



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

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Lent: A Time of Conversion to a Life of Mercy

As we embark on another Lenten season, we are invited to join with the whole church in a special time of prayer and reflection on deepening our faith. In calling for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis said in the document *The Face of Mercy* that this year is a time for animating “a new stage in the journey of the church on its mission to bring every person the Gospel of mercy.”

He says in section 15:

“It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy. . . . Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offenses,

bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.”

Some of you who read this *Connections* newsletter know that my wife Mary Lisa and I belong to a Jesuit parish in Cincinnati, Ohio. Over the last 50-plus years, I have been blessed to be formed in the spirituality of two remarkable saints, Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Saint Peter Julian Eymard. I find them to be kindred spirits. I hope to write more about that in the future.

One of the pastoral staff members at our parish, Saint Robert Bellarmine, Karen Brandstetter, recently published the following “Examen for Mercy: Increasing Our Hearts for Mercy.” With her gracious permission, I share it with you here as a prayer you might use in your adoration and/or personal prayer during this Lent. (Those of you who are familiar with and/or pray the blue adoration card *A Way of Eucharistic Prayer by Saint Peter Julian Eymard* may be interested to know that this prayer guide and its five steps was inspired by the Ignatian “Examen” and its five prayer steps or prompts.)

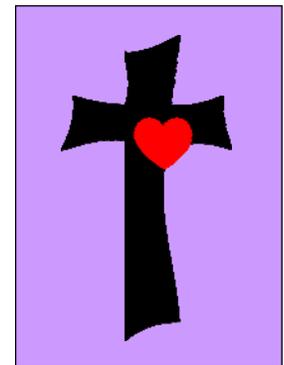
“God of Mercy, in this moment, I put myself in your loving presence. In my heart, I see you loving me, showering me with your kindness. Dear God, let me see myself as you see me. . . .

“God of Gentleness, I know your love for me in the mercy that you show me over and over. I am filled with gratitude for your loving kindness. Faithful One, thank you for your great love. . . .

“God of Life, help me to see your mercy in the events, people and tasks of yesterday (today). Open my heart to recognize your mercy. Allow me to see what is in me that resists receiving or giving mercy. Holy Spirit, guide me. . . .

“God of Compassion, please forgive my unkindness in not sharing your love with others. Forgive me for not courageously living a life of mercy. Christ Jesus, have mercy on me. . . .

“God of our Days and Nights, show me your way of mercy. Help me to carry your loving kindness with me as I face this new day. Give me the grace to increase my heart for mercy.” God of hope,



be with me. . . .”

Whatever method you use in your adoration or personal prayer, we hope you will join with the universal church in spending time this Lent reflecting upon Pope Francis’ call to “increase our hearts for mercy.”

Jim Brown

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Living the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

The Blessed Sacrament Associates and parishioners of Saint Vincent de Paul Church have come together with another diocesan parish and two other Christian churches under the Metropolitan Ministry Meal Site Partnership Program of Tampa to serve hot dinners to the needy in our Holiday, Florida, neighborhood every Monday evening.

The opportunity to serve them has sparked us to add items of clothing and gift bags of small toiletries and non-perishable foods to meet daily needs.

Saint Vincent de Paul currently has 50 volunteers, with 31 associates participating in a rotating schedule through the month.

Our associates who wanted very much to work together with the other Christian communities to feed the poor are finding this mission personally rewarding. Some have a natural gift, as they share in “table ministry” to help offer some counsel. We find these encounters extraordinary as we reflect on those who have the least of life’s comforts and find we are blessed to be able to draw from the charisms of Saint Peter Julian Eymard (*ROLA*, 3, 17) and Saint Vincent de Paul, our parish patron, with humble service to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Gloria Jung
Lay Associate of the Blessed Sacrament



Sylvia Archibold, currently in the initial formation process for associates at Saint Vincent de Paul Church, is one of the volunteers in the Meal Site Partnership Program.

Other News

LEADERSHIP BOARD FOR SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL, HOLIDAY, ASSOCIATES

On Thursday, February 4, the birthday of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, those who were nominated and accepted leadership for the Associates Leadership Board — called for in the *Rule of Life for Associates* — met for a time of reflection and discernment.

Gloria Jung received a strong endorsement from the group as the new “lay leader,” which is a reflection of the great work she has been doing to get our associates organized and active. She has also been active in the formation of new associates.

Anita McMahon, Laura Worhacz, Mary Brady, and Jan Russo will form the working Board to assist Gloria and me as the local director in the ongoing leadership for our associates at Saint Vincent de Paul.

Father Bill Fickel, SSS
Pastor

NEW ASSOCIATES AT CORPUS CHRISTI, HOUSTON

On Saturday, January 30, 2016, eight people were received as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament by Father Thomas Smithson, SSS, the pastor and local director for the associates at Corpus Christi Parish in Houston, Texas. They each made the Promise Commitment ceremony at the Vigil Mass for Sunday. The ceremony was followed by a reception planned by the current associates at Corpus Christi.

A fuller story about these new associates will appear in the April-June 2016 Province Newsletter, *Bread Broken & Shared*.

Jim Brown