



Roma, 14th of November 2017

On November 14th and 16th, we commemorate the birth and the baptism of our Founder saint John Eudes.

We know that John Eudes was a man who had a thankful memory. His *Memorial of God's Deeds* bears a precious testimony to his own person and to the spirituality that guided him throughout his entire life, all the events of which were ablaze with the love of God. Even the worst moments of his life gave him an opportunity to pray, to devote himself to God and to give thanks for the fidelity of the Lord.

I invite you to be thankful to Heaven and to lift up your hearts in gratitude for the person of John Eudes. For the life he received from his parents and from God; for his baptism that he made bear fruit in a way that baptism be a true participation in God's life, in God's holiness. I call upon you to love John Eudes, to love his person, to love what we know about him, his personality and his work. We should develop a cult to saint John Eudes. This is an aspect that isn't very much visible although many churches, schools, areas and streets, bear his name. Let us be proud of the figure of holiness of our Father John Eudes. Today he lives in the light of God, he intercedes for us, for our lives and our missions. How can we dream up, wherever we are, a real love and cult for our Founder? Take this for a call for creativity. It is also a call from the heart to everyone to love and to discover John Eudes, to make him better cherished and more widely known.

When we celebrate a close friend, we plan a party and we offer gifts. What are we going to offer John Eudes for his anniversary, his 416th birthday? We should offer him what we have best, what is dearest to us and what costs us most! Dear friends, we can offer our Father John Eudes three fundamental aspects of our Eudist life. These are the three presents we can give.

To begin with, let us offer him our own personal life with all its history, with the paths in which we grow in faith, with all its contents of great and somber moments. Let's offer him all we own: our entire will and deepest love. We offer him the desires which inhabit us, the feelings which stir within us, the movements of our inner selves and all our yearnings for holiness. We make this offering to saint John Eudes and we ask him to greet it for the glory of God. The detachment of ourselves, which is the third foundation of the Christian life, is an extraordinary way of keeping us from focusing on what should matter the most, the friendship of Christ. We offer him this very personal gift.

Secondly, we offer saint John Eudes our brotherhood in our community. What an extraordinary present! Imagine that we may offer him all the moments we have been living together gratuitously and in brotherhood; all the moments we have spent truly listening to one another; all the conversations that have bonded us together while living the mission and carrying out the same apostolic work. Imagine the wonderful present if we offered the gathering of all our belongings. We know that all that is rare is dear! We offer our Father John Eudes, as a gift, the density of what binds us together. For it was what he wished that we would live together in a community, beneath one roof, around one table sharing the same mission and destiny. He did not want us to become saints without all the others! We offer him this collective gift!

Thirdly, we offer saint John Eudes the huge field of our missions, so diverse in cultures and apostolates. This is the inheritance he leaves us so that we make it grow by caring for priests and bringing forth vocations, by taking care of the poor and the voiceless. We offer him our collaboration with so many priests and nuns, with disciples of Christ, with men and women of good will. What a beautiful gift it is to offer him our joys as well as our disappointed hopes, our aspirations as well as our faux pas. All is offered!

Dear John Eudes, look upon those who bear your name, the Eudists: Fathers, Incorporated members and Associates. They all offer you their life, their brotherhood and their mission! It is you who set them on the way because you wanted each person to sanctify oneself so that all may lead a truly holy life, because together they may undertake the unique mission of the Church by following the path you have laid out.

Accept, Dear John Eudes, the ups and downs of the tiny Congregation you have entrusted us with. It is still a small Congregation, but we want it to take its place among the missions of the Church, to pay tribute to the infinite love which stems from the Heart of Jesus and Mary, such a love that is above all words, love that is both effective and active.

Yes, let us celebrate our Father John Eudes! What we offer him, we pray that he will return in grace because we need it so much, to carry out our mission *Corde magno et animo volenti* in the Church.

Happy Birthday !

Fr. Jean-Michel AMOURIAUX, General Father of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary
Translation into english by Pierre Loiselle