

SSS INTERNATIONAL

EYMARDIAN FAMILY

n. 293 – December 14, 2020

SSS Generalate

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www.ssscongregatio.org



A great light will shine in our life

Let us begin the liturgical year with Advent as a time of preparation for Christmas. Let us light the first of the four candles of the Advent wreath, a contemplative sign reminding us of the great moments of the History of Salvation. *Come, come Lord, do not delay!* Strengthen the attitude of waiting for the great Mystery of Incarnation, *a great light that will shine in the life of the world* (cf. Mt 4:16). Let us briefly reflect on the three signs that we contemplate during this time of grace: 1. The Crib 2. The elements of bread and wine 2. Fraternity.

1. The Crib: Among the typical signs of this liturgical season, the Crib is a place of contemplation of the Mystery of Incarnation. It awakens a sensitivity to dialogue with others in both family and community environments. God becomes a child to be welcomed in our arms. In human weakness and fragility he hides all his power and transforms himself into a God of



tenderness and love beheld in the innocence of a child. The Crib is a sign filled with meaning for Christians, enabling us to feel involved in the History of Salvation and to actualize the event of Bethlehem: "its portrayal in the crèche helps us to imagine the scene. It touches our hearts and makes us enter into salvation history as contemporaries of an event that is living and real in a broad gamut of historical and cultural contexts." [Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Admirabile Signum* n.3, 1 December 2019].

2. The elements of Bread and Wine: The Eucharist is the treasure that *synthesizes* the History of Salvation, *actualizing* the evangelizing itinerary of Jesus Christ and *confirming* the Christian experience. This liturgical season is an important one to *underline*, *relive* and *rediscover* the essence of the new command of love announced and lived by Jesus: "Love one another" (cf. Jn 13:34). To translate into practice the love of God for us, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14).

This year 2020 the whole of humanity has lived an experience of the desert through the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting everyone, taking away millions of lives, among whom some of our brothers. This pandemic has created situations of panic, uncertainty and changes of projects. The Eucharist sheds light on how to face problems of indifference and to be discerning regarding problems, conflicts and human fragility, a situation already faced by Fr Eymard in his time. It is time to make our own the culture of encounter promoted by Pope Francis by expressing in our own life the dimension of *unity in diversity*, this being a fundamental Eucharistic principle.

3. Fraternity: "Our whole life as Blessed Sacrament religious is based on the celebration of the Paschal Mystery" (Message of the 35th General Chapter). This affirmation recalls something of primary importance for us, "*the cenacle*": a place of *fraternity, communion and contemplation*. In almost all the Catholic churches there can be seen some sign of the Crib, recalling the spirit of Christmas.

God incarnates himself in Mary to become a human being so that we may contemplate Emmanuel, "God with us", taking on our human condition and shining in our lives. In this way the great Mystery of Salvation illumines the path of our existence in order that we may respond to the great issues pertaining to a search for its meaning.

"Who am I? Where do I come from? Why was I born at this time in history? Why do I love? Why do I suffer? Why will I die? It was to answer these questions that God became man. His closeness brings light where there is darkness and shows the way to those dwelling in the shadow of suffering (cf. Lk 1:79)." [Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Admirabile Signum* n.4, 1 December 2019].

Let us prepare our heart like the Crib, to welcome in grace the "Emmanuel" into our life, for him to reach to the peripheries of our existence, to discern the sense of fraternity as an essence of the Eucharistic life and to improve our Christian and religious life.

Merry Christmas to the Eymardian Family present in the different geographic areas of the world! May the light of Christmas illumine our journey of faith and our adhesion to the Eucharistic Christ!

4th of December 2020

DEACON ELIBIEN JOSEPH, SSS



Celebration of the feast of the Vietnamese Martyrs

The feast of the Vietnamese Martyrs is not only a great event for all Vietnamese Catholics but it is also an important feast for SSS Religious and Priests. It is a special feast because it is also the patron Saint of the Vietnamese Province.



Every year, all SSS of the Vietnamese religious and all brothers who belong to educated periods in many places in Vietnam gather together in the mother community to share the mission, listening the homily, confession and celebrate the patron Saint.

In the beginning, we are used to be silent and adore before the Eucharist. We want to offer this precious time to relax, and ask the strengthen from the eucharistic Jesus.

At half past eight, according to the General Father's suggestion, the Provincial Father shared the brief of Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* of the Holy Father Francis on Fraternity and Social Friendship. Truly, learning from this encyclical, any SSS religious is called to be aware of himself and his role in our society. SSS religious should be interested in the poor, the sorrow and the immigrants.

The Holy Mass was cozy, friendly and also holy. The master was Provincial Father Peter Trinh Nhu Cung, sss. Father Dominic Vang served the homily. Father Vang called all religious to prove the spirit of martyr in real life. Following the footsteps of Father Eymard, the SSS religious devoted their life for the kingdom of Eucharist.

What a coincidence! On this day, **21 of November 2020**, it was also the 20th anniversary of priesthood for Father Joseph Pham Hoang Thinh, sss and 40th anniversary of the vow for fathers: Dominic Vang sss, Peter Nguyen Van Thinh sss; Michael Pham Tien Thanh sss. All Religious prayed for them.



After finishing the holy Mass, all members moved to the dead's portrait who belong to SSS Congregation to pray for them.

After that, we shared the lunch together. We shared both happiness and sorrow friendly because we did not have an opportunity to meet each other. Covid 19 Pandemic separated us to gather. That is the useful treatment for SSS religious. Sharing together help us to improve our mission and brotherhood.

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, Saint Peter Julian Eymard, and the Vietnamese Martyrs pray for us! God! Pour out grace for us! And we will get the courage to preach Jesus in the Eucharist to everywhere and everyone in order to work at building a world founded on justice and love, so that the glory of God can be revealed to the world.

FATHER MARTIN AUGUSTIN BUI VĂN HỒNG PHÚC, SSS



The Story 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" (LITE). 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 Corpus Christi Parish.

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.

That all changed in March 2010 when the Superior General of the Congregation, Father Fiorenzo Salvi, SSS, reinstituted the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Patterned on the *Rule of Life* for the Congregation, he introduced the *Rule of Life (Project of Life) for Associates*. 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*.

October 31, 2020

CENTER FOR EUCHARISTIC EVANGELIZING
Cleveland, Ohio



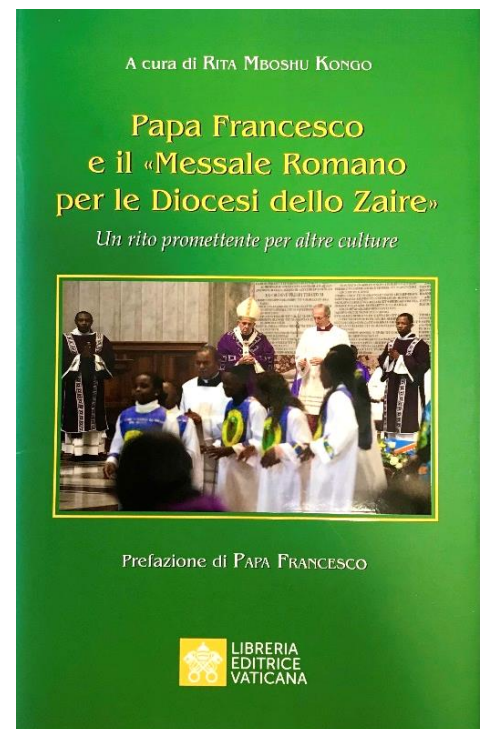
Roman Missal for the Dioceses of Zaire

On the first of December 2019, at the Basilica of St. Peter, Pope Francis celebrated a special Mass for Congolese community, at the commemoration of 25th anniversary of Congolese Catholic Chaplaincy in Rome. The Mass was celebrated according to the Zairean Rite used by Dioceses in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Exactly one year after this special celebration, a significant book was launched on **1 December 2020**, with the title *Papa Francesco e il "Messale Romano per le Diocesi dello Zaire"* - *Un rito promettente per altre culture* (Pope Francis and the "Roman Missal for the Dioceses of Zaire" - A promising rite for other cultures).

This book is consisted of a significant Preface of Holy Father, Pope Francis, and five chapters or articles from different authors. One of the chapters is written by our religious, Father Olivier Akwel-Mpem Ndongdo sss, who is president of the Association of Congolese Religious in Rome. As being informed earlier in the previous SSS International, n° 292, Fr. Olivier at present, is part of the new community responsible for the Parish of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and Canadian Martyrs, in Rome.

This is a very important initiative of Pope Francis who wants the "Roman Missal for the Dioceses of Zaire" (Democratic Republic of Congo) to be well known in the Church, also opening new paths with initiatives of this kind. Holy Father convinces that the liturgy must touch the hearts of local Church and the liturgical inculturation needs to be welcomed as a gift of the Holy Spirit, as he states in the Preface of this book: *"This process of liturgical inculturation in Congo is an invitation to value the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are treasures for all humanity."*





The death of a brother will be celebrated as a Paschal event filled with hope. We shall faithfully carry out the prescribed prayers for our deceased (RL 13).

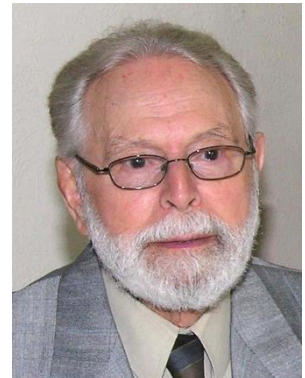
N. 1590 - Father Francisco Artola Elverdin

Province: Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament
 Community: Tolosa, Spain
 Death: 13 November 2020
 Age: 87
 Profession: 69
 Priesthood: 63



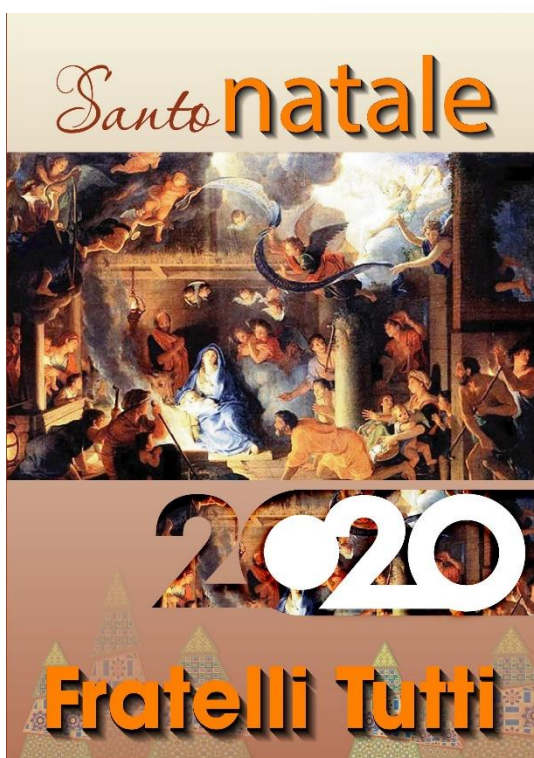
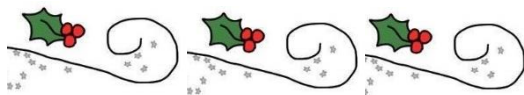
N. 1591 - Brother Paul-Eugène Hamelin

Province: St John the Baptist
 Community: Québec, Canada
 Death: 19 November 2020
 Age: 101
 Profession: 72



N. 1592 - Father Bert Janssen

Province: St Peter Julian Eymard
 Community: Lommel, Belgium
 Death: 26 November 2020
 Age: 72
 Profession: 50
 Priesthood: 24



**Merry Christmas
 and
 Happy New Year**