



### **From A Bishop's Journal (771)**

#### **A Double Anniversary for the Blessed Sacrament Sisters**

**F**ounded in Paris in 1858 by Saint Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868) with the help of Marguerite Guillot (1815-1885), a mill worker, the Congregation of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament came to Chicoutimi, Québec on July 21, 1903, and to Edmundston in the fall of 1948. A eucharistic triduum in the presence of Sister Catherine-Marie Caron, the Superior General, and of Sister Janine Bourque, the Provincial, was the hallmark of the community's and our diocesan Church's celebration of thanksgiving. I thank Bishop Gerard Dionne and Monsignor Eymard Desjardins, P.A., for having presided the first two days of the celebration. On October 16 I had the happiness of joining in the hymn of gratitude by the community and its affiliated members.

#### **First Contacts**

It was at the St. John Eudes junior seminary in Québec that I first got acquainted with the Blessed Sacrament Sisters. As a young boarder at the seminary (1951-1957) I had the pleasure of being sacristan and, as such, it was one of my tasks to go to the Thabor Convent to get the hosts. Back in Québec City in 1965, following my ordination as a priest, I often went with confreres to spend many memorable moments in adoration at the humble yet magnificent Thabor chapel. I must admit that quite a few confreres went there to renew their strength and courage as priests and teachers. We felt supported by the prayers of the sisters who were totally dedicated to adoration on behalf of the whole world, as well as to their specific prayers for priests. To these personal memories I would add the contacts I also had with a new congregation dedicated to adoration, the congregation of the Missionary Dominican Sisters Adorers, founded October 7, 1948 by Sister Julienne du Rosaire and Canon Cyrille Labrecque in Beauport, Québec. In December, 1993, a few days before my ordination as bishop, I and fellow parishioners of Saint-Odilon were privileged to meet Mother Julienne du Rosaire. I humbly believe that no fewer than five parishioners from Saint-Odilon, my home parish, were Sisters Adorers. I must also note that they had welcomed me to their convents in Haiti, and Lima, Peru in 1977.

#### **“My Father is Looking for Adorers”**

It would not be looking down on St. Peter Julian Eymard, to quote Mother Julienne du Rosaire's words to her sisters, on June 6, 1967. Besides, Mother Julienne, whose cause for beatification has

just started in Québec, only thirteen years after her death, was a faithful visitor to the Blessed Sacrament Sisters' chapel between the ages of 12 and 17. This is what she wrote: "I would go to the Blessed Sacrament Sisters who were close by, and there I would be hours in adoration. There I would take my 'sun bath'... It was before the blessed sacrament that my vocation as a sister adorer took shape in my soul: Our Lord asking the Samaritan woman for adorers, I wanted to be part of them. I wanted to respond to the Father's desires: 'My Father is looking for adorers.' This was what would bring me to the Blessed Sacrament Sisters on holidays and especially Sundays. I would spend hours there, and then it dawned on me that Christ was the Adorer. I would ask myself what Our Lord was doing among us, in the obscurity of the sacred bread, hidden behind the veil of a host. I gradually learned that he was there in order to worship, in my place. I felt the need to pass my prayers through his. I was being taught a special way of adoring: adoring through him.

### **Infinite Adoration**

"'My Father is looking for adorers' [worshippers]. The word was a problem to me, and I thought about it often. Ever since the beginning of the world, were there no true adorers on earth? And I understood that if the time had now come it was because Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father's only true adorer, and that we are adorers only in him and through him, that his first heartbeat his first breath of life was not his first act of adoration but the beginning of an everlasting adoration; that from the moment of his conception in Mary's womb and until his death and into eternity, Christ adores and worships. He adores in heaven. He adores in tabernacles. He adores in the midst of humankind when he gives himself in communion. He adores without end. He adores day and night. He adores in all places. His sacrifice on the cross is the supreme adoration that is perpetuated down the centuries through the sacrifice of the mass. I was especially drawn to the realisation that every time a host or a chalice is raised to heaven, it is the whole Church that offers the Father not the homage of adoration but the infinite adoration that is Jesus Christ."

### **A Merry Feast**

These words reflect those of St. Peter Julian when he writes: "At mass Jesus Christ offers himself to his Father, he adores him, thanks him, asks forgiveness and prays for the good of the Church, for each one of us, and especially the poor sinners. Let us join Our Lord; let us pray as he did, with the four attitudes expressed in the Eucharist. Let us walk into the Upper Room, the first church of the new law. This is where the incarnate Word builds his mystical dwelling and supports it with seven columns that are the seven sacraments. It is there that he sets up his table and invites his disciples to supper with him... Thanks to the Eucharist, Christians celebrate a feast where everyone, without jealousy or distinction, partake of the same divine table and share the same heavenly cup. It is the merry feast of fellowship that we can extend indefinitely. May Jesus then be praised for having given his Spouse all of himself, and not only a picture! Let us know how to appreciate and taste this nourishment."

### **In the Hearts of the Poorest**

Jesus the Father's adorer shows himself in a very special way in the poorest of the poor in our society; he identified with them, with the dispossessed, the afflicted, those thirsting for justice, the

merciful, the peacemakers, and the lovers of purity. May our adoration lead us on to the poor among us. Whatever we shall have done to them, it is with Jesus, for Jesus and in Jesus that we did it. "At the holy table, all are children, receiving the same food."

+ *François Thibodeau*

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.  
Bishop of Edmundston

10-22-08