

Saint John Eudes



John Eudes was born in 1601, in the village of Ri, in Normandy, France. After completing his studies at the Jesuit College in Caen, he entered the Congregation of the Oratory of France, founded in 1611 by Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle. Accepted by the founder himself on March 25, 1623, John Eudes was ordained to the priesthood on December 20, 1625. During time in the Oratory, he assimilated the Christocentric spiritual thought of de Bérulle and shared his enthusiasm for "restoring the priestly order to its full splendor".

Imbued with this spirit, as an apostolic missionary, he evangelized many towns and cities of Normandy, Ile-de-France, Burgundy and Brittany. He spent most of his life evangelizing people through "the popular parish mission." He had great zeal for sharing the good news of the Reign of God. He wanted all people to know the merciful love of God and to experience that love in a personal way.

In the course of his parish missions, he met women who were in need of healing and rehabilitation. In 1641, he founded the Order of Our Lady of Charity to provide haven and assistance to women and young girls mistreated by life. In the centuries after his death, this charism lived on and grew into a worldwide apostolate. The congregation is now known as the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd (sometimes just The Good Shepherd Sisters).

He recognized the pressing need for contributing to a reform of the clergy, and founding a seminary at Caen appeared to him as indispensable. To do so, he left the Oratory and, on March 25, 1643, with a few diocesan priests, founded a congregation dedicated to the spiritual and doctrinal formation of priests and candidates to the priesthood, while pursuing the work of

parish missions. Other seminaries were soon added to the one at Caen. Thus, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary was born.

He brought people to love Christ and the Virgin Mary by speaking tirelessly about their Heart, the sign of the love God shows for us and the communion to which we are called.

To offer them liturgical worship, he composed Masses and Offices in their honor and had the first Feast of the Holy Heart of Mary celebrated on February 8, 1648, at Autun, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus celebrated on October 20, 1672.

Moreover, through his many writings, he helped spread the spiritual teaching of his masters who were members of Bérulle's Oratory, while giving it his own personal touch to the point where he came to be regarded as a spiritual master in his own right.

He died on August 19, 1680 and was canonized by Pope Pius XI on May 31, 1925. The pope proclaimed him to be "the Father, Apostle and Doctor of Liturgical Devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary."

