

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE  
SPIRITUALITY OF ST. JOHN EUDES  
AND ST. MARY EUPHRASIA  
IN THE LIGHT OF  
VATICAN COUNCIL II



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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST JOHN EUDES  
IN THE LIGHT OF VATICAN COUNCIL II

As Evidenced by His Spirit and in the Aim and Purpose  
of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity.

The Aim and Spirit of our Institute as stated in Chapter I - Articles 1 and 2 of our present Constitutions are almost verbatim as they were given in the original Book of Rules drawn up by St. John Eudes for his newly founded Order of Our Lady of Charity of 1641.

It is not surprising then that the service of God "by the exact observance of the holy Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience and by the perfect imitation, of all the other virtues of Our Lord and His holy Mother" was the constant theme of our saintly Founder's exhortations to his daughters in his sermons, in his writings, in his numerous letters to them.

God was served, according to St. John Eudes, when Jesus Christ lived and reigned in the soul. That was the end of every Christian and religious life. He was convinced that the Christian is given life only that he may use it in the service of God from whom he has received it. He wanted to be completely transformed into acts of praise, adoration and pure love. (1)

"It should be your desire, your study and principal occupation to form Jesus in you; that is to say, to make Him live and reign in you, together with His spirit, His devotion, His virtues, His sentiments and His inclinations." (2)

How completely in accord he is then with the thought expressed in Article 7 of the Constitution on the Church

"All the members (of the Church) ought to be molded into Christ's image until He is formed in them." (3)

At the same time, he had from his early years an intense love for and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and he unceasingly encouraged the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity "to develop deep in their hearts a tender and cordial devotion for the holy Mother of God, who is an inexhaustible source of every kind of blessing and an infallible means of attaining eternal salvation." (4)

St. John Eudes used to say that "Jesus and Mary are so closely bound together that whoever loves the one cannot help but love the other." (5) He saw devotion to Mary as a means of drawing closer to the Heart of her Son. Thus, we read in a letter from him to the Convent of the Refuge upon the news of the formal approbation of the Institute by the Bishop of Bayeaux in February, 1651

"You are now daughters of the Queen of Heaven and are bound to honor and love specially her most admirable heart. . . and to exhibit in your hearts a perfect image of the love, charity, obedience, humility, meekness, zeal for the salvation of souls and all the other virtues which reign in her Heart, in order that by this means you may be according to the Heart of Her Son." (6)

Perhaps, St. John Eudes most lyrical and ardent expression of what our devotion to Jesus and Mary should be and to what heights we should aspire in our imitation of their virtues is contained in "His Wishes" which prefaced the first Book of the Profession Ceremony for the Institute. The following excerpts from those "Wishes" make clear how great were his expectations for those who would be received into the Order of Our Lady of Charity -

"May their hearts be so many sacred Books and living Gospels, in which the most holy lives of their loving Father and dear Mother, Jesus and Mary, are forever inscribed.

May their hearts be as one heart in the sacred bonds of the most perfect charity, and may they be one with the heart of Jesus and Mary by virtue of divine love.

May the hearts thus made one be the throne whereon the will of God reigns as King that they may be consumed in, the flames of eternal love and continually immolated as a holy victim to the praise and glory of the most adorable Trinity." (7)

St. John Eudes, however, made it clear that his devotion to Mary was secondary to his devotion to her Divine Son. There is evidence of this in a letter which he wrote to the Religious of Our Lady of Charity at Caen in 1650 for the Feast of the Joys of Mary -

"All my intentions have no end save the sanctification of your souls and the establishment of the reign of God in your hearts. It is that for which we must unceasingly strive; all our happiness lies there in, and it alone should constitute our joy." (8)

It can be concluded then that the Council Fathers endorse his love and veneration for Mary, the Mother of God, "the Church's model and exemplar in faith and charity," (9) since they incorporated the following statement into the Constitution on the Church:

"The followers of Christ still strive to increase in holiness by conquering sin. And so they raise their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as a model of virtues. When she is being preached and venerated, she summons the faithful to her Son and His sacrifice and to love for the Father." (10)

But turning specifically to the obligation of Religious today to give an increasingly clearer revelation of Christ to all the world, Vatican Council II states emphatically that, while "all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of their Christian life and to the perfection of charity," (11) all who have been called to the profession of the vows should "take painstaking care to persevere and excel increasingly in the vocation to which God has summoned them." (12)

It is in this same spirit that St. John Eudes set up as the general end of our congregation to glorify God through the exact observance of the Vows and by the perfect imitation of the virtues of Our Lord and His holy Mother. He gave himself unstintingly and perseveringly to all of Iris many works. Completely forgetful of self and his own interests in the labors he undertook, he sought only the interests of God. By his example and by Iris exhortations - both verbal and written - he urged his daughters to undertake the same complete immolation of self, that Vatican II is asking of Religious today.

"To let their purpose be a more vigorous flowering of the Church's holiness and the greater glory of the one md undivided *Trinity*." (13)

"*To unite* themselves to *Christ* through a self-surrender involving their entire lives." (14)

There were some virtues that St. John Eudes especially stressed to his daughters as efficacious means toward achieving this complete immolation of self and, from the frequency with which he enumerated some of them in his letters, it is not difficult to determine which he considered must be possessed pre-eminently by a true daughter of Our Lady of Charity.

"I beg you to study this young person well in order to see if she is resolved to renounce her own will entirely, if she has zeal for the salvation of souls, a spirit of piety, humility, meekness, obedience and simplicity." (15)

"I am delighted that our dear Sisters are traveling so happily along the paths of heaven through the practice of sound virtues.

"I beseech them always to continue their advancement, especially in humility, obedience, mutual charity and in the love of our most amiable Jesus and His most worthy Mother." (16)

"I beseech all my dear daughters to labor in competition with one another to imprint upon themselves a perfect likeness of their most adorable Father and most amiable Mother through a conscientious and continual imitation of their holy virtues, particularly, their humility, obedience, charity, forbearance and overwhelming love of the Cross." (17)

"I entreat you to examine yourselves particularly on these points, namely: humility, obedience, and mutual charity and cordiality." (18)

"I beseech you, my dear daughters, to strive to acquire all the virtues you need in order to be true daughters of the most Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, especially humility, obedience, love, charity and zeal for the salvation of souls." (19)

"May these favors from heaven animate us to love our most bountiful Jesus and our amiable Mother more fervently as well as to serve them more faithfully, through the practice of sound virtues, especially humility, obedience, charity and above and beyond all else, zeal for the salvation of lost and abandoned souls." (20)

"Think what it cost the Saviour to rescue our souls from eternal damnation! Then do not be astonished, my dear daughter, if you encounter trials and crosses while doing God's work; that is the best part of your task. But, bear in mind the charity, patience, meekness and other virtues which our most benign Saviour practiced while accomplishing His Father's work on earth." (21)

"I beseech you, my dearest daughters, to be very faithful and exacting in the observance of your Rules and Constitutions, and in the practice of all the holy virtues, especially humility, mutual charity, zeal for the salvation of souls, submission to the most holy will of God, pure love for Jesus and a special devotion to His Blessed Mother." (22)

Perhaps, we can go one step further and say that, even among those virtues mentioned so consistently in the Letters quoted from above, we can conclude from our Saint's own life and works and from the special admonitions that he gave regarding certain of these virtues, that a higher priority would go to conformity to God's will, humility, charity, and zeal for souls - since the possession of these very traits would in his estimation guarantee the presence of the others.

Father Herambourg states that St. John Eudes looked upon the divine will as the supreme purpose of his life as well as its center. He declared that "submission to God's will was the most: universal of all virtues." (23) It is not surprising then, that he wished to make it the soul of the institutes that he founded believing that there is no better way of showing God respect and love than by submitting to His holy will; no surer way of making a complete surrender to God than by abandoning one's own will.

Numberless letters of his to his spiritual daughters bear the caption "May the divine will be our guide in all things.!" (24)

Excerpts from other letters to the Community or to individual Sisters at Caen express the same wish:

"God keep us ever from doing our own will, and grant us the grace to acknowledge that we have no interest in this world, save that of accomplishing His holy will, everywhere and in all things, with a great heart and a willing mind." (25)

"I do all that I wish, because I do not wish and shall never wish for anything except the holy will of God." (26)

"Truly, my dearest daughters, there is no real cause for joy on earth other than this: to perform the will of God and to be despised and crucified with Jesus Christ." (27)

"Annihilate at the feet of Our Lord and His Mother all your thoughts, plans, desires, inclinations and intents, and resign yourself completely, sincerely and unreservedly to their holy will, supplicating them to arrange all things in the way most pleasing to them." (28)

As for humility, St. John Eudes considered it absolutely essential for anyone striving to truly follow Christ, since Our Lord, Himself, recommended it most emphatically and insistently to us in these divine and lovable words of His - "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of Heart; and you shall find rest to your souls."

Humility was the greatest good that our Founder desired for souls. He judged that other blessings without humility were valueless; and, that, in possessing it alone, one possessed them all. That is how he explained it to his daughters, in whose perfection he took such great interest -

"Be very humble, my dear daughters, be very humble, . . . for when you achieve humility, Our Lord will abundantly infuse His graces into your hearts. A soul which is truly humble is indeed wealthy, for it possesses all; but a soul lacking in humility has nothing." (29)

In "*The Kingdom of Jesus*" St. John Eudes wrote –

"This virtue (humility), together with burning love, makes saints, and great saints. For the true measure of sanctity is humility. Give me a truly humble person and I shall say that he is truly saintly. On the other hand, a soul without humility is a soul without virtue." (30)

In a letter to Mother Margaret Patin, Superior of Our Lady of Charity, we find the following advice -

"Preserve, strengthen and increase within you the most essential of all virtues, that of humility, which shapes the soul it possesses according to the Heart of Our Lord and His most Holy Mother... Let us dwell in the house of our nothingness and await with patience, humility, simplicity and submission Him Who desires only our nothingness as the material and substance with which to do whatever is pleasing to Him." (31)

However, the virtue that above all others characterized his life and work was CHARITY – a Charity that reached its peak in love of God through love of souls and ZEAL for their salvation – especially zeal for the salvation of those souls already in great danger of being lost.

To him, love of God and love of neighbor are quite inseparable. "These are not two loves," writes St. John Eudes, they make but one single love. We must love our neighbor with the same heart and love as that which we love God, for we have to love him, not in himself, or for himself, but in God and for God; or rather, it is God Himself Whom we must love in our neighbor.

Here again we see how closely attuned is our great saint's thinking to that of Council Fathers, who stated -

"It is the love of God and of neighbor which points out the true disciple of Christ." (33)

Father Hermanbourg describes his zeal as all-embracing in its inspirations and daring in its accomplishments. (34) Every opportunity to work for the salvation of souls was infinitely precious to him, and he sought and found these opportunities directly in the hundreds of Missions he preached throughout France and, indirectly, through the establishment of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, dedicated to the training of priests and through the founding of our own Congregation.

In his words, the characteristic and special aim of our Institute is "to imitate as far as possible. . . the ardent charity with which the loving Hearts of Jesus and Mary are inflamed towards souls, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ. . . and to cooperate with Him. . . in the conversion and re-education of wayward girls and women!" (35) This has been and still is the spirit and soul of our holy Congregation.

Just as instruction, example and prayer were the means he used to draw souls to Christ, so he urged his spiritual daughters to do likewise, by "employing themselves with all their hearts, by the example of a holy life, by the fervor of their prayers and by their zeal to winning souls for the Good Shepherd, I binding themselves to this blessed labour by a fourth Vow - Zeal for the salvation of souls - A vow - proper to our Congregation.

St. John Eudes was firmly convinced that work for the salvation of souls is the noblest and holiest act possible to man - and no stronger evidence of this is needed than Article 2 of the First Chapter of Our Constitutions, in which he surpasses himself in the intensity of expression by which he presents to his daughters the reasons why our apostolate is the most worthy service that can, be rendered to God.

In a sermon at a Profession Ceremony at Caen in 1666, he stresses the uniqueness of the fourth Vow the Sisters were about to take. He saw it as the *essence* of the vocation of a Sister of Our Lady of Charity - and its fulfilment as the very "raison d'etre" of the Institute, as well as an incomparable good to the individual Sister - whose only desire in all she desires should be the glory of God and the good of souls. (36)

"You will be distinguished from all other nuns by a fourth Vow of laboring for the salvation of souls, purchased by the precious blood of the Son of God. Remember, dear daughters, that is the object for which we have been founded. . . and at the hour of death God will require of you an account of the manner in which you have fulfilled this obligation. Be firmly

persuaded that you are absolutely bound to do all that diligence, prayer and above all the example of a holy life can do, to win for your Spouse the souls that He has redeemed with His blood. (37)

His letters breathe over and over this same spirit of great zeal for the salvation of souls -

"I feel in myself so strong an inclination to work for the salvation of souls that I would willingly renounce all the glory of Paradise and would without difficulty quit heaven, if I were there, in order to return to earth for the purpose of helping in the salvation of one poor soul." (38)

"Yes, my dear Sisters, you have in a manner the same vocation as the Mother of God. For, as God chose to form His Son in her, and through her in the hearts of the faithful, He called you to this holy Community where you are to make His Son live in you, and to raise through you, the souls of poor penitents that were dead in sin. Oh, my dear Sisters, how holy is your vocation" (39)

"A single soul is worth more than a thousand worlds; whoever wins a soul to God does better than if he were to conquer a thousand empires, (40)

"Excite a fervent desire to attain the end for which your holy Order was founded, that of laboring by your prayers, examples, instructions, and every manner prescribed for you by holy obedience for the salvation of the lost souls whom divine Providence may send you." (41)

There emerges from this paper an image of a man of God, who unflaggingly persevered in the practice of Christian virtue in his daily life and who tried unceasingly to inspire others - especially his spiritual sons and daughters by the example of his holiness and by the completeness of his commitment to the love of God and of neighbor - to follow in his footsteps.

The special message that our Founder might wish to transmit to us of the 20th century is that the success of our special apostolate - which remains essentially today what it was then - depends upon the blending of close union with God and the unqualified giving of self in zeal for the salvation of the souls in our care - for love of HIM.

Is this not what the Council Fathers are saying in Article 8 of "Perfectae Caritatis"?

"In order that members may above all respond to their vocations of following Christ and may serve Christ Himself in His members, their *apostolic activity should result from an intimate union with Him*. In this way it will happen that love of God and neighbor will itself be nurtured," (42)

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST JOHN EUDES  
IN THE LIGHT OF VATICAN COUNCIL II

An Examination of Particular Aspects of His Spirituality  
Liturgical, Biblical, Apostolic, Ecclesial and Social

"From the very infancy of the Church, there have existed men and women who strove to follow Christ more freely and imitate Him more nearly by the practice of the evangelical counsels." (1)

St. John Eudes was a great missionary and apostle of the 17th century, who not only followed in the footsteps of Our Lord very closely himself, but he inspired many others to do so. He was the Founder of two religious communities, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (also known as the Eudist Fathers) and the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, of whom the Sisters of the Good Shepherd are a vital branch.

The parents of St. John Eudes had dedicated him to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother before his birth, and the Saint lived out a lifetime of this dedication. His birth was the answer to his parents' fervent pleas for a child at the shrine of Our Lady of Recovery, after three years of childless marriage. He always believed that Our Lady had a special love for him, and he conducted himself as her devoted son throughout his life.

In examining particular aspects of the spirituality of St. John Eudes, namely the Liturgical, Biblical, Apostolic, Ecclesial, and Social Awareness, we will try to view these in the sense of how they affect religious today, especially in our own Congregation. To do this it is important to take into account the Document of Vatican Council II on Religious Life - "Perfectae Caritatis."

## LITURGICAL

The center of the liturgical doctrine of St. John Eudes was devotion to The Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. This is the heritage that he has passed on to the children of his religious families, and can be truly be considered "the original inspiration behind a given community," (2) namely, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity.

While his love for Jesus and Mary was so tender and exquisite that he could hardly think of one without the other, and he often spoke of their Sacred Hearts as being one Heart, nevertheless he formulated two liturgical cults to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Holy Heart of Mary.

"This idea of not separating the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, an idea peculiar to our Blessed Founder, shows us how deeply that profound mystic had penetrated the ineffable secret of the relations of the Man-God with the most pure Virgin, whom He had chosen for His Mother. It was given to our Father to understand what those most holy and loving Hearts are to each other! And he concluded that it was not fitting, according to the rules of love, that they should ever be separated" (3)

Hence, in each Mass composed by John Eudes, there is much mention of the veneration to both of these loving Hearts.

Pope Pius X, in the Decree of Beatification of our Founder on December 13, 1908, noted that he was the first to offer liturgical worship to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. (4) Therefore, he is considered the Father, Doctor, and Apostle of this devotion.

"Each religious family has its own special devotion. The mission of some is to honor the Mysteries of the Childhood or the life of Jesus and Mary; of others- to revere the sorrows of Jesus and His Holy Mother; ours to the devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, but united and blended into one and the same heart, by perfect conformity of disposition and will," (5)

The title of author of the liturgical worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was bestowed on St. John Eudes for the following reasons, according to a great Benedictine scholar, Cardinal Pitra.

"It should be difficult, in France, to speak of the works inspired by the Sacred Heart, without recalling to mind the Venerable Father Eudes who deserves to be entitled Its apostle. He was the first to propagate the new devotion, and continued to do so all his life; he entrusted the same task to the Congregation which he founded, had manuals printed, inaugurated feasts, composed offices, built churches and chapels in Its honour, erected innumerable confraternities and gave the first impulse to a movement that has spread throughout the whole Church. . . . Moreover, Father Eudes is the Doctor who supplied the formularies for the new devotion, and he was Its ambassador to pastors and people, to the princes of this world and of the Church." (6)

St. John Eudes felt great concern for the condition of the Church in his time and constantly sought for more profound liturgical celebrations. One of his aims was, "The restoration of the reign of the Eternal King of ages by the sway of a boundless love, symbolized in His Heart of flesh, and manifested by the whole work of Redemption." (7)

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was considered by St. John Eudes to be the one essential and fundamental act of worship of the Catholic Church. He stated that "without the Mass the priesthood would have no justification; some of the greatest promises of Our Lord would remain idle and unfulfilled, and souls, deprived of the Bread of Life, would be condemned to weakness and exhaustion." (8) This latter point is also emphasized in our own times, in the Document of Vatican II on the Sacred Liturgy:

"From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a fountain, grace is channeled into us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their goal, are most powerfully achieved." (9)

Reverence and appreciation for the efficacy of the Mass was always evident in the manner and speech of Father Eudes. He was so thrilled by the fact that his First Holy Mass could be said on Christmas Day, and so he was therefore able to offer three Masses. Later in life he made this observation:

"The Holy Sacrifice is something so great that it would require three eternities to offer it up fittingly; the first to prepare for it, the second to celebrate it, and the third to return thanks." (10)

St. John Eudes was particularly devoted to the sacred mysteries of Our Lord, according to the various times of the year. For each week or month he followed the liturgical cycle of the Church, and also paid special homage to Our Blessed Lord or His Mother according to the season. For instance:

"The entire season of Easter he devoted to the glorious mystery of the Resurrection, Christ's entrance into a life of glory and His last days on earth. From the Ascension to Pentecost he would contemplate the triumph of Christ in heaven, a practice that he also carried out every Sunday of the year. Pentecost week was consecrated to the Holy Spirit, with meditation on the sanctifying mission, the grandeur and the mysteries of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

"On the Feast of the Holy Trinity he adored the life of the three Divine Persons in our Lord as well as the human soul of Christ united to the three Divine Persons. The following Monday he dedicated to the Father, Tuesday to the Son, and Wednesday to the Holy Spirit. The days after Corpus Christi and all the Thursdays of the year he devoted to the mystery of the loving Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar." (11)

In this way John Eudes paid special honor to Jesus and Mary, by uniting his own life to their holy lives. He encouraged this practice for his spiritual sons and daughters, to enable them to achieve closer union with God.

Religious today can find much to imitate in the liturgical practices of St. John Eudes - all of which are solidly based on the maxims of the Gospels. Vatican II stipulates that religious life be patterned after Our Lord's example in the Gospels, and so they will grow in the virtues which will be the fruit of the liturgical worship.

## BIBLICAL

In the Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life, Vatican Council II urges a continuous return to the sources of all Christian life. The life and works of St. John Eudes attest to his love of Sacred Scripture, and his firm belief that the divinely revealed realities which are contained in it have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

"The faith of St. John Eudes was pure and simple, grounded in the testimony of Sacred Scripture, which he studied continually with special devotion. In lifeless print he beheld the eternal word of God the Father who desires to enlighten mankind. He looked upon Holy Writ as the *most* precious gift bestowed upon us by the Holy Spirit of God. He was convinced that everyone should revere Scripture as the heart of God which contains His divine secrets and is the source of life for His children." (12)

The following passage is a tribute of high praise to this saintly apostle, and also provides a very practical example for all religious in their spiritual exercises.

"Mindful that our divine Saviour had read Sacred Scripture publicly in the synagogues as St. Luke tells us, St. John Eudes used to unite himself to the dispositions of Christ and of the saints who were made holy by the reading and study of Scripture. It was his custom to implore the divine Spirit who inspired these words of eternal life to implant these truths in his heart, to make a gospel of his body and soul. It may be said of him, indeed, that he was a living book, written inside and outside with the interior and exterior life of Jesus Christ as unfolded for us in Sacred Scripture. He never concluded his daily scriptural reading without retaining a special text on which to meditate at various times during the day and to use as food for thought, since it is true that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (13)

St. John Eudes encouraged his followers to read a chapter of the New Testament each day on their knees. He felt this was the surest way to learn the life of Christ and to base their conduct on His works, actions, and virtues.

In his conferences to the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, John Eudes gave vivid examples from Sacred Scripture to help them to form a trusting relationship to God, to place their complete confidence in Him. He urged the Sisters to be humble and when they realized their imperfections, to love their own abasement.

"St. John Eudes deemed it an outrage to flee from the presence of God after one has offended Him, as did the wretched Cain in the wake of his crime. On the contrary, he desired souls to return to God as soon as they had failed Him, and to cast themselves at His feet in the sentiments of the Prodigal Son. Hope was for him a firm and steadfast anchor, as St. Paul would have it be. It always made him happy, safeguarding him from his enemies and surrounding him with divine protection. Indeed, Sacred Scripture teaches us that none are happier than those who have perfect hope in God; that they will gather new strength from it; that they will soar like eagles above the attacks, perils and corruption of the world; that they will progress rapidly and without weariness along the way of the Lord; and that they will advance untiringly toward the blessed eternity." (14)

"St. John Eudes used to say that it was to strengthen us in hope that Jesus Christ, our Lord, had characterized Himself in Sacred Scripture as the friend, advocate, doctor, shepherd, brother, father and spouse of our souls; that He called us His sheep, His children, His portion and His heritage, His Soul and His heart. He listed all the passages from Scripture that expressed the happiness and the reward of those who rely on God, for use whenever the devil tempted him to think otherwise. He compiled another list of passages which point out the love of God for us and the care that divine providence exercises over us in order to sustain our hope whenever we might meet with opposition in our work." (15)

The saint illustrates his point by passage after passage of Sacred Scripture, trying to impress upon his hearers the mercy of God, His protection of us in our weakness and the reward of His unfailing assistance in time of need.

"I could go on forever, if I began to quote here all the texts from Holy Scripture in which God commends to you the virtue of trust. It seems as if He were not satisfied even with the thousand instances in Holy Scripture by which He proves how dear and delightful this holy virtue is to Him, and favors those who place their trust in His goodness and abandon themselves entirely to the fatherly care of His Divine Providence." (16)

In a book of meditations according to the spirit of the Founder of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, written during an annual retreat, a religious of the order has given a beautiful treatise on the Parable of the Good Shepherd. This Parable characterizes so well the vocation of both the Sisters of the Refuge and, of course, the Religious of the Good Shepherd today.

"Daughters of Our Lady of Charity, charged with watching over the sheep who are in danger of being lost, or who having been lost, are found and are returning to the fold, have in your heart the sentiments of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. As far as your sex allows, you are yourself a shepherd

by your vocation, you may easily become a hireling if you do not endeavour to be and to remain a good shepherd. Yes, I understand, I would be a hireling if I laboured with a view of gain rather than through love and devotedness to souls, if I thought of my own interests, even spiritual, of the eternal glory that would revert to me, of enriching myself in a word, rather than saving the sheep entrusted to me. The hireling 'whose own the sheep are not: acts in this way. But since all souls belong to God and to Jesus, the only true Shepherd, because His Father has given them to Him for His inheritance, how can they belong to me? Precisely because they belong to Jesus Christ who should live and reign in me and with whom I should be one in the union of heart and mind.

"But if these sheep belong to me, they should be dear to me. I should surround them with a tender and maternal solicitude. Far from fleeing like the hireling, at the approach of the hellish wolf, at the approach of difficulties, sufferings, contradictions, and trials of every kind, I will face them, brave them, ready to take the brunt of them, to endure all the blows so as to spare my dearly loved sheep."

"I feed my sheep" What good would it do to preserve them from the wolf if they are dying of hunger within the fold or have not sufficient nourishment? I am the Good Shepherd; I feed my sheep: says the Divine Shepherd. Yes, my first duty as a shepherd is to lead my flock to wholesome pastures.

"I must go first myself to seek out this good and precious food; I must know the shortest and safest way to reach it, and above all, I must be assured of the wholesomeness of the nourishment. The fertile plains of Holy Scripture, the vast fields of the Fathers of the Church should be familiar to me. I should have explored them in all directions, and I can still do so daily with additional profit."

"When we read the Scriptures, it is not a sage, a genius, however great, with whom we hold intercourse, but the Spirit of God, we gather the very thoughts of the Eternal Wisdom, the very highest truths, the purest and surest lights that souls need on earth are to be found in those sacred pages. So it is preferably to them that I should lead my flock, choosing from among the various herbs, those best suited to the weak temperaments and simple tastes of each of my sheep. I should guide them thither myself; they cannot go alone. I must go before them, guide them, clear the way, measuring my pace to theirs so as to spare them any fatigue which might discourage them.

"On the ever-blessed day of our Religious Profession (our incarnation) we, like our divine Spouse, offered our lives to God for the salvation of souls. Consequently, that life is no longer ours and we should pour it out drop by drop, without any reserve for the sheep to whom it belongs. Our least actions, our prayers, our sufferings, everything that goes to make up our life, should be consecrated to them. We should spend our lives in their service, saying with Jesus: 'I lay down my life for my sheep.' But let these words be true, profoundly true. Then shall we be able to repeat them in our last moments, when death will come to help us to make or rather to consummate the sacrifice of our life." (17)

This passage describing the role of the Good Shepherd in the salvation of souls, sets forth in clear light the vocation of our Sisters as depicted by Jesus, the Good Shepherd. He is our Model and in assiduous study of the Gospels, as recommended so earnestly by St. John Eudes, we can learn many lessons of love and forgiveness in dealing with the flock entrusted to our care.

## APOSTOLIC

". . . If their members can combine the burning zeal of an apostle with wise judgments, made in the light of faith concerning the circumstances of the modern world, they will be able to come to the aid of men more effectively." (18)

The apostolate of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd derives directly from the aims and wishes of St. John Eudes, as he intended it for the Congregation of Sisters he founded. These are stated very succinctly in the 'Wishes of St. John Eudes to the Religious of Our Lady of Charity':

"The general intention of the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, in all their life and all their exercises, ought to be, to unite themselves to God and to the Holy Church, to labor with zeal for the salvation of their neighbor by the fervor of their prayers, by their good example, and particularly by the exact observance of their fourth vow." (19)

The particular apostolate which John Eudes had in mind in forming this group of religious women was conceived in his mind as a result of the many missions he preached in France. He was very conscious of the fact that many young women were sincerely converted during the missions he gave, and yet it was extremely difficult for them to continue to live good Christian lives without being in some kind of protective setting.

"Of all the foundations of Fr. Eudes, none cost him so much as the Order of Our Lady of Charity, but there is none that does him greater honor.

"The Blessed Servant of God was led to found this Order to assure the perseverance of fallen women whom he converted in his missions, but who returned to their former life, owing to the abandoned state in which they were left. He, at first, brought several of them together at Caen, at the house of a poor woman, Madeleine Lamy, who consented to take them under her care. Others found a shelter in different places under similar conditions. But this state of affairs was evidently too imperfect and too precarious to last. Seconded by a number of charitable persons, and especially by Madame de Camilly, who had placed herself under his direction, and came to his aid in all his enterprises, Blessed Jean was soon able to purchase in the outskirts of Caen, a little house to which he transferred the penitents. He confided the direction of them to a pious lady named Marguerite Morin, with whom he soon associated precious auxiliaries. It was on the Feast of St. Catherine, November 24, 1641, that the new-born community was installed in the house prepared to receive it." (20)

The order was slow in its beginning and underwent many trials, all of which constituted a spiritual martyrdom for the Founder, whose authority over the little community was even taken away. However, he was willing to suffer all of this if it would mean that the work of the Sisters for the salvation of souls would continue and prosper. Then, too, there were many difficulties in obtaining Papal approval for the Congregation.

"Rome hesitated. to approve an Institute devoted to the conversion of fallen women, fearing lest the Sisters themselves should find in the work an occasion of ruin. The Blessed Jean Eudes was more confident, and in a letter written on the Feast of the Assumption, in which he spoke in beautiful terms of the sublimity of their vocation, he feared not to address to them these words, considered prophetic, and which are every day more and more realized: I tell you, my dear daughters, that it is impossible for Our Lord to let those fall, who, for love of Him, assist others to rise. Purity is not stained when accompanied by true charity. Have confidence in Him who has called you to work with Him for the salvation of souls; if you mistrust yourself and lean upon Him, He will not withdraw to let you fall:" (21)

Nevertheless, John Eudes was very much aware of the crosses and obstacles which would be encountered in this work. He wrote lengthy letters to the Sisters in which he spoke realistically about the trials of their vocation, but made them aware of the tremendous spiritual value of their apostolate:

"Ah! My dearest Sisters, how holy is your vocation I how advantageous your state in life! Ah! how great is the goodness of God in your regard in thus calling you to a truly apostolic religious order. Ah! how great would be your ingratitude if you failed to recognize your unutterable obligation to the divine mercy on this account!

"But remember that, as this employment is marvellously displeasing to the evil spirit, he will not fail to tempt you in regard to your vocation. He will bring before your minds the trials and difficulties you must endure; but do not forget, my dearest Sisters, that there is no state in life exempt from labour and sufferings, and that, if you do not suffer with Jesus, you shall not reign with him. Hence there is nothing you should so much fear as to be without a cross. Cast your eyes on a crucifix and see

what he has suffered to save souls. Is it reasonable that you should be associated with him in that great work for which he came into the world, which is to save sinners, and which cost him so dearly, and that you should go scot-free? Alas! Alas! where would you be, if the fear he had of suffering, which was so violent as to make him sweat blood, had hindered him from labouring for your salvation? Consider also the sea of sorrows, tears, and anguish through which the Blessed Virgin had to pass in order to co-operate with her Son in the redemption of souls. . . ."

"Do you want another Gospel written for you, do you wish God to send you another Messiah - a Messiah of honey and roses? Do you wish to go to Paradise by another road than that which the Mother of God and all the Saints have trod, or do you really wish to go there all by yourselves and leave your poor Sisters on the road to hell, because you are so delicate that you are afraid to take the trouble of stretching out a hand to pluck them back?

"Perhaps you may say that they are walking along a very dirty, muddy road, and that you are afraid of soiling yourselves when you strive to withdraw them from it. The Devil is clever enough to tempt you in this way, which is all the more dangerous because it seems beautiful and true; but I tell you, my dearest Daughters, it is impossible that Our Lord should let those fall who, for love of Him, help others to rise. Purity, when allied with true charity, can never be sullied, any more than rays of sunlight can be soiled by mud. Cast aside, then such vain fears, and trust in Him who has called you to this divine employment; if you mistrust yourselves and rest on Him, He will never withdraw and allow you to fall. . . ." (22)

John Eudes was concerned lest the Sisters should succumb to discouragement, or fail to concentrate on the main purpose for which their Congregation was founded. These words are very appropriate for us today, because though we need to adapt and be ready to change methods and approaches according to the needs of the times, we must be faithful to our main purpose - to labor for the salvation of sinful souls.

"Know, my very dear Sisters, that whilst you remain in this holy employment, which associates you in a wonderful manner with the Saviour of the world, with His most precious Mother, with His Apostles, and with all the Saints who have been called by God to this same exercise, you will be the true daughters of the most Holy Heart of the Mother of God; she will look upon you and love you as such, and will heap upon you every kind of favor and blessing. . . I supplicate the Mother of Mercy by all the tenderness of her maternal Heart that the moment you should deviate from it, she would chastise you so effectually as to oblige you to return to the path of your vocation. . . ." (23)

In regard to his own life and works, St. John Eudes gave himself fully to the apostolic ministry from the time of his ordination to the priesthood in 1625, at the age of 24. As a matter of fact, two years before he was ordained he was commanded by his superiors to begin to preach. Evidently, his talent for oratory was noted early in his religious life. John Eudes became quite ill shortly after ordination and was forced to spend a long period of time in rest and quiet. He took advantage of this to further his studies of Sacred Scripture and to prepare himself more adequately for his future as a missionary. After his recovery he devoted himself completely to preaching the Word of God. Upon hearing of a plague near his hometown, John Eudes volunteered and received permission to engage in the most challenging apostolic labors.

"Fr. Eudes thus lived at St. Honore spending his time in study, prayer, apostolic labours, and in hearing the most celebrated preachers, when a letter from his father made an appeal to his charity. The plague had burst forth with extreme violence in the country places neighboring on Argentan, and the victims of the scourge, owing to the fear which it inspired, were abandoned even by those who, by their calling and state, were obliged to assist them.

"At the fatal tidings, the Blessed Apostle, touched even to tears, prays, has recourse to God, and finally resolves to go to the aid of his unfortunate countrymen. To have the safeguard of obedience for his self-devotion, he begs permission from Father de Berulle, who, when assured that it was the will of God, finally permits him to depart, with a letter for the Superior of Caen, to which city Jean receives orders to first direct his steps. From thence he goes to Seez, but the Bishop being absent, he proceeds to Falaise, where the Vicar-General of the Diocese was at that time. The latter received the young priest very kindly, and gave him the faculties necessary for his mission. "Immediately he hastens to the most infected places; he takes up his residence with a holy priest who was also working zealously for the plague-stricken victims. During almost two months, Fr.



Eudes goes through villages assisting the sick, relieving pains both of soul and body, watching over all with inexpressible tenderness, diffusing on all sides, if not joy, at least patience and resignation.

"After the manifold labors of the day, the holy priest gives but little time to repose even during the night, long hours of which he consecrates to his practices of devotion. He finally throws himself dressed upon his bed or upon a chair; and after a short sleep, he applies himself to meditation, while awaiting to ascend the altar for mass." (24)

Shortly after his work among the plague-stricken in 1629, he was made director of the missions preached by the Oratorian Fathers in Normandy. The following passages describe the work of the holy apostle - the intensity of his zeal and his endeavors:

"The missions preached by Fr. Eudes lasted six weeks, even in the smallest country parishes; 'without this,' says he, 'we plaster the evil, we do not cure it; we break evil habits, but we do not uproot them; we make a noise, but we produce little fruit.' Many missions lasted more than eight or ten weeks. That of Rennes, in 1669-1670, opened on the first Sunday of Advent, and ended four and a half months after, on April 13th. And these missions were perfectly organized. There was a pastoral letter from the Bishop, a convocation of all the parishes of the country, daily exercises, solemn ceremonies, formal dosing, everything, in fact, most aptly disposed to make upon souls the most salutary and lasting impression.

"The instructions were not only general, they were also special for the different classes of society; ecclesiastics" nobles, mothers of families, workmen, and at times Corporations heard by turns the word of God adapted to their special needs. Nor were the children forgotten; they, as well as older persons, were taught catechism and were prepared for their first communion, which was rendered as solemn as possible. It is, 'indeed, to Father Eudes that we owe the establishment of these beautiful and touching ceremonies so cherished by the faithful, so impatiently desired by parents and children, which leave in the soul an imperishable remembrance.

"The missionaries were trained to their holy ministry by Fr. Eudes himself, who chose them from the Congregation or from the Secular clergy. They were subjected to an austere and truly sacerdotal discipline while travelling, as well as in the missions, and they diffused around them the good odor of Christ, preaching by word and example wherever they went. Hence, the people, no matter how indifferent and rebellious on their arrival, soon Sur rounded them with religious veneration, and at their departure, accompanied them with tears and sobs." (25)

Our Blessed Lord sacrificed His life for the salvation of souls and He also provided for apostles in the Church, whom He sent into the world to convert it. Since He wished to continue the function of those first ministers of the Gospel to the end of time, Christ raised up a succession of men endowed with the zeal of the first apostles. St. John Eudes was of this number.

"From his earliest years as a priest he cherished a high ideal of this office. He considered the salvation of souls to be the chief occupation of God, the angels and the saints. He had learned through his readings of the Fathers that the care of the sick, fasting, the gift of miracles, even martyrdom *itself*, are secondary in comparison with works of zeal undertaken to cooperate with Our Lord in the salvation of souls. That is why the Saint gave himself to the works of zeal perseveringly and without stint.

"Apostolic zeal must possess many qualities in order to be perfect; that of St. John Eudes had them all. He was fervent in his desires; he frequently begged the Incarnate Word to fill his heart and those of all Christians with burning charity for souls. The Saint considered it a blessing for him to expend his health; his life, his time, his all to save a single soul. His strongest desire was to die in the battle for souls, while still carrying out the functions of preaching, hearing confessions and actively working in the service of those same souls. He was deeply grieved to behold so many souls perishing day by day because of the dearth of apostolic men to stretch forth a hand to sustain and prevent them from falling into hell. He used to say that a whole lifetime of blood and tears would not be sufficient to lament this great evil."

"We must confess, however, that St. John Eudes felt special affectionate preference for hardened sinners who had the greatest need of his help and of the mercy of heaven. In this he followed the example of our Saviour, who says of Himself in the Gospel that He came on earth particularly for sinners. God alone, from whom nothing is hidden, knows what tenderness the Saint felt for sinful souls. Many a journey he made, many an action he performed, many a night he spent, many a labor he endured, that he might snatch these precious souls from sin and win them back to the divine majesty of God. A number of heretics and atheists were among his fortunate conquests." (26)

In summary, the apostolic labors of St. John Eudes were the fruit of his love of God and burning zeal for the salvation of souls. The inspiration for his founding of the Religious of Our Lady of Charity came from this combination of love and zeal and is vividly portrayed in the writings of a Sister of Our Lady of Charity. These words continue to express the spirituality of the apostolate of the Sisters in modern times.

"Our model is our Blessed Founder, who is always represented holding a flaming heart in his hand. In fact, he casts fire wherever he goes, nothing resists the ardour of his flames, he must enkindle everyone he meets and he may, in truth, apply to himself the words of Our Saviour: 'I am come to cast fire' If I cannot repeat them with him, I have not the spirit of my vocation, for zeal for the salvation of souls with love of God and abnegation of self is the distinguishing characteristic of every true daughter of Our Lady of Charity." (27)

## ECCLESIAL

Today we hear much of the necessity for "renewal" and "updating" in the Church. Since Vatican II, vast changes have occurred in regard to priestly formation, as well as spiritual renovation of the People of God. There is a great deal of concern that the liturgy become more meaningful to the people, and therefore ceremonies are now conducted in the vernacular for the most part. Efforts are being made to simplify religious observances as well as to discover their original meaning, which had often become so obscure that many Catholics were not aware of it

St. John Eudes had a deep and undying loyalty to the Church, holding her in the same esteem as the late Pope John XXIII, who termed her "the loving mother of us all." His obedience to Rome and his life-long submission to all authority in the Church were exemplary.

"The zeal of St. John Eudes for the Church developed very deep veneration for all the sacraments, which to him were admirable instruments of the power, wisdom and goodness of the eternal Father by which He forms and causes Jesus Christ, His Son, to live in Christians. Through the sacraments the Holy Spirit of God strengthens, perfects and sanctifies souls, according to St. Peter, the prince of the apostles. St. John Eudes regarded the sacraments as divinely instituted to extend the ranks and broaden the empire of Christ the King in order to effect its perfect consummation in each soul. The Saint described the sacraments as fountains of the Saviour to which those who aspire to salvation may come to draw with joy the waters of grace; the instruments by which the fruits of His life and death are applied; the treasures of the house of God which contain an infinity of riches hidden from the wise and prudent of this generation but revealed to the meek and humble; the sacred vessels in which Holy Mother Church preserves the Precious Blood, the divine spirit and the holy grace of her Spouse that she may nourish, sanctify and beautify her children He tried to foster this attitude in the minds and hearts of all the faithful." (28)

There were many severe problems existing in the Church in France during the lifetime of John Eudes. The Church had been torn by schism and heresy and many abuses had crept in. The physical condition of the church buildings and the lack of respect - even evidence of contempt by the people, grieved St. John Eudes very much.

"No longer is there a sanctuary or special place reserved for the sacred ministers in the Holy of Holies. All places are thrown open, not only to lay-men, to worldly women, to evil-living vagrants who enter the holy places only to profane them, but even to dogs that are allowed to roam around and do what they please; the Church is a den of thieves, a lair of wild beasts, a place of

profanation. . . You see lay-folk, men and women, entering the choirs and sanctuary, taking the priests' places, and sometimes seating themselves above them, standing beside the altar and even leaning upon it. . . ."

"That is not all: do you wish to see in what little consideration the majority of Christians hold the house of their God? Go to the houses of the rich and noble: you will see nothing there that is not clean and decent; you will see them adorned with rich tapestries, choice furniture, exquisite linen, vessels of silver often inlaid with gold. and enamel. Go to the Churches; you will see many of them in dirty and filthy surroundings; tapestried inside with cobwebs, paved with dust and mud; the roof and windows open to wind, rain, hail, and snow; altars devoid of ornaments and covered with dust, priests offering the dread sacrifice in torn albs and chasubles, corporals and purificators sometimes so dirty that they make one's heart sick; chalices made of tin and begrimed at that; the Most Holy Sacrament in a ciborium of the same material and within a wretched tabernacle covered and filled with dust and dirt, without a lamp, without a light, and without any mark of religion." (29)

"The spirit of religion also helped St. John Eudes to conceive great and exalted ideals of the majesty and sanctity of our churches. He often compared the house of God to the bosom of the Eternal Father. He used to say that Jesus Christ delighted in dwelling there among the children of men, as in the bosom of Him who is their common father. He looked upon Church buildings as a true paradise in which is found all the glory of God. He never entered the church except with fear, and he would hesitate at the door of the sanctuary. His reflections on the humiliation of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar and on his own sins would make him shudder in the presence of the divine majesty. The disrespectful behavior of many Catholics in the holy place caused him a great deal of suffering. He could never witness without grief and resentment the useless conversations and unworthy conduct common among people of the world. He would confront such profaners of the temple, with a stern countenance, addressing these words to them: 'How terrible is this place!' In THE KINGDOM OF JESUS he included a treatise on the honor and veneration due to churches. His zeal still unsatisfied, he said a great deal more on the subject in several other of his books." (30)

The lack of formal training for priests and the consequent laxity in their ministry was a source of great anguish for John Eudes. Many of them appeared to have little concern for the condition of the churches, or even for the spiritual welfare of their parishioners. John Eudes himself had been counselled by his own confessor to enter the Society of the Oratory, which had been founded by Peter de Berulle for the restoration of the sacerdotal state in France. This was a select band of priests who, by word and example, were to labor for the re-establishment of the priesthood in all its integrity.

During the missions he gave throughout France, John Eudes gave a great deal of time and effort towards the spiritual renewal of the ecclesiastics of the neighborhood. Hence, he added the role of reformer of the clergy to that of missionary.

"It was, in fact, necessary to reform the clergy. For this purpose he began to give special lectures and instructions, once or twice a week, to the priests of the country in which the mission was being preached, and in these lectures he endeavoured to show them the grandeur of their vocation, and the obligations which it imposed upon them. To these instructions he joined also spiritual readings and meditations, so that he may be regarded as the institutor of ecclesiastical retreats; But whatever fruits these instructions and exercises may have produced, they had not the same efficacy as a long and serious preparation for holy orders, to which young students should be subjected, during several years, in special institutions, under the direction of learned and experienced priests. Father Eudes soon came to the same conclusion as St. Vincent de Paul and Monsieur Olier, and he resolved to work immediately for the establishment of Seminaries." (31)

In 1643 John Eudes left the Oratory, after several attempts to interest the Oratorians in taking definite action towards the establishment of seminaries. He founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, known as the Eudist Fathers, with two principal aims: the first, to form good ecclesiastics by means of seminaries and retreats; and the second, to renew the Christian spirit among the people by means of missions.

"The end Fr. Eudes had in founding his Society was, first of all, to prepare irreproachable laborers for the church by the institution of seminaries, especially intended for young ecclesiastics and candidates for Holy Orders. It was principally these young clerics whom it was of the utmost importance to instruct in their duties, and to train to the life and virtues proper to their holy state; for it was from their good formation that the church in France had a right to hope for its restoration.

"But he also desired to see pastors, rectors, and curates, retire there every year for a retreat of eight or ten days. There, separated from the tumult of the world, and free from all temporal cares, they should give themselves entirely to the great affair of their salvation, reflecting on their past lives, purifying their conscience by an extraordinary confession and renewing themselves in the spirit of the priesthood." (32)

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church promulgated by Vatican II, emphasizes the priestly role of the bishop and his sacramental consecration, rather than the powers conferred on him by reason of his appointment. Not only the bishops, but all priests of the Church are to continue the work of the Good Shepherd, who came to serve and not to be served. The following passage from the writings of St. John Eudes illustrates this point:

"To all I have hitherto said showing the importance of work for souls I will now add that it is the work of the most revered, the most sacred, the most exalted class of persons in the world, that is, of Priests and the Shepherds of souls, for the priesthood has been established on earth solely for this object, it is the great and only work of Pastors. Of what magnitude and how weighty are their obligations. to labour for the salvation of the souls God has committed to their care! It is a burden under which even the Angels might tremble.

"What is the duty of a Shepherd? In the words of Holy Scripture it is to cure that which is sick, to strengthen that which is weak and infirm, to bind up that which is broken, to bring back that which was driven away, to seek that which is lost or gone astray, to preserve that which is well and strong." (33)

St. John Eudes urged the Religious of Our Lady of Charity to have the same unending devotion to Holy Mother Church, to wait patiently for Rome to speak even though it was many years before the Congregation was granted Papal approval. Religious today must also place their confidence and loyalty in Rome, especially in the Vicar of Christ on earth, as the Church passes through troubled waters. Bearing always in mind the objectives of the Church, the Religious of the Good Shepherd have a rich tradition from which to draw the strength and vigor they need to look ahead to the needs of the apostolate to day - always endeavoring to be faithful laborers in the Lord's vineyard for a rich harvest of souls.

## SOCIAL AWARENESS

"The appropriate renewal of religious life involves. . . an adjustment of the community to the changed condition of the times." (34)

This awareness of the needs of the people was what prompted St. John Eudes to found the Religious of Our Lady of Charity. He placed some young women who had been converted during the course of his missions, with a good woman who was not too successfully providing them with a sort of "refuge."

"Now one day, when Father Eudes, who was already famous, was taking a stroll with de Bernieres, M. and Madame de Camilly, and some other friends, they chanced to pass in front of Madeleine Lamy's door. She saw them and spoke to them as follows: Where are you going? To visit the churches, no doubt, and to feed there on the images of the Saints; then you will think yourselves very pious. That's not where the quarry lies. Better try and establish a house for those poor girls who are being lost for want of assistance and advice!"

Struck more forcefully than ever before by the impact of her words, the Saint endeavored to undertake what was considered an impossible task at that time - to interest young women of good background in a religious vocation to rehabilitate the underprivileged.

Earlier in this paper, the unselfish work of John Eudes during the plague in his native place of Argentan was described. What a supernatural response to the temporal and spiritual needs of those poor victims! Parish priests and curates fled or went into hiding through fear of death. There were very few generous enough to carry out, in presence of danger, the essential duties of their state. After this arduous apostolic work, John Eudes spent two years completing his preparations for the work of the missions.

"As John Eudes was living in solitude, he went over in his mind all that he had observed in those parishes where he had labored; he understood the great needs of both clergy and people, and sought for means by which he could most efficaciously remedy them." (36)

We have already discussed at length the work of St. John Eudes in striving for the spiritual development of the clergy. He was cognizant of the fact that the fervor of the priests increased, there was greater hope of their reaching the people to whom they ministered. He tried diligently to correlate the mission given by himself in conjunction with other priests, with the needs of the people.

"Nothing could escape such untiring patience. The greater portion of his missionary effort was directed towards the fathers and mothers of the largest families; but he also carefully looked after the children. They were taught their catechism and, if necessary, prepared for First Communion, after they had first publicly asked their parents blessing and forgiveness. Divine worship was carried out within and around the church with all the pomp calculated to touch and influence men's minds; processions of the Blessed Sacrament were held and hymns were sung. Moreover, open-air meetings were held, at which obscene books and drawings were burnt. Inquiries were made as to what steps should be taken to bring about reconciliations and effect those acts of restitution to which we have already referred. The missionaries were successful in nearly all such attempts. They also found time to give special conferences to the nobility, to the working classes, and to monks and nuns whose monasteries chanced to lie within the parish; leagues were organized against swearing and blaspheming, and also against duelling. The missionaries did not fail to visit the sick, and they had one or two poor men to dine with them every week." (37)

Other attempts by John Eudes to relieve the suffering of the people are further described as follows:

"When in 1651 Paris was caught in the throes of a great famine, the Ladies of Charity had recourse to the Saint because they had often heard of his zeal for the relief of the unfortunate, and had witnessed on several occasions the great blessings with which God had crowned his sermons. They therefore begged him to exhort the people from the pulpit to give alms. He did so with such great fervor and success that in a short time the purses were filled and the poor received considerable aid through this means.

The same thing happened several years later in the city of Caen, when a large hospital was being built. Several patients had been received into this building before its completion, but the poverty became so great there that the things necessary for the maintenance and the continuation of the building were lacking; in consequence it remained unfinished.

"M. John de Bemieres de Gavrus, who was in charge of the construction and administration of this hospital, and who had defrayed the greater part of the expenses that had been incurred up to that time, went to the seminary to beg the Saint to deliver several sermons on alms giving in St. Peter's Church in Caen. St. John Eudes, who might well be called the father of the poor, accepted the proposal with manifest joy, although he was then frail and broken with age. During the month of August he preached five times with all the zeal and forcefulness of a young man on Psalm 40: 'Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: Afterwards the faithful treasurer of France came to him and said: 'Father, you have preached enough. We now have means in abundance: As a matter of fact, there was no one, rich or poor, who did not wish to contribute to the construction and furnishing of the hospital. Some brought money or grain; others supplied linen, beds and furniture. There was actually difficulty in finding room for everything that was offered. It reminded one of the charity of the first Christians, who cast at the feet of the Apostles the goods they possessed, or of the devotion of the ancient Israelites who brought riches to Moses from all sides for the construction of the Tabernacle. The same charity was manifested several times during the lifetime of St. John Eudes, particularly when he was giving missions in the

large cities in which he founded houses of refuge for the poor and the sick, or restored old ones which had fallen into a dilapidated condition.

"St. John Eudes also had a rare sympathy for prisoners; the unfortunate condition of some of them touched him deeply. In their imprisonment he honored the captivity of Jesus Christ; he did all he could to have them freed, striving on every occasion to further their spiritual welfare by having Masses said on Sundays, feast days and certain week days, as well as by many other devotional exercises.

"The poor who were ashamed to beg were not forgotten by the Saint; they also felt the effects of his charity. He did good to them all the more willingly because he was less exposed to the dangers of vanity in doing so. While he was conducting missions, he wanted catechism to be taught to the beggars of the locality, who sometimes numbered close to two thousand. At his request alms would afterwards be given to them. He overlooked no means to establish schools for poor children in places where he happened to be, so that they might have a place to learn the things necessary for their salvation." (38)

St. John Eudes was involved with all classes of people - the very wealthy as well as the very poor. He even addressed the Queen in Paris, to remind her of the sufferings of the people and other abuses:

"At Paris, at St. Germain des Pres in 1660, Father Eudes fears not to address his words to the Queen Mother, Ann of Austria, and to recall to her the duties of royalty, in the presence of her people. He insists especially on the extirpation of heresies, old and new, namely of Calvinism and Jansenism, and on the destruction of Atheism which was spreading more and more through the capital; he insists also on the causes of public misery, namely, luxury, the source of the greatest disorders, and on the exactions of subaltern tax-gatherers. And so touching are his accents, when, in the name of God, he conjures the Queen to better the condition, to relieve the sufferings of her subjects, that he draws tears from the eyes of all. He then approaches a more delicate question, the distribution of benefices to worthy ecclesiastics who would faithfully discharge their duties. Notwithstanding the difficulty of the matter, he treats it with no less strength than the preceding one, imploring Ann of Austria, with tears in his eyes, to use the greatest care in her choice, and to inspire the King with a sense of his duty towards the Church and Religion, for his own interests here and hereafter. And instead of being offended by his remonstrances, the Queen is grateful to him! 'That is the way to preach,' she says to her courtiers. 'Those who flatter, deceive us, they should tell us plainly the truths which concern us.'" (39)

We can only strive to imitate the foresight and courage of this holy man.

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## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. MARY EUPHRASIA IN THE LIGHT OF VATICAN COUNCIL II

From the **Conferences and Instructions** of St. Mary Euphrasia:

1. Spirit, tradition and characteristics of St. Mary Euphrasia and our Institute in relation to Article 2 of "Perfectae Caritatis."

"Since the fundamental norm of religious life is a following of Christ as proposed by the gospel, such should be regarded by all communities as their supreme law."

2. Specific characteristics of Mother Foundress' spirit
  - a) Her adherence to Holy Mother Church;
  - b) Her Scriptural, doctrinal and liturgical spirit;
  - c) Her deep personal relationship to Christ as evidenced by her spirit of prayer and love of the Eucharist; that parallel to Article 2. of 4'Perfectae Caritatis."

"It serves the best interests of the Church for communities to have their own special character and purpose. Therefore loyal recognition and safekeeping should be accorded to the spirit of founders, as also to all the particular goals and wholesome traditions which constitute the heritage of each community."



## 1) Spirit, Tradition and Characteristics of St. Mary Euphrasia and Our Institute.

"Since the fundamental norm of the religious life is a *following of Christ as proposed by the gospel*, such is to be regarded by' all communities as their *supreme law*." (Perfectae Caritatis, Article 2)

Pg. 14 Instruct yourselves, instruct yourselves. Do not hesitate to go back upon the fundamental truths of religion, to read again and again the Epistles and Gospels.

Pg. 14 Remain devoted to the doctrine of Jesus Christ, through which only can you hope for light, justice and sanctity for yourselves and your neighbor.

Pg. 17 As for ourselves we sail in two barques, that of the Gospel and that of our constitutions. We should pass constantly from the one to the other.

Pg. 8 In the excess of His Love the Lord has deigned to choose you as guides to lead other souls to Him. He desires that others should profit by the abundance of the blessings with which He has enriched you, by the graces which He continually bestows upon you.

Pg. 11 When the Divine Master, leaving His parents, remained in the Temple conversing with the Doctors, He wished to show us the necessity of being instructed ourselves so as to enlighten others.

Pg. 39 How mistaken are those who make sanctity consist in anything but the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Love is the fulfilling of the law

Pg. 40 How great should be our love for God from whom we have received so many benefits, and Who only asks as a proof of our love that we should keep His commandments.

Pg. 41 Do everything as far as possible through love, and you will see what great things you will be able to effect.

Pg.48 Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd is the true model Whom we must endeavor to imitate, in order to acquire the perfection of our holy state. He is the divine Original that we must strive to reproduce in our whole conduct.

You will effect no good, my dear daughters, you will not possess the spirit of our vocation until you become animated with the thoughts, sentiments and affections of the Good Shepherd, of Whom you should be the living images

Now what did Jesus Christ say of Himself? The Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

How did He act? He pursued sinners with fatherly solicitude - He endured every kind of fatigue to bring them back to Him. Remember the ineffable goodness with which He received Mary Magdalen. See Him on another occasion seated by the well of Jacob. He awaits a soul. He desires to convert the Samaritan woman.

Ps. 44 Consider Him after His Resurrection, always acting the part of the Good Shepherd, pursuing the two sheep. He walked with them, accommodating His pace to theirs, taking part in their discourse, condescending to their weakness in order to instruct them and enlighten the darkness of their minds. Here, my dear daughters, is the example you should follow, for you are destined to be so many Good Shepherds, and you must imitate the abnegation, the spirit of charity, the zeal of Jesus Himself. Like Him go to Emmaus in search of the wandering sheep and fulfilling the office of the Good Shepherd in their regard, you will bring them back to the fold. The object of Our thoughts, desires, words and actions, should be the salvation of Our dear sheep, after the example of Our Divine Saviour, Whose thoughts, desires, efforts and labors had no other end.

Pg. 45 Do not forget that to labor efficaciously for souls we must be holy, we must belong entirely to God, and cease to think of ourselves. Jesus Christ has chosen you. He has associated you with His mission to nations, that you may bear fruit. Fruits of conversion and salvation. You will thus draw down on yourselves

manifold blessings and an abundance of grace. Always take the Shepherd of shepherds as your model. Render yourselves worthy of your sublime vocation by an ardent, active, vigilant zeal, and a boundless charity.

Our Lord appears to have always had a special predilection for the title of Shepherd. The reason for this was that their conduct towards their flock represents better than any other figure, God's tenderness and solicitude for His dear sheep.

Pg. 77 Clothe yourself with the spirit of Jesus Christ, imitate His life of silence, sacrifice, zeal, obedience, poverty and humility.

Pg. 79 At the feet of Jesus Christ, whom you should strive to imitate you will learn the true way of honoring the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, to whom, as you know, He paid so much honor Himself.

Pg. 84 Has not Jesus Himself said: Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you – After such an invitation who could refuse to give themselves up to His love? And then, too, we have so many things to say to Him, so many secrets to communicate to Him. Let us go to Him, therefore, with confidence. Let us make Him the confident of our hopes, our desires, and longings; let us seek after Him the strength we need for our days of trial. He will secretly strengthen us and pour out upon us in abundance ever new graces. He asks in return from each one of us a special tribute of love and gratitude. Let us offer Him this tribute by boundless devotedness and by constant fidelity in fulfilling our holy engagements.

Pg.88 You must endeavor with all your heart to love, honor and imitate Jesus Christ. This must be your chief exercise if you desire to attain sanctity, and at the same time help weak souls to do so too.

Pg. 95 Our Lord says to us, Ask, and you shall receive. Our Lord Jesus Christ opens His treasures to us; He is there ready to listen to you, to anticipate your desires, to provide for all your needs. Go to Him with your troubles, your weariness, your disappointments, your sorrows, and you will come away consoled and strengthened for the path you still have to travel.

Pg. 97 Enkindle in your hearts a love for the Adorable Heart of Our Lord; ask Him for all you desire; remember that His Heart is an inextinguishable furnace of grace.

Pg. 101 I implore you, my dear daughters, apply yourselves earnestly to the interior life, the life hidden in God, to the spirit of prayer. In religion, there is much need to seek from our Divine Savior the courage and zeal needful in working for the salvation of souls.

Pg. 100 My dear daughters, have great zeal, great ardour for the salvation of souls, and to obtain this be devoted to prayer and Holy Communion, for where will you find the graces necessary to fulfill your mission, if not from the Author of grace Himself?

Pg. 106 To you it belongs to beg God with all earnestness that He would teach you to converse with Him, and it is to you to strive to make yourselves worthy to receive this grace. Prepare yourself constantly for prayer by great fidelity to your duties, then in all simplicity present yourself before our Divine Saviour. Harken to His voice when He speaks to your heart and when He tells you to correct certain faults or suggests certain sacrifices. Ask His pardon for your faults, thank Him for His innumerable benefits, beg new graces for yourself, for your neighbor, for your sisters laboring in our missions. Your prayer should be an Apostolic prayer, animated not only with a great desire to please God and glorify Him by your service, but also by a longing to bring the whole' world to His love and service, even at the cost of your life.

Pg. 107 Never, my dear daughters, will you labor efficaciously for the salvation of souls, if you have not first sought in prayer and silence the lights which are necessary for this end. Religious animated by the spirit of God effect many more conversions than those who are only endowed with great talents.

Pg. 109 After the example of the saints, love to listen to God's voice, and make it your delight to converse with Him in the recollection of prayer.

Pg. 120 To the interior soul, to the soul living alone and hidden in God may be applied these words: She will be the friend of the Lord.

Pg. 126 You are far more than soldiers of Jesus Christ. You are His chosen spouses, who in order to be more pleasing, more like your Divine Spouse, have willed to unite yourselves intimately with Him by the holy Vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and charity.

Pg. 127 By choosing poverty you have renounced not only the possession of the goods of this world, but even the desire of them.

Embracing chastity you have bound yourself to lead on earth a life similar to that of the angels in Heaven.

By your Vow of obedience you have consecrated to God your whole will, so that it may be no longer yours but entirely His. You have resolved to imitate your Divine Master, more particularly, in His submission to His Heavenly Father in the garden of Olives and on Calvary.

Ponder deeply on the sublimity of our sacrifice in consecrating ourselves by a fourth Vow, to the work of saving souls. This sacrifice raises us to the dignity of cooperators in the work of God's mercy.

Pg. 128 Our principal end and object is charity, that charity which should lead us to follow in the footsteps of the Divine Shepherd and to go in search of the poor sheep, who, having strayed from the fold of Jesus Christ are become the outcasts of the world.

Pg.134 It is a great glory for us, and we should recognize that this state is a gift of God's goodness in our regard. God has vouchsafed to choose us out of the multitude. He communicates light which penetrated the depth of our soul, causing it to see clearly the nothingness of worldly ties. He gave us an attraction for religious life and for works of the most sublime charity, and He accompanied this great favor of a religious vocation, with those special graces which conquer the obstacles frequently encountered by a soul who desires to follow God's call. The blessing of a vocation is, therefore, a gift from God, and to Him all the glory of it must be rendered. Let us unite in thanking Him for the marvels of grace which He has wrought in us.

Pg. 138 Live joyfully with your God, love Him, think only of Him, seek Him, occupy yourselves with Him alone, let Him be your souls' atmosphere, give yourselves unreservedly to God.

Pg. 145 Do not fear to be too humble. Look at Our Lord Jesus Christ at the feet of Judas.

Pg. 146 Had Our Lord known a surer way to Heaven than that of humility no doubt He would have taught it to us. Who amongst you was cradled in a manger? Who amongst you has been caluminated as He was? Who has borne the ignominy of the cross? The disciple is not greater than the Master. With humility alone and no other austerities than those prescribed by the Rule you can make great progress in virtue.

Pg. 147 A truly humble religious is convinced that she is possessed of no merit, but with God's help she can do all things.

Love humility, unite to the realization of your own misery and unbounded confidence in the goodness of God. You will be strong in the very strength of God, and your intimate union with Him will daily increase.

Pg. 154 We should be indeed foolish were we to act for any motive but that of pleasing God. Let us live in such a manner that we may be able to say confidently, "I live in God, I act only for God."

Pg. 157 Be like a fisherman who keeps casting his net, always hoping to catch fish. Then leave God to do the rest; He knows better than we do what is for our good. We are instruments in His hands, which He deigns to use for the accomplishment of His designs.

Pg. 159 In your laborious life, my dear daughters, you are like Jesus Christ on the cross; each of you has received her mission from the Incarnate Word, and all your sufferings are, so to say, a co-operation in the mystery of the Redemption. Let us suffer all for God, let us lose all for God, and we shall find all in God.

Pg. 162 The desire to do good to others and to add to the glory of God raises the soul to heavenly thoughts. When a soul is filled with true charity, nothing appears difficult, because this charity becomes the

principle of all its operations, and it acts only under this influence. It is said in Holy Scripture: God is charity, and he who abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.

Pg. 179 It is in silence that we hear the secret intimations of divine Providence, and by it we shall soon reach that perfection which is so necessary to each if they are to contribute efficaciously to the works of the Institute. In our holy Congregation prayer, an interior life, solitude, should be our chief though not our only end; but the one will lead to the other, for no labor will bear fruit for the salvation of souls unless the necessary light for conducting souls to God has been first gained in prayer and silence.

Pg. 180 Endeavor to become interior religious, souls hidden in God, and do nothing except to glorify Him and give Him pleasure. Only in solitude and in silence can God make His voice heard in your heart. It is of absolute necessity in our vocation that self-sacrifice and the practice of an interior life should be a habit.

Pg. 190 If you are generous enough, my dear daughters, to allow yourselves to be crucified after the example of our Divine Saviour, to die with Him so as to bury your poor human nature in the tomb, you will rise gloriously from the sepulchre, as He did, to be born again in a divine life which, begun here below in the mysterious obscurity of Faith, will have its completion in the splendors of eternal glory, when you shall be able to say with truth: I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me.

Pg. 200 Remember all your life long, my beloved daughters, that you are the privileged children of God and of the Church, and that you must put your whole heart into corresponding to the designs of divine Providence over our holy Congregation. Let us esteem our vocation more and more, and look forward with joy and gratitude to all the good which God means us to accomplish,

Pg. 201 We must fathom and put into practice these words of St. John Eudes: "They should employ their minds and hearts, their care and industry, in rendering themselves worthy coadjutors and cooperators with Jesus Christ Our Lord, in the work of the salvation of souls whom He has redeemed at the price of His Blood."

Pg. 211 You should endeavor to rise to the height of the vocation which God has given you. Your thoughts, your sentiments, your affections, ought to be the thoughts, sentiments and affections of Jesus Christ Himself. Your virtue ought not to be an ordinary and common virtue, but you ought to endeavor to attain the highest degree of perfection.

Pg. 217 Let us pray for the salvation of souls; let us labor for the salvation of souls. We must never forget that our lives must be entirely consecrated to this end, and were we to have anything else in view we should be wanting in the spirit of our vocation.

Pg. 220 I repeat it, my dear daughters, be full of love and charity for souls.

Pg. 223 Remember, my dear daughters, that you are the instruments chosen by God to co-operate in the great work of the salvation of souls, that to you it is given to cultivate the grain of mustard seed, destined to become a great tree in the field of the Church. Your efforts must all be directed to this end. By your means souls who have strayed into the ways of sin must be brought to the grateful shade of this tree, there to recover strength and vigor. Now, how can you best effect this? It will be by the faithful accomplishment of your duties from whence will result all the beauty of God's House.

Pg. 223 Yes, my dear daughters, if you remain faithful to the mission God has intrusted to you, if you love it sincerely, you can do much good, for great works are only accomplished by love.

Pg. 228 Seek for happiness, my dear daughters, in God alone; but do not fail to refer to His glory and to the salvation of souls all that you are doing or may do. Yes, be assured that when your actions are actuated with this spirit they will be of great value and merit, and will bear in some way the stamp of sanctity, although they may appear to be very, very little, very indifferent, and very lowly. If a soul called to religion had any other end, she would grievously deceive herself. For this reason I unceasingly recommend to you great purity of intention in all you do. The soul that keeps this in view sees in all things only the good pleasure of God; her one thought is the faithful accomplishment of His holy will; she considers only His glory and the salvation of souls, and is, therefore, always content whatever happens.

Pg. 231 Have we not often heard in the depth of our hearts, Let there be light, when it has pleased God to enlighten our minds by showing us the nothingness of created things, and the happiness of serving His Divine Majesty, in such sort that a supernatural light illuminated all our actions, vivifying and animating them. Every good impulse; every holy desire which we feel in our souls, are so many effects of this divine light. Happy they who know how to profit by them.

Pg. 232 Be faithful, my dear daughters, in following the interior light which God deigns to grant to each of you. The more faithfully you follow the light of grace, the greater will be your enjoyment of that delightful peace which constitutes our happiness here below.

Pg. 238 Keep alive within you and bring under wise control that courage which makes you long to undertake great works and the intrepidity that would lead you to overcome all obstacles; because under God's inspiration they will be a powerful help in undertaking what others might consider it folly to attempt.

Pg. 273 Die to a worldly life, to your desires and to your will, to your self-love, to your judgment and to your own ideas. Renounce all these things to place them at the foot of the Cross, there to be buried and offered as a sacrifice to Our Lord, to obedience. In this way you will walk safely along the path of perfection in company with Our Divine Master. Follow Him in all simplicity and purity of heart; He will be your support.

Pg.279 We are daily overwhelmed with God's benefits as was Jerusalem. He watches over and guards us with His wings and lavishes on us His most tender caresses. He frequently sends us prophets to recall His holy will to us and make known what He desires we should do for His service. He protects us against our enemies and puts them to flight; He has surrounded us, as He did Jerusalem, with a wall of enclosure which defends us from outward foes. He speaks to us, unceasingly, in the depth of our souls to encourage us in our labors, to urge us, to entreat us to remain faithful to Him. He often invites us to the Holy Table to be nourished with His Flesh and Blood. He gives us manna in abundance as He did formerly to the children of Israel in the desert.

Pg. 292 In the Old Law it was much more difficult to sanctify oneself than it is in the New, because God kept Himself, so to say, hidden in the heights of His inaccessible splendors; but in the fullness of time the Son of God, in becoming Man, was given us as a model for the practice of humility, obedience, mortification, and of all the virtues. Moreover, He Himself has deigned to remain always present in the Blessed Eucharist, where we find the very source of sanctity.

Pg. 304 God will act in you and He will communicate to you in abundance the knowledge you need, provided that you love prayer, are generous, charitable, affable, industrious, in a word, it suffices that you are careful to act for God alone.

You must draw from the Divine Heart of Jesus the esteem and love of all the virtues that you should practice, and of those above all which are the special object of your Vows. A religious possessing the spirit of her Institute, who loves her Vows, contemns all that is not God.

Pg. 326 In poverty you will find all riches, and he who possesses nothing has everything, because God has taken upon Himself the care of His life. You are not called to devote yourselves to the rich, my dear daughters; make yourself poor with the poor, because the poor are the treasures God has confided to you.

Pg. 330 Do nothing but by obedience, and God, Who never lets Himself be out-done in generosity, will rather work a miracle than leave you in difficulty.

Pg. 342 It was not for your salvation alone that you embraced the religious state. God destined you to have a spiritual family, He gave you children to convert. He has deigned to choose you as His coadjutrices, and to this end has given you special graces; but to sanctify and perfect you He demands cooperation on your part. He exacts perfect fidelity.

Pg. 344 Be faithful to God, living only for Him, laboring only for Him, offering Him all you do.

Pg. 347 It is above all in suffering that Religious of the Good Shepherd should imitate Our Lord, because, you know, my dear daughters, that to labor for the salvation of souls and to suffer are synonymous terms and cannot be separated.

Pg. 351 Good works take their rise, gain strength and are perfected only at the foot of the Cross. Our Lord wills that we follow Him to Calvary, in order to allow us to participate in the work of the redemption of souls which He effected by the shedding of His precious Blood. If you encounter trials suffer patiently and in silence, do not by your own fault lose the merit which God has given you the means of acquiring.

Pg. 353 Remember that you are not alone, but Jesus Christ labors with you and imparts to you His strength.

Pg. 372 Severity is not the spirit of our vocation, nor is it God's spirit.

Pg. 381 To gain souls to God, you must be pleasant and agreeable. Endeavor to become so. Let peace always shine on your countenance, and let words of sweetness and charity flow like balm from your lips on to the souls of your hearers. Far from being affected or haughty, be natural, affable and obliging, yet grave in manner. Let it be visible to all that you are souls consecrated to God and happy in your vocation.

Pg. 385 Our ministry is a glorious one, and we may say it is a continuation of that of the Apostles. For your consolation, listen to Jesus Christ speaking to His disciples: "You who have followed Me shall be seated on a throne of glory in Heaven." This is addressed to all who have imitated the Apostles in their Apostolic labors. We can truly affirm that wherever we are established, God pours down torrents of graces and love by the blessings He bestows on our labors, whilst waiting to enjoy in Heaven that torrent of sweetness and delight which satiates the souls of the just. Let us receive in peace the crosses we meet here below; we shall never be exempted from them.

Pg. 395 Oh what charity and compassion we should have for these souls placed in our hands by Holy Church, in the name of the Divine Pastor and of their tender Mother, the Blessed Virgin. Love them much, very much. Console and strengthen these suffering sheep; make them by God's grace happy, very happy; this is your duty. Do not forget that you will win hearts to our Lord only by charity

Pg. 397 Love all your girls, whatever their nationality. Devote yourselves to their happiness with all possible zeal, and you will rejoice the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of the Blessed Virgin; you will rejoice the Church, which has inherited the love of Jesus and Mary for souls.

Pg. 401 The Divine Gardener chose each of you separately from the midst of the desert of the world, and Himself led you by the hand into His Own flower garden. The abundant dew of heavenly blessings descends daily on your souls to lighten your troubles and lessen your fatigues, causing you to taste an ineffable peace and enjoy a happiness as great as can be here below. You have a heart created to love and to be grateful, therefore let the expression of your joy and gratitude for the grace of your vocation ascend to your Benefactor. Love your holy state more and more, desire to have a thousand lives to offer to the Lord and strive to return Him love for love.

Pg. 417 What life can be more beautiful than that of a religious, who, daily offering herself a living holocaust to God, and occupied only with what is pleasing to Him, is at length able to say with the great Apostle. "I live now; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Pg. 420 Oh! yes, this work is God's work. He will keep you all in His Heart.

Pg. 422 This spirit of charity, simplicity and gratitude is the soul and life of your Institute. With it you will possess all things, and God will continue to shed upon you the dew of His blessings. And then, my dear daughters, it is only by this that it will be possible for you to gain souls to God.

Pg. 423 You are continually occupied in bringing back souls to the fold of the Good Shepherd, on all sides you raise Churches in His honor, it is for this reason that the representatives of Jesus Christ feels such interest in our Congregation.

## 2) Specific Characteristics of Mother Foundress' Spirit -

### a) Her adherence to Holy Mother Church

Pg. 1 We would wish, my dear daughters, to speak to you unceasingly of our Mother the Church, of the love which is due to her and of the obligation we all lie under of praying much for her. No Religious Congregation should be more attached to her than ours, for there is not one that owes more to her, not one which stands more in need of her protection and support. Let us then remain always so closely united to her, that she may be able under all circumstances to recognize us as a mother recognizes her obedient and devoted children. On arriving at a Foundation you should consider that as daughters of Holy Church you are sent by her, and animated with these sentiments go amongst our dear girls and devote yourselves as apostles to their salvation.

The Church is the ship which contains the treasure of our Faith and Hope, and for more than eighteen centuries it has borne these riches to all nations, passing victoriously through every storm. Jesus Christ Himself is the Pilot; He it is who holds the helm and steers it safely through all shoals it encounters.

Pg. 4 Let us pray then, pray unceasingly for the Holy Church to whom you are so attached. Let us sacrifice and immolate ourselves for her that her conquests may be multiplied, and that the splendor of her beauty may become more and more manifest.

Pg. 15 We again recommend you to converse frequently amongst yourselves of the Church, in order to keep alive the spirit of love and submission which you owe to her. Speak often on this point to our dear children, so that they may come to know and love the Holy Church.

Pg. 17 Oh, how I rejoice that our Congregation should be so closely united to the Church! We can have no greater assurance of our preservation, it was the Church itself that brought us into existence. In fact, no sooner did the project of the Generalate present itself, than we at once cast ourselves on to Holy Church, which is the cause of the special affection the Sovereign Pontiff bears towards us. Lastly, I have such entire confidence in the Church, that when she speaks I believe as firmly as if Jesus Christ Himself had spoken.

Pg. 17 Oh, my daughters, how I love our holy Faith and the Church our Mother! How consoling it is to witness our Congregation laboring in the interests of this Faith and of the holy Church, to which you should all be attached with as much devotedness as constancy.

Pg. 19 As the sunflower, so named because it ever turns towards the sun, and the mariner's compass always points towards the pole, so should you look continually towards Our Lord, towards Rome and towards your Congregation.

Pg. 21 The Holy Father told us that he regarded our Institute as one of the brightest gems in his crown. Let us endeavor to correspond to the opinion which the venerated Head of the Church entertains of us, by practicing faithfully all our Observances and holy Constitutions.

Pg.21 Nothing can be altered in our Rules and Constitutions without the authorization of the Sovereign Pontiff whose Brief establishing the Generalate confirmed them all in general and each in particular. Therefore, if any difficulty should arise, reference must be made to the Cardinal Protector of our holy Congregation, recourse must be had to Rome and from thence light will come.

Pg. 21 You are placed for all times under the protection of the Church, and as the Holy Church cannot fail, it is impossible that a Religious Congregation should perish which maintains an inviolable fidelity to its authority.

Pg. 22 Thank God unceasingly for the great blessing He has granted you in causing you to .be born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, that Holy, Apostolic, Roman Church whose daughters you have the honor to be.

Let us people the Church with holy souls. God's Vicar on earth rejoices each time we ask to found another of our Houses.

Pg. 87 In our Institute there are three Cenacles. That of the Church, in which we find all our Customs, our religious ceremonies, our strength. That of Communion or the union of the soul with God by the reception of the Blessed Eucharist, and that of our vocation or the study. of our vows, and of the duties of our calling. These are three special solitudes linking one with another, and the bond which unites them is the spirit of the Church. Act always in accordance with this spirit, entering into the sentiments it inspires.

Pg.199 We could hardly enumerate all the favors granted us in the Holy City. What precious audiences with His Holiness, Gregory XVI. What abundant blessings we obtained for the whole Congregation. Oh, how greatly the Head of the Church loves our Congregation, how dear you are to his heart, my dear daughters.

Pg.200 Remember all your life long, that you are the privileged children of God and of the Church, and that you. must put your whole heart into corresponding to the designs of divine Providence over our holy Congregation.

Pg. 221 I gladly point out to you that the rapid growth of our Institute in so short a time is due only to the special blessing bestowed upon it by holy Church. In the Brief establishing the Generalate our Holy Father, Gregory XVI, deigned to use the following words: "We support it with all the weight of Our authority." The little grain of mustard seed which he had first sown in I the soil of France, and which had sprung up in a few parts only, has developed, grown rapidly, and from a little shrub has become a great tree extending it's branches in every quarter of the globe, gathering souls by thousands under its protecting shade. His Holiness Pope Pius IX, after his accession to the Papal throne, repeatedly said to our sisters "The work of the Good Shepherd is a work after my own heart." And this venerable Pontiff has given us a proof of his fatherly interest in the Institute by the Brief of July 21, 1855, which established provinces in the Congregation. It has been, as you see, the blessing of the Church and of its Head which causes us to advance, enabling us to make fresh progress every day.

Pg. 385 Our ministry is a glorious one, and we may well say it is a continuation of that of the Apostles.

Pg. 393 To you the Church confides her children whom the world rejects, but whom her maternal love eagerly receives. What an honor Holy Church bestows on you in associating you with the very mission of Jesus Christ.

Pg. 393 What may these girls placed in your hands become? How glorious is your mission, and how necessary is prayer to fulfil it worthily. Each of us should offer for this intention all her sacrifices, all her trials, all her mortifications, all her good works, thus every moment of our lives will be consecrated to the salvation of these dear souls.

Pg.394 "Take care of these children." We must admit that we owe our vocation to these girls, because without them our Congregation would not exist.

Pg.394 We continually talk to you about our fourth Vow. But could we speak too much of the salvation of souls since it is our vocation and our only end? My greatest desire is that you may understand, more and more, the extent of your obligations regarding these dear souls. Endeavor to accomplish your fourth Vow in all its perfection. It is summed up in two words, Charity and Zeal. I advise you to ponder it over and over again.

Pg. 395 Oh, what charity and compassion we should have for these souls placed in our hands by Holy Church, in the name of the Divine Pastor and of their lender Mother, the Blessed Virgin. Love them very much. Console and strengthen them; make them by God's grace very happy; this is your duty. Do not forget that you will win hearts to Our Lord only by Charity.

Pg. 397 Love all your girls, whatever their nationality. Devote yourselves to their happiness with all possible zeal and you will rejoice the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, you will rejoice the Church, which has inherited the love of Jesus and Mary for souls.

Pg. 422 Our Institute is very closely united to Holy Church, because it has the blessings, the protection of the Church, because even the Head of the Church is doubly your first Superior, as Christians and as religious.

Pg. 422 When the Head of the Church suffers, we suffer also; when the bark of Peter is tossed by the tempest, so is our little and frail vessel. Then it is that we must cling closer than ever to the bark which cannot



perish, and with it we shall be saved. Since my journey to Rome the truth of what I say is very close to me.

Pg. 423 Let us constantly sail our little ship on the side of Rome and we shall have nothing to fear.

Pg. 423 You are continually occupied in bringing back souls to the Good Shepherd; on all sides you raise churches to His honor, and it is for this reason that the representative of Jesus Christ feels such interest in our Congregation.

Pg. 424 Do you know what it is that earns this special protection of God? Do you know what it is that enables our Congregation to spread to all sides? It comes from our attachment to the Church. Oh, how I love our holy Mother the Church! How consoling it is to me to reflect that our dear Congregation labors for her exaltation.

## **b) Her Scriptural, Doctrinal and Liturgical Spirit**

Pg. 2 Our little Congregation follows closely in the footprints of the Church. See the prodigious efforts that are being made at the present time for the propagation of the faith. And it is precisely at this moment that our Institute seeks to extend itself.

Pg. 5 The Institute is founded to labor not only for the salvation of the souls around us, but also for that of little pagans, of negroes, of idolators.

Pg.6 We read in Holy Scripture that when King Amalec sought to destroy the people of Israel in the desert, Moses commanded Joshua to choose brave men and march against the enemy, promising to remain on a neighboring mountain watching and imploring the assistance of the Most High. And Holy Writ adds that whilst Moses prayed with his arms uplifted to Heaven, the Israelites were victorious; but when Moses grew weary and his hands fell a little, Amalec had the advantage. Then Aaron and Hur supported the arms of Moses until the Amalecites were completely defeated by Joshua or put to flight at the point of the sword. This is an illustration of our work and of that of the holy daughters of Carmel. The latter are on the mountain praying fervently with uplifted hand to Heaven, offering fasts and austerities, to obtain victory for us whilst we struggle, hand to hand, with the infernal enemy.

Pg. 8 Our holy Congregation has two ends, to reform morals and to strengthen faith in souls.

Pg. 9 Our vocation is a vocation of zeal, an apostolate of charity; let us bear in mind that our entire life should be consecrated to the propagation of our holy faith and the sanctification of souls.

Pg. 9 Our holy Constitutions point out that all Religious Institutes have a common as well as a special end: the common end of all is to serve and glorify God by the practice of the Evangelical Councils, yet "As there are many mansions in the house of our Heavenly Father, there are also diverse families and many different offices." Our special office as Religious of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd is not only to sanctify ourselves and save our own souls, but also to labor for the sanctification of others.

Pg. 25 The following passage of the Gospel applies perfectly to our vocation: "What woman having ten goats, if she lose one goat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently, till she find it? And when she hath found it call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the goat which I had lost." Our goats are our dear girls. Rejoice at their entrance for they are so many goats which were lost and have been found. Before you knew these dear children they belonged to you. You should love them, you will reach Heaven only by working for them. Strive to bring them back to God; this is our vocation, the vocation to which He had deigned to call you and by which He distinguished you amongst so many others in the great family of the Church. A religious of our Congregation can be esteemed but in proportion to her charity to our dear girls and the fidelity with which she devotes herself to their salvation.

Pg. 32 Always remember that our Congregation was founded only through love of souls and by this love alone will you maintain it. Love souls because God loves souls and Our Lord shed His blood for their ransom.

Pg. 34 You know the mission which the Son of God came on earth to fulfil. Consider that you have in a measure the privilege of a similar vocation.

Pg. 36 Our vocation is to receive with open arms, the most abandoned souls. There is no misery, no spiritual wound, however repulsive, which we ought not to seek to cure with the assistance of grace.

Pg. 37 Our Institute is an Institute of Faith and Love.

Pg. 43 I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep. Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd is the true model Whom we must endeavor to imitate, in order to acquire the perfection of QUI' holy state. He is the divine Original that we must strive to reproduce in our whole conduct. We must endeavor on our side to form ourselves to the spirit of this Adorable Master and live His very life, since He has deigned to associate us with His work, to allow us to discharge His office, so to say, in the fold into which He has brought so many lost sheep. Become animated with the thoughts, sentiments and affections of the Good Shepherd, of Whom you should be the living images in the midst of your flocks.

Pg. 44 The object of our thoughts, desires, words and actions, should be the salvation of our girls after the example of Our Divine Saviour, Whose thoughts, desires, efforts and labors had no other end.

Pg. 48 I feel it my duty to give you a very important recommendation. You know that it is written in the Gospel that the Good Shepherd left the ninety-nine sheep to seek the one that was lost. If you abandon them to take up other works you will forfeit the favors and blessings of God.

Pg. 417 What life can be more beautiful than that of a religious, who, daily offering herself a living holocaust to God, and occupied only with what is pleasing to Him, is at length able to say with the great Apostle, "I live now; yet not I, but Christ lives in me." Again, " God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Imitate the meekness of the Sacred Heart, bearing humbly all the sufferings which you encounter in the exercise of your fourth Vow. We must live for God and in God, entirely consecrated to Him. You are established on Mount Calvary.

Clothe yourself with the spirit of Jesus Christ, imitate His life of silence, sacrifice, zeal, obedience, poverty and humility.

Your hearts are consecrated to Our Lord in a very special manner; this imposes upon you the obligation to imitate, as perfectly as you can the beautiful virtues which shone in Mary. Your life should be like hers, one of prayer hidden in God. Thus you will have the happiness of being her beloved daughters. She will watch over you with all the incomparable tenderness of her maternal heart.

Understand clearly that our Institute is intended for labor and be persuaded that the active life can be perfectly united to the contemplative.

A Religious of the Good Shepherd, if she is to live according to the spirit of her Institute, should be a soul of prayer, since she ought to be another Jesus Christ, a mediator between God and souls.

### **c) Her Deep, personal relationship to Christ as evidences by her spirit of prayer and love for the Eucharist**

Pg. 61 In Holy Communion our souls find the strength and courage of which we stand in so great need.

Pg. 62 In this Holy Sacrament we truly find God and really enjoy His Divine Presence.

Pg. 63 Banish quickly from your heart all that displeases God and you will feel His grace descending in great abundance upon you, little by little you will be completely transformed. Endeavor to approach the Holy Table with great confidence, joined to a deep sense of your needs. Draw near to Lord thoroughly penetrated with your nothingness, your weakness, your poverty, and you may hope all things from His goodness and

mercy. Do not forget that Jesus Christ is no less powerful, no less generous in the Blessed Sacrament than He was during His mortal career when He lived on earth and conversed with men.

Pg. 63 How great should be our confidence, when the signal favor: granted us of possessing within us the Divine Physician of souls, this M from Whom every blessing proceeds.

Pg. 64 Do not fear to approach Him since He Himself calls you. He is the God of all consolation and He loves to see that we Confide entirely in His divine goodness.

Pg. 64 Have great love for Holy Communion; you will find strength, courage and light. Holy Communion will always be the peace, consolation and life of your soul. Take care each day to prepare carefully and fervently for Communion. The progress of a religious depends above all on her Communion.

Pg. 66 I have several times told you and I repeat it again. "Holy Communion should be our food, our consolation, our one desire.

Pg. 67 This divine Sacrament is the joy, the glory, the support of every faithful soul and particularly of a Religious of the Good Shepherd. Living in a world thickly strewn with thorns and surrounded with difficulties of every kind, what would become of us if we had not the immense happiness of possessing the treasure of Holy Communion?

Pg. 69 The time of all others in which we should be the most recollected is when Jesus Christ dwells within us after Holy Communion.

Pg.69 You must neglect nothing in order to approach worthily this Sacrament of love.

Pg. 70 You know the meaning of these three words which alone might suffice as an habitual subject for our meditations - Eucharist, Host, Communion. Eucharist signifies thanksgiving, praise, gratitude; it places before us the sentiments with which we should be animated before and after Holy Communion. Host is another word for Victim. When we have the happiness of communicating, we receive the Sacred Host, that is to say, the Sacred Victim, the Body of Jesus Christ sacrificed for us. Communion signifies "union with." What a mystery, what a grace, what a favor.

Pg. 71 We have so many important enterprises in hand that we have need to nourish and fortify ourselves frequently with this Divine Manna. Later, when you are engaged still further in the works of the Institute, and the devil wages war against you with still greater fury (for you must expect this), Holy Communion will be your support, and all the good you do will be the effect solely of the strength of God living in you. Be sure that in proportion to your labors for God's glory, and to your earnest endeavor to bring about this great end, will be the malignant and multiplied efforts of hell against you. It will be then above all that you will feel the need of drawing near to our Eucharistic Lord, but I recommend, I entreat you to always do so with great fervor and great love.

Pg. 72 Frequently ask Our Lord for the favor of receiving the support of Holy Communion at the end of your life.

Pg. 73 As you do not withdraw from the light of the lamp when you can not see well, so you must not remain from Holy Communion because you are imperfect.

Pg. 75 The Church, which we may say celebrates this august mystery throughout the year, did not institute a special feast for it until the 13th Century, when she established one expressly to condemn, by this public testimony of our faith, the impiety of heretics who were then more violent than ever in endeavoring to insult this Sacrament of love. She wishes .that the faithful should make known to the whole world, the glory and grace they enjoy in the possession of the veritable Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the mystical veil of the Sacrament. And further, she desired that they should thus excite one another to love their Saviour more and more. A further object of the Church was to offer, by means of this exceptionally solemn celebration, public reparation to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, for all the irreverence's, offenses, ingratitude and contempt He endures from heretics and bad Christians.

For this reason devout souls, who are careful to conform themselves to the mind of the Church, make it a duty during this precious octave to frequently visit this Divine Saviour on His altar throne, and find great

consolation in so doing. They endeavor to redouble their love for Him, and pray with renewed fervor, wishing to become mediators with His Heart for all sinful souls. As religious we should above all others enter into these sentiments, and it is for us to console Our Lord for all the outrages committed against Him in this Sacrament of His love, offering Him our whole hearted fervor, acts of reparation, our regular observances, our religious spirit, and all the virtues which should adorn our Institute.

Pg. 76 The true spirit of the Feast of Corpus Christi is one of joy, gratitude, love and reparation.

Pg. 77 You cannot carry too far the worship of adoration, love and respect, which is due to this adorable Sacrament.

Pg. 77 You are devoted to the works of the Congregation and you wish that they should increase rapidly but if a rapid growth is good, a solid growth is better. And,...-here shall we find the strength needful to make our works solid and lasting? We shall find it at the foot of the altar, by our petitions to Our Lord in the quiet of meditation, in the shadow of the Tree of Life. It is there we must strengthen ourselves.

Pg.77 Remember, that our Institute came into existence through the virtue of the Holy Eucharist, and that it owes its development to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, consequently we must seek from Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, from our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, the courage and zeal we need for the conquest of souls.

Pg. 78 Let your devotion to Mary be based on your devotion to the Blessed Eucharist. I say the same regarding devotion to St. Joseph and the other saints.

Pg. 79 At the feet of Jesus Christ, Whom you should strive to imitate, you will learn the true way of honoring the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, to whom, as' you know, He paid so much honor Himself.

Pg. 80 No where can you receive better instruction than at the foot of the Tabernacle, where Our Lord will vary His lessons according to the needs of our soul. His goodness is infinite, and you will find Him ever the same to you. Pray to Him with confidence and with love; recollect that He Who desires to do you good holds in His hands the power of God.

Pg. 81 God is ever inviting us to go to Him, and we may converse with Him as long as we wish. Let us then address ourselves to Him on all occasions. Let us expose our needs to Him with perfect confidence, let us ask His grace. He is an abyss of charity, and we shall always find in Him the assistance we may need, and also inexhaustible treasure of consolation.

Pg. 83 What happiness should fill our hearts when we are privileged to kneel before the thrice - holy God, Who deigns to dwell so near to us. And when we enjoy the ineffable favor of receiving this loving and gracious God in Holy Communion, do not our hearts become so many living sanctuaries? We are not capable of understanding what takes place during these precious moments.

Pg. 84 Souls possessed of good will who are faithful to their Communions usually become great saints.

Pg. 84. Has not Jesus Himself said "Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. After such an invitation who could refuse to give themselves up to His love? And then, too, we have so many things to say to Him, so many secrets to communicate to Him. Let us go to Him, therefore, with confidence. Let us make Him the confidant of our hopes, our desires, our longings; let us seek from Him the strength we need for our days of trial. He will secretly strengthen us and pour out upon us in abundance ever new graces. He asks in return from each one of us a special tribute of love and gratitude. Let us offer Him this tribute by boundless devotedness and by constant fidelity in fulfilling our holy engagements.

Pg. 85 I recommend to you an ardent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

Pg. 86 The Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist is the dearest, the most consoling remembrance, the most sacred pledge of the merciful goodness and incomprehensible love of our adorable Saviour. We draw the light, strength and life of our souls from this Sacrament. It is the veritable treasure of the Church and it is a treasure that belongs to all of us.

Pg. 86 The Blessed Sacrament is our life, it is a fountain of love.

Pg. 86 Our love for the Blessed Sacrament should be carried to the highest degree; the highest degree of love and adoration is the silence which prays and pours itself out in admiration before the grandeur of a hidden God.

Pg. 87 Deeply penetrated with love and gratitude towards Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament; meditate constantly on the excess of His tenderness for men, on the excellence and value of Communion, and on these admirable words addressed to us. "Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

Pg. 88 The Blessed Sacrament is the first and supreme object of our worship; but you must remember for your consolation that the worship of the Blessed Sacrament should be chiefly interior, that is to say, we must preserve in the depth of our hearts a constant and uninterrupted, profound adoration of this precious pledge of divine love.

Pg. 89 It is only by devotion to the Holy Eucharist and the practice of the interior life that we can fulfil our Vows and relieve our sisters who need assistance. If we cannot fly to help them in their combats, it is always in our power to aid them by prayer. For this reason I wish to inspire you with an ever-increasing devotion to the adorable Sacrament of the altar. It is also for this reason that I would constantly speak to you of this august Sacrament, which is the food of souls, the consolation of hearts. Jesus Christ is the only friend who never abandons anyone. He it is Who in our last moments comes to visit us on our death bed. Let us, therefore, remain united with Him by prayer and Holy Communion. Let us go before the tabernacle and weep, not only for our own sins, but for those of the wandering sheep confided to our care. A House of the Congregation where this consoling devotion exists, where its members are faithful to the Observances and to charity, is' a paradise on earth.

Pg. 91 Lead a wholly interior life. Cut off all wandering thoughts and replace them by the interior spirit, love of the Blessed Sacrament, fervor, and in short by all the virtues that constitute a soul hidden in God.

Pg. 92 Devotion to Our Lord Jesus Christ and devotion to Mary are intimately united. The more we love Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the more we love the Blessed Virgin, and the more we love the Blessed Virgin, the more we love the Blessed Sacrament.

Pg.92 To speak to you of the Blessed Sacrament is to speak to you of all that is most sacred. The Blessed Sacrament is our life; the Blessed Sacrament is our love; the Blessed Sacrament is the first object of our adoration.

Pg. 93 Our Lord hidden in the tabernacle never abandons us. He is there always awaiting us and ever ready to help us.

Pg. 93 The Blessed Sacrament is the river upon which our Institute, like a ship, is borne swiftly along. Were it not for the Blessed Sacrament, never could it have made such rapid progress. We embarked upon our enterprise inspired by our Adorable Saviour, under His guidance and in His company we spend our days and march onwards to the attainment of sanctity and of an immortal crown of Glory.

Pg. 93 This blessed abode where you possess the God of your hearts should be very dear to you. You live under His eyes, you enjoy His presence, you rest under His protection, you dwell under the same roof with Him; it is nearly Heaven upon earth.

Pg.95 If ever you find certain days long and weary, seek refuge at once with Him whose word or glance suffices to dissipate the clouds of sadness and restore joy to your heart, go with confidence and lay your burden at His feet, confide to Him the bitterest trials of your heart, pour out your soul into His, all burning with love. Take up your dwelling in His Divine Heart, bury yourself there; you will find peace and receive more even than you expected to obtain.

Pg. 94 I would like to be in the place of the sanctuary lamp remaining there day and night, consumed by love for Our Lord.

Pg. 95 Our Lord opens His treasures to us, He is there ready to listen to you, to anticipate your desires, to provide for all your needs.

Pg. 100 Have great zeal, great ardor for the salvation of souls, and to obtain this be devoted to prayer and Holy Communion, for where will you find the graces necessary to fulfil your mission, if not from the Author of grace Himself? The more a religious is animated by the spirit of her vocation, the greater is her love for meditation and prayer, in which she finds strength to labor efficaciously in the work of restoring souls to God.

Pg. 100 Prayer should be our preparation for approaching the Sacrament of love, just as from it we ought to draw a spirit of prayer, by means of which we shall gain all the graces needful for our own sanctification and for that of the souls committed to our care.

Pg. 101 I earnestly recommend you never to omit your meditation when you are unable to make it with the community.

Pg. 101 I implore you, apply yourselves earnestly to the interior life, the life hidden in God, to the spirit of prayers. In religion, especially in our holy Institute, there is much need to seek from our Divine Saviour the courage and zeal needful in working for the salvation of souls.

Pg. 102 Always preserve an earnest desire to make your meditation well and do not fear, for the Divine Master will assuredly strengthen you; confidence in Him is the true means of making rapid progress in prayer.

Pg. 102 God looks upon every soul that meditates as His Beloved; He speaks to her, listens to her and grants her prayers.

Pg. 103 Every time that you go to prayer you should think that Our Lord Himself invites you and that He is ready to give you the lights and graces necessary to pray well.

Pg. 104 Prayer is founded on recollection and humility, just as recollection and humility are sustained by prayer.

Pg. 106 We only learn to meditate well by meditating.

Pg. 106 To you it belongs to beg God with all earnestness that He would teach you to converse with Him, and it is to you to strive to make yourselves worthy to receive this grace. Prepare yourselves constantly for prayer by great fidelity to your duties, then in all simplicity present yourself before our Divine Saviour. Harken to His voice when He speaks to your heart and when He tells you to correct certain faults or suggests certain sacrifices. Ask His pardon for your faults, thank Him for His innumerable gifts, beg new graces for yourself, for your neighbor, for your sisters laboring in our mission. Exercise your understanding memory and will, as much as possible, and above all excite in your heart sentiments of love, gratitude and generosity. In a word, your prayer should be a prayer of zeal, of abnegation and of sacrifice; a prayer as fervent and persevering when God leaves you in dryness, as when He consoles you with His ineffable spiritual consolations. Finally, your prayer should be what may be called an Apostolic prayer, animated not only with a great desire to please God and glorify Him by your service, but also by a longing to bring the whole world to His love and service, even at the cost of your life.

Pg. 107 It is in prayer that we find courage to support the humiliations, the anguish, the sufferings which we encounter in the discharge of our duties. If there is any good in us, we must recognize it as the fruit of prayer, whence we derive every spiritual grace. Without an interior spirit, without prayer, the labors and fatigues we undertake are useless, in fact we see that no fruit results. Never will you labor efficaciously for the salvation of souls, if you have not first sought in prayer and silence the lights which are necessary for this end. Religious animated by the spirit of God effect many more conversions than those who are only endowed with great talents, and who speak well and fluently.

Pg. 108 Prayer helps us in forming a right judgment and in determining our course according to the rules of a wise prudence.

Pg. 108 Prayer is the efficacious means of acquiring perfection, hence we see that all the saints began their career of sanctity, by applying themselves to this holy exercise of communion with God.

Pg. 109 And where in fact, did the saints imbibe the sweet sentiments which inflamed them with love? They drew them from meditation.

Pg. 109 After the example of the saints, love to listen to God's voice, and make it your delight to converse with Him in the recollection of prayer. Let this holy exercise be the occupation dearest to your heart.

Pg. 121 Our Lord takes pleasure in granting the prayer of souls of good will and in bringing about the accomplishment of all their holy desires.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. MARY EUPHRASIA  
IN THE LIGHT OF VATICAN COUNCIL II

From the **Letters** of Mother Foundress:

1. Her adherence to Holy Mother Church
2. Her Scriptural, doctrinal and liturgical spirit
3. Her deep personal relationship to Christ as evidenced by her spirit of prayer and love of the Eucharist
4. The special character and purpose of our Institute
5. The social awareness and flexibility of our Congregation
6. Other characteristics and virtues of Mother Foundress
7. Sound traditions in keeping with the teachings of Vatican II



### **Her Adherence to Holy Mother Church.**

St. Mary Euphrasia was always a loyal and devoted daughter of Mother Church and of our Holy Father the Pope. She fostered and faithfully encouraged this spirit in her daughters. This is manifested repeatedly in her letters.

In 1834, when Mother was establishing the Generalate we see examples of her remarkable adherence to the Church and to our Holy Father. She writes:

"Ah! if God did not support the Generalate, surely we must long ago have given in. Oh, my daughter I if our Holy Father, the Pope, condemned it, of course I should instantly yield. I love our Mother, the Holy Church, far too much to have the slightest idea opposed to it. The very thought of such sentiments is horrible to me; but if, in spite of the calumniating memorials invented and sent to Rome, if our Holy Father permits the continuation of this great work, then the time will have come for us to rise above all contradictions." (1)

Mother Foundress was filled with joy and gratitude when she received word that Rome favoured the Generalate. In the following letter Mother again expresses her fidelity to Rome.

"You remember, no doubt, the letter I wrote myself to Rome about our crosses and persecutions. I waited for the answer in the deepest peace, casting myself utterly into the arms of Divine Providence. Today, the answer has come, bringing precious news. Our hearts are overflowing with joy and thankfulness, it is so favourable. How good God is to us! Let us humble ourselves in His holy presence, and redouble our zeal and fervor in supporting the work of the Generalate so well begun." (2)

We see similar sentiments in the letter she wrote to her daughters when she received approval from Rome for the Generalate:

"Today, we received with the humblest, deepest sense of thankfulness, the announcement that at last the Generalate has been approved at Rome." (3)

When asked to make a foundation in Rome Mother Foundress again expresses her attachment to the Church and to our Holy Father.

"Yes, Rome is always doing more and more for us, coming nearer to us; Rome gives us light, strength, and assistance." (4)

"Ah, our inmost being is stirred at the thought of being permitted to go and establish ourselves at the very heart of the Church! Think of it, the humble daughter of Our Lady of Charity, in the capital of the whole Christian world. We are about to lay all our tribes at the feet of the Supreme Head of the Church. All glory be to Jesus and Mary." (5)

St Mary Euphrasia always saw religious life and the work of the institute as life and work within the Church, never apart from it. In the following letter written from Rome we see how she always looked to the Church and to Our Holy Father for light and strength:

"We are now in the Holy City, and have found the true light for the work of the Good Shepherd, at the sacred feet of him who is the head of the Church and in the fatherly heart of our holy Protector. Here only does one understand the full extent of our divine mission; here only have I been able to make a full explanation of my thoughts. What Divine consolation has been poured into my soul! At Rome it has found light and strength." (6)  
As the foundations multiplied and the work of the Good Shepherd spread throughout the world, Mother Euphrasia always remained united to Rome. In a letter to the Bishop of Bardstown, Msgr. Flaget, who had asked for a foundation in America, she writes:

"We have sent the contents of your letter to the august Head of the Church. He will rejoice to see us established in your diocese! We happen to know this is desired by the court of Rome, which always shields us with its protection and loads us with its benefits." (7)

Her deep faith was the source of Mother Foundress' loyalty to the Church and to the Pope. She writes:

"Rome alone will speak and as much as she will let us act, we will continue the holy work. Our Holy Father the Pope must know all! He is Our Lord Jesus Christ on earth; never will I murmur even for a moment." (8)

In the midst of her countless misunderstandings and sufferings she writes: "God and Rome console me. Only that lightens my sadness." (9)

"I would never have believed anyone could suffer so much without dying. . . . But alas, seeing the Supreme Head of the Church crowned with thorns of ingratitude, can I complain?" (10)

The following letter expresses beautifully St. Mary Euphrasia's love of the Church:

"Rome does not treat us like slaves. I am confounded, humiliated, annihilated by this, much more than by the injuries of my enemies. I have sinned so much, but the love that our Mother bears to her children is unutterable. O Divine Mother, tender Mother, may I give my whole life for you." (11)

## 2

### **Her Scriptural, Doctrinal and Liturgical Spirit.**

It was characteristic of St. Mary Euphrasia to begin every letter with a quotation from Scripture. These quotations suited every occasion and circumstance about which she wrote. They not only show her familiarity with Sacred Scripture but manifest Mother Foundress' interior spirit, deeply rooted in Scripture

The following are a few examples:

At the time of the establishment of the Generalate she begins:

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man shall take from you."

(Our Lord to His apostles) (1)

"Let us render thanks to God for all His benefits." (2)

When encouraging her daughters to prudence she begins:

"Be you therefore, wise as serpents and simple as doves." (3)

When asked for more foundations, especially in Rome, she begins:

"Lord, I come because you have called me." (4)

In the midst of trials and sufferings, she begins:

"Lord save us, we are perishing:" (5)

"The Lord has given me many good things, now He has taken them from me; may His name be blessed." (6)

"See if there is any sorrow like my sorrow." (7)

The "FIAT" of Mary was ever on the lips and in the heart of Mother Foundress. Her spirit was always a generous acceptance of God's will, the basis of all true holiness. She writes:

"I am inundated with graces, overwhelmed with work. Fiat." (8)

"Poor children! You suffer much and cause all of us a like sorrow! How many tears this dreadful prosecution has cost us! . . . There was never so much work nor greater trust in God. Fiat: " (9)

"Every hour brought bad news. Fiat was then our canticle." (10)

Concerning the Generalate she writes:

"All here are united in desiring nothing but what God wills, but His will is presented to us accompanied by many crosses and much sacrifice." (11)

In her desperate need for vocations, she turned to Our Lord with complete confidence:

"Postulants are beginning to make their appearance: we have three now, but what is that for such an abundant harvest? But after all, the Divine Father of our family knows our great need -'let us cast all our anxieties on Him, and he will take care of us.' Let us be humble, but without weakness, and united to God by prayer." (12)

We have much to learn from the spirit of poverty of our dear Mother. She was completely dependent on Our Lord:

"All our sisters live happily in God. Never has our house been so alone. We see no one; we don't even receive any help from people, not a single alms for the penitents. Just the same, we have no desire for God to change our position. We find peace even in the silence of creatures." (13)

### 3

#### **Her Deep Personal Relationship to Christ as Evidenced by Her Spirit of Prayer and Love of the Eucharist**

St. Mary Euphrasia's personal relationship with Christ and her spirit of prayer were the source of all her activity. She repeatedly encouraged her daughters to be above all true religious, to find their light and strength in God through prayer. Many of her letters bear witness to this:

"Be very good my dear daughters: you need so much grace for your great and holy vocation. If you have recourse always to Jesus and Mary, they will be your help in everything." (1)

"Yes! It is indeed only for the work's sake that God does such marvels: we are only an echo repeating the sounds of His everlasting will. Oh, let us be saints!" (2)

"My one consolation on earth is to see our dear sisters live the life of true religious." (3)

"How we shall pray for you and long that the Lord Himself may be the foundation stone of this wondrous building, and that you yourself may live only by His spirit and by His grace," (4)

"I believe that the Institute will spread everywhere. Be very holy then my very dear daughters; let us love God and our neighbor more than ourselves." (5)

In our Mother Foundress' own life we have wonderful examples of her intimacy with Our Lord, her spirit of prayer and love of the Eucharist. She writes as follows:

I am steeped in God and in such a love for the works of Palestine that all the chains of calumny and injustice have been broken in this divine fire," (6)

"Tears have been shed abundantly, but how sweet it is to suffer for the love of God," (7)

"We will visit four dear foundations, all for the glory of God, for the voyage will cost me a great deal. It is more repugnant to my nature than I dare to think. Then, my soul is sorrowful even unto death. But after all, it is for God. (8)

"There are many things you ought to hear about our works. They are vast as the sea, but I have neither light nor strength in me; I am overwhelmed with work, graces and crosses. But always God alone! He is our only Treasure. (9)

St. Mary Euphrasia had a deep personal relationship with Our Lord and encouraged her daughters to be very prayerful. However, this was never a sentimental, unrealistic piety that seeks God and ignores everyone else. The following letter illustrates her wonderful spiritual balance:

". . . Write to me about anything you like, only do leave your prayers for; awhile, and come and console me with one of your letters. It seems to me that you are becoming very recollected, for you are living in a beautiful solitary place, far from the tumult of the world. This will enable you, my dearest daughter, to unite your soul to God, and thus go on advancing in virtue." (10)

In all her trials and sufferings our dear Mother would have recourse to prayer and silence.

"In prayer and silence we will let this frightful tempest pass without being troubled." (11)

"I pray, suffer and remain silent:" (12)

"You will have much to suffer. We pray for you continually. We have been to communion for your intention. Prayer is the only weapon we can use." (13)

Mother Euphrasia always offered Holy Communion for her daughters and their intentions. This was for her a means of being united with them. This letter is another touching example:

"When the tabernacle door is opened I will place my five treasures in the ciborium. Our prayers will follow you everywhere. In Nantes we will receive Holy Communion in union with you." (14)

She also encouraged among her daughters devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. She writes:

"Oh! pray for me that I may know how to suffer and be silent. Let us never cease praying. Let us keep close to the Blessed Sacrament and in the Heart of our Mother the Blessed Virgin." (15)

#### 4

### **The Special Character and Purpose of Our Institute**

The special character and purpose of our Institute is to work for the salvation of souls. It is in order to give ourselves to this work totally that we pronounce our vow of zeal at the time of profession. Our approach to re-education today is in many ways very different than it was in Mother Foundress' time. New and more effective methods of working with our girls have evolved and we are happy to have the work of our apostolate enriched by them. However, we must be convinced of the precious heritage that our loved Mother Foundress has left us: Our life is a total commitment to work with zeal for the salvation of souls and our work can only be effective to the extent that we remain true to the special character and purpose of our dear Institute.

When the Generalate was approved at Rome, Mother Euphrasia writes:

"Yes, dear sisters, let us be faithful to the graces received. They are precious indeed, since by means of them we shall work with renewed zeal for the salvation of that multitude of souls which, without the Generalate would have been neglected. Requests for foundations will come from all quarters. Let us forever bless the Lord, that He may make us grow from virtue to virtue." (1)

"Penitents come from all quarters, even Tours. Charity makes us receive them without any fears. Now a few words about God's work of love for souls, the dear Generalate. . . ." (2)

"Again, my dear daughter, we have happy and great news to announce to you and our good Saint Louis will again sing the Te Deum. The Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary fill us with benefits: besides the decree, Our Holy Father has kindly accorded us a most solemn Pontifical brief, strong and consoling, which approves the Generalate forever, and also a class of children in each of our foundations. This gives us a special grace for our work."

"At last all is going to be well, but you must help us extend this great work throughout the universe. We must also become the good odor of Jesus Christ." (3)

St. Mary Euphrasia said of herself, "I am consumed with zeal for the salvation of souls." This was the spirit, a spirit of zealous, loving service which she encouraged in her daughters. She writes:

"It is of general admission that we agree that our house is founded only for the love of souls; it is very true that I had neither riches, nor talent, nor any exterior charm, but I always loved the poor children, and I loved them with all the strength of my soul. I even made a vow never to refuse to receive any children because they would have nothing to give; and you see my dear daughters, that in spite of that we are no poorer." (4)

"This work in London has been a source of all sorts of crosses for us, there are no pains which we have not felt for more than ten years'; and now you see, my dear daughters, how this work prospers and leads souls to God. This is proof that we should not be discouraged when the houses do not go as we would wish." (5)

From Rome she wrote:

"Our Blessed Lady has led us to this place, sanctified by the blood of so many martyrs, that we also may here become martyrs by the great labors attached to our fourth vow." (6)

In order to fulfil the purpose of the Institute and acquire the spirit of their vocation, Mother Foundress frequently speaks of the qualities and virtues she wishes her daughters to acquire:

"Be sure we pray for you. Don't let anything discourage you. See God in all things; edify your neighbor; educate souls; show yourselves humble and gentle but dignified, prudent-wise also. Do all you can to console your worthy superiors." (7)

"Courage, my three Xaviers! Be true apostles, humble of heart, interior, pious, zealous. Make the work triumph! (8)

"My dear daughters, in all things be led by the Spirit 'of God, that everything may conduce to His glory and that of the holy work. Be diligent in the virtues of the religious state for I have noticed that we can do nothing without them" (9)

"We pray for you with our whole heart. Make a rich harvest of virtues. Keep the interior spirit and peace of soul by the holy exercise of prayer. Love one another tenderly. Then be as gay as lambs springing about the plains of their Good Shepherd." (10)

Mother Euphrasia's words to her daughters for the end of the year (1844), give us an idea of the zeal she wished them to have and the tenderness of her affection for the children:

"If the great ones of the earth, if kings, give us of their bounty, it is our fourth vow which they hold in reverence, and you owe it to the girl of the city to whose salvation you have consecrated yourselves. Your vocation, your habit, nothing is your own; you are indebted to the poor girl, for your congregation exists only because of her. You must understand more and more the extent of our obligations regarding our dear children. This is the most ardent wish that I make." (11)

Mother Foundress was always deeply concerned with the formation of the novices and postulants. When she was away from Angers on one occasion she wrote them this encouraging and inspiring letter:

"It is so sweet to describe the docility, the fervor of our professed at Angers, and all our other communities that my soul is filled with a great longing to behold in God a numerous and faithful flock. Could you but know my dear daughters, how sweet it is to find sheep docile who feed in the pastures of Our Mother, Holy Church; could you but hear that Divine Mother's longing sighs for the children of this Institute, which is her Institute; could you but hear her calling you to every land; could you only comprehend the great designs she has for each of you, you would indeed strive after perfection with ever renewed earnestness, for the precious days of the Novitiate never return. . . . Dear Novitiate, give glory to God, for you are indeed fortunate in being called to this holy vocation." (12)

Elsewhere she writes concerning the novitiate:

"Without doubt, the designs of God on this work are great. Never have I received such capable subjects. How much you would enjoy seeing the novitiate! The holy Virgin herself is pleased to adorn it; it is a reunion of virtues and talents. We are getting young persons with a complete education and a charming candor. I am humiliated before God in our feeble and poor beginnings, in seeing what these rich plants of grace can produce someday! Oh, pray very hard for them! May we increase." (13)

In another letter Mother gives us some insight into what qualities she expected to find in the novices:

"The novices who remain are our crown and joy. . . Sister. . . is good but she has difficulty taking on the spirit of our holy Institute. It is a pity, she has much ability. . . ." "For order and economy Sister. . . is the one. She has very good judgment. What she finds hard are the little observances, humiliations and reprimands. . . . If she can overcome herself she will be a big help, being moderate, prudent and discreet." "We have four lay novices who already seem like trained religious: - hard working, humble and silent." (14)

Though the needs of the apostolate were urgent, Mother Euphrasia was always aware of the need of a solid formation. She writes:

"You ask me, my dear daughter, to send Sister. . . to you; in conscience I cannot do this; no one is less formed than this poor child, she needs a long novitiate. . . it would be better to hire a laborer while you are waiting for us to form true religious." (15)

She had great love, compassion and understanding for the young Sisters:

"Having nurtured all our young sisters in the Cross, I love them more than my own life. Then this love is based on God and on the knowledge of my misery, for when I was their age in religion I could not have stood their privations nor their work. (16)

## 5

### **The Social Awareness and Flexibility of Our Congregation**

St. Mary Euphrasia always had a motherly solicitude for the welfare of all confided to her care, especially the girls. One of her main concerns was to provide for their spiritual needs and she chose her chaplains with great care. She wrote to one of them as follows:

"I am worried and I must worry you. I have 200 children asking me for bread, and I have none to give them. I have recourse therefore to their kind father. .

"Has a chaplain been appointed for us? Will he come soon? Our children have not been to confession for two months. Please 'send me just a line Reverend Father that will' satisfy me."

As the work of the Good Shepherd spread to other countries we get some idea of Mother Foundress' ability to adapt to individuals and to the times. Regarding the foundation in London, she writes:

"Oh, what a divine work! Yesterday at noon the dear group left. Never before has there been a similar voyage. Obligated to remove the holy habit, our dear sisters, dressed in black, passed through the cloisters where their companions were ranged in silence. We were all weeping. Vivid impressions were made in our souls, a love that is stronger than death for the Institute. I see this love in God making great conquests of faith. I see a great people coming to us - Rome, Munich, London ....- What missions I What wonderful things I see!" (2)

When Mother Euphrasia was asked to establish the work in America she wrote to the Bishop as follows:

"It is the Divine Shepherd who has inspired you to care for those poor girls. Be assured that we will neglect nothing to help you. The Lord has prepared the way to your work.

"Since the Bishop of London has kindly called us to his city, an English novitiate has been established here in Angers. A course in languages has been given. The mistress of novices and several others speak and write English and German.

"As far as I am concerned, I will sacrifice all for God, for you,' and for our entrance into that country, the object of our desires and fond hopes." (3)

Mother was always interested in the new foundations and wanted to know especially about the people. These excerpts from letters to her daughters in America are an example:

"Did you stay some days in New York, and what do you think of that dear America?" (4)

"Please tell us all about the first two American penitents you are to receive, their names, character, appearance and where they come from." (5)

"Tell us often about the American prelates whom you have the happiness of seeing. Write to me about the little things that happen, especially about your holy Bishop Flaget. . . . I shed tears when I read how this holy old man works and how he makes his rounds on horse back. . . . Could you also speak to us about the savages." (6)

To her daughters in Smyrna and Tripoli she wrote:

"Will you give us the history of the slavery of about three or four children? Then tell us about your culture, your lands, your camels?" (7)

"You, the St. Paul of my soul, my very beloved daughter, the love of God, the works of the Institute, urge you on! I have the greatest confidence that you are fighting the good fight! Ah! Lord, the work of redemption is going to people heaven; I am expiring with happiness." (8)

"Oh, may you be blessed a thousand times for the redemption of the slaves; you have saved life for me! Oh! grow, my dear daughters, people the earth. . . . Tell our children that my heart is open to them." (9)

The sisters profited by the absence of canonical cloister to visit the environs of their convent and to make contact with forsaken children. They baptized children in danger of death and purchased as many young slaves as their resources would permit, in order to raise them in the Christian Faith. Moreover, they respected the religion, Moslem or other, of girls still belonging to their parents. Mother *wrote* encouraging them:

"Oh! I beg *of* you, baptize them by the hundreds. . . . Courage! Oh! How I love your fidelity and your zeal! . . . Do not hurry to put up the grilles, stay free for a time, you can do so much good! (10)

## 6

### **Other Characteristics and Virtues of Mother Foundress**

#### **(1) Her Faith:**

We have already brought out the Faith of Mother Foundress in speaking of her interior spirit and her spirit of prayer. Her remarkable spirit of Faith motivated all her activity. So deep was her Faith that she attributed everything she and her daughters did to Our Lord. She writes for example:

"Your consoling letter has moved us to the depths of our souls but it causes us to praise God who has again spread His peace among you. And now His divine bounty makes your works increase and strengthen. (1)

"You too, by faith and obedience, my beloved daughters, will see great things! . . . The good that has been done is divine." (2)

"Pray more and more, my good daughters, that the Good God will continue to touch the hearts of these little ones who are confided to our care." (3)

## **(2) Her Confidence and Courage:**

Mother Euphrasia derived her great courage from an unbounded confidence in God. She inspired this confidence in her daughters:

"You *are* deprived of all holy consolations, my very dear daughter; Oh, courage! I see in God that these crosses are the very roots of the work which shall flourish at Nancy. Yes, it will be a great work. Yet a little while, and you shall see great things. . . . I have the sweet confidence that God will do everything, through Mary, our Mother." (4)

"Be courageous, we will always pray for you. . . . Perhaps you already have some crosses but be not sad, God is with you." (5)

". . . . The Good God protects us from all evil." (6)

## **(3) Her Love:**

Since we have already spoken of St. Mary Euphrasia's relationship with God, we will stress here her fraternal charity. Mother Foundress was a warm, affectionate person. She had a very deep personal love for her daughters. She expresses this in her letters to them:

"Oh, my daughter, if you were not at Ratisbonne, I should command you to come here in Holy Week, to talk over Nice with me, because of our close union of soul."

"Your affectionate Mary of St. Euphrasia, who is lost in love of God and gratitude to Him, and loves you more than her own life."

". . . Oh, my daughter - yes, I do certainly share your sorrows and were it not so, I should be very unkind." (7)

"O my tender daughter, this life is strewn with crosses. In this profound silence I have kept, I was always speaking of you to God in prayer. . . . But let's concern ourselves with Munich where we have suffered so much! I am enduring a type of martyrdom by not answering you sooner." (8)

"Oh, how far away you are, my good daughter, and I long so much to talk to you; you whose letters, thoughts, interior trials go to my very heart. I understand you so thoroughly, and God alone knows how closely we are united. Truly my confidence in you is unbounded. Your progresses, your successes at Turin do not in the least astonish me. It was God's will that you should be placed there, and you will be the greatest help to me, my dear daughter." (9)

"My soul is crushed, I weep day and night. Although I am resigned to God's Will, I feel, nevertheless, an overwhelming sorrow. I mourn for a daughter of exceptional holiness, affection and loyalty. Could you but realize the support I found in her! I shall never be able to find her equal in this world." (at the death of Sister Mary Teresa of Jesus de Couespel). (10)

A true and sincere expression of charity is a readiness to forgive. Mother Foundress' life gives us many examples of this charity:



"Oh no! We were never rebellious religious, but souls oppressed, persecuted; happy in being like Him who, for love of us, became despised of men. Let us pray for those who made us rich by taking away from us everything. No, my dearest daughter, we shall not refuse any foundation: the source is miraculous, it will never dry up." (11)

"Oh, my daughter, how my heart is wounded! Fiat! I forgive everyone, Unfortunately, Mary . . . has lacked courage. She was unable to bear the cross and the outrages done to our holy Order. There has been so much trouble because of this. Nevertheless, may Our Lord fill our enemies with graces. O my God, how precious are your crosses." (12)

"Surrounded by jealous enemies, our only hope is in the Lord and our only strength is in silence. . . . I have just received a six page letter full of reproaches and injuries. May our Lord bless all our enemies. For two weeks we have been on a sea of tempests, crosses and calumnies. Fiat, O my God!" (13)

At the time she suffered so much because of Father Moreau, she wrote:

"Everything is closed: door, help, consolations. Tears have been shed abundantly, but how sweet it is to suffer for the love of God! Our hearts are wounded to death, but they pardon and submit." (14)

". . . He then raised his hand and said, 'On Mother St. Euphrasia, I pronounce malediction on malediction.' As for me, my dear daughter, after the arrival of the messenger, I went to prepare myself for Holy Communion. At the same time; I begged Our Lord to bless Father Dufetre and all those who revile us." (15)

Mother Euphrasia's love of her daughters was always compassionate:

"Poor and sorely-tried St. John of the Cross, you are indeed pierced with a sword of sorrow, but how pleasing to God is your soul! Both your dear letters are come to hand, and humanly speaking I am overwhelmed with grief but Divine grace convinces me of your future success." (16)

In a letter to her daughters in America we get a glimpse of the motherly love and solicitude that characterized her letters: .

"You are in America! That Divine mission, the object of our heart's love. Zeal and obedience have carried you two thousand leagues away from us! It is now twenty-five days since you left and my poor children, how many more before we hear from you? . . . Were you ill on the way? I am afraid you will have gone through much suffering and perhaps all five of you at the same time; but the love of Jesus will have made everything sweet. Our prayers have followed you continually. We have been counting the days and watching the weather. How thankful we shall be to hear all about your. voyage. . . your holy voyage, during which I am very sure my dear daughters, God gave you great graces." (17)

#### **(4) Her Love of the Cross:**

Mother Foundress' love of God was strengthened and made perfect in suffering. She suffered generously all that our dear Lord asked of her and encouraged her daughters to a love of the Cross. She writes:

"Oh no, daughter of Calvary, you do not fear the Cross? If all forsake you, God will remain with you. Your letter pierced my heart, but your courage dries my tears. Ah, stay, stay! You will not leave the cross which is your glory, and soon victory will come." (18)

"I have more to do than I can get through. I have not a moment to spare. It pains me that I cannot write more at length to you. I have been suffering for the last three days. I am writing only to you, because I cannot apply myself steadily to anything. It is a feverish attack, the result of over-fatigue." (19)

"If our good Sister-procuratrix is necessary to you, and if she wishes to stay another week with you, I will make this further sacrifice, although I am very much overburdened. But if I give all for God's sake, in Him I shall find all. He has wrought such marvels that none can fail to see that it is His work. We are all struck with admiration, and we cry to each other, 'The finger of God is there.'" (20)

"Remember Christmas night last year, and let us love the Cross, and toil, and grief. By these dark paths we shall come to the light. Here there is nothing particularly new - only crosses. They are my life. Some are very crucifying to nature and that is a good sign." (21)

"Those who were friendly to us yesterday have now turned on us, threaten us, try to take away our foundations, and will not hear of new ones. But what is man! Everything attaches me more closely to God alone, and to our work." (22)

"Pray -- we too will pray: your tears will bear fruits of grace for the whole Institute. You will see that by the Cross you will conquer. We have ever had to bear heavy ones, yet never has God or His glory failed to triumph. The increase of our work has kept pace with the severity of our trials. Munich promises an abundant harvest, hence does the enemy of all that is good come sowing his tares; but the Lord of the harvest slumbers not. Let us then be of good heart." (23)

"Our Divine Master leads the way, and we wish to follow Him. Great graces spring from the Sacred Wounds of our Savior. Ah! It is certainly His adorable Heart which is founding this royal Monastery of Munich."

. . . "It is a road of sorrowful trial, but the wonderful work you are doing is a tree of love and life. Courage - the more you suffer, so much more beautiful will be the work. How many souls will owe their life to your sacrifices. Be comforted in God, seek His glory, be dead to all else." (24)

The following letter, expressing Mother Foundress' supernatural attitude regarding suffering, gives us some insight into how she could have such a capacity for suffering:

"Oh! foundation of Angers, how many tears you have cost! But the more we suffer the more God is glorified. That thought which is the teaching of faith is enough to calm the deepest grief. You ask me to write freely to you from my heart, but my heart is so poor and so sorrowful that its only language should be silence. Still, since you too desire to have no happiness, save at the foot of the Cross, let us talk to one another there. Your sorrows ought to carry you to God and to Him only. One must know this, but it is of no use only to know it, or even to meditate upon it. It is a science learnt only by having the cross to bear. What is man, his favor, or his consolations, or his constancy, or his satisfactions? When experience has taught the soul to answer these questions truly, it has no other attraction than to discard everything that is not God, and to withdraw from creatures who so often have nothing to offer but blame, forgetfulness and deception. But all this is God's merciful way of dealing with us. He is jealous of our affections and these are the means He uses, painful as they must be, of drawing our hearts to Himself." (25)

#### **(5) Her Joy and Peace:**

Mother Euphrasia's love of the cross was never separated from the supernatural peace and joy that flows from a life of deep union with God. As she shared her daughters' sorrows, so she also shared their joys:

"This day, feast of St. Francis Xavier, will ever remain precious to me, the day you took possession of your house, the day of your triumph in the midst of your labors, the day your mourning ceased. Our sisters here all rejoiced. . . . (26)

". . . Above all avoid discouragement and sadness. Here my tenderly loved daughters, I will quote to you the words of the apostle St. Paul: 'Rejoice in the Lord always: You are very happy to have been chosen for this noble mission and your companions envy you:' (27)

"Like David, my very devoted daughter, you have sung a beautiful canticle of praise to the Good God. I am coming with all our Sisters to sing with you. We rejoice in God, who has broken the chains that were holding you captive." (28)

#### **(6) Her Humility:**

Mother Euphrasia was keenly aware of Our Lord's words "Without Me you can do nothing." She was dependent on Him for everything and derived all her strength from Him. She possessed, as do all the saints, a remarkable humility. She writes:

"I conjure you lovingly, and out of my own experience, not to set any value on the honor that may seem to be paid to you. Alas I My daughter, all of it is emptiness. Seek after God in your great work, and be free of all human respect. Use the excellent judgment God has given you to do things worthy of Him. "

". . . I am all yours, but the *all* isn't much. I can do nothing but love you till death." (29)

Ah, my dear daughter, if I had sought my own elevation in the holy cause of the Generalate, I should have been disappointed; but, thanks be to God, my soul is in peace. The glory of God, the salvation of souls - these are my life and only work. Let men judge me as they please." (30)

". . . It is for the glory of God only, and by obedience, that I go, for I am very sensible of my own weakness in all respects and it is frightening. But your prayers and the joy of seeing you all again will be my strength. Putting my trust in God, I will go with courage." (regarding her trip to Grenoble ). (31)

"I know you will be the joy of our Institute and the consolation of the Mother to whom you are very dear. . . . Do not allow yourself to think I should have succeeded better at Turin than you. I have no charm about me except in the eyes of my children, who are my glory and crown in Jesus Christ. (32)

"There are grave obstacles, but God is all powerful! Oh! I tell you this in tears, if I were holier, your affair would succeed; but no, for (I confess to you) I have been so irritable for some days that I feel I am in a state of imperfection which makes me desolate. Pray for me. I tell you the truth before God; the work which should be your great consolation is put in my hands, with all its obstacles. . . judge for yourself, my daughter! O my God, come to my aid! The excess of work contributes to this state." (33)

"Oh yes, my dear and true daughter, a miracle is necessary to save everything. You understand me so well. Your letters dry my tears; all my being is in the garden of Olives. . . . Our Superior gives me such painful and humiliating reproaches that at night I am in agony and fear of being the most wicked Superior in the universe. All the gentlemen who had this opinion before have joined him and, I believe, see me only as an obstacle to good. I pray, suffer and remain silent." (34)

#### **(7) Her Gratitude:**

Being humble, our dear Mother also knew how to be grateful. She writes:

". . . your letters are a great comfort to us, and poured into our heart a stream of peace and joy. Oh! my dear daughters, thank you for writing. We poured ourselves out in acts of thanksgiving in the presence of our thrice holy God, Who has done for us such marvellous things." (35)

"If Our Lord wishes it, He will achieve His work, for you see, crosses have never destroyed the holy work. Oh no! on the contrary, never have there been so many blessings. Thank Our Lord with us and try more and more to draw down new graces." (36)

"Now, my beloved sisters, let us show our gratitude towards the Hearts of Jesus and Mary for giving us such favors. Yes, let us be faithful to the graces we have received, they are so precious. (37)

#### **(8) Her Obedience:**

Mother Foundress had a great love of obedience and gives us a wonderful example by her docility and her admirable spirit of obedience. She writes:

"Let us hold together in unity until death, by great detachment from everything, belonging to God and to our holy work only and ready to fly to the ends of the earth if obedience should so order." (38)

The following letter written to her director Father Boucher gives us an idea of her docility:

"Do you remember what advice you gave me last Saturday? I have followed it to the letter. Amid countless annoyances and occupations I ever find relief, dear Father, in obeying you, in lightening your burden. God only knows how deeply I esteem you. Should then, your good Angel bring you here this evening at seven o'clock, it will be a reward for your most obedient and respectful child." (39)

In a letter to the Holy See, she writes:

"If the Sovereign Pontiff and Your Eminence find obstacles to the erection of the Generalate, I very humbly submit myself." (40)

She encouraged this supernatural obedience in her daughters:

"God, my dear sister, greatly helped and inspired you when you took the house suggested. In obeying us, you obeyed Him. You have done His holy will." (41)

"I cannot encourage you too much to observe our holy rule. Be my aid under the crushing burden under which I find myself. Later, may Our Lord give you a mother who is less unworthy and more conformable to His Heart, this is my wish; but let us continue for two more years. We are observing the decree for the glory of God, the good of souls and the work. Lead all our cherished daughters to this blind obedience. . . persuade them that they must be ready to go to the end of the world if they are so commanded. (42)

Mother Foundress also gives us a wonderful example on exercising authority. Having a great love of obedience, she knew how to use authority. She encouraged in her daughters a responsible obedience.

". . . act with holy liberty. . . You are the eldest daughter of the work, and we have entire confidence in you, and should like you to be head of it all." (43)

"My dear daughters, do this holy work, it is in your hands! You know that we do not hold on to the goods of this world, thus set down the conditions yourself, arrange for the best, and get things started." (44)

In a letter to her daughters in London when there was question of abandoning that foundation she writes:

"We leave you perfectly free to continue this laborious mission or to have yourselves cordially replaced, after which you will return to France where you will certainly find souls to save and where you will always be very dear to us! Holy Obedience leaves you free; let us explain ourselves thoroughly, for I admit to you simply that, if you remain in London, I want to be more in a position to tell you the manner in which I see things, and I desire to be less crucified than I have been until now. This state of slavery in Superiors does not produce the sweet liberty of the children of God, nor the success of the works. This is my regret." (45)

### **(9) Her Spirit of Poverty:**

Mother Euphrasia was truly poor in spirit and in fact. We can learn much of this spirit from her letters:

"How I thank you for the 250 francs. It was truly a bouquet of flowers, my loving daughter, for I am in debt, but that does not disturb my peace of mind. They are our Blessed Lady's debts, for I undertook to feed her children. She will defray the cost and I am helping her, for I work hard, but for love's sake. . . Listen to me, my loving daughter. I am full of my great schemes and plans, and yet you know, I have not a soul; but all the same, I anticipate great things." (46)

"All our sisters live happily in God. Never has our house been so alone. We see no one, we don't even receive any help from people, not a single alms for the penitents. Just the same, we have no desire for God to change our position." (47)

### **(10) Her Silence:**

Silence on one hand was the source of our Mother's strength; on the other hand it was an expression of it. She writes:

"Never, has the Institute founded such a work as Nazareth of Angers. The Lord has raised up Sion; He has made His glory burst forth. Princes and great ones of the earth exclaim when they see it. What is this great city which is raised up on the ruins of desolation? Here we pray and keep the most profound silence. Rivers of graces come from the heart of the most Blessed Virgin." (48)

"To say that the work in Paris is not according to our Institute is a false accusation which God will justify later. My first impulse was to justify myself to my Superiors and especially to Rome but after some time in silence and prayer I preferred to remain quiet and to suffer." (49)

### **(11) Her Sense of Humor:**

Mother Foundress was a deeply spiritual person. She was in every way a strong woman of God and she was also delightfully human. She writes:

"Today we had a ceremony - six were professed and eight received the holy habit. I am informing you that I am writing this during the sermon. This good and holy Jesuit Father always preaches an hour, I am hiding in a little corner. It is all for the Glory of God, is it not?" (50)

"I must admit that your letters alone made me laugh until I cried. How well you can play little tricks. I counted six perfect pranks in your letter! Is this excusable? I could not refrain from thinking of them in the refectory, and I laughed out loud. . . . Do not be ill, my good Mary St. Louis when I come to visit you. I am counting on your gaiety to relax me from my excessive labors. I have many things to tell you that I cannot think about without laughing." (51)

"I embrace you a thousand times, my dear daughter, and your venerated sister in Munich, for whom I beg God daily - I believe that I also embrace your respected father. Oh! gracious, arrange that as you will - here is my heart." (52)

". . . Everyone here is always the same. We have a mayor who is not worth two cents. This good man has taken me into his friendship. Think of it! Our priests joke about it saying "It is the good friend of Madame St. Euphrasia who has done me this favor. However, I love him only in God as one loves sinners." (53)

## **Sound Traditions in Keeping With the Teachings of Vatican II.**

### **(1) Spirit of Unity:**

Mother Foundress encouraged a real family spirit within the Congregation. They truly had "one mind and heart." She writes:

"You really cannot imagine, my dear daughters, what our sisters' zeal is for Metz. When your letters come, they flock to hear them. The last I read while I was giving the novitiate a conference and there were tears shed, but only for the love of God. Ah! my dear children, go on being the consolation of our large family. You know what we have suffered, for I may say you were born in tears.." (1)

". . . but as for you, be always our comfort and consolation, and never cease asking God for the graces you require. Live together always in the most perfect union. It delights me that you are always helping one another," (2)

"Persons of the world imagine that generally religious are unhappy and fretful, that we live without loving. No, no, my good daughters, you can give witness to the contrary. Assembled here from all countries, we are so many devoted sisters, and we know how much it will cost us when we have to separate. No one will blame us if at the moment of separation, we pay a tribute of tears to our affection. St. Paul himself, that great apostle who had suffered with so much courage was moved to the depths of his soul when he saw the tears shed by the faithful when he went away from them." (3)

". . . I believe the storm is gradually subsiding. Mary is taking care of us. Yet, it is truly miraculous, even our enemies admire our sweet union." (4)

### **(2) Fostering Vocations:**

Mother Euphrasia involved everyone in fostering vocations. In her letters she repeatedly reminded her daughters to foster vocations and to pray for vocations. She writes:

". . . Let us keep closely united and help one another. Pray, my daughter, that plenty of subjects, and good ones, may come, for the harvest is great." (5)

". . . Pray, ask God with tears for more subjects. We want at least forty more subjects, and meantime we will sacrifice ourselves and accept, shall we not? . . . Dear Mary St. John of the Cross, help us; send us good subjects. . . ." (6)

". . . I received a charming letter from your dear Mother. I think we are going to have a postulant from Roanne; and yours, my daughter, where are they?" (7)

### **(3) Devotion to Mary:**

Mother Foundress, a sincere daughter of St. John Eudes had a tender devotion to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. She writes:

"You know what sorrows we have had about the foundation at Grenoble. . . . Night and day we knocked at the door of the Heart of Mary, and listened to our sisters' cry; praying unceasingly, and in the distance seeing the offence against God, the work sapped at the foundation." (8)

". . . I have the sweet confidence that God will do everything, through Mary our Mother." (9)

". . . I ascribe all graces to the protection of our Blessed Lady, for there were crosses and obstacles but it was the will of God." (10)

". . . I am hoping for your postulants; we have none now. But the harvest is great and Mary will send laborers. She loves the field." (11)

### **(4) Her Hospitality:**

The Good Shepherd Sisters have often been praised for their hospitality. This dates back to Mother Foundress' time. On this occasion she received Father Boucher and his relatives with a most hearty welcome. She writes:

". . . On Thursday you must bring your worthy relatives, and those two dear little lambs. We have no wonders to show them, but only devoted attachment. . . . The doors of every heart will be opened to you; mine as you know, always is.

I long to embrace your good mother. I beg you tell her so. The little family dinner will be ready on Thursday at 5:00. There will be no ceremony, as you are well aware that is not my way. . . ." (12)

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3 - February 28, 1835	To her daughters at Metz	Pasquier I - P. 228
4 - May 28, 1835	To M. M. St. John of the Cross	Pasquier I - P. 382
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9 – December 1843	To her daughters at Poitiers	Pasquier II - P. 151
10 – January 23,1835	To M. M. St. Stanislaus	Pezzali V - P. 39
11 - 1832	To M. M. St. Stanislaus	Pasquier I – P 130
12 – May 22, 1834	To her daughters at Grenoble	Pasquier I – P 141
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1 – 1834	To her daughters in Metz	Pasquier I – P 190
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	4	
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. MARY EUPHRASIA  
IN THE LIGHT OF VATICAN COUNCIL II

From the **Lives** of Mother Foundress:

- 1) Her adherence to Holy Mother Church
- 2) Her use of Sacred Scripture
- 3) Her zeal
- 4) Her charity
- 5) Her personal love of God

### **Adherence to the Church:**

St. Mary Euphrasia, who would later instruct her daughters on love for the Church and who liked to recall to them the last words of St. Teresa: "I die a devoted daughter of the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church," was accustomed early in life to regard herself as "a daughter of the Church." When she was still very small she would never go to bed without having said five Our Fathers and five Hail Mary's for the Church. The good Moise, that faithful servant who watched over her during childhood with a motherly solicitude, never failed to add, when she mentioned this trait: "She recited them so fervently and it took so long, so long!"

"I could speak forever of Our Mother, the Holy Church, of the love we owe her, and the obligation we are under to pray continually for her. Pray then, pray without ceasing for Holy Church which you love so dearly. Why is it that our Congregation spreads throughout the whole world? I repeat what I have already said: 'It comes from our adherence to the Church. Oh how I love Holy Church, our Mother and Mistress! Everything will pass away, but the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church will never pass away. When the Holy Father suffers, I also suffer. Holy Church and the Sovereign Pontiff - these are the beginning and end of all I have to say to you.' "

Every joy and every sorrow of the Church found an echo in the conversation of the servant of God and her daughters. The name of Pius IX was constantly on her lips in 1860, and she often assembled the Community to tell them of the misfortunes of the Holy See, of the war against the Holy Father, and of all his sufferings. She would at such times ask her daughters to offer their Communions, mortifications and a share of all their work for the triumph of the Holy Church.

At all times she showed the deference and submission of a holy religious to the Bishop of Angers. This she did, despite the great suffering she was enduring.

### **Sacred Scripture:**

Few women have made more frequent and more fruitful use of the Bible. Mother Foundress went to the sources. She was interested in everything concerning her Institute and loved to read anything in print regarding St. John Eudes and the foundation of her Order. She followed in the footsteps of her Founder. "Read the Epistles and Gospels again and again. Remain ever steadfast in the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is from the teaching of Jesus Christ alone that you can hope to obtain light, justice and sanctity, whether for yourselves or for others." "Hope for no assistance but that of God alone, for all trust in man is vain. We must accustom ourselves to live for God alone. Our Institute is not the work of man; it is Divine. Fear much your own misery, your own weakness, but never let your confidence in God fail."

"The more I read Sacred Scripture, the more I love its beauties." When she was a young religious Father Alleron wrote to her, "I will tell you to my shame that I know less than you about the Bible."

To the study of Holy Scriptures, the Saint added that of the works most particularly related to her vocation as a Sister of Our Lady of Charity. "I can say that when I first entered religion, I was so eager to know all about the beginnings of the Order, its origin, and of everything relating to it, that, as a Novice at Tours, I always sought the society of the old religious to converse with them. It was my delight, after reading the Scriptures, to peruse the manuscript lives of some of our first Mothers, the letters of our Father Eudes, and an abridgment of his life, which at that time was not printed. When a community letter came from the houses of the Refuge, I did not sleep the whole night, so beautiful did it all seem." Oral, written, live traditions: she examined everything with a veritable avidity so that nothing of interest in the past of her Order remained a stranger to her. One had to have, like our Saint, a passion for her vocation to devote herself to the study of the few poorly printed books which then constituted the doctrinal heritage of the Eudist families. The unique book of the Constitutions and the Kingdom of Jesus offered to the daughters of St. John Eudes the essential thought of their father. They transmitted this to one another with a jealous care from generation to generation. St. Mary Euphrasia read and reread the brilliant pages. How well she possessed the spirit of her Order and practiced its virtues.

**Zeal:**

As a child, Rose Virginie Pelletier dreamed about the missionaries who came to the aid of infidels and particularly the little negresses in Africa and America. As a school girl, she invited one of her friends, who later became a Carmelite, to pray for her so that she would obtain the grace to vow herself some day to the salvation of little negresses. She loved the Sisters in the Refuge and considered them faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ. They had lived during the sombre days of the Revolution, truly witnesses of a past witnesses of a tradition.

St. Mary Euphrasia was ever yearning for the spread of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Protestant countries had a special attraction for her zeal. It seemed to her that no apostolic work could be more pleasing in God's sight than that of restoring our erring brethren to the unity of the Catholic faith.

She loved souls and hence had a facility for doing them good. "Our mother used to speak to us with exquisite delicacy; she never said a word that wounded or humiliated. She had a remarkable knowledge of souls."

One of her Confessors (Abbe Suchet) who had followed her very closely, said of her, "While she was Mistress of the Penitents in Tours, some indefinable way about her, at once imposing and attracting, won all hearts to her." Souls submitted in an almost irresistible manner to her extraordinary influence.

Visitors of every rank and condition came to the parlor of the Refuge, attracted and conquered by the strong personality of the new Superior. Some were drawn to her by her radiating kindness. Her charity and her exquisite art of comforting and consoling were so great that people easily opened their hearts to her. Others came in quest of services that they knew she was always ready to render, so inexhaustible was her charity.

M. Nogret, Bishop of St. Clause said of her: "What a woman your Mother Foundress is! She is capable of governing the entire Church." Funds were freely given to her who gave herself without counting the cost. Because she inspired confidence many came to her. She improved existing conditions and undertook urgent works which had been put off because of a lack of resources. Her first care was to provide better food and lodging for the penitents. The most pressing debts were paid.

"I become all things to all men that I might save all.' Follow this example of the great Apostle, and be all things to all men. This is a very important point. One missionary almost ruined a whole mission, simply because he refused to sit on the ground as the savages did. As for the penitents, you must use every precaution to avoid frightening them. You will never win them over except by humility. And among other things, there is one I should like to mention their food. Never let anything appear on the table which is not prepared according to the usage of the country."

At Rome, the Good Shepherd ranked among the great missionary Orders. No favor vouchsafed from Heaven could have been more highly valued by Mother Mary St. Euphrasia than that the Pope and his Cardinals should bless, approve and set a great value upon her work; for to be the Church's instrument for the conversion of souls had always been her dearest wish.

With a strength that cannot be humanly explained, urged on by love of God and neighbor, she consecrated herself to the Good Shepherd and to youths in danger. One hundred years ago she understood the questions of education which are still problems in modern times. She believed that there is good hidden in everyone and that we must make ourselves masters of this good in order to obtain the salvation and moral cure of lost souls.

"I leave you, as my last legacy, the love of the Cross and zeal for the salvation of souls." Truly this is a tremendous challenge for us today.

**Charity:**

Rose Virginie Pelletier learned in her home from her parents a great love of God and neighbor. Her father gave his free services to the poor. Her mother was charity itself; she was not content with merely giving alms; she visited and nursed the sick poor herself. A child of the revolution, St. Mary Euphrasia was born in stirring

times which required Christian fortitude and magnanimity. There was, from the first, something virile, something fearlessly direct about this noble woman. With a firm but gentle hand she was destined to govern 110 convents and to command the entire loyalty, the unbounded confidence of about 3000 Sisters. To love God immeasurably and to make Him loved was the passion of her heart and the law of her life.

### **Great Personal Love of God:**

The gift of piety was one of the principal elements of Mother Foundress' life. It was deep and earnest towards our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints, most compassionate to the souls in Purgatory, and full of solicitude for her neighbor, towards whom she practiced all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. In every way she honored the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She had a great desire to make reparation for the injuries He receives in the Blessed Sacrament.

Her devotion to the Holy Eucharist was her life's support. We find many exhortations about love for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. "Where will we get the strength that will make our work solid? At the foot of the altar." In regard to important decisions about the foundations, she often told her daughters, "God inspired me to do so in Holy Communion: When Mother was travelling she would fast late in the day in order to have the consolation of receiving her God.

A priest who was long her director said, "I have often heard her say with the greatest simplicity, 'I will ask our Lord about it while I am making my thanksgiving.' " She found great delight in studying the dogma of the Holy Eucharist. Her soul was afire with apostolic zeal.

"Jesus Christ stays hidden but living in His Sacrament to wait for souls who come to partake of the Bread of Eternal Life. Now the mission of the Religious of the Good Shepherd is to purify souls, to make them worthy of this heavenly banquet. By their vocation and their fourth vow, they become the servants of the Holy Eucharist, and their office is to help purify the souls who are to have the happiness of receiving it. Again, the Eucharist is the model of the religious of the Good Shepherd. Hidden under the sensible appearances of bread, shut up in the Tabernacle, but ever living, ever active in doing good in the silence of His prison. Jesus Christ is the Pattern of the Good Shepherd nun, active in the solitude of the cloister, busy all day long in the silence of her convent, uniting Martha's life to that of Mary. "

In conclusion, we might say that Mother Foundress had a great confidence in God and she used the means at her disposal to deepen her Faith and her dependence on God. She was a valiant woman, a woman of great courage, a woman of vision and above all a woman of great faith and love of God.