



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

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Christ is risen, creator of all!

“We are called to live an authentically Eucharistic Christian 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.

“We associate ourselves to this gift that he makes of himself, and we put ourselves at the service of the kingdom. . . .”

Rule of Life for Associates, 4

CENTER FOR
EUCHARISTIC EVANGELIZING
CLEVELAND, OHIO

A Ministry of the
Congregation of the
Blessed Sacrament

SPB Graduate Now An Associate of the Blessed Sacrament

Brittany Immormino is one of our youngest associates. This past January she joined the Associates Leadership Board at Saint Paschal Baylon Church, Highland Heights, Ohio. She was so touched to be nominated for the discernment process. It marked an interesting story that began in 2003 when as a 7th Grader at Saint Paschal Baylon Elementary School. Brittany volunteered to become a clown for the Helping Hands Ministry started by Deacon Joe Bourgeois, SSS. She also learned sign language that year for special parish Masses.

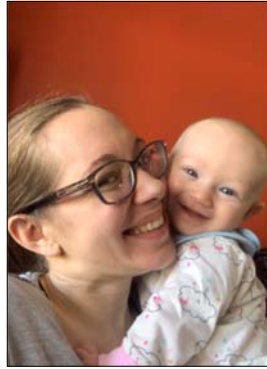
As an adult Brittany has been a catechist in the parish’s confirmation program, is a minister of Communion, and has been involved in the “Welcoming Catholics Home” program. “ But, most important, she and husband Steve are the proud parents of newly born Sophia.

In a recent phone conversation, Brittany shared that “becoming an Associate of the Blessed Sacrament fulfills my baptismal call. It shows me how to live each day well. Saint Peter Julian’s focus on the Eucharist is so important to me. Seeing people receive Communion at Mass makes me think about how we are all part of a whole and how we are living Christ in the world. The wonder and awe of it all!”

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SPB Graduate Now An Associate of the Blessed Sacrament (*Continued*)



Brittany and Sophia

“As an associate and especially as a member of the Board,” shares Brittany, “I hope to strengthen the sense of community with the other members of the association by learning about their journey. We are a gift to one another, and the opportunity to live in the presence of others is something to be cherished.

“Every individual grows closer to God in different ways, and we can learn so much from each other’s experiences when we take the time to share our stories with one another — growing closer to God as we do so. God’s gift to us are the people he places around us, and I hope we take this incredible opportunity of growing closer to Christ in others even further by being a lay member of the Congregation.”

“I became an associate because it’s not just how I was raised at Saint Paschal Baylon, but I truly believe that in order to live as Christ, we have to share in his body and blood. Communion is an incredibly beautiful gift that we can share *together*. As we bring ourselves to Mass, we join a community of individuals striving to follow Christ.

“I believe that not only in our words and thoughts but how we live is our prayer. How can I be the best Brittany I can be? As God’s disciple, I have a mission, and I try to live out every action of my day as a prayer. How I treat others, care for others and love others. This does not mean I am successful every day or hour, but it is through the Eucharist that reminds all of us to be the *one* body God reminds us that we are.”

In a concluding comment, Brittany added: “We are here to make the love of God known. I am challenged to understand what God is asking of my life because knowing God gave me life is evidence enough of the importance of my presence in this world, to this world and for this world. I became a lay associate because I adore Christ and Christ alone.”

2019 Regional Retreats for Associates of the Blessed Sacrament

As indicated in an earlier *Connections*, in 2019 we will celebrate the 160th anniversary of the canonical approval of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament. It was in Marseilles that the Aggregation received its canonical status, thanks to its bishop, Eugene de Mazenod, OMI, who had been trying to organize perpetual adoration in his diocese. He came to realize that only an institute of religious dedicated to the Eucharist could accomplish his own dream. In a short time, members of the Aggregation there numbered in the thousands.

To commemorate this anniversary, we have scheduled regional gatherings of associates. Father George Dunne, SSS, will be the principal presenter. He is being assisted by the local boards in the planning of each retreat. The dates for the retreats are the following:

- August 2-3 — Saint Paschal Baylon Church, Cleveland
- September 27-28 — Saint Jean Baptiste Church, New York City
- October 25-26 — Corpus Christi Church, Houston
- November 16-17 — Bethany Retreat Center, Lutz, Florida

Note: If you are not able to attend your local retreat, you are invited to attend one of the other retreats. Please contact a member of the local Board if you plan to do so.

A Historical Note



The readers of this newsletter know that Father Peter Julian Eymard would never have been given permission to found his new Eucharistic Congregation had he not proposed the ministry of catechetical preparation of the workers and children in the slums of Paris for First Holy Communion.

May is traditionally the month in the Catholic Church in the United States when thousands of children receive their First Holy Communion.



In August 1860, Father Eymard prepared his fifth group of young people for their First Communion. But something significantly new happened. Sisters of the newly-founded Society of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament were also involved, especially with the preparation of two girls who made their First Communion with 37 boys.

The following December they had 16 sixteen- or seventeen-year-old girls in the program. The sisters did the catechesis in their convent. Mother Marguerite Guillot, SSS, wrote years later in 1869:

“All the children were edifying.
The girls stayed three days on retreat in our house.
They wore a uniform, a pretty dress which we had made.
The following day, they came for a thanksgiving Mass.
These poor children returned home extremely happy. . . .

“Our dear children had really brought us some life and distraction.
We fed them on their First Communion day.
They were the queens of the feast, and we waited on them at table.
The Fathers did the same.
To do a bit of good, what sacrifices were we not ready to make.”

Source of story and quote: *Peter Julian Eymard* by Father André Guitton, SSS