
« LIVING WITH THE HEART » (5)



To review the 2000-2001 pastoral year in the light of the teachings of Saint John Eudes helps us discover the calls made to us, to holiness and compassion. Besides, we have other calls, especially the call to be bold. On this point I like to recall a statement which the late Cardinal Roy made to the directors of the Catholic Action Movement: « It isn't what you do that worries me, but rather what is not being done! »

CALL TO BOLDNESS

In the Constitutions of the Eudist Congregation it is asserted that "John Eudes, overpowered by the love of God, carried in his heart the pain and concerns of his brothers and sisters. He boldly blazed new trails for spreading the Kingdom of God. It is in St. John Eudes that members of the Congregation draw their deepest inspiration." When I consider all the pastoral initiatives which the leaders of our Christian communities had to take in order to respond to the new challenges of the Second Vatican Council, the Edmundston Diocesan Synod (1987-1990), and the new concerns and needs of our milieus, I cannot help but repeat the dictate of St. John Eudes himself: « *We have but one thing to fear, and that is to have too much fear and not enough trust* ». [Letter to M. Manchon, Superior of the Seminary of Rouen, in *Lectionary Proper to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary*. Charlesbourg, Québec, 1989 Life]

A CALL TO CONSECRATED LIFE AND TO MISSION

Looking at the work being done by the Office of Vocations, especially the reactivation of the *Called by Name* vocation programme, looking at the steps taken by religious communities to encourage, with the grace of God, the rise of new vocations, I consider that the Lord has not stopped calling and challenging through the Church, through the situation of Christian communities both here and elsewhere, and through the needs of our brothers and sisters: more than ever the Lord is inviting to the consecrated life, the missionary life, and the priesthood. If a wild flower bears so many seeds for reproducing itself, how then could the Lord not have taken the means necessary to continue building up the Body of Christ?

PRAYER

Pray the Master of the harvest to send workers to his harvest, but pray that he send exemplary workers who do not seek their own interests, but whose only aim is the glory of their Master and the salvation of souls which he paid for with his precious blood. Pray him to give his Church shepherds and priests according to his heart, who follow the path he took when he was on the earth. [Memorial of Priestly Life]

VOCATION

My dearest daughters, you have, in a way, but one and the same vocation with the Mother of God. For just as God chose to form his Son within her, and in the hearts of the faithful through her agency,

so too he called you to the holy community in which you are now so that his Son might live in you , and through you restore him to life again in the souls in which he has been allowed to die. What a holy vocation! How prodigious is God's goodness to have called you to a truly apostolic Order! [Letter to the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, in Lectionary..., p. 102]

MISSION

Go in the name of the Blessed Trinity, to make it known and adored in places where it is neither known nor venerated. Go in the name of Jesus, the only Son of God, to bring to souls the fruits of his Precious Blood which he shed for them. [...] Go in the name and on behalf of our little Congregation, to accomplish in China and the other places where Providence directs you what we should like to do throughout the whole world, even to shedding our last drop of blood: destroy Satan's tyranny there and establish the Kingdom of God. [Letter to M. de Sesseval, in Lectionary, p. 145]

FORMING JESUS IN US

If for John Eudes Christian living is continuing the life of Jesus in us, he never stopped repeating that it is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus is « formed » in us. « Forming Jesus in us » is an important requirement for every baptised and confirmed person, an activity which, we can say, is continually “measurable.” If we want to know whether we are successful in forming Jesus in us, all we have to do is to look at our prayer life, at how we share with others, relate to others, are available to them, and open to events. Holiness is far from being some kind of fluffy object! Forming in us the compassionate Jesus, the praying Jesus, the obedient Jesus, the Jesus available to all... these are as many facets of continuing Christian formation not only for religious communities but also for prayer groups, Bible sharing groups, etc.

The mystery of mysteries and the work of works is the formation of Jesus in us. St. Paul puts it in these words: «My little children, I must go through the pains of giving birth to you all over again until Christ is formed in you» (Gal. 4:19). It is the greatest mystery and the greatest work ever accomplished either in heaven or on earth [...]. so, forming Jesus in us should be our wish, our concern and our chief occupation, that is to say, causing him to live and reign in us together with his spirit and devotion, his virtues and sentiments, his inclinations and dispositions. This should be the aim of all our acts of piety. This is the task that God puts into our hands for us to work at continually. [The Kingdom of Jesus, in Lectionary Proper to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Charlesbourg, Québec, 1989, pp. 71, 72]

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« From A Bishop's Journal » (399) (08 August 2001)