



CONNECTIONS

Celebrating Our Eucharistic Partnership in the Eymardian Family

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November Moments of Grace in the Province of Saint Ann

The month of November is a special time in the history of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament. It was during this month in 1859 that Father Peter Julian Eymard founded an association of lay women and men who wished to participate in the Eucharistic mission of the Congregation he had founded in 1856.

In recent years, Associates of the Blessed Sacrament in the Province of Saint Ann have chosen to make this month a special time of the year. Annual retreats have been scheduled, sometimes joining local branches in geographical proximity. Leaders have timed the scheduling of Initial Formation Programs such that the reception ceremony of new associates could take place in November. Local branches of associates renew their promise commitment to live the *Rule of Life for Associates*. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, November 2020 was a time for many graced moments throughout the Province.

Jim Brown

On October 25, 56 new Associates of the Blessed Sacrament were received at Prince of Peace Church in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas. They had begun their initial formation process in person in the fall of 2019, but when the pandemic hit in March, the leaders of the associates completed the rest of the program via Zoom. Provincial Superior and Local Director Father Anthony Schueller, SSS, presided at Mass and received the new associates.

Submitted by Cesar Camacho, Branch Leader



On Saturday morning, November 14, some 55 Associates of the Blessed Sacrament from Saint Paschal Baylon Church, Highland Heights, Ohio, and Saint Vincent de Paul Church, Holiday, Florida, gathered via Zoom to participate in a joint retreat led by Father Bill Fickel, SSS, Pastor and Local Director at Saint Vincent de Paul.

Continued on the next page



“The holy season
of Advent
is [upon us].
Let us really enter
into the spirit
of the holy Church,
a spirit of penance,
of prayer,
of longing
for Jesus,
in order that
he may be born
in our souls
by his love
and virtues.”

Saint Peter Julian Eymard

A Thought for Every Day
December 1

Center for
Eucharistic Evangelizing

A Ministry of the
Congregation of the
Blessed Sacrament

5384 Wilson Mills Road
Cleveland, OH 44143

CONNECTIONS

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Father Bill used Pope Francis' recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* as the source of his very insightful presentation. The parable of the "Good Samaritan" was a focal point of the reflection as commented on in *FT*, especially 72 and 76. The group was split into breakout rooms during the Zoom session for small-group sharing.

The retreat ended with a brief prayer featuring a shot of the Blessed Sacrament in the church in Holiday. After the completion of the ending prayer, the participants took time to say hello and offer their thoughts on joining with their fellow associates from a thousand miles away.

Submitted by Mary Muehle, Branch Leader at Saint Paschal Baylon



On Sunday, November 15, the Associates at Corpus Christi in Houston, Texas, welcomed Rosie Robleto and Leigh and Dennis Woods as new Associates of the Blessed Sacrament. All three new members of the Eymardian Family were truly excited to join our community of associates and had long expressed a fervent desire to live a life centered on the Eucharist. Each has been actively involved in parish life here. (Rosie had moved out of town during the formation process and participated in the reception ceremony via livestream.)

The Initial Formation Program began in person and finished online. Several current associates were able to join us in person, but many remained at home and participated via the livestreamed Mass. Pastor and Local Director Father Thomas Smithson, SSS, presided and received the new associates.

Submitted by Jim Ziegler, Branch Leader

On Monday evening, November 16, eight new Associates of the Blessed Sacrament made their Promise Commitment at Saint Jean Baptiste Church in New York City. The ceremony began with a Holy Hour and concluded with the Promise Ceremony. Pastor and Local Director Father John Kamas, SSS, presided and on behalf of the Province received them into the Eymardian Family.

Received were: Rosalba Brookfield, Margarita Fadul, Gladys Fortunat, Maria Rodriguez, Jean Stoddart, Laura Tavoni, Bivian Tello, and Ruth Thomas.

Submitted by Clare Norton, Branch Leader

CONNECTIONS

A Historical Note

The History of the Aggregation (Continued)

“The Story in Albuquerque”

As we saw in an earlier installment of this graced story, different religious in the Province referred to the lay women and men in the Peoples’ Eucharistic League as “associates.” The principal expression of their association was participating in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, with a strong devotion to service, study, reflection, and presentations (both in writing and in person) by the local religious who assisted the laity in their love of the Eucharist.

In our last installment, we saw how lay women and men were trained to present the Life in the Eucharist program and partner with the Center for Eucharistic Renewal in the ministry of Eucharistic evangelizing. Pastoral staff members and employees of the Congregation were increasingly being seen as “associates.” In Albuquerque, another aspect of the growing associates phenomenon was developing.

Associate of the Blessed Sacrament Bernadette Hill recently passed away. She joined the heavenly banquet table with Andrea Montoya, two of the original women associates who assisted the early foundation of the Albuquerque male religious community. The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament had been invited to continue the work of a Blessed Sacrament Shrine that was started in 1948 by archdiocesan priest Father Daniel B. Leary. The Congregation built a new shrine and chapel of perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in 1950 at 1224 Gold Avenue, S.E. At the invitation of Archbishop James P. Davis, the Blessed Sacrament Community moved up the street to administer Saint Charles Borromeo Parish in 1966. They also moved the Blessed Sacrament Shrine there, which made Saint Charles a center of Eucharistic devotion.

After the arrival of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in Albuquerque, Angela and Bernadette quickly became members of the PEL. When the Congregation took over Saint Charles Parish, they were part of a growing community of women and men who sought to continue their association with the Congregation and its Eucharistic spirituality.

In 1986, Pastor Father Thomas Fitzgerald, SSS, invited the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament to administer aspects of parish life, including the bookstore and the growing community of lay people looking for a deeper Eucharistic spirituality. They served the parish until 1997, when the untimely deaths of two sisters at the motherhouse in Maine in January 1996 necessitated the Servants to return to their Province Center there.

In 1990, Father Bob Rousseau, SSS, went to Saint Charles to introduce a number of invited parishioners to his newly-created Life in the Eucharist program. At the time, two sisters from the community of the Servants assisted Father Fitzgerald. Following the LITE experience, Sisters Catherine Marie Caron, SSS, Edna Cardozo, SSS, and Josephine Roney, SSS, invited a number of the attendees to become part of a Eucharistic Prayer Association. In this program, there was collaboration between the Servants, Father Fitzgerald, and a number of lay people. Adoration was at the heart of their ministry. There was also a Life in the Eucharist Team from 1990 to 2004.

In October 2007, at the Province Assembly in Houston, Father Norman Pelletier SSS, Provincial Superior, invited lay members (“associates”) from across the United States to discuss a newly-created first draft of what would become the *Rule of Life for Associates* (ROLA). In spring 2008, with permission from Father Pelletier, Father John Thomas Lane, SSS, the last Blessed Sacrament Pastor of Saint Charles, began to form the existing group of Eucharistic associates in the vision of this new document.

He then gathered members of this group to a meeting to generate feedback for the Superior General, Father Fiorenzo Salvi, SSS, who was writing, along with Sister Catherine Marie Caron, SSS, a new *Rule of Life for Associates* for laity who wished to be united with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. The group in Albuquerque made their promises on May 13, 2009. They renewed their promise commitment after the final document was published on March 25, 2010.