

Bread Broken & Shared

A Publication of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, Province of Saint Ann, for the Eymardian Family and friends

A Eucharistic Spirituality

Book Review by Ernest Falardeau SSS

A Eucharistic Spirituality: Inspired by Saint Peter Julian Eymard, Apostle of the Eucharist. By Paul Bernier SSS and Jim Brown MA, Cleveland, Ohio: Emmanuel Publishing, Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. xvi, 96p.

Pope John Paul II inserted the feast of Saint Peter Julian Eymard into the general calendar of the Catholic Church for August 2. He thus decreed that Father Eymard had a eucharistic spirituality for the whole Church. Saint Eymard is no longer a saint for two religious congregations and the lay aggregation he founded, but he is a saint with an essential message for the entire Church. (*A Eucharistic Spirituality*, page 89).

This book is written for the laity, especially for the Associates of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (*Aggregation*). It is rich with quotations from the Bible as well as from the pen of Saint Peter Julian Eymard in the *Constitutions* that he wrote for the Congregations he founded and first published in 1863, the sermons he gave, and the letters he wrote constantly providing spiritual direction for women and men to learn and love Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist in all its dimensions.

In *A Journey of Faith* (Chapter I), the first chapter, is about a journey of faith that Saint Eymard began from his birth and baptism. He wrote in his journal that he was a little like Jacob, always on the move. From his home and parish church, Peter Julian was aware of Jesus Christ, who loved him in the tabernacle of the parish church.

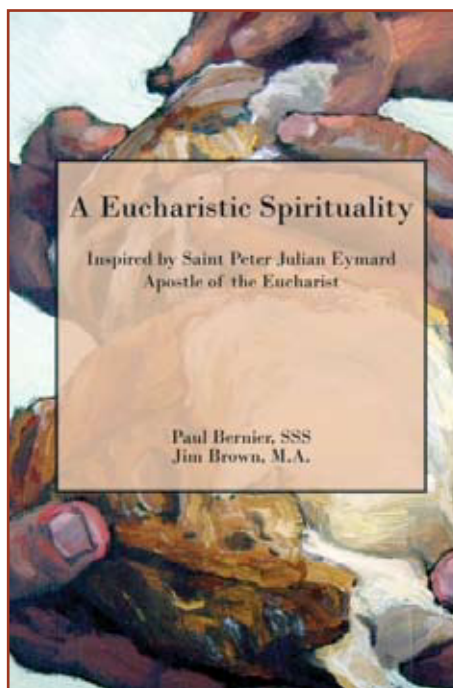
Prayer: A Conversation with A Loving God (Chapter II) is the next theme. Love is fundamental to Saint Peter Julian – and so is prayer. Mind, heart,

will, and intellect are the center of his spirituality. *The Eucharist at the Center of Our Life* (Chapter IV) was the heart of Saint Eymard's life. It was the beginning, center, and end of his inner life and spirituality.

Baptism and Eucharist are the new life and the nourishment of the soul. Without them we cannot live the eucharistic spirituality. Saint Peter Julian greatly loved the church in which he was baptized.

Making a Gift of Self to God (Chapter VI) is a practical way of imitating Jesus' gift of himself in the Eucharist. Jesus is a human being. The incarnation of the Son of God in the human person of Jesus Christ is a mystery. There is one person but two natures: God and man. Jesus was sent to transfigure men and women into the Kingdom of God. Jesus gave himself to accomplish

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the plan of the Father. He was born, lived, and did the will of the Father. We live spiritually by giving ourselves to Jesus Christ

Living In Thanksgiving (Chapter VII) is an invitation to live the Eucharist. The word Eucharist is the English translation of the Greek word "thanksgiving." Gratitude is fundamental to our relationship with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Adoration: Prayer that Flows from the Eucharist (Chapter VIII). There are four ends of the Mass – Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation, and Petition. *Listening for the Voice of God* (Chapter IX) is contemplation – a loving, silent prayer Peter Julian Eymard called adoration. He encouraged those who followed his spirituality to use this prayer method. We must be quiet to hear God who speaks to us in our mind, and his loving heart touches ours.

Read the Bible More (Chapter X) is necessary for every spirituality. Vatican Council II emphasizes the importance of the Scriptures –they are God's word. *Go Now to Love and Serve the Lord* (Chapter XI). Action, as Pope Francis reminds us often, that saying "Lord, Lord" is not enough. We must act to be saved. Finally, we are told that Peter Julian Eymard is *A Saint for Our Times* (Chapter XII). Like all canonized saints, Saint Eymard is for all who believe in Jesus Christ.

The love of Jesus in the Eucharist is evident in the eucharistic spirituality of Saint Eymard. He wrote to Mrs. Camille d'Andigne; *God loves us personally with a great benevolent love with an infinite and eternal love. (He) loves us as if you were his only daughter because his love is one and infinite. Our life of love is our response to the God who first loved us.* This book, written by a Blessed Sacrament Religious and an Associate, presents the "practical foundation and spirit" of a genuinely eucharistic life. I think you will enjoy it. ✠



[Left] Jim Brown

[Right] Father Paul Bernier SSS

Who We Are

"Following in the footsteps of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, our mission is to respond to the hungers of the human family with the riches of God's love manifested in the Eucharist." *Rule of Life 3*

Conscious of our call to bear prophetic witness to the Eucharist, we commit ourselves to the renewal of Church and society through this sacrament, especially by:

- ✠gathering communities characterized by hospitality, reconciliation, and service;
- ✠celebrating the Eucharist as the source and summit of the life of the Church;
- ✠associating others with our prayer;
- ✠giving personal witness to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist;
- ✠sharing our Eucharistic mission with others in full collaboration.

