

A Peek Behind Emmanuel Magazine

by Paul Bernier SSS

Emmanuel Magazine has been published by the American province of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament for almost 95 years. The magazine, however, is older than that. It was launched in 1894, even before Blessed Sacrament religious came to the States. This makes it the third oldest Catholic magazine in the U.S. It was started as a means of communicating with members of the *Priests' Eucharistic League*.

This *League* was started in France by St. Peter Julian Eymard in 1867, shortly after founding the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. The confraternity counted St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars, among its first members. It received the approval of Pope Leo XIII in 1881, and from there spread throughout Europe; in 1893 it came to the United States.

For Father Eymard, the primary object of this confraternity was the frequent and prolonged worship of the Blessed Sacrament by priests. At this source priests would learn how to adore Christ, "God with us," in spirit and in truth, and draw light and power to carry out more fruitfully their apostolic mission. Its next object was to extend the Kingdom of Christ by forming apostles of the Eucharist. Devout adorers would then labor to revive faith in the holy Eucharist, and encourage the faithful to partake of the life-giving banquet. A third object was to band together priests as apostles of the Eucharist who "will pledge themselves to take up and defend on all occasions the cause and the honor of Jesus Christ, and promote by every means in their power frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament as well as frequent communion." Communion was rare in those days.

Members promised basically three things:

- (1) to spend each week one full and continuous hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar or veiled in the tabernacle;
- (2) to apply once a month the indulgences attached to the hour of adoration for the benefit of the souls of members who may have died during the previous month;
- (3) to offer the Holy Sacrifice once a year for all deceased members of the association.

The league was brought to this country by Fr. Bede Maler, O.S.B., of Saint Meinrad, Indiana. He had called a meeting of interested persons at Notre Dame University to brainstorm ways of establishing the league in this country. In a bold move that was even noted in the New York Times of August 1, 1894, Maler invited every bishop and priest to a congress in Washington, to be held in October of that year. This congress had Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore as president, and Archbishop Elder of Cincinnati and Maes of Covington as program chairmen. It was a rousing success.

Fr. Maler became Director General of the League, and Bishop Maes accepted the office of Protector of the League. They were the ones who thought of *Emmanuel* as a means of bringing the attention of the American clergy to the spirituality of Father Eymard. St. Meinrad Abbey was a strong backer of the league and directed it until the SSS themselves were firmly established in this country. They then offered—in 1915—the direction of the league, as well as *Emmanuel* magazine, to us. It has been published by our American

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In Loving Memory

September

08	2008	Rev. Walter A. Riendeau
09	1974	Rev. Leopold St.-Hilaire
11	1959	Rev. Alphonse Ouimet
19	1937	Rev. Louis Tardif
19	1983	Rev. Antonin Dumont
22	1982	Rev. Leo Bourque
23	1964	Rev. John Graham
24	1978	Rev. Adrien Maheu
25	1971	Bro. George Lemoyne
25	1975	Rev. Adrian Hebert
27	1980	Bro. Noel Canuel

October

05	1988	Rev. Arthur Maheu
05	1999	Bro. Mark Proulx
14	1989	Rev. Thomas Kennette
15	1991	Bro. Narcisse Barette
17	1956	Rev. Wenceslaus Giasson
17	1999	Rev. Thomas Waldie
18	1945	Rev. Auguste Pelletier
20	1953	Rev. Emile Poirier
24	1996	Bro. Raymond Lussier
26	1946	Bro. Charles Caron
27	2003	Rev. Frederick Roberge
31	1974	Rev. Francis Brennan
31	2003	Rev. Lionel Lavigne

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province since then.

In those days, the growth of the league was facilitated by the fact that every diocese had a diocesan director. Every year they would contact all priest members, collect the dues (\$1.00), send the list to the national director, who also edited *Emmanuel*, and each member would receive a monthly issue of the magazine. From 1915 to 1974, *Emmanuel* had only four editors. The last two between them had it for a total of 50 years!

The League had seen its numbers peak around the time of Vatican II. Then it began a steady decline. There seems to have been two major reasons for this. First, the system of diocesan directors began to break down after the council. Dioceses started setting up offices of divine worship and ongoing formation in ministry, considerably broader than the parameters of the league, and at the same time reaching all the priests in the diocese. Also, the editor of *Emmanuel* at the time of the council took too little notice of it. He had done a tremendous job in the 1950s, doubling membership in the League. But continued espousal of pre-Vatican forms and a narrow appreciation of liturgical changes after the council had a disastrous effect on membership and subscriptions.

I have been editor of the magazine twice: from 1974-1983, and from 2003 to the present. Though the style of the articles varies from those printed by previous editors, the general focus of the magazine has never changed. We are the only magazine in the U.S. to focus on the Eucharist. Since this is such a rich treasure in the church, we have never run out of

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Statues Commissioned: St. Peter Julian Eymard and Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament

Now Available!



Early last year, the province of St. Ann of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, had two eight inch statues commissioned, one of the Founder, St. Peter Julian Eymard, and the other of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Founder's new statue portrays him in his traditional pose with the monstrance. The vestments are actually modeled after vestments that were worn by Father Eymard and the monstrance that he is holding is a replica of the monstrance that he used. The finish of the statue of St. Peter Julian Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist, is antique bronze.

The statue of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament is modeled after the statue that goes back to the time of St. Eymard, although it is done in color. It portrays our Blessed Mother holding the child Jesus who is holding a small monstrance.

You can see for yourself by the photos included in this newsletter the beauty of these statues. Although more than a year in production, we are happy to announce that these statues are now available through the Congregation's provincial office.



Each statue costs \$20 plus shipping and handling. If you are interested in both or either statue, contact Mrs. Susan Work, 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland, OH 44143; Tel: 440-442-6311; Email: susandwork@blessedsacrament.com.

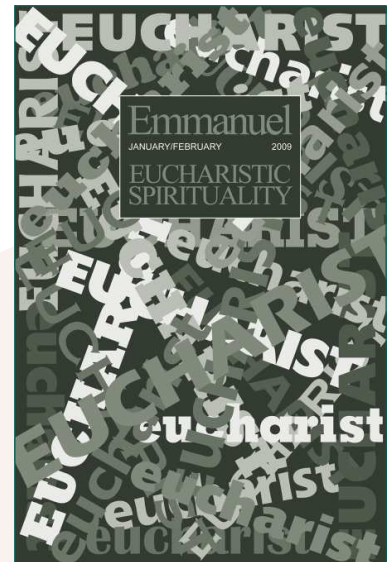
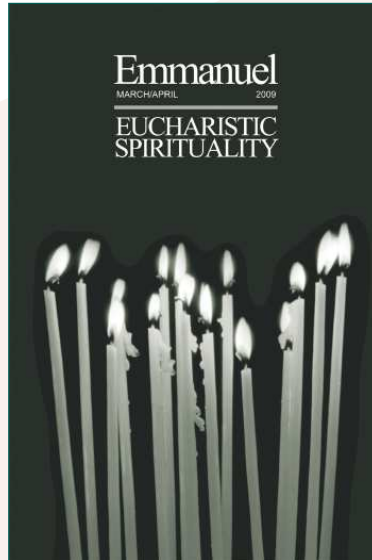
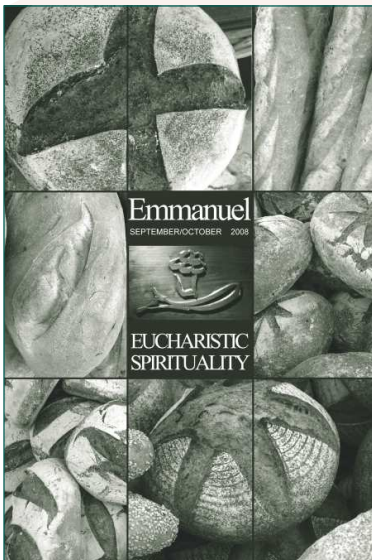
These statues will make excellent gifts for family or friends. Order yours now.

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material. There is still so much to learn and appreciate about this mystery that is at the heart of the church.

Though originally intended for priests, its readership now includes deacons, and many people in church service. This is only natural, since gone are the days when the only people in the church who knew or appreciated theology were the clergy. Since Vatican II, especially, the laity is far more educated and involved in the life of the church. The magazine today is enjoyed by those who have a eucharistic spirituality and are eager to learn more about this gift of Jesus to the church. Because it continues to be the only magazine of eucharistic spirituality in the country, it is appreciated by many because of the magazine's emphasis on the Mass, liturgy, and prayer. Over the years it has won many prizes for its style, content, and general excellence.

May it live another 100 years!



September Devotion: Our Lady of Sorrows

Birthday of Mary: September 8

October Devotion: The Holy Rosary