

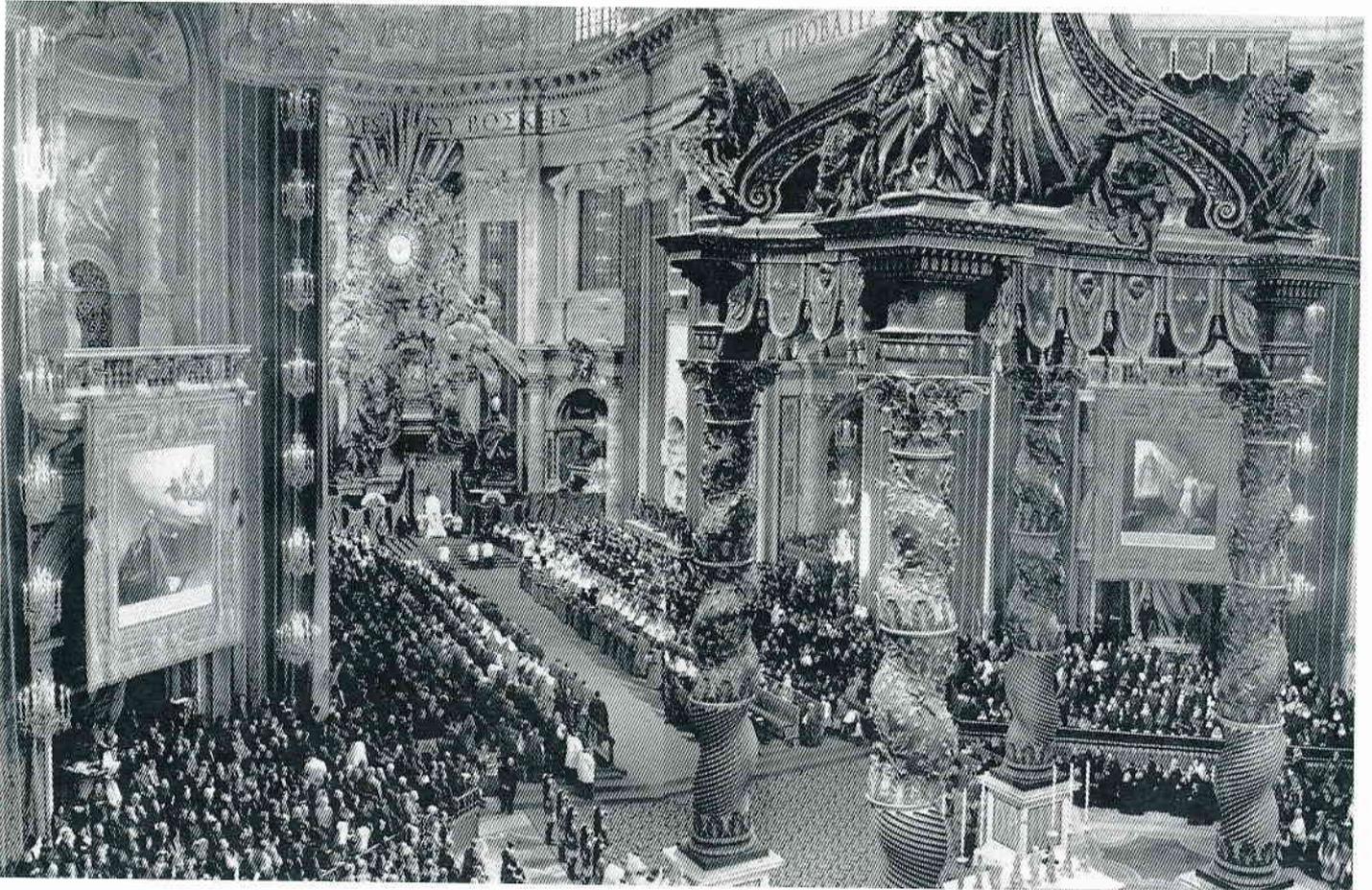


The Vineyard

Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament – Australia – Province of Holy Spirit

Special Edition – December 2012

MEMORIES OF THE CANONIZATION



St Peter's Basilica on the occasion of St Peter Julian's canonization.

James Dekker, S.S.S.



At the time of the canonization of St Peter Julian I lived at the international seminary next to the General House in the Via Nomentana, Rome. The Australian students who were with me were Fr Ken McDonald and Vincent Phelan. On the day of the canonization we travelled to St Peter's by Carolina, the bus that normally would take us to the universities. We were all dressed in black cassocks and I think we wore a white surplice.

After we arrived at St Peter's Square, I spent some time looking at the large banners hanging on the facade with images of the three persons to be canonized. Other Australians who were present at the Basilica were Fr Len McKenna, Fr John Flynn, Fr Tom Carra, Br Peter Julian Kelleher and Br Francis Murphy.

Since the canonization took place one day after the closing of the first session of the second Vatican Council, the Basilica was filled for the full length with seats for the Cardinals and Bishops, most of whom were present for the three-hour ceremony.

The SSS group was guided right up to the front and were given seats at the right side of the Basilica, a prime post with a full view of all the ceremonies. I remember I felt very privileged and grateful for being allowed to be present at this historical event in the life of the Congregation.

After fifty years my mind is blank of all the ceremonies that took place. One minor detail still sticks in my mind. At one stage one of the dignitaries read out a large discourse in Latin giving all the reasons why Peter Julian should be canonized. As I was watching Pope John XXIII, who was seated by himself in the centre, I noticed that from time to time he made some shuffling movements of his feet. I remember that I smiled and thought I wonder whether he feels a bit bored. After the discourse he stood up, accompanied by some others, and proclaimed Peter Julian Eymard a saint. That is all I can remember at the moment. It was certainly a happy, joyful day.



Pope John XXIII at the papal throne, during the canonization of St Peter Julian

William Bracken, S.S.S.



I remember Archbishop Simonds giving the speech and telling the priests of his experiences during the years of enquiry. How he attended every session as Vice President and Archbishop Mannix was president, and attending the first and last sessions. They had those for the miracle led by Monsignor Hannon, PP of Sth Yarra and those against the miracle led by Dean Murray PP of Elwood. One of the heart specialists called before the commission was a non-Catholic who happened to do his training at the Blue Nuns' hospital at Lewisham. He was practising in Broken Hill and would not come down. He changed his mind, saying he had to come to Melbourne on business. When he came out of the commission after two hours of having to defend his diagnosis, he said he believed in miracles if they went so thoroughly into the whys and wherefores in the enquiry. One book I had to deliver to Dean Murray was three inches thick on the procedures they had to go through for the enquiry. Thank you.

Ed Wood, S.S.S.



Memories may be likened to the waves that roll up the seashore. At times they rush in with flurry and fury, at other times there are only ripples. Memories of the time of Eymard's canonization are only ripples on the shores of time. There was a quiet joy that our Founder had been acclaimed a saint, accompanied with the feeling of gratitude that one of the miracles needed for this event came from Melbourne, Australia.