

# Bread Broken & Shared

A Publication for friends, benefactors, and Associates of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, Province of Saint Ann

## Reflection on the Eucharistic Congress: Renewing Our Eucharistic Spirituality

By Diana McGinty, Associate, Winter Springs, Florida



*Diana McGinty doing a reading*

After months of committee planning meetings via Zoom in preparation for the Eucharistic Congress, *Renewing Our Eucharistic Spirituality*, I was finally walking out of the Cleveland International Airport to meet my Saint Paschal Baylon Associate volunteer chauffeur, Mary Jean Iacco. We had texted earlier with descriptions to make it easy to identify each other. During our 40-minute drive to the host hotel, we were instant friends. After all – we share the Eymardian Spirit – great love for the Eucharist, and *we are Family!*

As a committee member, I arrived in Highland Heights a few days early to help with pre-event tasks. My first mission was to find Susan Work, an 18-year veteran, as executive administrative assistant to our provincial superior and co-chair for this Eucharistic Congress. She is a superwoman, and I have always been impressed by her ability to keep all the plates spinning in the air and never let any hit the floor! It always feels like I'm "coming home" when I return to our Provincial Center; warm hugs, smiles, and great conversations greeted me as everyone welcomed me throughout my first day.

The emotional joy of meeting Greg DuFour of Corpus Christi Parish in Houston, Texas, and Alex Petrilak of Saint Paul Parish in Tampa, Florida, for the first time "in person" after working with them on this planning committee by Zoom meetings and emails was extremely special

for all of us. By late Thursday evening, all out-of-state committee members had safely arrived, and we gathered Friday morning at Saint Paschal's for morning prayer, the rosary, and Mass before a long day of final preparation.

We were invited to join the community for meals while working, a beautiful gift to

*Some participants at the Eucharistic Congress*



*Continued on next page...*

### *Inside This Issue*

- 4** *Congress Presentation Excerpts*
- 10** *Provincial's Perspective*
- 11** *Saint Ann Triduum*
- 12** *Pilgrimage*

*Reflection on the Eucharistic Congress..Continued from previous page*

gather around the tables with our Eymardian family members and catch up, especially spending time with those who have visited us in Florida over the years. It would be an understatement to say we were all very excited with anticipation to greet approximately one hundred attendees at our registration counter beginning at 5:30 P.M., August 4.

The Friday evening Opening Keynote was a beautiful message from Father Darren Maslen SSS of the Saints Peter and Paul Province of Great Britain. He used the image of a vessel to describe how we are “the vessel” of Eucharistic Spirituality. He explained that the Eucharist embraces the whole of our life and Spirituality is staying *Alive in Christ*.

Father Darren reminded us that Christianity was born around the domestic table, where vessels of many shapes and sizes are used. We all have the opportunity to become the vessel; we are called to be the Eucharistic vessel for others. As many know, I am always happy when others gather around the table in my home, sharing in a meal and fellowship. Since I was a toddler, faith was shared around the table – that’s where we learned our prayers as children.

As Saint Peter Julian Eymard often mentioned in his writings about the “Gift of Self,” we are called to bring ourselves back into relationship with each other — vessels of service, prayer, mission, and love. Taizé songs and scripture readings completed the opening night session, followed by a reception. Returning to my

hotel late Friday evening, my head and heart overflowed with the love we shared in the charism of Saint Peter Julian Eymard and our love for the Eucharist.

Saturday offered a packed day of excellent keynotes, breakout sessions, evening Mass with the Auxiliary Bishop, and a banquet. Sister Catherine Caron SSS, delivered the morning keynote address. In her opening remarks, she mentioned when she entered the convent after two years, she thought she would know everything! She is now in her 80s, and she is still learning. I thought to myself, isn’t that normal for most young people, and now here we are gathered together wanting more – still learning! Sister Catherine highlighted the four experiences of Peter Julian Eymard’s life that were principal graces: Communion, Vocation as a Priest, Gift of Self, and Eucharistic Faith. Our founder’s relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist was personal and social. Following his example, we are called during this second year of the Eucharistic Revival to continue our close relationship with Christ in the Eucharist and bring that fire to others.

Father Norman Pelletier SSS, was the early afternoon Keynote speaker. Anyone scheduled to speak after lunch will agree this is not the easiest time slot. Those of us who know Father Norman have always been entertained by his wit and storytelling.

He did not disappoint! “Eucharist for Our Time” was his topic, focusing on our role as partners in this National Eucharistic Revival. He quoted Pope Francis, “Keep us from becoming a museum Church, beautiful but mute, with much past and little future. There is no need to create another Church, but to create a different Church.” (*Pope Francis’s address, October 9, 2021*)

Father Norman reminded us that we all share in the royal priesthood of Christ because of our baptism and in the celebration of Mass – we are all celebrating together as it is “our” Mass. 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. He wrapped up with a closing thought: after all, it is called “Eucharistic Mystery” – it is a Mystery, we are not to understand everything about it, we are to accept it as it is – a MYSTERY!

Saturday evening Mass (Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord)

*A moment at the banquet*



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*Reflection on the Eucharistic Congress...Continued from previous page*

was celebrated with Most Reverend Bishop Michael Woost, Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland, as the celebrant. His homily was a beautiful message about our mountain top and who was *really transformed* on that mountain top with Christ. I took a full page of notes during his homily, then remembered that Father Lane welcomed all who were watching online in his opening remarks at the beginning of the Mass. Gathering around the Table of the Word and Table of the Eucharistic with all of us who had shared so much already in the short time together, along with the beautiful music and environment, was overwhelming. The Holy Spirit was truly present. The Mass is available to view at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XPDQ1mrYx8>



Our evening ended with a delicious banquet at a privately owned restaurant nearby. This was a wonderful evening to socialize with associates from all over the U.S., the priests, brothers and sisters, and many from other countries who came for this Eucharistic Congress.

A breakfast business meeting and small group sharing filled Sunday morning. Very Reverend John Thomas Lane, Provincial Superior, shared plans to combine the 12-13 Associate booklets into one single book over the next year and plans for national gatherings over the next few years. He announced a Rule of Life Retreat to be held August 5-9, 2024, at the Provincial Center to be presented by Father Bill Fickel SSS, Brother Michael Perez SSS, and Mary Muehle, Co-Director of the Center for Eucharistic Evangelization (CEE).

Our 2023 Eucharistic Congress closed with a procession within Saint Paschal Baylon church and the final keynote address, "Eucharist Guiding Us to Change," presented by Father Darren Maslen SSS. Father Darren opened with the description of the dove-tail joint and how Jesus knew the powerful strength of this type of joint since he was the son of a carpenter. It is a joint that doesn't need any glue, nails, or screws to hold it in place. The strength is in the design of the joint, locking in place. Saint Peter Eymard's life was dove-tailed with Jesus in love for those in this world; he lived in the spirit of the Gospel of John – Love. Father Darren's message included the God of our baptism is our life; we must love one another and be strong for one another just as the strength of the dove-tail joint. Then, Christ's love that we share will be enough to sustain us; we belong to each other because we live with Christ first. What a beautiful image and message to send us forth as we leave our Eymardian Family of old

*[LEFT] Father Maslen carrying the Blessed Sacrament in Procession;*

*[RIGHT] Bishop Woost delivering the homily*

and new friends until next time.

The "Gift of Self" that each presenter, volunteer, attendee, staff member, and committee member shared for this Eucharistic Congress will forever be etched in my heart and memory as a true gift from above. I'm confident everyone who experienced this weekend has returned to their parish with a fire in their soul to bring a greater appreciation for the Eucharist to others.

It was a true blessing to serve on this committee with Susan Work, Mary Muehle of Saint Paschal Baylon in Highland Heights, Ohio (co-chairs), Father John Thomas Lane SSS, Brother Gary LaVerdiere SSS, Laura Worhacz of Saint Vincent

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*Reflection on the Eucharistic Congress...  
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de Paul in Holiday, Florida, Gloria Jung of Saint Vincent de Paul in Holiday, Florida, Greg DuFour, Corpus Christi, Houston, Texas, and Alex Petrilak, Saint Paul Parish, Tampa, Florida. ✠

*Two moments during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament*



# Presentation Excerpts from the Eucharistic Congress

## “Renewing Eucharistic Spirituality”: Congress Reflection 1

By Father Darren Maslen SSS



*Father Darren Maslen SSS*

I want to begin this evening by being very clear about the term “eucharistic spirituality.” It’s important because it will be the expression that will bring the essence of our weekend together to its purpose. In any Christian sense, ‘spirituality’ is staying alive in Christ. It is possible to stay alive in Christ because of Jesus Christ. As St. Paul expressed, it is life or walking in the Spirit. However, when I speak of ‘eucharistic spirituality,’ it is staying alive in Christ because that’s the way Christ intended to share that life; it is what he intended our deep communion with God to be.

Now, you know as well as I do that anything vital in life needs to be renewed. For some, it is insurance policies renewed annually. For others, it is medical prescriptions as our aches and ills change, diminish, or advance. Every so often, the driving license needs to be renewed. Then it comes to the home and what is renewable when material things become tired and worn after bearing the brunt of years of family life and everyday living. That is why we are here—because it is vital, and we know of the vitality of the Lord who was already here waiting for us.

To me, this weekend is a very natural and beautiful event. All of us together -as one family cradled within Peter Julian Eymard’s living legacy- are doing what is required to continue to be the eucharistic vessels that the Lord has crafted us to be. And, as I hope to convince you this evening, we are indeed chosen eucharistic vessels stemming directly from what we experience day in, day out, week in, week out, from the sacred vessels of our eucharistic liturgies in our respective parishes and shrines. How we worship infuses who we can become. You don’t need to look very far to see this evidence.

...

It is widely recognized that during Christianity’s first century, the

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celebration of the Eucharist was a domestic event. As Father Edward Foley, one of my great Catholic Theological Union professors in Chicago, noted: *More than architecture, music, or books, an examination of vessels demonstrates the influence of domestic Judaism on first-century Christianity. In a very real sense, Christianity was born around the domestic table.*

If only the many terra cotta jugs or pottery cups discovered these days and exhibited in museums worldwide could speak – I wonder what they would say. Of course, such things are not mute – they do speak to us.

The last article I wrote for our beloved *Emmanuel* features online as part of the final issue- and I wrote under the title “*The Grammar of the Eucharist.*” I attempted to articulate how we implicitly believe that the Eucharist has its language because we claim it speaks to us. So, I developed a simple grammar structure about how that language is ordered. I didn’t include how eucharistic vessels can say something to us about the renewing power of the eucharist they contain and bring a sense of patterning to our most regular worship.

Indeed, the priest’s actions on these vessels transfixed my earliest memories and my first responses as a young person during the parish eucharist on Sunday mornings. The liturgy’s regularity meant that I knew what was coming next- and I’d wait for this simple drama to be played out in front of us, knowing that at no

other time would I feel like this until next Sunday. It wasn’t receiving the eucharist that spoke to me- it was witnessing actions with vessels reminiscent of Jesus Christ.

...

Indeed, when Peter Julian envisaged the Eucharist as the source for the renewal of both society and the Church – he recognized the world as a sacred vessel and the sacred vessels of the Eucharist as containing the world open to sanctification. All brokenness is restored through the cascade of love that the Eucharist is: *The Eucharist is the life of the people. The Eucharist gives them a center of life. All can come together without the barriers of race or language in order to celebrate the feast days of the Church. It gives them a law of life, that of charity, of which it is the source; thus, it forges between them a common bond, a Christian kinship.*

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## **“The Eucharist Guiding Us to Change” Presentation 2**

By Father Darren Maslen SSS

In a sense living on in Christ is giving breath into the lungs of our baptism. Just as the physical body is animated by breathing, human life becomes abundant life – ‘life in its fullness’ – when its breath is none other than the person of Christ – and to have faith that Christ’s breathing will be enough to sustain you in everything!

After all, our very essence began with water *and* the Holy Spirit- there is or can be no ambiguity when it comes to our claim that the God of our baptism is a model, concept, or inspiration for us- no- the God of our baptism is our life!

But we also must understand that living in Christ is more than just belief. John’s inspirational gospel points out that to live on; you must also love one another, walk as Jesus walked, be strong in the faith, and do the will of God. Here is what Saint Peter Julian is saying today in his teaching. The plantation is not automatic. No plantation can produce sap or fruit by their own effort. No one has ever produced a single grape in their life by their own skill. Only the vine can produce fruit. Only exposure to the radiance of sunshine and showers can produce the life-giving branch. Only Jesus can produce fruit in our lives.

How can we allow the Lord to do this? Live on in Him! Trust him to produce the life sap in you as you aspire to live for others, mirroring as Jesus lived. Continue to trust that as you allow the Word of God and the sacraments to dwell in you richly, Jesus will follow through on his promise to you, and you will produce much fruit. Then you will be breathing heaven on earth.

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*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.

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## 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,*

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*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

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*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.

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Photographs in this issue courtesy of:

Scott Gongos, Diana McGinty, Gloria Jung, File Photos



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*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...

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## 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.

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### *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.**



*Presentation Excerpts...Continued from previous page*

## **Bishop Michael Woost's Homily** (August 6, 2023 – Feast of the Transfiguration)

This is our mountain – this is where Jesus takes us day after day, Sunday after Sunday, and invites us to experience the fullness of his life, human and divine, not just as passive observers but as active participants in the living presence of our God, who is here and active in our midst. This is our mountain top. And here, the glory of the Lord is revealed to us in the Word that is proclaimed, in the sacrament that we celebrate and receive, in the community of faith gathered together in prayer and song, here the glory of the Lord is revealed to us.



*Bishop Michael Woost*

But I wonder when we come together, Sunday after Sunday, how many of us, like Peter, would like to say, well, let's set up some tents here and just stay. More often than not, we're looking at our watches and wondering when it's going to be over. And we fail to recognize the glory being revealed and the invitation that Christ is extending to us to encounter the fullness of his life. An encounter that can transfigure us that can change our lives. Where we walk out of here, different from the way we walked in.

First of all, when we come to the celebration, we should come with the expectation that we are going to encounter the presence of the living God, that this is our mountain top. That God is going to speak to our lives and touch our hearts. That God is going to reveal God's self to us. Somewhere in the midst of the celebration, through our prayer, through our song, through the community that is gathered together, in a moment of silence, in the Word that is proclaimed, in the Eucharist, that we receive. Somewhere in the midst of all of this, God is going to reveal God's self to us, individually and as a community, and effect, a transfiguration, a change. It may not be a dramatic change. It may be something as simple as experiencing a sense of peace. It may be as simple as bringing the anxieties that weigh upon our hearts and feeling consoled. It may be as simple as being renewed in hope and, in some way, walking out of the celebration, knowing that God knows what's going on in our lives and cares for us.

This is our mountain top. This is a unique place where God comes to meet us. And here it's not a

voice from heaven that says, "This is my beloved Son." Instead, it is Christ himself who speaks to us. *This is my Body. This is my Blood.* To which we respond, *Amen.* And divine life comes to dwell in us anew. The tents we set up are the tabernacles of our hearts as we receive Christ anew into our lives in each celebration of the Eucharist. And we don't have to stay here; instead, we are called to carry on. We have no need to fear the tabernacles in our hearts that we carry out into our lives because Christ is with us. All we need to do is to listen. Listen to him, listen for him, because this is our mountaintop, and Christ has invited us to encounter him anew, and, in that encounter, how can we not be changed? How can we not be transfigured?

So today, who is transfigured? We are. We are. Because Christ has come among us and invited us to share in the fullness of his love, listen to him then. And allow the grace of transfiguration to change hearts, minds, and lives because he's called us to come to this mountaintop and to encounter him. ✠

*Concelebration during the Eucharistic Congress*



# From My Perspective – Our Annual Appeal 2023

Blessings to you at this tremendous thanksgiving time in the USA – Thanksgiving Day in November, through the Advent Season, and Christmas Time. During this arc of over six weeks, we take the time to be grateful, acknowledge how God has blessed us, and pray during Advent with joyful hearts for the LORD to come again. We culminate our season of hope by remembering that great incarnation of Jesus Christ in our world at Bethlehem.

We have much to be thankful for and joyful about this past year! Because of your ongoing support and mission, we had a fantastic Saint Ann Triduum July 24-26 and a significant and spiritual Eucharistic Congress August 4-6. This issue of *Bread, Broken, and Shared* gives you a glimpse of the remarkable holy events, and you can sense the essence of all the hard work that went into these events from our valuable lay associates - partners like you in our Eucharistic mission. I am so grateful for the kindness and care that made these events successful.


As the presider of the Saint Ann Triduum here in the Diocese of Cleveland at our Saint Paschal Baylon parish here in Highland Heights (*next to our headquarters building*), our annual devotion drew more participants for the anointing of the sick and procession/exposition of the Blessed Sacrament since the pandemic. Scott Gongos, our mission advancement director for Saint Ann, will highlight more in this issue. Father Paul Bernier SSS did a fantastic job sharing his family's history with the devotion and its application today.

It had been several years since our last Eucharistic Congress – with the idea coming from our founder Saint Peter Julian Eymard when he promoted a “congress” that would be a time of catechesis, prayer, worship, and devotion to the Eucharist/Blessed Sacrament. At our quad annual meeting, our Provincial Chapter last summer 2022, the idea and return of a congress, in light of the national Eucharistic revival/renewal, challenged us to collaborate and bring this idea to birth in less than a year. A congress is a gathering of people - the Body of Christ. One hundred members of the Eymardian Family, representing many places across the United States, and our male religious in Sri Lanka, Uganda, India, Philippines, and Vietnam attended. Our main keynote was an SSS from Liverpool, England. And everything fell into such a great place during a beautiful 3-day event.

**This is our ANNUAL APPEAL where we ask for your financial support for the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. You have been generous – and I know your will continue to be generous. Blessings on you this Advent, Christmas and New Year 2024!”**



Thank you, and let's continue to pray for each other!

Very Reverend John Thomas Lane  
SSS  
Provincial Superior 

## Prayer for Vocations

Loving God and Father, your servant Saint Peter Julian Eymard was captivated by your Son's love revealed to us in the Eucharist and he greatly desired to manifest this love to his contemporaries.

He established a new form of religious life which is nourished by the Eucharist: celebrated, contemplated and enriched with ministries of all kinds.

Through his intercession, call forth many young people who will labor in your Church as priests, deacons, brothers or sisters.

Give us the grace to become like the bread of the Eucharist which is broken for the life of the world.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



# Saint Ann Shrine Triduum Annual Appeal

By Scott Gongos, Director of Mission Advancement

Saint Ann Shrine hosted the Triduum on July 24, 25, and 26 and it was a wonderful three days celebrating the Solemnity of Saint Ann and Saint Joachim. Father Paul Bernier, SSS preached all three days. His deep knowledge and wisdom surrounding our faith provided an amazing background for his preaching. Due to little being written of Saint Ann, Father Paul was able to pull in to context the great mother Saint Ann was to Our Blessed Mother along with being a wonderful role model for her grandson, Jesus! Saint Ann's role in the history of our faith is so vitally important!

Day One of the Triduum is the Children's Mass where our young people are able to receive a special blessing. Day Two is our Mass where we celebrate the Anointing of the Sick. This Mass has such special meaning to Saint Ann and our work at Saint Ann Shrine as she is a healer to those who are sick and suffering. So many of you share your joyous stories of being healed through your prayers to Saint Ann. I am humbled by your stories of faithful devotion to Saint Ann based on your own healing! Thank you for sharing them with me and feel free to continue to share your amazing stories with me at 440-449-2700 or [sgongos@blessedsacrament.com](mailto:sgongos@blessedsacrament.com). The third day is the actual feast Mass. We had quite the rain and lightning storm prior to and during Mass this year. The lightning made for an interesting backdrop through the windows of the church. But the cloudy sky made for a wonderful framework during the candlelight procession. The lit candles looked magnificent as the congregation walked through the church. It looked so amazing!

We'd love to have you join us at Saint Ann Shrine for daily Mass Monday through Friday at 11:30am. I hope you are able to experience the serenity of Mass at the Shrine! Please call ahead to let me know that you'll be joining us so I may introduce myself! We also welcome your group to join us for Mass!

On behalf of the staff at Saint Ann Shrine, we thank you for your sincere generosity while supporting the Shrine! We do thank you for all you continue to do to support the mission of Saint Ann Shrine and the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament! Please let us know if there's anything you'd like us to keep in prayer. We look forward to your continued prayers and support! Wishing you a very Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year! ❖



[TOP] Shrine set up in Saint Paschal Baylon Church for the Triduum;

[CENTER] Father Paul Bernier SSS preaching during the Triduum;

[BOTTOM] Fathers John Thomas Lane SSS and Roger Bourgeois SSS celebrating during this year's Triduum





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