



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership

JUNE 20, 2014

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 7

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ



All of us have moments in life that we come to see as life-changing. They define who we are and what course our life will take. It might be when we discover a gift or talent we have been given by God and wish to maximize its potential. It might be when we feel passionately enough about something to commit our lives to it. It might be when we fall in love for the first time or hear the gentle, persistent voice of God calling us to ministry. Common to all these experiences is the knowledge that life will never be the same.

Recently, in the church's liturgy, we heard the story of the call of Elisha to succeed Elijah in the prophetic ministry in 1 Kings 19:19-21. No angelic messengers disclosed God's will, no blare of trumpets announced the transfer, just the simple gesture of an aged, battle-weary prophet

throwing his mantle over the shoulders of a youth plowing in his father's fields. Elisha didn't quite know what to make of it all, but he understood intuitively that life would be different from now on.

Peter Julian Eymard, just six years a Marist and already provincial superior, had been invited to preside at the Corpus Christi procession at Saint Paul's Church, Lyons, on May 25, 1845. As he was carrying the monstrance through the city streets, Father Eymard experienced what Father André Guitton describes in his biography of the founder as a "deep spiritual grace," something he neither shared with family or friends but mentioned only in his personal notes. Here is what he wrote:

"I had the special privilege of carrying the Blessed Sacrament at Saint Paul's, and my soul derived great benefit from it. It was penetrated by faith and love of Jesus in his divine sacrament. Those two hours seemed but a moment to me. I laid at the feet of our Lord: the church, France, Catholics, the Society (of Mary), myself. What sighs, what tears! My heart felt crushed as in the winepress!

How I could have wished at that moment to have all hearts in my heart! The zeal of Saint Paul!"

"This is what I promised our Lord. Since the beginning of this month, I have felt a great attraction towards our Lord, never had I experienced it so strongly. This attraction inspires me in my preaching, in my spiritual counseling, to bring all the world to the knowledge and love of our Lord; to preach nothing but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ eucharistic."

It would take another eleven years for the grace of that Corpus Christi experience in 1845 to come to its fullest power — when Father Eymard would undertake the painful step of leaving his beloved Marist Order to begin the great eucharistic work which became the consuming passion of his life and ministry.

Defining moments shape us over time into the useful instruments God calls us to be. A blessed Corpus Christi!

Father Anthony

The Aggregation Continues to Grow

As the article by Frank and Marjorie Zalar in this issue indicates, the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament continues to expand. God is blessing this work!

Dan Krenicki and Father Michael Boccaccio, of Saint Philip's Church, Norwalk, Connecticut, have also begun the formation of about a dozen prospective candidates. All of this shows the wide appeal of Eymardian eucharistic spirituality and the lay association.

CENTER FOR
EUCCHARISTIC EVANGELIZING

*A Ministry of the
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament*

5384 Wilson Mills Road
Cleveland, OH 44143

440.442.4734
eucharisticevangelizing.com
cee@blessedsacrament.com

Father Anthony Schueller, SSS
James W. Brown
Father William Fickel, SSS

"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

CONNECTIONS

A Reflection on the Feast of Corpus Christi



As many of you know, Saint Peter Julian Eymard wrote thousands of letters, wonderfully translated in a set of six volumes by Sister Catherine Marie Caron, SSS.

I happened upon a young woman to whom he wrote 52 letters over the course of 20 years, starting in 1848. Her name was Stephanie Gourd. She was the daughter of Mrs. Josephine Gourd, who was a member of the Third Order of Mary and a good friend of Father Eymard. She also seemed to have been like a second mother to him. This was at the time when he was a member of the Marist Society.

Let me share with you some highlights as a way for us to

reflect on how we spend our prayer time and especially on this feast of Corpus Christi, when we pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

The first letter appears in 1848. Her mother is ill, and she is taking care of her as well as her father. (How many of us have taken, are taking, or will take care of aging parents?) His advice: “Then, my daughter, always go to the Good Lord very simply, with the surrender of a small child. Tell the Good Lord what you are thinking, what you want, what is upsetting you. Oh, how happy we become when we discover the interior conversation with our Lord! We carry our treasure (with us) everywhere. He becomes the

center of our heart and life.”

As one reads these 52 letters to Miss Gourd, one finds this very compassionate, kindly spiritual director encouraging her through difficult times tending to her aging parents, struggling to discern marriage or vowed life, dryness in her prayers, even her own physical ailments. “Get eight hours of sleep,” he urges her in one letter.

May our prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament be inspired by these words of Saint Peter Julian especially when facing difficult times, that oft-occurring dryness in prayer, or the challenges of everyday living.

Jim Brown

Follow the Associates program and the Life in the Eucharist movement in Bread Broken and Shared, the Provincial Newsletter.

Associate Candidates Begin Discernment in Maryland

SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST, FREDERICK, MARYLAND

Frederick, Maryland, is a vibrant community with deep historical roots in the American Revolution and the growth of Catholicism in the United States. The Parish of Saint John the Evangelist can trace its beginning to a Jesuit community established in Frederick before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, when Catholics were forbidden to worship in public.

Saint John Parish invited Father Bill Fickel, SSS, to lead a Parish Mission during the difficult winter of 2014. With God’s blessing, the mission took place during a small

window of mild weather. With the assistance of associates Frank and Marjorie Zalar, former eucharistic evangelizers at Saint Paschal Baylon, Highland Heights, Ohio, and currently members at Saint John, Father Bill introduced the eucharistic spirituality of Saint Peter Julian Eymard and the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. The mission was well received.

Over 20 attendees responded to an invitation for further study and discernment and have been meeting monthly to learn more about the Blessed Sacrament Congregation and the Eucharist. The group is quite diverse and very enthusiastic about participating in the formal associates formation and

discernment program, which will begin in September under the guidance of Frank and Marjorie. With the Spirit to inspire us, we will be inducting new Associates of the Blessed Sacrament in the fall of 2015.

A second parish in Maryland, Saint Joseph’s, Eldersburg, has already booked a mission with the CEE, and Frank and Marjorie will be leading a Day of Reflection on the Eucharist this coming September. The Eucharistic Flame continues to spread through the work of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and its Associates. Thanks be to God!

*Frank and Marjorie Zalar
Purcellville, Virginia*