

SSS INTERNATIONAL

n. 262 – December 18, 2017

SSS Generalate
Via G. B. de Rossi, 46 - 00161 Rome – Italy



www.curiasss.net



“The Religious of the Blessed Sacrament and the Great War”

By post I received the latest book “sui generis” by Father André Guitton, published in June 2017 by Nouvelle Cité. It presents the writings of religious of the Blessed Sacrament who were carrying out military service during the Great War of the years 1914-1918 and communicated to other religious of the Congregation by the Superior General during that time, Father Eugène Couet. I said “sui generis” because this is a strange book: correspondence written in wartime and statistics. I read it for the most part and went through it as a whole. Here are my impressions.

THE ROLE OF FR. COUET.

He faithfully passed on to the Congregation the testimonies of religious in military service. The testimony of confreres confiding in their family. I felt that Fr Couet cared for this family.

Regarding Fr Couet, I recall the tradition passed on by the elderly, in the second term of his generalate, which lasted twenty-four years, during which the Provinces of the Congregation were created, he was

ANDRÉ GUITTON
**LES RELIGIEUX DU SAINT-SACREMENT
ET LA GRANDE GUERRE**
Édition des circulaires du P. Eugène COUET,
Supérieur général durant la guerre de 1914-1918



Nouvelle Cité

presented as “An Eternal Father who crucified his sons”. I was told of religious deported or appointed to distant communities, Buenos Aires among other places.

I owe him my gratitude for his humanity and attention towards these brethren, who emerge from this book.

THE RELIGIOUS IN SERVICE

Some men, often very young, with their faith and their religious ideals, thrown into the midst of the fray, in the trenches and, as religious generally were consigned to serve in the infirmary corps, very often relate that they were near the trenches to gather up the wounded or dead. What is recounted also is their joy in having been able to celebrate the Eucharist, distribute communion or to hold Easter or even to pray in a makeshift chapel. How in these wartime circumstances did they maintain their commitment? But also how did these experiences wound them? Some of them did not return to the Congregation after the Great War.

THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK ANDRÉ GUITTON

We are above all grateful to him for the biography of St Peter-Julian Eymard, our Founder. Those who have had the opportunity to meet him know his erudition as an historian.

With this new book I have felt that the historian was presenting not History but the concrete life of persons, whether they were proclaimed saints like Peter-Julian Eymard or simply torn to shreds by a shell in the trenches. This is also a lesson of history.

In conclusion, this “sui generis” book of our brother André Guitton says perhaps much more than what the pages relate: witnesses, statistics, circulars. I have read and experienced it as a living page of the Eymardian Family.

FR CAMILLE GAGNON, SSS
Provincial St Jean XXIII



Anniversaries - Brussels Blessed Sacrament La Viale Europe

How did we celebrate, at the Chaussée de Wavre in Brussels, three anniversaries and a birth?

On 18 and 19 November 2017, we held the 150th anniversary of the Blessed Sacrament, the 20th anniversary of the community of La Viale Europe, the 10th anniversary of the Festival of Adoration, and the opening of the Béguinage Viaduc.

Generations of people in Brussels know the church of the Blessed Sacrament as a traditional venue of adoration.

On 17 November 1867 Peter-Julian Eymard arrived at the Chaussée de Wavre to begin adoration of the Eucharist.

150 years later to the day Father General Eugênio Barbosa Martins SSS came from Rome to celebrate this anniversary.



Celebrants: Father general Eugênio Barbosa Martins at the altar, Father provincial Maurits Gijbrechts in the foreground, behind Father Guy Martinot SJ

A church built under the impetus of a saint is almost unique in Brussels.

This church is an unusual large-scale building in the European quarter, which was not demolished 20 years after being constructed, and which is still standing despite real estate speculation.

This is a church, where the generosity of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers allowed, just 20 years ago, the welcoming of a renewal Community of La Viale Europe in which about a thousand young people, mostly trainees for the European Union lived and are living an experience of a community life of prayer and simplicity according to the Gospel.

For the last ten years, through the collaboration of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers and La Viale Europe, the church, chapel and site have been entirely renovated.

A thousand faithful come here to pray each week and they appreciate its beauty and excellent acoustics.

This is a church where daily fidelity is uninterrupted for 150 years in assuring watchfulness in prayer since the beginning of the European institutions.

It is a church that has brought to birth a new Béguinage of 20 dwellings, a village in the city that is a response to the urban crisis.

Ten years ago a few friends started in Belgium the Festival of Adoration.

To give thanks to God and remain faithful to these missions, a festive Eucharist and a night of Adoration brought together on 18 and 19 November 2017 the active groups in the house and numerous friends and faithful: the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, the community of La Viale Europe, Jesuits, Béguinage Viaduc, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, the African prayer group Kristu Bolingo, the English-speaking and Philippine group, the prayer group Alleluia and members of the Youth Mass.



Procession in the new Béguinage Viaduc

At this time when we risk living outside of ourselves, we have need of intense occasions of interiority. In our everyday living we experience Eucharistic adoration as a source of joy, strength and peace. As a child put it: "this is a spiritual sunbath".

On Sunday morning Father General carried the Blessed Sacrament in procession to bless the new houses of the Béguinage. Then a festive breakfast at which the faithful gathered there was a surprise in store insofar as they learnt that all the food, bread, jam, yogurt etc. was homemade.

THE SSS COMMUNITY OF BRUXELLES



A festive weekend

The feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, brings the church's Sunday cycle of worship to a joyful close. At St Francis' Church in Melbourne this year the festivities occupied the whole weekend.

On the morning of Saturday 25th November 2017 a full church of confreres, family members, friends, associates and St Francis' regulars witnessed Bishop Terry Curtin ordain Deacon Ben Ho SSS to the priesthood. Ben is the first member of the Australian Province to be ordained a priest for nearly 20 years, the last being Boris Perlaki in August 1998. No wonder it was the occasion of much rejoicing. Members of St Francis' Choir and St Francis' Youth Choir, in combination with brass and organ, made hearts and voices soar.



In a striking homily Bishop Terry focussed on weakness as the heart of priesthood. Citing the letter to the Hebrews (2:18; 4:15; 5:2), he observed that "there is an innate link between priesthood and weakness which is not a threat but of the essence". Thus "Jesus of Nazareth was a priest – ambiguous, suffering, mysterious and salvific".

Weakness, he said, connects us to others and to God. "It allows us to feel with [others] the human condition, the human struggles and darkness and anguish which call out for salvation". And it "relates us to God more deeply, because it brings us into the place in which his

grace can be seen, in which his sustaining presence can reveal itself".

The joy of the church service carried over into the luncheon served in the Pastoral Centre by devoted staff members and hospitality volunteers. Their cheerful generosity over the whole weekend was an inspiration.

The spirit of praise and thanks did not abate on the Sunday morning, buoyed as it was by a tide of marvellous music. Former members returned for their annual performance with St Francis' Choir to sing Haydn's glorious "Mass in Time of War". The augmented ensemble was complemented by four soloists and accompanied by the organ and Symphonia of Melbourne.

Fr Ben was proudly assisted at the altar by Graeme Duro, Director of Formation. Time (perhaps to Ben's relief!) permitted only a short homily on Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats at the end of time. What mattered, Ben said, was how well we made use of our time now.

A contingent of Ben's family travelled from Singapore to join him for the weekend: his parents, John and Irene, several aunts, and his brother and wife and three children. John and Irene rightly played a significant role in the liturgies of both days.

Just before Fr Ben blessed and dismissed the assembly from his first eucharist, the Director of Music at the church, Tony Way, had a few words to say. He drew everyone's attention to two significant features of the day's celebration.

The first was the new beginning that Ben's ordination meant for the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in Australia and for St Francis'. The second was the final appearance of Tony's predecessor, Roger Heagney, as guest conductor at the 11.00 am Sunday choral eucharist. This brought to a close Roger's extraordinary fifty-year contribution to the musical life of St Francis'. How fitting that one splendid example of service should finish just as another gets under way. May this inspirational weekend draw a stream of new members into the Province's eucharistic life and mission.





Servitium Christi in Vietnam

Responding to the call of God, on First Sunday morning of Advent (December 3, 2017) ten sisters of the Servitium Christi, a secular Institute in Vietnam, came together with other sisters of the Institute, with their friends and relatives. They met around the table of fellowship at the small chapel of the SSS Fathers located in the parish of Hai Duong belonging to Xuan Loc diocese, Dong Nai province, Vietnam, to celebrate the Eucharist and pray for the candidates who definitely engaged themselves in a way of life according to Eucharistic Spirituality promoted by Saint Peter Julian Eymard to the service of the Church and God's people.



Among the ten sisters, there were six candidates for perpetual profession and four candidates for first profession. Father Joseph Phan Ngoc Tro, Provincial Superior of the Province of the Vietnamese Martyrs presided the celebration. Miss Mary Keane came from Dublin, Ireland, as General Directress to witness and to accept the vows of the candidates. Father Norman Pelletier sss, former Superior general of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation and Father Anthony Schueller sss, Provincial Superior of the Province of Saint Ann, from New York and Cleveland, were

concelebrants together with other SSS Fathers and some diocesan priests.

Servitium Christi was founded on January 6th 1952 by Father Godfried Spiekman; as Superior General of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation, he wanted to carry out the will of Father Eymard to have a secular institute to share in Eucharistic Spirituality and mission for lay people. Miss Ton Golsteijn and Miss Han Bollen were subsequently the first two General Directresses. Since the foundation in Netherlands, then the Institute spread throughout various corner of the world with its members developing in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Czech Republic, Great Britain, Ireland, USA, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Philippines and especially in Vietnam. Total number of the members in the Institute is 140, in which 60 members are Vietnamese.

The Institute rooted in Vietnam in 1997. Among 60 members, they have 19 perpetual professed, 15 temporary professed,

some novices, postulants and aspirants. The Institute in Vietnam is divided into two centers, Saigon Center and Dong Nai Center. Majority of the members earn their living by taking care of kindergartens. For carrying out their mission in various parishes and dioceses, the members of the Institute involve in and commit themselves in the areas of education, social charity, some activities at parish church such as giving catechism sessions for children and adult preparing for first communion, pre-canna, and service of the sacristy and altars of the parishes churches, choir conducting.



Merry Christmas
Happy New Year
2018

