

St Francis' Newsletter

Blessed Sacrament Congregation

August 2013



MASS TIMES

Sunday

6:00pm Saturday
7:00am, 8:00am,
9:00am, 10:00am
11:00am
(Choral),
12:30pm, 1:30pm,
4:30pm, 6:00pm

Monday- Thursday

7:30am, 8:00am,
11:00am,
12:05pm, 1:05pm,
5:30pm

Friday

7:30am, 8:00am,
11:00am,
12:00pm, 1:05pm,
5:30pm

Saturday

8:00am, 11:00am,
12:05pm

Public Holidays

8:00am, 11:00am,
12:05pm, 5:30pm

RECONCILIATION

Tuesday-Thursday

11:30am - 2:00pm
3:30pm - 5:30pm

Friday

7:30am - 8:30am
11:30am - 2:00pm
3:30pm - 5:30pm

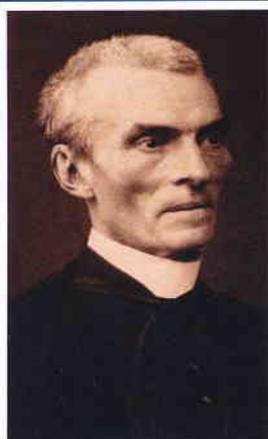
Saturday

10:30am - 12:30pm
3:30pm - 5:30pm

No Confessions on
Sundays, Mondays and
Public Holidays

A priest is usually
available for
consultation Tuesday
to Friday 9:00am to
5:00pm at the
Pastoral Centre
except on Holy Days
and Public Holidays.

The Feminine in the Life of Father Eymard



There are three major feminine influences in the life of Father Eymard. His relationship with his mother, his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and his relationships with the many women he encountered during his years of priestly ministry.

Family Background

After the loss of his first wife, Eymard's father Julien married Marie-Madeline Pelorce. By the time Peter Julian was born, only two of the five children from this first marriage, Antoine and Marianne, were still alive, and the family had adopted a young girl, Annette Bernard. She was ten years older than Peter Julian, and as Fr Donald Cave SSS has noted, '... this constant feminine influence was to be of great importance in the after life of the child, since it is certain that from this contact at close quarters with the spiritual psychology of women, he should derive insights which would serve him later as a priest and make him a highly esteemed spiritual director, above all of women. A director in fact whose charism for this work has been likened to that of St Francis de Sales.' (Donald Cave SSS; *Eymard, the years 1845-1851*; Rome, 1969 [English edition, 1989])

Marian Spirituality

Peter Julian's love of Mary, the mother of the Lord is well documented. To discern his call to the priesthood in the face of his father's opposition, he undertook the three-day return journey in the middle of winter to the shrine of Our Lady of Laus, trudging barefoot through the mountainous, snowy terrain.

His first attempt to prepare for the priesthood was to join a new Marian Congregation, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. But his health failed him and he had to leave. For his first Mass, he chose a Marian shrine under the care of the Oblates, Notre Dame de l'Osier.

After a few short years in parish ministry, he sought to enter religious life again. The condition his bishop set for letting him go was that he bring the whole parish back to their Easter Communion. When Eymard fulfilled the condition, the bishop gave him leave to the Society of Mary, another newly founded Marian order.

After the apparitions of Mary in the spectacular mountain scenery at La Salette in 1846, the place soon became one of his favourite pilgrimage sites. The genius of Eymard's ability to inspire and orient the spiritual lives of women is best revealed in the way he brought about the renewal of the Third Order of Mary. This was a secular form of living the Marian spirituality of the Society of Mary. Beginning with just fourteen adherents, Fr Eymard was able to expand it, in a mere five years, to a point where it counted some 300 members and included both clerics and laymen; among them was the Curé of Ars, St Jean-Marie Vianney.



Church and Shrine of Notre-Dame du Laus

Ministerial Relationships with Women

Much sought after as a spiritual director, Fr Eymard had numerous women directees. A good number of them made highly significant contributions to the spiritual and ecclesial renewal of the Church in France. They included Mlle Pauline Jaricot, founder of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Mother Marguerite Guillot, the first superior of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, Mlle Emilie-Marie Tamisier, initiator of the Eucharistic Congress movement and Mlle Virginie Danion, founder of perpetual adoration in dioceses.

One of the most outstanding of these women was Madame Nathalie Jordan, wife of a Lyons judge,

The Feminine in the Life of Father Eymard (cont.)

who is credited with preserving the true spiritual legacy of Fr Eymard after his death. Drawing upon her considerable correspondence with Fr Eymard she was instrumental in helping the former parish priest of Saint Romans, the Abbé Alexandre Seymat, who was a friend and an admirer of Eymard, to draw up the first account of Eymard's spirituality.

Some of those receiving letters of direction lived far from France, such as Mlle Edmée Brenier de Montmorand, who resided in Shanghai, China.



Despite his closeness to these women, Eymard's manner in his correspondence was always very correct and formal; never did he use the first name of his directees, but only the polite forms of address – Mère, Soeur, Mme or Mlle.

A number of his correspondents were responsible for important pastoral initiatives. His links with Mother Anne de

Meeus in Brussels, for example, resulted in the first Blessed Sacrament foundation outside of France in Belgium. Another of his former directees, Mlle Marie Hébert de la Rousselière, invited the Congregation in 1890 to Montreal in Canada.

The largest collection of letters from Fr Eymard was the 395 missives to Sr Marguerite Guillot. She was the first superior of the women's branch of the order. Another correspondent, Mlle Zénaïde Blanc de Bonnet, the sister of the famous philosopher, Blanc de Bonnet, acted as Fr Eymard's secretary when he stayed at St Bonnet to write the first Constitutions of the order.

It is interesting to note that three of the four miracles formally approved by the Church in the process leading to Eymard's beatification and canonization involved women: Mme Lucinda Cifuentes, Santiago, Chile, 1916; Mlle Renée Foucherou, Angers, France, 1919; and Mrs Mariadora Bartels, Melbourne, Australia, 1949.

Integration of the Feminine

In Fr Eymard's culture it was commonplace and acceptable for men to shed tears. Anglo-Saxon culture was not the same; people used to say that boys don't cry. Much has changed since then. We have seen images of Australian Prime Ministers and champion footballers in tears. The church has a long history of appreciation for 'the gift of tears'. Jesus himself wept over Jerusalem's resistance to God's gift – and this was recorded in the shortest sentence in the bible. Mourning and weeping are listed among the Beatitudes; the gift of tears has always been esteemed in the Church and considered to be a sign of spiritual sensitivity in the face of evil.

Father Eymard related so well to women and was no stranger to tears. Indeed he refers to a gift of tears a number of times in his writings. The reason is apparent in our own struggles to live lives that integrate body and spirit, faith and reason, the rational and emotional and the masculine and the feminine – inescapably part of our heritage and giftedness.

Just as genetically there can be no human life without the union of the masculine and feminine cells, so too in the life of the spirit, there must be the union of receiving and giving of God's revelation and gifts.

The Roman Missal contains a beautiful prayer: *Almighty and most gentle God, who brought forth from the rock a fountain of living water for your thirsty people, bring forth we pray, from the hardness of our heart, tears of sorrow, that we may lament our sins and merit forgiveness from your mercy.*

Fr Jo Dirks SSS Community Leader



View of rue de Breuil, La Mure, where St Peter Julian Eymard was born- and where he died. Today the Blessed Sacrament Congregation owns the house where he lived, at number 67.



YOUNG VINNIES AND SOUP VANS

Some of the Young Vinnies from the St Francis' Conference spend every Wednesday evening serving food to the needy from a Vinnies Soup Van. Together with Young Vinnies from other areas, they work from 5:30pm to 10:30pm dispensing hot soup and other food in the North Melbourne area. These dedicated young adults are also involved in Teen Day Out, a program which takes under-privileged teenagers on outings to places as widely different as football games, Werribee Zoo and the Melbourne Aquarium. They also help to organize an annual camp.

In addition, some make home visitations to people who call the Vinnies' Hot Line for help. If you would like to join this valuable work, or know a young adult who might, please leave contact details at Reception in the Pastoral Centre.