



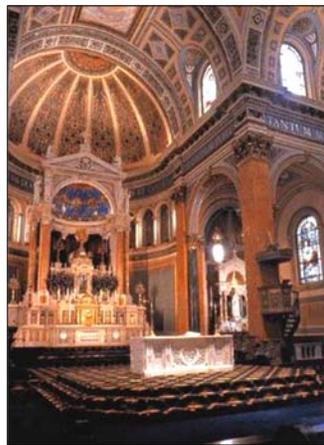
CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

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An Associate’s Life at the Epicenter of the Pandemic



Clare Norton is an Associate of the Blessed Sacrament at Saint Jean Baptiste Church on the Upper East Side of New York City. She serves as the Lay Leader of the associates group there and the main organizer for the local religious director, Father John Kamas, SSS. She recently wrote me an update on what things are like during these difficult times in the city. I’ve written a brief story based on these updates.

Clare’s sister, who had not been able to shake the flu bug (not Covid-19), moved in with her in early March with her dog. Clare herself was sick and eventually had to remove all the carpets in her apartment to create a clean environment for her ailing sister.

In the middle of March, Clare began feeding a homeless man, sometimes twice a day. She had met him at Saint Jean’s. A former college professor and an attaché with the Cameroon Council at the United Nations, he had fallen on bad times.

In early January, one of the older associates fell and had to be hospitalized. Clare brought her Holy Communion and, once out of the hospital, she helped her with her leg wounds, the result of the fall. In addition to daily care for her medical situation, Clare does her laundry, shops for food and supplies, and happily shares her and her sister’s meals with her. Clare also brings Holy Communion to two other associates.

And if this wasn’t enough, a close friend of Clare’s, while on duty as a Covid-19 nurse, lost her apartment in a fire, leaving her and her two children homeless.

Clare shared this with me: “We in New York City are truly in a more extreme situation than any other city in the nation.”

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“Keep your soul
at peace,
in order to
be able
to be attentive
and very faithful
to the inner
movement of the
Holy Spirit.”

Saint Peter Julian
Eymard

Center for
Eucharistic Evangelizing
Cleveland, Ohio

*A Ministry of the
Congregation of the
Blessed Sacrament*

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An Associate's Life at the Epicenter of the Pandemic (*Continued*)

“Father John Kamas has witnessed as have I the overflow of deaths at Lenox Hill Hospital (a block from Saint Jean’s). Two huge refrigerator trucks hold up to 300 patients who have passed from Covid-19. Most have no family for their bodies have yet to be claimed.

“My apartment is two blocks from New York Presbyterian Weill Cornell, a huge medical facility, the Hospital for Special Surgery, and Memorial Sloan Kettering. New York Presbyterian Weill Cornell has so many cases and deaths that the staff are working 13.5 hours a day, minimum. Additional medical personnel from all over the country where cases are minimal or few and where hospitals are closing – mostly nurses, but some doctors – are a great help, so much so that huge buses transport these medical practitioners to various satellite hospitals and to their respective hotels and motels when their shifts end.”

This past month, Clare sent out a note to her fellow associates and the group in initial formation, soliciting how everyone is doing. As of this writing a few responded:

- Josephine closes the church each day.
- Dr. Joseph is on the front lines attending at Lenox Hill Hospital.
- Carolyn was recently released from the hospital.
- Maria is on the mend from some medical issues.
- Terri, another health professional, is serving on the front lines.
- Jean, Margarita, and Laura frequently attend adoration at Saint Jean Baptiste Church.
- David is busy filming Father John Kamas’ Masses and keeping up the church website.

Please keep our fellow Associates of the Blessed Sacrament at Saint Jean Baptiste Church in your prayers. They live, work, and worship in the midst of the worst Covid-19 situation in our country.

Jim Brown



Picture courtesy of Houston, Texas, associate Jim Ziegler

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A Historical Note



The Story of the Aggregation (*Continued*)

The story of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament in the first half of the 20th Century was affected by two developments in the Congregation following the death of Father Eymard and the suppression of the Church by the French government in the last decades of the 19th Century.

1. The mission direction the Congregation took after Eymard's death.
2. The expansion of the Congregation beyond France.

At the time of Father Eymard's death, he had not completed writing the *Constitutions*. As a result, there was no legal set of rules that had the approval of Rome. With that, the mission focus of the Congregation was largely set by Father Raymond de Cuers, his successor as General Superior. Father Eymard was totally committed to the work of First Communion *and* promoting adoration, especially with the lay faithful. Father de Cuers believed that the main purpose of the institute was to promote adoration.

The community where the Superior General lived became a place of solemn worship of the Eucharist. The work of First Communion had been abandoned. The cult of adoration became the principal mission focus. This was the vision of Father de Cuers.

By 1900, the Congregation had established a community in Brussels, Belgium (1880) and the Generalate had been moved to Rome. In 1890, a community was founded in Montreal. The community there was extended to Quebec and then they opened a house in New York City in 1900. In the next 30 years, the Congregation expanded to South America, Spain, Chile, Australia, and Europe.

By the time the Congregation arrived in New York in 1900, the major focus of its mission and ministry was firmly established. The *Constitutions* (formally approved by Rome in 1895) clear stated the purpose of the Congregation: "The supreme purpose of the Institute consists entirely in this, that under the guidance and patronage of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, it give true and perpetual adorers to our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, abiding day and night in the Holy Eucharist for the love of men . . ." (2.2).

As the Congregation emerged in the United States at the beginning of the 20th Century, there were two central Eucharistic works: the Priests' Eucharistic League and the Peoples' Eucharistic League, both of which were founded by Father Eymard. The religious community at Saint Jean Baptiste Church also adopted the work of nocturnal adoration, which actually predated Father Eymard. The Peoples' Eucharistic League was affiliated with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament by Pope Leo XIII and elevated to the status of an Arch-Association in 1887.

Father Eymard's dream was to draw lay people into a deeper appreciation for the Eucharist, that they pray regularly before the Blessed Sacrament, receive Holy Communion more frequently, and bring the fire of the Eucharistic love into their hearts, their families, and their communities.

As the Congregation expanded in the United States, this became the focus for the lay women and men who were associated with the Congregation up until the Second Vatican Council.

(Source material: An unpublished manuscript by Patrick J. Riley, DMin).