



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership

JANUARY 24, 2014

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

Father Provincial Visits Houston Associates



Some have said that my visit to Houston was an excuse to get away from the frigid temperature of Northeast Ohio. Well, for the sake of full disclosure, I have to admit that the 68° F and sunshine in Houston was a lot better than the 12° F and snow that bid me farewell when I left the Cleveland airport. Actually, I was in Houston with Father Anthony Marshall for a workshop on religious vocations sponsored by the National Religious

Vocation Council (NRVC).

As a number of you will know, there is no possibility of a Blessed Sacrament religious arriving in Houston without the associates grapevine being alerted. And so it was this time also. In truth, it is a wonderful feeling to know that you are anticipated and always warmly (it's Texas, after all) welcomed.

After the workshop was finished, I was able to spend time with the Houston Blessed Sacrament Associates. At their invitation, I shared with them some of the conclusions drawn from the recent research done by CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) on religious vocations and American culture. What was of particular interest was the

application of these conclusions to the associates as well as to Corpus Christi Parish, in fact to any parish or church group.

The research findings tell us that what young people are looking for in religious life today is not necessarily a particular apostolate but a group of committed people with a clear sense of purpose living in a fraternal community which prays.

This is the very short answer to not only what young people are looking for in religious life, but also what many people are seeking in a parish or church organization.

Such is our challenge as associates, parish members, and religious. True to our eucharistic orientation, our sharing concluded with tasty food provided by our faithful associates. It made me feel real warm, even at 68°.

Now I'm back in Cleveland where it was -7° F this morning. Can't wait for the next workshop or invitation!

*Father Norman Pelletier
Provincial Superior*

Cleveland Hosting "Come and See"

This Sunday, January 26, the Cleveland associates will host a "Come and See" event starting at 1:30 in the Eymard Room of the Parish Center to introduce prospective members to the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament.

A general invitation has been extended to parishioners as well as personal invitations from the associates themselves. A new program of initial formation for associates will get underway in late February or early March.

Good News!

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut, has given approval for the establishment of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament at Saint Philip's Church in Norwalk.

Father Michael Boccacio, the pastor, asked that we request permission to start an associates group at Saint Philip's, under the leadership of Daniel Krenicki. May God bless this new endeavor!

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Associates Formation Begins at Saint Eulalia, Chicago

Saint Eulalia Church is a new parish of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in Maywood, Illinois, west of downtown Chicago. We officially moved into this multicultural (Hispanic, African-American, Asian, and Anglo) community last July 1. It was a diocesan parish since its founding in 1927.

Introducing ourselves as religious of the Blessed Sacrament was a big project. Of course, together with the new concept and structure of a religious community is also introducing our founder, Saint Peter Julian Eymard, to the parish. The thought of a slow and long adjustment of connecting who we are as religious of the Blessed Sacrament turned out to be faster

and shorter because the parish community was so welcoming and eager to know us.

Part of the excitement of the parish community is their initiative in discovering who we are as disciples of Saint Peter Julian Eymard. In September, one of the altar servers inquired about the Associates of the Blessed Sacrament. A month later, four parishioners came to me expressing their desire to become associates. Every Sunday, they would ask, "When are we going to start?" The experience with these four enthusiastic people reminds me of Saint Peter Julian's words, "Tomorrow will be too late." Thus, in November, without any further reflection and with great

Joy, I formally started journeying with Jane, Martha, Paul, and Rose in discovering their respective call to love Jesus and follow him in serving their brothers and sisters as witnesses to the love they receive in the Holy Eucharist.

A member of the group recently left for a three-month trip to Hawaii. She took along enough formation booklets for three sessions, and when our group last met we included her via Skype. It worked out just great. She did her preparation beforehand and it was almost like having her in the room with us. Ah, modern technology!

*Father Rudsend Paragas
with Jim Brown*



Follow the Associates Program and Life in the Eucharist (LITE) in Bread Broken and Shared, the Provincial Newsletter.

Life in the Eucharist Coming to Virginia and Maryland

Change touches all our lives. It is an essential element in listening to what God asks of us as we embrace new situations.

Frank and Marjorie Zalar have seen many changes as their children grew, left home to marry, and began families of their own. As empty-nesters, they gave generously of time and talent to Saint Paschal Baylon Church in suburban Cleveland. They were active in the Life in the Eucharist ministry. Frank served as co-director of the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing, helping with the formation of new LITE teams and conducting programs. They were so involved in the life and ministry of the

Blessed Sacrament Community that they were among the first to make their covenants as associates.

And then, like father Abraham of old, God called them to leave their homeland and embrace their new vocation of being grandparents. They did not want to miss out on the special joy of this new chapter in their lives. The move was to a new home in Purcellville, Virginia. The sacrifice was in finding a new parish to sustain their love of the liturgy. The new spiritual family for Frank and Marjorie was miles away—past a number of other Catholic churches— at Saint John the Evangelist Church in Frederick, Maryland.

On February 22-26, Frank and Marjorie, with my help, will conduct the annual parish mission, sharing their love of the Eucharist in order to plant the seeds of eucharistic evangelizing. The mission focuses on the dynamic of the Eucharist as: Encountering God's presence in the celebration; Enlivened by Christ's love in contemplation; and Enflamed to give witness in a communion of service.

Our hope is that the fertile ground of Saint John the Evangelist may yield a new team of eucharistic evangelizers and Blessed Sacrament Associates.

Father Bill Fickel