



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

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Presenting at the General Chapter

Last month, on June 17, I had the privilege of addressing the General Chapter of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, which was held at the Conference Center of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake — Mundelein Seminary in suburban Chicago, Illinois, throughout the first three weeks of the month. I was asked to report on the story of the Associates of the Blessed Sacrament in the Province of Saint Ann.

My report largely reflected the input I received from meetings held over several months with associates across the Province. In it, I highlighted five conclusions drawn from what people told me:

1. The significance of the story and writings of Saint Peter Julian Eymard for so many associates.
2. Their deep love for and participation in the Eucharist.
3. The opportunity to spread love of the Eucharist and the benefits of adoration to others.
4. The love and support they feel from their fellow associates.
5. The yearlong initial formation experience and opportunities for ongoing formation and social gatherings.

In my concluding remarks, I shared a comment made by a newly promised associate as a good statement about what it means to be an Associate of the Blessed Sacrament in the Province of Saint Ann:

We are a group who share the charism of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the founder of the Congregation. We participate in a twelve-month formation/discernment program which includes presentations by Blessed Sacrament religious. When we participated in the Commitment Ceremony during Mass, we promised to follow the 28 inspiring statements found in the *Rule of Life for Associates*. Personally, I made a promise to live my life according to the teachings of Saint Eymard, by participating in Mass (including weekdays when I can), daily prayer, adoration, service to others, continued study on the Eucharist, and supporting the Congregation.

The presentation was well received. Quite a few Provincials requested copies of the twelve initial formation booklets and the ongoing formation materials we have developed. It was also recommended that we post these materials on the Congregation's website.

I came away with one lasting impression from the discussion that followed and my interactions with a number of the capitulars, that is, we are very unique in the Congregation, especially in terms of 1. having a yearlong formation and discernment program; 2. that we have developed a number of ongoing formation initiatives, for example, the Course of Study on Saint Peter Julian Eymard; and 3. the rich variety of ways associates live out their commitment.

A special word of thanks to all of you whose ideas I was able to represent in my presentation.

Jim Brown

“We are inspired by the teachings and example of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, ‘Outstanding Apostle of the Eucharist.’ He responded to the needs of the people of his time by proclaiming God’s love manifested in a special way in Christ’s gift in the Eucharist; he encouraged the faithful to share, as associated members, in the charism and the mission of the religious Congregations he founded.”

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The “Eymardian Charismatic Family”

As a young priest serving at Saint Charles Borromeo Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, many years ago, I would occasionally celebrate Mass with the charismatic prayer group there. Having read about the gifts of the Holy Spirit (*charismata* in Greek) — prophecy, healing, teaching, praying in tongues, interpretation, etc. — it was a novel and interesting experience for me. There were even those who “rested in the Holy Spirit,” although I first assumed my preaching had simply put them to sleep!

At our recent General Chapter, the phrase “Eymardian Charismatic Family” was often used. It has nothing to do with the “charismatic movement” and the distinctive prayer form it nurtured among many in the Catholic Church following Vatican II. But it has everything to do with the unique gift or inspiration of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon a founder or foundress of a religious community. To put it succinctly, *our gift is the Eucharist!*

In an address to the Chapter,

Father Eugênio Barbosa Martins, SSS, our Superior General, stated: “The Founder’s charism is a complex reality. The document *Mutuae Relationes* describes it as ‘an experience of the Spirit transmitted to the chosen disciples so that it may be lived, protected, deepened, and constantly renewed, attuned with the ever-growing body of Christ.’ A charism becomes a particular way for sanctification and apostolate, in proportion to the sharing of life among the members of the same family. In order

to identify clearly the charism of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, we have to look at his life experience, his choices, his fundamental options, his motivating ideas. Father Eymard had a particular experience with the Spirit, *allowing the Spirit to bring him to a new level of understanding the mystery of Christ, the Gospels, and the Christian life starting from the Eucharist.*”

How wonderful that we all form part of the “Eymardian Charismatic Family”!

Anthony Schueller, SSS

New Associates at Saint Joseph’s Church in San Antonio



On Saturday, June 17, 2017, at the Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), 17 men were received as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament at Saint Joseph’s Church (Downtown) in San Antonio, Texas.

Father Mario Marzocchi, SSS, the pastor, celebrated the liturgy during which the new associates made their Promise Commitment and received the associates’ cross, the symbol of their commitment. The next day, they led a procession they organized, in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, in the streets of San Antonio. The procession culminated with the noon Mass at San Fernando Cathedral, at which Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller officiated and preached.

A lengthier story about these men, who call themselves the Messengers of His Real Presence, appeared in our June 3 *Connections*. The group is already organizing an initial formation program for about 20 prospective associates, including many of their wives!

Welcome to the Eymardian Charismatic Family!

Jim Brown