



FOURTH INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CONGRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRD CENTENARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PASSIONIST CONGREGATION

Dear Brethren, Sisters and Passionist Family,

We are very pleased to report that at the meeting of the General Council (January 30 to February 10, 2018), at which were present both the Commission for the 3rd Centenary of the Congregation, as well as the General Chapter (2018) Preparatory Commission, the Cathedra *Gloria Crucis* of the Pontifical Lateran University was charged with researching the possibility of holding an International Theological Congress in Rome as one of the key events of the 3rd Centenary Jubilee Year. This Congress will be designed as an international, intercultural and multilingual event.

The Cathedra committee met at Sts. John and Paul on 24 March 2018. The Rector of the Lateran University, Monsignore Enrico dal Covolo, S.D.B. was present as well. He was wholly in support of our proposal. At that meeting the executive team was named, the dates for the Congress (September 21-24, 2021) were determined, and the theme was chosen: *The Wisdom of the Cross in a Plural World [La sapienza della Croce in un mondo plurale]*.

This celebration of the 300 years since the birth of the Congregation within the Church is a motivating force for us to deepen our understanding that *the Passion of Christ continues in this world until He comes in glory; therefore, we share in the joys and sorrows of our contemporaries as we journey through life toward our Father* (Const. 3). The same Constitutions point out the horizons of the Passionist charism: *We express our participation in the Passion by a special vow, which is at once personal, communitarian, and apostolic. Through this vow we bind ourselves to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Christ. By word and deed, we strive to foster awareness of its meaning and value for each person and for the life of the world* (Const. 6).

Our history is a magnificent combination of spirituality and of apostolic sanctity. We thank and praise God for it. However, the memory of a glorious past is insufficient at this moment; we feel compelled to proclaim the Memory of the Passion in this moment. ...*our life-style must stand out as a prophetic condemnation of the injustices among which we live; it should be a continual witness against the abuses of a consumer society* (Const. 72).

Within the missionary Church, which is always "moving outward," we wish to take our place as part of the local Church, bringing with us our specific gift of the Spirit, and *we must never lose sight of our characteristic apostolate of preaching the message of the Cross; nor must we ever forget that our life in community is a necessary element of our religious life as well as being a most important witness for the whole Church* (Const. 73). We recognize that *our vocation as Passionists prompts us to familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the Passion of Christ, both in history and in the lives of people today, for the Passion of Christ and the sufferings of His Mystical Body form one mystery of salvation* (Const. 65).

Three hundred years after our foundation, the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary, spoken to the young Paul as he tried to settle the question of whether to enter an existing religious Order, ring true for our own day: "My Son, do you see that I am dressed in mourning? It is on account of the most sorrowful Passion of our beloved Son, Jesus. You should be dressed so, and you should found a Congregation which will dress in this manner, in which there will be continual mourning for the Passion and Death of my dear Son."

Conscious of being part of the wider world community, we recognize the need to collaborate responsibly with people of good will everywhere in pursuing all that is true, noble and just, bearing in mind the present needs of the Church and the world, our special mission in the Church, and the particular gifts of our religious (Const. 69).

This Jubilee invites each of us to celebrate our appreciation and our praise before our Crucified God. Some of us are called to contribute from their measure of faith and their understanding of the mystery of the Cross, in conjunction with international scholars, in order to explore the depths of the mystery of Creation and Redemption.

May this Third Centenary of the founding of the Congregation move us so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning....The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God....we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles....Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1Cor 1,17-18; 23-24).

May this International Congress, organized by our Cathedra *Gloria Crucis* in the Pontifical Lateran University, under the title *The Wisdom of the Cross in a Plural World*, bring forth the highest scholarly treatment on the salvation offered to the people of today, who need redemption and are engaged in a continual search for the truth.

As the Congregation embraces this event, it also opens it to the People of God, confident that it responds to the voice of the Spirit, which gathers up every man and woman in order to wash them in the redemptive Blood of Christ.

Our gratitude to the Cathedra *Gloria Crucis* of the Pontifical Lateran University which promotes and hosts the Fourth International Congress on the Wisdom of the Cross.

Fraternally,

P. Fernando Taccone
CP

P. Fernando Taccone cp
Cathedra Director



J. Rego. CP
P. Joachim Rego cp
Superior General

Rome, May 22, 2018