



# CONNECTIONS

*Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family*

OCTOBER 31, 2020 — ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 9



## *With deepest appreciation . . .*

Dear Members of the Eymardian Family in the Province of Saint Ann,

Several weeks ago, Jim Brown sent an email to the Provincial Council and me. At first, it seemed like so many others he has written over the years until we read that Jim has decided that it is time for him to retire in order to be able to spend more time with his beloved wife Mary, children Andrew and Lizzie and their spouses, and the four little “grandboys” who adore him.

Jim’s association with the Congregation and the Province dates back approximately 34 years, to the day he flew to Chicago to meet with Father Jack Dowling and three members of his Council about facilitating an assembly of all the religious of the Province.

What began as a professional relationship as a consultant has blossomed over the years into a deeply personal and a mutually-enriching partnership. Jim is a trusted adviser and friend. Most recently, he has generously served as the director of the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing and the coordinator of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament. His gifts of thoughtful analysis, creativity, faith, and love touch everything he does.

Jim will continue to serve through the end of the year. Please pray for Jim and Mary and their family. And for the Provincial Council as we discern new leadership for the ministry of Eucharistic evangelizing in the Province.

In the Lord Jesus,

Anthony Schueller, SSS  
Provincial Superior



“The Eucharistic lifestyle of Christians is ecclesial and communal. Following the example of the first Christian community, our experience of communion is nourished by the word, by the ‘breaking of bread,’ by prayer, and by listening to the teaching of the apostles. By living ‘with one heart and soul,’ we witness to the presence of the risen Lord.”

*Rule of Life  
for Associates, 5*

Center for  
Eucharistic Evangelizing

### The First “Associates” in the Modern Era

#### Fond Memories

I recently had the opportunity to chat via Zoom with Nancy MacRoberts and Patty Pizzitola from Corpus Christi Church in Houston, Texas. The two of them and thirteen other women and men were members of the first Life in the Eucharist Team trained in early 1991. They along with the other Eucharistic ministers had been invited to attend a new Eucharist-based program a year before, created and led by Father Robert Rousseau, SSS.

On the weekend of March 16, the team presented the LITE program to a group of parishioners of Corpus Christi. A week later, they were part of the group who were asked to consider themselves as “associates” of the Congregation by the late Father Jack Dowling, SSS, then Provincial Superior. (Cf. more of the story in the “A Historical Note”.)

I asked them this past October 21 what they remembered about the events of 1990-1991. Both were delighted to experience this new Eucharistic program. Both indicated on the evaluation form that they would be interested in being trained to put on the program themselves for other parishioners. Patty said, “I prayed that I would be invited. I felt totally inept theologically and I was working fulltime, but I so wanted to be involved in this program.”

“Fifteen of us were chosen,” said Nancy. “We began to meet weekly to prepare and to support one another. We really didn’t know one another. We formed incredible friendships and often went out for a bite to eat after a training session.” “It was exciting,” said Patty, “*and scary*.” “We built a community and new friendships that last to this day.”

Patty remembers: “A week after we finished presenting our first LITE program, we were invited to meet with Father Dowling, the Provincial, from Cleveland. He thanked us for responding to the invitation to form the first LITE Team in the Province. And then he said that in being involved in their Eucharistic mission, he saw us as ‘associates’ of the Congregation” “I was pleasantly stunned,” said Patty. “We were raising families, many of us were working and now we would be associated with Father Rousseau and the Congregation in promoting this new Eucharistic program.” Both agreed, “It was such an honor!” “But what did it all really mean?” Patty and Nancy wondered at the time.

Later that year, they were invited to present the LITE program to the pastors and local superiors of the Province in Cleveland on September 18-20, 1991. “It was part of a turning-point for us,” Patty said. “Originally,” remembers Nancy, “we were to be a part of the three-day agenda for this annual meeting. But we became the whole agenda and rather than present a part of the five-session LITE program, we did the whole program as it was designed. The participation and response of the religious were terrific. At the end of the meeting, Father Tim Mangan said that we were the “new vocations.” It was the beginning of some wonderful relationships with so many of the religious. A number of them wrote us personal letters thanking us and more,” said Nancy.

The implications of being a LITE Team and “associates” of the Congregation became all the more real when Patty and her husband Bubba were invited to join Father Rousseau in presenting a portion of the LITE program at a General Chapter in Rome in 1993. A group from the team of 15 travelled to Scotland in 1994 to put on the LITE program for the religious of the Irish-English Province. Father George Dunne, SSS, was the Provincial Superior at the time. And then later in 1997, a small group attended the International Eucharistic Congress that was held in Wroclaw, Poland.

Though the group and others who they trained to be LITE Team members felt a great association with the Congregation and its mission (many of the religious considered them “associates), they were never really formally and canonically-approved associates. That happened some 30 years from the time of their first experience of the LITE program, when in November 2010, Nancy, Patty, her husband Bubba, and Noreen Hoard were received as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament, along with five others of us who had been associated with the Congregation.

“It was such a joyful day!” remembers Nancy. “After nearly 30 years of feeling in our hearts that we were associates, now it was official,” said Patty.

## A Historical Note

### The History of the Aggregation (Continued)



In March 1991, Father Jack Dowling, SSS, Provincial Superior of the Province of Saint Ann and his Vicar Provincial, Father Robert Rousseau, SSS, travelled to Corpus Christi Parish in Houston, Texas. It was one of the most significant graces of my long relationship with the Congregation that I was invited to accompany them. On the 23rd of the month, the three of us met with some 15 parishioners of the church.

In February 1990, the Eucharistic ministers for the parish had been invited to attend a program called Life in the Eucharist. It had been created by Father Rousseau. The program addressed five topics related to the Eucharist. It integrated the principles of adult religious education, music, small and large group discussions, and a Eucharistic theology that reflected the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the charism and legacy of the Congregation's Founder, Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

At the end of the program, the participants were asked on the evaluation form if they were interested in being part of a group to put on the program for other parishioners. Fifteen of the people who expressed an interest were then invited the following November to be trained and formed as the first LITE Team in the United States. For the next several months, the group met weekly to develop presentations and witnesses and organize themselves under Father Rousseau's guidance to present the first lay led LITE program. This took place in March 1991 with their fellow parishioners at CCP.

A week after the LITE program was completed, the LITE Team met with Father Dowling. At the meeting, he thanked them for being willing to be partners with the religious of the Congregation in promoting their Eucharistic mission. He then told them that in light of their involvement with the religious in this ministry, he saw them as *lay associates* to the Congregation.

The idea of being considered "associates" of the Congregation was very new and even "overwhelming" to the members of the group. At the time, it was difficult to really understand the implications of what they heard that day.

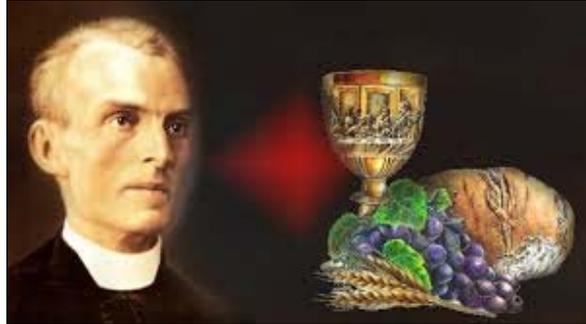
The following September, the LITE Team from Corpus Christi was invited to travel to Cleveland, Ohio, to present the program to Blessed Sacrament pastors and local superiors at their annual meeting. It was a life-changing experience for these women and men, and judging by the comments of the religious at the end of the meeting, it opened up a new sense of a ministerial partnership for many of the religious as well. The late Father Tim Mangan, SSS, said at the end of the meeting: "We don't have a vocation crisis. We have fifteen vocations right in front of us; fifteen people who have responded to a *call* to join us in spreading the Eucharistic mission of our Congregation."

Father Rousseau subsequently put on the LITE program at Saint Paschal Baylon Church in suburban Cleveland. A group of them also responded to the invitation to form a LITE Team. Now there were two teams presenting LITE programs in their respective parishes and throughout their Dioceses. Over the next 25 years, more LITE Teams were formed and many of them felt honored to be considered "associates" to the Congregation. And in time, women and men who worked at the Provincial Center in Cleveland and on parish staffs throughout the Province felt and were seen to be "associates." But as yet, there was no formal recognition as such by the Congregation.

*Continued on the next page*

### A Historical Note (*Continued*)

#### The History of the Aggregation (*Continued*)



That all changed in March 2010 when the Superior General of the Congregation, Father Fiorenzo Salvi, SSS, reinstated the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Patterned on the *Rule of Life* for the Congregation, he introduced the *Rule of Life for Associates* (English translation). It expressed “a renewed vision of associated life of lay faithful with (the) Congregation taking into account the experiences of the last (30) years. . . .” In the Province of Saint Ann, this reality was uniquely found among the various LITE Teams and the collaboration of lay people in parish ministry.

In November 2010, a number of these original LITE Team members were received as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament, including Noreen Hoard, Nancy MacRoberts, Patty and Bubba Pizzitola from Houston; Louise Borgione and Marjorie and Frank Zalar from Cleveland. In addition, Susan Work, the Administrative Assistant to the Provincial Superior in Cleveland, and I were also received.

Since that first group of lay women and men were trained to present the LITE program, other women and men joined the ranks of being LITE Team members. Currently, there is a LITE Team at Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Cleveland, at Corpus Christi in Houston, at Saint Vincent de Paul in Holiday, Florida, and a number of Teams at Saint Stephen Church in Winter Springs.

In the course of the last 40 years, nearly 100 LITE Team members have become Associates of the Blessed Sacrament.

The last ten years has seen a remarkable development of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament in the United States. We will focus on that in the next issue of *Connections*.

*Jim Brown*