

I stumbled my way to Fr. John Eudes. I was not even then quite sure what I came looking for when I ventured to the Abbey in 2012. I came as a recent revert, perhaps with a confused zeal mixed with even more brokenness and obscure sight about where God was leading me. Religious life was inviting, marriage was attractive, but the only thing I was certain of then was Our Lord inviting me to more stillness, to some detachment and deeper considering of this gift of faith.

I came across Fr. John in the Confessional on my first day of retreat. He seemed to know my condition with but a glance, it was oddly intimidating even though he was elderly and tiny. No time for pleasantries, straight to business. Though having gone to plenty of Confessions, this moment was as a new birth. I was struck by his severity of faith, his attentiveness and counsel. "Make a good retreat now," he said as we finally parted and after him having shaken me to my core. In my heart I knew somehow that this priest could help sort me out. That week we meet two more times or so, Fr John Eudes, guided gently. That retreat week in March was the beginning of a charitable accompaniment that would help form me more soundly in faith, incline me to discern my vocation, and help me to more deeply understand my eventual role as wife and mother.

Father had a way of drawing sense of the Eternal right under my nose, not in a way that was detached from a grounded sense of life, but one that helped me be attentive to everything as God's, and God's sustaining all things. He was not shy of course to also impose and stress the implications of this by speaking of the demands presented in belonging to such a loving Father and made for Eternity. He was a man of great mercy but correction, always with the aim of leading more deeply into the love of God. Father and I had many moments of dialogue, he liked to talk quite a bit, but knew when to listen, and more than this, he knew when I needed to be told to stop talking.



His love of the Eucharist was evident and even contagious. Most times the medicine he would suggest following chatting with him was to "go and sit before the Eucharist, go to Christ in the Eucharist". This continues to define my days.

I was blessed to keep coming to Genesee quite regularly since that first retreat, my husband Carmen even proposed to me before Our Lady of the Genesee! I have great joy also in bringing my children Eliana and Peter to the Abbey along with me. We have made many fond memories there that they continue to recall. Fr. John Eudes was always so pleased to meet them, so gentle, always reminding me of my role as mother and its importance.

I am forever indebted to his wisdom, counsel, and accompaniment. "And if thou see a man of understanding, go to him early in the morning, and let thy foot wear the steps of his doors." -Sirach 6:36. I continue to find much wise counsel through reading his archived homilies and Chapter talks. After visiting the Psalms and daily Mass readings in the early morning, I sit with Fr. Eudes' words. I once told him this and he shot back with a humble boyish joy: "surely there are far better things you can do to pass time than read me". There is far too much to condense into a tight space upon a page, the memories could fill a book! One thing is certain. Eternity is closer than the monastery, and when Fr Eudes went home to our Lord last year, I knew his accompaniment would ever continue to help my way along. I am thankful beyond measure that Fr never tired of my knock at his door. I am also thankful to the monks at Genesee for their witness to me throughout these years. We pray for them daily at home and are better suited to live faithful in the middle of the world assured of the grace breathing through their prayers in hiddenness.



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