

Life and Letters
of
Saint Peter Julian Eymard

Volume Two
1853 - 1857

Founder

Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament
Fathers and Brothers,
Congregation of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament and
a Eucharistic Association for the Laity

Translated and arranged chronologically by
Sister Catherine Marie Caron SSS

* * *

Electronic version by
Curia Generalizia
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament
Rome, 2010

CONTENTS

VOLUME II

1853 - 1857
The Transition Years

Introduction

- I. La Seyne (Part II 1853-1854).**
- II. La Seyne (Part III 1855).**
Preparation for the Cenacle.
- III. Chaintré - St. Chamond Aug. 1855 - May 1856.**
- IV. Paris May 1856.**
Foundation of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament.
- V. Paris 1857**
- VI. Appendix I**
Letter to Fr. Colin from Fr. Mayet

INTRODUCTION

“I have been a little like Jacob, always on the way”... If St. Peter Julian characterized his own life as Jacob’s journey, then certainly this second volume of his letters, from 1853-1857, brings us the high point of that drama.

These were the years of transition and of the foundation of his Congregation. These were the years of anguish and discernment in the search for God’s Will.

These were the years of consultation, reaching out for the “Ananias” who would show the way, the “Voice of God” who would settle his conscience, the sure guide who could interpret his dreams for the worship of the Eucharist and put the seal of approval on the “*pensee eucharistique*”, variously translated as Eucharistic thought, idea or project.

But ultimately these were the wrenching years of fidelity to conscience which required that he burn his bridges behind him: “burning his ship,” as he called it. There was no turning back. Ultimately, like Peter and John who prepared the Cenacle for the Passover meal, St. Peter Julian Eymard knew that the road to the Cenacle would lead him to Calvary. He accepted the agony and proceeded with heroic faith, trust and love.

His humility is characterized by the expression he used to explain his role in this lofty venture: “to be manure for the tree.”... “If at least I can see the mustard seed grow.”

It seems appropriate to begin this volume with a prayer to St. Peter Julian which was published in the recent biography of Fr. Norman Pelletier, SSS, the Superior General of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, “Tomorrow Will Be Too Late” (St. Meinrad, Ind. 1992).

PRAYER TO SAINT PETER JULIAN EYMARD

The God of our ancestors led you, Peter Julian,
like He did his servant Jacob in times past,
on a journey of faith.

All your life long you searched for a deeper union with God
and for an answer to the hungers of humanity.
You discovered in the Eucharist the answer to your quest.
God's love was there available to you and to all mankind.
In response to this unearned love
you made a "gift of self" to God
and tirelessly spent yourself to serve His people.

Your life, modeled on the Cenacle where Mary and the
disciples gathered in prayer and celebration,
inspired your own disciples, as it does again today,
to a life of profound prayer of contemplation
and of apostolic zeal for building Christian communities
where the Eucharist is source and center of life.

St Peter Julian, assist us in our own journey of faith
to pray more fervently and to serve one another more
generously so that our lives may witness to a more just and
peaceful world. May our celebrations of the Eucharist proclaim
God's liberating love for the renewal of the Church and for the
coming of the kingdom. Amen.

Key

The technicalities of translations deserve some consideration and explanation. Our effort was to be more literal than literary, to stay as close to the original text as possible, while however striving for smooth and readable English.

The headings for the letters are followed with a code which will enable the researcher to locate the original French letter and know the number of letters addressed to this correspondent. For ex.:

Miss Marianne Eymard (III 1/145 VI 10) means that this is the first of 145 letters to Marianne Eymard in the French Vol. III and that there are also 10 letters to her in the French Vol. VI.

St. Peter Julian often used abbreviations to begin his letters and after his signature. The meaning of these will be given in a footnote the first time the abbreviation is used. Ex.: A.R.T.E. = May your Eucharistic Kingdom Come! Abbreviations used after the signature have usually been written out in full when they were simple enough. Ex.: Sup. = Superior. Others are left as abbreviated when they did not translate easily from one language to another.

The capitalization of words by the author has been respected and left as in the originals. Therefore, Heaven, Will, Providence are constantly capitalized, which reveals a certain sensitivity or importance given by St. Eymard to these spiritual realities. However, the letters from Vol. II (to Marguerite Guillot) do not follow his usual pattern of capitalization. These were probably not transcribed from the original manuscript to the French publication. Other words were capitalized in English though they were not so in French, because custom or meaning required it. Ex.: Mass, Society and Work, when the latter two words referred to the Religious Institute he founded or other Works being undertaken in the Church of France at the time. The capitalization of the word cross and the words he, his and him, when referring to God, has been left as in the original.

Another pattern of his which has been respected is that of placing dashes when least expected, or an exclamation point in the middle of a sentence, or a colon to precede an explanation.

Although it was customary for diocesan priests to be called Mr. whenever the context is clear, these have been translated as Father, as is current in English use.

The list of topics taught at retreats and conferences is incomplete. But it is the one presently available to the translator. Conferences given to the priests and brothers of the Blessed Sacrament are indicated by the abbreviation SSS, those given to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament by the abbreviation Conf. Serv.

Whenever a phrase is bracketed in English, it is because additional words were needed to complete the original French thought. Lines of dots in the text, especially letters to Marguerite Guillot, indicate that the text was made illegible by the recipient (crossed out).

The determining guide in placing the Letters was the chronological listing of Fr. Garreau, S.S.S. Therefore, some letters have been relocated because that critical reading indicated that some dates had been misread for the French publication. For instance, in St. Eymard's handwriting May and March were difficult to distinguish, as were January and June. Occasionally, St. Eymard himself wrote an incorrect date or year as can be deduced from the postmark or content. The critical judgment of Fathers Garreau and Troussier have been followed in this matter. Other letters were without indication of date or place. These have been placed according to St. Eymard's pattern of correspondence. Letters begun on one date and finished on another have been placed at the earlier date except when the context dictated otherwise.

The Letters are divided into six volumes as follows:

I 1845-1852; II 1853-1857; III 1858-1861; IV 1862-1864; V 1865-1866; VI 1867-1868.