

Walking with Saint Eymard: A Pilgrimage Experience

Recently, a group of 21 people (composed of religious of the Blessed Sacrament and lay associates) headed off to France to encounter Saint Peter Julian Eymard in his own land of France. The pilgrimage lasted nearly two full weeks and provided many opportunities to learn about the great Apostle of the Eucharist. The group was led by Father Norman Pelletier SSS, provincial superior, who instructed the group along the way in the life and spirituality of Saint Peter Julian Eymard. From Paris in the North, all the way down to the Shrine of the Blessed Mother (Notre Dame de Laus) in the South, these twenty-one pilgrims prayed for various intentions through the intercession of Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

The group began its journey in Paris where Father Eymard ministered for many years and where he also founded the Congregation in humble surroundings with the poor of the city. With just a few humble followers, Saint Peter Julian Eymard pursued his dream of a Congregation of men dedicated to the Eucharist, proclaiming the love of God in Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In Paris we visited



▲ The pilgrimage group at St-Bonnet-le-Froid where Saint Peter Julian Eymard spent much time working on the original Constitutions of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

◀ The statue of Saint Peter Julian Eymard in the Cathedral of Grenoble, France; Father Eymard was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Grenoble

the Chapel where Father Eymard had the first public exposition of the Eucharist. In addition we visited the Blessed Sacrament Chapel where the saintly remains of Father Eymard are preserved and venerated.

We next ventured South from Paris to Lyon and its surroundings, visiting the ecumenical community of Taizé, famous for their simple chants and prayer before the Cross. We had the privilege of celebrating Mass at Ars, the home town and parish of Saint Jean-Marie Vianney, the Curé of Ars. Lyon was the place where Father Eymard spent many of his early

years as a Marist and where he often visited the Shrine of Notre Dame de Fourvière. We also visited the chateau where Father Eymard went out to the country to rest and also work on the first Constitutions of the Congregation – Chateau St-Bonnet le Froid.

From Lyon we headed further South to Grenoble, the diocese in which Father Eymard was born, baptised, received his first communion, ordained to the priesthood and finally died. His birth place in La Mure d’Isere is in the pre-Alps just south of Grenoble. Father Eymard studied for the diocesan priesthood here in Grenoble and was ordained a priest of the diocese. His first assignments were in the diocese of Grenoble and we had the privilege

Continued on next page...

Walking With Saint Eymard...Continued from previous page



◀ Frieze on the façade of the church of Notre Dame de Fourviere in Lyon, France; the central character looking to the right is Saint Peter Julian Eymard, pictured with other local saints



▲ The house of the Eymard family (on the left), and the newly-acquired Eymard Exposition store front (on the right) on the main street of LaMure d'Isere, France, the birthplace of Saint Peter Julian Eymard



◀ Pilgrimage group in Paris with their guide Jerome Hugron [center]

of visiting the places.

The highlight of the pilgrimage for many was the time spent in La Mure and visiting the actual house where Saint Eymard lived and died, and the Church where he was baptised and often prayed. We had the time to spend some quiet moments at the Calvary overlooking the town where Father Eymard often went to pray. We had the opportunity of meeting the four religious of the Blessed Sacrament in the community of La Mure – a religious from Switzerland, Italy, Vietnam and the Congo. They are in La Mure to minister to the pastoral needs of the parishioners as well as continue to share with pilgrims the story of Saint Eymard and his love for the Eucharist.

Next, we headed further South to visit the very important Marian Shrines of Notre Dame of La Salette and Notre Dame de Laus. Father Eymard's great devotion to Mary impressed us all. Michael and Sally Switek, Eucharistic Associates from Corpus Christi Parish in Houston, TX share: *"(We) received a better understanding of the relationship between Fr. Eymard and Mary. (We) could imagine the comfort and strength Fr. Eymard received from Mary at these peaceful places. It seemed so much easier to hear Mary's encouraging voice at these shrines than in Paris, or Lyon, or even Grenoble."*

The final days of our pilgrimage brought us back to Paris, to digest

the journey we had made – walking in the steps of Saint Peter Julian Eymard – digesting many of the inspiring things that we had experienced in our pilgrimage.

All the participants were moved by the experience. Father Frederico Joseph Ablog SSS said: *"All that I have seen and touched – photos, vestments, his bed – speak of his holiness and they are well preserved. I was delighted to be a witness of his holy life that he continues to share with us today."*

Father Uthariyanathan Arokiasamy SSS from India shared: *"This pilgrimage left an indelible mark and made an impact on me. While visiting his home town of LaMure and looking at the spirituality of the place, location of the parish church, the highway to Italy, the mystical cross just behind his house and the primary school where he studied, the places of his ministry*

Continued on next page...

Walking With Saint Eymard...

Continued from previous page

and the religiosity presented through architectural edifice reflected in and through stain glass windows (letting the light shine through) and the location of the Marian sanctuaries helped and increased in him the genuine desire and goodwill to do something good always. This comes from the inner light experienced by Peter Julian in the inner cave of his heart and it made me realize that any amount of outer light cannot dispel the darkness, on the contrary inner light can dispel outer darkness.” Father Nathan concluded: “It (the pilgrimage) enthused me to live the religious life in an authentic way. I pray that all may continue to experience the depth, breadth and width of God’s love manifested in the Eucharist. *Adveniat Regnum Tuum Eucharisticum.*”

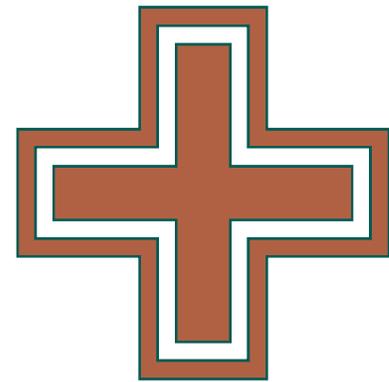
Christabel Wescombe from Australia reflected: “It is not often in life that one has the opportunity to partake in a life changing experience. The 2011 Eymard pilgrimage to France celebrating the 200th anniversary of the saint’s birth provided the occasion for visitation, adoration, investigation and celebration.” Her husband, Roger, reflected: *I was intrigued with St Eymard. I wanted to understand what sort of person he was and, if possible, how he could have got to be that way.*

Noreen Hoard of Corpus Christi Parish in Houston, Texas, a long-time and active Associate of the Congregation writes eloquently of her personal experience of this Pilgrimage: “*The Eymard Pilgrimage is a pilgrimage that connects my association with St. Peter Julian Eymard, his past with my present and my future. It is a pilgrimage that deepens and strengthens not only my connectedness and relationship*



*to Peter Julian and the members of Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, but to all those with whom I journey. The words ‘Entrez en Paix - Sortez en Joie’ meaning ‘Come in Peace, Leave in Joy’ inscribed in the archway at the chateau St. Bonnet le Froid, where Peter Julian retreated to compose the final draft of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, are not just words inscribed in a stone archway passage from a busy public area to a private area of solitude, but words to interiorize how to live each moment of our day, i.e. to enter each moment of our lives in peace and to exit each moment of our lives in joy – Words to embrace and to live each day, for as Peter Julian so aptly said, “**Tomorrow will be too late!**”*

All of the pilgrims, from very different backgrounds, came to know and love Saint Peter Julian Eymard much better as a result of this special 200th anniversary pilgrimage. We hope that they continue to inspire others with the message of love preached very simply by the priest from LaMure who was on fire with the Eucharist! ✠



In Loving Memory

September

- 08 2008 Rev. Walter A. Riendeau
- 09 1974 Rev. Leopold St.-Hilaire
- 11 1959 Rev. Alphonse Ouimet
- 19 1937 Rev. Louis Tardif
- 19 1983 Rev. Antonin Dumont
- 22 1982 Rev. Leo Bourque
- 23 1964 Rev. John Graham
- 24 1978 Rev. Adrien Maheu
- 25 1971 Bro. George Lemoyne
- 25 1975 Rev. Adrian Hebert
- 26 1971 Bro. Donaldus Carucci
- 27 1980 Bro. Noel Canuel
- 28 1991 Rev. Norman MacPherson

October

- 05 1988 Rev. Arthur Maheu
- 05 1999 Bro. Mark (Rosaire) Proulx
- 14 1989 Rev. Thomas Kennette
- 15 1991 Bro. Narcisse Barette
- 17 1956 Rev. Wenceslaus Giasson
- 17 1999 Rev. Thomas Waldie
- 18 1945 Rev. Auguste Pelletier
- 20 1953 Rev. Emile Poirier
- 22 2009 Bro. Stanislaus Kowalski
- 24 1996 Bro. Raymond Lussier
- 26 1946 Bro. Charles Caron
- 27 2003 Rev. Frederick Roberge
- 31 1974 Rev. Francis Brennan
- 31 2003 Rev. Lionel Lavigne