



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2014

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Eucharist and the Cross



At Saint Paschal Baylon, the eastside suburban Cleveland parish served by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, a large wooden cross has stood in front of the altar since Ash Wednesday. Due to its size and placement, it really dominates the sanctuary visually and physically.

The *Directory of Popular Piety and the Liturgy* states: "Throughout Lent, every Friday is observed, since very ancient times, as a commemoration of the Lord's passion and the faithful easily direct their devotion toward

the mystery of the cross. They contemplate the crucified Savior, they sense more easily the great suffering which Jesus, the holy and innocent one, suffered for the salvation of mankind. They understand his love and the effectiveness of his redemptive sacrifice" (127). The focus on the cross reaches its high point in the liturgy of Good Friday in that solemn moment when we come forward to lovingly venerate the cross, the instrument of our salvation.

Saint Peter Julian Eymard, too, contemplated the mystery of the cross. As a young curate assigned to the parish of Chatte, he found peace and inspiration at the hilltop Calvary of Saint-Romans, "my mystic rock." Saint-Romans would remain a point of reference throughout his life.

Thirty years later, the cross was very much in the mind of Father Eymard when he wrote to Madame Lepage on October 10, 1867: "*Meditate on the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, not as a model of expiation and penance, but rather as a proof of his love for you and for us all. In order to remove the bitterness and horrors of the cross which are entwined with this life, Jesus in his love made the cross blossom with the flowers of paradise.*"

Touched by the mystery of the Eucharist, Father Eymard chose to focus on the perfect love of Jesus Christ that the cross reveals. Like him, let us see *love* this Easter when we look at the cross and when we celebrate the memorial of his death and resurrection.

Father Anthony

Associate Shirley Perrault R.I.P.

Shirley and Charlie Perrault were always together! Devoted members of Saint Vincent de Paul Church in Holiday, Florida, they served in too many ministries to mention here. Shirley would typically respond, "Sure, I'll help out." For a while, they moved north to be closer to their children, but soon returned to SVDP where they had sunk deep spiritual roots. Shirley and Charlie became Associates of the Blessed Sacrament on December 9, 2012. Both also received the Saint Jude the Apostle Award at the Cathedral of Saint Jude the Apostle in Saint Petersburg on the feast of Christ the King, November 20, 2011. God called Shirley home on April 10, a new saint and witness in the presence of the eternal One and the victorious Lamb!

Gloria Jung

Christus Vincit!

God bless you as we enter into the Sacred Triduum. The Lord in whose eucharistic presence we delight will bring us to the new life and joy of Easter.

A Rule of Life Suggestion

Patty Pizzitola, convener of the Houston associates, sends out an e-mail with an excerpt from the ROLA each Monday. This is a great way to stay in touch and to interiorize the rule.

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A New Experience: A Parish Mission with Children



This past month, Father Tony and I had the privilege of presenting a Life in the Eucharist parish mission for Saint Michael Parish in Sharonville, Ohio, just north of Cincinnati. The pastor, Father Thomas DiFolco, an old friend of mine, had called the office last summer seeking a Eucharist-centered program for Lent 2014 to follow up a successful Lenten program the parish had experienced the year before.

The request from Father DiFolco presented a new challenge for the CEE in that he was inviting parents and their children to attend. Babysitting was also provided. The net effect of these efforts was that parents who typically

would not make an evening program were able to come out and participate. About 165 adults attended each of the two evenings. This was all the more remarkable in light of the fact that March 31 was opening day for the Cincinnati Reds (the first professional baseball team in history), which in Cincinnati is like a national holiday.

The mission followed a pattern that has increasingly become the norm for the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing: Father Tony preached at all the weekend Masses and the parish leadership picked LITE themes for the two 1-1/2 hour evening programs—*transformation* and *mission*.

Father Tony and I presented a draft outline on the two themes and a religious education expert from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Colleen Gerke, developed an outline for the teachers in the parish's religious education program to use with the children in attendance (kindergarten through sixth grade).

Each evening began with all of the adults and children present for an opening prayer, a short activity based on a story, and a simple question that both parents (and the other adults) and the children could discuss as a family or in small groups.

After about 25 minutes, Father Tom presided over a short blessing and dismissed the children for 45 minutes with their teachers to continue reflecting and doing an activity based on the theme for the evening. The children returned at the end of the session for a concluding prayer and a social.

A number of parents commented that one or both of them would not have been able to attend the program had it not been open to their children or if babysitting had not been provided.

Father Tony and I were both delighted and grateful for the wonderful spirit of the group in Sharonville, and for what the presence of the children added to the experience.

Jim Brown

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

Advisory Board Meets

On April 5, the CEE Advisory Board met at the Provincial-ate. Present were Patty and Bubba Pizzitola (Corpus Christi, Houston); Kay Vincent and Joe McCormack (Saint Paschal Baylon, Cleveland); Louise Borgione and Don Burke (Our Lady of Guadalupe, Macedonia); Rick Krivanka (Cleveland); Fathers Bill and Tony, and I.

In addition to updates on the development of the associate programs around the province, the group reflected on a report on the International Commission for SSS Mission (see the March 21 *Connections*); gave feedback on the new CEE website; discussed having an annual covenant renewal and a national gathering of associates; and how to

respond to interest in being an associate by persons not living near a Blessed Sacrament community.

Two decisions were made: 1. The CEE will provide guidance for local associates group to sponsor an annual Day of Prayer and Covenant Renewal in the fall. The CEE will explore the possibility of a national gathering in the future. 2. Regarding requests from those living at a distance from a community, the local associates director will interview the individual, invite him or her to spend time in one of the communities, and appoint an associate as a mentor. Formation materials will also be available online.

Jim Brown