

# SSS INTERNATIONAL

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SSS Generalate  
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[www.curiasss.net](http://www.curiasss.net)



## Vocation meeting Cenacle Saint Benedict

During this vocation month we continued the programme of the meetings of the SAV – Regional 1 following the theme: “The Eucharistic vocation of Father Eymard”.



The morning began with coffee together and we shared conversation about our experiences since the last formation meeting. Then there followed a time for prayer and we gathered in a room that had been prepared with symbols inviting us to reflect on the day’s theme: an image of Father Eymard, a copy of our *Rule of Life* and Life Project, an image of Christ at table during the sharing of bread with the disciples of Emmaus.

The lecture was given by our SSS layperson Epiane Evangelista, who brilliantly underlined the importance of deepening our knowledge of the life and work of our Founder, St Peter-Julian Eymard in the course of discernment for our youth, so that they would mature in his love for the Eucharist.

Father Eymard, despite obstacles from his earliest years and during his youth, had not given up his dream of becoming a priest, studying and consecrating himself to prayer. As a Marist religious he was captured by the devotedness of Our Lady to Jesus, our Saviour. His austerity and his prayer showed his living faith and his love for the Eucharist. He never abandoned his

pastoral fervour and he renewed Eucharistic praise, the heart of the Church.

However, his project was deeper, and he recruited young people in order to spread love of Holy Communion into a religious Order. In 1856 he obtained the reply to his endeavour: permission to create the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, centred on adoration, which through the celebration leads the faithful to frequent communion, an idea new at the time.

A primary feature to understand the life of our Founder likewise requires an appreciation of his great love for Mary, developed from his childhood. This led him on 1 May 1868 to propose honouring the Virgin Mary by the title of *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament*, which thus indicated the relation between Mary, the Church and the Eucharist.



After this intense time of reflection we discussed the reports of the day and then we shared a fraternal meal with the youth, the lay persons and religious of the house.

26/08/2017

FR ARMINDO MAGALHÃES DUQUE, SSS  
Promoter of the Vocation Apostolate



## Interafrican Novitiate

### First religious professions

As is customary on each September 8 throughout the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, on Friday **8 September 2017**, the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, six young novices who completed their formation made their first religious vows in the parish of Saint Peter-Julian Eymard at Koudiadiène. Two other brothers on this same occasion renewed their temporary vows.

This took place during a Eucharistic celebration beginning at 4 p.m., presided by Father Edgard Diémé, the Superior of the new province of Our Lady of Africa in Senegal. The following brothers officially committed themselves to the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament: Alfred Frays Kumanzembe from the Dem. Rep. of Congo, Ange Mayithé Miayoukou, Céli-Césaire Bansimba Moukanza, Ephège Baloula from Congo Brazzaville, Christophe Mendy and Francisco Mendy from Senegal. Their promises were made before the religious, relatives, friends and acquaintances who had come to support them to live the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

In his homily Father Edgard spoke of the importance of the commitment undertaken by the newly professed and advised them to “allow themselves to be seduced by the poor, chaste and obedient Master of Nazareth”, because through him, if they follow these counsels, they will discover happiness. He put this in these words: “And this choice, if you undertake it truly with all your heart, will be the source of joy, peace, in a word, gladness”. Continuing his homily, the Superior of the new province of Our Lady of Africa in Senegal invited the new religious in their commitment to follow Christ in the overcoming of self to be inspired by God’s love

manifest in the Eucharist, to take Christ as their sole reference point, to love him and base their whole life on him.

However, he clearly pointed out that in the course of their journey, they will experience a life consisting of daily infidelities and mistakes; but these very things should not put them off track if they learn to accept them and carry their cross. This cross consists of small and great miseries, sufferings. They must thus live the truth in fully taking up their suffering. Father Edgard Diémé thus ended his homily by inviting the brothers to abandon themselves entirely to God and to allow themselves to be guided by his Mother, the holy Virgin Mary.

After the homily there followed the rite of profession and clothing with the habit, consigning of the *Rule of Life* and cross.

Brothers Abraham Correa and Paul Ndour likewise in the course of this same Eucharistic celebration renewed their temporary vows. Then the Mass continued as usual. At the end of the Eucharistic celebration Brother Alfred Kumanzembe on behalf of the newly professed gave thanks to God for the gift of the Eucharistic vocation. They likewise thanked the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament for accepting them as its members and also thanked those who had come to support them.

After the Mass the relatives, friends and numerous acquaintances present congratulated the newly professed, offering them gifts and in a fraternal and convivial spirit shared refreshments in the grounds of the parish presbytery.



### Renewal of vows

The Region of Cardinal Émile Biayenda (of Congo Brazzaville) had the joy of celebrating the renewal of vows of eight scholastics on Friday **8 September 2017**, the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, in the midst of the community of Barrage.

This prestigious ceremony of the renewal of vows was itself preceded by a spiritual retreat from 4 to 8 September. Guided by Father Casimir Moukouba sss, this retreat had the theme: *Living religious life like the disciples of Emmaus*.

Thus, three important moments marked this precious time. Firstly, a careful consideration of the Founder's vocation enabled emphasizing or evoking certain values and characteristic virtues of the Christian life, or better, of the religious life. Then, the retreat preacher insisted on what must be the profile of a religious of the Blessed Sacrament by recalling the challenges facing our mission in society; he also invited the scholastics to live always in a transparent way and to work for perfect brotherhood by feeling continually responsibly for others. Finally, the specificity or originality of the retreat consisted in the sharing of experience. Each scholastic had the opportunity to share his vocational journey, or better, the unfolding of his vocation.

As the *Rule of Life* n. 57 states: "The profession of temporary vows is annual and is renewed each year until perpetual profession". In this perspective, eight scholastics renewed their vows - for the third time, Brothers Séverin Amos Mvouka, Ephrem Nsimba Mabika, Aurélien Nzitoukoulou, Chabrey Malonga, Jack Nkodia, Divin Maboundou; for the second time, Brother Chancelin Kifoueti; for the first time, Brother Orsini Batekouahou.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided by Father Brel Daouda Malela, the Regional Superior, in the presence also of Fathers Armand (Parish Priest of La Mure), Claude, Rodolphe, Aimé, Chally, Elois, Jean de Dieu, and Casimir. In his homily, the Regional Superior exhorted the professed to witness always to fruitfulness regarding our religious vocation; he also recalled the challenges of religious commitment and the meaning of the vows that we profess.



It is thus in a climate of fraternity and communion that the confreres present have assisted and supported the eight professed who had to renew their vows.

BR. DIVIN MABOUNDOU NGONGO, SSS



## Auguste Rodin and Peter-Julian Eymard The sculptor and the saint

*The 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 is the celebration of the first centenary of the death of Auguste Rodin (1840-1917). The 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Father Eymard. In this first article I set out the connection of these two anniversaries.*

*The celebrations for Rodin's anniversary (see the site created for this occasion: [www.rodin100.org](http://www.rodin100.org)) highlight the determining role that Father Eymard had in the artistic career of Rodin.*

### Auguste Rodin novice in the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) is considered as the father of modern sculpture. Born on 12 November 1840 in Paris, he became an apprentice in the School of design.

Disturbed by the death of his sister Maria, a novice of the Sisters of Saint-Maur, on 8 December 1862, he was received by Father Eymard into his community. A little later he became a novice taking the name Brother Augustin. His mother, Marie, who used to often frequent the chapel of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, asked for the help of Father Eymard, and the meeting between the two men was arranged.

Father Eymard quickly understood that Rodin did not have a clear vision of his vocation and encouraged him to persevere in his art, making available to him a shed in the garden as a workshop. Rodin made a bust of Father Eymard in 1863, which was one of his first works. We do not know if Father Eymard posed for him. We know that he would offer a plaster copy to Mother Marguerite Guillot in 1864. Father Eymard wrote to Mother Marguerite: "You may send me your letter by means of good Brother Augustine; that was a poor gift that he gave you." (21 June 1864, CO 1412). The work was not satisfactory and was put in the attic.

Rodin stayed in the Congregation for five months before returning to secular life and carrying out his true vocation as a sculptor.

The bronze bust of Father Eymard is exposed in the Rodin museum.



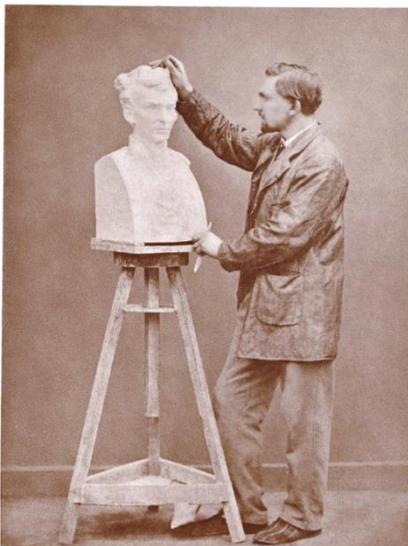
## Auguste Rodin “God’s pupil”

Rodin’s meeting with Father Eymard was decisive in the following of his artistic career.

An article on “Auguste Rodin, a sculptor who does not fit into the mould” has a paragraph beginning by “God’s pupil”, stating: “Recall this name well: Father Eymard. Without this holy man, who knows if Auguste Rodin would have been able to free and share his genius at all? At 22, struck and distraught by his sister’s death, Auguste Rodin entered into a mystical crisis and joined the seminary of the Blessed Sacrament. One day, when the young Auguste had just carved the bust of Father Eymard, the man in question, amazed by so much talent, approached his young pupil and told him: ‘My son, you have better things to do in life than to be a priest. God has not called you to religion.’ Brother Auguste then put aside entering orders and began his career of being a sculptor. Thank you Father!” (www.expointhecity.com)

An article, published in the magazine *Nouvelle Cité* July-August 2017, put on Father Eymard’s lips the following words addressed to Rodin: “Draw, model, trim, shape... and give the world your soul through Beauty. I am a priest and I do not know how to do it... Some pray and save another person. Others paint, build or sculpt and make others better. Some are roots, others trunks and then there are all those who are branches, leaves, flowers and fruits”.

## The bust of Father Eymard



For his portrait of Father Eymard, Rodin was inspired by the style of David d’Angers (1788-1856), a celebrated portraitist of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The shape of the *buste en hermès* (head and shoulders) and rigour of the attire contrast with the wavy hair and many sunken and dented features of the face.

The message engraved on the coiled scroll – “*Laudes ac gratiae sint omni momento sanctissimo ac divinissimo sacrament*” (“Praise and thanks be at every moment to the most holy and divine Sacrament”) – recall Father Eymard’s prayer. The bushy eyebrows accentuate the determined look. The

strands of hair, suggesting the “horns of the devil”, according to Father Eymard, explain the little affection that the ecclesiastic figure showed towards his bust.



Yet, we can say that the vivacity and vigour of the sculpture serve to express the spirituality of the model.

FR MANUEL BARBIERO, SSS  
Superior of La Mure



*The death of a brother will be celebrated as a Paschal event filled with hope. We shall faithfully carry out the prescribed prayers for our deceased (RL 13).*

### N. 1524 - Father Frederico Joseph ABLOG

Province: Saint Ann  
Community: Houston, USA  
Death: 17 September 2017  
Age: 77  
Profession: 31  
Priesthood: 27

### N. 1525 - Father John MAGILL

Province: Holy Spirit  
Community: Kew-East-Prov.H., Australia  
Death: 13 October 2017  
Age: 86  
Profession: 61  
Priesthood: 59

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