

INTRODUCTON

The impetus for this book came at a meeting of the Asian SSS Provincials as they discussed what would be most fitting as a contribution to the bi-centenary celebrations of the birth of our founder, St. Peter Julian Eymard in 2011. Prior to this, the Indian Kristu Jyoti Province had already been contemplating the idea of producing a book on the sayings of Fr. Eymard with a short explanation for each, as a tool for those in formation to come to know the founder better and to imbibe and appreciate his special contribution to the Church! When this was proposed to the group of Asian Provincials at their meeting as a possible bi-centenary special, they readily espoused the idea opting to make it the contribution of the entire Asian Conference of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers. And that is how it all began way back in September 2008 during the Amplified General Council meeting held in Madrid, Spain.

Easy as it was to propose such an idea, the implementation of it wasn't all that facile. Nevertheless, all those in formation in the Indian Province at various levels were pressed into service to collect as many quotations of Fr. Eymard as was possible for them. Generous as they were in their effort, they came up with a number of quotes, most of them documented, but quite a few with no reference to the time and place or their background in the life of Fr. Eymard. Nevertheless, as it was in itself a Herculean task to collect enough quotations to span the entire year, we began the work, hoping to be able to track down as many of the undocumented quotes as possible. This we did, but a few still eluded our myopic scrutiny. We thought it best to leave them as is and hope that perhaps in the next edition, with the help of other members of the Congregation and our readers, we would be able to fill in the blanks adequately. We are also greatly indebted to the spiritual magazine "Emmanuel" published by the Province of St. Ann (U.S.A.) which features each month a Saying of Fr. Eymard, and also by the work of the Sister Servants who have done extensive work in English on our Founder, particularly on his letters.

Fr. Eymard's Inspiration

The rationale behind this project is the amazing personality of Fr. Eymard in several ways he was way ahead of his times in his insights into the centrality of the Eucharist as the sacrament of Christ's love for us. What is remarkable about his contribution is the nature of the times in which he lived and the spiritual background of France particularly, during the aftermath of the French Revolution. His insights cannot but be the result of several hours of intense prayer and spiritual effort on his part.

In recent years we have been fortunate to have good English translations of the life and writings of Fr. Eymard's made available to us, and so we felt it would be profitable to our young students if they could be familiar with these, right from their earliest years in the Congregation. The idea behind presenting them in the form of a capsule each day is the age-old wisdom - that if even a drop of water is dropped on a hard rock repeatedly and consistently over the same spot, it will in time make a noticeable hole in it. With this in mind, we place this tool before those in our formation communities, hoping that the students will not only read one quote each day of the year without fail, but will also spend some time reflecting on it and seeking to make the teaching it contains a part of their lives through prayer and assiduous practice. Being young and pliable this consistent and repeated exposure to the thinking of Fr. Eymard should do something to mould our formees into the kind of adorers Fr. Eymard had in mind when starting the Congregation.

Primarily for Formees

In the reflections presented we have kept in mind precisely those in formation and so have included elements that they would necessarily come across in the formation process at some stage or other. Insights culled from various sources of formation have been used hoping thereby to present a broad-based understanding of the thought and intent of Fr. Eymard. At times, we have taken his thought a little further, particularly where it involves terminology which in Eymard's day and age was different from ours today. Besides, several of the insights of Vatican II have been included, as this is what our young people today are familiar with. It is evident that a tool of this kind will be as useful to the formees

as their formators make it out to be for them! Having experimented with this approach with several groups of trainees over the years, we can assure everyone who cares to use this method that it does produce fantastic results and communicates our SSS charism far more effectively than other tried classroom methods. All we need to do is to make use of it conscientiously!

Realizing that no human work is perfect right from the start, our hope is that this humble effort will be regarded more as a starting point than as a polished accomplishment, inspiring others to also join in the project and either perfect the present effort or even perhaps produce another companion volume for there is scope for much more in this line. We are grateful to all who have contributed towards enabling this little book to see the light of day and trust that Fr. Eymard and the Good Lord he served faithfully in the Eucharist will bless them abundantly.

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(For the Asian Conference 2009)
Blessed Sacrament Congregation
