

HOW TO HONOR THE MYSTERIES OF JESUS TO FORM HIM IN US?

Year 4 | 2



THE EXPRESSION 'STATES AND MYSTERIES OF JESUS'

The expression 'states and mysteries of Jesus' remains very mysterious! What are we talking about, when we touch the most precious of the treasures of St. John Eudes' spiritual pedagogy?

"Each event in the life of the Son of God is a mystery and to each mystery corresponds a state of the Incarnate Word, which finds its value in the Incarnation" (Louis Cognet). We usually use the expression "mysteries" when we pray the Rosary (with its twenty mysteries), but, in truth, their number is not limited since they are all the events lived by the Incarnate Word. Let us note that the idea of mystery does not refer to something that is hidden, but, on the contrary, to what is revealed. Regarding the "state", "it is the interior attitude of Jesus in each of the events of his earthly or glorious life, 'considered as an eternal reality to the extent that this life is assumed by a divine person'" (Louis Cognet).



There are, then, on the one hand, mysteries as the set of what was lived by the Word made flesh in his humanity similar to ours, and states that are revealed in these historical circumstances which, according to the words of St. John Eudes, are "the most important, constituting the foundation, the substance life and truth of the mystery." Bérulle explains it in a beautiful formula: "The mysteries of Jesus Christ happened in some circumstances, and continue and are perpetually present in another way. They happened in regard to execution, but they are present in regard to His virtue, and His virtue never passes away, nor will His love ever pass away from which they are filled". There is precisely one small exercise that we must make in our understanding: Jesus is the Man-God, who unites in His person time and eternity; what He has lived in time and what is transmitted to us by witnesses has an eternal value, not only as an example to be followed, but as a grace to be received. It is Christ Jesus who is formed in us since the grace that acts in our life is not "grace in general," but the grace of what Jesus has lived. For example, in contemplating Jesus in his regard to the widow who makes her offering in the Temple (Lk 21:1-4), it is not a general regard, but the regard of Jesus, and it is precisely this regard of the Lord that we want and that we receive by an incredible gift of grace.

The spiritual path on which John Eudes invites his readers is a communion with the states and the mysteries of the Incarnate Word. The pedagogy he uses is to go through the meditation of the mysteries to reach the grace they reveal and transmit. The humanity of Jesus Christ is the access to his divinity; since we are united to Christ by the humanity of the Word, we pass through Him to reach God, and commune with the divine life freely offered. The spiritual path passes through the contemplation of the mysteries of Jesus, of which we have knowledge of in the Scriptures. Thus the Bible, which contains the Word of God, is at the center of St John Eudes' pedagogical journey. The historical Incarnation of the Eternal Word meditated today in the Holy Spirit communicates to us the eternal grace rests on the Son of God.

TEXT OF SAINT JOHN EUDES

John EUDES, The Life and the Kingdom, OC I 322-325

Among the infinite wonders contained in each mystery of the life of Jesus, there are seven main aspects which you should consider and honor in them, for knowledge of them will give you much light and scope, as well as facility in concentrating on His Mysteries.



The first is the external aspect of the mystery, that is, all its outward manifestations. For instance, the visible exterior elements in the mystery of the birth of Jesus are the nakedness, poverty, cold and

weakness of the newborn Want, the little swaddling bands in which He was wrapped, His cradle in the crib and on the straw between the ox and the ass, His tears and baby cries, the tiny movements of His sacred feet and hands, the first gaze of His baby eyes, His slumber in the arms of His Blessed Mother, the nourishment He took from her most holy breasts, the sweet kisses He received from her and from St. Joseph, the visit of the shepherds, and all the Other touching incidents that took place outwardly in the stable of Bethlehem, On the night of the birth of the Son of God.

This is what I call the body and the exterior of the mystery of the birth of Jesus. Likewise, all that took place outwardly in the mystery of the Incarnation, of the Circumcision, the Presentation in the Temple, the flight into Egypt, the Passion and all the other mysteries. All that was said or done or suffered outwardly, either by the Son of God, or by the other human beings and the angels who were present at the unfolding of the mystery, comprises its body. Every detail deserves your consideration and honor, because there is nothing unimportant in the mysteries of Jesus, but, rather, each aspect is great, divine and worthy of adoration.

The second aspect to be considered and honored in each mystery of the Son of God is the *i n t e r i o r* spirit of the mystery, that is, the particular virtue, power and grace which inhere in the mystery and are peculiar to it, since each mystery has its own proper virtue and Spirit of grace. This includes the thoughts and intentions, the affections, sentiments, dispositions and interior activity accomplishing the mystery. I n a word, it includes all that took place inwardly in the mind, Heart and holy soul of Christ, and in the minds and hearts of ,all those who participated directly in the mystery.

Take, for example, all the interior content of the Incarnation, the birth, Passion and other mysteries of the Son of God, such as the thoughts in His mind, the afflictions and sentiments of His Heart, His inward dispositions of humility, charity, love, submission, meekness, patience. Likewise the inward activity of all His mysteries and acts, with respect to His Eternal Father, Himself, His Holy Spirit, His Blessed Mother, His angels and His saints, mankind in general, and each one of us in particular. Add to this the power and virtue and spirit of grace which He exercised in His Incarnation, His birth, Passion and other mysteries. I call at this the spirit, the core and, as it were, the soul of the mystery.

This spiritual aspect ought to engage your principal attention and honor in the mysteries of the life of Our Lord; yet it actually receives the least attention and honor. Many Christians are satisfied to con template the body and the externals, without passing on to the inward features of these tremendous mysteries.

Yet it is the spirit and the core that are most important, constituting the foundation, the substance life and truth of the mystery, whereas the exterior is no more than a covering, an accessory, and the accidental being of the mystery. The exterior and body is passing and temporal, but the interior virtue and spirit of grace which dwell in each mystery are permanent and eternal.

Thus you may truly say that Christ's mysteries are not in the past, but are always present, according to the spirit, the interior, the truth and substance of the mysteries, not according to the body and exterior. It is true, however, that one may also say that even according to the body and externals, the mysteries remain ever present in a certain sense, before God, just as all things are always present to Him by virtue of His eternity, because there is nothing past or future in the sight of God.



FINAL PRAYER:

Jesus, my Lord! Prostrated at your feet, I surrender myself to the power of your divine Spirit and your Holy Love. With the immense power of this same Spirit and the infinite greatness of this love, I adore you, I glorify you and I love you in Yourself and in the mysteries and states of Your life.

I adore you in your divine and eternal life in the bosom of your Father; in your temporal life on earth for thirty-four years; in the first instant of this life; in your holy childhood; in your hidden and laborious life; in your life of dealing with men and women, when you were living and walking visibly on earth and where you are still with us in the Holy Eucharist.

I adore you in your outward and inward sufferings and in the last moment of your mortal life; in your glorious and heavenly life; in the life you have in your holy Mother and in your angels and saints of heaven and earth.

In a general way, I adore you, I love you and I glorify you in the other mysteries and wonders contained in the limitless vastness of your divine, temporal and glorious life. (O.C. I, 438)

FOR YOUR PERSONAL REFLECTION (YOU CAN READ PHILIPPIANS 2: 5-11 AND LUKE 1: 26-38):

1. During this month, I will pause to contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God: what happened outwardly with him?
2. What happened within His interior? That is, what happened in His spirit, in His heart, in the holy soul of Jesus when he was carrying out this mystery?