



# Passionist International Bulletin

N° 36 - New Series, 1-2015

Supplement to *L'Eco of Saint Gabriel*, July-August 2015  
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**THE PASSIONIST:**

***“a living portrait  
of the Crucified”***

***(St. Paul of the Cross)***

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*The Superior General*

# CIRCULAR LETTER ON COMMUNITY LIFE

## *Some Thoughts and Reflections*

Fr. Joachim Rego, C.P. Superior General

[*Editor's Note:* Below are some excerpts from the Superior General's Circular Letter on community life. To read the complete text, please go to the website [www.passiochristi.org](http://www.passiochristi.org)]

February 18, 2015  
Retreat of Sts. John and Paul

Dear Brothers,

### INTRODUCTION

In this letter, I wish to cast some random thoughts on the subject of community life. This is also in response to the proposal from the last General Chapter, which asked that the Superior General would undertake a specific pastoral action (catechesis) on the communitarian dimension of our life. I aim to share some reflections on community life from selected authors, but especially from Pope Francis – which I encourage you to use for your personal reflection, but also urge you to share as brothers in community.

There is never a time when the subject of community life is not an issue to talk about. We have done, and continue to do, a lot of talking, sharing and discussing about community life; there is also a vast amount of material written on this subject. I ask myself: *“What more can I say? Is there anything new that I can add?”* Perhaps a place to begin is the lived experience, because it is in the lived experience, more than anywhere else, where we can identify both the fruitful and evangelical community life, and also the challenges and sufferings encountered in community.

### COMMUNITY LIFE: *Thoughts & Reflections*

I believe that much of the cry to hear more about this area of community life is in relation to the human-relational dimension, and not so much about the theological-spiritual dimension of which we can find lots of material, more especially some clear, beautiful and challenging thoughts expressed in our Rule and Constitutions.

From my own experience in living the common life, and from my visits to the communities and lis-



**“It is in the lived experience, more than anywhere else, where we can identify both the fruitful and evangelical community life, and also the challenges and sufferings encountered in community.”**

tening to the brothers' experience of the fraternal life, I sense a yearning for companionship, acceptance, respect, harmony and working together on the one hand; but I also see and hear about loneliness, isolation, individualism, independence and excessive privacy on the other.

In some instances, our communities are compared to ‘boarding houses’ – bodies living, praying, eating together, going out to work and returning to sleep. There is no communion! In fact some religious have re-defined “common life” in such a way that it may be understood to include religious who live alone for the sake of their ministry but come together regularly for mutual support. They claim to find more sincere communion with their brothers and sisters in this way. Is it a case of *“absence makes the heart grow fonder?”*

Pope Francis emphasises the ‘spirituality of communion’ as “a way of being” for religious and to be ➔



lived in community life: *Communion is lived first and foremost within the respective communities of each Institute. To this end, I would ask you to think about my frequent comments about criticism, gossip, envy, jealousy, hostility as ways of acting which have no place in our houses. This being the case, the path of charity open before us is almost infinite, since it entails mutual acceptance and concern, practicing a communion of goods both material and spiritual, fraternal correction and respect for those who are weak ... it is the "mystique of living together" which makes our life "a sacred pilgrimage". We need to ask ourselves about the way we relate to persons from different cultures, as our communities become increasingly international. How can we enable each member to say freely what he or she thinks, to be accepted with his or her particular gifts, and to become fully co-responsible? (Apostolic Letter to Consecrated People, No.3)*

In an address at a symposium on Apostolic Religious Life, Sr Sara Butler of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity said: *"Common life is prescribed not simply for reasons of convenience and economy, nor even for mutual support in ministry, but because it manifests our communion in Christ. By our consecration, we share the same traditions, spirituality, apostolic purpose, resources, and constitutions. Our sisterly or brotherly communion announces that persons who love God are able to love and sustain each other; accept one another's gifts and limitations, share joys and sorrows – despite differences in age, race, language, nationality, culture, temperament, and ministerial competence. Because the asceticism of community life demands love, forgiveness, patience, and mutual self-giving, it contributes to growth in holiness. Vowed life, in fact, has serious consequences chiefly for those who live together. In an age of exaggerated individualism, community life is truly a prophetic sign. By living together, even at great cost, religious are able to bear striking witness to the Trinitarian mystery of self-emptying love."* ("Apostolic Religious Life: A Public, Ecclesial Vocation", Stonehill College, 27 September 2008).

We must not underestimate the witness value of our community life. Religious are asked to be witnesses of the humanising power of the Gospel through a life of brotherhood. Especially when divisions, breakdowns, conflicts, discrimination, prejudice, exclusion and individualism are such a reality of society and the world today, religious persons liv-



**"We must not underestimate the witness value of our community life."**

ing in community together with those whom we did not choose, can be a witness to the values of unity, difference, harmony, acceptance, inclusion and cooperation for a common purpose. We bear witness to *"the Christian community founded on the love of Christ, who by His Cross, 'tore down the wall of separation' and made all one people."* (Const. #26)

Pope Francis encourages us: *"In these days when fragmentation justifies widespread sterile individualism and when the weakness of relationships breaks up and ruins the care of the human person, we are invited to humanize community relationships, to encourage communion of heart and spirit in the Gospel sense, because "there is a communion of life among all those who belong to Christ. It is a communion that is born of faith" that makes "the Church, in her most profound truth, communion with God, intimacy with God, a communion of love with Christ and with the Father in the Holy Spirit, which extends to brotherly communion".* (Rejoice!, No. 9)

As it is our vocation and call *"to live the fullness of Christian love in an evangelical community"* (Const. #25), we reflect on the invitation of Pope Francis that this be characterised by 'joy', which is confirmed in the experience of community life: *"Since we are witnesses of a communion beyond our vision and our limits, we are called to wear God's smile. Community is the first and most believable gospel that we can preach. We are asked to humanise our community. "Build friendship between yourselves, family life, love among you. May the monastery not be a Purgatory but a family. There are and there will be problems but like in a family, with love, search for a solution with love; do not destroy this to resolve that; do not enter competitions. Build community life, because in the life of a community it is this way, like a family, and it is the very Holy Spirit*



who is in the middle of the community. [...] And community life always with a big heart. Let things go, do not brag, be patient with everything, smile from the heart. And a sign of this is joy". (Rejoice! No. 9)

One of the sad facts of our community life is to find brothers who have lived, and continue to live with past hurts and unresolved conflicts experienced with their fellow brothers. Sometimes their life is rooted in bitterness and while they may celebrate the sacraments and preach reconciliation to others, yet they cannot bring themselves to forgive the brother they are living with in the community of the house or the Province. This can have an overall negative and heavy atmosphere for everyone and does stifle joy and good communication. It also encourages people to make rash negative judgements and engage in unhelpful conversations filled with cynicism and sarcasm. Superiors, both Local and Major, must be attentive to this and confront particular situations with respect and charity.

Pope Francis says: "...You are challenged to become "experts" in divine mercy precisely through your life in community. From experience, I know that community life is not always easy, but it is a providential training ground for the heart. It is unrealistic not to expect conflicts; misunderstandings will arise and they must be faced. Despite such difficulties, it is in community life that we are called to grow in mercy, forbearance and perfect charity. (Address to Religious Communities, So. Korea, August, 2014)

He further urges: "Pray, pray for all the members of the community, but pray especially for those with whom I have problems or for those to whom I don't wish well, because to not wish a person well sometimes is a natural thing, instinctive, but pray: and the Lord will do the rest." (Meeting with seminarians, Rome, May 13, 2014)

Speaking of the community as a place of healing and growth, Jean Vanier writes: *The wound in all of us, and which we are all trying to flee, can become the place of meeting with God and with brothers and sisters; it can become the place of ecstasy and of the eternal wedding feast. The loneliness and feelings of inferiority, which we are running away from, become the place of liberation and salvation.*

*There is always warfare in our hearts; there is always a struggle between pride and humility, hatred and love, forgiveness and the refusal to forgive, truth and the concealment of truth, openness and closedness. Each one of us is walking in that passage towards liberation, growing on the journey towards wholeness and healing. ... We must not fear this vulnerable heart, with its closeness to sexuality and its capacity to hate and be jealous. We must not run from it into power, knowledge, seeking self-glory, and independence. Instead, we must let God take his place there, purify it and enlighten it. As the stone is gradually removed from our inner tomb and the dirt*



***"We must not fear this vulnerable heart... we must let God take his place there, purify it and enlighten it.***

*is revealed, we discover that we are loved and forgiven; then under the power of love and of the Spirit, the tomb becomes a womb. A miracle seems to happen. (Community and Growth)*

Finally, we need to make greater efforts in community life to truly get-to-know one another. In order for this to happen, we must be prepared to give time to the other, to listen to their story with respect, and to hear their experiences in life which have been both life-giving and also those which have left scars that need continued healing through our fraternal care, acceptance, understanding and tenderness.

## CONCLUSION

What I have shared in this letter are some random thoughts about community life, backed up by some helpful reflections from various authors to encourage, inspire and assist us in growing in brotherhood and giving joyful witness of Christian love in evangelical communities.

I am certainly no more an expert in community life than any one of you and I am very aware of the limitations of what is presented through this letter. However I am offering you these thoughts and reflections on particular aspects of community life, strongly urging every community through the responsibility of the Local Superior (with the encouragement of the Major Superior) to make time to share about this area of our life, in relation to greater genuineness and growth of your particular community.

As we each reflect on our personal and communal desires to encounter Jesus in a deeper way, and as we respond genuinely to the grace of conversion gifted us by our merciful Father, let us walk this journey without fear, but with great trust and confidence strengthened by the compassion of our brothers and the tenderness of our God.

**Fr. Joachim Rego CP  
Superior General**



# NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CONSULTA MEETINGS

## February 2-11 and April 27-30, 2015

### Meeting with General Curia and the directors of various sectors of the Generalate

For the first time since the beginning of his mandate as Superior General in 2012, Fr. Joachim and the General Council convoked a meeting of all those religious who serve as staff members of the General Curia as well as those religious who are directly responsible for various sectors of the Generalate community and its principal apostolates. In addition to the Superior General and the General Consultors, the following were present: Fr. Floriano De Fabiis (Procurator General); Fr. Paul Cherukoduth (Secretary General); Fr. Vincenzo Carletti (General Econome); Fr. Jesús María Aristín (Secretary General for JPIC and the Missions); Fr. Giovanni Zubiani (Postulator General); Fr. Martin Coffey (Executive Secretary for Formation); Fr. Stanley Baldon (Web Master); Fr. Matteo Nonini (Rector of the Generalate Community); Fr. Miguel Ángel Villanueva (Community Vicar); Bro. Giuseppe Pugliese (Community Econome); Fr. Vito Patera (Retreat House Director); Fr. Augusto Matrullo (Rector of the Basilica); Fr. Adriano Spina (Librarian); Fr. Alessandro Foppoli (Personal Secretary to the Superior General); and Fr. Lawrence Rywalt (Editor of the Passionist International Bulletin [PIB] and English language secretary for translation).

The three-hour morning programme offered each religious an opportunity to share about his life and ministry with the community and on behalf of the Congregation. At the conclusion of the meeting, Fr. Joachim thanked everyone for their candid sharing of information and views about their ministries. He also offered his own thanks to all members of the Curia and all present for their service and dedication to the life and mission of the Congregation. In his remarks, he noted, *“After my election I tried to meet with most of you individually to talk about your role here in the Curia. I was new; I did not know much about the General Government...I appointed, or reconfirmed all of you in your jobs... [with] a term of office... I rely very much on the gift of others, and I am happy to delegate things to others; when I delegate, I fully trust everyone. On behalf of the Council I want to say how much I appreciate what you have been doing and what you are doing.”*

### Canonical Visits

Fr. Joachim and members of the Council have conducted visitations in the following Provinces in preparation for their respective Provincial Chapters. In reference to the Configuration of Eugenio Bossilkov these visits were in anticipation of the inaugural Provincial Chapter which will create a unity of the former eight Provinces. Fr. General and or a member of the Council have conducted



The Superior General, the General Council and members of the General Curia.

Canonical Visits in France (Province MICH), in Portugal and earlier in Angola (the Province of FAT), and in Italy which is home to the provinces of DOL, PRAES, CFIXI, CORM, PIET and LAT. These visits also included meetings with our students in the General House in Rome, and visits to our mission in Bulgaria, and the communities of Monte Argentario and Highgate, England.

Other Consultors conducted visitations in the United States (CRUC), Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand (SPIR).

### The General Synod, Rome: 12<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015

The 15<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the Congregation is scheduled to take place at the Generalate in Rome this coming October. According to a change that was made at the last General Chapter (2012), the Superior General convokes the General Synods at three-year intervals or at other times between General Chapters (Const. 146). Number 144 of the Constitutions states, *“The General Synod is primarily an assembly that acts as a consultative body to help the Superior General. It will examine the programs proposed by the General Chapter and evaluate their implementation. Further, it will suggest initiatives to keep the Congregation continually up to date; it will propose means of settling problems in a spirit of brotherly harmony, and will call the attention of the various Provinces to their duties towards one another.”*

During these Consulta meetings a draft of the timetable and arrangement of the work of the Synod was discussed and further refined. The theme of the Synod will be, ***Passionist Life: The Call to Holiness in Community for Evangelisation***. The Synod will begin with some sharing sessions and a seminar on leadership (with particular emphasis on governance and some of the canonical responsibilities of superiors). The Secretary for the Synod is Fr. Paul Francis Spencer, CP (PATR) and the



Facilitator (Moderator) will be Fr. William Chang, OFM. Cap, PhD. Fr William is currently Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Prior to the Synod all materials will be given to the participants. In reference to the proposed seminar on *Canonical Matters for Leaders*, each Provincial will receive a communication regarding various areas of concern in June and they are asked to return these questionnaires by the end of August in order to indicate what areas which areas they desire to learn more about.

The six Presidents of the Configurations will also give a report to the Synod. Among the major areas for discussion and decision will be determining norms for participation in future General Chapters and Synods, the possible elevation of the three CPA (Africa) Vicariates to the status of Vice Provinces, discussion of the revised norms for the use of the Solidarity Fund and the consideration of the proposed General Budget for 2015-2018.

**Dictionary of the Passion**

As previously conveyed, this spring, 2015, Pauline Publications (Spain) published the Dictionary of the Passion in Spanish. In return for the rights to the publication, they will grant us a 40% discount on the purchase of each book and will give us 8% of the income from the sales. The publisher will only hold the rights for the Spanish language and so we will be free to seek further publishers for both English and Italian editions. If Pauline Publications chooses not to publish a second edition in Spanish, then even the Spanish rights come back to the Passionists.

Currently the Congregation or our Sister Congregations have reserved some 440 books for purchase. We want to express our gratitude to the thirty-three (33) authors who collaborated in the creation of this Dictionary and to the SCOR Province. This will surely be a wonderful resource for the Congregation and the whole Church.

**Meeting with the General Econome**

Fr. Vincenzo Carletti, General Econome, reported that the repairs and ongoing maintenance of the Generalate, the community and the retreat house buildings is continuing. As per the contract, the work being done on the community buildings was scheduled to be completed on 30 April 2015. However, because of the extensive amount of rain during the past several months, this deadline moved into May. This, however, is not problematic because it



Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, visits the FAT Province of Portugal during Holy Week.



Restructuring of the "casa" sector of the retreat of Sts. John and Paul.

gives us an opportunity to add some other work that is necessary for these structures.

**Province Transfers & Membership Status**

Since the General Chapter of 2012, several Vicariates and Provinces have merged into new Provinces, for example, in 2013 the three Spanish Provinces and the Colombian Province and their respective Vicariates merged into a new Province (SCOR), and in 2014, the three Brazilian Vicariates merged into a new Province (EXALT). In May of this year, 2015, the six Italian provinces and the Provinces of Portugal and France also merged into a new, single Province.

Consequently, the Procurator General, Fr. Floriano De Fabiis, addressed the issue of the status of some religious who were residing in a province other than their province of origin for an extended period, as well as other religious who wished to transfer from one province to another. While discussing some particular cases, he also reviewed what is stated in our General Regulations on this topic: *The Superior General may incorporate a religious into another Province after having heard the opinion of the Provincial Superiors concerned. By mutual written consent, the Provincial Superiors concerned may allow religious from one Province to reside in another for a period of not more than five years. A longer stay requires the consent of the Superior General. (Reg. No.60)*

**Report of Historical Commission**

Fr. Alessandro Ciciliani (PIET), President of the Historical Commission, shared with the General Council a report of the most recent meeting of the Commission held in Rome in December 2014. (Please see Fr. Alessandro Ciciliani's report in this issue of the PIB).

**World Youth Day 2016**

After taking into consideration the advice of the Extended Council and being aware of the expense involved and distances to be travelled, it has been decided that at the World Youth Day in 2016 in Poland, there will not be a meeting of Young Passionist religious with the Superior General and Council. The General Council has become aware also that several Configurations are planning to have their own gatherings of younger religious, but within their own geographical areas and not linked specifically to World Youth Day.



## JPIC WORKSHOP:

# Creating a Network of Passionist Solidarity

**F**r. Jesús María Aristín, Secretary General for the Office of Solidarity and the Missions, organized a seminar-workshop on JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation) at the Generalate in Rome from 13 to 19 April 2015. The aim of this workshop was primarily to form a network of Passionist Solidarity, i.e. to meet with clergy, religious and lay people who work in the areas of solidarity, justice and peace. The weeklong meeting offered an opportunity for the approximately eighty participants to meet one another, to share with each other about what they do, and to see how they can coordinate their activities with each other. Like any social network, it is not about everyone thinking alike; rather, its goal is to plan and achieve precise objectives.

The presentations and discussions focused on three principal topics: volunteers, NGOs and Fr. Thomas Berry, CP. Since it was an international workshop, Passionists who are local promoters of Justice and Peace in the provinces were invited to participate, together with all those who work in this field, men and women religious, as well as the laity.

The following participated in the workshop as speakers: Adolfo Pérez Esquivel (Nobel Peace Prize recipient); Comboni Missionary, Fr. Alex Zanotelli; Fr. Joseph Mitchell (CP-CRUC), Fr. Martin Newell (CP-IO), Antonietta Potente; and representatives of the Sant'Egidio Community of Rome.

Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, noted that

this workshop is a response to the first two points of the Passionist Life and Mission section of the final document of our last General Chapter (2012): 1) *The charismatic testimony of the Passionist community;* and 2) *In joyful hope we embrace Christ's Passion for the crucified and for the earth.*

**Fr. Joseph Mitchell** (CP-CRUC), president of the Passionist Earth & Spirit Center in Louisville, Kentucky, spoke about the life and work of Fr. Thomas Berry (1914-2009). His presentation was entitled: "Thomas Berry, CP: The Earth Story and the Great Work". He described Berry as an original and prophetic voice for the Earth community. He was a gifted speaker, an original thinker, and an inspiring teacher, who reshaped our thinking about human-Earth relations. Drawing on his broad knowledge of world religions and his deep feeling for the journey of the universe, Berry identified "story" as a means of guiding humans into the future. Mitchell's presentation focused on the issues of JPIC by asking: how can we bring forth an environmentally sustainable, socially just and spiritually fulfilling human presence on the planet? He explained: "*we live at an extraordinary moment when the traditional conceptual framework of our world is being challenged and new perceptions of what it means to be human are emerging. Recent scientific discoveries have awakened us to the remarkable and magnificent creativity of our planet as a living system.*" In his talk, he presented the observations and insights of Thomas Berry whose

ideas "*invite a multifaceted reflection on our current ecological, cultural and spiritual crises. As the lists of crises in our world multiply, Berry offers a way forward into a viable future by deeply affirming the sacred quality of creation.*"

**Adolfo Pérez Esquivel** is an Argentine human rights activist, community organizer, pacifist, artist-painter, writer and sculptor. He was the recipient of the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in defense of human rights. Additionally, in 1999, he was given the Pacem in Terris Award. In his address, entitled "Open



Fr. Jesús María Aristín and the participants in the JPIC Workshop.



the doors of hope”, he began by stating: *“every person experiences life on personal and collective levels, and he responds according to his roots and culture, spirituality and social, political and economic life situations. These experiences enrich and intersect with other cultures through knowledge, people and stories. The great wealth of a people is their diversity, and it is this element that preserves their identity.”* Later in his talk, he noted, *“The twentieth century was a great challenge for humanity. The twenty-first must open the doors of hope. Every person, from his place, needs to remember and to contribute to making the world a more just and fraternal place for all. What we have the courage to sow today, we shall reap tomorrow. We all have a story, struggles and dreams to fulfill. In this journey it is necessary to look within, that is within ourselves as individuals, within the culture of our people, our spiritual values, and search through our memory for ways to seek unity with ourselves and with one another.”*

**Fr. Martin Newell, CP** was the presenter for the third day of the Workshop. He spoke about his twenty-year involvement in the Catholic Worker Movement and its history in Great Britain. He said that the Catholic Worker center in London is based in a house of hospitality that offers housing for twenty men who were refused asylum and therefore, are destitute since they are not allowed to work or claim any social security benefits. He explained that traditionally Catholic Worker communities are based in Houses of Hospitality and are places to practice the works of mercy— feeding the hungry, welcoming the homeless and the stranger, caring for the sick, visiting the prisoner. We as Passionists can see these realities as clear examples of Crucifixion among us.

He then posed the question: “What can we Passionists, as fellow disciples of the one Lord, learn from this movement?” He explained that in order to live and minister from this perspective *“what is needed is not a theology of liberation, but a theology – or rather, even before that, a **practice** – of repentance and resistance— repentance from our privileges and resistance to the injustice and violence where it starts – which is ‘at home’.... And for Passionists, following the example of the Catholic Workers, this repentance can easily take the form of what might in another language be called ‘acts of penance’: non-violent direct action, or ‘active non-violence’, leading us along the path of Jesus’ Passion, of his arrest, trial, conviction and sentencing.”* He concluded: *“Another world is possible...*



**The video conference of Adolfo Pérez Esquivel.**

*another Church is possible... another way of being Passionist is possible.”*

At the concluding Mass, Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, stated that, *“JPIC is about living the Gospel in its radical truth and letting the Light of Christ shine in the midst of the dark areas of our lives and the dark forces of our world... In these days of your Workshop, you have shared with one another your experience of the areas of darkness and sin in our world today. You have listened and learned from one another about the suffering of human beings, and the tragedy of the destruction of the environment and creation in your particular part of the world and context. You have recognised that at the basis of this lifestyle is the hunger for oppressive power and greed toward self-sufficiency. You have expressed your desire to be in solidarity with one another and collaborate together to find effective ways to combat issues where people suffer because of injustice, poverty, greed, violence, racism, abuse, and exclusion.”*

*As Passionists, we find hope and a meaningful path forward in the Passion and Cross of Jesus - “the power and the wisdom of God”. However, before we can stand with the ‘crucified’ of the world, we need to stand before the Cross of the Crucified Jesus, listening and learning from the response of Jesus in his suffering at the forces of darkness he encountered - his response of truth, unity, inclusion, acceptance, love, non-violence, forgiveness, humility, and ultimate trust in God.*

*As Passionists, we must never lose sight of the fact that we are more than an organization for doing good things in our world. We are missionaries with a clear identity and mission stemming from God’s gift of the charism - our life-force: to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus as an act of God’s great love for all of creation; and to proclaim the Gospel of the Passion.”*

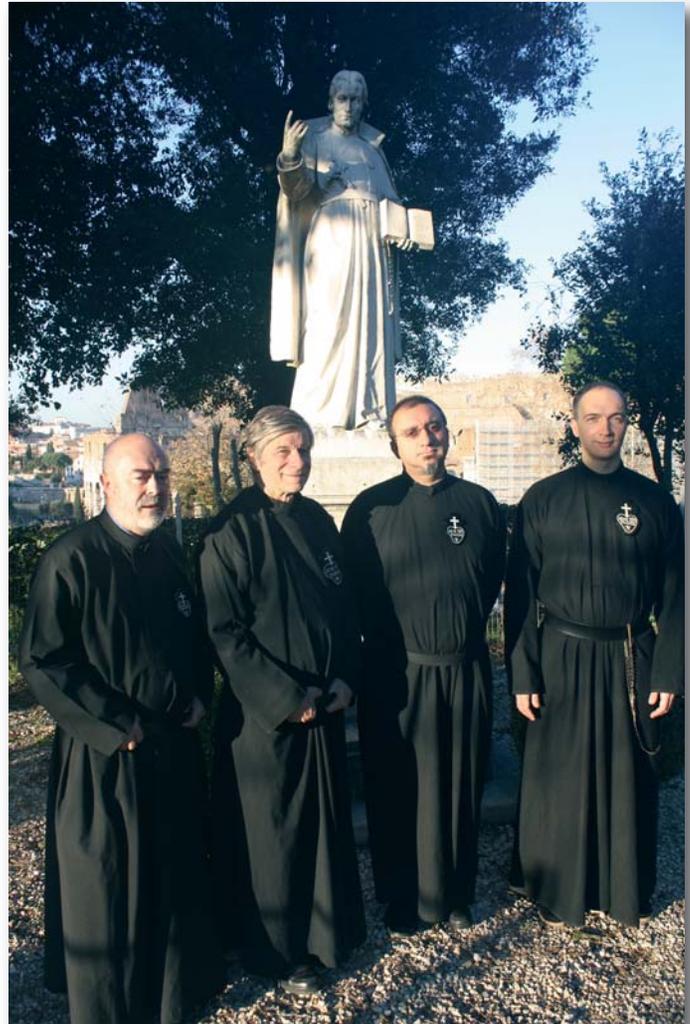
# THE NEW HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Fr. Alessandro Ciciliani, (MAPRAES)

The last member of the former Historical Commission, Fr. Fabiano Giorgini, died on April 28, 2008. On October 1, 2014, the Superior General, Fr. Joachim Rego, appointed new members to the new Historical Commission: Fr. Robert Carbonneau (PAUL), Fr. Andrés San Martín (SCOR), Fr. Pablo Gonzálo (SCOR), and Fr. Alessandro Ciciliani (MAPRAES); the latter is also the President who subsequently convened the first meeting from 19 to 21 December 2014.

The meeting began with the following introduction: “The task of the historical Commission is to investigate the past of our Congregation. By doing so we hope to preserve our Passionist identity so that every religious feels a strong sense of membership in the Institute and so that our common and fundamental values are preserved among the various areas of the Congregation. [...]. Therefore, it is urgent that we not lose the memory of who we are and what we do in the Church and in the world, in order to promote the Kingdom of heaven. Through our ministry, we strive to reawaken in every religious a love for the Congregation that St. Paul of the Cross founded at great personal cost. [...] It is important for us historians to help our confreres rediscover the specific elements of our vocation. Our task should be to help each religious to love our life through these two aspects: the contemplation of the Crucified and the proclamation of God’s love for every person. It is only in this way that we will have achieved our goal and will have effectively performed our service. We need to make the sources of our charism known and accessible so that it can continue to be a means for renewal and innovation in the various parts of the Congregation”.

During this first meeting, which also helped the Commission members to become better acquainted, we discussed various issues and topics, and concrete proposals were made for work projects to be assigned to collaborators who were previously identified and



(L-R) Frs. Andrés San Martín (SCOR), Robert Carbonneau (PAUL), Pablo Gonzalo (SCOR) and Alessandro Ciciliani (MAPRAES).

contacted, including laity.

The first point discussed was the new organization and classification of the General Archives, and continuing the digitalization of documents already in process. The next point that was discussed was the Third Centenary of the founding of the Congregation (1720-2020). Various proposals were made: periodically publish articles in the BIP; complete the fourth volume of our history and begin the fifth volume that will address the period of 1925-1965; have a sector on the website of the Congregation for offering information and making available publications of the Commission in the three official languages.



Additionally, concerning the topic of the tri-centennial, the commission discussed the possibility of preparing two publications every year to be included in the History and Spirituality series. Some possible Passionist topics might be: “The history of the education of the Passionists from our origins to the present day”; “The Congregation of the Passion and World War I”; “Lives of eminent Passionists”; “The apostolate and parish missions as a charismatic expression of the Congregation”; “Justification and analysis of 20th century Passionist sources: pros and cons of veracity”; “The Popes and the Passionist Congregation throughout history”; “The Passionist religious: history and evolution”.

We were then updated about the publication and translation of another critical edition of the letters of Saint Paul of the Cross.

We agreed about the need for an adequate workspace for the Commission at the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul.

The Commission will renew an invitation to the major superiors of the Congregation to send religious to study Church history. Additionally we will remind them that it would be good for each province to prepare its own written history. Thus, the historical Commission hopes to make our history more accessible and better known.

Another important aspect that was discussed concerned cooperation with the Secretariat for Formation and initial and ongoing formation. It is important to make our young religious conscious of our history so that they can fully live our charism and mission according to our tradition. Consequently, courses and seminars will be organized for both those in formation, as well as formation personnel.

The Commission will prepare a PowerPoint presentation with some basic information about the history of our Congregation that will be available to every religious. We will also prepare a small booklet with



**Fr. Alessandro Ciciliani successfully defends his dissertation and is awarded a doctorate in Church History from the Gregorian University in Rome on 13 May 2015.**

photos and short texts on the history of the Congregation that can be distributed in the context of our ministries as a means of offering general information about our Institute.

The Commission agreed to elaborate norms of historical criteria so that there is uniformity in our publications, using previous criteria as the common basis. We also believe that there should be methodological uniformity in our publications and therefore we will provide our collaborators with a common methodology to be used in their work: in principle, we will use the method established by the faculty of history at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

### Conclusion

This first meeting of the new historical Commission was very positive and the members worked effectively toward establishing various projects for the period of their mandate, which will expire in September 2018. The Commission will meet again on November 11-12, 2015 in Rome.

It is our hope that during these upcoming years we can be of service to our confreres in defining more clearly our identity and mission. Accordingly we will strive to be true worshipers in spirit and in truth of the Crucified One in order to be able to stand with the crucified of today throughout the world. ●

# THE HOMILETIC DIRECTORY AND THE PASSIONIST CHARISM

Fr. Aldo Ferrari, (MAPRAES)

[*Editor's Note:* On 10 February 2015, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published the “Homiletic Directory”, which opens with the decree of Cardinal Antonio Canizares Llovera, prefect of the dicastery at the time of the composition of the document. “It is very poignant that Pope Francis wished to devote considerable attention to the theme of the homily in his Apostolic Exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*”, writes the Cardinal. “The bishops gathered in Synod had already expressed both positive and negative aspects of the state of preaching, and guidance for homilists was offered in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations “*Verbum Domini*” and “*Sacramentum caritatis*” of Pope Benedict XVI. From this perspective, and bearing in mind the provisions of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*”, as well as subsequent magisterial teaching, and in light of the “Introduction” to the “Lectionary for Mass” and the “General Instruction of the Roman Missal”, this two-part “Homiletic Directory” was prepared. The full text is currently available in Italian and English from the “Libreria Editrice Vaticana” (Vatican Press) or local book publishers. In an effort to help our religious to study this document from a Passionist perspective, we offer the following article written by Fr. Aldo Ferrari (MAPRAES).]

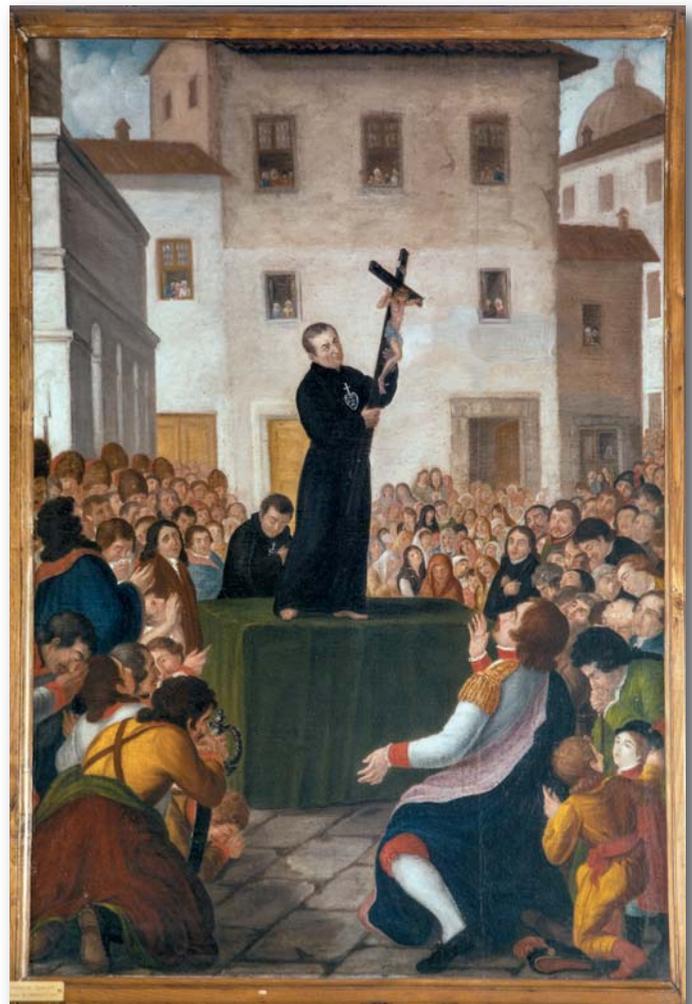
After so many homilies of Pope Francis (there are already four volumes in Italian), after the forty points dedicated to the preaching of the Word of God in “*Evangelii Gaudium*”, a logical next step was a Homiletic Directory. The type of homily that Pope Francis preaches every morning at the Mass in his Santa Marta residence, suggests, indeed determines, the format for homilies in our present day Eucharistic celebrations.

Someone said that if a world organization, similar to the Catholic Church, had the opportunity to address all its followers every week, even if only for ten minutes, it would cause a worldwide revolution.

In order to communicate, we speak; but it is how we speak that matters. Sunday homilies seem to address various topics in all sorts of ways. There are long homilies that put their listeners to sleep. There are short homilies that are incomprehensible. There are those who speak about current events and seem to have a political agenda. Some talk about morality like a moral theologian. Some homilists make us laugh and enjoy telling stories, and there others who use dialog homilies. In some cases, it is not clear what the homilist is really speaking about; some make their listeners bored, while others make them angry. Some choose to act like talk show hosts, whereas still others simply have no idea what to say.

It is said that the Ministry of the Word is one of the highest and most challenging ministries within the Church. St. Thomas Aquinas entrusts this ministry only to bishops and those who the bishops authorize.

For Saint Augustine, bishop, (he preached nearly every day) preaching was particularly tedious: “it is the Gospel that scares me,” he once said in a sermon. He would have preferred contemplative silence in his assembly. Certainly St. Bernard of Clairvaux was more adept, the “mellifluous doctor”, not to mention St. Bernardine of Siena and many others.



A depiction of a miracle that occurred while St. Paul of the Cross was preaching a popular mission.



St. Paul of the Cross willingly preached because he had a beautiful, baritone voice (prior to the invention of microphones), and he knew how to use gestures in his delivery. However, more than anything, he abhorred the Baroque, oratory style of his time (he did not want his religious to accept commitments for Lenten preaching which he felt were often pedantic, pretentious and rhetorical). On the contrary, he wanted to be a true minister of the Word, not his word, but that of the Cross. He wanted to be a living image of St. Paul the Apostle who affirmed: *“For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning.”* (1Cor.1:17)

To preach the “*Verbum Crucis*” (the Word of the Cross) is extremely difficult. Humanly speaking, it is nearly impossible. In fact, the human art of rhetoric, oratory, refined speech, seem to have a negative effect. Paul the Apostle tried this approach in Athens, at the Areopagus—he was a total failure. He departed the city with his tail between his legs. Instead, at Corinth, while making a living at weaving tents, his preaching was highly successful. He summoned up all his courage and he preached with humility and reverence, as he himself describes in his letter to the Corinthians: *“I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive (words of) wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.”* (1Cor.2:3-5)

Similarly, St. Paul of the Cross went through the streets of Castellazzo carrying a crucifix, inviting the children and the adults to listen to Christian doctrine. Someone jeered at him; others taunted him, but those who went to the Church of San Carlo, heard him preach “fiery” words on the Passion of Jesus. This also happened at other times in the life of this itinerant missionary. In the city of Chiavari he was dismissed by order of the Senate of the Republic of Genoa; in the city of Civitavecchia he got a cold and unfriendly reception; but in the town of Piegario the crucifix itself preached, exuding blood.

### The Homiletic Directory

After the many homilies that Pope Francis has preached to us, after his apostolic letter on the joy of the Gospel in which he calls the Church to go out and evangelize, a logical next step was this practical document, a directory. The purpose of this document is to encourage everyone to experience the *“delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow...”* (EG:II,10) There is no mention of [our Passionist tradition of] Sacred Eloquence, now in disuse; rather its scope is the homily, that is not the same as the so-called “preaching” of the past that was often moralistic in style and generally not received well by listeners. Rather, the homily is a true “*actio liturgico*” (liturgical action) as is the entire celebration of the Eucharist.

It is a sacramental act in the sense that in the same way that the priest acts “*in persona Christi*” (as Christ) when he pronounces the words of consecration over the bread and wine, so he functions “*in persona Christi*” when he preaches the homily. Despite his human defects, including at times, awkwardness in public speaking, stuttering like Moses, or like St. Paul the Apostle who candidly admitted not being proficient in the art of speaking, the homily is a Christological act and an essential part of the liturgy of the Word. In the apostolic exhortation “*Verbum Domini*” Pope Benedict XVI states, *“The proclamation of God’s word at*



**Pope Francis preaches a homily shortly after his election in 2013.**

*the celebration entails an acknowledgment that Christ himself is present, that he speaks to us, and that he wishes to be heard.”* (VD, 56)

We should speak in public, as did Jesus himself. The gospel of Luke records one of his “homilies” during a liturgical celebration on the Sabbath. It was not really a homily; however, it was a clear confirmation that the word read and proclaimed was identified with the presence of Jesus: *“Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”* (Lk.4:21) It seems that the people of Nazareth were filled with admiration and gratitude for the words of this young rabbi, Jesus, but only to hear the usual “skeptical leaders” drive away their fellow citizen. To understand the homily in a liturgical context means considering it within the whole liturgical celebration, whereby *“the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist together proclaim the wonderful work of God of our salvation in Christ.”* (HD, 11) In other words, we are speaking about the celebration of “the Paschal mystery” of our salvation.

To talk about the Paschal mystery means talking about the work of our salvation that was accomplished through the Passion and death of Jesus (sorrowful moment), followed by the resurrection (glorious moment). Currently we affirm that we Passionists *“make the Paschal Mystery the centre of our lives ... and [that we] familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the Passion of Christ...in the lives of people today.”* (Const.65) Do we also know how to talk about this? Appropriately? Appealingly? With conviction? St. Paul of the Cross believed even a heart as hard as stone, could not withstand the “loving attraction” of the Passion of Jesus. Unfortunately, he lamented the lack of “evangelical workers”, people who would move about not like “windbags”, but as “trumpets of the Holy Spirit”. Moreover, he referred to what happened in Jerusalem at the time of the first Pentecost when *“a strong driving wind...filled the entire*



house in which they were [and] there appeared to them tongues as of fire.” (Acts2:2)

## The Passion of Jesus at the Center

It is remarkable that the Directory refers to the pierced Heart of Christ on the Cross, as the place where we can understand the Scriptures in their entirety and unity. Before the Passion of Jesus, the Scriptures remained “unclear.” Just think of the difficulty in understanding the fourth song of the Servant of Yahweh (Isaiah 53), a Messiah defeated, humiliated and crushed, but who actually was the one who rescued us all, by being the true “goel” [Redeemer], including the Paschal Lamb, whose blood saved the first-born sons of the Israelites from death.

And Jesus himself is quoted explaining his Passion, death and Resurrection to the confused disciples at Emmaus, whose understanding of the Scriptural texts were “unclear”; yet when explained by Jesus (“*Christ had to suffer all these things*”) they became like a fire that burned so intensely in their hearts that they ran back to Jerusalem to tell to everyone else.

St. Paul of the Cross said that the Passion of Jesus, in particular his wounds, were the necessary channels for gaining access to God and to his grace at work in us. He used to cite the Johannine passage “*Ego sum ostium*” (“I am the gate”, Jn.10:9) We cannot get to God except through his Passion, because here, there is no deception. He wanted his religious to “dwell” in the open heart of Christ, submerged in a sea of love and pain, hidden in his wounds. From this vantage point, all of Scripture could then be contemplated and understood in a spiritual sense. The Homiletic Directory arrives at the conclusion that “*the preacher’s task is to help the faithful to read the Scriptures in the light of the Paschal mystery, so that Christ may reveal his heart to them, which, according to St. Thomas coincides with the content and focus of Scriptures*”. (HD,18)

We recall what St. Paul of the Cross advocated: whenever a Passionist preached any sermon to the people, he should not forget the theme of the Passion. That the Passion opens minds and hearts to the understanding of the Scriptures is well illustrated by the story that Thérèse of Lisieux tells in her autobiography. She recounts: “*It did not bother me at all if I was watched (when, as a child, she was in church); I listened very attentively to the sermons even if I did not understand them very well. The first one that I understood, and which deeply impressed me, was a sermon of Fr. Ducellier on the Passion, after which I was able to understand all the others.*” And not only understand the homily, but enter into it: “*The purpose of the homily is to help the people of God see how the Paschal mystery not only informs what we believe, but it also makes us capable of acting in the light of the realities of we believe.*” (HD, 22)

## The preparation?

Sometimes it seems that to prepare a homily one needs to be a walking encyclopedia of patristic and exegetical knowledge, as well as the writings of the Saints and doctors of the Church, including magisterial documents. Certainly, study should not be underestimated. Pope Francis says that a preacher who does not prepare is “*dishonest, irresponsible; a false prophet, a fraud or a shallow impostor.*” (EG,145;151)

However, study is not enough: “*In the preparation of homilies study plays an inestimable value, but prayer is essential.*” (HD,26) This is because prayer more than study “personalizes” the word that is read, studied and meditated.



**“Whoever wants to preach must be the first to let the word of God move him deeply and become incarnate in his daily life.” (EG, 150)**

Pope Francis writes: The preacher “*needs to approach the word with a docile and prayerful heart so that it may deeply penetrate his thoughts and feelings and bring about a new outlook in him*”. (EG, 149). Otherwise, as St. Paul the Apostle observes, we can sound like a “*resounding gong or a clanging cymbal*”. (1Cor.13:1) It would be good to make a distinction between proximate and remote preparation of the homily.

Remote preparation is best suited for the “lectio” aspect of a biblical text, in order to understand “*what the text says in itself*”. (DO, 27) At this point, it is “*useful to consult commentaries, dictionaries, and other studies that can help us understand the meaning of the biblical passages in their original context*”. (DO, 29) On the other hand, proximate preparation relies on “*meditatio*” (meditation) and “*oratio*” (prayer), which are two means of personalizing the biblical text. The first answers the question: “*What does this text say to me?*” the second: “*After the word has challenged me in my heart, how do I respond to the Lord?*” For St. Paul of the Cross the suitable place for this proximate phase was at the foot of the Cross, in meditation. Several times, he was unexpectedly found kneeling at the foot of a crucifix, on a mat of spikes or nails. He said, “*you need to put on interiorly the bitter wounds of Jesus Christ...*” as you proceed along the path of love, “*because love moves us to own the pains, the virtues and the merits of our dearly beloved, Jesus Christ.*” (Letters, 285)

Pope Francis simply writes, “*Whoever wants to preach must be the first to let the word of God move him deeply and become incarnate in his daily life.*” (EG, 150) St. Paul of the Cross did not want eloquent preachers (“*Let not any member...be allowed to make use in his sermons of so lofty and elegant a style as to become obscure and not easily understood by the common people.*”- Rule 1775, XXIII); rather, great evangelizers and evangelical ministers who prepare themselves with “*prayer, fasting and penances; with lamenting and tears in order to help their neighbor; sanctify souls, and convert sinners.*” (Breve notizia, 1747)

Especially today, homilies should be brief, but effective, so that the words come from a heart on fire with the love of the Crucified— because whoever lacks enthusiasm for evangelization is “*no longer sure of what it is that [he is] handing on; [he] lack vigour and passion. A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody.*” (EG, 266)



# THE CRUCIFIX THAT PREACHED TO ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

Fr. Lawrence Rywalt, (PAUL)

Perhaps one of the most challenging statements in our Constitutions concerning the fundamentals of our life is found in the first Chapter. It powerfully states that Passionist life and ministry must be rooted in the Cross of Christ: *“If the message of the Cross has not first penetrated our own lives, we ought not to presume to proclaim it to others.”* (No.9) The fact that the Cross was at the center of the life and preaching of St. Paul of the Cross can be verified not only in his hundreds of pastoral letters, but also by the existence of many of the crucifixes that he used while preaching missions. Many of these are still in existence and several have their own historical and, in some cases, miraculous identity. Among the latter is the Crucifix that St. Paul of the Cross used during a mission that he preached in the town of San Lorenzo Nuovo in the Italian province of Viterbo.

The mission that St. Paul of the Cross preached there in May, 1760, was one of five missions that he preached that year. In his monumental work, “San Paolo della Croce”, Fr. Enrico Zoffoli records some of the history of this Crucifix. Since this work currently exists only in Italian, the following is a brief translation of the section of the third volume that concerns this topic. In part, the text quotes some of the testimonies that were given during the process for the canonization of our Founder.

The current city of San Lorenzo Nuovo is located about one kilometer from the old town of San Lorenzo (closer to Lake Bolsena), which Pope Pius VI had destroyed in 1774 because of a plague. Unfortunately, there is no record or document that refers to this famous Crucifix in the archives of the old parish church, which was destroyed by fire before the town itself was leveled. However, the well-founded tradition is as follows:

During this mission, St. Paul did not stay in the pastor’s residence, but in the home of a highly respected and affluent family of the parish, the Licca family. On the final day of the mission, because of a



**An artist’s interpretation of the miraculous event.**

large influx of the faithful from the neighboring areas, the Church was not able to contain the crowds. Consequently, it was decided to hold the mission talk outdoors, in the square in front of the collegiate church. For this purpose, a small, temporary platform was erected in the plaza. Since the large crucifix that St. Paul wanted to use had no base to support it, he asked the archpriest of the parish, Fr. Giuseppe Pace, for assistance. Towards the end of the sermon, the archpriest and others noticed something extraordinary. Fr. Pace describes what occurred: *“That day [Fr. Paul] asked me to vest in a surplus and to go onto the stage with him and to assist him by standing on his left side, supporting the Crucifix that he brought with him on his missions; and this is what* ➔



*I did. When the sermon began, I started to hear a certain voice that pricked my ear, but elsewhere, dissipated. I clearly observed that Fr. Paul only uttered those words to the people that he had heard, the same words that I too heard, before he spoke them to the people. I was completely amazed at this. I had never experienced anything like this before, nor have I ever experienced anything similar to this since then. Therefore, I tried to find out where this voice could be coming from. I noted that on the stage there was no one except Fr. Paul [and me]. Therefore, I started to think that perhaps the voice was not human but divine and so I began to stare at the face of [Jesus] on the crucifix that I held in my hands to see if the mouth moved; but I did not observe this. Therefore, I concluded that this was truly a divine voice, which continued throughout the entire sermon, and it produced such fruit that everyone present was moved to tears. The words were such that even a heart of stone would have been softened.”*

After the mission, St. Paul's host in the house where he was staying, Aloysius Licca, asked to have the Crucifix as a remembrance of the Mission. However, St. Paul did not feel that it was opportune to grant this request. The following day when he left the city for another mission in the nearby town of Grotte di Castro, he took the Crucifix with him. However, Licca was not satisfied with Paul's decision. Instead, he procured another crucifix similar to St. Paul's and he went to the town of Grotte di Castro to try to convince St. Paul to accept this crucifix in exchange for his. The Saint finally agreed saying: *“May the crucifix continue to preach the mission in San Lorenzo!”*

Since that time, the venerated image has remained in the Licca family home. However, the parish has always exercised the right to have it in the Church during missions. In fact, missions in the town begin with the solemn transfer of the Crucifix from the Licca home to the parish church, with the mission preacher bearing it in procession.

Mrs. Maria Pacetti, a descendant of the Licca family, is the current family member that is the custodian of the Crucifix. In September 2014, together with several of our religious from the retreat of Sant'Angelo, Vetralla, I went to visit Mrs. Pacetti in her family home in San Lorenzo Nuovo, and to see and venerate the miraculous Crucifix of the Founder.



**The miraculous crucifix of St. Paul of the Cross as it appears today.**

As we prayed together before the Crucifix, Mrs. Pacetti commented that an aspect of this image that had always impressed her was that Jesus is depicted as still alive, with his eyes and mouth open, as if He is communicating, speaking to us, even today.

The fact that St. Paul of the Cross moved hearts with his preaching was due in great part to the fact that before he preached or displayed a Crucifix for others to venerate, he himself had already prayed and meditated with it. In his biography St. Vincent Strambi records these words of the Founder: *“In the solitude of your room take the crucifix in your hands, lovingly kiss the wounds, and ask him [Jesus] to preach to you. Listen to the words of eternal life that He speaks in your heart: listen to what the thorns preach to you, the nails and the precious blood: Oh what a sermon [you will hear]!”* (“Vita di S. Paolo della Croce”, St. Vincenzo Ma. Strambi, Cap. XX). ●

# THE REPAC PROVINCIAL CHAPTER IN INDONESIA

The third Provincial Chapter of the REPAC Province of Indonesia took place during 13-18 January 2015 at Ruma Retret Tirta Ria, the Capuchin retreat center in Pontianak, Kalimantan (Borneo). There were thirty-eight participants, including the Superior General, Fr. Joachim Rego and Bro. Laurence Finn, PASPAC President. The General Consultor, Fr. Sabinus Lohin, a member of this Province, also attended. The moderator of the Chapter was Fr. William Chang, OFM, Cap.



(L-R) Frs. Antonius Janga, Stefanus Suryanto, Nikodemus Jimbun (Provincial), Ligorius Jalak, Markus Adu (First Consultor).

This dynamic province of one hundred sixty two professed members held many discussions and formed an outline for the next four years of Province Life. Generally, the Province has continued to develop in its self-identity; however, it was observed that at this time the religious need to focus more on the needs of the Congregation at large. In his role as President of the PASPAC Configuration, Bro. Laurence Finn made a presentation to the Chapter members, requesting assistance with some of the more urgent needs of the Configuration. Since parochial ministry is the primary ministry of the Province, the religious were challenged to seek greater variety in their apostolic life.

Among the challenges for the Province during this period will be adequate formation for the Brothers of the Province in the Passionist charism and spirituality. Additionally, attention needs to be given to learning English, the official language of the PASPAC Configuration.

Father Nikodemus Jimbun, having served out the final twenty seven months of the term of office of Fr. Sabinus Lohin, who was elected a

General Consultor at the 2012 General Chapter, was elected as Provincial Superior in his own right on the first ballot. Fathers Markus Adu, Antonius Janga, Ligorius Jalak and Stefanus Suryanto were re-elected to the Council, with Markus Adu being chosen as First Consultor.

\* \* \*

## A brief history of Passionist Presence in Indonesia

Fr. Tito Paolo Zecca (PIET)

The Apostolic Prefecture of Ketapang, Borneo, Indonesia, was founded in 1954 and transferred to the Dutch Passionists (SPE Province). The Mission of Ketapang was separated from the Apostolic Vicariate of Pontianak ten years earlier. It was equal to the surface area of the Netherlands and occupied the southwestern end of the island. The population in 1957 consist-



**Bishop Gabriel Sillekens, C.P. (1911-1981).**

ed mostly of Chinese, Malays and Daiak, totaling approximately 190 thousand inhabitants with its capital at Ketapang.

Catholic presence began with the Chinese merchants. The first missionary to set foot in the region in 1917 was a Dutch Capuchin. In 1946, the Passionists established an autonomous mission in Ketapang. In 1957 there were seventeen Dutch Passionists in the country (sixteen priests and one Brother), headed by the Apostolic Prefect, Bishop Gabriel Sillekens, C.P. (1911-1981). Additionally, eight Augustinian Sisters of Heemstede (Netherlands) ministered with them. In July 1956, the Prefecture included a population of 3,171 Catholics, 4,751 catechumens and 1,499 schoolchildren.

During the phase of decolonization that began in 1959, the Indonesian Government banned the entry of Catholic missionaries into the country and threatened the expulsion of those missionaries already in the metropolitan area. These were all Dutch citizens residing in Indonesia with a residence permit. The expulsion of the missionaries would have resulted in the collapse of the Indonesian Catholic Church already in full bloom.

For this reason, the Superior General, Fr. Malcolm La Velle (1901-1984) asked the PIET Provincial Curia to send some missionaries to work in the Diocese of Ketapang in the region of Sekadau. On February 19, 1961, the first two Passionist missionaries arrived: Fr. Cornelio Serafini and Fr. Marcello Di Pietro. Two years later, they were joined by three other confreres: Fr. Raffaele Algeni, Fr. Carlo Marziali and Brother Carlo Ferrari. Afterward, Fr. Luca Spinosi also arrived. In 1966, Fr. Michele Di Simone, together with Fr. Efrem Di Pietro and Fr. Bernardo Matani departed for the distant archipelago. In subsequent years, other confreres arrived.

The normalization of the political relationship between the governments of Indonesia and the Netherlands avoided the risk of the expulsion of the Dutch missionaries. This situation necessitated the division of the region between our Dutch and Italian missionaries.

The apostolic prefecture of Ketapang was erected on June 14, 1954 with the Papal Bull *Quandoquidem* of Pope Pius XII, created from the territory that was previously the Apostolic Vicariate of Pontianak (later Archdiocese). On January 3, 1961, the Papal Bull *Quod Christus* of Pope John XXIII elevated it to a diocese.

The apostolic prefecture of Sekadau, which then became a Diocese on April 9, 1968, with the Bull *Quandoquidem condere* of Pope Paul VI, with territory from the Archdiocese of Pontianak and Diocese of Ketapang. On June 8, 1982, by means of the Papal Bull *Quam maxime* of Pope John Paul II, the Apostolic Prefecture was elevated to a diocese. The current bishop is Giulio Mencuccini, C.P., a native of Fossacesia, Italy, the Archdiocese of Chieti-Vasto. He was consecrated on 3 June 1990.

Because of the constant concern of Italian missionaries, great emphasis was given to promoting indigenous priestly and religious vocations for our Congregation. After merging with the Dutch Vicariate, the Provincial Vicariate of Indonesia was established. Subsequently, it became a General Vicariate and then a Vice-province in 2002. Finally, the Indonesian Province was erected in 2007 with the title of "Queen of Peace" (REPAC). ●



# THE FOURTH VICE-PROVINCIAL CONGRESS IN JAPAN

Bro. Laurence Finn, (PASPAC President)

**M**embers of the Vice Province of the Japanese Martyrs gathered in the Passionist Retreat Centre located in Mefu-jinja, Japan, from 1 December until 5 December 2014. In addition to the religious of the Vice-Province, also present were the Superior General, Fr. Joachim Rego and Brother Laurence Finn, PASPAC Configuration President.

Seventeen religious in vows compromise this Vice Province, which has presences in Tokyo Archdiocese (a Monastery); Fukuoka Diocese (Monastery and Retreat Centre) and Osaka Archdiocese (a Monastery, Retreat Centre and two Parishes). The foundation of the Passionists in Japan began in 1953 under Holy Cross Province in the United States – and was elevated to the status of Vice Province in 1999.



(L-R) Frs. Francis Yamauchi, Paul Matsumoto (Vice-Provincial Superior), Joachim Rego (Superior General), Joseph Someno and Bro. Laurence Finn.

Two of the members of the Vice Province are over 90 years of age while two more are over 80 and a further two in their 70's. The remaining 11 members are divided between the early 40's until the mid-60's in age. There is one member who is in temporary vows, and one postulant in residence. Three of the older members of the Vice Province are missionaries from the United States and France.

The apostolate in Japan has always emphasized parish and retreat house ministry. The Passionists in Japan were, from the earliest days, also heavily involved in itinerant ministry giving parish missions and retreats to religious the length and breadth of the Japanese Islands.

One of the chief topics of the 2014 Congress was the care of the aged members of the Vice Province



Members of the Vice Province of the Japanese Martyrs gathered in the Passionist Retreat Centre, Mefu-jinja, Japan.



as they face further physical decline due to the process of ageing. An outside group of individuals involved in the care of older persons with difficulties was invited to share the various options available to those who are advancing in years. Pastoral and physical cares were looked at closely.

Another topic of concern was the future of Xavier Chapel – a large Church building that had been moved from Kagoshima, the place of St. Francis Xavier’s apostolate in Japan 450 years ago. This building served as the Cathedral of the Kagoshima Diocese – and was offered to the Congregation in the Fukuoka Diocese, where the Passionists have a very large piece of property that surrounds the Retreat

Centre. It is hoped that this building, originally constructed in the post-war period, could eventually serve the pastoral needs of the Catholic people in the city of Munakata, where the Passionists are located.

Finally, several sessions were spent on “future planning” as the Vice Province faces the issue that vocational candidates are few and far between in Japan. A decision was reached to research the viability of the apostolates of the Vice Province and to make concerted efforts in the area of vocational recruitment.

The Congress closed with the election of Frs. Paul Matsumoto as Vice Provincial and Francis Yamauchi and Joseph Someno to the offices of first and second Vice Provincial Consultor respectively. ●

## A Brief History

# THE MAIAP VICE-PROVINCE OF JAPAN

Fr. Paul Matsumoto

In 1952, Bishop Paul Taguchi, the bishop of Osaka, the second largest city in Japan, asked the Superior General, Fr. Malcolm La Velle, to send Passionists to establish a retreat house in his diocese. Fr. Malcolm asked Holy Cross Province to undertake this foundation.

In 1953, five priests were chosen to make the first foundation: Fathers Matthew Vetter, Carl Schmitz, Paul Placek, Clement Paynter, and Peter Kumle. Later, Fathers Ward Biddle, Dennis McGowan, Francis Horack, Leonard Kosatka, Ronan Newbold, John Patrick Day, and Gabriel Brecheteau came to assist. In the beginning the Passionists were asked to give retreats in English, and later in Japanese. In 1954 the Passionists bought property on twenty three acres of mountainous land in Mefu, near Osaka City. Bishop Taguchi also invited the Passionist nuns to make a foundation in his diocese. They arrived in 1957.

A traditional Japanese residence was bought in Ikeda, and the Ikeda Catholic Church was inaugurated in 1955, with Father Schmitz as the first pastor. A new church structure was built in 1965. With the

growth of the parish, the church in the Nisseichuo area became an independent parish.

The first Passionist retreat house in Japan was constructed in Mefu. In 1962 a residence was opened in Tokyo for seminarians. In 1963 the Passionists went to Fukuoka City, on the island of Kyushu, to establish a community and build a retreat house. In 1988 this was sold; land was purchased in Munakata, and a community residence and retreat house were built in 1989.

From the beginning Japanese aspirants joined the province. Father Augustine Kunii was the first. Fathers Paul Hata, Provincial, Isaia Kishi, and Michael Suzuki were the first fully Japanese Vice-Provincial council. In 1999 the vicariate became the Vice-Province of Japanese martyrs (MAIAP). In 2003 the Vice Province celebrated fifty years of presence in Japan.

For years the Vice Province has ministered in the areas of spiritual direction, retreat ministry, parish ministry, kindergarten, and other individual works. It has also faced difficulties in evangelization in the country, a decline in vocations and the aging of the religious. ●

# SCOR PROVINCE FORMATION MEETING

**R**eligious of the SCOR Province of Spain and Latin America who are currently responsible for formation met in Conocoto-Quito Ecuador from 9 to 14 February 2015. The Provincial, Fr. José María Sáez and his Consultors, Frs. Juan Ignacio Villar, Eddy Vasquez, Carlos San Martín, Joaquín Vargas, together with Fr. Martín Coffey, Executive Secretary for Formation of the General Council, attended the meeting that included seventeen religious from the various zones of the Province. Fr. José Luis Quintero, Provincial Secretary and Dr. José Luis Cervera, a psychotherapist, facilitated the meeting.

The overall objectives of the meeting were to offer an opportunity to those who are involved in initial formation ministry in the various geographic areas of the Province to become better acquainted with each other and to study areas of human and spiritual formation that would help them in their work. Specifically, the participants learned how to work with each other as formation teams, and acquire those skills needed to work with young people at this point in history. Additionally, they learned about the need to care for themselves and their personal and spiritual development. They studied ways of integrating the “Memoria Passionis” in order to help the young candidates to grow in the spirit of our Passionist charism. Finally, they reflected on ways to further develop and apply the SCOR formation plan on local levels.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants listed what they felt were the challenges of Passionist formation as well as some ways to address these challenges: 1) Strive to know each young man and become aware of his particular reality so as to facilitate the process of personal growth and human, Christian, and charismatic maturation. 2) Strive for integral formation: human and charismatic, and to understand that this is a process. Consequently, there



**Religious of the SCOR Province of Spain and Latin America in Conocoto-Quito, Ecuador.**

is a need to be aware of the complementarity and interrelationship of the stages. 3) The need for “Formative communities” to be credible and responsible, providing opportunities for reflection, expression and challenging in order to achieve the ideal of Passionist community. 4) Enabling formation personnel and developing means of communication and coordination among themselves so that they can achieve the objectives, goals and initiatives in each of the stages of the formation program. 5) Be aware of the richness of the Passionist charism and insure that it is present in all stages as a dynamic element in the life plan of each candidate in order to facilitate his full incorporation into the life and mission of the Congregation. ●



# 150 YEARS OF PASSIONIST PRESENCE IN MEXICO

The history of the Passionists in Mexico is a complex story that involves our religious from three countries — Italy, America and Spain – who at various times and places played roles in the establishment of various communities. Some of these retreats survived the initial foundation and periods of political upheaval; others were abandoned only to be re-founded at a later period in time. While still others remain only in historical memory.

The history begins in the year 1863 when the Superior General, Fr. Pietro Paolo Cayro, sent a group of Passionist religious from Italy with the purpose of making a foundation of the Congregation in the state of California in the USA. There were various difficulties with the foundation and, after several years, it was abandoned. It was decided that most of these religious would return to Italy; however three of them, Frs. Giandomenico Tarlattini, Pietro Magagnotto and Amadeo Garibaldi would remain and instead go to Mexico City where they arrived on May 25, 1865. The first religious depended directly on the Superior General and then were incorporated into the American province of St. Paul of the Cross (PAUL).

When the Passionists arrived in Mexico, they had to deal with difficult living situations. However, they

immediately distinguished themselves by their spirit of work and pastoral ministry stemming from their Passionist vocation and charism. On November 20, 1865 they took possession of the Church of San Diego in Tacubaya, Mexico City, where they remained until 1873. They experienced many problems due to the socio-political situation, such as France’s intervention in the Mexican situation from 1861 to 1867, and Spain’s intention to reestablish Mexico as part of its empire. This led to a devastating war and on 2 April 1867, the Passionists were expelled from the church and monastery of San Diego. However, on August 20, 1867 they were again able to take possession of the church.

Subsequently, Benito Juárez rose to the Presidency of the country. He introduced reform laws that severely limited the Church, stripping it of its privileges and properties. Various communities of religious, among them, the Passionists, were expelled from the country. They left the monastery and Church of San Diego in Tacubaya on October 12, 1873. During this period, the Passionists had to attend to the wounded soldiers in the battlefields, placing their lives in danger day and night. They lived in private houses and could not appear in public dressed as religious.

During the presidency of Sebastián Tejada various religious orders, including the Passionists, were again driven from the country. For a month our religious were imprisoned and were declared to be “malicious foreigners”. The expulsion of priests coincided with the increase of the Protestant expansion, especially in indigenous regions where Catholicism was weak due to a lack of religious, priests and catechists. In this context, the Passionists returned to Mexico at the request of Bishop Germán Villalbazo, Bishop of the state of Chiapas, who went to the Generalate in Rome (August 1877) with a petition for this purpose. Our religious preached missions for almost two years in that State and again returned to Mexico City and the Church of San Diego in 1879.

In 1886, the CORI Province was



Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, religious of the REG and SCOR Provinces and the Daughters of the Passion during a celebration of 150 years of Passionist presence in Mexico.



founded in Spain and Fr. Amadeo Garibaldi, who had been among the first Passionists in Mexico, was appointed Provincial Superior. Two years prior, in 1884, the retreat of San José, “El Ranchito”, was founded in Toluca. In 1896 the first Passionist community took possession of another house, the “Casa Amarilla” (Yellow House) with the assistance of the archbishop of Mexico. These two houses were entrusted to the newly established CORI Province of Spain. The following years were periods of great missionary fervor. Many Italian, Spanish, American and Mexican religious collaborated in living and preaching the Passionist charism.

In 1892 a work was founded known as the “Circulo Católico” (“Catholic Circle”) whose objective was the education and evangelisation of the youth of Tacubaya. In 1896, this pastoral experience resulted in the Foundation of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Sorrowful Virgin by Fr. Diego Alberici, CP and Mother Dolores Medina.

Because of the political upheaval and the religious persecution of 1914, the Passionists were forced to abandon the retreats and seek refuge in the countryside, among the local people. Many of them were arrested and suffered maltreatment and various kinds of torture. At this time the houses of Tacubaya, Toluca and Guadalajara were completely abandoned. However, even in these circumstances our religious continued to assist others through their priestly and apostolic ministries.

From 1920 to 1929, during the persecution of Presidents Obregon and Calles, religious institutes were banned and our religious were again forced to leave the country. When political calm was restored, many of the religious returned to the retreats and reassumed their ministries. However, because of the expropriations of the government during the persecution, our religious were forced to abandon some of the more important foundations.

In the midst of this extremely complex situation in Mexico, the cloistered Passionist nuns tried to make a foundation here in 1913-1914. (Venerable) Mother Maria Maddalena Marcucci (of the Blessed Sacrament) was among the Sisters who made the original foundation, but they left Mexico due to the political unrest and returned to Italy. Although Marcucci hoped to return to Mexico, instead she founded two monasteries of the nuns in Spain, in the cities of Duesto (Bilbao) and Madrid. From Spain, the nuns finally returned to Mexico to make a new foundation in 1994, in Villa Corregidora “El Pueblito” (Querétaro).

On April 24, 1947, Passionist religious from the CORM Province of Italy became the first religious to make a new foundation in Mexico. Despite numerous



**Fr. Amadeo Garibaldi (1831-1924)**

difficulties, they established the retreat and Church of the Holy Spirit, in the Colonia Escandón section of Mexico City. In 1948, they began the construction of a house of formation (Esceula Apostólica), which would become the novitiate in Apaxco. In 1965, a theologate was established in Cuernavaca.

In 1994 (after fourteen years of development as a Vice Province), the REG Province was erected with the communities that had previously been under the Italian CORM Province. Today the REG Province has numerous ministry locations and eight communities: Espíritu Santo y Señor Mueve Corazones, provincialate, theologate and parish (Mexico, D.F.); Instituto Francisco Possenti -Primary, secondary and college preparatory school (Mexico, D.F.); San Gabriel de la Dolorosa – Passionist Spiritual Center-(Cuernavaca, Mor); Valle de Chalco-Parish-(Edo. Mex.); San Miguel Arcángel -Parish (Tumbalá, Chis.); Beato Domingo Barberi–Retreat House,(Villa Corregidora, Qro.); Beato Isidoro de Loor–Novitiate, (Tequisquiapan, Qro.) and Perpetuo Socorro–Shrine and theologate (Guadalajara, Jal.). Because of the recent Restructuring of the Congregation, the REG province is currently part of the Configuration of Jesus Crucified.

The newly formed SCOR Province of Spain and Latin America (that includes the former CORI, SANG, FAM and FID Provinces) also has two retreats in Mexico: the parish of the Sagrada Pasión, in Mexico City and “El Ranchito”, in Toluca. ●



# ASSEMBLY OF THE CONFIGURATION OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

The major Superiors of the Configuration of Jesus Crucified met in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 25-28 January 2015. In addition to Fr. Augusto Canali, General Consultor for the Configuration, and Fr. Moisés Ríos Ruíz (President of the Configuration), the following religious were present: Fr. Carlos Saracini (CONC), Fr. Amilton Da Silva (CALV), Fr. José Ramón Montañez (PAC), Fr. Robert Joerger (PAUL), Fr. Rafael Vivanco Pérez (REG), and Fr. José Roberto (EXALT). Fr. Francisco Murray (CONC) was the Secretary.



The major Superiors of the Configuration of Jesus Crucified, and Fr. Augusto Canali, General Consultor, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Among the various matters that were discussed during the Assembly, those present were asked to reflect and to share their responses to the following questions: 1) Concerning ministry with the laity: What are the more significant joys, difficulties, questions, and concerns? During the past year 2014, what were the most important achievements in this area? 2) How do I keep alive the “Memoria Passionis” in my ministry? 3) How do I live and how do I nurture my belonging to a Passionist community conscious that I am situated within a province, a configuration, a Congregation, and within the Church?

At the conclusion of the Assembly, the following were some of the decisions that were made:

**Formation:** 1) that the Formation Commission continue the process of studying the possibility of a single novitiate for the Configuration. A decision will be made in 2016. 2) In 2016, there will be a meeting of religious who are perpetually professed from one to ten years. The Formation Commission will organize the meeting. 3) A meeting of the students of the Configuration was tentatively approved for June 2015 in the Dominican Republic.

**Finances:** 1) During 2015-2016, the entities will pay one quota. 2) Fr. Robert Joerger (PAUL) was elected coordinator of this Commission.

**Personnel:** The work of the Personnel Commission was further developed to include the following points: 1) Assist and cultivate a sense of being part of a Configuration; 2) Prepare criteria for restructuring and terminating presence at sites and ministries; 3) Network and assist with the preparation of criteria for an exchange of personnel; 4) Assist

with the implementation of the decisions of the 46<sup>th</sup> General Chapter — a) the charismatic witness of the Passionist community; b) Formation in our spirituality; c) Evangelization and new evangelization; and d) Participation of the laity in our Passionist charism.

**JPIC:** A JPIC Commission is being formed. Some entities still need to name a representative; subsequently a coordinator will be chosen.

**Election of the President and the Secretary:** These religious will be elected in the 2016 Assembly. A petition will be made to the General Curia to move the Assembly from October 2015 to January 2016.

**Passionist World Youth Day:** It was agreed not to organize anything specific for religious or laity for the Passionist WYD, although we should support those who wish to participate. The General Council should encourage the Configurations to organize meetings of young religious. This is a time to strengthen the life of the Configurations. A gathering could take place by technological means, i.e. a video-conference with all the young religious of the world, on a specific day, perhaps during the WYD in Poland or at some other time.

**Future Assemblies:** Time should be provided for the entities to share their experiences of the previous year. It will help us to know one another better and to network better. The Consultors of the provincial teams where the Assembly takes place should also be invited to participate because they can help to share this experience. ●



# THE SISTERS OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS: BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

The opening ceremony of the Jubilee year of the Second Centenary of the Foundation of the Sisters of St. Paul of the Cross took place on Sunday, March 15, 2015 in the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul, Rome. The Cardinal Vicar of Rome, Agostino Cardinal Vallini, presided at the solemn Eucharistic liturgy. The concelebrants included Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General of the Passionists, Fr. Ottaviano D'Egidio, former Superior General, Fr. Fiorenzo Bordo, PRAES Provincial Superior, Fr. Cosimo Chianura, LAT Provincial Superior, and many religious from the Passionist community at Sts. John and Paul, as well as several diocesan priests. In addition to the Superior General of the Sisters, Mother Mary D'Alessandro and other provincial superiors, many laity, including children and young adults from the Sisters' schools together with their parents and families, also attended the celebration.

To mark the occasion, Fr. Joachim Rego, presented the Sisters with a citation. In part, it states: *"The Superior General of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, Fr. Joachim Rego, together with Council, congratulates the Passionist Sisters of St. Paul of the Cross, who in this year of our Lord 2015, celebrate the second anniversary of their founding. Together with them we thank God for the wonders that He has worked in their history in the service of the Church and society."*

The history of the Sisters of St. Paul of the Cross began in the city of Florence, Italy. Moved by zeal for the restoration of the Catholic faith and the work of religious orders, the Marchesa Maria Maddalena Frescobaldi (1771-1839), urged by her son Gino Capponi (1792-1876), who was an outstanding political-social pedagogue, established a religious community on March 17, 1815, called the Handmaids of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and of Mary the Sorrowful Virgin. They engaged in charitable works. Through their association with the Passionist Nuns at Tarquinia they came under the guidance of the Passionist Superior General in 1817. After the death of the foundress and reduced in finances and numbers, the Community dispersed, some entering the Cloistered Passionist Nuns.



Fr. Joachim Rego presents Mother Mary Dalessandro with the congratulatory citation.

Two heroic souls, however, Sister Crocifissa Tognoni and Sister Pia Frosali, assisted by the parish priest Don Giuseppe Fiametti, revived the "Caponi Retreat" (convent) on September 14, 1872, at Signa near Pisa, Italy, under the title of the Sisters of Charity of the Passion of Jesus Christ and under the patronage of St. Paul of the Cross. When they received final Papal Approval in 1931, the title of the Institute officially became the "Passionist Sisters of St. Paul of the Cross." The Sisters take the fourth vow to promote devotion to the Passion of Christ. They were formally aggregated to the Congregation of the Passion in 1904.

The initial inspiration was to gather a group of women in the love of Christ, who would be totally dedicated to the service of children and the poor, in response to the misery of the crucified of all times. Since then, the Congregation has grown in the number of religious and in the number of communities. Today the Sisters are present in twenty-seven countries on five continents, and are involved in educational and scholastic activities, the care of minors, single mothers, women at risk and the elderly. Additionally they are involved in parish and pastoral ministry and social advancement.

The Sisters' Jubilee Year will continue with many other celebrations in various other locations, recalling the various phases of the foundation of the Congregation, until its solemn closing 17 March 2016. ●



# A PASSIONIST IN THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SHROUD: "A LIVING PORTRAIT OF THE CRUCIFIED"

**Introduction:** In November 2014, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis had given permission for an exhibition of the Holy Shroud at its Shrine in Turin, Italy, from 19 April to 24 June 2015. The exhibition is entitled: *"The Greatest Love"*. This is the third time the Shroud has been displayed to the public during this millennium. The Exhibition was especially envisioned for two specific groups of people: the young and those who suffer.

To assist our Passionist religious and the members of the Passionist Family, especially those who may not be able to make the pilgrimage to Turin, we offer an opportunity to at least spiritually share in this event, by presenting some excerpts from a provincial Circular Letter of Fr. Costante Broveto (1923-2001), entitled "A Passionist before the Shroud of Jesus", that he wrote on the occasion of an exhibition of the Holy Shroud in 1978.

Additionally, we include some photos from a presentation on the Holy Shroud that is a ministry of the Confraternity of the Passion at Immaculate Conception Monastery, Jamaica, New York. Mr. Donald Nohs, Director General of the Confraternity of the Passion International and president of the Society of the Holy Face of Jesus, has been studying the Shroud for more than fifty years. The presentation focuses on the Shroud in the Gospels and its liturgical elements, especially the Eucharist. To date, this presentation has been offered in hundreds of parishes throughout the USA, and recently Don Nohs was a guest on the EWTN American Catholic television station.]

## An event that profoundly involves us

Since it was first announced that there would be a solemn exposition of the Holy Shroud in Torino all of us Passionists ... strongly felt that we were involved. ... And it is right that we focus on the meaning that such a prodigious "memorial of the passion" has for us, who are called to perpetuate this memory through our vow that is at the heart of our precious charism.

## The shroud, a "living portrait of Jesus Crucified"

The shroud that wrapped the body of Jesus during his short rest in the grave is an object that points us, so to speak, to the spirituality of Holy Saturday. Even the mention of it exegetically connects Good Friday, which ended with the burial, with the Sunday of the Resurrection, with the open and empty tomb, and with those "cloths" that were left there in order to make the evident more obvious (cf. Mc. 15.46; Jn. 20.7). The spirituality of Holy Saturday demands that we "become quiet" before the mystery of the cross, now irreversible. It also demands that we "not resign ourselves" to the passion that was suffered. Rather, we must remember it as the irresistible provocation that the Father could not resist. Additionally, it makes the resurrection more accessible and certain. Beginning with the first catechesis on the day of Pentecost, the Apostles quoted from Psalm 16: *"my flesh shall rest in hope because you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow that your Holy One see corruption"* (cf. Acts 2,27s).

It seems to me that this kind of spirituality of Holy Saturday is very appropriate for this period of the Church's



The official logo for the 2015 Exposition of the Holy Shroud -*"The Greatest Love"*.

history, which extends from the departure of Jesus until his return in glory. Faith is perfected as we gradually "quiet" ourselves, accepting the mystery of the cross as the inevitable law of Christian existence. Similarly, we are perfected to the degree that we do not "resign" ourselves to accepting a dark and senseless cross. Rather that we strive, by means of the extravagant proclamation of the cross of Jesus, to bring into being that divine and certain intervention that will put an end to the domination of the Prince of this world, who through death, continues to enslave us. (cf. Heb. 2, 14ss).

## The Passionist: a living portrait of the "Crucified"

I believe that St. Paul of the Cross particularly exhorts us to consider this spirituality of Holy Saturday. Numerous times in his teachings, he referred to the theme of *"resting on the cross as children,"* i.e. those who are evangelically able to enter into the Kingdom of heaven immediately. To a nun (the same one to whom he sent the manuscript on "Mystical Death") St. Paul of the Cross wrote: *"His Divine Majesty wills to make you a living portrait of the Crucified... So remain on this cross of your precious pains with a silent patience and a gentle meekness... and do not allow a word of complaint escape from your mouth. However, make your sighs to God and breathe toward God with gentle affection: 'O Father! O great Father! Your Will be done! O dear Cross, you are my joy, the bed of my repose!' Years ago I had a beautiful picture of the Divine Child sleeping on the cross, and I gave it to a soul of holy life who was crucified with a strange illness so that she would take care to sleep on the cross of Jesus in a gentle silence of faith and silent patience"* (Letters III, 602)

In reality that "sleep" can be misinterpreted as passivity. However, the intent of our holy Founder is just the opposite. In fact, to the same nun he explains that *"the divine lullaby that Mary Most Holy will sing to the Divine Infant to go to sleep, being in union with his heart will be: "May your Will be done on earth as in heaven." The second verse will be: "To work, to suffer, and to be silent," and the third: "Do not*



justify yourself, do not complain, do not show resentment.” (Letters, III, 604)

Is it possible to translate these suggestions for our lives today? I sincerely believe so. Moreover, I hope that one of the fruits of our providential encounter with the Holy Shroud, will be to “rest” with Jesus in the mystery of the Cross, and become a permanent living “portrait”, in a profoundly genuine sense according to the Word of God, to which, our holy Founder clearly refers: “*Crucified with your Divine Spouse by means of a mystical death to all that is not God with a continual detachment from everything created and a completely hidden life in the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father in a true interior solitude, living no longer in yourself but in Jesus Christ, even more, Jesus Christ living in you. In that way the power of the Divine Savior will shine forth in all your works so that all will see in you a true replica of the Crucified and perceive the sweet fragrance of the holy virtues of the Lord...*” (Letters I, 508)

Behind the words of the Saint are those of the Apostle: “*I have been crucified with Christ. I live, but not me; instead, Christ lives in me*” (Gal. 2, 20). However, this is not all: this life “hidden with Christ in God” (cf. Col 3.3) is meant, like that of Jesus, to manifest on earth the hidden face of the Father. In fact, we do not become “portraits of Christ” by means of sterile and foolish external imitation; but because we possess the same Spirit, we are similarly created, as was He, from the Father. The importance of this transformation is contained in this reality. Indeed, Jesus was such a perfect image of the Father that he could boldly say: “*He who sees me sees the Father.*” (Jn. 14.9).

...Of course, it is only by faith that we are able to peer fearlessly into the mystery of a God who has his maximum expression in the Crucified. However, we must remember this truth because our efforts to be a living portrait of Christ Crucified do not end at mere asceticism; rather we must strive to become clearer images of God present in our world, for the salvation of all.

Today it is increasingly difficult to speak of God and to draw men and women to Him who are absorbed in innumerable forms of illusory vanity. Words are largely ineffective. This is why Vatican II, noting the spread of atheism, says that to oppose it “*it is the function of the Church, led by the Holy Spirit Who renews and purifies her ceaselessly, to make God the Father and His Incarnate Son present and in a visible sense.*” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 21)

Jesus said, “*When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself*”. (Jn.12:32) Therefore, becoming his mirror image is the necessary requirement for being able to fulfill this redemptive function with similar effectiveness.

Our holy Founder wrote, “*Act in such a way that anyone who sees you sees the living portrait of Jesus Christ resplendent in you and in your countenance. In your deportment and your work people should see the virtues of Jesus Christ, so they will praise the Divine Majesty in simply seeing the sons of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and sinners be converted only by the sight of you.*” (Letters 4, 285)

In other words, as psychology confirms the image that we have of ourselves is very important, and as religious and apostles, the image of God that we portray is equally significant. From the “kind of person” that we are, we inevitably become the “kind of God” that we reflect! From the gospel authenticity of our humanity, one can deduce the gospel authenticity of the God that we follow and that we present to our brothers and sisters. To paraphrase a famous saying, we could say— tell me who you are and I will tell you who your God is!



**The Director of the Confraternity of the Passion (PAUL/Jamaica, New York), Mr. Donald Nohs, gives a presentation on the Holy Shroud.**

Therefore, my dearest brothers, see what a tremendous responsibility we have to personally become a “portrait of Christ”, an authentic image of our God. How unfortunate for us if the reproach of Vatican II concerning those Christians who because of “*deficiencies in their religious, moral or social life...conceal rather than reveal the authentic face of God*” was directed toward us (*Gaudium et Spes*, 19). Let us learn from our contemplation of the Crucified the features of his divine face and let us allow Him to transform us into his image. In fact, “*Christ, the new Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself... ‘He is the image of the invisible God’* (Col. 1:15). He is the perfect man. To the sons of Adam He restores the divine likeness... The Christian man, conformed to the likeness of that Son who is the firstborn of many brothers, received ‘*the first-fruits of the Spirit*’ (Rom. 8:23) by which...the whole man is renewed from within.” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22)

### **Our Crucified God is a God who is compassionate**

The Crucified reveals above all how and how much the Father loves us, how and to what degree our God “suffers” in and with his Son, to save his creatures...

I find it extremely beautiful that precisely this refined human feeling is the first characteristic of a man who wants to be a “portrait of the Crucified” and thus portray the Gospel image of the true God. St. Paul of the Cross eloquently stated, “*I have always tried to be compassionate with everyone (because I drew compassion from my mother’s womb) and addressed everybody with kindly words; but this was a divine virtue, not mine.*” (cit. in Zoffoli, S. Paolo della Croce, Storia Critica, III, 2253) He had very specific principles: “The spirit of the servants of the Most High has always been to be fairly strict with oneself; but extremely gentle and charitable with others” (cit. ib. II, 578). Therefore he rightly deserved the appellation of “mother of mercy” (ib); “he had a mother’s heart because he had the holy charity of a saint.” (Ib., 589).

Today we quickly understand that people will see God in us only if and when they are able to experience genuine compassion, in fraternal harmony with all their joys and hopes, sorrows and anxieties; the fruit of infinite patience and long-suffering in the presence of any immaturity, resistance or inconsistency. Moreover, if we have this attitude we will surely experience the cross first hand. “*Be patient and, meanwhile, look often to the Crucified, whose holy life was*”



*all the cross, and you will make yourself rich in virtue and a saint...Patience brings with it a perfect work and true resignation to the Divine Will, which is the treasure of treasures... You should take note of and consider a treasure anyone who causes you to be patient". (Letters, IV, 86; III, 625, with quotation from Jas.1:4; I, 266).*

### **Our Crucified God is a God of people-in-relationship**

If we are to be true "portraits of the Crucified" we must refine our sense of being "community-minded" in the Holy Spirit. Here, too there is no doubt: Jesus wanted his cross to be a sacrifice of communion and he anticipated this the night before He died, making it a perpetual Memorial.

Experience clearly shows us the cost of establishing true communion between people... These reflections should inspire us to try with all our strength to foster fraternal love that alone can make a religious community a recognizable image of the God of the Gospel, as St. Paul of the Cross reminded us on his death bed. (cf Chapt. Doc., 1969, 23) The most important means of achieving this will no doubt be truly praying with one heart (see the Holy Founder's beautiful letter in preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit, Letters, IV, 228).

### **Our Crucified God is a living and transcendent God**

What is the "method" of God, of our God, for forming the perfect community? It is a "different" method, compared to all those devised by human beings, because God is "other" than all his creatures and beyond all the divinities that we can imagine. Therefore, in very concrete ways, we need to be "portraits of the Crucified", real images of the transcendent God.

...I believe that the following of Jesus through the practice of the Evangelical counsels is the unique way to follow him in a countercultural fashion and then somehow expressing (rather than rationally, almost like a shock) the transcendence of the living God. In fact, the method that we use to form evangelical community is seemingly contradictory, paradoxical and, from a human pointed of view, destined to fail. Yet, despite this inconsistency, we continue to see that "we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us... always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body." (2Cor.4:7s)

Religious ... with their countercultural identity have always built society, particularly in the great moments of historical crisis. Primitive monasticism was especially countercultural compared with Constantinian Christianity that was very comfortable. In addition, the Benedictine period was unconventional in harmonizing sacred and secular culture, speculative and agricultural realities in contrast to the rampant barbarian darkness. The entire history of religious life can be understood from this perspective.

Therefore, let us try again to be in harmony with our holy Founder who teaches us to withdraw from everything created and to be freed from every material conditioning, so as to follow our free and liberating God, and to reveal Him to the world. The countless times that St. Paul of the Cross asks us to enter into inner solitude and dwell there "in sinu Dei" (in the womb of God), is proof that he is aware that only through contact with the transcendent can our life become something "more". Thus, it becomes a true "portrait" of the only begotten Son of the Father.

The countercultural dimension of the Gospel, like the life of Jesus, is created in our lives only through truly personal contemplation of the Father. "Abba father": the "maverick"



**Pope Benedict XVI prays before the Holy Shroud in May 2010.**

form of address that Jesus uses when he relates to God clearly indicates the source of his countercultural stance. It not a kind of utopian fantasy; rather it is only through an intense dialogue with the Father that we arrive at a vital and original reinterpretation of God's Word. Only prayer opens our minds to "the fifth Gospel" without which the other four are museum artifacts. Similarly, Jesus drew from the source his clear and powerful wisdom which he then prophetically preached, heedless of opposition: "You judge by appearances, but I do not judge anyone. And even if I should judge, my judgment is valid, because I am not alone, but it is I and the Father who sent me." (Jn.8:15s)

Is this the model of humanity that we embraced and that we try to cultivate every day through prayer, poverty, chastity and obedience? Surely this is our vocation—"The Congregation of the Passion must walk in this way, and its sons must be the strongest of men, proved in various temptations, within and without, in order to accomplish great things, especially in these very perilous times, which require men who are armed with faith and well accustomed to great suffering, which produces the marvelous fruit of eternal life and makes one taste of that tree 'which is in the paradise of my God.'" (Letters, II, 94)

### **Learning to recognize "the true portraits of God Crucified"**

At the end of our reflections, we return to where we started, that is, that mysterious image of Jesus on the Holy Shroud...Our meditative and devout encounter with the Shroud could not be more fruitful than in our apostolic concern for our "crucified" brothers and sisters. This is a way of being "portraits of Christ", Christ the Liberator: in fact "contemplating Him we become increasingly able to clarify his love, being available to help others, because in Christ we raise up their sufferings and hopes to the Father". (Chapter Document, 1969, No.5)

May Mary most holy, who in her Immaculate Heart imprinted forever the contemplation of the life, passion, and death of her Son, obtain for us the grace that, "in conformity with our external religious habit you grieve continually over the Passion and Death of our Divine Redeemer and in this way are dead to all that is not of God; and if you are a portrait of Jesus Christ, continually exercising all the holy virtues, then by the holiness of your life, you will inspire people to glorify the most Holy Name of the Lord." (Letters, IV, 260; 288) ●



**[N.B. Due to space limitations, some fotos were not published in this issue of the PIB; however, they will be published in a subsequent issue.]**

## PROFESSION OF FINAL VOWS

Eight religious professed Final Vows during the period January to May 2015. In the SPIR Province of Australia, Erick Niyiragira professed Final Vows on 30 January 2015. On the same day, 30 January, the following religious professed Final Vows in the GEMM Vicariate of Tanzania: Exupery Kilemi, Erasto Ngwabali, John Kaniki, Pastor Mumburi and Patrice Oisso. In the CALV Province of Brazil, Hélcio Antunes Garcia and Ademir Guedes de Azevedo professed Final Vows on 8 February 2015. Finally, on 07 March 2015, Ílber Alexander Salcedo Velázquez professed Perpetual Vows in the SCOR Province of Spain/Latin America.



**(L-R) Exupery Kilemi, Erasto Ngwabali, John Kaniki, Pastor Mumburi and Patrice Oisso (GEMM)**

## PROFESSION OF FIRST VOWS

During the period of January to May 2015, thirteen Religious professed First Vows. On 3 January 2015, two religious professed First Vows: Fernando da Silva Oliveira (CALV Province of Brazil) and Sandoval Dias (EXALT Province of Brazil). Seven novices of the SCOR Province of Spain/Latin America professed First Vows on 02 February: Elidercio Flores, Juan Francisco Quevedo, Yamid Jesús Gómez, Luis Alirio Ramirez, Manuel Antonio Vázquez, José Gilmer Cieza, and José Luis Rodríguez. On 01 March, Armindo Baltazar professed Vows in the CALV Province of Brazil. In addition, on 12 March, three Religious from the VULN province of Austria/Germany professed First Vows: Franziskus Maria Zellner, Thomas Maria Höflich and Dominikus Hartmann.



**Ílber Alexander Salcedo Velázquez (SCOR)**



**Armindo Baltazar (CALV)**

## PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

Five of our Religious were ordained to the Priesthood during the period January to May 2015. On 08 April, Frs. Jifin Sebastian Mappilassery and Johnson Emmanuel Mamath, and on 18 April 2015, Binu Johnson Kunnummel of the THOM Vice-Province of India were ordained to the priesthood. Fr. Pius Ononuju Akazor was ordained in the PRAES Province of Italy on 09 April 2015. Lastly, in the SCOR Province of Spain-Latin America, Fr. Andrés Yamit Carillo Mendoza was ordained on 25 April 2015.

## DIACONATE ORDINATIONS

During the period of December 2014 to May 2015, nine Religious were ordained deacons. In the PRAES Province of Italy, Pius Ononuju Akazor was ordained a deacon on 8 December 2014. The following religious were ordained to the diaconate in the SCOR Province of Spain/Latin America: on 12 December 2014, Segundo Felaun Fatama Rucoba; on 27 February, Helí Ramirez Lizana; on 28 March 2015, Carlos Andrés Sánchez Sarmiento and on 25 April, Ivan Francisco Lizcano Arenas. On 31 January 2015, three religious of the GEMM Vicariate of Tanzania were ordained deacons: Pastor Mumburi, Patrice Oisso, and John Kaniki. On 8 March in the CALV Province of



**Franziskus Maria Zellner, Thomas Maria Höflich and Dominikus Hartmann (VULN)**

Brazil, Latifo Fonseca was ordained a deacon. Finally, Jesús Ceja Quiróz and Clemente Olvera Guerrero of the REG Province of Mexico were ordained to the diaconate on 18 April 2015. ●

# NEW PUBLICATIONS

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# NOTITIAE OBITUS

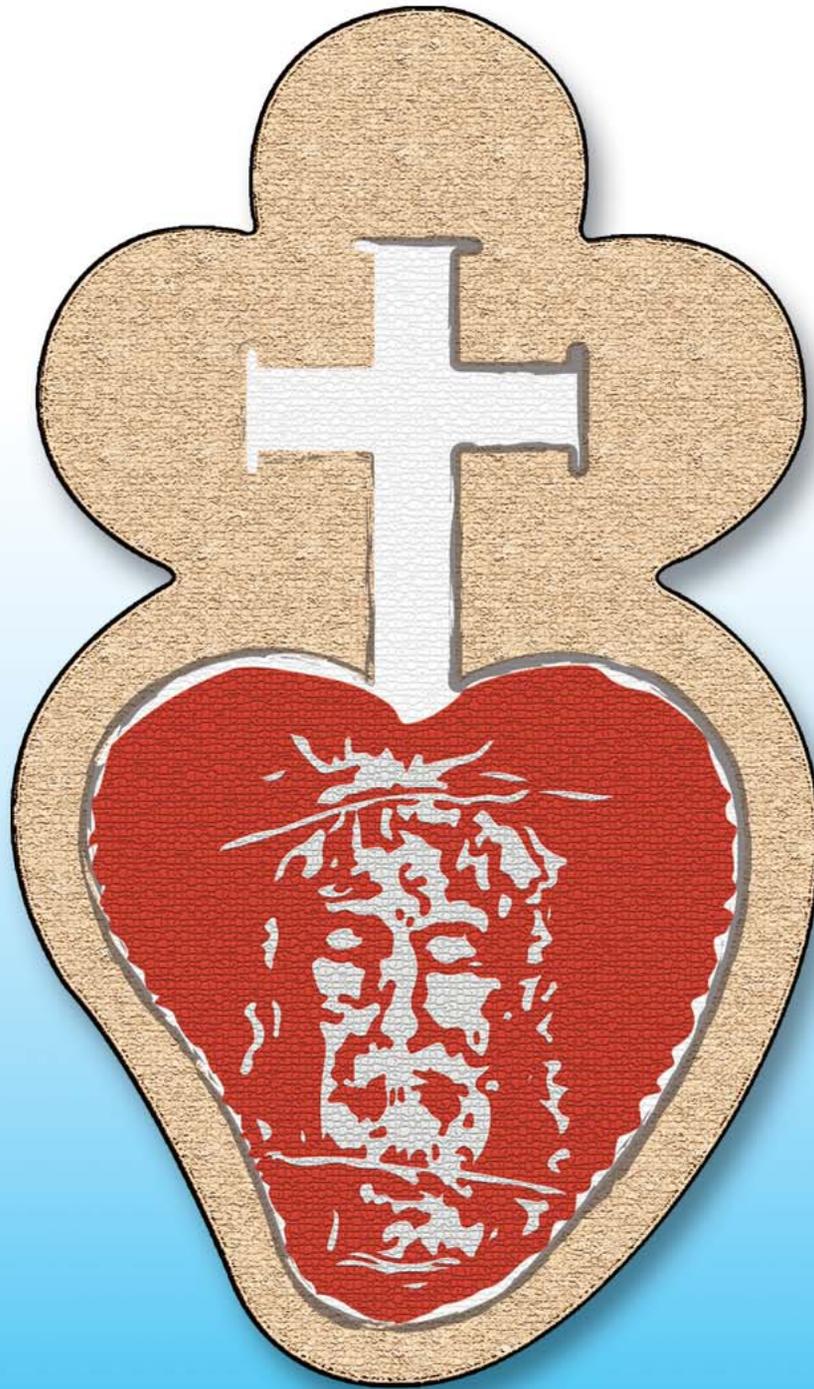


## Usque ad diem 14 Decembris 2014 – 6 Aprilis 2015, acceptae

DIE	OBDORMIVIT IN DOMINO	PROVINCIA	NATUS	VOTA NUNCUPAVERAT
14/12/14	Sac. Paulino Alonso Lobato	SCOR	19-giu-24	24-ago-40
25/12/14	Sac. Xavier Hayes	PAUL	10-lug-31	16-lug-52
30/12/14	Sac. Federico Pirozzi	PRAES	23-mar-39	21-set-55
16/01/15	Sac. Alfred Pooler	CRUC	07-gen-33	09-lug-53
20/01/15	Sac. Cornelio Schermer	SPE	20-ott-28	12-set-49
22/01/15	Sac. Miguel Blanco de la Lama	SCOR	29-set-25	26-mag-46
30/01/15	Sac. Mário Porfírio Ferreira	CALV	16-mag-58	11-gen-04
02/02/15	Sac. Bernardino Minoia	LAT	25-giu-23	28-giu-42
05/02/15	Sac. Stanislao Renzi	DOL	20-nov-34	22-nov-50
18/02/15	Sac. José Luis Tubilla Díez	SCOR	04-ott-40	08-dic-60
01/03/15	Sac. Piotr Gryz	ASSUM	17-mar-54	15-ago-73
08/03/15	Sac. Florencio Landa Etxebarria	SCOR	01-feb-36	22-apr-57
19/03/15	Sac. Fortunato Grasselli	PIET	26-nov-25	15-set-43
30/04/15	Sac. Alfons Smet	GABR	24-lug-26	08-set-47

### MONIALES ET SORORES DEFUNCTAE

19/11/14	Sr. Carità del Cuore di Gesù (Maria) Drago	Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa) Prov. Sacro Cuore di Gesù	08/02/1923	02-nov-47
16/01/15	Sr. M. Cecilia dell'Immacolata (Teresa) Benedetti	Monasterio Passionistarum de Tarquinia (Italia)	25/11/1942	05-giu-66
29/01/15	Sr. Lourdes Rosa de María Virgen (Luz Elena) Aguilera Casillas	Inst. Filiarum Passionis D.N.I.C. et Dolorum B.V.M. (México)	26/09/1937	08-dic-63
11/02/15	Sr. Ma. de los Ángeles del Sagrado Corazón Delgado Alvarado	Inst. Filiarum Passionis D.N.I.C. et Dolorum B.V.M. (México)	01/10/1936	03-giu-52
22/02/15	Sr. Conleth O'Leary	Inst. Sororum SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.I.C. (England)	18/09/1922 10/09/1935	23-gen-44 28-ago-57
23/03/15	Sr. Ellen Downes	Inst. Sororum SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.I.C. (U.S.A.)		
13/04/15	Sr. Martha de Jesús Crucificado (Martha Catalina) Luja Pérez	Inst. Filiarum Passionis D.N.I.C. et Dolorum B.V.M. (México)	19/01/1968	15-ago-91
16/04/15	Sr. Margherita del Sacro Cuore di Gesù (Maria Antonia) Albanese	Monasterio Passionistarum de Campagnano (Italia)	10/06/1927	02-lug-56
19/04/15	Sr. Germana da Anunciação (Etelvina) Possebon	Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa) Prov. Cuore Imm. di Maria, Brasile	15/03/1927	29-mar-48
24/04/15	Sr. Lairte de Jesus Coroado de Espinhos Grigolli	Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa) Prov. Cuore Imm. di Maria, Brasile	19/10/1956	31-gen-81
05/05/15	Sr. Brigid Noonan	Inst. Sororum SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.I.C. (England)	10/12/1921	05-mag-41



*“Act in such a way that anyone who sees you sees the living portrait of Jesus Christ resplendent in you and in your countenance. In your deportment and your work people should see the virtues of Jesus Christ, so they will praise the Divine Majesty in simply seeing the sons of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and sinners be converted only by the sight of you.”*

(St. Paul of the Cross, Letters IV, 285)

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