



SSS Grapevine

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Houston Associates Join for a Retreat Day Followed by Parish Mission



Our Houston Associates gathered at Corpus Christi Catholic Church on Saturday, March 22, for an English-speaking and Spanish-speaking retreat day. We were together to start the day in prayer, for lunch, and for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament using the Novena of Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

Mona Grigsby-Suarez (*Co-Director of the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing – CEE*) and Greg

On March 22, 2025 at Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Houston, Texas, the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking Associates enjoyed a retreat day. The Blessed Sacrament Community (SSS) has served this Astrodome area of Houston since August 1, 1987.

The pastor, Father Paulraj Gnanasekar SSS (*Father Sekar for short*) and Father Jaime Ario Rodriquez Reyes SSS welcomed, in English and Spanish respectively, Associates to the day, introducing Father John Thomas Lane SSS (*Provincial*),

Dufour (*Province Associates Council Chair and Local Council Chair*). They were the organizers and presenters for the day. Father Jaime also presented during the day. We prayed the 125th Anniversary Jubilee Prayer in English and Spanish and sang *Pan de Vida* before they preceded into our language groups for the morning sessions.



For the English-speaking group (29 attended), Father Lane gave an icebreaker and brief history of the *Project of Life* and its return to the title Saint Peter Julian Eymard gave the document. He encouraged members to think about what drew them to Saint Eymard, drew them to be associates, and what number of the *Project of Life* spoke to them the most. Then, Associates went into groups of three to focus on "how to live the Project of Life" as a community through prayer, worship, and service. Veteran Associates, newer Associates, and candidates in formation to be in the Aggregation formed small groups and reflected upon:

- How might we grow in community and solidarity? As an individual, a lay aggregation, and a Blessed Sacrament parish?
- How might we increase prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament? As an individual, a lay aggregation, and a Blessed Sacrament parish?
- How might we work toward justice and peace? (*This was one of many different questions on service, for each group had a different question*).



Three of the leaders for the day- Mona Grigsby-Suarez, Greg Dufour and Blanca Gonzalez

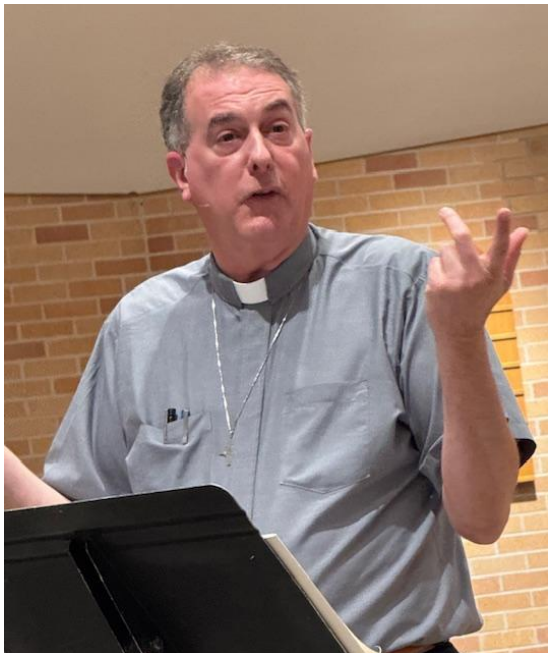
While the English-speaking group focused on these questions and reflections, the Spanish-speaking group (46 members) had a session on the history and life of Saint Peter Julian Eymard and the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament with Father Jaime and Mona.

We enjoyed lunch together and spent the afternoon developing a one-year and up to five-year action plan with the ideas and dreams of each of the Associates. Finally, the group joined the bi-lingual Novena of Saint Peter Julian Eymard. One of the thoughts that Father Lane

stated at the beginning of the day was: "It is so wonderful to have so many folks here from one parish, and now let's spread our Eucharistic charism and Eymard to others around this great big city of Houston." Mona reflected on the goal for the day: to fortify ourselves as Blessed Sacrament Associates. "Together, we prayed, sang, planned, nourished ourselves, and continued our journey. We grew as a community to enrich our prayer and worship efforts, and to be a gift of service to others." The action plans were given to the local council so that they may implement the ideas and build the Associates of Houston.



Mini-choir led us in song, even during lunch in the Prefontaine Hall. Notice the special 125th-anniversary tapestry banner shared in all of our SSS parishes across the country.



Father John Thomas Lane SSS during the Parish Mission

"These seasons highlight our liturgical life and our way of living Christ's Paschal Mystery and our own Paschal Mystery." A highlight during Lent in each parish is the annual "Scrutinies,"

Over the weekend Masses and Monday and Wednesday nights, March 22 – 26, Father Lane preached the parish mission on "The Amazing Days and Season." Asked by Father Sekar to deepen the parish's spiritual on Lent, the Sacred Triduum, and Easter, he highlighted key elements in our rituals that are rich in significance in history, theology, and spirituality. With the Jeanne Cotter song, "This is a Day of New Beginnings," sung during the homily as the mission's theme song, he highlighted the purpose, the reason to plan, think, and meditate on Lent, the Sacred Triduum, and Easter Time.



Participants listen attentively to the Mission presentations



The leaders of the retreat experience: Father John Thomas Lane SSS, Greg Dufour, Mona Grigsby-Suarez, Father Jaime Ario Rodriguez Reyes SSS

part of the ritual to become Catholic using the *Order for Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA). Several children and adults are becoming Catholic Christians at Corpus Christi this year and Father Sekar reminded the community of their role in initiating the "Elect of God."

Each night of the mission, Father Lane highlighted the three separate dates of the Sacred Triduum, the most important liturgical season of the year. At the invitation of Father Sekar, Father Lane mentioned that pastors are to give time to reflect, prepare, and study these most holy days for their parishioners. Father Lane create a retreat to step back and realize their importance. He highlighted the history, theology, and reasons for these liturgical rites. Talks were separated by songs that emphasized the different liturgies of the Sacred



Father Sekar SSS, celebrated the first scrutiny of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA) for those becoming Catholic Christians at Corpus Christi Church in Houston

Triduum. All left with a deeper appreciation of these "amazing days," and look forward to celebrating them anew on the evenings of April 17-19 and welcoming new Catholic Christians into their faith community.