



# CONNECTIONS

*Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family*

OCTOBER 31, 2019

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 10

## Prayer. Presence. Promise. The Ties That Bind



Longtime parishioner at Saint Paschal Baylon Church in suburban Cleveland, Ohio, Joe McCormack offers a reflection on what being an Associate of the Blessed Sacrament means to him. He especially focuses on the connection he believes we associates have with the religious of the Congregation. Joe's convictions are born out of his many relationships with the men of the Saint Ann Province: involvement in the parish, participation in Province retreats, being a member of the facilitation team for the Initial Formation Program at Saint Paschal's for new associates, to name a few. Joe is also a member of the Daily Eucharistic Reflections writing team. Thank you, Joe, for offering this unique point of view.

*Jim Brown  
Director*

*Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing*

"What can you do for me?" is a question fraught with difficulty. The *quid pro quo* has been in our cultural structures but more recently is now in the forefront. Nevertheless, it presents problems in the realm of human relationships. Now that we have been gathered into the Eymardian family, we may have some expectations. There is no paycheck and no vacation time but there is common ground.

By now as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament, we know what we are about. If in doubt, read, study, and meditate on the *Rule of Life for Associates*. There's much to think about. So, that takes care of us. We know who we are. So, what is the connection we have with the professed of the Congregation? What do we do? What do they do? Perhaps "do" isn't correct.

Rather what are the expectations? If we have learned anything from our *Rule of Life for Associates*, we know we are to be connected to Christ and to each other in three ways.

"We welcome Christ's command to the apostles, and like them we proclaim the Gospel, and give witness to it with our lives. We invite all people to that communion with God that we celebrate in the Eucharist. We collaborate with men and women of good will toward the building of a world of justice and solidarity."

*Rule of Life for Associates, 12*

CENTER FOR  
EUCCHARISTIC EVANGELIZING  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

A Ministry of the  
Congregation of the  
Blessed Sacrament

5384 Wilson Mills Road  
Cleveland, OH 44143

*Continued on the next page*

## CONNECTIONS

---

### Prayer. Presence. Promise. The Ties That Bind (*Continued*)

#### **Prayer**

We try very hard to connect with people but are rarely satisfied with the engagement because there may not be engagement. Electronics gives us a false sense that I am connected to 2,000 people. And we keep trying with empty results.

Let's place connectedness in a better perspective.

Our liturgical prayers structure the Mass connecting us with the Trinity and our faith-community. Together we are encircled in prayer. As associates, we join together in prayer with the common purpose to celebrate, give thanks, and pray for one another.

#### **Presence**

Prayer leads to presence of mind, but we are physical people. We have said: "I wish you were here." Prayer connects us through our soul and spirit. A presence connects us in body. When we are physically present to Jesus in the liturgy or adoration or time spent in chapel, we can't help but have an awareness of what we are doing. So too when we are gathered, unless you stand out in the hallway, we are aware of each other as individuals with a common purpose. Being present for each other by just showing up tells the story.

#### **Promise**

"I will be your God." It is the promise of all promises changing our relationship with our God. Now, it's personal. A promise we make takes us out of ourselves. We look forward to fulfilling that promise. Failure to carry it out disconnects us, and the promise is never fulfilled. It is not complete. Promises are personal. Associates have joined with the Congregation to fulfill the promise of keeping Eucharist sacred in our lives and bringing Eucharist to others.

And so, we work together helping each other fulfill that promise.

Prayer. Presence. Promise.  
What more can we ask?

#### **Psalm 133:1**

How good and how pleasant it is,  
when [we] dwell together as one!

*Joe McCormack  
Associate of the Blessed Sacrament  
Saint Paschal Baylon Church  
Cleveland, Ohio*

### New Associates in San Antonio

Nearly 100 women and men became members of the Emardian Family by making their Promise Commitment on Sunday, September 29, during the 7:00 p.m. Mass at Prince of Peace Church, a diocesan parish in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Father Rodolfo Caballero, the pastor, officiated at the Mass, concelebrated by Father Anthony Schueller, SSS, Provincial Superior and the pastor of Saint Joseph Church Downtown.

The previous day, September 28, a large group of Associates of the Blessed Sacrament and candidates met for a retreat day in preparation for the Promise Commitment Mass. The program took place in the Mother of the Americas Center at Saint Joseph Church Downtown and was led by members of the local Associates Board who gave powerful teachings and witnesses on the transforming love of Christ in the Eucharist and the importance of Eucharistic adoration in developing and sustaining a relationship with the Lord. Father Anthony also spoke about the history of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament, founded in November 1859, and of Saint Peter Julian Eymard's vision of a great Eucharistic movement to renew the Church.

*Continued on the next page*

## CONNECTIONS

---

### New Associates in San Antonio (*Continued*)

During the concluding prayer service, the associates crosses were blessed and each new associate received his or her cross and copy of the Promise Commitment for the Mass the following day. It was an extraordinarily joyful moment for the candidates and team members alike, who accompanied the candidates at every step of the Initial Formation Program over the past year.



### A Historical Note — The Work of First Communion of Adults

By 1858, Father Eymard had the space he needed to prepare the young “rag pickers” for their First Communion. One of the first to volunteer in this ministry to the young workers was a layman and friend from Lyons, Louis Perret. An architect by profession, Perret had been a member of the Marist Third Order, travelled widely to places such as New Zealand and Rome, and on his return to France, he stayed with the Marist Fathers in Paris. It was during this time that Father Eymard invited him to join him in his work. He described the work this way:

“Looking for the young workers, catching them at night as they leave the factories — because it is impossible during the day, since they have no time — teaching them the basic foundations of religion, and thus filling in for the parish catechetics, which they cannot attend: this is the special work of the religious of the Blessed Sacrament” (P. J. Eymard, *Work of First Communion*, 62).

Some parts of Paris were still dangerous for a cleric to be seen. So Father Eymard relied heavily on people like Mr. Perret and other men who were members of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. In August 1859, Mr. Perret left Paris to return home to Lyons to attend to his business affairs. He never again visited Father Eymard in Paris. They remained close friends and corresponded on many occasions. Father Eymard kept him apprised of the ministry to the young workers. Mr. Perret continued to support the ministry financially. That Christmas, Father Eymard wrote:

“Dear gentle friend, I am writing to give some news. . . . Today we had a great feast! First Communion for 18 children; some of whom were 16-18 years of age. They really edified and consoled us; what a change takes place in them. These wild, rude, brutish types when they arrive, these little street urchins, become gradually more humane. They become attentive, grateful, good and virtuous. First Communion changes them completely. They are no longer the same! Their hearts are open and we find generous and gentle sentiments.

“This is our work, dear friend, but it is still in its infancy, because there is still so much good for us to do! Mr. Carrie received the 200 francs which you sent us. *Deo Gratias!*”

“It is well understood, dear Mr. Perret, that wherever we have a house, you will have a room, as a friend. Thank you for remembering us. Everyone loves you here and embraces you very warmly. I am the first, and most loving in our Lord.”

Eymard, Superior Soc.

(Source: *Peter Julian Eymard* by Father André Guitton, SSS)