



Part 3

THE PRESENCE OF THE “MEMORIA PASSIONIS” (“CONSECRATION TO THE PASSION”) IN THE FORMATION PROCESS OF THE PASSIONIST RELIGIOUS

- I. The Passionist Charism (“*Memoria Passionis*”) in the formation process
 1. When it comes to reflecting on the uniqueness of the Passionist charism, we realize the need for a definition or at least the implications and dimensions of the same. The first numbers of the Constitutions define the charism as a unifying principle which defines Passionist life and apostolate (Cons.5.65). The categories that refer to it are: the Memory of the Passion, the Paschal Mystery and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, lived and contemplated through the charismatic gift given by God to St. Paul of the Cross. Together with the community experience of the same ("gathering companions") the following are the expressive elements of the same in the Congregation-- solitude, penance, prayer and living according to the way of life "of the Apostles" on mission. The Constitutions are oriented to the baptized who lives the consecration to the Passion in this form of Christian life that is, "consecrated life" by which one is incorporated by the profession of the Evangelical Counsels.
 2. The pedagogical process proposed for the assimilation and conformation to the charism identifies the following as interdependent dimensions:
 - A. *Knowledge, acceptance and assimilation of the "kerygma" (proclamation-experience-confession of the Christian proclamation) in its Passionist expression. ("Wisdom-knowledge about the mystery")*
 - a. Knowledge and assimilation of the faith elements referred to in the Passion of Christ from the biblical, theological and spiritual viewpoints. Knowledge through "encounter-assimilation-conformation".
 - b. Knowledge and assimilation of the lived experience found in the life and teaching of St. Paul of the Cross and the Congregation expressed in the spirituality of its saints and the Rule and Constitutions.
 - c. Knowledge and assimilation in order to experience a greater and more intense lived reality in keeping with the different aspects of one's personality.
 - B. *Configuration of one's life according to the experience of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. (The following of the Crucified-Risen Lord)*
 - a. Assimilation originating from contemplation of the Crucified and from the acceptance of the salvation offered in the Paschal Mystery.
 - b. Conformation to the dynamic of the following of Christ Crucified-Risen.
 - c. Incarnation of this project in the life and mission of a community.
 - C. *Commitment and Mission of the Crucified in the Passionist Community*
 - a. Manifestation and expression of the Paschal dynamic of engagement with the ministry of the Word of the Cross and commitment to those who today are crucified.
 - b. Special sensitivity to the proposals of JPIC re. spirituality and culture.
 3. These three levels or dimensions of human and Christian existence are assimilated and configured from the Passionist charism. This implies presence in all the levels of formation. Moreover, the charism offers a realization and modeling of the human, Christian and apostolic dimension of the subject. More than overlapping layers that once successfully achieved one can move on to the next one, they are "configuring dynamics" that act in a transverse mode and at the same time are the cause of human maturity "in the form of



Christ", "fully human", and at the same time offer a "spirituality of following" in the paschal sense.

4. In the various stages of the process, we need to keep in mind this horizon that will be lived and assimilated in a progressive fashion. The "gradual pace" has to be constant in all existence and in the entire process.
5. The charism is spirituality, i.e. stresses and enables a faith existence from a certain "form". In this case, it refers to the centrality of the Passion of the Lord or to the Lord in his Passion, understood this not as apart from or a fragment of his existence, but as its culmination and sense of being and mission. Being characteristic of Christian existence, the charism given to St. Paul of the Cross and institutionalized in the Congregation of the Passion, makes the experience of the same acquire a highlighted centrality, such that it makes all other dimensions of Christian existence become integrated, contingent, reorganized and enhanced by it. Therefore, within common Christian existence, the Passionist charism offers a Christian spirituality, or Christian spirituality configured from a peculiar, not exclusive but inclusive perspective. The entire formation process cannot lose sight of this perspective and must establish a program to make the person configured according to this unique aspect.
6. Of this uniqueness, are born those who are marked by this spiritual experience and by the grace of commitment, a very intense experience of the Paschal mystery originating in Baptism, the means by which the Reign of God is made present in history and from the commitments made through the recognition of this presence.
7. A perception revealed through the charismatic experience of the Holy Mystery of God, the face of God the Father and the gift of the Spirit. In this sense, the formation process becomes the assimilation of a perspective in which the sense of faith opens to a special perception of the Paschal character of all Revelation. The recognition of the Paschal face of God the Father originates in a praxis of liberating and supportive commitment that extends his love. The Paschal perspective (staurological) of the being and the Mission of the Son is underlined in our charismatic reflection and assuming a substantial amount of the theological reflection of the last fifty years impels us to supportive and compassionate solidarity with the crucified.
8. In the formation of the Passionist candidate the reference to St. Paul of the Cross, to his life, doctrine and experience is fundamental and inescapable, essential and substantial. It is the point of departure, accompanies and sustains all the process. His personal experience as teacher and founder is the beginning point-point of reference and incarnation of the Passionist charism. All of its reality is offered to us by his way of living and teaching meditation on the Passion and the deep experience of the same in his life of commitment and service of love expressed in his personal life and in his work as founder, preacher and spiritual director. His spiritual diary, his letters and writings are a living heritage proposed by the Church to encounter and experience the Passionist charism. In this process, we live by the conviction that the gift that he received is communicable and invites participation. Given to him who is called it is received in the dynamism of "creative fidelity" which is reborn and recreated in personal and community history; in the history of unfinished salvation.
9. Along with sapiential knowledge of the Founder (life and doctrine), the concrete reality of the Congregation as "event" is the "space" for living and enfleshing the Passionist charism. The Congregation as a historical event is a living reality in which the founding charism has



been assuming various configurations through time and space. The present concrete reality exists within the tension – within the reflection of its particular life – of radical wealth and the ideal proposed in the Constitutions. These have been presented to us by the Church as a faithful reflection, in creative fidelity, to the inspirational charism. In addition, it belongs to our identity as *conscience* and the *project* that we are called to be. Hence in the process of formation the meeting with the community affords perception of the ideal and of the process of the realization of the same "*in evangelical community life*", always inserted in the process of conversion to greater fidelity.

10. The formulation of these realities pertaining to the charism at various levels will facilitate ongoing pedagogy, steady growth and maturation. It will make us aware of the ongoing process of configuration to the charism, the fruit of grace and of necessary cooperation that it raises awakening our freedom and purifying our will, configuring mind and heart.

- II. Some concrete steps for each of the stages (inspirational principles) in the process of religious consecration.

The objective is to develop or enumerate the different aspects that are involved in the concept of "Passionist charism" by inserting them in each of the stages. The aim is that the individual develops in each of these aspects derived from the charism of St. Paul of the Cross. In a comprehensive way, it will be necessary to note how the charism is not only an intellectual or theoretical concept, sensitivity or spirituality, but it integrates, together with these aspects, the theological dimensions-- personalized, practical and paschal, of Christian existence. Therefore, together with the intellectual, there is the volitional and sapiential (spiritual) dimensions and the level of moral commitment. It is the entire human and Christian existence formed from a gift of the Spirit to the Church, which has received the quality of being communicable and experiential. It is the space of the "fundamental option" as the root of personalization and construction of a personal project.

The charism becomes spirituality, mode of commitment and conforming grace of the new creature. When the unifying element is the Passion of the Lord, the key components of this spirituality must be isolated. They are the following:

1. *Absolute generosity and precedence of the gift of God* that is shown as redeeming love that takes on the human condition. This act of God in Jesus Christ reveals his face: to know and to accept this love that precedes us with its characteristics of supportive and kenotic love. Thus is salvation, the origin of a new existence.
2. *In this event, we are born and reborn.* It is the source of a spirituality of gratitude and gratuity that supersedes all self-sufficiency or self-justification.
3. The call to commitment is recognized as a grace that takes place within personal history of the *lives of disciples*. Take up the cross is the sign of commitment to the Reign of God, in the way of the Beatitudes.
4. The goal conforms to the process of the new man that is transformed and the suppression of power and the manifestations of the old man in the *paschal dynamic* that the Lord accomplished for us in his death and resurrection.
5. The road towards Jerusalem, Johannine "time", the dynamic of abasement and submission mark the dynamics that once personalized, allow grace to bring about the birth of Passionist discipleship, the realization of the "personal project".



6. Our spirituality is characterized by the contemplation of the humanity of the Lord and in it the face of the Father, enabling greater sensitivity to all humanity in their joys and suffering. The sacramental encounter with the Passover of Christ, the celebration of his submission allows us to live and proclaim the integral salvation that it offers us.
 7. The experience of the charism reveals a perception of the mystery Holy One of God, of the face of the God the Father and of the gift of the Spirit. In this sense, the formation process becomes the assimilation of a perspective in which the sense of the faith is opened to a special perception of the Paschal character of all revelation. The recognition of the Paschal face of God the Father engenders a praxis of commitment of liberation and solidarity that extends his love. The paschal perspective (staurological) of the being and the mission of the Son is underlined in our charismatic reflection and, assuming much of the theological reflection of the last fifty years; it impels us to supportive and *compassionate action on behalf of the crucified*.
 8. In the formation of the Passionist candidate reference to St. Paul of the Cross, his life, doctrine and experience is fundamental, indispensable and substantial. It is the starting point, accompanies and sustains the entire process. His personal experience as teacher and Founder is the model- point of reference and incarnation of the Passionist charism. The entire reality offers us, via our life style and teaching of meditation on the Passion and a profound experience of the same through his life and his service of love expressed in his personal life and in his role as Founder, preacher and spiritual director. His spiritual diary, his letters and writings are a living heritage proposed by the Church as a means of knowing and experiencing the Passionist charism. In this process, we lived out the conviction that the gift that is received is capable of proclamation and reception. Given to one that is called it is received in a dynamic of "creative fidelity" that is reborn and is recreated in his personal and community history, in salvation history that is in process.
 9. Along with wisdom-knowledge of the Founder (life and doctrine), the concrete reality of the Congregation as "event" is the "space" for living and incarnating the Passionist charism. The Congregation as a historical event is a living reality in which the founding charism has been taking various interpretations throughout time and space. The present concrete reality exists in tension - the reflection in their particular life – of the radical wealth radical and ideal proposed in the constitutions. These have been presented to us by the Church as a faithful reflection, in creative fidelity to the inspirational charism. It belongs to our identity as the conscience and the project that we are called to be. Hence in the process of formation the meeting with the community is the perception of the ideal and of the process of realization of the same "in evangelical community life", always inserted in the process of conversion to greater fidelity.
 10. The formulation of these realities pertaining to the charism at various levels will facilitate a continued, steady growth and pedagogy of maturation. It will make us aware of the ongoing process of configuration to the charism, the fruit of the grace and of cooperation that this demands, awakening our freedom and conforming our will, configuring our mind and heart.
- II. Some specific steps for each of the stages (guiding principles) in the process of religious consecration.



The objective is to develop or enumerate the different aspects that are involved in the concept of the "Passionist charism" by inserting them into each of the stages. The aim is that in each of these stages the Passionist candidate is formed according to the charism of St. Paul of the Cross. In a comprehensive way, it will be necessary to note how the charism is not only an intellectual or notional concept, an idea or spirituality; rather it integrates, together with these aspects, the theological, personalized, practical and paschal dimensions of the Christian existence. Along with this concept, there are volitional and spiritual levels and the levels of moral commitment. It involves all of human and Christian existence formed from a gift of the Spirit to the Church, which has received the quality of being communicable and invites participation. It is the space of the "fundamental option" as the root of personalization and the construction of a personal project.

The charism becomes spirituality, a way of commitment and conforming grace of the new creature. When the unifying element is the Passion of the Lord, we must extract from it the essential components of this spirituality. They are the following:

1. Absolute generosity and precedence of the gift of God that is shown as redeeming love that assumes the human condition. This act of God in Jesus Christ reveals his face: to know and to accept this love that precedes us with its features of compassionate and self-emptying love. Similarly salvation, the origin of new existence.
2. In these events, we are born and reborn. A spirituality of gratitude and gratuity that supersedes all self-sufficiency or self-justification.
3. The call to follow is recognized as a grace that is fulfilled in the personal history of the lives of disciples. Take up the cross is the sign of the commitment to the reign of God, in the way of the Beatitudes.
4. The goal derives from the process of the new man who continues to transform and annul power and the manifestations of the old man in the paschal dynamic that the Lord has accomplished for us by his death and resurrection.
5. The road towards Jerusalem, the Johannine "hour", the dynamic of abasement and self-giving are the dynamics that are personalized, allowing grace to bring about the birth of the Passionist disciple, the realization of the "personal project".
6. Our spirituality is characterized by contemplation of the humanity of the Lord and the face of the Father, enabling us to have to a special sensitivity for all human being in their joys and pains. The sacramental encounter with Christ's Passover, the celebration of his self-surrendering enables us to live and proclaim the integral salvation that it offers us.
7. Spirituality of Easter in the passion of the world, living and cooperating with the growth of the new Heaven and the new Earth in gestures of life and hope.
8. These initiatory processes or "mystagogical introduction" culminates in the process of free and loving grace, with the participation in the "Mystic of the Passion". Assiduous and loving contemplation of the Crucified One, the new existence that comes from sacramental participation in his salvation, commitment to charity with the crucified enable and inspire, relying on the loving liberality of the Spirit, the experience in faith of an intense participation in the Passion of Christ that continues in the history of humanity.
9. To recall the Passion of Christ in the passion of the humanity becomes for the Passionist a process of transformation and of a new identity: To remember in order to be remembered in the permanent love given by God to humanity, an extension of that same love.
10. The ultimate goal of the formation process, with all the dimensions that constitute the subject has to be this new configuration of the grace of baptism according to the Passionist



charism. The gradual division into stages must not lose sight of the horizon or the frame of reference that transversely has to permeate all the dynamics and instruction.

Centered in the conformation of the baptized called to consecrated Passionist life:

- a. The *period of postulancy* this spirituality has to be introduced that models the human aspects of one's personality in order to enable psychological, affective and spiritual development. The model of humanity completed and mature in Christ is the supreme expression of his humanity giving life and becoming criteria for the realization of the "pro-existence" that in Him becomes solidarity and self-giving in the extreme love expressed in the Cross. Spiritual guidance needs to proceed in this direction toward maturity in Christ crucified and risen.
- b. *The time of the novitiate* together with further development of the project of human maturation "formed" by participation in the "Passion of Christ" is presented as a greater practice of contemplation of the Crucified in an evangelical community setting that recognizes that they are gathered as the fruit of the reconciling and transforming action of the Passover of Christ. Gathered around the crucified they recognize that they are the fruit of on-going self-emptying and in turn commitment to solidarity with the suffering of the world. The configuring elements of the Passionist community: brotherly love lived in solitude, penance and prayer, proclamation and witnessing the Word of the Cross as a revelation of the Father's love and salvation of mankind have to be underlined in this period which ends with first profession. The configuring elements of community and of the Passionist candidate have to be also stressed as a means to a deeper experience and incarnation of the charism in his reality concrete. The form of life called "life consecrated" expressed in the experience of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience is the fundamental element in this stage. They have to be considered in their conformational specificity of existence according to the peculiarity of our specific vow.
- c. *The period of temporary vows* until perpetual profession is a time of progressive, developing work, in creative fidelity that began at the time of the novitiate. This stage will allow - both in the case of the religious called to the priesthood and in the vocation to be a layman [Brother] - a deeper conceptual and theological understanding of the dimensions of the charism: spirituality, history and theology. Together with an initiation and first experiences continued in the various fields of mission or apostolate. In this period the role of the community as the place to experience Passionist life is essential, because each of them reflects the plurality in which the only mission is incarnated.
- d. On-going formation, rather than a stage, is an "attitude of life" that calls us to live the experience of the charism, expressed in our case in the called "fourth vow" that we have to consider as the "first or founding vow". The process of configuration is tension in creative fidelity, called to commitment, permanently recalling and proclaiming, contemplating and experiencing. At this stage, all dimensions of personality and charism come alive claiming greater and permanent configuration and conformation: baptismal existence in the form of consecrated life in community, conformation in the experience of the vows from consecration to the Passion, assumption of the Mission in various ministries and services received, affective and effective solidarity in the passion of humanity.



III. Guidelines to the charismatic experience of incorporation in the different stages of the formation process.

The orientations that are proposed herein, can be considered concrete actions or rather configuring features that have to be present in all the dimensions of the process. These guidelines need development and realization in every one of the formation projects.

1. The phase of Postulancy

1. Knowledge and experience together with the historical humanity of Jesus Christ announcing the Reign of God is accomplished in his person on the way to Easter.
2. Underlined in the category of “following” as a spiritual, conformational attitude of true personality.
3. Introduction and presentation of the Loving Face of God the Father manifested in the history of salvation and especially in the Paschal mystery.
4. Practical assimilation of the mystery of kenosis and submission as a continuation and fruit of the attitude of the emptying of the Lord.
5. Progressive participation and commitment to the passion of the world sharing the reality of suffering in its multiple expressions as a call of God in order to make the Passover of Christ present as salvation, liberation, building of the Reign.
6. Commitment as the effect of grace in living out the values of detachment and self-donation in places and actions of the Paschal presence.
7. Knowledge and living of those values according to the life and teaching of St. Paul of the Cross in the Passionist Community.

2. The Phase of the Novitiate

1. Conformation of all the dimensions of personal existence according to religious consecration lived from the context of the fundamental and radical vow, the memory of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Appropriation of the contemplative dimension of the Crucified Lord lived in the Passionist tradition and that has historically been expressed in solitude, penance and prayer.
3. Experience and configuration from the call to live evangelical community life according to the ideal of Passionist life proposed in the Constitutions.
4. Knowledge and experience of the configuring character of each one of the vows and how these receive their uniqueness from the "specific vow" (consecration to the Passion): following the crucified Lord in poverty, chastity and obedience.
5. Deeper understanding of the spirituality of the Congregation expressed in the life and doctrine of the Passionist saints in order to proceed to a new and personal assimilation in creative fidelity of the charism that is received.
6. Assimilation, identification and incorporation into the present day reality of the Passionist mission lived in intercultural and international realities.
7. Presentation and incorporation into the new meaning and new expressions of the charism today, which especially come from commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation.



3. Post-novitiate (period of Temporary Vows)
 1. Training for the Mission of the Congregation in fidelity to the mandate of the Church and the charism received, assuming the peculiarities of every time and place.
 2. Deepening in everyday life of the implications and practices of charismatic configuration in the different aspects of Passionist life: community life in a Paschal dimension and experience of the vows.
 3. Personalization of living out the consecration to the Passion (vow) in all dimensions of life.
 4. Creation of different vocations or (lay or priestly vocation) or missions received from the elements that are emphasized and proposed by the Paschal mystery of the Lord.
 5. Knowledge of the lines of theology and spirituality of the Passion in order enable and specialize all that regards the reality of the charism and mission.
 6. Initial participation in the various apostolates of the Congregation, paying particular attention to those that are considered more significant and expressive of the charism.

4. The Phase of On-going Formation
 1. Vigilant and responsible attitude to conform the different stages and situations of life according to the charismatic experience in creative fidelity to the essential elements: contemplation, life of fraternity, identification with the crucified, assumption of the Mission of the Congregation in every circumstance.
 2. Recognition and docility to the action of the Spirit that is perceived in community experience and discernment, the reading of the signs of the times, attentive listening to the Word and sacramental encounter with the Lord in the midst his Church.
 3. Continuous deepening and assimilation of the sources of Passionist spirituality present in the life and writings of the Founder, the testimonies of the Passionist saints and in the magisterium of the Congregation (Chapters, Synods, Major Superiors...).
 4. Docility to the Constitutions of the Congregation and the Congregational magisterium as current and binding expressions of the Passionist charism proposed as a way of holiness and personal-Passionist identity.
 5. Opening of mind and heart to the new challenges and re-dimensioning of the charism that emerge from the life of the Church, from the history of humanity, from new social and cultural movements, desiring to respond to the light of Christ Crucified.