

Bread Broken & Shared

A Newsletter for friends of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament of the Province of Saint Ann

*Take Then as Your Inspiration
the Exceedingly Rich Legacy Which Your Founder
has Handed Down to You*

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In our long journey since the end of Vatican Council II, our religious congregation has spent a great amount of time – as have all the other religious congregations in the Church – reflecting and praying on how to renew the life of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. A few years ago, in his letter to our General meeting in Rome, addressed to me as the newly-elected Superior General of our Congregation, Pope John Paul II responded in part to this quest.

He said on that occasion, *“Take then as your inspiration the exceedingly rich legacy which your founder has handed down to you and, in fidelity to his grace, make your inheritance fruitful for the good and the growth of the Church”*. This was an invitation to return to St. Peter Julian Eymard and to deepen our appreciation of his grace as we continued our journey of renewal.

In the same document the Holy Father further challenged us to take our rightful place in the Church’s own evangelical journey. He reminded us that our *“...specific contribution to the ‘new evangelization’ should consist in a*

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▲ Norman Pelletier SSS, provincial superior, celebrates Eucharist



◀ Fiorenzo Salvi SSS, superior general, presents a commemorative 150th anniversary medal to Pope Benedict XVI in a recent audience



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deeper penetration into the Eucharistic mystery, together with a commitment to proclaim the gospel to the men and women of this present age...[and]... that we should remain committed to the formation of communities nourished by the Eucharist."

As in any organization that hopes to revitalize its mission and energize its people, we, too, have been continuing our efforts to focus our attention on what gives life to our communities and our members. Our quest has taken many twists and turns in the last years but eventually, in God's good time, we have been blessed with greater clarity and resolve in our mission and in the appreciation of our specific contribution to the Church and society.

"To become communities of eucharistic evangelization and to work at the formation of these communities" has become the focus of our efforts in these past months. It sounds like an obscure statement and yet once we begin to describe its meaning, you will see what it all really means. For example, in all that we do we try to establish a certain reality which we have come to describe as communities who find their meaning and their life in the Eucharist. So, our aim is to form our parishes into communities of eucharistic evangelization, which means that our parishes, like the Church herself, are about evangelization. Our specific contribution is to evangelize from a eucharistic perspective. We need to connect whatever we do in the parish, all of the parish ministries, to the Eucharist. This becomes the basis for our understanding of our spirituality rooted in the Eucharist.

So now after this long explanation about our mission to evangelize from

the Eucharist and with the Eucharist, let's see how that really works in practice. This issue of *Bread Broken & Shared* reflects in an excellent way how we do eucharistic evangelizing. The ways are many, rich and varied. These ministries are all nourished with the Eucharist and are sustained by this sacrament.

Read these articles and you will see what I'm talking about. Deacon Joe Bourgeois and the *clown ministry* is a very innovative approach to evangelization. It is not a ministry you find very often listed in your parish bulletin, but it is a powerful means of evangelizing. Who among us are so cold-hearted as not to smile at the sight of a clown? Clowns have had a long and fascinating appeal for young and old. What a clever way to reach out and touch people with the healing hand of God. But, Deacon Joe and the wonderful people in the clown ministry don't just "clown around", they perform serious works of mercy, and, as a consequence, of evangelization. So many homeless people in downtown Cleveland have been fed and clothed through their eucharistic outreach.

Father Ernest Falardeau has often written ecumenical articles for this newsletter. As a recognized expert in this supremely important ministry, Father Ernest has always sought to link his ministry to the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity. Unity of the churches is what we pray for every year just before the liturgical season of Lent. Unity was Jesus' prayer and unity is what we strive to accomplish in all of our relationships. What could be more eucharistic than to work for unity.

There is a peculiar ministry going on in New York City, in lower Manhattan which, again, you would not find in most parish bulletins. Father James Hayes spends most of his time mixing with the dedicated people who work in the law enforcement divisions of the city, state, and federal government. Whether they are US Marshals, or FBI employees, or State judges, Father Hayes knows them and they know him. Few of us, I suspect, think of these people as needing to be ministered to. Father Jim gathers them together. He makes them feel that they are not forgotten and that they, too, are part of God's people, each one invited around the Lord's table to share the food of life, the Eucharist.

You will also read about Brother Edmund. He had a long and fruitful life, an eminently eucharistic man in so many ways. As a cook in our religious communities for many years Brother Ed provided food for our bodies, but through his example of faithful service he fed our souls. Later when he visited the sick and the homebound, Brother Ed brought the sacrament of the Eucharist to them so they could receive communion and, through his ministry, God's presence became a constant source of comfort and strength. Brother Edmund understood what the Eucharist was all about and made it the center of his life!

There you are. These are but a few examples of the ministries flowing from our understanding of what the Eucharist requires of us. All of us who participate in the Sunday or weekday Mass are invited to deepen our own appreciation of what the Eucharist means and how this mystery of God's love for us challenges us in our daily lives, at home, at work, in our parishes. To begin to see how the Eucharist touches all that we are and all that we do and to make these connections is the journey that remains unfinished, yet always filled with promise. ✠