

## Praying in the Holy Week with Saint John Eudes at the time of the Coronavirus



### ♥ *A time for being open and receptive*

*I find a place that I like, I sit or I walk - I am aware of my body - I concentrate on my breathing - I place myself in an attitude of surrender - I welcome my feelings that emerge - the pandemic, the boundaries that close - in the sick - the fear to be contaminated - the lockdown...*

*I become aware of what is going on within me - my reactions to the situation - the radical change in my daily life. I name what is going on within me - my feelings that are (arising in me) running through me - my fears - my hopes - my expectations - my desires.*

I open myself ... I listen ...

I welcome what comes to me

## ♥ *A time for contemplating and giving thanks*

*I take my Bible, the Lectionary, a passage of a book that I like or a reflection of someone who clarifies the present situation and I reflect: Psalm 103 - Genesis 1 - John 11*

“The life of mortals is like grass, it flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.” (Ps 103:15-16)

We are all members of the great human family, all created in the image of God. “God created man in his image; in the divine image he created them...”  
(Genesis 1:27)

« I am the resurrection and the life: whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life; and whoever is alive and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?» (John 11:25-26)

*How do I react in the face of this crisis? With fear?  
With faith?*

*I also take the time to enter into the experience of Saint John Eudes when he went to minister to those afflicted with the plague:*

Extracts from the book of Paul Milcent entitled “A Craftsman of the Christian Renewal of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century”

« In 1627, John Eudes was studying in Paris. It was there that he received disturbing news from his father about

his native country: the plague had returned in force! ... For 18 months, he was the priest of Jesus, the shepherd who gave his life: he had to go to the most miserable of hollows. He was given hospitality by a good priest who provided lodging in his own house...every morning, they celebrated Mass together and left the house together, John Eudes carrying around his neck a little white metal box with consecrated hosts...they went looking for the sick...this went on for 2 months. The epidemic ceased and the young priest returned to Paris...when the aged John Eudes wrote his memoirs in his journal, he noted that regarding the little white metal box: "it is at the bottom of my trunk". Also, well long after, he carefully kept this souvenir linking it to a permanent commitment that he had made in the service of his brothers the most afflicted.." (page 37)

« We often see John Eudes close to the poor, mindful of overwhelming situations in which he frequent found himself...This misery increased brutally; a dreaded new seed was sown; the plague was there again...it claimed victims in 1630... and then resumed again before spring 1631. John Eudes, as in 1627, decided to personally commit himself. Others tried to dissuade him, but he responded by laughing that he feared nothing being himself more nasty than the illness...John Eudes wanted to assist the sick: He decided to live like those he helped: they were isolated in the fields, sheltered in large barrels : it is there that he prayed, slept, ate...the priest of Répichon, the superior of the Oratory of Caen, and 2 other Oratorians were attacked by the plague, John

Eudes returned to the house to be near his sick brothers, he wanted to care for them, to give them all the needed services that were given to the sick...the superior and his brothers died in his arms ...John Eudes, exhausted, fell gravely ill himself, and everyone was afraid for his life...John Eudes did not die. He recovered and came out even stronger from this ordeal. He allowed himself to be captured and completely rooted in the Gospel of Jesus!" (page 45)

*I give thanks for what I discovered in these texts. I give thanks for the nature that takes back its rights—the pollution that decreases—breathing that becomes easier—the animals that regain their freedom—the money that no longer controls the world—the equality for all in the face of the virus—the creation of new connections—solidarity reinforced...*

I mediate on these texts that speak to my heart.

I adore Jesus, the human face of the Love of God.

### ♥ *A time for living forgiveness*

Extracts from the prayer of the Urbi et Orbi blessing on 27 March 2021 in Saint Peter's Square

"The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have

constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities.

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

*“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”* Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: “Wake up, Lord!”.

*When I look at our world, when I look at myself in the heart of this society, where I live very protected in my community, my family, my environment, what do I discover:*

- ❖ *The cry of the poor? My commitment to the poor?*
- ❖ *A planet that is suffocating... that suffers... that cries?*

- ❖ *How is my faith challenged by that which is happening to us?*

*I ask pardon, Lord, for having maltreated nature. I am sorry to have been one of those who were in the mad race of consumption. I am sorry for my fears, for my lack of faith, for not believing that you sleep on the cushion of the boat, and that you are there in the heart of the crisis, in the heart of this global storm.*

I come to you, Christ, with my weaknesses, my fears,  
and I open myself by letting you act in me.

### ♥ *A time to give ourselves to Jesus for ...*

Extract from the prayer of the Urbi et Orbi blessing on 27 March 202 in Saint Peter's Square

*"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"* Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: "Be converted!", "Return to me with all your heart" (*Joel* 2:12). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a *time of choosing*. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary

from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves.”

*I enter into myself... I listen to the Spirit within me. What is the Spirit saying to me? May I be able to give to Jesus ... What can I give/surrender to Jesus for...*

*To commit myself to build a new world, a new society where the economy will no longer be a race for money, but an economy for life, a society based on Gospel values - on respect for others, for the common good.*

*I take time to write my poem, my text, on what I want to give to Jesus and to others at this time of vulnerability, of weakness, and also of interiority.*

I give myself anew to Jesus.  
I let Him revive in me his Paschal Mystery  
of death and resurrection.

Spirit of God, Gift of the Father, You are the Spirit of our spirit, the Heart of our heart. You are always with us and within us. Be blessed eternally for all your wonders! Spirit of Jesus, Gift of the Father, You form Jesus in us since our Baptism. You make us members of his Body, the Church. Give us your Breath, guide us, that all our thoughts, our words and our actions take their source in You. Be blessed eternally for all your wonders! Spirit of Jesus, Gift of the Father, help us to combat the evil that turns us away from You and to choose the new Life in Jesus. Increase in us the happiness to be children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. Be blessed eternally for all your wonders! Spirit of Jesus, I give myself completely to You. Possess me and lead me to follow Jesus.”

Prayer based on a text of Saint John Eudes – Complete Works,  
volume 2, page 173

