



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 7

The Future of the Associates of the Blessed Sacrament

In the last issue of *Connections*, we indicated that we would share ideas from the presentations and workshops from the Convocation held this past August.

The following is a summary of the workshop I presented. I suggest you begin your reflection with the Year of Grace — Year of Mercy Prayer developed for the Convocation and printed on the second page of this newsletter.

The Current Situation

- There are eight branches of the Province's associate program across the United States.
- Five groups gather at Blessed Sacrament parishes.
- Three groups gather at diocesan parishes.
- A total of 215 associates have made their Promise Commitment to be disciples in the spirit of Saint Peter Julian Eymard.
- Plans are in place at five of the parishes to begin a new initial formation program in the next year.

What is Happening

Collectively, much is going on as this new iteration of the Aggregation of the Blessed

Sacrament evolves. Associates are involved in a great variety of ways:

- Planning and leading initial formation for prospective associates.
- Planning and leading Holy Hours in the parishes.
- Planning and leading the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Planning and leading ongoing formation programs.
- Planning an annual retreat for the associates locally.
- There are five boards in place, as called for in the *Rule of Life for Associates*, 27.
- Associates are highly involved in their local parishes.
- There are associates involved in the most identifiable eucharistic evangelizing program of the Province, the Life in the Eucharist ministry.

As the director of the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing and one who is regularly in conversations with associates across the country, I see and hope for a number of things for the future of the associates movement in the Province of Saint Ann. Let me mention some.

- As the Body of Christ, we stay connected across the Province, e.g., *Connections*, re-sourcing one another.
- Each branch periodically discerns its own mission priorities, i.e., What would Saint Peter Julian Eymard be doing?
- Sometime down the road, a group of associates would write their own "Rule of Life for Associates."
- Associates will participate more actively in Province meetings and chapters.
- Within the parameters of the *Rule of Life for Associates*, each branch would develop its own way of being an associate.
- As each branch grows in numbers, the group arrives at a point where the ministry of one associate or of a group of associates is *our* ministry — always a *we!*
- More associates write articles and/or make contributions to *Connections* so that we all stay connected.
- Each branch plans an annual retreat around the anniversary of the Aggregation's founding.
- Groups are creatively and lovingly managing the inevitable conflicts that arise.
- Each associate can answer with confidence and clarity what it means to be an Associate of the Blessed Sacrament.
- Lastly, I hope you will partner with, rouse, and support your pastors and religious in building true Eymardian, Eucharist-centered communities and ministries.

Reflection Question

What are your hopes for the future?

Jim Brown



The Gift of Self
(1865)
The Year of Mercy
(2015-2016)

CONNECTIONS

What We “Make” of the Year of Mercy

The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy ends in less than two months on Sunday, November 20, the solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. As we approach the close of what has truly been *an extraordinary year*, we might ask ourselves, What exactly is the net result of it all? Is it simply to be reminded of mercy and to allow it to enter again into our thinking and our vocabulary?

Pope Francis has insisted from the very start that he wanted the Holy Year to be *practical*, not a theoretical or a theological exercise. In *Misericordiae Vultus*, he states: “We will entrust the life of the Church, all humanity, and the entire cosmos to the Lordship of Christ, asking him to pour out his mercy upon us like the morning dew, so that everyone may work together to build a brighter future. *How much I desire that the year . . . be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God!*”

This is the emphasis I sought to convey in the closing keynote of the Convocation in July. The Holy Father, in *Misericordiae Vultus*, identifies specific, concrete ways we can *live* mercy. He especially underscores the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and seeing every encounter with Christ in the sacrament of reconciliation as one where we meet the God of mercy in our Savior Jesus.

I take away from this jubilee two powerful convictions. The first is about God. It is a heightened awareness that the fundamental posture of God toward creation, and everyone in it, is one of mercy. God, the Lover, is absolutely extravagant in bestowing mercy, not distinguishing those who are “worthy” from those who are not, but lavishing it abundantly upon all.

The second is about us. If we wish to be truly *like* Jesus (and therefore *like* the Father), we must “suspend judgment” in approaching others and, instead, view them as God does, as deserving of our time, our patience, our ministry, our compassion. The Samaritan Woman at the Well (Jn 4:3-42) is a prime example of this. Everyone but Jesus regarded her with disdain; he saw her as a precious daughter of God and touched her deepest needs with unconditional love and acceptance. The world is hungry for such mercy!

Father Anthony Schueller, SSS

Gift of Self – Gift of Mercy



Merciful God,
through your Son Jesus, you show us your face and we are saved.

Your loving gaze empowers us
to zealously promote your compassion and mercy.

Under the inspiration of Saint Peter Julian Eymard,
you call companions to journey together,
witness to the gift of self in Christ, manifest forgiveness and love,
and nourish one another through the Eucharistic Mystery.

Send your Spirit to proclaim liberty
to those bound by selfishness, oppression, and blindness,
so that we may joyfully nourish the world
with the Good News of grace and mercy.

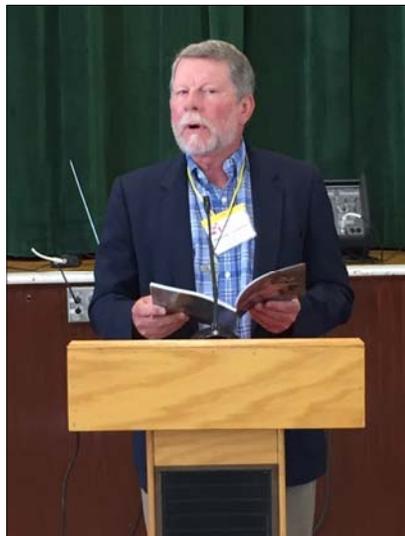
Grant success to our endeavors
that we may share the gift of God —
Christ, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.



*Remembering Again
the Convocation on
the Gift of Self
in the
Year of Mercy*

July 29-31, 2016
Provincial Center
Saint Paschal Baylon Church
Highland Heights, Ohio

Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament,
Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,
Associates, LITE Team Members,
Friends, and Benefactors



“Inspired by the spirit of
Saint Peter Julian Eymard . . .
and in partnership with
the Congregation of the
Blessed Sacrament
and the Servants of the
Blessed Sacrament,
we seek to pursue
our Christian vocation
and our call to holiness
by following
the evangelical way
taught by
Saint Peter Julian Eymard.”

Rule of Life for Associates, 1