THE YEAR FOR PRIESTS

“Model your life on the mystery of the Lord’s Cross”

(Rite of the Ordination of a Priest)
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WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS OF RESTRUCTURING?

Excerpts from the Circular Letter of the Superior General to the Congregation concerning the process of Restructuring

[Note: the complete text is included with this present issue as an insert and may also be found on the website www.passiochristi.org]

My dear brothers of the Congregation and sisters and brothers of the Passionist Family,

Introduction. In proximity to the feast of St. Paul of the Cross, our Father and Founder, I want to share some reflections and plans with you concerning our life and mission and also concerning the process of the revitalization of the Congregation.

1. Remembering the Passion of Jesus is an efficacious remedy for the evils that afflict, exhaust and divide humanity because “recalling” in an authentic sense, means living by it and allowing oneself to be inspired by its logic of love and of self-giving in the choices that are made and in interpersonal and social relationships. In this sense, “recalling” is a true revolution that is not only spiritual, but also cultural. The Passion of Jesus and its meaning can transform the world! We don’t know if this is a dream for us; but it is certainly what we believe.

2. We should, we want to re-center our life around the charism of the Passion. The current process of Restructuring is about not forgetting; it is about being present and successful in the fight against “the evils” about which St. Paul of the Cross spoke.

3. In fact, we are living during difficult times in which society and the Church and we cannot remain passive. However, this is something that we already know and are convinced about and, beginning with the General Synod of 2004, we have begun the process of Restructuring. This was reconfirmed by further discernment and specific decisions were made by the General Chapter of 2006 and the General Synod in Cuernavaca, Mexico in 2008. It involves a change of heart, of mind and of will. “My” must be changed into “we”; autonomy must be changed into relationship and profound and fruitful collaboration so as to bring about structural changes. The sense of being a “Province, Vice-Province and Vicariate” must change into a sense of being a “Configuration and a Congregation”.

4. In the Gospel passage of this Sunday, 11 October (Mk.10: 17-30) a rich young man asks Jesus what he has to do to gain eternal life. “You know the commandments…,” Jesus tells him. “Master…I have observed them from my youth”, the young man responds. “Then Jesus, looking intently at him, loved him and said: “You are still missing one thing: go, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come and follow me.”. Perhaps the young man thought that Jesus was going to tell him to do some other religious practice, another religious devotion. No! Jesus does not invite him to add something else, but to free himself from something. He invites him to abandon the human security that his “many possessions” had afforded him and to share them with the poor. But the young man lowered his eyes and he went away sad because he was incapable of sharing the many goods that he possessed.

6. The word Solidarity, that had its maximum expression on the Cross, is also the key word for us in the current phase of the process of Restructuring. But so that it doesn’t remain only a “word”. It should deepen the conviction in us that life is a gift that should be shared
among the various regions of the Congregation. It was not an empty word on the Cross, nor was it an empty word in the early Christian communities who "held everything in common."

7. It is in concrete situations that we evaluate the capacity of being in solidarity and sharing goods, understood in the wide sense and not only in economic terms, will be the measure of our charity, our hope and our faith.

8. During the two years since the General Synod of 2008 and until the next General Synod of 2010 we have before us the essential task of planning and experimenting with possible ways of achieving Solidarity for the Congregation as an entire entity and for the Configurations.

10. To assist the General Council in its tasks of encouraging and guiding the process of Restructuring, seven Coordinators were named for the six Configurations who, in addition to being a liaison with the General Council, have the task of directing the process within their own Configuration. Additionally, each Configuration with its relative Coordinator has a General Consultor as a contact person.

12. Currently the Configurations are proceeding with analyzing and experimentation as was requested by the Executive Committee of the Configurations (Provincials, Vice-Provincials, Regional Vicars, Coordinators and the General Consultors-liaisons) and with the work of the Study Groups or Commissions of the Configurations.

13. Successive phases: c) At the General Synod of 2010 the results of the two years of work of the six Configurations will be, and the General Council will similarly present its work for the structures elaborated for the three areas of Solidarity in the entire Congregation; e) The Synod will do its discernment and will give suggestions about how to proceed with this process. f) The final phase envisioned for our process will be the period from 2010 to 2012. During this time we should accomplish what was specified by the Synod of 2010. g) The General Chapter of 2012 will take make appropriate decisions for accomplishing the objective of the process of Restructuring and conclude it.

14. Questions. The most common questions posed by the religious are of two types: a) the first concerns the process and the legitimate request to know where we are going and where we will arrive; b) the other concerns some juridical aspects during this phase of transition.

15. In reference to questions of the first kind, it is normal that these queries arise and that there is concern about the final results of the process. However we are still living in the phase of study and experimentation and therefore definitive responses are not available. A figurative response can be given using the following analogy: we are scaling a mountain not yet knowing with certainty what we will see when we arrive at the summit: we are climbing with great hope and faith that the view of the valley beyond will be magnificent.

16. The difficulties, that are frequently voiced in many parts of the Congregation, concerning community life and prayer life, ministry, formation and finances, whether they are new realities that are growing, or historical realities that are diminishing. These have brought us to the word Solidarity in order to overcome dysfunctional situations and current problems and to empower resources. In fact, we are convinced that the gift and sharing are an investment, like the outpouring of the love of the Father for our sins in the Passion of Jesus.

17. Therefore, in the light of the Gospel and discerning the signs of the times, by means of the process of Restructuring we have arrived at the conclusion that Solidarity can be the "pearl of great price" for which we spend our energies and life. And we are further convinced that Solidarity can no longer be left up to the good will and generosity, as is presently the case – even if we have seen some examples of significant collaboration. It needs to be made essential.

18. In order for the Configurations to be effective and to have the capacity to make decisions in the three areas. At the present time we do not know the kind of juridical form that the Configurations will assume. These forms will emerge as the process continues.

19. However, it is clear that, if we do not want to obstruct the process of Restructuring, we need to discern the best institutional form to enable us to make Solidarity a stable and concrete reality, which is the objective of the process. This also demands that we study new models of governance, both on a general level for the Congregation as well as on the level of the Configurations.

20. In this context, we envision that the local Superior
will play a very important role in the life of the community as he motivates and guides it within a local area, among the people, in order to fulfill the charism and mission of the Congregation. The Constitutions affirm that the community is the fundamental entity of the Congregation and therefore, if the individual entities are strong and healthy, then the entire body of the Congregation that is composed of these will also be healthy and strong in its endeavors.

21. To arrive at the objective of forming strong communities that witness by their lives and their ability to evangelize, we are challenged to diminish the number of individual communities and the “excessive number” of services and ministries. But we should not be discouraged: the process itself will present us with criteria and will help us to confront this formidable challenge. Surely there will always be attempts to act with great sensitivity and respect for the feelings and the concerns of the religious.

22. Perhaps some Provinces feel that they do not need Restructuring or at least they believe that it is not urgent. Perhaps the province doesn’t need anyone else, but certainly others have need of it. It cannot be concerned only with its self-preservation, but it must evangelically open itself to giving and sharing. Also, in Jesus’ parable, the Good Samaritan (Lk.10:30-37) didn’t have any problems, and neither did the priest or the Levite; but there was “a man who fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho” who stripped and beat him and went off leaving him “half-dead”. He had very serious problems. The priest and the Levite who saw him wounded passed him by. The Samaritan stopped and took care of him, attending to his wounds by pouring wine and oil on them and bandaging them. At the end of the parable Jesus says to the doctor of the law and to us: “Go and do likewise.”. And he also says this to us with regard to the process of Restructuring.

23. For the questions of juridical nature, I wish to point out the following. We are living in a very unique moment in our history and in the history of the Provinces, Vice-provinces and Vicariates. The simultaneous new reality of the Configurations may give rise to some questions of juridical nature. Currently the Configurations have no juridical identity; rather they function based on the mandate of the General Chapter and the last General Synod as Work groups. The basic structure of the Configuration on a juridical level is still the Province and therefore any juridical decisions and permissions must be granted by the respective Provincials or the Major Superiors of the Provinces, Vice-provinces and Vicariates, according to the Constitutions and the General Regulations. The juridical and financial relationship between the Provinces and the Vicariates would continue status quo until 2012.

25. Conclusion. The person and the decisions of our holy Founder should offer us encouragement. Numerous times he revised the primitive Rule until its final approbation in 1775, the year of his death. We should also feel reassured by the certainty that the Restructuring which we are undertaking will take place in the spirit of the Constitutions in order to confirm them and make their values more effective. However, beyond reasonable doubts and perplexities, the religious are interested and want to understand and participate in this process. The initiatives with which we are experimenting are generating hope and they are opening new horizons and presenting new possibilities.

Dear brothers, we are steadily moving along and we are ever more aware of the need to develop common perspectives for shared objectives and goals. This can occur if we have a heart that is free and an open mind to accept change. The poet Henry David Thoreau wrote, “Nothing is so much to be feared as fear,” because fear can impede life. Fear can generate doubt: “This will never work!” and there is a “certain cynicism” that can be an obstacle to the work of the Spirit. Inertia can create an illusory sense of security for the present moment; but it is death. It is about going to Jerusalem “with fixed gaze”, like Jesus, for the Resurrection and for new life. In fact, it is the risen Jesus that will give the mandate of the mission to the Apostles, to the Church and to us. Without the Cross there would be no resurrection, nor a mission. This conversion that is required of us is in this direction.

At this decisive moment, may St. Paul of the Cross grant us courage and wisdom of heart for the vitality of the Congregation and may he guide us with his mystic...
Introduction:

“A YEAR FOR PRIESTS”

of Pope Benedict XVI

Following the celebration of “The Year of St. Paul” (the Apostle), Pope Benedict XVI proposed that the Church celebrate “A Year for Priests”. The reason for this celebration was the 150th anniversary of the death of St. John Vianney, the “patron saint of parish priests” who, at the end of this year, will also be proclaimed the “patron saint of all priests”. The theme for this year’s celebration is: “The Fidelity of Christ; the Fidelity of the Priest”. The choice of this theme highlights the fact that the gift of divine grace takes precedence over every possible human response and pastoral project.

“The aim of this Year for Priests”, the Holy Father explained, “is to support each priest’s struggle towards spiritual perfection, ‘upon which the effectiveness of his ministry particularly depends’, and to help priests, and with them the entire People of God, to rediscover and revive an awareness of the extraordinary and indispensable gift of Grace which the ordained ministry represents, for the person who receives it, for the entire Church, and for the world which would be lost without the real presence of Christ”. (Angelus Address, June 24, 2009)

So that we as Passionist religious, priests and Brothers, may also share in the spiritual benefits of this “Year for Priests” we offer the following articles written by several of our religious. They address the topic of the priesthood from three perspectives: a Passionist historical perspective, i.e. the priesthood as St. Paul of the Cross perceived it for himself and for the Congregation; from the perspective of priestly formation today; and finally the missionary dimension of the Passionist priest.

Together with our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, we affirm that “God is the only treasure which ultimately people desire to find in a priest.” It is this treasure that Pope Benedict XIII acknowledged as he ordained Paul of the Cross and John Baptist priests in 1727: “In pronouncing the formula ‘Accipite Spiritum Sanctum’ [Receive the Holy Spirit], he placed his hands on the head of Paul ‘with particular fervor’ and, as soon as he had ordained the two brothers, ‘he took them both by the hand and said: Deo gratias!’” (Zoffoli, I,351). We, too, say Deo gratias! for the gift of St. Paul of the Cross – religious, priest and Founder – and for the gift of priesthood in the Church and in the Congregation and “…as Church and as priests, we proclaim Jesus of Nazareth Lord and Christ, Crucified and Risen, Sovereign of time and of history, in the joyful certainty that this truth coincides with the deepest expectations of the human heart.” (Benedict XVI to Members of the Congregation for the Clergy, 16 March 2009).
The Superiors wish us to be ordained priests, continuing, with the Pope’s permission, in the same habit and life-style as at present. We have already received first tonsure and minor orders and during the present Lent we shall easily be promoted to two major orders or at least to one.

“I haven’t time to give a long account of what Divine Providence has done for us in this matter. I tell you plainly that, believing myself to be burdened with so many imperfections, I am afraid that (through my own fault) the whole thing will end in my greater punishment. Please pray fervently to the Lord to protect us in our great need.” (St. Paul of the Cross, Letter to Don Erasmo Tuccinardi, 15 March 1727).

These words of Saint Paul of the Cross, written three months before his ordination to the priesthood, give a clear indication of his own attitude to his being ordained. Paul and his brother John Baptist were working in the Hospital of San Gallicano. Today we would describe their role as being members of the chaplaincy team. While some of their time was spent working as orderlies, or support staff to the doctors and nurses, their main interest at San Gallicano was in speaking with the patients, offering them pastoral care through listening, counselling and praying with them. It was from this context that Paul wrote the above-quoted letter to his young priest-friend Erasmo Tuccinardi.

From the letter we see that being ordained to the priesthood was not Paul’s idea: “The Superiors wish us to be ordained priests”. We know this also from other sources. Paul’s inspiration had been to gather companions, a community of brothers, who would ‘promote the fear of God in souls’ by means of the loving message of the Passion of Jesus. Nowhere in his initial ideal is the notion of the priesthood to be found. Aware of the dignity of the priestly office and of how, in the eighteenth century, that dignity could be misused by priests to justify an opulent lifestyle, he has, in accepting the priesthood, insisted that this should not divert him from the original inspiration to ‘live in very deep poverty’ and so in the letter he states that, after ordination, he and John Baptist will “continue, with the Pope’s permission, in the same habit and life-style as at present.”

Having safeguarded his own charism in this way, Paul is now willing to accept the priesthood for John Baptist and himself as being “what Divine Providence has done for us in this matter.” Just as the work at San Gallicano, which would occupy him for about a year and a half, was never seen by Paul as being the life-style or ministry to which he was called but was accepted by him as it was the only way open to him at the time, so priestly ordination was not something he looked for but was received by him in faith, trusting that this could be integrated into the mission of his future community.

Paul’s fears that the whole priestly enterprise would somehow end in tears spring from his sense of his own unworthiness and his exalted notion of the priestly vocation. It was because of this that he held back initially from being ordained. His respect for the priesthood is well documented. Already, in a letter to his brothers and sisters on February 21, 1722, he wrote: “Show reverence to everyone, especially priests.” At the same time, he was not blind to the shortcomings of many of the clergy, those whom Pope Benedict XIV referred to as ‘the superfluous and useless crowd of priests’.

In eighteenth century Italy, where, in many places, as many as five per cent of the male population were clerics, the problem was a shortage of pastoral workers rather than a shortage of priests as such. Large numbers of clergy were living the lives of country gentlemen, engaged in no pastoral work and dividing their time, after morning Mass, between hunting, gambling and going to concerts and other entertainments. During his
missionary years, Paul conducted many courses of spiritual exercises for priests and when giving missions to the people, he always included special sessions for the clergy. The spiritual renewal of the priesthood remained one of his lifelong concerns; in fact, towards the end of his life, he would present to Pope Clement XIV a programme for the reform of the clergy.

Saint Paul of the Cross believed that no priestly ministry would be fruitful if it were not rooted in a prayerful relationship with Christ. At the heart of this relationship was the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Paul promoted Eucharistic adoration during missions and in the 1736 text of the Rule he proposed the practice of perpetual Eucharistic adoration for his communities. In the Rule of 1775, we see that he wished his brothers to prepare for the Eucharist ‘by fitting pious meditations, by fervent acts of virtue, especially of faith, charity and humility.’ The text continues: ‘After receiving the Sacrament, melting into seraphic ardours, let them return becoming thanks for so great a benefit, and show their gratitude by entering on a more perfect life.’

In his ministry, he often encouraged priests to enrich their celebration of the Eucharist by spending time in personal prayer before and after Mass. In his testimony in the Canonisation Processes, Brother Francesco Luigi of Saint Teresa tells us that Paul ‘deplored the blindness of priests... who were negligent in preparing for Holy Mass’ and he quotes these words of the Founder: ‘They go to the altar without realising what they are doing. One can easily see this from the way they act when Mass is over. They mumble a few hasty prayers and are off at once to their duties, too often not even religious ones.... When I was still a layman and taught catechism to little children I used to ask them, “What must we do after Holy Communion?” and they answered, “We must stay in church for at least a quarter of an hour to make our thanksgiving.” But what about a priest, who not only receives Holy Communion but actually offers the Holy Sacrifice?’

While the Eucharist was for Paul at the heart of priestly spirituality, he saw the apostolate of the Passionist priest as being principally exercised through the Ministry of the Word and the Ministry of Reconciliation.

Although Paul had already engaged in preaching as a layman, within the context of the eighteenth century his acceptance of ordination to the priesthood allowed him to be recognised as an apostolic missionary and to devote himself more fully to the Ministry of Word. He saw the mission of his Congregation as being ‘to preach what Jesus has done and suffered for love of people’. He prayed for his community ‘that we may burn with love and be inflamed with charity in order that we may enkindle the same divine fire in the hearts of our neighbours by preaching the most holy sufferings of our Crucified Lover’. Faithful to his teaching, our Constitutions remind us to ‘hold the Ministry of the Word in the highest esteem’.

When we examine Paul’s activity as a missionary, we see that for him the missionary priest is called to be a minister of reconciliation, both through the sacrament of penance and through working to establish peace between enemies.

The settling of disputes and reconciliation of enemies was an important task during missions. In the section of the Rule entitled ‘On the choice of the assistants, and the regulation of the chief things to be performed in time of mission’, we read: ‘If it should happen that one of our Brethren be called upon to make up quarrels, or to reconcile enemies, let him fulfil his part peacefully and wisely, and always master of himself, never fall into injurious language against any one. Let him not grow heated, nor for any reason, though grievous and very aggravating, give way to anger. Let him take pains to remove obstinate hindrances and difficulties with patient charity, and not once, but a second and a third time return to work, till he succeeds. If, after all, his endeavors prove vain, let him with the same tranquillity and sweetness of mind leave them in their obstinacy, commending their cause to God.’

According to Fabiano Giorgini, ‘For Paul and his companions the importance of the mission rested on the fact of instructing the people by catechism and meditation in order that they be converted and reconciled to God in the sacrament of reconciliation. For this reason,
when missionaries were not engaged in preaching, they were to be wholly dedicated to hearing confessions.\footnote{10}

In the Regulations (Regolamenti) of 1756, Paul advised the priests of the Congregation on how to exercise their pastoral ministry in the confessional. Here are some examples of his practical wisdom as found in these Instructions for Confessors:

vi) Let them not be in a hurry to finish with a penitent, for haste is a temptation all the more dangerous since not easily recognized; whatever is done in haste is done badly.

xii) Let them avoid as far as possible dogmatizing – such as: this is a venial sin, that is a mortal sin, the other is nothing – unless there is some most pressing necessity for acting in this way or on things that are as clear as the noonday sun….

xxi) Let them not judge penitents… according to what they have heard from others, because they may be deceived and misled, but rather judge according to what the penitents themselves admit. Credence must be given to them and not to others, moved perhaps by passion, by suspicion, if not by spite, hatred or jealousy.

xxiii) Let them not treat venial sins with severe words nor with undue gravity, so that uncultured penitents form an erroneous conscience and consider as grave which is not….

xxv) Let them be more willing to hear the confessions of the poor than of the rich…\footnote{12}

Here, Paul is writing after more than twenty-five years of experience in the priestly ministry. What comes through above all is his respect for the person: the confessor should be available, listen well, not impose his opinions, not be judgmental, and care for the weak. We can see clearly the kind of priest Paul wanted to have in his Congregation.

In his thesis Priestly Spirituality according to the Doctrine of St Paul of the Cross, Father Jude Mead, CP, listed what he called the virtues of the priesthood as found in the letters of Saint Paul of the Cross: humility, obedience, abandonment to the Will of God and devotion to the Passion of Christ.\footnote{13} Reflecting on this list, we see that Paul’s spirituality of the priesthood is also a spirituality of the Passion. The priest is to be a servant, following Christ who came not to be served but to serve. He is to imitate Jesus who humbled himself, taking the form of a slave. He is to live in a spirit of obedience to the Word, without which there is no real mission, because it is only when we live in obedience to the Word that we dispose ourselves to being sent by the Word. For Paul of the Cross, the priest must live a life that is truly abandoned to the Will of God, handing himself over each day to the Father’s Will, as Jesus does in his Passion. In this way, he lives the Memory of the Passion through his priestly ministry, not just by acts of devotion but by carrying in his heart the sufferings of Christ. For the Passionist priest, his daily celebration of the Eucharist is the proclamation of the death of the Lord until he comes\footnote{14} and his priesthood is not an obstacle to being part of a community of brothers but a way of living his Passionist vocation given to him by the Lord: ‘On Sunday we celebrated our first Mass. We were ordained priests by the
THE MISSIONARY IDENTITY OF THE PASSIONIST PRIEST

The experience of a Passionist missionary in Kenya

Fr. Filippo Astori, C.P. (CORM)

Is “The missionary identity of the Passionist Priest” and “My experience as a Passionist missionary priest” two ways of looking at the same topic? — Perhaps. However, reflecting on the first point I feel at a disadvantage and I had to work hard at trying to understand what it means; whereas the reflecting on the second point I felt greatly encouraged by my experience with the subject. I would like to begin this reflection by speaking a little bit about myself. I am Fr. Filippo Astori, born in Italy in 1944 in the diocese of Milan. My life was influenced by three significant locations: Italy, where I was born and where I lived for 14 years following my profession of perpetual vows; the Holy Land or the Middle East, where I was reborn and lived for 21 years; and finally, Africa, where I arrived a little bit more than 8 years ago and where I have experienced a period of greater maturity which I believe can be summarized as: the practical, the essential and the gratuitous.

The life and the experience of a Passionist priest in Africa is something very specific. There are few words to describe this experience, but there are many deeds. Words serve only to prepare the facts or to explain them, as is explained by Jesus in the Gospel. The charism is alive when it is inserted in life; then it becomes something concrete. Concrete means that something is limited, incarnated in something and therefore alive. The faith experience that the Church in Africa is living out following the first Synod of African bishops, is summarized in a concrete and fundamental phrase: “The Church as the family of God.” This phrase highlights two essential attitudes or relationships: being a child of God and fraternal solidarity with one another.

The first thing I have seen and learned in Africa (Kenya) is something concrete or fundamental. I think that it is the fruit of a poverty of means (e.g. means of transportation, of communication and subsistence); poverty within the infrastructures of the nation; the poverty of structures within the Church and the Vicariate; structures of poverty of services required for living and growth (e.g. home, food, water, clothing, health, work...). Things which in other parts of the world are taken for granted, and it is unthinkable to imagine that these things do not exist in Africa or that in Africa one can or should have to make do with less.

Faith is also something concrete, because if is not accompanied by some work it is nothing, it is not believable, as St. James says in his letter. So it was also with Jesus: “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—...‘Rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home.’” (Mt.9:6) So that the apostles and the crowds were prepared for believing in the Eucharist he multiplied the loaves and the fishes. So that Martha could believe that those who accept Jesus have eternal life, he raised Lazarus.

Beginning with the practical elements of life, Africa opens up and becomes the continent of hope. Hope is a powerful energy of life. It is a hope that is based on the promises of God, who is the God of life, justice, peace, growth to maturity; God who gave his own Son to redeem all people and offer them a different life, which is eternal life; God who gives to all his sons and daughters gathered together as nations, a time and a place on the road of history and the development of humanity.

Through a sense of what is concrete or tangible I have seen and learned in Kenya that which is essential, and this understanding opened my mind, my heart and my life to many things that I thought were unnecessary, secondary...
and superfluous. I came to understand what is essential in human life, in spiritual life, in the liturgy and in the charism.

By means of understanding what is concrete and essential I was able to see and learn about what is freely given. I had heard about the experience of something that is freely given and personally I tried to understand what this was about and how it could be expressed. In Kenya I felt immediately enveloped by it and that I was a part of it, because it is very difficult for someone to give you something in return for your love, for your presence, your service, your gift. I was immediately fascinated by the beauty of that which is gratuitous — its magnitude and its cost — yes, its cost, because what is gratuitous has no limits and is susceptible to exploitation. I soon realized that only God is gratuitous, because He is Father, and so, too, is Jesus because He is his Son, who became our brother and Redeemer. “If you do good to those who do good to you, what merit is there in that? Even the pagans do the same...” (Lk.6:33)

There is the issue of tribes — different in origin, culture, customs and traditions; the experience of strong contradictions that are immediately evident between wealth and poverty, between the dominant and the protected tribe, and the inferior and forgotten tribe. The experience of violence after the December 2007 elections also made me realize the existence of sin in Africa and the need for the reconciliation. Only through forgiveness and justice can life be regenerated, relationships renewed and power reestablished. Sin is present in wounded human nature and is found in all lands, countries, families, individuals, without distinction of color, culture or wealth-poverty.

In this specific context of hope, of essentiality, of gratuitousness and of sin-reconciliation the way in which I used to be present to others has collapsed, as well as my self-image and my understanding of my ministry as Passionist priest. Thus was born wonderful and new priestly experience of God and of my brothers and sisters.

“Priest” refers to the things of God in relation to human beings and the things of human beings in relation to God. Above all it concerns faith and reconciliation. Ministerial priesthood is in communion with and at the service of baptismal priesthood which inspires the life of the faithful. “Passionist” refers to the good news of the Passion of Jesus — the wisdom, power and healing strength of God for every day life. It is particularly related to charity and witness.

The practical, essential, gratuitous and reconciling elements find their origin and their fullest expression in the celebration of the Eucharist. In Africa the Mass is a “celebration”, which means joy, thanksgiving and dancing at the gratuitousness of God and the exchange of fraternal peace. It is difficult to explain this to people who have never attended a Mass in Africa. The Mass is the celebration of the family of God: God the Father offers the Son and the Spirit to his sons and daughters and reconciles them as sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters to each other. The Mass is thus lived as a divine and human celebration. It is an encounter with God and with our brothers and sisters. This is highlighted for example in the way that the penitential Rite is celebrated, with appropriate songs and dance, and in the exchange of peace before Communion. The Mass in Africa is also a celebration of baptismal priesthood and ministerial priesthood that exists in communion and by which one compliments the other. It is stressed for example by the space and the involvement given to the Assembly, both small and large, and in the songs, dances, acclamations and processions which accompany the book of the Gospels and the enthroning of the Word of God; the singing of the Gloria, the Offertory, the acclamation of the “mystery of faith” after the consecration, the prayer of Our Father, the demonstrative gestures at the exchange of peace. The Mass in Africa is still a celebration of gratuitousness and hope. This is highlighted in the joy of the Penitential Rite and in the songs and dances that accompany the Presentation of the Gifts of money and of natural products. The Mass in Africa is a unique and dynamic experience of the divine and human dimensions of life, of the baptismal and Ministerial priesthood — two essential and practical filial and fraternal dimensions. It is an energy that engenders hope and fruitfulness for the future.

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The practical, essential, gratuitous dimensions are present going from the Mass to the dispensary; from preaching the Word of God to the factory; from the celebration of the sacraments to financial planning; from prayer to repairing cars and addressing problems of education and health for many people, groups and families.

In October, 2009, Africa celebrated its second Synod of bishops in Rome. The theme of the Synod is: “Christ, the source of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation in Africa”. It is a door that is open to us Passionists through which we can announce and bear witness to the good news of the Passion of Jesus — the wisdom, power and remedy to conquer the causes of evil that afflict humanity. Perhaps this is a new experience of being priest, Passionist and missionary in Africa.

Sotik 17.09.2009
I have been ministering in Mozambique (Africa) for more than eight years. We are five Passionist missionaries, four from Brazil and one from Congo, living in two communities. We work in the diocese of Pemba in the extreme northern region of the country. We are the only male religious congregation in the diocese. There are twenty diocesan priests — seven of these are currently living outside the diocese for studies associated with Church matters. Clearly there are many parishes and missions without a resident priest or a missionary. This is a common reality in Africa.

Throughout my life I have always wanted to be a Passionist, a priest and a missionary "ad gentes" in Africa. God granted me this triple privilege. In preparation for the mission "ad gentes", it was always clear to me that when I arrived at the mission I would have to “remove my sandals” as did Moses. In the daily activity of the mission I realized that without this attitude of being stripped it would be impossible to give and take, to come to understand the reality of the situation and, consequently, to learn and to collaborate.

Arrival in Mozambique and the present situation

In 2001, during the first days following my arrival, within less than a month, there was a “massacre” (more than one hundred people) of those who were in opposition to the political regime in the second most important city of our diocese (Montepuez). At that time and even today, nothing is easy for the opposition. The climate is characterized by violence, fear and silence. The Church too is silent. This was my first impression.

Within a short time I began to understand the realities with their signs of life and death, as in every society. The warm welcome of the bishop, of the priests, the religious and the people characterized my initial experiences. Afterward, carefully observing and removing my sandals, I entered into these realities and I began to understand them better.

After a year and a half in the provincial capital of Pemba, Fr. Fernando and I were assigned to the Mission of Metoro, 100 km. away. There, in a rural area composed of more than 30 Christian communities that did not have any missionary presence for more than twenty four years, we continued to learn. Today there are approximately 60 Christian communities in this parish. With the arrival of the new missionaries, we opened our seminary in Pemba, where we have 10 seminaries doing preliminary studies and another two in Brazil preparing to begin their novitiate.

Shadows and light of the realities

There are many bright spots in these realities: the people are good and welcoming; all of them are willing to learn and they attend meetings and formation sessions. The young are very hopeful and they want to study and have different experiences. There is minimal investment in education and health care. There are many vocations and a true increase in the number of Christians. There is good rapport among Christians, Muslims and those who practice traditional African religions. The universities are increasing throughout the country and these offer great hope to young people and adults. The Church has made a great effort in the area of ongoing formation of the clergy. There is peaceful coexistence among the various ethnic groups and women are encouraged to study and to assume positions of leadership in society and in the Church.

Reach out to the young people – the greatest present challenge of the Church
However, there are also shadow areas: fear — the fruit of experiences of war. The greatest suffering is caused by hunger and malnutrition; the lack of water; political figures who are accessible to the people; uneven access to health care and education; the degradation of cultural values due to globalization, harsh work and the oppression of women. The Church is still very reticent about being prophetic and there is a large void between rich and poor. There is corruption especially in political governing of the society. Life expectancy is 40 and death is often attributable to malaria, HIV-AIDS, cholera, tuberculosis and the lack of prescription drugs to combat them.

My personal experience of being a Passionist Missionary Priest

As I try to live the “Memoria Passionis” every day of my life as a missionary, there are several convictions that I try to put into practice. Some are inherent to my personality; others I have to work hard to acquire; and there are still others that I hold as goals to be reached. The following are some of the principles that I list in a kind of “Missionary’s Alphabet”:

A) To be able to work and to touch human suffering with all its illnesses (hunger, pain, fear, want, abandonment);
B) Motive the local clergy and the faithful to be prophetic by denouncing and not acquiescing to structures that engender death;
C) Listen; “waste” time with people; value small things, humble gestures, small steps;
D) Repeatedly share the experience of malaria – the greatest cause of death in the country;
E) Travel using same precarious means of transportation as the people use;
F) Eat what those of the local rural areas have to offer;
G) Facilitate the human and Christian formation of the laity that restores to them their dignity and enables them to stand on their own two feet; that encourages them to be protagonists in all areas of their life, above all in a society which is changing;
H) Be of service to the local Church, assisting it to be open to new challenges in the world and in the mission, and exhort it to be an advocate and defender of the poor;
I) Reach out to the young people – the greatest present challenge of the Church (approximately 80% of the population is 30 years old);
J) Work with projects of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (of the Congregation, the Church and the country);
K) Enter and work in the university setting of the two new centers in the mission;
L) Work in the area of vocation ministry, promoting vocations for the Church and also minister in the area of formation for Passionist seminarians who offer continuity to the work begun by St. Paul of the Cross;
M) Learn to appreciate the gift of giving freely — not seeking gratitude, recognition or immediate response for work accomplished;
N) Help others to reflect on the negative aspects of the culture, above all the superstitions that paralyze and enslave the people, enlightening them with the Gospel;
O) Help others to realize the beauty of every culture, where the seeds of the Gospel are already present;
P) Avoid comparisons that denigrate, demean and that create misconceptions and hate (“in my country we do it this way; my country is better”);
Q) Value the sacrament of Reconciliation as an opportunity for people to be open, to review their life and to be freed;
R) Work as a team with the religious communities, avoiding individualism or isolated work so that the entire ministry is shared;
S) Live a simple lifestyle, without ostentation or affluence in order to be a sign of the Reign and avoid scandalizing the little ones;
T) Motivate missionary openness for the Africans, helping them to understand that they are no longer living in a “mission land” in a passive sense; rather that they are to be missionaries for the world;
U) Reaffirm the importance of a ministerial Church, opening spaces and motivating the laity to assume positions of leadership through service and ministry;
V) Value women, motivating them to study; encouraging them in all ways possible within and beyond the Church;
W) As far as possible, learn a foreign language; learn about the culture and the customs of the people so that the mission will be more “inculturated”;
X) Create a friendly climate, characterized by cooperation and association with the local clergy;
Y) Be renewed daily by personal prayer and intimacy with God and by the celebration of the Eucharist, the center of our life and our mission;
Z) Be conscious of the Holy Spirit who is the protagonist of the Mission and be aware that we are his servants.
As I enter a patient’s room in my part-time hospital ministry, my greeting is always the same. “Hello. My name is Fr Paul, the Catholic priest here today.” Inevitably, the patient responds, “What parish are you from?” This prompts me to clarify my identity further. “I am not in a parish, nor am I a Chicago diocesan priest. I am a member of the Passionist Religious Community.”

This little dialogue which is repeated quite instinctively with the same precision patient after patient points to a very important factor for me as director of formation for Passionist seminarians. Most of the people I meet, both Catholics and non-Catholics, always think of priests as “parish priests.” Even if the people worship in a Franciscan or Carmelite parish, they still think of these religious priests as “parish priests.” Indeed, the current celebration of the Year of the Priest which Pope Benedict XVI solemnly inaugurated on the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus aligns this holy year of grace and renewal with the 150th Anniversary of the birth of St. John Vianney, “the patron of parish priests.”

However, the context of priestly formation in the Passionist tradition has a much broader scope than parochial ministry alone. The charism and example of St. Paul of the Cross, the Constitutions revised in the light of Vatican II, and Formation Committee documents of our Congregation provide us with guiding principles. We also give appropriate attention to documents on priestly formation which have come from recent Popes, Vatican Secretariats, and National Episcopal Conferences.

Our Constitutions and Regulations describe the formation of both cleric and brother candidates for Passionist apostolic community in terms that stress what they have in common rather than what distinguishes them. Once admitted as a cleric or a brother, novitiate is common (Const. No. 91). “Whether clerics or brothers, all of us share in the same Passionist vocation and are called to live in community as equal sons of the same Father.” (Const. No. 100). This conviction of the shared grace of Passionist vocation to community pervades the Constitutions so fully that we never hear the word ‘cleric’ again!

In their preparation for effective apostolic community life, vowed Passionist clerics everywhere follow the academic and ministerial courses required by the Holy See. In addition, National Episcopal
Conferences often provide specific guidance related to their regional situation which is most helpful to Passionists who prepare for priestly ministry in those regions. Vatican documents tend to highlight priesthood in view of membership in the diocesan presbyterate and parochial ministry. But it is noteworthy that the United States Bishops’ Program of Priestly Formation clearly respects the specific context of religious charism and mission for religious in preparation for ministerial priesthood. Their call to Church ministry is through their commitment to religious life. Fidelity to the charism of their founder is the gift that is shared with the Church. (cf. Nos. 27-31, 5th edition, 2006).

Recalling the tradition of choral prayer from St. Paul of the Cross, our local communities still celebrate at least some of the Liturgy of the Hours together. This communal prayer assists the cleric in formation as he learns to pray the ancient psalms on behalf of the Church in its passionate concern for the whole world, lifting up the cry of the poor and powerless.

“We seek the unity of our lives and our apostolate in the Passion of Jesus.” (Const. No. 5). Our distinctive vow related to the Memoria Passionis frames our embrace of poverty, consecrated chastity and obedience which all religious men and women profess. For those Passionist clerics who will be ordained for priestly ministry, this same charismatically inspired vow offers a treasury of enormous theological wealth.

In the ordination rite, the bishop singles out several of the particular responsibilities the cleric assumes in priestly ministry. He receives the Book of Gospels from the bishop who reminds him of his mission to teach and preach. “Meditate on the law of God, believe what you read, teach what you believe, and put into practice what you teach.” The ministry of the Word is at the core of our Paulacruician grace so that we “Passionists, by our preaching and our caring concern for those among whom we live, become ‘doers of the word,’ and true witnesses to the Word of God” (Const. No. 63).

The bishop then recalls the priest’s responsibility for the Eucharist. “Your ministry will perfect the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful by uniting it to Christ’s sacrifice which is offered through your hands.” The Memoria Passionis is rooted in the Paschal Mystery of which the Holy Eucharist is the enduring sacrament. While the Eucharist is the summit and supreme expression of our worship in community, ministerial priesthood, by definition, creates a bond between the Passionist priest and the whole Church. The Gospel miracle stories of Jesus providing bread for the hungry in the desert echo Jesus’ actions at the supper on the night before he died. In principle, every priest ordained in the priesthood of Jesus Christ takes on this ministry of providing the Eucharist for God’s people. Age, health and apostolic availability will determine the manner in which an individual priest may fulfill this ministry (Const. No. 73).

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest forgives sin in the name of Christ and of the Church. The Passionist priest carries out this priestly ministry, mindful that the Lord’s “Passion reveals the power of God which penetrates the world, destroying the power of evil and building up the Kingdom of God” (Const. No. 5).

In this Year of the Priest, may all Passionists give thanks for those who minister to us as priests, pray for the grace of spiritual renewal, and affirm those whom we believe God is calling to ordained ministry in the future.

(Fr. Paul Zilonka is the Passionist Formation Director at CTU Residence, Chicago, Illinois)
The Coordinators of the New Configurations of the Congregation met from June 18–19, at the Generalate of Sts. Paul and John in Rome. In addition to Fr. Ottaviano D’Egidio, Superior General, and the General Councillors, Frs. Denis Tavers, Luis Alberto Cano, Clemente Barrón and Luigi Vaninetti, the following Coordinators were present, representing the six territorial Configurations of the Congregation: Frs. Antonio Maria Mundate, The Configuration of the Sacred Heart (FID, CORI, FAM, SANG, CORI-RES, CORI-PAC, FAM, SANG, SANG-CARM, SANG-EXAL); Joachim Rego, PASPAC- The Asia and Pacific Configuration (SPIR, MACOR, PASS, REPAC, MAIAP AND THOM, and Vietnam); Leone Masnata, Eugene Bossilkov Configuration (CORM, LAT, CFIXI, ASSUM, MICH and VULN); Michael Ogweno, The CPA Configuration of Africa (SALV, CORM-CARLW, CORM-GEMM, AND PATR-MATAF); Joseph Jones and Norberto Donizetti, The Configuration of Jesus Crucified (PRAES, PRAES-DOMIN, DOL, DOL-VICT, PAUL, CRUC, CALV, CONC, REG, FAT, CORI-PAC, SPE-LIBER); and Franz Damen, The Configuration of Northern Europe (GABR, IOS, PATR and SPE). Sr. Christine Anderson as moderator also attended this meeting. Serving as interpreters were: Frs. Marco Pasquali (PIET), Lawrence Rywalt (PAUL) and Patricio Manosalvas (LAT). The secretaries were Frs. Ramiro Ruiz (Secretary General) and Jack Douglas (PAUL).

Sister Christine began the opening session by explaining the nature of the meeting. She stated that this was an interim meeting to help the coordinators to understand what is occurring in the process of Restructuring in the various parts of the Congregation. She further clarified that this meeting was about updating and not necessarily about decision making.

During the course of the meeting, those present addressed the following points: Updating the use of the Discernment Instrument for Assemblies in the new Configurations; identifying and working on issues that appeared in the reports; clarifying the role of the Provincials and the General Council in this process; studying emerging models - imagining the future shape of Solidarity; issues concerning governance; and exploring the next steps in the process.

The next meeting of the Coordinators with the Superior General and the General Curia will take place at the Generalate in Rome on 2-4 December 2009.
THE CAUSE OF FR. THEODORE FOLEY: AN UPDATE

Fr. Dominic Papa (PAUL)
with Fr. Giovanni Zubiani (Postulator General)

The cause for the beatification and canonization of Fr. Theodore Foley continues to proceed. The petition to begin the cause was presented at the Rome Vicariate on Jan. 15, 2007. After receiving the “Nulla Osta” (no objection) of the dioceses in the Metropolitan See of Rome, Cardinal Ruini issued the proclamation in May of the same year that the Rome Vicariate had accepted the petition and declared Theodore Foley a “Servant of God”. The diocesan inquiry, an important phase on the road to beatification and canonization was opened on Friday, May 9, 2008, in the Hall of the Concordat at the Lateran Palace.

The work of collecting and translating into Italian Fr. Theodore’s published and non-published writings began. Since the number of manuscripts is enormous, three to five translators are engaged in the work at any one time.

Two commissions were formed: The Historical and Theological Commissions. The Historical Commission has the task of collecting and examining the writings, especially for authenticity. This commission will present its opinion to the Tribunal at the Rome Vicariate. The theological commission has the task of examining the documents and rendering an opinion on whether there is anything contrary to faith and morals. Their opinion will help the Tribunal to conclude whether Fr. Theodore practiced heroic virtue.

Another important step is the exhumation of the remains of the candidate for beatification and canonization. Fr. Theodore Foley died in Rome on Oct. 9, 1974. Following the funeral services at Sts. John and Paul, Rome, his body was taken to the United States and buried in the cemetery on the property of Our Lady of Sorrows Passionist Monastery, West Springfield, Massachusetts. When the monastery was sold in 1995, the remains of all the Passionists buried there were trans-

ferred to the diocesan cemetery of Gate of Heaven, Springfield, MA. Exhumation does not happen simply by the will of the petitioner of the cause. The Holy See has issued specific norms which must be followed.

When the petitioner feels that the remains should be taken from the cemetery to a specific place (church or monastery), he informs the postulator. The postulator needs a “Nulla Osta” from the bishop in whose diocese the candidate is buried (in this case of Fr. Theodore there were two dioceses involved) and then the postulator writes to the bishop(s) asking their “Nulla Osta”. When he receives their “Nulla Osta”, the postulator will petition the Holy See for the “Nulla Osta” to exhume, examine and transfer the remains of the candidate. This process is complete in the case of Fr. Theodore Foley.

His remains were exhumed and examined on Sept. 28, 2009 and transferred to the Passionist Monastery Church of St. Paul of the Cross, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On October 28, 2009, the only date that the bishop of Pittsburgh was available for the final re-interment, the remains of Fr. Theodore Foley were placed in an attractive, marble sarcophagus in one of the niches of the monastery church at the foot of a beautiful, marble base-relief of the Crucifixion. It is fitting that the remains of a Passionist, in particular Fr. Theodore Foley, who had a deep devotion and love of Christ Crucified, be placed in such a setting.

The exhumation of the bodies of saints and of those who are close to beatification and canonization is a well-established practice, dating back in the history of the Church more than 1,000 years. The reason for doing this is also to allow future generations to have the chance to venerate and care for these relics. This event shows even more clearly the sign of our belief in the Communion of Saints. The Vatican II document, Lumen Gentium affirms this: “It is not only through their example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; rather we seek, by devotion to them, to exercise that bond of fraternal charity which unites and strengthens the whole Church in the Spirit (cf. Eph 4:1-6). Just as Christian charity brings us closer to Christ on our earthly journey, so does the communion of saints join the People of God to Christ, the fountainhead of all grace and life, on their eternal journey” (LG 50).

At this time it is hoped that the Diocesan Tribunal will continue its work of the Inquiry of witnesses in the Province of St. Paul of the Cross (United States) in the Spring of 2010.
The 38th Provincial Chapter took place from June 29 to July 4, 2009 at the Spiritual Center and Shrine of Angosto, Spain. In addition to Fr. Ottaviano D’Egidio, Superior General and Fr. Luis Alberto Cano, General Consultor, also present were Fr. Jesús Echeandía, Vicar for the Caribbean region, and Fr. Javier Areitio, the Vicar for Peru.

Fr. General began the Chapter by thanking Fr. Luis Alberto Cano for doing the Canonical Visitation to CORI-PAC Vicariate which comprises Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, and the Vicariate of CORI-RES of Peru. He also expressed his gratitude to Fr. Luigi Vaninetti, General Consultor and Fr. Fernando Rabanal, the FAM Provincial Superior for their canonical visitation of the communities of the region of Spain. The moderator of the Chapter was Fr. Antonio Munduate, the Vice-Provincial of the FID Vice-Province of Colombia the Coordinator of the Configuration of the Sacred Heart.

During his opening talk, Fr. General highlighted some of the challenges that need to be addressed by the Province during the Chapter: the kind of Province that is envisioned in order to respond to the tasks presented by the process of Restructuring and in order to make our presence more efficacious in Spain, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Peru; discernment of criteria for provincial leadership of the communities; the strengthening of vocation ministry, adapting it to the various areas of the Province, especially urban areas; and finally, those decisions that need to be made to guarantee monetary funds for the future needs of our life and mission.

He also cited the need to examine ways of making community life more vibrant and fraternal. Also important would be discernment about the number of apostolates and communities in a region, especially in dialog with the larger Configuration.

During the Chapter the following religious were elected: Fr. Juan Maria Santamaria, Provincial Superior; Fr. Jesus Goikoetxea, 1st Consultor; and additional Consultors: Fr. José Maria Arzalluz, Fr. Eddy Alejandro Vásquez, (from the Vicariate of Perú) and Fr. Jon Maria Abaroa.
On the feast of St. Maria Goretti, 6 July, the FAM Province of Spain began its 31st Provincial Chapter at its retreat house in Corella, Navarra, Spain. The Chapter took place over a period of four days, concluding on 10 July.

In addition to the Superior General, Fr. Ottaviano D’Egidio, Fr. Luis Alberto, General Consultant was also present, as was the General Consultant, Fr. Clemente Barrón. Fr. Clemente performed the canonical visitation in the following geographic areas of the Province: Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico and El Salvador, where he also met the religious stationed in Honduras and Guatemala. The Canonical Visitations to the central area of Spain was done by Fr. Luigi Vaninetti, General Consultant together with Fr. Eulogio Cordero, SANG Provincial Superior. The Moderator of the Chapter was Fr. Antonio Munduate, Vice-Provincial of the FID Vice-Province and coordinator of the Configuration of the Sacred Heart.

In his opening address to the Chapter, Fr. General referred to the significant pastoral work that the religious, including the elderly, are accomplishing. In particular, he underlined the work being done in the area of formation and also the work that is being done by the FID Vice-Province in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. Fr. Ottaviano further spoke about the process of Restructuring and the three areas of solidarity (formation, personnel and finances) that would guide the decision making of this Province within its Configuration.

During the course of the Chapter the following religious were elected to positions of Provincial leadership: Fr. Fernando Rabanal Calle, Provincial Superior (Confirmed), Fr. Juan Ignacio Villar, Consultant for Spain, Fr. Jesús María Ahechu, Consultant for Central America, Fr. Valentín Duerto, Consultant for Venezuela and Fr. Carlos San Martín, Consultant for Mexico.
The newly elected Provincial Superior, Fr. José María Sáez Martín (center) and the SANG Provincial Council
The XI Congress of the CORI-PAC Vicariate took place from 28 September until 2 October at the Formation House in Dorado, Puerto Rico. Fourteen members of the Vicariate were present which included both Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Also present by right were: Fr Juan Maria Santamaria, CORI Provincial; Fr. Jesús Etxeandia, former Vicar and his consultants, Fr. Angel Pérez and Fr. Moisés Ríos; and at least 1 religious from each house of the vicariate. Fr. Miguel Torres, CSSR, was the moderator.

The theme of the Congress was, “To recover Hope for the life and vitality of the Vicariate”. During the Congress there was discussion about the process of Restructuring in the Vicariate in which they tried to evaluate how to reach the proposed goals of the 2008 General Synod. The participants also evaluated the new internal objectives that were presented after the recent Provincial Chapter, centering on the living of the Charism, sharing the Mission and proclaiming the Word of the Cross. The Congress also approved that the Vicariate, according to the Restructuring process, would be part of the Configuration of Jesus Crucified, and no longer part of CORI Province, effective in 2012.

During the Congress the following religious were elected to positions of leadership in the Vicariate: Fr. Aníbal Rodríguez, First Consultor; Fr. Moisés Rios, Vicar; and Fr. José Ramón, Second Consultor. Of special interest is the fact that Fr. Moisés Ríos is the first Puerto Rican Vicar since the foundation of the Passionists in the Caribbean and to date, also the youngest. Additionally, for the very first time, a Puerto Rican Passionist Brother, Brother Javier Montalvo Avilés, participated in a Congress.

Participants at XI Congress of the Caribbean Vicariate CORI-PAC
The Chapter of the CALV Province took place during the week of September 7 - 11 2009 at the Retreat House of the Sisters, Apostles of the Sacred Heart, in Curitiba, Brazil.

In his opening address to the Chapter, Fr. General thanked those religious who assisted him in performing the Canonical Visitation of the Province: Fr. Laureano Alves Pererira (FAT Provincial Superior) who visited many communities of the Province, including the Mission in Mozambique and Fr. Francesco Tito Ape, the Regional Vicar for LAT-ISID Vicariate who assisted Fr. Ottaviano during his visitation of the other communities of the Province. In addition to the religious of the CALV Province, also present were the Regional Vicars of the DOL-VICT, PRAES-DOMIN and SPE-LIBER Vicariates of Brazil: Frs. Pedro Bacchiocchi, Luiz Carlos Meneghetti and Eleno Marques de Araújo.

Fr. General acknowledged that most communities lived in a spirit of fraternity and fidelity to the charism. Some of the communities made great efforts to work together with the laity in the areas of liturgy, assistance to the poor and the sick and the education of adults. However he also spoke about some of the challenges that Province would address during the Chapter and during the period following the Chapter. Some of these included the possibility of developing a new spiritual center for retreats; the ongoing formation of the religious; communication and collaboration within the Province, working toward internal Restructuring; vocation ministry; and the mission in Mozambique.

During the Chapter the following religious were elected to positions of Provincial leadership: Fr. Augusto Canali, Provincial Superior (Confirmed); Fr. Amilton Manoel Da Silva (First Consultor) and Fr. Norberto Donizetti Brocardo CP (Second Consultor).
SECOND MEETING OF THE MAJOR SUPERIORS OF THE EUGENIO BOSSILKOV CONFIGURATION (CEB)

Following the 2008 General Synod, the Major Superiors of the Eugene Bossilkov Configuration (CEB) met several times and in various locations: the first meeting took place in Warsaw, Poland from 19 to 23 April 2009 and the second meeting in Bulgaria from 14 to 19 September 2009, at the Passionist community in Belene, the birth place of Blessed Eugene Bossilkov, where the parish church was recently declared a “Shrine”, the first in his honor.

It was in Bulgaria, in the diocese of Nicopoli, where the Passionists returned in 1993, following their expulsion during the Communist period. They reclaimed the first mission of the Congregation dating from 1781, shortly after the death of St. Paul of the Cross in 1775.

For the Provincials this was also an opportunity to learn about the often difficult work that our religious of the PIET Province of Italy have been doing during these past sixteen years. All present felt that their missionary spirit was renewed by their stay in this land that is so much in need of Christ following the long and sad experience of atheistic Communism. It also renewed a sense of hope for the new forms of Passionist presence in Ukraine, in the Czech Republic. There is also the possibility of making a foundation in Rumania, where the Passionists have ministered in the past. This missionary impulse of Europe toward the East strongly characterizes the proximate future of this Configuration.

The following religious were present at the meeting in Bulgaria: Fr. Luigi Vaninetti (General Consultor), Fr. Andrzej Jakimiak (Provincial ASSUM), Fr. Waldemar Linke (translator ASSUM), Fr. Gregor Lenzen (Vice Provincial VULN), Fr. Lucas Temme (Provincial Consultant VULN), Fr. Guy Sionneau (Provincial MICM), Fr. Giuseppe Martinelli (Provincial CORM), Fr. Piergiorgio Bartoli (Provincial PIET), Fr. Antonio Curto (Provincial LAT), Fr. Leone Masnata (Provincial CFXI), and Fr. Giuseppe Adobati (CORM), secretary CEB.

At the meeting in Bulgaria the participants, assisted by the preceding work done by the Study Group, affirmed the mandate of the last Synod. They believe in the opportunities offered by the process and they are moving prudently, but decisively toward experiencing and realizing Solidarity among the Provinces. They have not ignored the difficulty of communication due to diverse languages (French, Italian, Polish and German), but they feel that with work this can be resolved. So too the reality of diverse cultures requires a good amount of dialog, ongoing and reciprocal understanding, calm and patience, hope and tenacity. But they are hopeful because they are convinced that “we are attentive to the voice of the Spirit and of the Church, and we are encouraged by the experience of other religious Congregations.”
Fr. Denis Travers, General Consultor for Africa and the General Curia organized a Seminar Program for the Formation Personnel of the Passionist Configuration of Africa. The program took place at the Generalate in Rome from 1-31 October 2009. The Programme gave twelve Formators from the CPA Configuration – three each from the Vice Province of SALV (Congo) and the Regional Vicariates of MATAF (South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia), GEMM (Tanzania) and CARLW (Kenya) – one month of in-service instruction and renewal.

The vision behind the programme was to support formation ministry in Africa. Further, and at a very important level, this gathering was historic. It brought together those religious involved in formation in a learning environment in the hope of developing new initiatives, ideas and potential areas of cooperation and future collaboration.

The first two weeks of the programme studied the foundations of our spirituality and study of the theology of the Passion. The third week offered the religious some time for personal reflection and the opportunity for ‘pilgrimage’ together as they visited those places that were significant for our Founder. The final week provided an opportunity for the participants to address practical and developmental issues in formation ministry and to integrate what they have learned.

As well as the major themes there were seminars and workshop sessions examining various issues that may be of interest and help in the ministry of formation. Obviously a four week programme could not cover every major area of interest; but the programme offered the opportunity to receive some stimulating input, to share wisdom and vision and to have time for personal reading, prayer and pilgrimage.

On several days the group joined the Local Community of Sts. John and Paul for praying the Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist, and on other days there were separate celebrations of the Eucharist, led by various members of the group.

In his homily at the Mass that opened the Seminar, Fr. Ottaviano D’Egidio, Superior General stated: “Formation was an important area in the discussions of the General Chapter of 2006 resulting in the choice of two priorities that address these concerns: the 4th: “Formation” and the 10th: “Preferential Option for Youth”. These are priorities that compliment each other. Number 4 states that: “the Congregation must do everything possible to offer fundamental and effective formation to its new members. We are also committed to increase our efforts in the area of on-going formation for our professed Passionists. Among those who need opportunities for on-
ON-GOING FORMATION COURSE FOR ITALIAN PASSIONIST NUNS

From August 31 to September 9 a group of Passionist cloistered nuns in Italy, together with some Superiors and Sisters involved with formation, met in the Passionist monastery of Genoa Quarto, in northern Italy.

Approximately thirty nuns shared this fraternal and educational experience. They came from the following monasteries: Ovada (Alessandria), Costigliole d’Asti, Loreto (Ancona), Vignanello (Viterbo), Campagnano (Roma), Tarquinia (Viterbo) and Genoa. In addition to the Italian sisters, there was also one nun from Poland and a large group of Indonesians, originally from the monasteries of Maumere and Malang.

The topic of the on-going formation course was fraternal life in community. The presenters were Sister Maria Bottura, of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family, who is also a member of the teams of psychologists who work together Fr. Amedeo Cencini, and Fr. Luigi Vaninetti, General Consultor.

The first part of the course addressed the topic from a psychological point of view, examining the formation of conscience, and one’s capacity and limitations for developing positive and mature relationships. The second part of the course considered the biblical-theological dimensions of the topic, i.e. the call of Jesus to follow him in communal life and mission; the Passionist dimension of the common life, i.e. humility; allowing ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit; discerning the will of God and finally, mutual reconciliation.

There were opportunities for work in small groups, sharing and fraternal exchange. The Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist guided by the various communities present, were important moments of the week.

All of these dynamics helped to make this a very enjoyable and profitable experience. We hope that there will be other such programs in the future which can also help us to better know one another and to be of mutual support among the various monasteries of cloistered Passionist Nuns in order to sustain their contemplative mission to all people and to sustain the active apostolate of the Passionist male religious.

Passionist Nuns and Fr. Luigi Vaninetti, General Consultor
PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

Fr. Henrique Evangelista De Oliveira of the DOL-VIC Vicariate was ordained to the priesthood in Brazil on 26 June 2009. On 28 June 2009 in the CORM-CARLW Vicariate, Fr. Peter Ochieng Owino was ordained. On 4 July 2009, the following religious were ordained to the priesthood: Fr. Fernando Beltrán Soto, FID and Fr. Pasquale Gravante, DOL. Again, in the DOL-VICT Vicariate of Brazil, Fr. Paulo Sérgio Sabino was ordained on 01 August 2009 and Fr. Aurélio Aparecido Miranda was ordained on 06 September 2009. Lastly, in the FAT Province of Portugal, Fr. Francisco Xavier Oliveira was ordained on 27 September 2009.

DIACONATE ORDINATIONS

On 14 June 2009, Uldefonso Machado de Souza and Everaldo Pires da Cruz of the PRAES DOMIN Vicariate were ordained deacons. In the CALV Province of Brazil, Wilson Ramos da Silva was ordained to the Diaconate on 26 June 2009. On 4 July 2009 in the SPIR Province of Australia, John Auram was ordained a deacon and on the same day in the FID Vice-Province of Colombia, José Yoiner Ordoñez Mazábel was also ordained to the diaconate. On 12 July, Francisco Borda Oruño of the SANG EXAL Vicariate and Alexander Alexis Castillo Rodríguez of the SANG Province were ordained deacons. On 03 October 2009, Enno Rufino Dango of the CRUC Province of the USA was ordained to the diaconate. And finally, on 7 October, in the PRAES Province of Italy, Luigi Imbastari was ordained a deacon at the Pontifical Shrine of the Scala Santa, Rome.

PROFESSION OF FIRST VOWS

In the REPAC Vice-Province of Indonesia, the following religious professed First Vows on 09 July 2009: Marcellius Ari Christy, Nikodemus Iko, Fra. Adrianus Stefanus Lotoi, Aloysius Sigit Pranowo and Marianus Krispinus Sihabit. On 18 July 2009 in the REG Province of Mexico Jesús Ceja Quiroz and José Juan Cruz Zúñiga professed First Vows. On 08 September 2009, these religious of the Italian national novitiate professed First Vows: Piero Berti (PIET), Marco Ermano (CORM), Salvatore Frascina (PIET), Anthony Maria Chidi Iyiegbu (PRAES), and Marco Staffolani (PIET). In the ASSUM Province of Poland/Ukraine, Jurii Kurdybacha professed First Vows on 12 September 2009. On the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, the following religious of the FAM Province of Spain, professed First Vows: Douglas Alexander Carmona Rodríguez, Christian Américo Chicas Aguillón, Carlos Rosendo Diaz Castellon, Brother Héctor Madrid Salinas, Jesús Marin Pérez, Miguel Angel Merino Rodea, and Luis Felipe Padilla Coreas. And finally, on the Feast of Our Mother of Sorrows, 15 September, in the DOL Province of Italy, the following religious professed First Vows: Daniele Curci, Cristiano Massimo Parisi, and Vincenzo Serpe.
Vincenzo Serpe, Daniele Curci and Massimo Parisi (DOL) - Italy

Hugo Rodrigues Figueira, César Silva Costa and Nuno Ventura Martins (FAT) - Portugal

Fr. Joseph Barbieri (LAT)
Italy

Adrianus Stefanus Lotoi, Aloysius Sigit Pranowo, Marianus Krispinus Sihabit, Nikodemus Iko, and Stanislaus Marcellius Ari Christy (REPAC) - Indonesia

Enno Dango (CRUC) - EE. UU.

Héctor Madrid,
Luís Felipe Padilla,
Cristian Américo Chicas,
Miguel Angel Merino,
Douglas Alexeer,
Carlos Rosend
Diaz
and
Jesús
Marín
(FAM)
Spain
PROFESSIONS OF FINAL VOWS

In the SALV Vice-Province of Congo, Jean Faustin Maphasi Mbenza professed Final Vows on 31 July 2009. On 09 August 2009, in Jamaica, West Indies, Michael Rowe of the PAUL Province, professed Final Vows. In the FAT Province of Portugal, three religious professed Final Vows on 06 September 2009: César Miguel da Silva Costa, Brother Hugo Filipe Rodrigues Figueira and Nuno Filipe Ventura Martins.

In the LAT Province of Italy, Fr. Joseph Barbieri professed Perpetual Vows on 12 September. Finally on 27 September in the CRUC Province of the USA, Enno Rufino Dango professed Final Vows.
Deacons Alexeer Castillo Rodríguez (CORI-Panama) and Francisco Borda Oruño (SANG-Bolivia)

Fr. Francis Chenampally (THOM-CRUC) - India

Fr. Pasquale Gravante (DOL) - Italy

Deacon Yainer Ordoñez (FiD) - Colombia

Fr. Paulo Sergio Ribeiro Sabino (left) (VICT-DOL) - Brasil

Deacon Luigi Imbastari (PRAES) - Italy
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Rey Lopez, Aniceto
LA HORA HA LLEGADO, No se haga mi voluntad, sino la tuya Cuaresma-Pascua Ciclo A 2005, Anno Edizione: 2005, pp. 43

ME AMO Y SE ENTREGO A LA MUERTE POR MI VIA CRUCIS


Taccone, Fernando, C.P.
## Notitiae Obitus

Usque ad diem 15 febbraio 2009 – 12 giugno 2009, acceptae

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DIE</th>
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<td>02/07/2009</td>
<td>Sac. Emmanuel Van De Nieuwenhof</td>
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<td>Sac. Fergus Loughrey</td>
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<td>Sac. Tito (Felix) San Miguel Larrea</td>
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<td>1921</td>
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<td>02/10/2009</td>
<td>Sac. Bernardino Cerroni</td>
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## Moniales et Sorores Defunctae

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<td>02/07/2009</td>
<td>Sr. Assunta degli Angeli Verazze</td>
<td>Monasterio Passionistarum de Napoli</td>
<td>1934</td>
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<td>18/07/2009</td>
<td>Sr. Manuela del Espiritu Santo Arranz Rodriguez</td>
<td>Monasterio Passionistarum de Madrid (España)</td>
<td>1924</td>
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<td>19/07/2009</td>
<td>Sr. Luisa di Cristo Re Sibiano</td>
<td>S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa)</td>
<td>1923</td>
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<td>Sr. Luzia de Sancta Maria Alba Catapan</td>
<td>S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa)</td>
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<td>13/08/2009</td>
<td>Sr. Mary Catherine Brock</td>
<td>Monasterio Passionistarum de Hereford (Anglia)</td>
<td>1907</td>
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<td>16/08/2009</td>
<td>Sr. Marta di S. Tommaso d’Aquino Tersigni</td>
<td>S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa)</td>
<td>1921</td>
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<td>Sr. Marie Martha van Jezus in de Olijfhof Wellens</td>
<td>Monasterio Passionistarum de Tielt (België)</td>
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<td>Sr. Veronica della Passione (Adele) De Santis</td>
<td>Monasterio Passionistarum de Lucca (Italia)</td>
<td>1924</td>
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“On Sunday we celebrated our first Mass. We were ordained priests by the Supreme Pontiff. Out of charity pray for us so that we may respond with holiness of life to the many benefits the Lord has given us”.

(St. Paul of the Cross, Letter to Don Erasmo Tuccinardi, June 11, 1727)

The Eucharist is central to the life of each community… Our common sharing in the same Body of Christ nourishes the life of our community, constitutes its norms and fosters union among ourselves. For every community, and for each religious, the Eucharist is a divine reality that transforms their lives”.

(Constitutions, No. 43)