



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

FEBRUARY 25, 2015

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

A Eucharistic Spirituality for Lent

This past Monday night, February 23, despite the chilly -1 temperature in Cleveland, our associates from Saint Paschal Baylon Church met for their monthly gathering. We started with a brief social of *hot* coffee and fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies outside Saint Ann's Shrine at the Provincialate.

Following some warm fellowship, we moved into the chapel and began our evening program. Jim Brown, the new director of the CEE, discussed the possibility of the group participating in a newly reconstituted *Course of Study on the Life and Writing of Saint Peter Julian Eymard* — originally developed by Tony and Ethel Lapitan, two of our associates from Saint Vincent de Paul Church in Holiday, Florida.

Following a brief discussion of this prospect, I led the group in a simple reflection based on an article in the March/April 2015 edition of *Emmanuel*. I would like to share these ideas with the rest of the laity in the Eymardian family. The author of the article is Victor M. Parachin, a minister and a frequent contributor to *Emmanuel*.



In the article, "Twenty-four Ways to Make the Most of Lent," Parachin reminds us that Lent can be filled with grand resolves about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Often, however, the greatest growth comes through simple daily efforts at living the Gospel. These represent real self-denial and self-giving as we journey with the Lord Jesus this season.

So, if you have not yet decided on your Lenten program, or like so many of us already have grown busy and distracted, here are his 24 ways to make the most of these Lenten days of grace. You can also write your own by reflecting on your relationships, your behaviors, and your hopes for growth.

1. Suspend judging others.
2. Control your anger.
3. Comfort a griever.
4. Watch your mouth.

5. Try to please God.
6. Drive compassionately.
7. See Christ in every person you meet.
8. Let go.
9. Let God.
10. Give up meat for Lent.
11. Schedule kindness into your day.
12. Smile at everyone you meet.
13. Make a retreat at home.
14. Give up a vice.
15. Acquire a virtue.
16. Reconcile with someone.
17. Practice persistence.
18. Give "alms."
19. Create sacred space in your home.
20. Pray for an "enemy."
21. Encourage someone who is discouraged.
22. Read Bible prayers.
23. Help a stranger.
24. Extend compassion to all of God's creatures.

Father Anthony Schueller

"Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am! (Is 58:8-9a)

"We are called to live an authentically eucharistic spirituality, and we are moved by the spirit of love that led Christ to give his life for the world and to perpetuate this gift in the Eucharist."

Rule of Life for Associates, 4

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What's Expected of an Associate?

We began in the last edition of *Connections* a series of reflections in response to a question we often hear: *So what is expected of me as an Associate of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation?*

We read in Number 7 of the *Rule of Life for Associates*:

“The celebration of the memorial of the Lord is at the center of our life as individual persons and as family members. It is the starting point of the Eucharist and the inspiration of our prayer and our commitment.”

“We actively and joyfully participate in the banquet of the risen Christ on the Lord’s Day, on feast days, and whenever possible, even on weekdays. We nourish our faith at the table of the word of God, especially through the daily liturgical readings.”

The word of God played a fundamental role in Father Eymard’s life of prayer, in his preaching, and in his pastoral commitments. We find in his personal notes how he set up his own systematic formation program which he dedicated himself to during his years of ministry (1834-1839). The four areas of research included Holy Scripture, theology, church history, and the secular sciences.

Father Eymard was a man who knew the Bible, and he knew it by heart. He read, studied, and meditated on it during his entire life.

During moments of crisis, he looked to the Scriptures to get reoriented and to find answers and a guide for his journey.

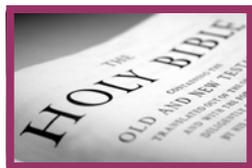
During his “Great Retreat” of Rome in 1865, Father Eymard wrote: “Jesus was the Word of the Father. That is what I must be for my brethren and my neighbor. I must therefore listen to this interior word of Jesus Christ, understand and repeat it, listen to it with faith, accept it with respect and love, transmit it with fidelity and confidence, with meekness and power.”

If you are looking for another way this Lent to live in the spirit of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, consider spending time reflecting on the Scriptures proclaimed each Sunday and weekday. Simply read the passage, stop, and let a word, a phrase, a teaching, or the story itself speak to you:

Jesus,
what is the word
or the message
you wish to speak to me
today, right here,
right now?

Speak, Lord,
your servant is listening.

Jim Brown



A number of our religious and lay associates are on the road this Lent preaching a Eucharist-centered mission or retreat. The legacy and charism of Saint Peter Julian Eymard are being spread beyond all that is happening in our Blessed Sacrament parishes. As Father Eymard would have said, “*May God be praised!*”

Father Anthony Schueller preached at all the weekend Masses on February 21-22 at Saint Joseph Church in Strongsville, Ohio. The parish has experienced an influx of new members, and the pastor, Father Joe Mamich, wanted Father Tony to underscore in his preaching the importance of the Eucharist and participation in the parish’s nine-year-old program of eucharistic adoration. Father Tony shared copies of *A Way of Eucharistic Prayer by Saint Peter Julian Eymard*, a prayer card we developed, and explained the Four Ends of the Mass method of eucharistic prayer.

On March 9-11, Father Tony and Jim Brown will be preaching an evening retreat at Saint Joseph Church in Eldersburg, Maryland. Marianist Father Neville O’Donohue, the pastor, was introduced to Eymardian spirituality by Marjorie and Frank Zalar (lay associates originally from Saint Paschal Baylon, Highland Heights, Ohio, now living in Purcellville, Virginia) when he sat in on a parish mission they and Father Bill Fickel presented last February at the Zalar’s new parish, Saint John the Evangelist in Frederick, Maryland. The theme of the retreat at Saint Joseph is “*I will go to the altar of God!*”

Father Anthony Marshall will be preaching a mission in Lewes, Delaware, March 7-11. He will preach at all the weekend Masses; and, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, he will preside and preach at the morning Masses and present a mission each night. The purpose of the retreat is focused on teaching about the meaning and benefits of, and exhorting people to participate as scheduled adorers in their Perpetual Adoration program. The theme is “*Eucharistic Adoration and Building Up the Body of Christ.*”

On March 14-18, Father Bill Fickel, former director of the CEE and current pastor of Saint Vincent de Paul Parish in Holiday, Florida, will be preaching a Lenten mission at Holy Redeemer Church in Long Island, New York. The theme of the retreat is “*Encountering God’s Love in the Eucharist.*” A parishioner and lay associate at Saint Vincent de Paul, Laura Worhacz, is responsible for arranging this mission. She grew up in Holy Redeemer and she and her husband and family are still connected to the parish. Father Bill tells me that they are also interested in starting an associates program at Holy Redeemer.

On March 15-17, Father Tony will be joined by Mary Muehle, a lay associate and parishioner of Saint Paschal Baylon Church, to preach a Lenten Mission at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Ashtabula, Ohio. The theme is “*Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus.*” The mission begins on Sunday evening and continues with presentations in the morning and evening on Monday and Tuesday. Please pray for these parishes and our mission team!