced each day as I played before him all the while: played on earth, for my delights were to be with the children of men." (Prov. VIII: 30.) And your

gospel recounts that you rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and you commanded your apostles to rest after labour.

40. Journeys.

O Jesus, may all my travels, all my comings and goings, my every step, give glory to the various journeyings, the comings and goings, and all the steps you took on earth.

O Jesus, may the use of my eyes, my mouth, my hands, my feet, and all my inward and outward senses, pay homage to the use you made of your divine eyes, your sacred mouth, your blessed hands, your holy feet, and all your inward and outward senses.

I have proposed to you these little practices, to point out the path you must take to walk always before God and to live in the spirit of Jesus. This same spirit will teach you many others if you care to give yourself to him at the beginning of your actions. For I ask you to note well that the practice of practices, the secret of secrets, the devotion of devotions, is not to be attached to any single practice or particular devotion, but to take great care in all your exercises and actions, to give yourself to the Holy Spirit of Jesus, and to do this with humility, trust and detachment from all things in order that, finding you without attachment to your own spirit, to your own devotions and dispositions, he has full power and liberty to act in you according to his desires, to put into you such dispositions and devout feelings as he wishes, and to lead you along paths that are pleasing to him.

41. Mary in Christian prayer. O.C. 1: 337.

Devotion to the most holy mother of God is so agreeable to her Son, and is so much to be recommended, so familiar to all true Christians, that it is not necessary to

SELECTED TEXTS

101 -

recommend it to those who desire to live in a Christian way, as do those to whom I address this book.

I would only say that we must never separate what God has united so perfectly. Jesus and Mary are so closely bound up that whoever sees Jesus sees Mary, whoever loves Jesus loves Mary, whoever has devotion to Jesus has devotion to Mary.

Since we must continue the virtues and possess *the sentiments* of Jesus we must also have the love, and filial devotion which Jesus had towards his most holy *mother*.

In order to honour *her* as God asks and *she desires*, we have *three things* to do:

1. We must *see* and adore her Son in her and *see and adore nothing else but* him. For it is thus that she wishes to be honoured, *because of herself* and by herself she is nothing, but her Son Jesus Christ is *everything in* her; he *is her* being, *her life*, her holiness, her glory, her power, her greatness.

2. We must recognise and honour her as *the Mother of God* and as our *mother and queen*. We must thank her for all the love, glory and *service she gave* her Son Jesus Christ Our Lord. After God, we must submit our life and being to her. We must depend on her and beg her to take care of all our affairs. Let her dispose of us as she pleases for the glory of her Son; may she make use of all our

actions to honour those of her Son; may she associate us with all the love and praise which she has always given and will give him for all eternity.

3. We can and we ought to honour this glorious virgin in our thoughts, *reflecting on* the holiness of her life and the *perfection of* her virtues; in our words, taking joy in speaking of her *excellence and* listening to her praises; in our actions, Offering *her ours* in honour of, and in union with, *her own*; by imitation, trying to copy *her* virtues, especially her humility, charity, pure love,

102 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

detachment to all things, and her ineffable purity, the thought of which should give us a burning desire to fly from and to fear, with a horror stronger than death, the smallest thing contrary to purity in thought or word or deed.

42. **A typical prayer.** O.C. III: 296.

Let us adore Jesus in the great love he always had, and that he will have eternally, for his most lovable mother. Let us thank him for all the effects of his love for her, and for having given her to us as our mother. Let us ask pardon for all our ingratitude towards him and towards her. Let us give ourselves to him in order to understand his love for such a mother, and his zeal for her honour; and let us beg him to share them with us. Let us offer ourselves to this mother of love, declaring that we wish to serve her, to love and honour her, and to make her served, loved and honoured in every possible way, through the grace of her Son.

VI. To continue the sacrifice of Jesus Christ

43. Jesus, high priest. O.C. III: 293.

Let us adore Jesus on his cross as the sovereign high priest who immolates himself, and as a sacred victim who is immolated for the glory of his Father and for our salvation. Let us thank him both for having shared with us the two qualities of priest and victim. Let us ask his pardon for all the faults we have committed in our priestly functions. Let us give ourselves to him and beg that he will give us the spirit of his divine priesthood; that he will make us worthy of being such victims as may be sacrificed with him; that he will draw us into his sacrifice; that he will immolate us with him to the glory of his Father, and that he will consume us in the sacred flames of his holy love.

44. Participation of the laity In the Mass. O.C. 1: 459.

What is necessary to assist worthily at the holy sacrifice of the Mass;

1. As soon as you leave the house to go to Mass, you must meditate on the thought that you are going, not only to assist at or to look on, but that really you are going to do the most holy and divine action which is done in heaven as well as on earth. So this must be done with holy and divine dispositions and with great care and application of mind and heart, befitting a matter of greater consequence than anything else in the world. I have said: "you are going to do" for all Christians being one with

Jesus Christ, and therefore being sharers in his divine priesthood, (for which reason they are called priests in holy scripture) have the right not only to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, but also to do with the priest what he does, that is to say, to offer with him and even with Jesus Christ, the sacrifice which is offered to God on the altar.

2. On entering the church you must humble yourself profoundly, esteeming yourself to be unworthy to go into the house of God, to appear before his face and to participate in so great a mystery, which comprises in itself all the mysteries and all the marvels of heaven and earth.

3. After having adored Our Lord Jesus Christ, who comes on the altar in order to receive from us the homage and adoration which we owe him, and after having prayed that, as he changes the poor and earthly substance of the bread and wine into his body and blood, so may he change and transform the sluggishness, coldness and dryness of our and earthbound hearts into the flaming love, tenderness and power of the holy affections and dispositions of his heavenly and divine heart. You must remind yourselves that Christians, being united with Jesus Christ as members of their head, and Jesus Christ being in this sacrifice both priest and victim together, so in the same way all those who assist at it must share as priests or sacrificers, in order to offer with Jesus Christ, the sovereign priest the same sacrifice that he offers there. They must share also as victims, which form but one host, as they are but one priest, with Jesus Christ, and are to be immolated and sacrificed with him to the glory of God.

And because it is necessary that the victim which is to be sacrificed must be slain, then be consumed in the fire, pray that you may die to yourself, that is to say, to your

passions, to your self love and to all that displeases him! Pray that you may be consumed in the sacred fire of his divine love, and that he may make you such that, henceforth, all your life may be a perpetual sacrifice of praise, of glory and of love towards the Father and towards him. 4. Lastly, having thanked God for the graces he has granted you in the holy Mass, go away with the firm resolution to use the day fruitfully in his service, and with the thought that you must be a victim, at the same time dead and living; dead to all that is not God, living in God and for God, completely consecrated and sacrificed to the pure love and glory of God.

45. **Martyrdom.** O.C. 1: 284.

Martyrdom is the height, the perfection and the consummation of the Christian life. There is no greater miracle that God works in Christians than the grace of martyrdom. It is the grandest, most marvellous thing that Christians can do for God—to suffer martyrdom for him. It is the most signal favour that Jesus Christ does to those whom he specially loves, to make them like himself in their life and death, to make them worthy of dying for him as he dies for his Father and them. It is in the holy martyrs that he more especially shows the marvellous power of his divine love; and among all the saints it is the martyrs for God who are the most to be admired.

Oh, the extraordinary love and goodness of Jesus for his holy martyrs! Oh, how happy are they who perfectly mirror your holy life and most loving death!

To use the words of the Holy Spirit, it is the final and perfect consummation of all holiness since man can do nothing greater for his God than to sacrifice for him what is most dear, that is to say, his blood and his life, and so die for him. (Cf. Jn. XV: 11) It is in this that true and perfect martyrdom consists.

All Christians, whatever their condition and estate, must

be prepared at any time to suffer martyrdom for Christ Our Lord; and they are obliged to live in the disposition and spirit of martyrdom.

We made profession in baptism of adherence to Jesus Christ, of following and imitating him, and consequently of being victims consecrated and sacrificed to his glory. This obliges us to follow and imitate him in his death as well as in his life and to be always ready to sacrifice to him our life and all that is ours according to these words: "We are delivered to death every day for love of you, and are esteemed as sheep for the slaughter . . ." (Ps. XL111: 22.)

46. **The spirit of martyrdom.** O.C. 1: 296.

What is the spirit of martyrdom? It is a spirit which has five wonderful qualities:

1. It is a spirit of strength and constancy which cannot be shaken or vanquished by either promises or threats, by either gentleness or rigour, but which fears only God and sin.
2. It is a spirit of profound humility which holds in horror the vanity and glory of the world, and which loves contempt and humiliation.

3. It is a spirit of distrust of self and of very great confidence in Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the one who is our strength, in whom we can do all things.

4. It is a perfect spirit of freedom from the world and from all that is of the world. For those who must sacrifice their life to God must also sacrifice everything else to him.

5. It is a spirit of ardent love towards Our Lord Jesus Christ, which leads those who are moved by this spirit, to do all and to suffer all for the love of him who has done all and suffered all for them.

SELECTED TEXTS

107-

47. **The vow of martyrdom.** O.C. XII: 136.

Vow -- Jesus, Mary

O my most beloved Jesus, I adore and glorify you infinitely in the bloody martyrdom you suffered in your passion and on your cross.

I adore and bless you to the utmost of my power, in that state of host and victim in the blessed sacrament of the altar, where you are continually sacrificed for the glory of your Father and for love of me.

I honour and revere you in the grievous martyrdom which your holy mother underwent at the foot of the cross,

I praise and magnify you in the various martyrdoms of your saints when they endured so many and such atrocious torments for love of you.

I adore and bless all the thoughts, plans and infinite love which you had from all eternity for all the blessed martyrs who have ever been since the beginning, and who will be to the end of the world in your holy Church.

I adore and revere in every way I can, the immense desire and burning thirst you have to suffer and to die to the end of time in your members, in order to accomplish the mystery of your holy passion, and to glorify your Father by way of suffering and death to the end of the world.

In honour of and in homage to all these things, and in union with that supreme love by which you offered Yourself to your Father from the moment of your incarnation as host and victim, in order to be immolated for his glory and for love of us in the very painful martyrdom of the cross; in union too with all the love of your holy mother and of

JOHN EUDES

108-

all your holy martyrs, I offer and give myself, I vow and consecrate myself to you, O Jesus my Lord, in the state of host and victim, to suffer in my body and in my soul according to your good pleasure and with the help of your grace, every sort of pain and torment even to the shedding of my blood and the sacrifice of my life, in whatever manner it may please you; and this for your glory alone and most pure love.

O good Jesus, receive and accept this my vow and this my sacrifice which I make to you of my being and my life, as homage to and through the merits of that most divine sacrifice which you made of

yourself to your Father upon the cross. Look upon me henceforth, as a host and victim dedicated to be entirely immolated to the glory of your holy name. Grant that through your great mercy, all my life may be a perpetual sacrifice of love and praise for you. May I live a life which is spent in imitation and honour of your holy life, and that of your blessed mother and your holy martyrs. May I never pass a single day without suffering something for your love, and may I die a death conformable to your holy death.

O Mother of Jesus, queen of all the martyrs, O holy martyrs of Jesus, please beg this same Jesus that of his infinite goodness, he may work these things in me for his glory alone and his most pure love. Offer him this vow of mine, and ask him to confirm and accomplish it by virtue of his precious blood, as I am going to sign it in my own blood, as a witness to the desire I have of shedding it even to the last drop for love of him.

Given at the Oratory of Jesus at Caen,
25th March, 1637 - Jean Eudes.

SELECTED TEXTS

109 -

48. Mary, perfect model of a Christian life. O.C. 1: 432.

O Jesus, only Son of God, only Son of Mary, I contemplate and adore you as living and reigning in your most holy mother, the one who is all and does all in her, For, if according to the apostle's teaching -you are all and do all in all things" (1 Cor. XII: 6, Eph. 1: 23) you surely are all and do all in your most holy mother. You are her life, her heart, her soul, her mind, her treasure. You are in her, sanctifying her on earth and glorifying her in heaven. You are in her, operating there greater things and giving yourself greater glory in her and through her, than from all the other beings in heaven and earth. You are in her, clothing her with your qualities and perfection, with your inclinations and dispositions, imprinting there a most perfect image of yourself in all your states, mysteries and virtues, and making her so like yourself that whoever sees Jesus sees Mary, and whoever sees Mary sees Jesus. Blessed are you, O Jesus, for all you are and for all you do in your holy mother!

O Mother of Jesus, I honour and admire you in the holy and wonderful life that you have in Jesus your Son, a life adorned with every kind of virtue and perfection; a life, one single moment of which is dearer to God than all the lives of angels and men; a life which gives God more honour and glory than all other lives put together in heaven and earth; a life which is none other than the life of your Son Jesus Christ, a life which he is communicating to you in a unique and ineffable manner. May you be blessed, O holy virgin, for all the honour you gave your well-beloved Son throughout your whole life. I offer you my whole life, O mother of life and grace, and I consecrate it utterly in honour of yours and beg your Son Jesus, God of life and love, with all my heart, that in his great goodness he will make of my entire life a continual and eternal homage to his most holy life and yours.

VII. Sanctity of the Christian priesthood

49. The priesthood and the mystery of the Holy Trinity. O.C. 111: 442.

O most holy and adorable trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, kneeling before you with all the humility and devotion of heaven and earth, I adore you in all that you are in yourself, and in all your works, especially in your Church and in the divine priesthood that you have established there for your glory and our salvation.

You are, O my God, the origin and source of all the dignity, power and holiness of the Christian priesthood; for it is from you that all good comes. You are the goal of all its functions, for they have no other end than the honour which is due to your divine majesty.

You are the consecration, the benediction and the sanctification of all the priests and levites of your Church; it is by the choice and special summons of your adorable will that they are chosen and called to so high a dignity; it is by a communication of your wonderful paternity, O holy Father, that they are made the fathers of the children of light; it is by a participation in your divine priesthood, O Jesus, only Son of God, that they are the immolators of the most high; it is by a special outpouring of your infinite sanctity, O divine Spirit, that they are the sanctifiers of souls; it is in them and by them, O king of heaven, that you make yourself visible on earth, and that you manifest there works

SELECTED TEXTS

111-

which belong only to an infinite power and goodness; in fine, you are their portion, their treasure and their glory on earth and in heaven.

I adore you, I praise and glorify you, O most august trinity, in all these things, and in all that you are for them, and the holy order to which you have called them. May all the creatures of the universe bless you with me, O divine Father, for having willed to establish this holy order in your Church, of which you are the source and creator, your Son Jesus being the institutor and head, and your Holy Spirit the director and sanctifier; and also for having willed to establish, augment and sanctify your Church by this same order.

50-51. "The holy order of the priesthood of Jesus"

O.C. 111: 3.

To all the holy bishops, priests and levites who are in the Church Triumphant.

Great saints who have been chosen from all eternity by the saint of saints, to be clothed in an outstanding way with his wonderful sanctity; blessed pastors, priests and levites, who have been elected from a thousand others by the sovereign pastor and by the high priest, Jesus, to share in his pre-eminent quality as great pastor of souls, and in the most sublime dignity of his divine priesthood, prostrate at your feet and with all possible humility and respect, I salute and honour you in every way I can and ought according to God. You are my masters, my fathers, you are brilliant stars shining in the Church, true shepherds of the holy flock of Christ, oracles of the eternal Word . . . the adornment and glory of the eternal priesthood. You are pastors and patrons of the greatest, the most worthy, the most admirable of all orders of heaven and earth, the holy order of the divine and royal priesthood of Jesus, who is its institutor, founder and head.

I revere you as living and perfect likenesses of our sovereign priest Jesus Christ, only Son of God, with whom you form together but one priest, clothed with the same priesthood that his eternal Father gave him, and one with him as members are with their head.

To all the bishops and priests in the ecclesiastical state.

My honoured Fathers and dear Brothers,

After having knelt at the feet of all the holy bishops and priests who are in the Church triumphant, to pay them my respects and to consecrate to them this little work, allow me to address myself to you now, and to tell you especially what the prince of pastors and of priests, St. Peter, said in general to all Christians: «But as for you, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people God means to have for himself; in order that you may proclaim the exploits of the God who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.» (1 Pet. 11: 9.) After the most holy virgin, you are the most glorious conquest of the Saviour, and the most precious of all the gifts that his eternal Father has made him. You are the first and best fruit of his labours, the most worthy prize of his blood, his principal and most notable portion, his dearest treasure and most rich inheritance, the one from which he claims to draw more fruit for the glory of his Father, than from all his other possessions. And so he has chosen you, in order that you might serve him and love him yourselves, but also that you may make him loved and served by others, and it is for this that you should announce to all men the virtues, that is to say, the perfections and excellencies, the mysteries and marvels of him who has called you out of the darkness of sin and hell to his wonderful light. For he who said, speaking of himself: «I am the light of the world», says also to you "You are the light of the world; and to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven", (Jn. VIII:

SELECTED TEXTS

12; Mt. V: 14; Mt. XIII: 11) and to manifest them to others. It is to you that the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God are open, as well as those of grace and mercy, so that you may be dispensers of both one and the other. You are of the royal and divine blood of Jesus Christ only begotten Son of God; you share his descent; you are his brothers and his members, and that in a degree more eminent than other Christians, for you are clothed with his royal priesthood, and your priesthood is but one with his, and you are but one priest with the high priest. So much so that as there is only one priesthood in the Christian religion: *Unum est sacerdotium* (which is originally and sovereignly in Jesus Christ, and by extension and communication in other priests) so to be accurate, there is only one priest, who is Jesus Christ, our high priest.

To which of the angels has God ever said: "You are and will be eternally, a priest according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. CIX: 4) that is to say according to the order of my Son Jesus Christ? To which of the archangels or principalities or powers, did the Son of God say: "All that you bind in earth shall be bound in heaven, and all that you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?" (Mt. XVI: 19.) To which of the cherubim or seraphim did he give power to blot out sin, to communicate grace, to close hell, to open heaven, to form himself in the hearts of men in the holy eucharist, to offer him in sacrifice to the eternal Father, and to give his body, blood and soul to the faithful? Finally, to which of all the celestial beings did he say what he says to priests: "I send you as my Father has sent me" (Jn. XX: 21) that is to say, I send you for the same reason for which my Father sent me; to announce the same gospel that I have announced; to dispense the same mysteries and the same graces that I have dispensed; to act and administer the same sacraments that I have instituted; to offer to God the same sacrifice that I offered to him; to disperse the darkness of

hell which covers the face of the earth; to spread there the light of heaven, to destroy there the tyranny of Satan, to establish there the reign of God and, in short, to exercise on earth the same sacerdotal functions that I exercised there, and to continue and accomplish the work of the redemption of the world, and to continue as well the same life that I led and the same virtues that I practised there.

You are the most noble part of the mystical body of the Son of God. You are the eyes, the mouth, the tongue and the heart of the Church of Jesus; to put it better, you are the eyes, the mouth, the tongue and the heart of Jesus himself.

You are his eyes; for it is by you that this good shepherd watches continually over his flock; it is by you that he enlightens them and leads them; it is by you that he mourns those of his sheep who are in the grip of the infernal wolf, and that he sheds tears over the death of his dear Lazarus, that is to say, souls dead because of sin.

You are his mouth and his tongue: for it is by you that he speaks to men, and that he continues to announce to them the same words and the same gospel that he preached to them himself when on earth.

You are his heart: for it is by you that he gives true life, the life of grace on earth and the life of glory in to all real members of his body. Oh, what marvels!

You have a wonderful alliance with the three eternal persons; you are the associates of the Most Holy Trinity; you are the coadjutors and the co-operators of the all powerful God in his greatest works: *Dei adiutores, cooperatores veritatis*. (1 Cor. 11: 9; Jn. 8)

You are the sacrificers of the most high, the sanctifiers of souls, the mediators between God and man, the judges of nations and the saviours of the world, whom the great Saviour left here below in his place, to continue and to accomplish the work of the redemption of the universe. And

SELECTED TEXTS

115-

so he wished that you should bear the name of saviours in the scriptures. For it is of priests, and especially the first ones, that mention is made in these words of the prophet Abdias; «Those who must save the people shall go up the mountain of Sion» (Abdias 21); and Clement of Alexandria makes no difficulty in giving them the role of redeemers (cf. Hosea).

So you are other Christs living and walking on the earth, since you bear the most beautiful and holy name of the Son of God, the name of Jesus and Saviour, you represent his person, you hold his place; you are clothed with his royalty, with his priesthood, with his authority and his other divine perfections; you act in his name and on his behalf; you are employed in his greatest works and you have to continue the life he led on earth, and all the sacerdotal functions that he exercised.

V111. Mission of the priest

52. Mediator, judge and saviour with Jesus Christ. O.C. III: 187.

There are three principal qualities which Our Lord Jesus Christ communicates to priests and especially to pastors:

1. They are mediators between God and men to announce to them his divine will, to call, attract, and reconcile men to God, in order to render him all the homage, adoration, praise and satisfaction which they owe to him; to treat between God and man the most lofty and important affairs in heaven or earth, which concern his glory, the salvation of the world, and the completion of the sufferings of his Son by their application to souls.

2. They are judges of the world with the Son of God; judges not of earthly and temporal things, which are only dust and smoke, but of heavenly and eternal things: judges not of the body only, but of souls; judges who pass not a temporary judgement, but one which is permanent and will last for all eternity; judges at whose feet all the judges of high courts, kings and monarchs, are obliged to bend the knee, to submit themselves to their power and to yield to their judgement.

3. They are saviours of the world with Jesus Christ and they carry that name in the sacred scriptures. For the Son of God associates them with him in this beautiful work; he wants them to co-operate with him in the salvation of souls. He wishes that they fulfil the office of saviours and that they continue and complete on earth, the greatest and most divine of all his works which

SELECTED TEXTS

117 -

is the work of the redemption of the world: "I send you as my Father has sent me." (Jn. XX: 21.)

It is in this work that Our Lord Jesus employed every moment of his time, every thought, word, and action, all his works, toil, energy, tears, blood and life. It is also to this work that priests, and above all those who are pastors, must give their whole heart, their mind, their thoughts, their affections, all their time, their goods, all their strength and ten thousand lives if they had them, in order to be able to say with St. Paul "For my part I will gladly spend and be spent on your souls' behalf." (2 Cor. XII: 15.)

Priests hold the noblest and most worthy place in the mystical body of Jesus, which is his Church, that is to say, the place of the head and the heart, since all priests together form only one priest with Jesus Christ who is the head and heart of his Church: and in consequence they are obliged to do all their actions the more nobly and perfectly, as the heart functions more *excellently than* the other members of the body.

53. "Thus Jesus has loved souls . . .!"*

All the mysteries in which our Saviour partook on earth for the salvation of the world, his incarnation, his birth, his circumcision, his presentation in the temple, his flight and stay in Egypt, his infancy, his hidden and laborious life, his life of solitude and penance, his life of communication with men, his passion, his death, all his thoughts, all his words, all his actions, all his sufferings, all the ignominies he bore, the wounds he received, all the pain he endured, every drop of blood he shed, and all the love with which he did and suffered everything; all these things I say, are so many voices crying: "It is thus that Jesus loved souls." It is thus that he esteems them and loves them

better than anything *else*. *It* is true that he loves them more than his own ease, more than his reputation, more than his human

118 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

interests, more than his life-blood, more than his very life. That is why he leaves everything, despoils himself of everything, gives everything, does everything and suffers everything to save them. That is why for thirty-three years he stripped himself of the infinite glory and happiness due to him from the moment of his incarnation, in order to make them glorious and happy for ever.

O my Saviour, who could say, who could possibly imagine the great love you have for souls? O my Jesus, since you love souls so much, one can say " v with truth that there are no people in the world so dear to you as those who cooperate with you in their salvation. It is upon these people that you pour n profusion.on and without reserve, every kind of favour and blessing.

54. Advice to preachers. O.C. IV: 21.

After having considered attentively the greatness and importance of this action, adore Our ~Lord Jesus Christ in the holy dispositions with which he preached while on earth; renounce self firmly; give yourself to him whole- heartedly, begging him to annihilate you and take possession of you so that it may be he who preaches by your mouth, the more so since it is he alone who may rightfully announce,, the Word of his Father; and accept f~r love of him, all the confusion and humiliations that may corn- your way; also surrender your memory to the Father, your hearing to the Son, and your will to the Holy Spirit.

Offer the hearts of the hearers to the divine goodness and pray him to enable them to listen as they should to his holy Word. Offer them also for the same purpose to the Blessed Virgin, to the angels and to the patron saints of the place where you preach,

Kneeling in the pulpit humble yourself again and to abase yourself in the depths of your own nothingness, call upon him to whom alone it belongs to preach, in some such words

SELECTED TEXTS

119 -

as these:---Come, Lord Jesus, come! Come to annihilate me in this place so that you alone may be here and may preach your divine word. Come into the hearts of all here to dispose them to do whatever you desire of them . . ."

Making the Sign of the Cross with the words: ---In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", say them with great attention and give yourself from the depths of your heart to the eternal Father, to enter into that boundless love with which he spoke to us in his Son; to the Son of God to enter into the infinite charity with which he announced to us the Word of his Father; and to Holy Spirit to unite yourself to the zeal, devotion and all the holy dispositions with which he has spoken by the mouth of so many holy preachers. Offer your listeners also to the love of the Father, to the charity of the Son, and to the bounty of the Holy Spirit.

Say the "Hail Mary" clearly, calmly, and with great devotion.

In preaching, try to preserve a spirit of recollection and devotion, considering and savouring the truths that you announce. When you speak against sinners think that you are reproving yourself.

55-58. **"John Eudes, missionary priest** O.C. X: 385.

To Richard Le Mesle and Thomas Vigeon.

Inviting them to come and make their promise of incorporation.

Lion-sur-Mer, 23rd September, 1646. I call upon you to come here and accomplish your sacrifice perfectly, to dwell with your brethren who love you tenderly and long to live and die with you. For you know that no one who looks behind him when once he has put his hand to the plough, can inherit the kingdom of heaven. Comethen, my beloved brothers, in the name of the Lord and his most holy mother, and be faithful to him who calls you;

120 - ST. JOHN EUDES

come without delay that we may share together the rest of our life in the service of our goodmaster, and win for him the souls that he has redeemed at the price of his blood.

To the staff of the college of Lisieux.

Recommendations regarding their work and conduct.

Caen, 15th October, 1657. May Jesus, the most holy heart of Mary, be your heart, your spirit and your strength in the work which you undertake, and in the task you are beginning for the love of him in the diocese of Lisieux. A most important occupation. It is the work of God and of Jesus Christ since it is work for the salvation of souls! It is the work of the Mother of God, of the apostles and the greatest saints! It is a mission of very great consequence to which the Son of God, sovereign missionary, sends you and says to you: ---I send you as my Father sent me." (Jn. XX: 21.)

Your mission is to children in whom you are to lay the foundations of the kingdom of God, and in whom there are, generally, far fewer obstacles to divine grace than in older persons.

It is to children who belong to God by baptism, who have cost the blood of the Son of God, and who are created to see the face of God, to possess him and bless him eternally. It is to children so dear to their heavenly Father, that he has given to each one of them ? prince from his court to hold the place of guardian and in some degree, of servant: "All the angels, are they not spirits who hold the place of servants and ministers, being sent to exercise their ministry in favour of those who must inherit salvation." (Heb. 1: 14.) Lastly, it is to children for whom our good Jesus had so much love and tenderness, and of whom he said, "Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. XIX: 14.)

SELECTED TEXTS

121 -

Weigh seriously all these truths, my dear brothers; they will lead you to thank God for the very great grace he has given you of using you in so holy a mission, and to courageously seek all the opportunities you can to do good.

To M. Blouet tie Camilly at Paris.

Vasteville, 23rd July, 1659. My very dear Brother,

I could not tell you all the blessings God has given to this mission; certainly they are prodigious!

For a long time I have not been preaching in the church, for although it is very big, it is nevertheless, too small for my need. I can truthfully say that on Sundays we have 15,000 people.

There are twelve confessors but without exaggeration, we could easily do with fifty. People come from eight to ten leagues, and their hearts are so touched that we see only tears and hear only groans from the poor penitents. The fruits the confessors observe in the confessional are wonderful. But what troubles us is that we are not able to confess even a quarter of them. We are overwhelmed. The missionaries see some who have been eight days waiting without being able to go to confession; they throw themselves everywhere on their knees when they meet them, begging them with tears and clasped hands to hear them. Yet it is six weeks since we came.

O what great good these missions do! How necessary they are! O what a great evil is done by putting obstacles in their way! If those who have hindered us from giving many in this diocese only knew what they have done! "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Lk. XXIII.)

My dear brother, let us pray the Lord of the harvest that he may send workers, and let us say to him often with all our hearts: "O Lord of the harvest, send workmen into the harvest." (Lk. X: 2)
What are so many doctors and

122 -

ST. JOHN EUDES

graduates doing in Paris while souls are perishing in their thousands for want of people who will stretch out a hand to draw them from perdition and preserve them from eternal fire? Indeed, if I am right in this, I should go after them to Paris crying out in the Sorbonne and other colleges: "Fire! Fire! Hell fire which swallows up the universe! Come, you doctors, and all you men with degrees, come priests, and all ecclesiastics, help to put it out!"

Obedience given to M. Sesseval for the foreign missions.

John Eudes, missionary priest, Superior of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, to all whom these letters concern, greeting.

Our well beloved brother, Peter Sesseval, a missionary priest Of our Congregation, has informed us that, having heard that innumerable souls in the kingdom of China and other neighbouring lands, are being lost for want of evangelical workers who might lend a hand to draw them from perdition and set, them on the road to salvation, he ardently desires to join with several other ecclesiastics preparing to set out for these regions. But because he does not wish to do anything without the perfection of complete obedience to the superiors God has given him, he asked us to look favourably on this plan, and give it our approval, consent and permission.

We, after having carefully recommended the matter to God, and after having consulted several senior members of our Congregation, wishing to co-operate in so holy a work, for which we would willingly sacrifice, with the help of divine grace, a hundred thousand Eves if we had them, we consent and do so very gladly in this letter, that the said Sesseval may accomplish his holy and laudable desire, because we know his piety, prudence, capability and many other virtues and good qualities which God has given him.

Yes, dear brother, it is with all our heart that we approve

the holy enterprise which you undertake for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Go, then, in the name of the Holy Trinity to make it known and adored in those places where it is neither known nor adored.

Go in the name of Jesus Christ, only Son of God, to apply to souls the fruit of the precious blood he poured out for them.

Go under the protection and safe keeping of holy Mary, to imprint upon hearts the respect and veneration which are her due, and under the patronage of blessed St. Joseph and St. Gabriel, of your good angel and the saintly apostles of the places to which you go, to work with them in saving lost and abandoned souls.

Go in the name and on behalf of our little Congregation, to do in China and the other places where providence will bring you, what it would wish to do in the whole universe, with the shedding of the blood of its members to the last drop, to destroy there the tyranny of Satan and establish the kingdom of God.

But remember that this work being wholly apostolic, you must have a very pure intention to seek only the glory of God, a profound humility and distrust of yourself, a great confidence in his infinite goodness, an entire submission to his adorable will and to that of the prelates who will take his place for you; invincible patience too in the midst of your labours, with ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, and sincere cordiality towards other ecclesiastics, especially for the religious of the Society of Jesus, with whom we pray you very earnestly to live always in perfect union and understanding, Meditate often on these virtues, be fervent in asking them from God, and try to practise them faithfully. May the divine goodness give them to you in perfection, with all the other graces so necessary for you to carry out his most holy will perfectly, and to behave everywhere as a true

124-

ST. JOHN EUDES

missionary of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, and as a true child of their most lovable heart.

May our adorable Jesus and holy Mary give their holy blessing on this enterprise; may it remain always with you and may it precede, accompany and follow you everywhere and on all occasions.

It is with this wish that we pronounce over you in the name of Jesus and Mary, and in the sacred love of their most charitable heart, these precious words of holy Church: "May the Blessed Virgin with her divine child bless you."

59. **A liturgical prayer.**

O God, glory of your priests, you have given us your Son as sovereign priest and vigilant shepherd of our souls.

You have united with him in order to sacrifice to yourself a pure victim, the holy priests and levites.

Through the prayer of blessed Mary ever a virgin, and of the holy priests and levites, deign to rekindle in your Church the generous spirit which animated them; filled with this spirit, we shall try to love what they loved and to act as they taught us by word and example. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

1X. The heart of Mary

60. The mystical body took birth in the heart of Mary. O.C. VI: 144.

The third picture of the most noble heart of the queen of heaven, is expressed in these holy words: "God our king brought about salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. LXXIII: 12).

What is this precious earth? It is the blessed virgin, of whom the first earth, considered in the state in which God created it and in which it existed before the evil of sin, is a foreshadowing or sketch although imperfect.

It is this earth of which the Holy Spirit speaks when he says "Let the earth open and bud forth a saviour." (Is. XLV: 8.)

It is this earth in the midst of which "God worked our salvation", or according to another version, "In the midst . . . in the heart of this earth", that is to say, in the heart and in the womb of this incomparable virgin. Yes, it is in the midst of this earth, or better still, in this good, this very good heart of Mary, mother of Jesus (Lk. VIII: 15) that the uncreated and eternal Word, leaving the bosom of his Father to come and save mankind here below, was received and carefully cherished; where "the wheat of the elect" (Zac. IX: 17) was sown abundantly, and produced its fruit a hundredfold and a thousand times a hundredfold.

It is what was declared in the divine prophecy of the Holy Spirit which holds several great and wonderful mysteries: "A handful of grain scattered on the high mountain tops shall grow to such rich fulfilment that in the wind's moving

breath its waving harvest shall seem like the verdant woods of Lebanon.- (Ps. LXXL 16)

For I ask you, what is this grain scattered by the handful, unless it be the only Son of God, the true corn of the elect, the bread of God who is the life and the strength of the heart of man (Ps. CIII: 15), that the Father eternal has sown and sows plentifully every day, when he gave it with such love in the mystery of the incarnation, and continues to give it to us with such great bounty *in* the holy eucharist? What are these "high mountain tops" unless his most holy mother?

Now it is on these divine mountain tops, it is in the bountiful heart of Mary who is so good, that this adorable grain was sown and developed in the first place, since she received him into her heart before she received him into her womb. From there it spread throughout the whole universe, by the moving breath of apostolic preachers animated by the Holy Spirit, and is infinitely increased in the hearts of all true Christians.

In this manner one can say with truth that Jesus is the fruit, not only of the womb, but also of the heart of Mary; as also are all the faithful the fruit of this same heart. For, as the faith, humility, purity, love and charity of her heart made her worthy to be the mother of the Son of God, so these virtues made her the mother of all the children of God. And as the eternal Father gave her the power, clothing her with his own divine power by *which* he gives birth to his Son from all eternity in his own adorable bosom: "The power of the most high shall overshadow you" (U. 1: 35), power, I say, to conceive this Son both in her heart and in her virginal womb, so he gave her power at the same time to form him and to make him grow in the hearts of the children of Adam, and to make them by this

means members of Jesus Christ, and Children of God. And as she conceived and carried, and will carry for ever, her Son Jesus Christ in

SELECTED TEXTS

127-

her heart, so she conceived, bore and will eternally bear all the holy members of our divine head as her well beloved children, and as the fruit of her maternal heart, of which she makes a continual oblation and a perpetual sacrifice to the divine majesty.

Thus it is that this "good earth" fructified the grain of wheat *which fell* into it, and there died and was, as it were, annihilated, in order to be alone no longer, but to bring forth a great harvest. Thus it is that this very holy heart has produced its fruit a hundred thousand times a hundredfold. Thus it is that the king of kings and the God of gods wrought the work of our salvation "in the midst of the earth".

61. In the heart of Mary we meet Jesus. O.C. VI: 168, 187.

The fourth picture of the holy heart of the most blessed virgin, is that marvellous fountain which God caused to spring up from the earth at the beginning of the world, of which mention is made in the second chapter of Genesis: ---A fountain sprang up from the earth, which watered the whole surface thereof." (Gen. 11: 6.)

I find in your holy gospel, O my Jesus, that one day while, as man, you were living in this world, you were going on foot from town to town and from village to village, to bring the people your Father's divine word. Being wearied and worn by travelling the roads, you sat down near a fountain called the Well of Jacob. There you met a poor woman drawing water from the well and you took the opportunity of teaching her; and between several holy instructions which you gave her, you told her that you had the water of life to give, and it was such, that those who drank of it would never thirst again; never thirst, that is, for those polluted waters which the world gives to those who follow it.

I find also, in another place in the gospel that, your infinite goodness towards men kindling in your heart a bound

128-

ST. JOHN EUDES

less desire to give them all this living water, you were one day in the temple in Jerusalem, in the middle of a great crowd, crying aloud:---If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and let him drink." (M. VII: 37.)

What you did then, my God, you do always. For I see you, not at the Well of Jacob, but at this divine fountain of *which I s~* and I hear you cry out insistently, "If anyone thirsts, let him drink."-- -Come to me all you who are burdened, wearied and thirsty in the roads of the world, full of toil and misery; and come to me here, at the fountain, not of Jacob, but of the heart of my most worthy mother; there you will find me, for I have established there my dwelling place for ever. It is I who have made this beautiful fountain, and with much more love for my children than the one I made at the beginning of the world for the sons of Adam.

I made it for you; I filled it with infinite riches for you; I am there for you; I am there to uncover and distribute for you the immense treasures I have hidden in it. I am there to refresh you, to strengthen you and to give you new life by its vivifying, overflowing waters. I am there to feed you with milk and honey and to inebriate you with the wine which flows from it. Come then to me!"

For a long time, my Saviour, you have cried out thus, but there are few who listen to your voice. If the world does not listen to the master, it will not hear the servant. No matter. Allow me to cry with you so that the servant may imitate his master.

Oh, who will give me a voice strong enough to be heard in the four corners of the universe, and to shout in the ears of all men -You who are thirsty, come and drink of the beautiful, lifegiving waters of our miraculous fountain; and even you who have no money, hasten nevertheless, come and buy, without money, wine and milk from the fountain." (Ls. LV: L)

SELECTED TEXTS

129-

Hurry! What are you waiting for? Why do you delay a a single moment? Are you afraid of wronging the unparalleled bounty of the heart of Jesus, your God and your redeemer, if you address yourselves to the charity of his mother's heart? But do you not know that the mother is nothing and has nothing and can do nothing except from Jesus and by Jesus and in Jesus; and that it is Jesus who is everything and can do everything and does everything in her? Do you not know that it is Jesus who has made the heart of Mary what it is, and who wished to make it a fountain of light, of consolation and of every kind of grace for all those who turn to her in their need? Do you not know that not only is Jesus dwelling continually in the heart of Mary, but that he is himself the heart of Mary, the heart of her heart and the soul of her soul, and so, to come to the heart of Mary is to come to Jesus; to honour the heart of Mary is to honour Jesus; to invoke the heart of Mary is to invoke Jesus?

X. The heart of Jesus

62. A new heart to be your heart. O.C. VI: 261.

O my God, how overwhelming is your goodness, how wonderful your love for us! You are infinitely worthy to be loved, praised and glorified. We have countless reasons to love and glorify you, but because we have neither heart nor mind worthy or capable of acquitting ourselves of these obligations, your incomprehensible wisdom has found for us, and your immense bounty has given to us a wonderful means to satisfy them fully and perfectly. You have given us the spirit and heart of your Son, which is your own spirit and your own heart, and you have given them to be our spirit and our heart according to the promise that you made by the mouth of your prophet in these words: "I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you." (Ez. XXXVI: 26) And in order that we might know what kind of new heart and new spirit you promised, you added: "I will put my spirit, which is my own heart, in the midst of you.---It is only the heart and spirit of a God that is worthy to love and praise a God, and which is capable of praising and blessing him to the degree he deserves. That is why, dear Lord, you have given us your heart, which is the heart of your Son Jesus, as also the heart of your holy mother, and the hearts of all the angels and saints who, together, are but one heart, as head and members have only one body. (Acts IV: 32.)

Imprint this upon your mind, that this heart has been given you in order that you may serve and honour God and do his will with a great heart and a great love, that is to

SELECTED TEXTS

131 -

say, with a heart and a love worthy of his infinite grandeur. (11 Mac. 1: 1)

To achieve this, renounce your own heart, that is, your own mind, your own will and your self love; and give yourself to Jesus to enter into the immensity of his great heart which contains the heart of his holy mother and of all the saints, and to lose yourself in this abyss of love, charity, mercy, humility, purity, patience, submission and holiness.

When anyone asks you if you love him, say -Yes, I wish to love him, and with my great heart, and I give myself to him for that." When you are asked if you wish to do or suffer something for love of him, say: "Yes, and with all my great heart I give myself to him for that." If you love your neighbour and have some act of charity to do, love him and do all you should for him, in the charity of your great heart. If you hate and detest sin, let it be in the hate and detestation that your great heart has for sin. If it is a question of humiliating yourself, let it be in the spirit of humility of your great heart. If you must obey, let it be in the spirit of obedience of your great heart. If you must suffer something let it be in the spirit of humility, patience, submission and love of your great heart; if you must do penance, let it be in the spirit of humiliation and contrition of your great heart. If you have to make some oblation, donation or sacrifice to God, of yourself or of some other thing, let it be in the spirit of love and zeal of your great heart. If you want to pray and ask God for some grace, let it be in a spirit of abasement, of confidence and of resignation in your great heart, If you must adore, praise and thank God, let it be in union with the adoration, praise and thanksgiving which were, are and always will be given to him by your great heart, and in union with all the holy dispositions with which this same heart adores, praises and thanks him incessantly. When you say these holy words: "I will praise you Lord, with all my heart" (Ps. C.X.I.) let

your intention be to speak of your great heart. Lastly, whatever you do, do it in the spirit and dispositions of your great heart, renouncing your own and giving yourself to Jesus to act in the spirit which moves his heart.

63. **The heart of Jesus and Mary.**

A translation of the salutation composed by St. John Eudes in honour of the most holy heart of Jesus and Mary.

'Jesus lives and reigns so totally in Mary, that he is truly the soul of her soul, the spirit of her spirit and the heart of her heart, so much so that, strictly speaking, Jesus is the heart of Mary.'

O most holy, gentle and humble heart, we hail you.

O most pure, prayerful and wise heart, we hail you.

O most patient, obedient and watchful heart, we hail you.

All faithful, all blissful, all merciful heart, we hail you.

O loving heart of Jesus and Mary, we hail you.

We adore and praise you. We glorify and thank you. We love you with all our heart, our soul, our strength.

We offer and give you our heart.

We consecrate and sacrifice it to you.

Accept it and take entire possession of it. Purify and enlighten it.

Make it holy.

Live in it and have absolute power over it now, always and for ever. Amen.

