



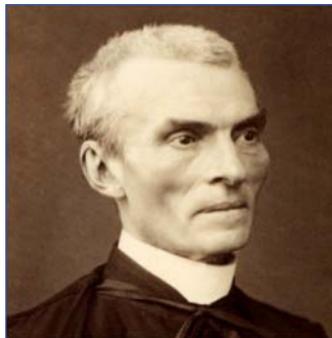
# CONNECTIONS

*Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family*

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## For the Glory of Christ in the Eucharist



Saint Peter Julian Eymard  
Apostle of the Eucharist

“The Eucharist shapes our lives as individuals, as family members, and as members of society.

“We endeavor to understand every reality in the light of this sacrament and we contribute to a Christian vision of our global reality”

*Rule of Life for Associates, 6*

## The Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing: Its History and Mission

A few months back, I was in a conversation with a group of associates. I was talking about the CEE and a number of issues and questions we would be facing in the near future as the Association in the United States, now numbering about 280 women and men, continues to evolve and grow. One person in the group, a relatively new associate, *blurted* out, “What’s the CEE?”

At first I was dumbfounded. Then I thought, “Oh my! There are probably a lot of recently promised associates, many of whom have little or no history with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, who don’t know much about the CEE, its history or mission, and what we do.” A little history. . . .

One might say that from its founding by Saint Peter Julian Eymard in 1856, the Congregation has always been about sharing the riches of God’s love manifested in the Eucharist. This mission certainly crystallized following the Second Vatican Council. Following the writings of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, we began to focus on the idea of *Eucharistic evangelizing*, sharing the Good News of God’s love in the Eucharist and putting the Eucharist at the center of our life and faith as followers of Jesus Christ.

In 1989, Robert Rousseau, a Blessed Sacrament priest, created Life in the Eucharist (LITE), using the best practices and theory of adult religious *Continued on the next page*

CENTER FOR  
EUCHARISTIC EVANGELIZING  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

A Ministry of the  
Congregation of the  
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### The Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing: Its History and Mission (*Continued*)



education to introduce laity and clergy to the essential elements of a comprehensive understanding of the Eucharist and a dynamic Eucharistic spirituality. In this, he followed the example of Saint Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868), the Apostle of the Eucharist, who sought to bring the Eucharistic fire to the ends of the earth and share with the Church of his day a vision of the Eucharist which would renew Christian living and transform society.

In a matter of a few years, hundreds of lay women and men attended a LITE program and many of them chose to be trained to be members of LITE Teams putting on the program in parishes in their dioceses and beyond. (Many of these people are now Associates of the Blessed Sacrament.)

Out of this groundbreaking work, which spread across the United States and to other countries worldwide, grew the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing. The CEE began offering, and still does, a variety of programs and resources on the Eucharist and Eucharistic spirituality for parishes and dioceses, as well as experienced teams and speakers. In the 1990s he created four key programs:

- Life in the Eucharist (LITE): Sacramental Reflections
- Life in the Eucharist (LITE): Scriptural Reflections
- Team Training Program for Life in the Eucharist (LITE)
- *Manna*: A Three-Volume Series of Topics Related to Eucharistic Spirituality

In 1999, Tom Wiese, SSS, took over directing the CEE. He continued to guide and nurture LITE Teams throughout the Province. In 2003, Bill Fickel, SSS, assumed the leadership of the CEE. He continued to build LITE Teams and especially the Scriptural Reflections program. In 2008, he moved the CEE to Cleveland, where he served as Parochial Vicar of Saint Paschal Baylon Church *and* directed the CEE. At the same time, a CEE office at Corpus Christi Church in Houston continued to function under the amazing care of Nancy MacRoberts, one of our first Associates of the Blessed Sacrament.

It was at this time that Congregational leadership in Rome reinstated the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament founded by Father Eymard. And with the publication of the *Rule of Life for Associates (ROLA)* in 2012 in the Province of Saint Ann, Father Bill began to organize the twelve-session, yearlong initial formation program for prospective associates. And with my assistance, we wrote and published the first set of booklets to guide the process. Three revisions later, we now have twelve burgundy booklets and the small *ROLA*.

In 2013, Father Bill was appointed the pastor of Saint Vincent de Paul Church in Holiday, Florida, and Father Anthony Schueller, SSS, after a ten-year appointment as the pastor of Saint Jean Baptiste Church in New York City, succeeded him as CEE director. During his tenure, we began to publish the *Connections* newsletter as a way to connect all our partners in Eucharistic evangelizing, especially our LITE Team members and the growing number of Associates of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the Province. We continued to develop LITE Teams and field requests for parish Eucharistic missions and resources.

In these years associate branches were developed in all of our Blessed Sacrament parishes and two diocesan parishes, Saint Philip Church in Norwalk, Connecticut, and Saint Stephen Church in Winter Springs, Florida, under the leadership of Father George Dunne, SSS. In addition, LITE Teen Teams were developed at Saint Stephen Church, again under Father George's guidance, and at Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Highland Heights, Ohio, under the leadership of Evamarie Mickol, the parish's youth minister.

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## The Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing: Its History and Mission (*Continued*)

In November 2014, Father Tony was the elected the Provincial of the Province. He asked me to succeed him as the first lay director of the CEE. In addition to fielding requests for Eucharistic missions, including ones focused on adoration, as well as putting in place a number of LITE traveling Teams, we have over the last five years:

- Continued to publish a monthly *Connections* newsletter
- Developed leadership boards in all of our associate branches (cf. *ROLA*, 27)
- Co-sponsored a Convocation in Cleveland to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Father Eymard's "Gift of Self" and the Year of Mercy promulgated by Pope Francis in 2016
- Initiated a Daily Eucharistic Reflection (now in its second year) that goes out to some 400 email addresses throughout the Province and the United States
- Worked with Aña Camacho, an associate at Saint Philip Church, in developing a Spanish version of the twelve session initial formation program
- Overseen the development of a number of ongoing formation programs for associates, including an 18 session *Course of Study on Saint Peter Julian Eymard* and a program based on the Congregational resource *Counsels for Spiritual Life*
- And as my two predecessors did, continued to serve as a resource and a support to the growing community of Associates of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the Province.

In conclusion, the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing (CEE) shares the mission of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, namely, to "respond to the hungers of the human family with the riches of God's love manifested in the Eucharist" (*Rule of Life*, 3). In doing this, we follow in the footsteps of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist. Number 33 of the *Rule of Life* states: "Father Eymard's ability to translate his Eucharistic grace into very diverse ministries stimulates us to be creative in our mission." We at the CEE do this by developing programs, resources, and experiences that foster knowledge and love of the Eucharist and the search for the true meaning and power of the Eucharistic mystery.

*Jim Brown*  
Director

### A Historical Note



On Corpus Christi, May 25, 1845, Father Eymard, then the Provincial of the Society of Mary (Marists) in France, experienced a powerful spiritual grace while carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession through the streets of Lyons. That grace would alter the course of his life and eventually lead to the founding of two religious orders and a lay association dedicated to the Eucharist.

According to Father André Guitton, SSS, Saint Peter Julian "never referred directly to this (experience) in his correspondence, neither in his future retreats, nor in sharing with his close friends." He mentioned it "only in his personal notes" (*Peter Julian Eymard*, 65) What we have is this: "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 Christ 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."

Father Guitton states (67) that there were two main effects of this experience:

1. In his preaching, he seemed to be "led to speak more frequently of the Eucharistic mystery";
2. In his correspondence to directees, there was "a greater insistence on the practice of Communion, and even frequent Communion." (Not at all practiced in France at that time.)

The solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is observed in much of the world on Sunday, June 23.