

History

Inspired by the spirituality of [St Peter Julian Eymard](#) (1811–1868), the Blessed Sacrament Congregation's pioneers in Australia believed that they were led by God at a particular moment in history.

A foundation group of five priests and two brothers came to Australia from Canada and the United States, at the invitation of Archbishop Daniel Mannix who wanted them to take over the historic [St Francis' Church](#) in the middle of the city of Melbourne. They arrived on All Saints' Day, 1929.

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Under the guidance of these men and their successors, St Francis' Church was transformed into an extraordinary eucharistic shrine.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and perpetual adoration brought people into the church during the day and evenings. The number of masses increased and demand for confessions was sometimes overwhelming. Thousands of people wanted to participate in the culture of eucharistic devotion that the Congregation transplanted.

More American and French-Canadian priests and brothers were recruited from overseas, and when growing numbers of Australian men became interested in joining the Congregation, a novitiate and a scholasticate were established at St Francis' Church. The first Australian priests were ordained in the early 1940s.



In 1947 the Congregation opened a novitiate at Bowral, New South Wales which formed the bridgehead for a later foundation at Haymarket in central Sydney in 1953 (now [St Peter Julian's Church](#)).

A major seminary dedicated to Christ the King was opened at Lower Plenty, Victoria, in 1955. During that year, Australia became an independent province of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation – the 'Province of the Holy Spirit'.

The young Australian province sent priests and brothers to open missionary foundations at Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1956 and to Mumbai, India in 1964.

At Toowoomba, Queensland, the province established a city shrine (1958–95) and a novitiate (1958–89). In Western Australia, the province opened the Chapel of the Holy Eucharist at Bunbury (1975–81), and operated All Saints Chapel in central Perth (1976–98) as well as parishes in the Perth suburbs of Kensington (1976–98) and Como (1985–98).

Now facing the challenges of the modern world with a new Rule of Life (adopted in the mid 1980s), the Province of the Holy Spirit maintains the strength of its eucharistic mission at [St Francis' Church](#) in Melbourne and [St Peter Julian's Church](#) in Sydney.

As in Eymard's day, the eucharist remains a powerful force for renewal of the Catholic Church and society.

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