



## CONGREGATIO SANCTISSIMI SACRAMENTI

*Superior Generalis*

### **170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Foundation of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament 13 May 1856 – 13 May 2026**

Dear Confreres in the Eucharistic vocation,

With profound gratitude and joy, we celebrate the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, established by Saint Peter Julian Eymard on 13 May 1856. This jubilee is more than a remembrance of a historical date; it is a sacred moment of grace – *a kairos* – in which we pause before the Lord to give thanks, to deepen our identity, and to walk forward with renewed zeal.

For 170 years, the Eucharistic fire ignited by our Founder has continued to burn in the Church through the witness, prayer, sacrifices, and apostolic zeal of our confreres. Today, that flame has been entrusted to us – not merely to preserve, but to rekindle for our time.

#### **1. Our Identity: Eucharistic Life, Prayer and Mission**

The Rule of Life clearly tells who we are: “Our ideal is to live the mystery of the Eucharist fully and to make known its meaning” (RL 1). The Eucharist is the center of our life – celebrated, adored and lived.

**The Eucharist Celebrated:** The celebration of the Memorial of the Lord is the center of our life (cf. RL 21). It is the source from which everything flows – our life, our prayer and our mission. In this mystery, we encounter Christ who gives himself totally and invites us to do the same.

**The Eucharist Adored:** Faithful to our tradition, we recognize adoration – prayer before the Blessed Sacrament – as an essential dimension of our vocation. It is not merely a practice, but our characteristic form of prayer. In adoration, we prolong the celebration, entering more deeply into the mystery we celebrate. We allow the Eucharist to shape our hearts, to purify our intentions, and to transform our lives.

The Rule of Life invites us to dedicate daily time to this prayer, recognizing it as a priority in our life and forms part of our mission (cf. RL 29). Without this encounter, our mission risks becoming mere activity rather than true apostolic witnesses.

**The Eucharist Lived:** We commit ourselves to the service of others so that, through our whole life, we may be witnesses of Christ (cf. RL 3). The Eucharist we celebrate and adore sends us forth. It commits us to serve, to love, and to build communion. It calls us to be attentive to the poor, to promote justice, and to become instruments of unity in a divided world. The celebration of Eucharist and adoration are never separated from mission. They form in us the heart of Christ and lead us to give ourselves for others.

## **2. Remembering with Gratitude: The Paths Walked**

Saint Peter Julian Eymard founded the Congregation in response to the hunger of his time: indifference towards the Eucharist, religious ignorance, and the need to make known the love of God manifested in the Eucharist. Our Rule of Life recalls: “Captivated by this love, he made it known to his contemporaries. For this purpose, he traced out for his companions a new form of life in the Church.” (RL 2)

Since then, the Congregation has journeyed through many lands, cultures, trials, and blessings. We have communities of prayer, centers of evangelization, parishes, retreat centers, missions, formation houses, and places of welcoming for those searching for meaning. Generations of our brothers have lived this vocation with fidelity. Their lives remind us that our charism is not a theory, but a lived reality: a life shaped by the Christ present in the Eucharist.

## **3. The Present Moment: A Call to Renewal**

While we give thanks for the rich heritage entrusted to us, we must also face with clarity and responsibility the challenges confronting our Congregation today. In a rapidly changing world marked by secularization and growing indifference to the Eucharist, we experience a weakening of the spirit of prayer, a fragmentation of community life, and a tendency towards activism that is not always rooted in deep spiritual experience. Added to this are concerns about the decline in vocations and, at times, a certain lethargy in giving a vibrant and convincing witness to our Eucharistic charism.

These realities invite us not to discouragement but to discernment and renewal. The present moment calls us beyond nostalgia toward a renewal that is authentic, rooted in the Eucharist, and expressed in a fidelity to community life, prayer, and mission.

## **4. The Path Forward: Deepening Our Eucharistic Identity**

### **a. Living What We Celebrate**

The Eucharist must shape our daily life, forming in us a way of being that stands in contrast to the spirit of the world: it teaches us thanksgiving in a culture marked by complaint, self-gift in a climate of self-interest, communion in a divided world, humility in a culture of power, service in a spirit often driven by competition, and hope amid discouragement.

In this light, the essential question remains whether we are truly becoming bread broken for others, allowing our lives to reflect the very mystery we celebrate. For, as our Rule of Life

reminds us, the Eucharist calls us to place ourselves at the service of others and to become, by our whole life, authentic witnesses of Christ's self-giving love.

If the Eucharist is not translated into life, if it does not shape our attitudes, relationships, and mission, then the Eucharist remains incomplete. It is meant to be lived, interiorized, and expressed in the concrete gift of ourselves.

### **b. Prayer Before the Blessed Sacrament: Our Precious Heritage**

At the retreat in preparation for vows (Paris, February 23–28, 1859), on the 4<sup>th</sup> day, during the second meditation on 'The Goal of the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament', Saint Peter Julian Eymard affirmed that "the holy Eucharist is the unique and exclusive goal of our life and of our members. This goal is expressed principally: 1. In the solemn and public worship of perpetual adoration. 2. By the Eucharistic apostolate" (PR 5,5; XIV,36).

This foundational intuition of our Founder continues to define our identity today. The approval decree of Our Rule of Life (1984) affirms that our mission is "to place at the centre of its life and the life of the faithful, the Eucharist celebrated in the truth and internalized in a prayer of adoration and contemplation".

As we celebrate the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation, we are invited to deepen and renew this identity.

## **5. Ensemble/Together 93**

The new issue of *Ensemble/Together 93* is dedicated to the theme "Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament". It is brought out by the SSS International Theological Commission. This publication offers rich reflections and personal testimonies that invite us to deepen our understanding of this essential dimension of our vocation. I express my sincere gratitude to the members of the SSS International Theological Commission and to all who have contributed to this work.

These reflections reaffirm a fundamental truth: adoration is not simply a practice, but a way of being. It is the prayer through which we internalize the Paschal Mystery, allowing our entire life to become a prolongation of the Eucharist. At the same time, it is a gift that requires continual renewal, for – as our tradition consistently reminds us – prayer before the Eucharist remains of fundamental importance for the life of the Congregation.

In light of this, I invite all our communities and each confrere:

- to make fruitful use of these reflections in personal prayer and community sharing.
- to deepen the quality of our prayer, leading to a true encounter with Christ.
- to integrate prayer and mission more consciously, so that adoration becomes a source of apostolic zeal.

In this way, our communities will increasingly become what they are called to be: cenacles of prayer, schools of Eucharistic life, and centers of mission. Our fidelity to Prayer before the

Blessed Sacrament will sustain our vocation and make us credible witnesses of hope for the Church and the world.

## Conclusion

This anniversary is a call for all of us to return to the source, to rediscover the Eucharist as the center of our life, and to deepen our identity with courage and hope. Strengthened by the example of our Founder and united in our charism, let us continue to live faithfully our Eucharistic vocation, allowing it to shape our lives and guide our mission.

Moving forward together, we trust that the Lord who has sustained our Congregation through the years will continue to lead us, so that our charism may remain a living gift for the Church and a sign of hope for the world.

*Let us keep the fire of the Eucharist alive – first in our hearts, then in the world.*

May our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament continue to protect us and our holy founder Peter Julian Eymard continue to inspire us and intercede for us.

Fraternally,



Fr. Philip Benzy Romician SSS  
*Superior General*



12 May 2026