



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

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Regional Retreat in Southeast Florida

Nearly a year ago, Province leadership announced that Father George Dunne, SSS, would be leading regional retreats for us Associates of the Blessed Sacrament. This was to celebrate the 160th anniversary of the founding of the Aggregation of lay faithful by Father Eymard. The theme would be “The Spirituality of Communion.”

Our leadership boards at Saint Vincent de Paul (Holiday) and Saint Stephen (Winter Springs) churches began to meet. We decided to hold the retreat in November (15-17) and to meet at the Bethany Retreat Center in Lutz, Florida. Over the months leading up to the retreat weekend, hundreds of emails were exchanged, spreadsheets created and updated, and eventually our steering committee enjoyed a lunch meeting together on October 5 to work out the logistics and tasks for the weekend.

With 52 attendees registered and three cottages filled with overnight attendees, the weekend began with a welcome reception held Friday evening, with appetizers, cookies, and beverages, before heading to Saint James Chapel for personal prayer time.

One of our goals was that members of Saint Vincent de Paul would lead and teach us from Saint Stephen’s the Liturgy of the Hours, morning and evening prayer. (Associates at SVDP lead morning prayer each day of the week.) Mary Brady and Gloria Jung organized the prayers for Saturday and Sunday so all attendees had a printed booklet for the three prayer sessions.

A memorial display created by Anita McMahon of white roses, blue and white candles with the individual names of associates from both parishes and religious who had passed away were remembered in Saint James Chapel.



Associates: Rose Brown, Phyllis Tokar, Shirley Perreault, Art Morrill, Ted Laubner, Maureen Vaughan, Charles Perreault, Dalisay Lustre, Angel Manalo, Therese Pelletier, Jim DeGrandi, Ed Stevenson

Religious: Father Julian Rousseau, SSS, Father Edward Stapleton, SSS, Father Thomas Fitzgerald, SSS, Father Dana Pelotte, SSS, Brother Peter Mahady, SSS

“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

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Regional Retreat in Southeast Florida (*Continued*)

The meeting space centerpieces included a graphic design by Espie Stewart. Each component of the weekend had representatives from both groups, as the steering committee wanted us to come together as one body in Christ, which was reflected in the retreat opening song *One Bread, One Body*.

Saturday's schedule included morning and afternoon sessions with Father George presenting along with witnesses by Miriam Suarez of Saint Stephen and Lori Hoffman of Saint Vincent de Paul. The full day rounded out with a Votive Mass of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, Holy Hour, songs/prayers, and free time for personal reflection. The evening closed with candlelight Stations of the Cross, written and led by Father Bill Fickel, SSS, and inspired by the words of Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

Our time on Sunday included a "Bridging Our Communities" discussion where four questions were discussed by the group:

1. How do we enhance our bond as a Southeast Regional group?
2. What resources can we share?
3. Ideas for the future?
4. Any interest in an Eymardian Pilgrimage, and when?

Sunday's activities concluded with Mass and a luncheon, as new friendships were formed and a lasting bond had begun. All Southeast associates have set alarms on their phones to stop and pray for the members of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation at 12:00 noon daily. This idea came from our Sunday discussion. Also, we are planning quarterly activities for our two groups to come together in prayer and play as we share our love for the Eucharist and our Blessed Sacrament family.

The Southeast Regional Retreat Steering Committee includes Gloria Jung, Mary Brady, Anita McMahon, Margaret Flanders, Laura Worhacz, Kathy Ford, and Diana McGinty. Spiritual Directors are Fathers Bill Fickel, SSS, and George Dunne, SSS.



Diana McGinty
Associate of the Blessed Sacrament and Board Member
Saint Stephen Catholic Community
Winter Springs, Florida

A Retreat at Corpus Christi, Houston

On the weekend of October 25, Father George Dunne, SSS, led us associates at Corpus Christi Parish in Houston in a retreat. I and about 25 fellow associates had the privilege of hearing Father George speak on "The Spirituality of Communion." The following points were some of my key takeaways:

- He addressed how we as Catholics have had a loss of communion, due to television, with everyone looking in one direction instead of toward one another, and that telephones have us talking *at* rather than *to* one another. Mass is a time where we are taught to live in communion with each other.
- He pointed out the difference between loving the sinner and hating the sin. He believes that this concept has unfortunately been blurred today.
- Father Dunne quoted Bishop Robert Barron who draws on research suggesting that 75% of Catholics see the Eucharist only as a symbol of Jesus Christ, not his true body and blood; and many do not understand that this is one significant difference we Catholics have in relation to many other Christian denominations.
- He recommended to us a good book, *Making Eucharist Matter*, by Frank Anderson, MSC.

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A Retreat at Corpus Christi, Houston (*Continued*)

- Father Dunne reminded us that as our parents taught us table manners at home, God teaches us table manners around the altar table, as well as table manners for a Eucharistic life. It is important that we go to Mass; there we are divinized by God.

We were grateful to have Father Dunne with us for this retreat.

*Oren Mulkey
Associate of the Blessed Sacrament
Corpus Christi Church
Houston, Texas*

Annual Associates Retreat in Cleveland: “Eucharistic Murmurings”



On November 16, the Associates of the Blessed Sacrament at Saint Paschal Baylon Parish gathered for our annual retreat. The theme this year was “Eucharistic Murmurings,” led by Father John Keenan, SSS. We began with lunch to allow time to catch up on the events of our lives. Following lunch, we had a brief business meeting to begin implementation of our decision to collect dues to help support our activities and events throughout the year. The decision was received very favorably by the 30 Associates present for the gathering.

Father Keenan then led us through a very thoughtful and challenging reflection. Using the model of Jesuit discernment, he challenged us to make the Eucharist “work” in our lives through coming to a deeper understanding that we are the body of Christ.

Through discerning the Spirit’s movement in our lives, we are able to come to a deep interior peace leading us to become more in communion with the will of God in our own lives and in the life of our community.

Through an Emmaus Walk with another associate, we were given the opportunity to *murmur* together about just where the Spirit is leading us, both personally and communally. Suggestions that arose will be shared with the Associate Board to lead us forward. Adoration preceded our sharing in the Vigil Mass.

During the Mass, we renewed our Associate Promise and witnessed and affirmed the promises of seven new Associates of the Blessed Sacrament to our Cleveland community: Jeff Lupo, Ann Buda, EvaMarie Mickol, Anna Peko, Susan Travagliante, Dick Kramer, and Vera Thornton.

May God be praised for his continued blessing on the Associates of the Blessed Sacrament Community!

*Jim Brown
Director, Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing
Cleveland, Ohio*

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Emmanuel Magazine

Father John Christman, SSS, has recently taken on responsibilities as editor of *Emmanuel Magazine*. In the upcoming months, he would like to meet with our different Associates of the Blessed Sacrament branches to learn what would make *Emmanuel* more appealing and meaningful for our lay associates. Father John and I will work together to help organize these meetings. We would be very grateful for your thoughts and input as *Emmanuel Magazine* begins its 125th year of publication.

Jim Brown

A Historical Note — The Work of Catechesis for First Communion (*Part 2*)



The ministry of preparing young workers for First Communion continued until the end of Father Eymard's life. "From August 15, 1859, to June 28, 1868, on which date was held the last celebration in which Father Eymard participated, 24 ceremonies touched 766 young boys," writes Father André Guitton, SSS. The record for the girls were lost.

The preparation for Communion and confirmation included several months of catechesis and a three-day retreat which Father Eymard typically led. In later years, due to his many involvements, he often delegated the work to several of the Blessed Sacrament religious. Lay partners were involved in both the actual ministry and in providing financial support, as we saw in the last issue with Mr. Louis Perret.

A number of women, including a Madame d'Andigne, Mme. Fraguier, and Mme. de Grandville, were among generous benefactors who supported Father Eymard and his lay associates, especially in providing food, clothing, and other material needs.

Writing a thank you note to Mme. Fraguier in 1866, Father Eymard talked about the work:

"I don't know how to thank you. . . . What a beautiful work to help every year in the First Communion of 150 workers who otherwise would probably never do so. . . . What then would we have? Miserable members of society, and indifferent Christians who have received only baptism! But once they make their First Communion, they have a point of departure for salvation, a step taken towards Christian marriage, a powerful motive to return to God."

Clearly this was an important ministry for Father Eymard — till the end of his life. He was not only committed to increasing their faith but also providing clothes and care, especially for the young ones.

He wrote to Virginia Danion in 1862: "Our work of First Communion . . . (is) a beautiful and attractive mission! It is a royal mission of the Eucharistic wedding feast."

Jim Brown