



SSS Grapevine

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Notes and Photos of the 53rd International Eucharistic Congress in Quito, Ecuador

Highlights and Photos by Father John Thomas Lane SSS from the International Eucharistic Congress in Quito, Ecuador

For the first time, the Sacramentinos Americas Conference (*members from the three provinces of USA - Argentina/Brazil/Chile - Colombia/Peru*) gathered during the 53rd International Eucharistic Congress. The provincials, Father Carlos Sierra Rodriguez SSS (*Colombia*), Father Marcelo Silva SSS (*Brazil*), Father John Thomas Lane SSS (*USA*) and the other delegates from these provinces had a dream at the November 2023 General Chapter in Vietnam: as part of the International Eucharistic Congress (IEC), gather the Eymardian Family and have a Life in the Eucharist Retreat (LITE) for all who can attend. This would be led by the USA Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing Office (CEE) and its Co-director Mona Grigsby-Suarez, Associates, and other SSS from the Sacramentinos Americas Conference (SAC) such as Fathers Elibien Joseph SSS (*Peru*) and Jaime Ario Rodriguez Reyes, SSS (*Houston/USA - Colombia*). General Consultor and former delegate to the General Chapter in Vietnam, Father Francisco Junior Marquez SSS (*Brazil*), would support and assist in organizing the leg work with Father Marcelo for Quito, finding a place to live during the IEC. And so the dream became a reality this past week during the IEC with members from the USA, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Colombia participating - lay and vowed members. Plus, we were excited that former General Superior Father Fiorenzo Salvi SSS (*Italy*) and Father

Tonny Akena SSS (Uganda) were able to join us as well. Another honored guest, Bishop Jorge Enrique Izaguirre Rafael, CSC, from Peru, the bishop where we have a parish, also attended at the invitation of Father Elibien.

Saturday, September 14, we began the LITE day with a special Mass in honor of our Saint Peter Julian Eymard. Father Elibien preached to open the retreat. Father Francisco presided with special concelebrant Father Tonny, who assisted.



SAC LITE Participants after the Casa de Espiritualidad Center Mass, Quito, Ecuador Chapel. Mona introduced the history of the LITE retreat. First, it was a seminar produced by former SSS Bob Rousseau (USA). He brought the seminar, which morphed into a retreat experience in its 35-year history, to the countries of the USA, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, the Philippines, Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, Spain, and Italy. Of the two programs, we participated in the sacramental elements of this LITE retreat. Rather than all five pieces, due to time restrictions, we focused on Nourishment, Transformation, and Abiding Presence. *(The other two elements are Reconciliation and Mission.)*



Mona brought all the materials and updated two participation pieces, using paper plates to have folks describe how the Eucharist nourishes them; the puzzle for transformation stayed the same aid but also added four hearts for each person to have, using them as an activity for the 4-ends of the sacrifice and our prayer time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Participants wrote a prayer on each heart describing adoration, forgiveness, thanksgiving, and petition and ended the day by sharing these prayers. Fathers Elibien, Jaime, and Francisco also gave witnesses and talks.

Honored guest Bishop **Jorge Enrique Izaguirre Rafael CSC**, currently the Bishop Prelate of the Prelature of Chuquibamba, Peru, joined us during lunch. The Institute of Holy Spirit sisters and lay women serve great meals in our retreat center dining room.



Some of the participation aids for the LITE Retreat



This was our special booklet for our time together and a great reminder of who we are in the Eymardian Family. The three languages of the SAC are English, Spanish, and Portuguese. This was our booklet for the Life in the Eucharist retreat day, which included the votive Mass of Saint Peter Julian Eymard and the special Thursday night arts, poetry, and culture night.

On the way to the evening Mass and procession, we were blessed by a police escort. We had been running late from the retreat. On top of that, we were dropped off at the end of the procession at the Basilica of the National Vow (*to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*). The archbishop of Quito was also running late and just happened to come out of the Basilica. He got into his detail/police escort van, and we, walking by, were invited to go into an empty van that was supposed to be for a youth group that did not show up. We were all driven at high speed to the back of the Cathedral property, where we got an impromptu tour of this historic cathedral church and courtyards.





We were inside the Cathedral, looking into the plaza for the Mass and Eucharistic procession with the Blessed Sacrament that followed.

Talk about being in the right place at the right time throughout this day! We were in the right place for the procession with the Blessed Sacrament that weaved through the streets

of the old city of Quito. The streets were lined with people singing, rose petals tossed to honor the Risen Lord, flags, and different parish groups gathering and deeply engaged. The procession lasted 90 minutes.



Here are some of the 53 flags of the countries represented at the IEC. Yet, they also had a special flag for, as they kept announcing throughout the Congress, the “country of Puerto Rico.”



One of those pause moments within the procession was when we were packed like sardines but didn't mind because of the incredible singing of the people with the Eucharistic songs that they knew, especially one dedicated to Our Lady of Panecillo. *(This is the name of the hill where the 53-year-old statue of Mary adorns. In the picture, Mona, Fathers Francisco Junior de Marquez, SSS (General Consultor), and Father Elissandro Santana SSS (Brazil)*



After the procession, our group was next to the Basilica, lit with special LED lighting.



Before the Congress Closing Mass, the altar servers from Quito line up with bells to ring during the Mass. Fun fact: equal participation of girls and boys.



The Australian delegation went wild and shot off confetti when it is announced that Sydney will host the next International Eucharistic Congress in 2028. This will be 100 years since the first time they hosted the conference. They shared old footage of that Congress on the big screen in a wonderful welcome - saying, "See You in Sydney!"



We ran into the Archbishop of Sydney, Dominican Anthony Fisher, as we were leaving the Bicentennial Park Grounds (*former airport*). We Sacramentinos extended a special greeting because of our shrine in the Haymarket area of Sydney, Saint Peter Julian Eymard. The archbishop commented, "I know it well and will call your community for help."

After the Mass, the thousands of volunteers lined the parking lot to applaud our visit, and we, in turn, clapped back and said, “Muchisimas Gracias, Quito! Felicidades!”

