

Presentation Excerpts...Continued from previous page

This reality that was incarnated within Peter Julian of *being supernatural in everything* – is the living of very real and concrete lives that are entirely motivated by the power and inspiration of the risen Lord rather than our own resources and needs. When we breathe heaven, we can live heaven. As Pope Benedict said, *heaven is not a place within the cosmos, but a place within God*. Eternal life is within you and in your longing for intimacy.

Saint Peter Julian's breathing of heaven was a consistent desire for all of his spiritual children – and that desire remains to this very moment for each of you. Let us take hold of this weekend with both hands and seek that renewal in God again, recognizing that the eucharistic dove hovers within and upon our lives as a reality and that we are deeply grafted upon its wing.

Let us take the inspiration of Saint Peter Julian, whose instruction to one person today can become an invitation for all of us: *...cast a simple glance toward God, he wrote, who is present in us or around us, an interior act of offering, acceptance of everything. Happy is the soul who lives thus with God. What a beautiful friendship! Then heaven is everywhere.*

Our friendships in this beautiful Eucharistic Society begin and end with the profoundest abiding – for indeed, we belong to each other because we live on in Christ first.

Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the Real Presence, and Us By Sister Catherine Marie Caron SSS

Stories are life...isn't it true? Our lives are a composite of stories. When we share the stories of our personal life, we share our life... so it is also true that the life of a society, a family, or religious traditions is a composite of stories...The Christian family has its stories in Scripture. Stories define who we are... for we become more aware of God's actions when we touch our personal stories. From remembering, we move to thanksgiving, and our lives are transformed into Eucharist.

On April 27, 1868, Saint Peter Julian Eymard withdrew for a personal retreat at their novitiate house in the village of Saint Maurice, not far from Paris. He would die four months later. In typical Eymard fashion, he started his retreat by reviewing his spiritual weaknesses and how limited his response had been to the great love of God.

On the second day of that final retreat, his tone changed. He outlined his life's principal graces: *The greatest gift of my life has been a lively faith in the Most Blessed Sacrament since my childhood.*

He listed the four following experiences which I would like to explore and maybe add a few more:

- The grace of communion, a desire he had from when he was eight years old, to direct everything towards the Blessed Sacrament.
- The grace of my vocation at Fourvières, an awareness of Our Lord being alone in the Most Blessed Sacrament, without a religious body to watch with Him, honor Him, and procure His glory! Why not found something ...?
- At the boarding school of La Seyne, on the feast of Saint Joseph, the grace of the gift of self, union, and happiness lasted for several years.
- The grace of the apostolate, of faith in Jesus, Jesus is there, therefore everyone to Him, by Him, in Him.

He added: *I asked our Lord to renew this initial grace in me. Jesus is there,*
Continued on next page...



*Sister Catherine Marie Caron SSS
delivering her reflections*

Presentation Excerpts...Continued from previous page

alone, forsaken by his own, left idle in his Sacrament. I prayed ardently for a return of this grace.

Perhaps we are also saying to Our Lord, renew this initial grace in me, this gift of my Eucharistic faith. The American Bishops are calling all of us to restore this initial grace, this understanding of the great grace of Christ in the Eucharist.

When I was asked to give this talk on Saint Peter Julian Eymard and the real presence, I asked myself how frequently Saint Peter Julian used the expression: real presence. This expression comes from the Council of Trent, the same formula current in Eymard's time. It is a theological formula that is often followed with philosophical abstractions. But Father Eymard seldom spoke as a theologian, although theology always undergirded his faith and teaching.

Tellingly, he would later say to our first sisters, *you should really come to know the Blessed Sacrament, not only theologically but devoutly, lovingly.*

These words will guide me in speaking of Father Eymard's approach to the Eucharist. His was a personal relationship. He had a powerful sense of the divine person, Jesus, the person: Our Lord, or Notre Seigneur, which I like better in French. Jesus was someone to him, someone with whom he wanted to interact, to serve at every stage of his life. Shall we say a personal and relational approach to the Eucharist, which some have defined as existential, spiritual, or mystical, without particular preoccupation with theological definitions? Yet it is also true to say that as we search his writings and sermons, we find statements corresponding to current categories explaining the Eucharist: liturgical,

scriptural, or theological. But as a whole, his style was more poetic, existential.

This is a love story between Jesus and Saint Peter Julian Eymard. His vocation was born at the Last Supper in the Cenacle, contemplating the love of Christ for humankind. Jesus wants to be near to us, within us. This is what guided his meditations on the Eucharist, the real presence.

...

When Mother Marguerite Guillot and her two companions arrived in Paris for the foundation of the Servants in 1858, Father Eymard brought them together on average twice a week for their spiritual

formation. We have more than 600 talks taken in shorthand by one of the sisters, Sister Caroline de Boisgrollier, who knew shorthand. These talks are now available on the Eymard website. We owe her these precious texts. She faithfully wrote his every word, which he would verify.

In these teachings, Father Eymard often focused on the connection between knowledge and love and Our Lord's promise that he and the Father would manifest themselves to those who love them:

This manifestation, how will it come to be? he said, concluding, *By prayer, by adoration, since the Eucharist is Our Lord himself. No one can make you know the Blessed Sacrament. People can say something to you with a word of Holy Scripture, but the intimate knowledge, no one can give it to you; when you are in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, ask him for this knowledge.* (August 1, 1860)

...

As we enter the second year of the Eucharistic Revival, Saint Peter Julian's life serves as an inspiration: think of him as listening to Jesus as a child, looking for his face during his lifetime, longing to receive Him in communion, praying for the coming of God's Kingdom and learning from the rich spiritual heritage of the Church.

Our stories of faith will also become the stuff of our personal witness stories. We may remember the first time the reality of Christ's presence struck us — perhaps our First Communion or maybe

Continued on next page...

Bread Broken & Shared

Bread Broken & Shared Newsletter is published by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, Province of Saint Ann, for Associates, family, friends and benefactors.

Contact information:

Phone: (440) 442-6311

Fax: (440) 442-4752

Editor: Office of Communications

Design: Kay Vincent

Email:

ssscommunications@blessedsacrament.com

Website: www.blessedsacrament.com

Photographs in this issue courtesy of:

Scott Gongos, Diana McGinty, Gloria Jung, File Photos



CONGREGATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

5384 Wilson Mills Road

Highland Heights (Cleveland), Ohio 44143

Since 1900, our Eymardian Family serves the United States and now in Connecticut, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, New Mexico, New York, Ohio and Texas

Become an Apostle of the Eucharist: Brother, Sister, Deacon, Ordained Priest or Associate

Presentation Excerpts...Continued from previous page

faith-filled words from family or friends. We may also think of some recent experiences. When was the last time you recall being struck by the awesomeness of this presence? This is part of your treasury of personal stories that shape your story of faith. It fuels our faith and becomes material for our eucharistic witness...

Eucharistic Congress Presentation – August 5, 2023

By Father Norman B. Pelletier SSS

Father Norman Pelletier began his presentation by reminding the participants why we were here. He explained that this Eucharistic Congress was part of the United States Catholic Bishops Conference (USCCB) program for a three-year focus on the Eucharist. The bishops' call for a revival of Eucharistic spirituality and understanding was a direct response to the 2019 PEW Research Study report of a survey that indicated over 70% of Catholics did not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

As a direct reply to this situation, as reported by PEW, the Catholic Bishops established a three-year program of Eucharistic Revival to renew Catholics' understanding and appreciation of this sacrament. Year one focused on diocesan initiatives. Year two, where we find ourselves now, is to focus attention on the Eucharist at the parish level. The final stage will be at the national level with a national Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, Indiana, next year (2024).

According to the bishops, this



Father Norman Pelletier SSS making his presentation

revival would be carried out with Eucharistic Congresses on all levels of Catholic life by calling attention to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist through Eucharistic Congresses.

Father Pelletier noted that the emphasis on the Real Presence in isolation of a proper and updated understanding of the Eucharist as taught in the documents of Vatican Council II would most likely not achieve the desired goal of renewal. The Real Presence can only be properly understood and appreciated when this presence is placed within the Paschal Mystery. To speak of Eucharistic Real Presence outside of the role of the whole body of Christ, people, and presider in the liturgy would impoverish our understanding of the Eucharist. The document *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (1967) stated clearly: "In Eucharistic Congresses Christians seek to understand this mystery more deeply through a *consideration of its many aspects*." (Pelletier's emphasis)

Father Pelletier concluded that to focus exclusively on the Real Presence in Eucharistic Congresses would significantly impoverish our understanding of this Mystery and most likely fail to renew the US Church's "Real Presence Problem." Father Pelletier then used the rest of his time to situate the Real Presence within the great Mystery of the Body of Christ and its celebration of the Paschal Mystery.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Peter Julian Eymard

Gracious God of our ancestors, you led Peter Julian Eymard, like Jacob in times past, on a journey of faith. Under the guidance of your gentle Spirit, Peter Julian discovered the gift of love in the Eucharist which your son Jesus offered for the hungers of humanity. Grant that we may celebrate this mystery worthily, adore it profoundly, and proclaim it prophetically for your greater glory. Amen.

ANNUAL APPEAL 2023

With this issue we make our Annual Appeal for the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and ask for your generosity in giving.