



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

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A Gift of Self, A Year Focused on Mercy

Today, December 8, 2015, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis inaugurates the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. In *Misericordiae Vultus* (The Face of Mercy), he tells us, “The Jubilee Year will close with the liturgical solemnity of Christ the King on 20 November 2016.”

In the first line of the Bull, Pope Francis says, “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith.” Two paragraphs later, he says, “At times, we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives” (3).

The theme of mercy has been a central message of Pope Francis since his first year as pontiff. He has stressed over and over again God’s mercy and faithful

constancy in forgiving us.

You may remember how he compared the church to a field hospital calling us to welcome and tend to the wounded and the dying in the daily battlefield of life.

In his first apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Gospel of Joy), he said: “The church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven, and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel” (114). A few months after issuing this call to the church and during his general audience on February 12, 2014, Pope Francis reflected on how we live the Eucharist in our daily lives, telling us, “We celebrate the Eucharist not because we are worthy, but because we recognize our need for God’s mercy, incarnate in Jesus Christ.”

Jim Brown

*From all of us
in the
Center for
Eucharistic
Evangelizing*

**A Blessed
Christmas
and a
Grace-filled
New Year!**



December 9

53rd Anniversary
of the
Canonization of
Saint Peter
Julian Eymard

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A CALL TO SHARE EXPERIENCES WITH THOSE WHO CELEBRATE OUR EUCHARISTIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE EYMARDIAN FAMILY

I invite all of you who partner with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in eucharistic evangelizing to share with us your reflections and experiences living out the Jubilee Year of Mercy and how you are making a “Gift of Self” to those you serve. Please email your stories and reflections to us at cee@blessedsacrament.com.
Jim Brown

As We Come to the End of 2015

Fathers Anthony Schueller, SSS, Mark Del Rosario, SSS, and Bill Fickel, SSS, presented a retreat in November to the associates at Saint Vincent de Paul Church in Holiday, Florida.

The Life in the Eucharist team at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Macedonia, Ohio, is presenting a five-night program during Lent at Our Lady of Hope Church in nearby Bedford. The team will also be planning a monthly Holy Hour at OLG as part of the parish's fiftieth anniversary.

Father Paul Bernier, SSS, gave a retreat in November to the associates at Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Highland Heights, Ohio. The associates went through a discernment process this past fall to identify a new leadership structure as envisioned in the *Rule of Life for Associates*. Mary Muehle and Kay Vincent are the new lay co-leaders, and Christine Anderson, Dan Lewis, and Susan Work round out the board of five associates to assist the local director, Father Paul.

Also, the Life in the Eucharist team at Saint Paschal Baylon is planning the Scriptural Reflections LITE program at the parish in April. Evamarie Mickol, the parish's youth minister, has also begun planning for another LITE Teen program on the same Saturday in April.

The associates at Corpus Christi Church in Houston, Texas, participated in the Catholic elementary school auction in October by auctioning off a monthly meal for one year to a family raising money for the school. A new group of associates will make their Commitment Promise at the end of January.

Under the guidance of Father George Dunne, SSS, a group of 20 members of the Life in the Eucharist teams are on course to make their Commitment Promise as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament next spring at Saint Stephen's Church in Winter Springs, Florida.

Father Michael Boccaccio, an associate and the pastor of Saint Philip's Church in Norwalk, Connecticut, has been appointed the director of the Associates of the Blessed Sacrament in the Diocese of Bridgeport by Bishop Frank Caggiano. The appointment came at the request of the provincial superior, as specified in the *Rule of Life for Associates*. And the relic of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the story of which was highlighted in the last issue of *Connections*, will be moving to Saint Philip's. Father Mike is working with local artists to build a permanent home for it.

And lastly, the associates at Saint Philip's Church have begun the ten-session *Course of Study on Saint Peter Julian Eymard*; the team is also preparing a new group of associate candidates; and Advent began planning the monthly First Friday Adoration.

THE HOLY YEAR OF MERCY AND EMMANUEL

Emmanuel will promote its mission to "see all of reality in the light of the Eucharist," featuring in 2016 special articles and liturgical reflections on the Jubilee of Mercy. All are intended to enrich your prayer and your ministry. Subscribe today or give *Emmanuel* as a gift to a friend, family member, priest, deacon, or religious this Christmas. Associates, LITE team members, and religious can subscribe or renew at a special rate of just \$30.00. Telephone 440.449.2103 or email emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com.

Preparing for the July 2016 Convocation in Cleveland

As we anticipate the convocation to be held next July 29-31 in Cleveland, Ohio, and the theme "Celebrating the Gift of Self in the Year of Mercy," perhaps we who partner with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament and members of Life in the Eucharist teams can reflect on this call of Pope Francis — in our gatherings, the Holy Hours we prepare and attend, the initial and ongoing formation programs we facilitate and/or participate in, and during our own personal prayer.

"*Merciful like the Father*, therefore, is the 'motto' of this Holy Year" (14), writes Pope Francis. He goes on in subsequent paragraphs laying out ways to participate in this Holy Year of Mercy.

Additional ideas for reflecting upon and planning actions based on this call can be found on the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (usccb.org). I especially refer you to two very good links for applying two traditions familiar to us all: "The Corporal Works of Mercy" and "The Spiritual Works of Mercy."

Note: Please read the January 2016 issue of the Province Newsletter, *Bread Broken & Shared*, for more details on the July 29-31 Convocation. Registration flyers will be mailed out at the beginning of February. Thank you.

Jim Brown