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Opening Meeting

Inspired by the spirit of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, we form a lay association, approved by the church, called the *Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament* in partnership with the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament.

We thus seek to pursue our Christian vocation and our call to holiness by following the evangelical way taught by Saint Peter Julian Eymard.

Rule of Life for Associates (ROLA), 1

**Associates of the
Blessed Sacrament
Initial Formation Program**

Opening Meeting

1. Opening Prayer

Leader: Jesus said, “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” (Luke 12:49)

All: Creator of the universe, breathe upon us as we turn our hearts to you. Send your Holy Spirit upon us, as you did in giving birth to your church at Pentecost. Transform our lives to become apostles and disciples of the Eucharist.

Saint Peter Julian, we desire to live our lives with the same love for the Eucharist that burned within your heart. Be with us now, and send your grace upon all those throughout the world that seek to embody the fullness of the Eucharist for the glory of God and the good of the world. Grant all that we need through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

First Reader: A reading from a letter of Peter Julian Eymard to Miss Adele Julhien (July 18, 1861)

Keep your soul in constant thanksgiving. It is most pleasing to our Lord, the most refreshing for the heart. Turn everything into thanksgiving, because everything is a grace, everything can be to the praise of God. If you want to be the beloved disciple of our Lord’s heart, do as I tell you!

Go to his heart by pure love. Pure love is the flame which rises and emanates from the hearth without turning back. It moves towards its goal.

Pure love is the angel who loves God without looking at itself, or does so only to give back to God what it has received from him.

Let this good Master turn you to and fro as he likes, and be content with God’s contentedness. You no longer belong to yourself, nor have you for a long time. Therefore, the good Lord must be your Master to do what he wills with you.

Remember that the soul is never quite the same; God is always

leading it to a new state, in order that its love may always be new. So look at God within you and follow him.

(Pause for silent prayer. Leader invites people to express words of gratitude to God for blessings they have received recently in their lives.)

Second Reader: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Third Reader: A reading from the Decree of Canonization of Peter Julian Eymard.

This holy priest turned all his energies toward the sacrament of the altar with ever-growing fervor. He spent himself without counting the cost to nourish everyone with love for the Eucharist, and to awaken the zeal of religious groups. Peter Julian Eymard, while meditating on the sacred banquet, understood that the divine promises of Christ would be fulfilled at all times: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him.” And “I am here with you for all time, until the end of the world.”

He rekindled the fire with fire, and fed his own love for the Most Holy Body of Christ with greatest care, desiring to rekindle the devotion of every believer, especially that of priests. He believed that the duty of priests was to offer the bread of angels to the army of faithful Christians, so that they might feed upon it.

(Pause for silent prayer. Leader invites people to share their thoughts and inspiration at this time.)

Leader: Jesus said, “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” (Luke 12:49)

All: Spirit of the living God, awaken in us the sense of your call to place the Eucharist at the center of our lives. You entrusted to Saint Peter Julian Eymard the great desire to light the four corners of the world with the fire of the Eucharist. Through personal hardships, he encountered the transformative power of your love in the Blessed Sacrament. We ask you, Father, to enflame our hearts with the same desire that enabled Saint Peter Julian to offer the gift of his life in service of this great sacrament. Give us the grace we need to continue his mission of proclaiming the love of Christ to others. Grant this in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen

(Following Prayer, we will proceed with the following:)

1. Introductions
(Personal story, ministry involvements, association with the congregation, etc.)
2. Review of the Formation Syllabus
3. Reception of and explanation of the *Rule of Life for Associates (ROLA)*
4. Reception of the participant's booklet for the next meeting.
5. Pass out *Prayer to Saint Peter Julian Eymard* card and end with *Commitment Ceremony* on page 6.

2. Associates of the Blessed Sacrament: Initial Formation Syllabus

Initial formation is a process of introduction to the vision and mission of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, who saw the Eucharist as a powerful means for the transformation of individuals and society, and who collaborated closely with lay persons and others in propagating this vision. This formation takes place through a variety of experiences designed to prepare the candidates for living a life centered on the Eucharist.

I. Opening Meeting

- An opportunity to meet one another, pray and clarify the purposes and overview of the Associates initial formation program, the *Rule of Life for Associates (ROLA)*, and the *Handbook for Associates*.

II. Saint Peter Julian Eymard: his life and mission

- God led Peter Julian Eymard on a journey of faith: first as a diocesan priest, then a religious of the Society of Mary; then to found a religious community dedicated to the Eucharist.

III. Saint Peter Julian Eymard: Apostle of the Eucharist

- God inspired Saint Peter Julian Eymard to establish within the church a new way of living the Christian life as disciples and apostles of the Eucharist.

IV. Historical Development of the Congregation and the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament

- Understanding the origins and recent history of the congregation and the aggregation offers us a sense of who we are and where God is leading us today.

V. The Vocational Call of the Laity in Service to the Church

- Our baptism calls us to live an authentically eucharistic spirituality.

VI. Evangelizing and Mission

- We all share in Christ's mission to bring the love of God and the hope that is ours to others.

VII. The Eucharist as the Center of our Life

- Following the example of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, we place the Eucharist at the center of our lives and witness to the love of Christ offered in this sacrament for the transformation of the world.

VIII. Table of the Word

- When received in faith, the word of God resonates in our innermost being and reveals the meaning of our lives. We pay careful attention to the texts of the Mass and internalize them in prayer.

IX. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- The celebration of the Eucharist proclaims the paschal mystery of Jesus, the source of our salvation, and invites our full, active and conscious participation. By doing so, our lives become what we celebrate.

X. Liturgy of the Hours

- This “prayer of the church” is prayed by clergy, religious communities, and a growing number of lay persons and parishes. It is offered for the whole church and is encouraged in the *ROLA*.

XI. Saint Peter Julian Eymard and Prayer in the Presence of the Eucharist

- Prayer holds an important place in our lives and is part of our mission. By it, we hope to become adorers in spirit and in truth. Eucharistic adoration extends the celebration of the Eucharist and leads to service in daily life.

XII. Preparing for the Covenant Ceremony

- In studying and reflecting on these themes and the *Rule of Life for Associates (ROLA)*, we prepare ourselves for our Covenant Commitment as Associates of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation.

3. Ceremony of Commitment to the Initial Formation Program for Associates of the Blessed Sacrament

Leader: Thank you for responding to the invitation to begin your candidacy, a period of discernment and preparation in becoming an Associate of the Blessed Sacrament. We ask the Holy Spirit to come upon us as on Pentecost and enflame our hearts with love for the Eucharist. Guide us to center our lives on the Eucharist and share this precious gift with others.

Candidates: Good and gracious God, you invite us to be in your presence and to make an offering of our lives in the service of your Holy Sacrament. You instruct us through your Son, the Word made flesh who lives among us. Form your Word within us as you did in Mary so that our lives may bear fruit. Form us into disciples and apostles of the Eucharist. Mold us to become your bread to feed the hungry hearts that do not know how great your love is for our world.

Leader: Lord God, we praise you for your goodness.
You are the source of all holiness and life.
With bread from heaven you feed the hungers of your people.

Candidates: *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*

Leader: Christ Jesus, you sit with us at table in friendship.
Your body and blood become our food and drink.
You give us an example of humble service and selfless love.

Candidates: *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*

Leader: Holy Spirit, gather your people in a communion of love.
Powerfully breathe a mighty wind upon us that we might live.
Unite us in one bread and one cup, a living sacrifice of praise.

Candidates: *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*

Candidates:

*I dedicate myself anew to the vows of my baptism,
to live my life centered on your love in the Eucharist,
a life of prayer and service.*

*May I find my wholeness and holiness in this place and at this time,
where you have placed me.*

*May my ministry, complete with failings and stumbling,
be leaven for your kingdom to rise in our world.*

*I wish to be a servant to the needs of those around me,
and to the needs of the entire world.*

*Bless me now with your love, as I make a gift of myself to you,
and strive to be your disciple and apostle of the Eucharist.*

*I make this dedication in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

Concluding Prayer: *Prayer to Saint Peter Julian Eymard*



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Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament

