

Saint Peter Julian Eymard: When Eucharist Becomes Life



A Course of Study on the Life and Writings of
Saint Peter Julian Eymard,
the Apostle of the Eucharist



Picture taken on December 9, 1962 at the Canonization of Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

A COURSE OF STUDY ON SAINT PETER JULIAN EYMARD

Adapted from a program developed by Ethel and Tony Lapitan, Associates of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and members of Saint Vincent de Paul Church, Holiday, Florida.
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Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament Province of Saint Ann

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

August 2014

Dear Fellow Disciple of Saint Peter Julian Eymard,

On this anniversary of Saint Peter Julian Eymard's feast day, I am very happy to share with you *A Course of Study on the Life and Writings of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist*.

This resource guide is the fruit of many contributors, but primarily the work of two of our associates, Ethel and Tony Lapitan, parishioners of our parish in Holiday, Florida, Saint Vincent de Paul Church, and adapted for your use by our staff in the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing (CEE): Father Bill Fickel, SSS, Father Anthony Schueller, SSS, and Mr. Jim Brown, a long time consultant for the Province of Saint Ann and himself an associate of our congregation.

I pray that your experience of this program will deepen your own eucharistic spirituality and an ever abiding appreciation of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, his life and the legacy he left us. Peter Julian Eymard surely answered the gift of love he found in the Eucharist with his own gift of self and a life dedicated to service without counting the cost to the people God brought into his life: young and old, male and female, rich and poor, religious and lay.

Saint Peter Julian modeled his life on the Cenacle, where Mary and the apostles were united in prayer, and inspired his disciples, then and now, to live a life of apostolic zeal, grounded in prayer and inspired by the Eucharist, the center and the source of life.

With prayerful best wishes for God's abundant blessings in the days ahead studying, praying and learning together with your fellow "students," I am

Fraternally in Christ,

Very Reverend Norman Pelletier, SSS
Provincial Superior

**A Course of Study on the Life and Writings of
Saint Peter Julian Eymard, Apostle of the Eucharist**

A Resource Manual on Saint Peter Julian Eymard for Adult Catechesis and Eucharistic Formation

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A Course of Study on the Life and Writings of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist

Introduction

Welcome to *A Course of Study on the Life and Writings of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist*, a resource guide on Father Peter Julian Eymard, his life and key themes at the heart of his spiritual journey and teachings. In this introduction, the authors want to:

1. Share with you the background to why this course was written;
2. Explain its format;
3. Suggest various options about how to use its content.

The interest in Saint Peter Julian Eymard has increased since his canonization by Pope John XXIII on December 9, 1962, at the end of the first session of Vatican Council II, and his having been declared “Apostle of the Eucharist” by Pope John Paul II in 1995. It was at this time that the pope inserted Saint Peter Julian’s feast in the general calendar of the universal church for August 2. In the words of the decree:

“Font and fullness of all evangelization and striking expression of the infinite love of our divine Redeemer for humankind, the Holy Eucharist clearly marked the life and pastoral activity of Peter Julian Eymard. He truly deserves to be called an outstanding apostle of the Eucharist. In fact, his mission in the church consisted in promoting the centrality of the eucharistic mystery in the whole life of the Christian community.”

This *Course of Study* on Saint Peter Julian is published by the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing (CEE), a ministry office of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. The CEE has as its mission the creation and promotion of adult religious formation programs and resources that assist Catholic adults and youth in deepening their understanding and appreciation of the fullness of the eucharistic mystery. The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament has produced a wide array of resources on Saint Peter Julian Eymard and remains ever committed to sharing his life and legacy.

A Course of Study was conceived as a follow-up resource for women and men who have gone through the formation program to be Associates of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, or participated in a *Life in the Eucharist* program or mission, as well as groups of parishioners simply interested in knowing more about the founder of the congregation, Peter Julian Eymard.

The Format

This *Course of Study* consists of 18 sessions. It will take place the third Wednesday of the month. There will be a break the months of June and July, 2016. Sessions II – IX will each be divided into two parts taking place on consecutive months. The program is designed to take 1 ½ hours each.

Each session follows a similar outline:

- An opening prayer (“Invitation to Prayer”)
- A song (optional)
- An introduction to the theme and process
- A brief reflection
- A teaching on the theme
- A Work Exercise (*Sharing Faith*)
- Small group sharing
- Large group (Small group reports and as time permits discussion and/or questions for Presenter)
- Commitment to Action (“Invitation to Mission”)
- Closing Prayer (“Sending Forth”)

Sources for the Study

A Course of Study utilizes three primary sources: “*May God Be Praised!*” (General Editor: James W. Brown) published in 2013, *The Eucharist and Saint Peter Julian Eymard* by Bernard Camiré, SSS, published in 2011, and *Tomorrow Will Be Too Late* by Norman Pelletier, SSS. Additional resources are referenced on page 5.

A note about the “Sharing Questions” element of each session

The questions suggested in each unit are meant to tap into the faith journey experience of each participant. As a reminder, three things are important about the exchange of ideas and feelings in each session:

1. The questions are constructed in such a way that there are no *right* or *wrong* answers to the “Sharing Questions.”
2. Each of us is on a personal journey to understand more deeply the charism of the Blessed Sacrament congregation, the legacy of Saint Peter Julian Eymard and the eucharistic teachings of the Catholic Church.
3. The Blessed Sacrament religious leading or attending the meeting can provide clarity as to the intent of the ideas expressed by Saint Peter Julian or the author quoted. What’s most important is that each of us wrestles with the ideas expressed.

A note about the “Invitation to Mission” element

At the heart of Saint Peter Julian Eymard’s theology are the three C’s: *Celebration, Contemplation* and *Communion*. What we experience at the celebration of the Eucharist, we contemplate in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament so that the *missioning* we are called to at the end of Mass shows itself in action in the world, particularly in our commitment to communion with the poor and the marginalized.

Beginning with Session II: Part I, we commit ourselves to *doing something* to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ – at our parish, in the community, within our families. In Session II: Part 2, and following this pattern thereafter, we take time to share our experiences of putting into action what we commit to do (or continue to do) from the previous session.

Suggested ground rules for supporting the person facilitating each session

This *Course of Study* is a highly interactive one. Each meeting will have a *leader* - a Blessed Sacrament religious or an associate of the congregation. We have found it helpful when *all* the participants commit to the idea that “leadership is *everybody’s* business.” In that spirit, we suggest the following guidelines or “ground rules” for supporting the *leader* by committing to:

- A supportive environment for people to express their feelings and ideas – their stories. We encourage active, respectful listening, focused on the speaker. This is a time to share personal reflections, not a time for debate or disputing another’s ideas.
- A norm whereby we initially allow each person in the group the opportunity to share her or his reflections before any other person speaks a second time.

Note: Any participant at any time should always feel free to pass on a question.

- An approach encouraging each person to speak from an “I” point of view, e.g., “My experience suggests ...” or “My belief is ...” or “My understanding of what the congregation (or the church) teaches is ...” *not* a “You should...” or “You ought to ...”
- The norm that no one person (or two) dominates the conversation.
- Working with the leader to stay within the time-frame for each session.
- Staying on topic.
- This consideration: *we are here as co-learners and co-teachers.*

A note about the content of this Course of Study

The Second Vatican Council called upon religious communities to rediscover the writings and teachings of their founders. Over the last twenty years, the study of Eymard’s life and writings has enhanced a rich understanding of the legacy he left, especially in the writings of such religious as Fathers André Guitton, Norman Pelletier, Paul Bernier, Mario Vecchiato, Bernard Camiré and Sister Catherine Marie Caron, SSS.

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