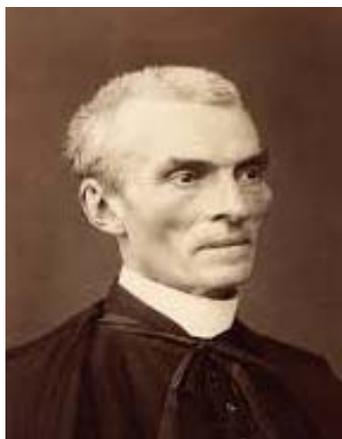


St Peter Julian's Newsletter

May 2017

Volume 10 Issue 5

THE SEED OF RESURRECTION



St Peter Julian Eymard

In the middle of June 1866 a tired man, burdened by trials and ill health, set out from a turbulent Paris in search of a rural retreat. He was disappointed to find that the property he had seen advertised was nothing but a ruin. Disheartened, and with a long wait for the train back to Paris, he called in at the local parish. The priest there persuaded him to look at another place nearby; it was astonishingly ideal.

The estate was large, with an orchard, a vegetable garden, two ponds, groves of trees, and beautiful views over fields and the river valley. The main building was in good repair and promised to house up to twenty-five people; it was complemented by an adjoining house and some sheds. No wonder he called the discovery a "stroke of Providence" in a letter written shortly after the purchase was made.

The man, of course, was Peter Julian Eymard. The estate he was shown was in Saint-Maurice-sous-Montcouronne, a small settlement about 45 kilometres south of Paris and not far from a railway station. Fr Eymard's plan was to make the place a novitiate for the growing institute he had founded ten years before in Paris, the Blessed Sacrament Congregation. He also intended it to be a house of prayer.

It was to this peaceful place that an exhausted Fr Eymard returned to make a retreat in April 1868. Thirteen weeks later he was dead. And no wonder. In the months before and after his retreat he not only suffered a long bout of flu, and later on a stroke, but resolutely fulfilled commitments for an almost non-stop series of retreats and preaching engagements. When he left Paris for La Mure on 17 July, worn out from his labours, he had only two weeks to live.

His own last retreat took place from the end of April to the beginning of May, during the season of Easter. Understandably, Fr Eymard reflected deeply on themes of death and life. On the second day he lists a series of "deaths" he had experienced in his struggle to found his eucharistic community: the death of his departure from the Society of Mary in which he had played such a prominent role for seventeen years; the death of his agonising wait for approval from the Archbishop of Paris; the death of being abandoned by his early companions; death from the failure of his dream to gain custody of the Cenacle in Jerusalem; death from losing the respect of bishops and his own religious. But this litany of pain begins and ends on a happier note.

It begins with the remembrance of his "yes" to God and God's "yes" to him:

How gladly I said *yes* to everything after that wondrous Mass! And God accepted everything, brought everything to a successful end. So much serenity, which lasted so many years and ever on the increase through the Eucharist, tells me God's *yes*.

And it ends with this affirmation: "And yet life follows death; it is the life of the Society and mine."



Mass Times

Saturday Vigil:

5.30pm

Sunday:

9.30, 11.00am (Chinese),
12.30, 3.30, 5.00pm (Korean)

1st Sunday:

1.30pm (Filipino)

1st & 3rd Saturday:

2.15pm (Indonesian)

Monday to Friday:

7.30am, 12.10, 5.30pm

Saturday:

12.10pm & Vigil at 5.30pm

Public Holidays:

12.10pm



Blessed Sacrament Congregation

St Peter Julian's
641 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Postal Address:
PO Box K334,
Haymarket NSW 1240

Phone: (02) 9270 6900
Fax: (02) 9270 6933

Email:
haymarket@blessedsacrament.com.au

Websites:
www.stpeterjulianhaymarket.org.au
www.blessedsacrament.com.au

Download monthly newsletter at:
www.stpeterjulianhaymarket.org.au

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"He (Fr Eymard) came to see that the reception of Holy Communion made the heart of the believer a Cenacle, a dwelling place which allowed Christ to become incarnate in us in a way that was somehow similar to his taking flesh in Mary."

Peter Julian Eymard died to earthly life and rose to eternal life just three months later. The Society he founded lives on still. But for one hundred years after his death the life and mission of the Society was shaped not so much by his prophetic intuitions as by what he once called the "old ideas" of his early companion and successor, Fr Raymond de Cuers (ironically buried at Saint Maurice), and de Cuers' ally Fr Albert Tesnière. It has only been in the past fifty years that fresh scholarship has led to the recovery of Fr Eymard's true charism.

The month of May offers a telling insight into the difference. Fr Eymard's retreat at the novitiate extended into the first days of May, traditionally a month devoted to Mary. According to Fr Tesnière, Fr Eymard took advantage of this to proclaim Mary as "Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament." But this title never appears in any of Eymard's drafts of the rule for his community. Instead, in a letter written soon after the approval of his new institute in 1856, he used the title "Our Lady of the Cenacle."

"... we can imagine ourselves doing through the weeks of Easter: praying earnestly together with Mary for the coming of the Kingdom, welcoming the gift of the Lord's body and blood in Holy Communion, and allowing the Holy Spirit to sow in us the seeds of resurrection."

The truth is that as the years passed Fr Eymard focussed more and more on the inner dynamic of Holy Communion and less and less on the outward cult of the Blessed Sacrament. He came to see that the reception of Holy Communion made the heart of the believer a Cenacle, a dwelling place which allowed Christ to become incarnate in us in a way that was somehow similar to his taking flesh in Mary. This is how he expressed this key insight the year before he died:

What happened in Mary at the Incarnation also happens to us in holy communion. To make us other Christs, the Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus in a single body. . . The Holy Spirit forms the Lord Jesus in our body by placing in us an earnest of the resurrection which will make us like the risen Christ. (14 June 1867)

This positive emphasis on Holy Communion, resurrection and the work of

the Holy Spirit is remarkable at a time when spirituality focused on Christ's suffering and death and on reparation for sin. Sadly Eymard's timely insight was absent from the Constitutions that were formalised after his death and finally approved by Pope Leo XIII in 1895. But there is a hint of it in the Congregation's post-Vatican II Rule of Life.



The number dedicated to Mary (#14) paints a thoroughly biblical portrait of her. She is called the "mother of Jesus" and, on the basis of the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55), the "voice of the poor and the lowly." In the same vein she is acclaimed as "the poor one of Yahweh and the servant of the Lord" (Luke 1:38). She, of all Jesus' followers, "welcomed the Word of God into her heart and put it into practice" (Luke 8:21).

Eymard's intuition is hinted at in this sentence: "She shared her life and prayer with the disciples actively working with them for the coming of the Kingdom." The reference here is to Luke's description of Jesus' followers after his resurrection and ascension: "All these [apostles] were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers" (Acts 1:14). They did this in "the room upstairs," traditionally identified as the upper room, or Cenacle, where the Last Supper took place.

This is what we can imagine ourselves doing through the weeks of Easter:

praying earnestly together with Mary for the coming of the Kingdom, welcoming the gift of the Lord's body and blood in Holy Communion, and allowing the Holy Spirit to sow in us the seeds of resurrection. All these themes come together on May 13, the anniversary of the founding of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in 1856 and the feast of Our Lady of the Cenacle (though still under the old title of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament). On this day that always falls within the Easter season, we can happily say that Mary is like a glorious moon reflecting the sun that is Christ crucified and risen.



MONTHLY MASSES & EVENTS

Indonesian Mass, 1st & 3rd Saturdays at **2.15pm** (**6 & 20 May**). James Christian 0416 637 236.

Cantonese Mass, every Sunday at **11.00am**. Simon Liu 0411 377 618.

Korean Mass, every Sunday at **5.00pm**. Lucian Jin Young Noh 0451 465 857.

Filipino Mass, 1st Sunday at **1.30pm** (**7 May**). Juliet Byrne 0437 045 945.

Holy Trinity Prayer Community, Eucharistic Adoration **2nd & 4th Saturdays (13 & 27 May)** at **3.00pm**. Jence Oesman 0414 506 770.

Mass of Anointing, Every 1st Saturday (**Feb-Dec**) at **12.10pm (6 May)**.

Associates of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, 2nd Saturday at **12.10pm (13 May)**. Mass followed by meeting. Fr Marcellus Glynn SSS (02) 9211 4100 or (02) 9270 6900.

Life in the Eucharist (LITE), Every 4th Saturday in Hall at **2.15pm**. Next meeting **27 May**. (Please note there is no April meeting.)

St Peter Julian's Altar Auxiliary. The **12.10pm Thursday** Eucharist is offered for members of the St Peter Julian's Altar Auxiliary. (For information on becoming a member please speak to the Receptionist.)

NOTICES

CATHOLIC CARE provides services for people managing mental health issues that promote confidence and independence and help connect people to their community. Our services assist people to live and thrive at every age. We provide disability services, counselling and support for children, young people and families and deliver ageing services in the home. We can assist you to navigate the new world of the NDIS and My Aged Care. To find out more call **13 18 19**, email connect@catholiccare.org or visit www.catholiccare.org.

St Mary's Cathedral Choir is returning to City Recital Hall on Friday, 30 June 7pm for an evening of seraphic singing accompanied by the Orchestra of the Antipodes. With a programme featuring J.S. Bach's *Magnificat*, Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, the Choir's ethereal sound will offer a musical experience to carry you through time and space. The crystal-clear acoustic of City Recital Hall offers concertgoers an opportunity to hear the Choir's technical and musical proficiency with a crispness which can't be experienced at home in the Cathedral. This one-night concert is sure to sell quickly, so make sure you book in advance. Tickets range from \$130- \$30 and can be purchased from www.cityrecitalhall.com

The Gregorian Schola of Sydney has served the people and the parishes of Sydney for close on thirty years in offering the opportunity to all of singing/praying/learning Gregorian Chant. (Vatican II: Gregorian Chant is "specially suited to the liturgy and... should be given pride of place"). Currently our schola is very much in need of more singers, both young and not so young. We invite you to consider joining and supporting this service. There is opportunity for both solo and group participation. Young people may like to put membership on their CVs. We are grateful to the Parish Priest of St Bede's, Pyrmont, that the schola, when in session, can rehearse in this historic church each week. If you are interested in joining **The Gregorian Schola of Sydney** ring **8741 2341** or email gregorian.schola@gmail.com. See also website www.gchants.org.au.

Australian Catholic Youth Festival – 7th to 9th December 2017 For people under the age of 30 years – for further information please refer to the website www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au



LIFE IN THE EUCHARIST (LITE) MEETING

At our meeting in February we resumed sessions with Fr Rosario who continued speaking to the group on the topic of HOLINESS - holiness in our day to day lives. The subject model of holiness for this session was "**Cultic: the Symbolic versus the Real.**"

In briefly reviewing the previous sessions, Fr Rosario reminded us that there is no right or wrong in these models. Our own understanding of holiness, and, those models of holiness we might follow to become closer to God, are different for each of us and we should respect those differences.

The image we might use here for this 'Cultic' model may be the altar, candles, incense, the missals and all the elaborate rituals. We might measure holiness by the number of prayers one says or the sacraments one administers. Those of us of advanced age might well recall our early instruction in being 'holy', such as recitation of the Rosary, various novenas and special prayers, religious statues and holy pictures, visits to churches, prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and many other devotions. The emphasis being more on ritual or recitation of prayers, as opposed to how we live our daily lives.

If we refer to Scripture we find many references to both justify and go against the 'Cultic' model.

For example, in the book of Leviticus we find detailed ritualistic prescriptions which show strongly the 'Cultic Model'. In Colossians 4:2, Paul says "Be persevering in your prayers and be thankful as you stay awake to pray" and in Thessalonians 5:17, Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to pray and give thanks constantly. In Hebrews 5:1-4, this epistle speaks of cultic ways – the high priest must atone for his own sins and those of the people.

Then we have some scripture which might go against the 'Cultic' model. In Matthew's Gospel we find several references. In Matthew 15: 7, we read how Jesus had strong language for those whose words did not match what went on in their hearts. In Mt. 7:21 we read "It is not anyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," who will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven."

The positive aspect of this model of holiness, is that rituals and ceremonies do have a place in any human relationship. For example we have a handshake on meeting an acquaintance, a hug for a close friend or relative, a 21 gun salute for a visiting dignitary. Then we have the towering majesty of a church, the delight of a choir singing in harmony, colourful vestments, incense and common recitation of prayers, all this is a healthy *religious spirit*.

The negative side of the model is that to measure one's holiness by the splendour and number of these religious practices is hardly reasonable. Flowing Episcopal robes, gem studded mitres, croziers and other adornments can equally be a *worldly spirit*.

Whatever model of holiness we might choose to follow, will not necessarily suit someone else. We must remember that each person's faith journey is personal and different.

Fr Rosario will lead us in discussion in the coming months as we continue to look at the various models of holiness that people choose to follow in their lives.

The LITE group meets on the fourth Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be at 2.15 pm on Saturday 27th May in the hall at St Peter Julian's church. All are welcome.