

St. Peter Julian Eymard, 1811-1868, Founder

Feast Day: August 2



Brief Biography

Peter Julian Eymard was born in LaMure d'Isere, France. His mother had previously borne three children who died in infancy. Peter, however, flourished, "and his mother often took him in her arms when she went to pray in gratitude before the Blessed Sacrament."

The story is told that at the age of five, he once disappeared from his childhood home. When his stepsister found him in their church, he was at the top of a ladder leaned against the high altar near the tabernacle. He explained, "I can listen better to Jesus from here."

His own childhood devotion to his faith led him to ordination to the priesthood in the Diocese of Grenoble in 1834. He was devoted to the Blessed Mother, which led him to join the Marist order in 1839. This, however, was not to be his last religious order (see next section).

His final years were filled with physical suffering, financial troubles, and resistance to his work. Nevertheless, he was beatified in 1925 and canonized in 1962.

Why St. Peter Julian Eymard is Identified with the Eucharist.

During his years as a Marist, his Eucharistic devotion deepened, as did his advocacy of Forty Hours devotion. A few years later, another desire gripped him, born on the feast of Corpus Christi in 1845: “to bring all the world to the knowledge and love of Our Lord; to preach nothing but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Eucharistic.”

In 1856, he founded a new order of priests: the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. The Congregation focused its efforts on preparing children for their First Holy Communion. They also worked to bring non-practicing Catholics back to the practice of their faith and reception of the Blessed Sacrament.

Eventually, an order of nuns joined his effort, and the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament were established. (*Magnificat Adoration Companion*)

The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament now has over 800 members in 29 countries on five continents. (For more information, visit blessedsacrament.com.)

Brief Quotations:

“Through the Eucharist, Jesus surely desires to conquer the heart of man. If Jesus is the first to give man his heart, it is in order to have the right to ask man for his. Love desires community of goods, society of life, and sharing of sentiments. The one who loves Jesus Christ as Jesus Christ loves him will then tend with all his strength to unity of life. And that’s the real triumph of Jesus Christ: to transform the life of the communicant into his own life and into his habits; and that is done without violence and without constraint, but with gentleness of love. Communion then is the fastest and best conversion of a soul.” (*Magnificat*, November 2023)

“The Eucharist is the life of the people. The Eucharist gives them a center of life. All can come together without the barriers of race or language in order to celebrate the feast days of the Church. It gives them a law of life, that of charity, of which it is the source; thus, it forges between them a common bond, a Christian kinship.” (*Saint of the Day*, Leonard Foley, OFM, and Pat McCloskey, OFM, Franciscan Media, Cincinnati, OH 2013)