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A very special Eymardian Pilgrimage

Friday April 22nd to Friday April 29th 2016

On Friday, April 22, a group of eight pilgrims, from the Blessed Sacrament Chapel in Dublin, Ireland, set out on a week-long Eymardian Pilgrimage. From the moment we arrived in the airport of Lyon, France, and were greeted by Fr Virgil Dalangin sss, on behalf of the Association *Friends of Fr Eymard in Matheysine*, we felt that something special was in store for us, and so it was!

Our drive to La Mure was very comfortable and exciting. Going into the house where Fr Eymard lived and died was inspirational, and it was to be our home for the next week. After a delightful meal, a slideshow and a briefing as what the pilgrimage would include, we retired for the night.

Each day of our pilgrimage was very carefully planned for us. Besides ensuring that we visited each Eymardian place, Fr Virgil ensured that we had some time to explore and reflect on our own. Guided by informative booklets during the guided tours, we had access to some of our Founder's own reflections that connected deeply to these places of interest, as it was explained along the way by Fr Virgil, for an added depth and nuance. Of course, a good measure of trivial information and humorous insights are also thrown in, to keep us light-hearted all throughout our visits.

Our first day involved us in a walking tour around La Mure that brought to life before us the history of

the birthplace of Fr Eymard. Of special importance was our visit to the two churches of the town - *Eglise Notre Dame* and *Chapelle St Pierre Julien Eymard* -, the *Exposition Eymard* and the *Calvaire de La Mure*, where Eymard walked barefoot as a young boy, during winter time. We celebrated Mass in Fr Eymard's room, at the end of our touring, and this was very special for all in attendance.

On our second day, we visited the *Sanctuaire de Notre Dame du Laus*. Fr Virgil showed us how the story of Benoit reflects Fr Eymard's own life journey with the Blessed Mother. In this place where our Founder made a pilgrimage at a young age, we were very blessed to have visited the *chapel of the Bon Rencontre*, Benoit's room at the entrance of the shrine, the *chapel of the Precious Blood*, the *Oratory of Angels* and the *Pindreau*, the place of the apparition on a hill, and they just filled us with awe and wonder. The fact that it is a place of reconciliation had a strong appeal for us, especially on this year of mercy.

On our third day, we visited *Ars*. Having celebrated the Mass at the *Crypte St Pierre* was very inspirational as was our guided tour of the Shrine and the Parochial House. Hearing of the deep friendship between Fr Eymard and St Jean Marie Vianney inspired some members of our group, and learning how our holy Founder sought counsel from the Curé of *Ars*, who in turn, encouraged him strongly, was something the group members would not have been aware of. Learning how this priestly town likewise reminds us of the commitment of Fr Eymard to the service of priests, was something that touched everyone's heart.

On the fourth day, we had a delightful touring day to *Saint Marcellin*, where we visited *Notre Dame de l'Osier*, *Chatte*, *St Romans* and on our way home, a visit to the town of *Monteynard*. A Mass was celebrated in the Shrine of Our Lady of Osier

(willow tree), which served as a memorial of the first Mass of the newly ordained Fr Eymard on that very same place. It was enlightening to visit Chatte, where Fr Eymard began his priestly mission as the assistant parish priest, and of course, pausing at the *Rock of St Romans* enabled us to reflect and savour with Fr Eymard one of the extraordinary graces he claimed to have received there. The grace that the holy Saint received on that Rock opened up for him a spirituality marked by the love of God.

On the fifth day, we travelled to *Grenoble* and celebrated the Eucharist at the *chapelle de l'Adoration* at Rue Voltaire, the same place where Fr Eymard presided his last Mass. When visiting the Cathedral of Grenoble, we saw two statues very near the altar, that of the Holy Curé of Ars and that of St Peter Julian Eymard. The two were both ordained in Grenoble: Jean Marie Vianney on Sunday, August 13, 1815 and Fr Eymard on Sunday July 20th, 1834. After lunch, we went to visit the *Grande Chartreuse*. This was a delightful trip with absolutely beautiful scenery that truly delighted us, pilgrims. At the museum of La Correrie, we got some understanding of the life of St Bruno and his companions, the evolution of the Carthusian Order and of what a day in the life of a Carthusian monk entailed. We returned to La Mure with lovely memories, images, stories and insights to reflect on.



The group at Notre Dame de La Salette

On the sixth day, we visited *La Salette*. We had lunch at the Shrine and had a guided visit of the place. We learned that the event that lies at the origin of this pilgrimage site took place on Saturday, September 19th, 1846, when a “Beautiful Lady” appeared to two children from a nearby village of Corps: Maximin Giraud, aged 11, and Melanie Calvat, aged 14. We learned how Fr Eymard was the first to make known in Lyons the message of the apparition in La Salette, by the end of 1846. Between 1852, the date of his first pilgrimage and 1868, the year of his death, Fr Eymard made no less than two visits there. In 1852, on August 18th, he noted in the Visitor’s Book that “I had the honour of being the first to announce the miraculous events of the apparition in Lyon, and I am happy today, to come and kiss with love and gratitude, this blessed earth, this mountain of salvation”. We returned to La Mure, from our visit to the La Salette, feeling very happy and with a precious sense of Our Lady’s presence and of Fr Eymard’s deep devotion to her.

On the final day of our pilgrimage, we visited *Lyon*, a city of great importance to the life and vocation of Fr Eymard, and while there, we went to the *Sanctuaire de Notre Dame de Fourvière*, where he prayed often. As a Marist priest, he stayed there between 1844 to 1851, the decisive years in his spiritual journey, since it was as in Lyon, and specifically in Fourvière that he received the “grace of vocation”. For Fr Eymard, Lyon was a “beautiful and pious city”. “When you go there” he counselled to his friends, “you should see Fourvière, the heavenly citadel of the Rome of the Gauls, and from Fourvière, go to St Ireneus, the reliquary of the martyrs of Lyons...”. At the conclusion of our visit, we headed for the airport to journey home.

We were really pleased with our pilgrimage and are most appreciative at how Fr Virgil had so meticulously planned it from beginning to end to assure us of a profoundly meaningful journey on the path of Fr Eymard, and we are now filled with a new sense and understanding of the Founder’s spiritual journey and legacy. We are truly very impressed with how Fr Manuel and the members of the Association *Friends of Fr Eymard in Matheysine* welcomed us, cared for us and shared with us. Our evening meals with the community were truly special family occasions, where there was collaboration, sharing, humour and fraternity. This Eymardian Pilgrimage was a truly wonderful occasion and experience. May God bless and reward Fr Virgil, Fr Manuel and the Association.

FR RAPHAEL O’HALLORAN, SSS
DUBLIN COMMUNITY



Accompaniment for perpetual vows

April 2016 – After having ended the three month preparation of accompanying our brother Julián Andrés Cano Alzate for perpetual vows, I wish to share with you this brief account.

Consecration is the basis of the Christian life of all the baptised; by the sacrament of baptism all Christians belong to God, are his exclusive property.

Through baptism Jesus shares his life with each Christian; each one is sanctified in the Son, each one is called to holiness, each one is sent out to share in Christ's mission, enabled to grow in love and service of the Lord.

I know that the purpose of this short period is to enable a religious to verify the integration of the values and lived experiences in the Congregation since the novitiate. Personal reflection, communal and personal prayer, spiritual reading, the Eucharist, silence, these are priorities during this period. It is a pause and a time to take stock of the journey of the scholastic before his definitive commitment.

Consecration is a divine action. God calls a person and separates him to be dedicated to himself in a particular manner. At the same time it is He, who gives the grace to respond to the call with a deep and fully free "yes". Thus, a covenant of mutual love and fidelity, communion and mission, is achieved for the glory of God and the salvation of humankind.

The three month period of accompaniment enables us to prepare the aspiring candidate for the concerns or areas of highest importance for the Congregation and the Church in general. We focused on the purpose of the process: SSS Life, the prophetic dimension, a life of discipleship and apostolate, Eymard and the Congregation, Religious Life, the three evangelical counsels, a week of deepening in prayer to deepen a sense of the evangelical counsels; Eucharistic spirituality, Eucharistic mission, and finally a seven-day retreat in an environment of deep prayer and contemplation, accompanied by his spiritual

director, with whom he reflected profoundly on the formula of profession (cf. RL 102).

Heartfelt thanks to the candidate for his willingness to live and undertake the programme presented; also to the Formation Commission for preparing the programme carried out during the process; to the fathers who accompanied him as being responsible and spiritual director; and, in general, to confreres who contributed their part in enriching the themes covered during the preparation process.



Julian with his parents

As a community of Blessed Sacrament brothers, we ask God to continue his work in the person of Julián Andrés so that he may live his consecration faithfully. Amen.

FR CARLOS JOSÉ SIERRA, SSS
PROVINCIAL VICAR



Ordinations to the priesthood

With joy we announce to the whole Eymardian family and to all who support the Eucharistic mission throughout the world the ordination of three of our brothers: Jérôme NGANTETE, Donatien BILO and Blaise MATONDO.

In fact, on Sunday the **8th May 2016** the Association of the Major Superiors of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ASUMA)

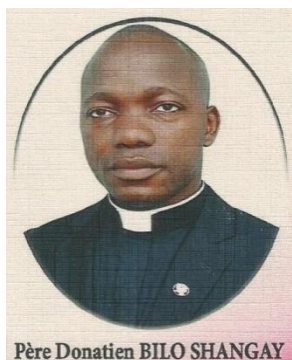
celebrated joyously and with gratitude sixteen priestly ordinations, among which were those of our three SSS religious from the province of Blessed Isidore Bakanja; with them four others were ordained deacons.

The Mass of ordination, held in the parish of Maria Auxiliatrice began at 10 am and lasted five hours, finishing at 3 pm. Bishop Edouard Kisonga sss, an auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese of Kinshasa, presided at the Mass, concelebrated by Bishop Louis Mbol, an emeritus bishop of the diocese of Idiofa, and 260 priests from many corners of our country. Very numerous male and female religious and Christians took part.

The celebration was rich in symbols such as the following: First of all, the blessing of the parents who took part before the dialogue of the bishop with those to be ordained. One of the parents spoke by expressing their desire to offer their sons to serve God and the Church. After this, each of the parents made a sign of the cross on the forehead of his son to bless him. Then, the parents offered two white pigeons to symbolise peace. These birds accompany the sacrifice of our life being offered to God and for the service of the Church. This is a feature pertaining to the Church in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Père Blaise MATONDO NKAU



Père Donatien BILO SHANGAY



Père Jérôme NGANTETE MPONO

In his homily, Bishop Kisonga exhorted those being ordained to join their voice to those who preceded them in the priesthood to be during this year of mercy artisans of reconciliation and peace, in order to unite

the heart of the Congolese people everywhere to whom they will minister. He also told them: “the shouts of joy and applause that accompany your ordination express cries of joy, but tomorrow these could take on other forms turned against you as criticism and insults. Such is the example of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when he was welcomed by numerous joyous cries, but shortly afterwards he endured only insults and injuries”. Notwithstanding these contradictions and difficulties, “one must remain strong in striving always for the welfare of humankind”. In conclusion, the Bishop reminded them: “a priest must always celebrate the Mass. It is the only source of graces and sanctification for himself and for humankind.”

In keeping with our traditions, this event ended with a festive reception. The whole Eymardian family of the Dem. Rep. of the Congo (SSS religious and members of the Aggregation) gathered around these three priests and their parents to share this moment of fraternity.

We wish the young priests a happy and fruitful ministry in following our holy Founder, Peter-Julian Eymard.

FR NOËL MAYAMBA
DIRECTOR OF THE EUCHARISTIC CENTRE

MRS PÉTRONILLE MUSAKA
MEMBER, AGGREGATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



Servitium Christi Amplified General Council

The Amplified General Council meeting of the Secular Institute Servitium Christi, took place at the Emmaus Retreat and Conference Centre, Lissenhall, Swords, Co. Dublin from **12th to 20th May 2016** (preceded by a General Council Meeting on 10th and 11th May). Our Ecclesial Assistant Fr. Sebastian (“Bong”) Luistro sss was unable to attend due to an unforeseen visa complication, but he was ably represented by Fr. Martin Tine sss who was on hand for celebration of the Eucharist, for advice, and for input, and he really became a brother to us.

Regional Directresses from Brazil, Chile and St. Clare (UK and Ireland) attended together with Local

Directresses of those Centres linked directly to the General Council (Germany, Vietnam, and the Philippines). Due to illness, the representatives from the Czech Centre and the Dutch Region were unable to attend.

The meeting was an occasion to review our progress since our General Assembly of 2013, and to identify our challenges on the journey ahead. This enabled us to plan our way forward towards the General Assembly of 2019. Our preparation had been well attended to, and as a result our discussions were deep, meaningful, and often challenging. As a dispersed Community, our time together is always very precious to us, and our work was therefore interspersed with some "Community-building" opportunities, like our "Party Night" and our Outing.

The openness and sharing helped each of us individually, and all of us as a Community, to identify our strengths and challenges, our goals and aspirations, and in general to renew our zeal as a Eucharistic Community. Many challenges lie ahead of

us, as we strive to "live the Mystery of the Eucharist in all its dimensions" (Rule of Life No.5) while still at the heart of the world, embracing secularity. Indeed we seem to live in a radical way St. Peter Julian's vision of "Two arms, these two flames, one to rise like fire towards the divine Host and the other to rise and spread out like the rays of the sun!" (Retreat Notes: 25 March 1865)

It was with great sadness that we parted on 20th May, but we pray that the bonding which took place during our Amplified General Council Meeting will endure despite the geographical distances between us. Many thanks to the wider Eymard Family for all the good wishes sent to us, and a special "Merci beaucoup" to Fr. Martin who really entered into the spirit of our gathering.

MRS MARY KEANE
GENERAL DIRECTRESS





Disaster in Sri Lanka

Dear Fathers,

As we prepare ourselves to celebrate the 60 years of our Eucharistic presence in Sri Lanka, herewith, I wish to inform you about the disastrous situation in our country due to worst weather conditions that the country ever faced in recent history.

Over 400000 people are displaced and are helpless. Heavy rains have brought disastrous landslides and floods displacing people, destroying homes and bringing death to many who were caught up in floods and landslides. Most of inland the major reservoirs, lakes, rivers and canals are heavily overflowing. When sluice gates of reservoirs, tanks and lakes that sported agriculture and electrical projects were opened and overflowing it caused damaged to the lives and livelihood of many people.



Everyone in the country contribute either in voluntary work, kind, thoughts, prayers and financially to fight the disastrous situation.

All these disastrous change in weather conditions could be due to climatic change and global warming because of the malpractices of many of us as Pope Francis rightly emphasized in his Encyclical on the theology of environmental ecology. We have now faced the catastrophe and causing mostly from the malpractices of humans.

There are many, who are sympathetically driven by sentiments at this moment of disaster, coming out offering with helps. Out of my experiences as a pastor in Matale parish, I know that when the disaster conditions pass away, those who were affected by bad weather conditions would be neglected and left by themselves in inhuman conditions without any help. The people, who are

affected by this conditions, need helps immediately after the disaster condition passed away to settle down and come back to their living conditions.

Please be kind enough to be with us helping us in your thoughts of sympathy, prayers and in other form of aid to help them to re-begin their lives in any form of Charity. Thanks.

In Christ,

FR. DILAN FERNANDO, SSS
PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR



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Padre Eymard / Escritos / Consejos para la Vida espiritual

Padre Eymard / Estudios / Vol XI "Absque sui proprio"



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. 1498 - Brother John BOURQUE

Province: Our Lady of the Assumption
Community: Quezon City, Philippines
Death: 10 June 2016
Age: 86
Profession: 66

N. 1499 - Father Maurits LUYTEN

Province: Saint Peter Julian Eymard
Community: Lommel, Belgium
Death: 22 June 2016
Age: 91
Profession: 69
Priesthood: 64