

Bread Broken & Shared

A Newsletter for friends of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament of the Province of Saint Ann

Saint Peter Julian Eymard and His Hometown

Historical Studies of La Mure during the Lifetime of Peter Julian Eymard: 1811-1868, from the First to the Second Empire

by Eric Marchand

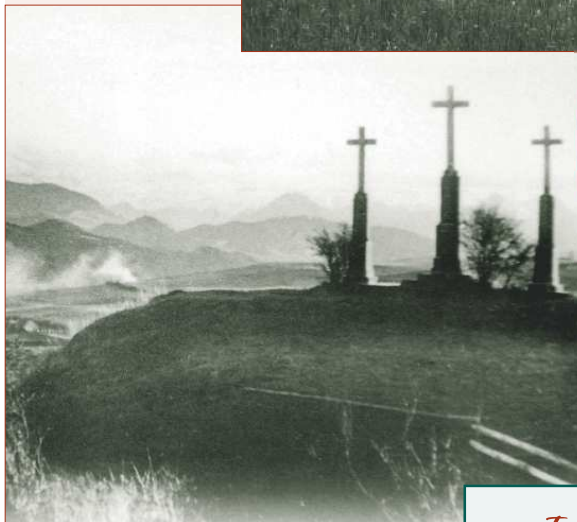
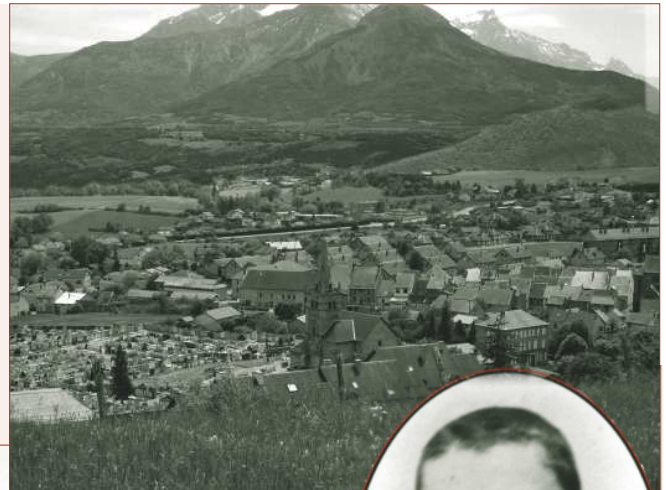
We continue to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth and baptism of our saintly founder, Peter Julian Eymard. Having completed publishing the 10 articles of Father Bernard Camiré SSS, we will now share with you articles that originally appeared in French and with this issue are now becoming available to an English-speaking audience. We begin with the first of four articles that appeared in the January 2011 issue of the magazine of our France-Swiss Province of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament called **Partager**. It is a bulletin of Eucharistic Formation. The translation of the French into English was done by Robert Lussier SSS. The other three articles will appear in future issues of **Bread Broken & Shared**. All four articles help to situate Saint Peter Julian Eymard in his own time and place.

Peter Julian Eymard was born on the 4th of February, 1811, on a Monday Market day, at La Mure, a small town on the Matheysin plateau, with an altitude of 2,900 feet, about 25 miles south of Grenoble, on the road that leads to Gap.

TOP: La Mure d'Isère at the time of Father Eymard

CENTER: Peter Julian Eymard as a young boy

BOTTOM: The Calvary of La Mure (about 1920) looking down on the town



Political Events

In 1811, La Mure's inhabitants numbered 1,836 people. Relatively spared the torments of the revolution, thanks to Pastor Gaubet, (deceased in 1803), a priest open to the new ideas, the town welcomed Pope Pius VI, prisoner of the Third Directory, on July 3 to 5, 1799. The mayor, Peter Noah Genevois, a fierce Bonapartist,
Continued on next page...

Inside This Issue

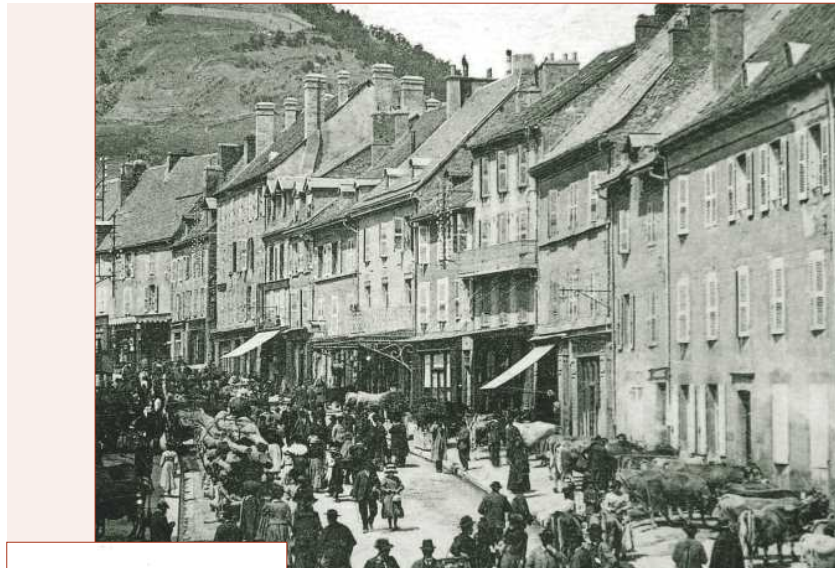
- 4 From Our Provincial
- 5 SSS Missionaries
- 9 Ecumenical Corner
- 11 An Ordination Homily
- 13 Br. Anthony Ornelas SSS
- 14 St. Ann's Shrine
- 15 World Youth Day 2011

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

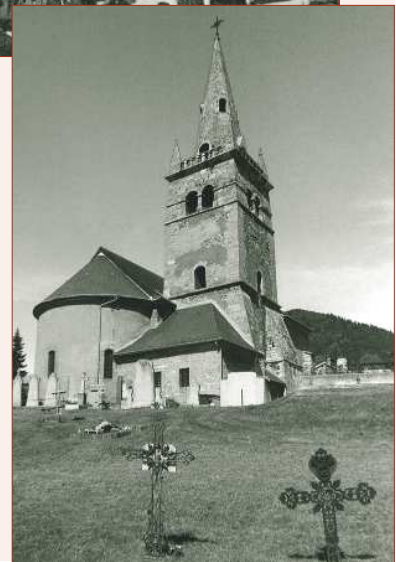
Saint Peter Julian Eymard and His Hometown...Continued from previous page

delivered a eulogy of the first Consul in March, 1801, to celebrate the peace of Luneville concluded that same year. On the 14th of April, 1810, some public celebrations were organized in honor of Napoleon's marriage to Marie-Louise of Austria. But, after the Emperor's defeat, a group of Austrian and Piedmontese soldiers occupied La Mure, leading to the troubles of April, 1814. Nearly one year after, on March 7, 1815, Napoleon passed through La Mure on his return from the island of Elba, to the acclamations of the people, and he bivouacked at the Calvary before going on to Laffrey, where the troops of Louis XVIII, sent to arrest him, gathered at his side, permitting him to retake power for The One Hundred Days. The Bonapartist infatuation of the people of La Mure was not extinguished, even with his exile at Saint Helena. In February, 1816, Paul Didier, the half-conspirator-adventurer, spent some time at La Mure and organized a revolt at Grenoble on May 4th. The plot failed after a bloody battle, and the repression was immediate. From May to June, 24 insurgents, including 8 from La Mure, were executed by firing squad on the Esplanade at Grenoble.

After the fever of the Napoleonic episode, a quasi political calm settled on the city. Genevois, the mayor, rejected by the restoration, died in 1817. Several years later, in 1824, under the reign of Charles X, noted by a return to the morals of the Ancient Regime, the municipality banned games and dances in the community of La Mure on Sundays and legal feast days during the ceremonies, under penalty of paying a fine. Like the swing of a pendulum, after Louis-Philippe came into power, the community hastened to apply the prefectoral decree of February, 1831, that ordered "the removal of 'fleur de lys' and other emblems of the fallen regime."



▲ La Mure d'Isère at the beginning of the 20th Century
 ◀ Eymard's house
 ▶ Old Church of La Mure



In February, 1848, the Second Republic was proclaimed. A new community administration came into being, and it installed welfare programs that dealt with providing salaries to unemployed workers to repair roads and highways. These public works ceased to exist in the springtime of the next year. In December, 1848, during the first presidential election in France, the La Mure voters gave a small majority to Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte. They renewed their confidence in him by approving the coup d'état on December 2, 1851, in a 75% plebiscite on December 21. At the start of the Second Empire, the municipal administration from before 1848 was returned to power and, in December, 1852, the proposal was made to set up La Mure as the Center of its arrondissement.

Economic and Social Events

Since the beginning of the 19th Century, La Mure had known a significant economic growth. Halfway through the century, it counted 3,500 inhabitants. It was a large, rural, bustling town on Monday, market day, with industrial activities in full swing. The hemp weaving industry employed 120 workers and 800 (women) thread spinners for the production of cloth packaging. The nail factory provided a living for a hundred workers who made carpentry nails, shoes

Continued on next page...

Saint Peter Julian Eymard and His Hometown...Continued from previous page

for horses and some oxen, and shoes. The flour industry had four mills for the production of flour sold in Grenoble and in the high Alps, assuring a market for the wheat grown around La Mure, Mens, Corps, and Valbonnais. The marble works employed many dozens of workers who harvested the marbles of the whole region. In 1847, the black marble of Sainte-Luce, polished at La Mure, was chosen for the altar of Napoleon's tomb at the Invalides in Paris. In 1855, with 44 employees, the marble works at Bon Repos was one of the most important in France.

The little river Jonche also did its part. One found there no less than 13 buildings housing activities like grain threshing, marble saws, carriage wheels, etc. The industrial development of the Jonche posed certain problems in winter, because of the ice, which lasted sometimes, causing long periods of inactivity.

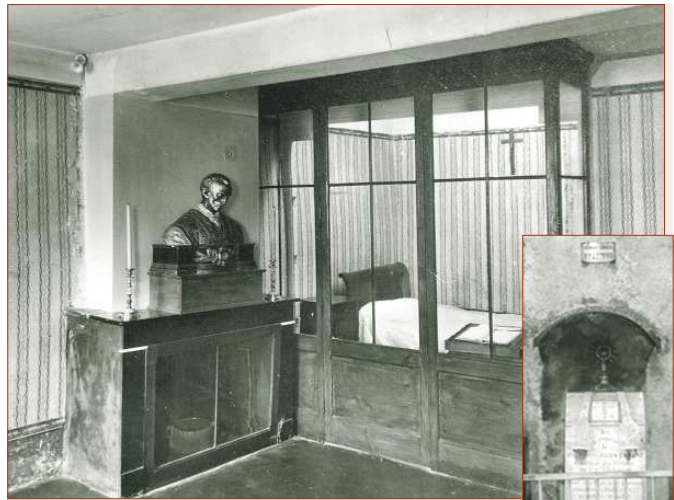
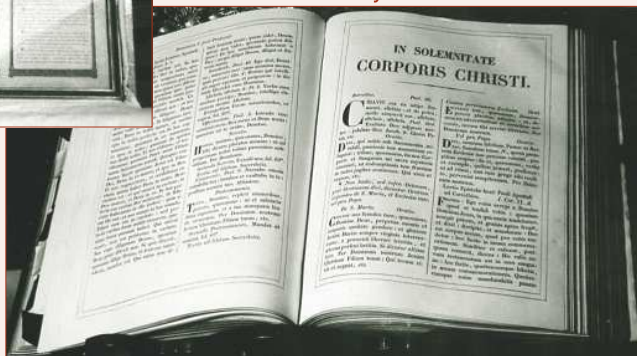
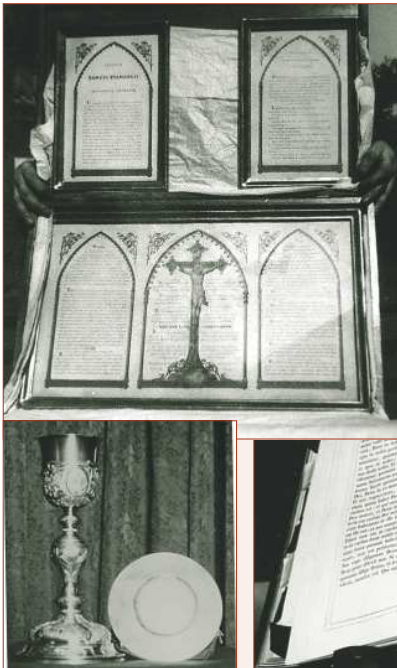
The glove industry developed mainly during the Second Empire. The great fashion houses of Grenoble began to decentralize their operations, while recruiting local talent. The mine, whose development had been authorized in 1806 by Napoleon the First, employed 200 miners, who produced 40,000 tons of anthracite in 1846. A new era in the production of Matheysin coal opened in 1857 with the creation of the Anthracite Company of La Mure, under the single presidency of Henry Giroud .

In 1850, with nearly a thousand industrial jobs, the Matheysine was an exception for Isère, which was still quite rural. But most of the workers were "double actives" who engaged in agricultural activities on the side, hard pressed by the crisis of 1846, but needed to supplement a weak revenue supply.

So, all through the 19th Century, La Mure entered gradually into the modern age.

A secondary school for boys had existed since 1803 in the buildings of the ancient Capuchin convent. A boarding school for girls opened in 1848, and work was begun to install it in a house on the Place Perouzat. A school for young girls already existed since 1836 in the Chateau Beaumont, run by the Sisters of the Nativity.

Missal, Altar Canons and Chalice and Paten from Eymard House



▲ The room in which Father Eymard died in 1868
▶ Original burial place and monument for Father Eymard in La Mure



The town changed its image, little by little: street lights were installed in 1840. In 1843 La Halle was rebuilt, and in 1864 a monument was erected at the Calvary to replace the three ancient wooden crosses. The daily life was transformed. Since 1833, the artisans and shopkeepers could benefit from financial aid, thanks to the Society of Mutual Benevolence for the arts and for business development. In 1862 it was the firemen's turn to benefit from an insurance program. In 1864, the Municipal Council approved the creation of a Savings Bank, and in 1865, two cultural societies were born: a choral group, "The Orpheon of La Mure," and a theatrical group called the "Lyrical Society." Finally, on the 5th of July, 1866, the first telegraph was installed, as La Mure entered the first revolution of telecommunications.

When Father Eymard died at the Rue de Breuil on August 1, 1868, his native town had become a little city, both prosperous and tranquil, that still awaited its "golden age", to be attained at the end of the century with the growth of the mining industry and the construction of the railroad. ✕