



The Vineyard

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

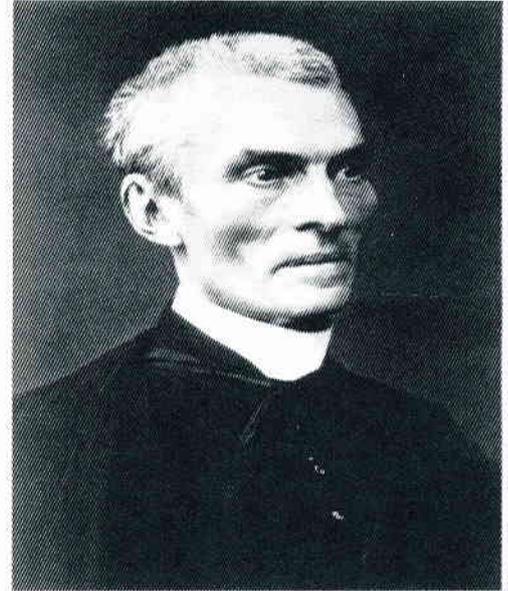
July 2008

EDITORIAL

This is a special edition of *The Vineyard* in honour of the feast of St Peter Julian Eymard. John Kingston leads the way with a captivating article entitled "Catching up with an Old Friend." Even though John is no longer with us in community, he obviously has affection for this "intense and saintly man" who had a profound impact on his life.

St Peter Julian has had a similar impact on all of us. For many of us he was *Blessed* Peter Julian when we entered the Congregation and we felt enormous pride in the fact that one of the miracles required for his canonization happened to be an Australian one. Now he is listed on the universal calendar and we add his name regularly to the III Eucharistic Prayer. Wherever we go in the world to visit one of our religious houses, it is a comfort to find his portrait prominently displayed and statues of him in our churches. This is especially true, I find, in places where we don't speak the language. Eymard is there! We are at home!

Yet a pertinent remark is made by Damien Cash in his history of the Congregation in Australia. Dealing with *Unity*, "the aptly-named students' magazine which originated in 1959," he writes:



By 1964, *Unity* content revealed a strong emphasis on the wider church and subjects like English in the mass, the Christian assembly, the laity, modernism, art and liturgy, renewal of Christian values, Catholic social principles and the eucharist. It was also increasingly apparent in the publication that the Congregation's founder was 'missing'. Eymard was news in *Unity* in the inaugural edition and around the time of his canonization in 1962-63. With minor exceptions, he was largely ignored by successive editors and contributors to *Unity* between 1964 and 1967, despite articles on the eucharist being published in each of these four years.¹

1964 – 1967 were difficult years. John XXIII had opened up the windows of the church to let in the fresh air of "aggiornamento" but with it came the winds of discontent as well. Could it be that in that period when we bitterly debated the value of having mass with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament we were just a little ashamed of a Founder who advocated perpetual adoration so strongly? In these years we were on the cusp of radical changes to our *Constitutions*. Don Cave's English edition of *Eymard: The Years 1845-1851* would not be published until 1969. His study of the writings of the Founder would not be published until 1999. In the meantime we relied on translations of writings (The Series) which had never been subjected to historical criticism and on biographies which tended to emphasize Eymard's piety. From the first moment we entered the novitiate we were reminded of the Founder's "gift of self" which we were supposed to emulate but many would have been hard pressed to put into words what that meant.

It is perhaps time for us to do some serious reflection on St Peter Julian and this internal magazine could well be the venue for a conversation between us. If you have something to say; if you want to tell us what you felt when you visited the Founder's birthplace; if you have some insights into his relevance for the 21st century; send what you have to say to me (pnegri@blessedsacrament.com.au) and I will see that it is published.

With best wishes for the feast of St Peter Julian,

Fraternally,
Pat Negri, SSS

¹ Damien Cash, *The Road to Emmaus: A History of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in Australia*, (Published by The Blessed Sacrament Congregation in association with David Lovell Publishing, 2007) pp. 285-286.