

Life and Letters
of
Saint Peter Julian Eymard
Volume Three
1858 - 1861

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
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CONTENTS

VOLUME III

1858 - 1861

The Eucharistic Family Years

Introduction

I. Faubourg St. Jacques 1858.

“It will be the Nazareth of the Work, as this [rue d’Enfer] was its Bethlehem.”
Feb. 22, 1858

II. Rome, “Rooted in Holy Church” Dec. 1858-Jan. 1859

III. The “Mustard Seed” Grows.

“I will ask [the Pope] for his blessing on this little mustard seed.” Dec. 3, 1858

IV. The “Eucharistic Family”

V. Spreading the Eucharistic Fire I

VI. Spreading the Eucharistic Fire II
The Retreat Master

Appendix I Undated Retreats

Appendix II First Rule for the Servants, Aug. 1859

Appendix III First Communion of Adult Workers
Letter of Fr. Carrie Jan. 1, 1861

Appendix IV Compilation of Writings, Retreats and
Conferences by Fr. Lionel Lavigne SSS

PREFACE

In Volumes I and II of the “Life and Letters of St. Peter Julian Eymard,” we witnessed the formative years of his spiritual journey first as a diocesan and then as a Marist priest.

He would “remain a Marist in his heart” all his life, which he had declared in leaving the Society of Mary. His formation to a deep interior life indeed characterized his zeal for the spiritual growth of souls in union with God.

In Volume II we witnessed the Transition years, the agony of growth and of knowing he was called in a new direction which proved to be incompatible with his Marist vocation. The birth of the Society of the Blessed Sacrament was to occur in profound soul-searching and discernment, a deep personal “fear of being unfaithful to a cross and a grace.”

In Volume III the “Eucharistic Project” becomes a reality as it extends itself and becomes a true “Eucharistic Family.” The vision of the Cenacle, Mary, Apostles, and Holy Women gathered in prayer, called into being a second branch added to the Society of the Blessed Sacrament, that of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament; then, all within the same period of time, the association of the laity to the eucharistic vision, the “Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament.”

Strengthened and made fruitful by the approval and blessing of His Holiness Pope Pius IX, the men and women religious made their official vows as religious now officially approved by the Church.

St. Peter Julian’s personal gifts were now transformed by his eucharistic grace. He became the preacher, teacher, formator, spiritual director on fire with a message and conviction of Christ’s love for us in the Eucharist.

“If you only knew the gift of God,” he proclaimed to his own religious as well as in parish missions and to adoration groups throughout France. He taught people how to pray and he helped them prepare for the Feasts of Epiphany, Corpus Christi, and the Sacred Heart, with renewed awareness of all that God has done for us in His goodness and mercy.

His Work for the First Communion of Adult Workers gained him the friendship of the poor and the respect of Church Authorities.

His great cross was the instability of vocations. “I cannot believe there are so few men for whom Jesus and his service are sufficient,” he wrote.

Let us also be taught by him as we read his words, so that the love of Christ may take hold of our lives.

“O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine.”

Sr. Catherine Marie Caron SSS, translator

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.