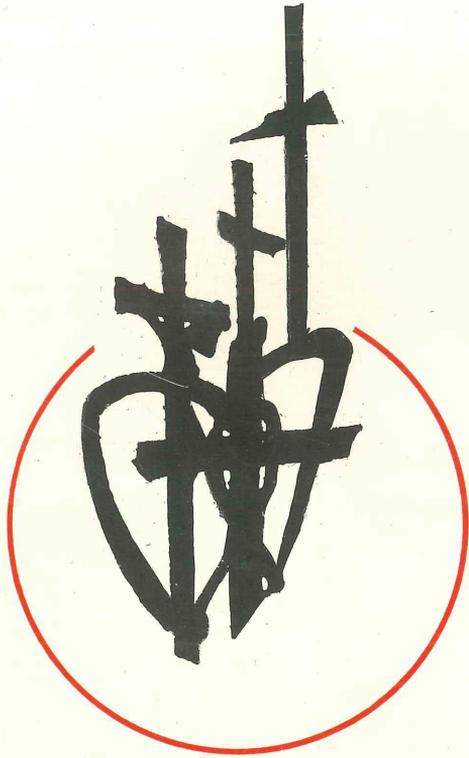


History of the Passionists





History of the Passionists

Volume I

**Its origin and development in the
Founder's period (1720-1775)**

by

Fabiano Giorgini

Edizioni ECO

Imprimi potest

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Superior General of the Passionists

Rome, October 19, 1987

Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality

Dedicated to
SAINT PAUL OF THE CROSS
*that his Congregation may ever
flourish in its pristine vigor*

E D I T O R ' S P R E F A C E

The publication of this translation of Volume I of **THE HISTORY OF THE PASSIONISTS** is long overdue. Fr. Vincent Laffan, C.P. of the Province of the Immaculate Conception (Argentina) translated this Volume from the Italian in 1982. Sometime later, Fr. Norbert Dorsey, C.P. of the General Council (now Auxiliary Bishop of Miami, U.S.A.) asked David Meade of Chicago, U.S.A. to edit the translation. For various uncontrollable reasons, the edited manuscript remained dormant for many months after being returned.

My task these past few months has been to give a final editing to the manuscript. Following a decision made before my coming on the scene, namely, that the English text of **THE HISTORY OF THE PASSIONISTS** would be more a "popular" history, I have heavily edited the footnotes. I have left the enumeration as in the Italian text, but have eliminated the text which Fr. Giorgini had added to many citations. These texts can, of course, be found in the Italian edition.

I am truly grateful to the following for their invaluable help: Sister Carmel Kidd, L.C.M., Rome, for typing the first edited translation; Fr. Bonaventure Moccia, C.P., Sts. John and Paul, Rome; Mother Catherine Marie, C.P., The Passionist Nuns, Owensboro, Kentucky, U.S.A.; Sister Miriam, C.P., The Passionist Nuns, Daventry, England; Mrs. Grace L'Manian, Hamden, Connecticut, U.S.A., for reading sections of my edited texts and offering many helpful suggestions. Finally, I am most grateful and indebted to Fr. Augustine Paul Hennessy, C.P., West Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A., for stylizing the text and giving it a final reading.

Rev. Dominic Papa, C.P.
Feast of St. Paul of the Cross
October 19, 1987
Sts. John and Paul
Rome, Italy

C O N T E N T S

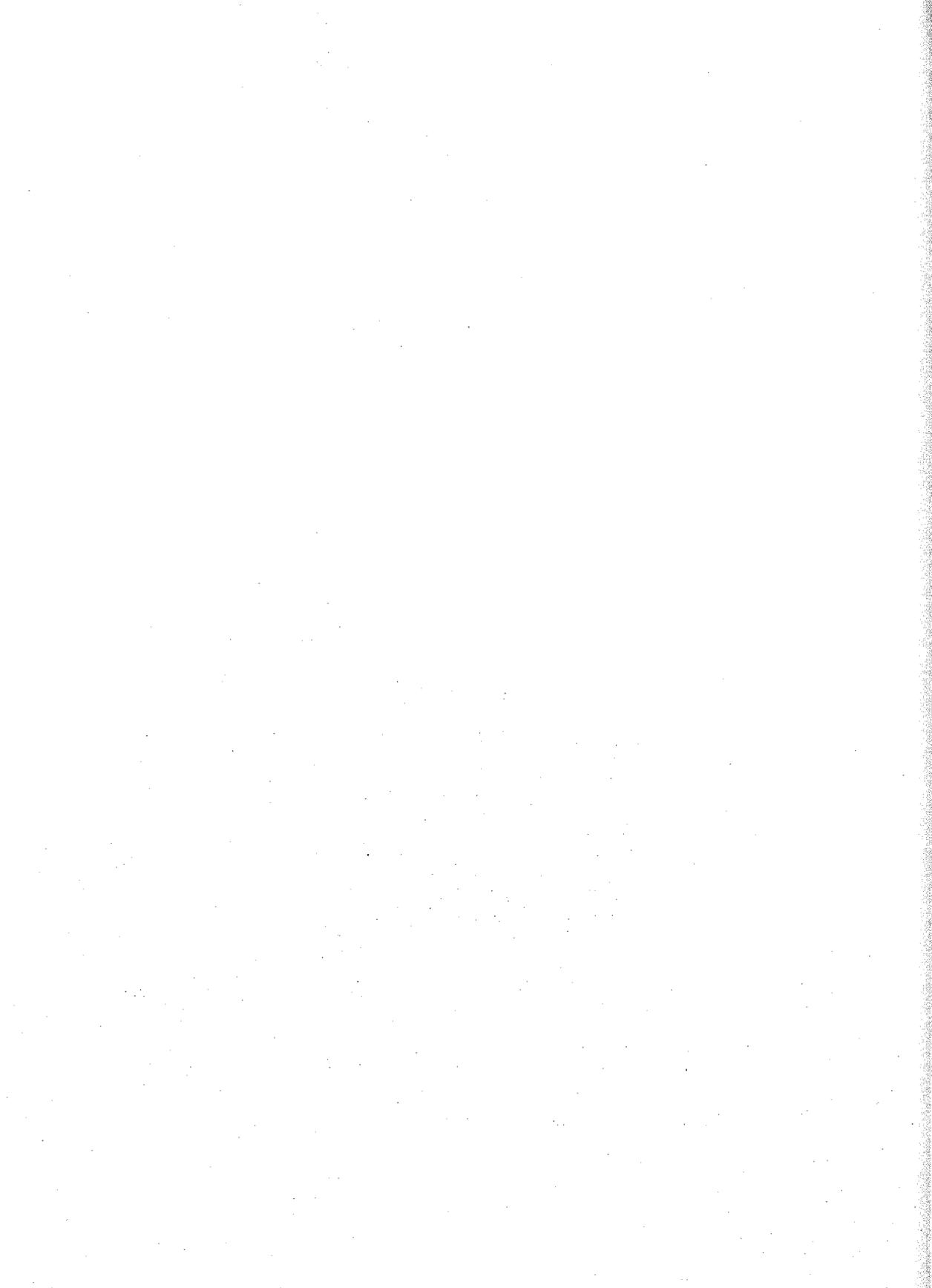
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ABBREVIATIONS

- AG - Passionist General Archives, Rome
- Acta C.P. - Acta Congregationis Passionis
(from 1930 onward)
- Biog. Rel.
Pas. Sac. - Biographies of several Passionist
priests.
- Bolletino - Bulletin of the Congregation
(1920-1930)
- Decreti e rac. - Decrees and Recommendations of
Passionist General Chapters
- Diz. Ist. Perf. - Dictionary of Institutes of Perfection.
- Filippo, Storia
Prov. Ad. - Philip Antonaroli, History of
the Passionists of the Province of
Our Mother of Sorrows.
- Filippo, Storia Ad. - Same as above.
- Let. - The Processes of Beatification and
Canonization for St. Paul of the Cross
Founder of the Passionists and of
the Cloistered Passionist Nuns.
- St. Paul of the Cross,
Guida - St. Paul of the Cross, Spiritual Guide
for Passionist life. "Common Regula-
tions" of 1755.
- Reg. et const. - Rules and Constitutions of the
Congregation of the Passion.

RSCI

- Journal of the History of the Church
in Italy.

RSSR

- Research in Religious and
Social History.

F O R E W O R D

This volume, which is mainly a history of the spirituality and daily life of the Passionist Congregation, fulfills a longing cherished since the earliest days of the Institute. A casual perusal of this and the following volumes may at times convey the impression that some aspects have been neglected, while others may appear overdone. The chief reason for this is the lack of available works for reference and for more exhaustive study. Monographic studies on local communities and provinces are scarce, while works on the spirituality of the Congregation are, at best, in their initial stages.

This may be the case particularly with the present volume. Its object is not only to portray the realization of the Passionist charism in its spiritual and apostolic exigencies, but also to convey an objective knowledge of the charism itself and the spiritual characteristics on which it is founded and which in turn flow from it. It is necessary, as well, to make known the founder's personality, his consciousness of the charism received, and his work as master and leader. It is further necessary to study how postulants were formed; how the memory of the Passion was promoted and the apostolic activity which flowed from it. As this study progressed, new avenues of research disclosed the spiritual heritage of the Congregation as presented by the tradition and theology of the religious life. Since the details of such research would have unnecessarily prolonged our history, I have often-times had to limit myself to mere references in order to stimulate our readers to further study.

A more satisfactory reconstruction of the realization of the ideals of community life and apostolic activities was not always possible. Documentation is scarce. We have no records of information which local or provincial superiors periodically sent to their respective major superiors concerning the state of their houses or provinces. During the period from 1720 to 1775 no records were kept of apostolic ministries (retreats and popular missions) nor of those who made retreats in Passionist houses. No trace

has been left of the founder's vast correspondence, nor of his procurator Struzziere, with members of pontifical commissions concerning the revision of the Rule, the controversy with the mendicants or the obtaining of solemn vows. Such correspondence would have cast much light not only on the chronological development of events, but more so on the motives of Paul Danei and his collaborators who were parties to those events so closely knit with the charism of the Institute.

Everlasting gratitude is due Fr. John Mary Cioni who has handed down much interesting information on persons and events, although at times as a first draft awaiting a definitive form. Without his patient and painstaking labor many aspects of events and persons of the Congregation would be veiled in mist if not totally ignored.

Many readers, Passionists particularly, may easily look up Fr. Enrico Zoffoli's three volumes on Paul of the Cross where foundations and other events of this period are dealt with at length. To avoid making the volume too ponderous, I have omitted references to documents and other details treated by him.

I hope this volume may serve as a valid introduction to the knowledge of the charism and spirituality of the Congregation and of its work for the people of God, as well as being a help in discerning these benefits in an historical context so far removed from our present socio-religious situation. I also hope the style and presentation of this work may not impede an objective understanding of its contents, which were patiently gathered and organized in order to make known the Congregation's part in the history of salvation and in the spiritual-institutional reality lived by men who believed in the love of God as revealed in the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Chapter I

SOME SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

This chapter deals briefly with some aspects of the century in which the Passionist Congregation was founded. It does not deal with all the problems in this century, which marks the beginning and the end of two historic epochs. Only passing reference is made to the trends of European thought in order to illustrate the outstanding aspects of the socio-cultural life in Italy, the birthplace of the Passionist Congregation.

A. NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

1. Attention given to "nature" and "reason"

The new attention given to "nature" and to man, or, better still, to his "reason," was the outstanding element of the 1700s. This was in contrast with the Aristotelian concept accepted in Catholic culture, concept that had become rather static. Science at the time was mainly a search for truth by means of the study of authoritative sources: revelation, the Fathers of the Church, philosophers, tradition. "A change, however, took place in the second half of the fourteenth century and decidedly in the fifteenth. Thirst for knowledge went directly to the reality of things. Independently of previous models, man wanted to see with his own eyes and examine with his own mind in order to arrive at a critically founded judgment. This was valid as regards nature, and thus gave rise to modern experimentation and rational theory. The same held for what concerned tradition, giving rise to humanistic criticism and historical science based on reliable sources. It applied also to social life: hence new concepts of state and law. In contrast with the unity of life and action determined by religion, science proclaimed its independence as an autonomous field of culture." (1)

The concept of "nature" acquired absolute value and was considered the binding norm for all knowledge and action. He who investigated nature and proclaimed himself the herald of the new science to combat the ignorance derived from historic religion became the true "scholar," the "philosopher." The birth of the science of nature brought with it a serious methodological problem, which in turn posed a "gnoseological" one to which the seventeenth century sought an answer by the methods of induction, mathematical deduction and Galileo's experimentalism. The new science grew and asserted itself chiefly through the Enlightenment which judged tradition critically and rejected it as a negative attitude of the human spirit. Enlightenment "is in itself a revolutionary culture with the following distinguishing traits: it places free criticism, the greater value of natural sciences, the rational explanation of the world, intellectual freedom and antiauthoritarianism in contrast to sentiment, to belief, to submission, to the principle of authority, to the metaphysics of culture and of traditional society, that is, it establishes reason as a critical act as the principle and supreme value of people." (2)

Begun in England, the Enlightenment passed to France where it assumed a persuasive literary expression, growing and taking shape in the *Encyclopedia*. That document was edited by some fifty authors of diverse cultural background, all united by a common rationalistic approach. Likewise united by the will to change the existing situation, they were opposed to constituted power and the doctrinal and moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Enlightenment in its various offshoots represented a lay culture that emerged outside of and against tradition and primarily against Christian tradition.

Together with the science of nature there appeared a science of natural law as opposed to divine law, which was conceived as an untouchable hierarchic social order with its social classes: monarch, nobles, clergy, and people. Classes were segregated with their own privileges, even though among the people (on the fringe of society) there existed sub-groups determined by economic status or trade and business activities.

The outstanding positive aspect of this natural law was the affirmation that by nature all men have the same rights: freedom, equality, right to property, religion, family, etc. This science was closely linked to the anti-curial tradition of the past and offered a theoretical basis for the powers of the monarch and the absolute state. These ideas were to provide the basis for the controversies over the rights, privileges, and immunities of the Church and its temporal structures. (3)

Thanks to the censorship of the Church and of various civil states, these ideas entered Italy in a very limited way among the educated and the nobility. They created attitudes of rejection towards traditional religion and all former cultural and moral principles. Their influence on the people, however, began to show up only during the second half of the century.

2. The concept of State

The concept of dynastic absolutism, at the root of the monarchies and princedoms, considered national territory as a family estate whose succession and transmission was ruled by private law. The protracted wars of the 1700s had their origin in problems of dynastic succession, to which must be added the hegemonic voluptuousness of one or other of the dynasties. During this century the sovereign had already obtained the full submission of the various princes, barons and feudal lords, etc. These, however, preserved their titles and some privileges which varied according to nation. Such privileges were to be still more limited toward the middle of the century by the sovereigns who favored centralization within a unitarian state. The State became more easily identified with the sovereign who was deemed the source and holder of every right and power, above all law and subject only to God. As regards political choices or legislation, the nobles exerted much influence, the clergy, somewhat less, and the people or third state, none whatsoever. During this period the theory and practice of state jurisdiction (*giurisdizionalism*) was more firmly asserted, denying the Church not only some privileges - its own tribunals for

judging cases pertaining to persons or goods dependent on ecclesiastical authority, tax exemption, etc. - but also impeding even the autonomous exercise of its specific duties such as the nomination of bishops, ordination of priests, establishing of new institutes and their houses, admission of postulants to religious life, enactment of bulls and decrees, etc. Sovereigns, upheld by jurists and ministers, claimed such rights on the theory that the State was the only source of every right, even over the external structure of the Church.

While on the one hand some intangible natural rights were acknowledged and guaranteed every individual according to the principle of the natural equality of all, on the other the absolutism of the sovereign and the State developed and gained ground. The sovereign, once invested with power was to dedicate himself entirely to the welfare of the people, and, though not subject to law, he was obliged by the moral duty of seeking the welfare of the people, to respect their fundamental rights. This ideology reinforced dynastic and state despotism which intervened in every area of social and religious life in order to promote the total good of the people. Even the Church was looked upon as a means of contributing to the welfare of the citizens, and thus many sovereigns and States, without an understanding with the Holy See, attempted to organize the churches autonomously on the sole criterion of social efficiency. Such a view influenced legislation concerning parochial organization, duties of parish priests, the presence and activities of religious men and women. These latter were obliged to open popular schools while their possibilities of admitting postulants were reduced, since these had to undergo a State examination of their vocation. Undoubtedly many things needed improvement in ecclesiastical structures, but State intervention was vitiated by the intention of reducing the papacy to a purely dogmatic role and empowering the State to intervene in all ecclesiastical matters within the nation.

It must be stressed, however, that the concept of an enlightened sovereign resulted in greater attention to the people's welfare in areas such as sanitation, in-

struction, administration of justice, a more equitable distribution of taxes and social assistance. Yet even in these areas, many theoretic affirmations of this period found but slow and partial fulfillment in everyday life. Within the context of this concept of the State, tolerance of ideas was proclaimed in principle on religious and philosophic levels, but when it came to political ideas, the State became ever more monolithic and repressive regarding ideas that deviated from the officially approved model.

It may not be out of place to recall here the system of international relations brought about by the Peace of Westphalia at the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648. That date saw the end of the political influence of the two major medieval ideal powers: the papacy and the empire that had contributed to maintaining the international balance. The new egalitarian society sought a new international balance by being watchful that no one power became so strong as to constitute a danger to other nations. This principle, known as the just balance of power, together with that which considered national territory as a family estate, was to be at the root of the wars in the first half of the 1700s. (4)

3. New economic trends

In the first half of the eighteenth century the military demands occasioned by nearly 30 years of war, the luxury of the courts and the aristocracy, and the newly acquired appetites of the enriched middle classes required ever increasing commodities, military equipment, means of transport, etc. The transition continued from the handicraft system consolidated in corporations to the organization of the great manufacturing works built on the basis of efficiency which laid the foundation for modern industry. The want of sufficient capital and the need to consolidate enterprises to maintain competition led to the limitation of wages, often to the detriment of workers unprotected by social legislation. As doctrinal trends, such theories as mercantilism, physiocracy, and liberalism gained ground. Colbert's mercantilism considered industry

and trade as the chief sources of monetary wealth and hence of state welfare. This prevailed in France. On the other hand the physiocrats, whose chief prophet was Quesnay, held that agriculture was the primary source for the production of wealth. With this end in view from the middle 1700s onward, attempts were made for the recovery and betterment of land, new agronomical societies were founded for the study of agricultural techniques and the usurpation of church properties was augmented. Finally, liberalism, expounded by Adam Smith, proclaimed the prime source of wealth to be human labor under the supervision of technicians and expert organizers, offered consumers the greatest possible quantity of goods.

Somewhat complex in their initial affirmation, these economic trends became clearer as they were gradually actuated in different countries. The agricultural tendency prevailed in Italy, and many projects for the recovery of land were undertaken in the Papal States, in Tuscany, in Austrian Lombardy and in Piedmont. Paul of the Cross and the Passionists witnessed the works undertaken by Pius VI for the recovery of the Pontine marshes, but they were also witnesses of the tactics of governments usurping religious properties. This situation gave religious orders an added motive for not wanting to possess real estate or fixed incomes. (5)

B. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EUROPE

Throughout the eighteenth century the Church found itself facing numerous problems. This arose from the new cultural concepts of the State, from Jansenist and Quietist quarrels, from the Church's own temporal structures and socio-economic privileges acquired through the centuries. The relations of the Holy See with other States were complicated by the concept of state jurisdiction and the enlightened despotism of governments. This made the pastoral work of bishops more difficult, for it immersed papal and episcopal energies in jurisdictional and economic problems and impeded a fuller dedication to evangelization. The Jansenistic disputes, the heated controversies

between various theological schools, the new doctrines on the concept of church, the jurisdiction of bishops in relation to the universal Church and their relation to the Roman pontiff, the role of the pope in the college of bishops, all these factors constituted doctrinal and pastoral problems that diminished the internal cohesion of the Church while external opposition kept increasing. (6)

Within the Church a wise and enlightened tendency toward reform was not lacking. However, it did not meet with that benevolent welcome needed to allow its gradual introduction into the formation of the clergy. With better formation many pastoral aspects would have fitted in better with the new cultural movement arising in society. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century the great reformatory effort carried out by the post-Tridentine Church appeared to grow weary and remain static. This led to a defensive attitude in the following century, both in the fields of theology and apologetics.

Governors and philosophers spoke preferably of the "court of Rome" rather than of the Holy See. The other dynastic courts looked upon the "Roman court" with some haughtiness, deeming it of small value both in its members and political power, and, what was worse, still anchored in obscurantism, that is, in the dogmas of revelation. With the expression "court of Rome," the emphasis was placed more on the governmental and temporal structures of the State than on the Holy See as representing the Christian religion. Hence, every intervention of the Holy See was seen as an attempt of a foreign power on the rights of a sovereign to intervene in all material and spiritual affairs concerning the welfare of his people. In such a cultural situation clashes were almost inevitable. Despite Benedict XIV's generous conciliatory efforts in agreeing to sign concordats with various States - with great economic disadvantage to the Holy See - little improvement was achieved in relations between the Holy See and various nations, among which was the kingdom of Naples in Italy. The suppression of the Society of Jesus was the emblematic sign of this struggle in which the Church was the loser on all fronts.

Besides these ideological factors many other causes concurred to obstruct the life of the Church in the eighteenth century. The chief of which appear to be the following:

1. The pressure brought to bear on the conclaves by the courts, especially those of the Hapsburgs and Bourbons, through the "courts' cardinals" and the "veto" against the election of a cardinal unacceptable to a sovereign for fear he might favor an opposing nation. Amid arguments, bargaining and transactions, conclaves were drawn out for months on end to terminate finally in the appointment of some neutral or colorless cardinal. Thus the eighteenth century popes, all men of doubtless moral conduct, some even pious and austere, not always had the high cultural understanding and initiative needed to face the evolution that was taking place. Often they could not even count on truly capable collaborators or men totally dedicated to the welfare of the Church.

2. Attached to the court of Rome were men known as "cardinals of the crown" who acted as ministers of their respective sovereigns and had the favor of their monarch more at heart than the welfare of the Holy See. These, together with a plethora of courtiers, were ready to serve the highest bidder. They formed spy rings in favor of various sovereigns and centers of intrigue, thus creating administrative and political division and rivalry in the "court of Rome." This resulted in weakening, if not paralyzing, every initiative of the pope or of his secretary of state. Needless to say, the frequent change of popes was of little help towards a consistent State policy and adequate initiatives to face the new social and cultural situation.

3. The higher clergy, coming mostly from the nobility and middle classes (sometimes because they were the younger sons), were not always capable of understanding the frailty of the temporal structures of the Church. They could not collaborate in a healthy evolution. The lower clergy, due to their social extraction and deficient formation, were of little help to the Church, and it is

something for which to be grateful if they did not further burden it by their conduct.

4. Elements such as episcopalianism, gallicanism, caesaropapism and enlightened despotism contributed to identify the Church with the old regime, subduing the pope or at least weakening his influence as universal shepherd. All these were contributing factors increasing the difficulties of the Holy See during the second half of the century.

If the Church could be considered backward from an external, social point of view, internally we find a vigorous effort at self-purification, of dedication to the mystery of Christ and to evangelization of the poor, that is, of those living in rural areas, in mountainous regions and in unhealthy places, for all of whom religious instruction had been neglected. We find this movement spreading all over Europe through religious congregations such as the Eudists, Vincentians, Passionists and Redemptorists - all joining in the work already developed by the Capuchins and some groups of Jesuits and Franciscans. Many sodalities underwent a renewal both in the formation of their members and in their dedication to Christian social assistance. When the French revolution came it meant the unjust suppression (in the name of reason!) of religious institutes, sodalities and other pious lay associations. If the Church survived this catastrophe, it did so through unfailing divine assistance, but also because of the christianizing efforts by the best of its diocesan clergy and religious congregations, old and new, which were ever present and active. (7)

C. EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ITALIAN SOCIETY

1. Political situation

The dawn of the century found Italy with a population of about 14 million, which by the close of the century had increased to about 18 million. Politically it was divided into 10 principal states plus a considerable

number of minor ones: dukedoms, marquises, feudal states, etc. These latter, though no longer independent as in previous centuries, still enjoyed many privileges particularly in the kingdom of Naples. During the early part of the century, Italy was the stage on which the armies of the Hapsburgs and Bourbons fought for European hegemony. The prevailing Spanish dominion was succeeded in 1714 by the Austrian, which in turn ended in 1738 with a new division between them. The 30-years' war of Austrian succession ended in 1748, leaving Italy impoverished. It was followed by a long spell of peace till the 1792 French invasion. This favored demographic growth, agriculture and trade, although at times (1762-67 and 1782) the vagaries of nature brought famine to the land.

Politically, Italy had become a buffer state between the Hapsburgs and Bourbons, not only because of the territories controlled by the two rivals in Italy, but also because of the presence of family allies in the various Italian States and duchies (the Kingdom of Naples, the duchies of Parma and Modena).

Furthermore, the dominant power held the strategic base in central Italy, thus controlling north and south, keeping in check both the Papal States and the grand duchy of Tuscany. This strategic base was known as The State of Tuscany Garrisons, and it is within this State that the Passionist Congregation was born.

This Garrison State was formed by the Argentario headland and the villages of Portercole, Porto Santo Stefano, the city of Orbetello as administrative center, and a strip of land which joined the headland with the small port of Talamone. In addition, on the island of Elba, it took in the village of Portolungone, today Porto Azzurro. In all, it included 315 square kilometers on the mainland and 9 square kilometers on the island of Elba, with a civilian population of about 3,000. Philip II of Spain formed this State in 1557. He and his successors spent huge amounts in fortifying these strategic points. In the eighteenth century Portercole was considered one of the best strongholds of Italy. Its ruins today testify to this.

During the second half of the century the Italian sovereigns who were partial to the Enlightenment dedicated themselves to reforms which sought the welfare of the country. They accepted and fostered the collaboration of Italian thinkers and men of action, among whom were Sallustio Bandini, Pompeo Neri, Caesar Beccaria, Peter Verri, G.B. Vico, Anthony Genovesi, Cajetan Filangieri, Ferdinand Galiani, and others.

2. The demographic situation and the family

The Italian population of this period was chiefly rural: 85% lived in small villages. The more populous cities in 1770 were Naples with 351,698 inhabitants, Rome with 158,906, Palermo with 140,599, Venice with 140,256, and Milan with 128,473. Another 21 cities surpassed 20,000 inhabitants, while the rest were below that figure.

	1700	1750	1800
Northern Italy	5,660,000	6,511,000	7,206,000
Central-South Italy	6,077,000	7,000,000	8,452,000
Islands (Sicily, Sardinia, etc.)	1,636,000	1,973,000	2,433,000
Totals	13,373,000	15,484,000	18,091,000

The Italian birth rate varied between forty-five per thousand in the Basilicata and thirty-nine per thousand in Lombardy. Venice registered the lowest birthrate, particularly among the nobility; in 1790 it had fallen to twenty per thousand. Numerically large families were to be found at all social levels, especially in rural districts. Infant mortality, however, was high particularly in the first year of life. Bishops on pastoral visitation to marshy areas usually administered confirmation to infants and children under seven years because many of them never lived to that age. (8) The average rural family numbered four to five members and even more in the patriarchal families of the share-farmers. The husband held undisputed and frequently authoritarian preeminence in the home, which served to highlight the juridic inequality

of women, particularly in southern Italy and on the islands. (9) Preachers and confessors had a decided influence in reducing the authoritarianism of husbands, thus clearing the way in northern and central Italy for a greater responsibility allowed to women. They were also influential in slowly eliminating marriages of convenience arranged by parents. One of the results of a better Christian family formation in this period was a more careful separation of the sexes, eliminating the nocturnal promiscuity that was due to the use of one large bed for parents and children. (10)

A social plague of this period was that of the foundlings abandoned at church or hospital doors, or on the streets. They were usually the offspring of seasonal workers, poor families or prostitutes. They abounded mostly in the marshy areas and around military quarters or city ports. Their number increased in times of famine. The average life span was 25 years, whereas in the marshes it was 19 or 20 years. (11)

3. The nobility

After the sovereign, the nobles were at the summit of the social ladder. They enjoyed not only riches but political and cultural influence as well. During the 1700s many were impoverished or overladen with debts, partly on account of luxurious living and injudicious spending, and partly because of the general decline of agriculture and trade afflicting the country. There arose in consequence a new category of fallen nobles "who took part in nothing and were scarcely known to exist," according to a contemporary. Some charitable institutions took it upon themselves to give them aid. (12) The nobles did not possess a solid education. In general they were up to date in the trends of European thought filtering in through France, whose language many of them spoke. It was through them that the Enlightenment and philosophies were handed down to the middle classes and slowly absorbed by the people. Hunting, riding and card playing were the chief pastimes of the nobility. Long hours were spent in these activities and considerable sums invested.

Dress balls and evening and night socials were frequent. Such were the activities of the higher state officials who disdained generally to have anything to do with law, trade, or commerce.

It is not easy to give an equitable judgment on the religious practice and morality of the nobles. In the course of the century they, more than others, suffered moral and religious deterioration, chiefly because their practice of the official religion was not based on firm convictions.

One problem that cannot be overlooked in speaking about the nobility is that of their younger sons. Some reference to it will help in understanding their situation and that of the higher clergy. In order to preserve the family estate, the nobles entrusted the duty of perpetuating the family to the firstborn male who alone inherited the estate and the title of nobility. The other sons were forced to work out their futures in military careers, as magistrates, in business or in the church. The female offspring were given in marriage with an eye to family convenience, and those who were not remained single or entered convents. About the middle of the century in Milan, for example, there were 1,925 adult males of the nobility, only 350 of whom were firstborn. Of the remaining 1,575, approximately 350 entered the Church, 200 entered law or government offices, 90 entered noble law colleges, 50 entered the army, 25 joined the order of Malta, 75 dedicated themselves to science and literature, and the rest lived as loafers. Among the church offices reserved to noblemen were cardinalates, wealthy bishoprics and abbeys, canonries, Roman curial offices. Almost all the nobles who attained these offices were younger sons. There were also monasteries where admission was reserved only to nobles. (13)

4. The people - the "third state"

This social class was made up of heterogeneous groups who were worlds apart due to economic status, education, and employment. The only unifying factor was

that none possessed an hereditary title. Even if they were wealthy and cultured, such persons did not enjoy the privileges of the nobles nor were they even permitted to dress as noblemen. Professionals, artisans, contractors and others rising gradually in the social scale soon became the chosen collaborators of the emerging bureaucracy of the new modern State. In the 1800s they constituted the middle classes and exercised decisive roles in social and political life. On the other hand the peasants and laborers who were the majority in the third state lived rather poorly and achieved but slight improvement in their situation. As in the rest of Europe, beggars were numerous and their numbers increased in times of famine. They were cared for by various sodalities and by some State organizations as well. Almsgiving to the needy always existed and this was, at times, carried out in churches during liturgical celebrations. (14)

Dwellings, particularly in small villages, were insufficient for large families. Usually the homes of the people were small, poorly ventilated and lighted, and lacking in hygienic facilities. The houses of the peasants in country places were still worse. The location of villages and small cities on hillsides caused problems of water supply and hygiene, which were aggravated by the presence of cattle. Streets were not paved or lighted except the main ones in larger cities. Some attempts at lighting began during the second half of the century. The darkness of night was only attenuated at the crossroads where votive lamps burned in honor of the Virgin or the saints.

In spite of occasional serious hygienic problems, people in villages or cities were conscious of living in a human, friendly environment, where each one was called by name or nickname and where joys and sorrows were shared by all. Narrow streets permitted women to exchange small talk and gossip or to spin, knit or sew in small groups. The fact that the town hall, the castle and the parish church occupied a central position gave a sense of unity to life and to its socio-religious manifestations embracing the total destiny of man. The city gates were closed an hour or two after sunset and opened

only at dawn. Though limiting the social and cultural horizons of the citizens, all of these features favored a sense of familiarity and solidarity among them. The outstanding negative aspect of this society was the local or provincial mentality it begot. Newspapers did not exist and participation in politics was unheard of. The prevailing mentality frequently gave rise to petty jealousies and gossiping, aggravated at times by gambling and drinking which people indulged in to forget their worries. From an economic point of view a distinction should be made here between the share-farmers of Tuscany, who enjoyed a fair economic position, and those of the mountains and the small landowners of the same zone who lived in precarious conditions. The share-farmers, manual laborers, and small landowners in southern Italy and the islands lived in wretched poverty, as did those of Padua and Ferrara, whereas those of the plains of Brescia and Verona enjoyed better living conditions.

The laborers in the marshes of Tuscany and Lazio, exposed as they were to malaria, were in a singularly painful condition with a short life expectancy. They usually came from the mountains or from other depressed areas; they were subject to overseers whose reputations were deplorable. Their living quarters were huts or sheds built on their places of work. In summer they slept out in the open, or on heaps of straw, fully dressed or wrapped in blankets. There was no such thing as medical or religious assistance. When in need of medical or spiritual attention, they walked to the nearest town where they were not always well received. Only some confraternity or sodality might care for them if they were ill, or bury them when they died.

The general diet of the people was soup and bread, the latter a mixture of flour made from chestnuts, beans, wheat, or also of maize which at that time was used with greater frequency and was often the cause of skin trouble. Added to the soup were vegetables and dairy products. Meat was reserved mostly for feasts or times of particularly hard labor such as sowing or harvesting. Urban laborers frequently had a healthier diet because

the food-distribution board made better provision for city inhabitants.

Though the governments made some progress during this century regarding health care, this was still insufficient. Up to the middle of the 1700s such service was given by charitable institutions maintained by confraternities and religious congregations, such as the orders of St. Camillus, Trinitarians, Sisters of Charity, etc. This service was moderate in the larger cities, less so in the smaller ones, and almost non-existent in towns and villages, which were often lucky to have a midwife. Medical doctors were to be found only in the larger cities. Towards the close of the century even this good work was discontinued because of famine, the economic depression, and government confiscation of the facilities of the confraternities and other charitable institutions. Meanwhile comparable government services developed at a very slow pace.

Very helpful in this period, particularly for the poorer people in the country and small towns, were the *Monti di Pietà* started by the Franciscans in the fifteenth century to save the people from being victimized by usurers. These *monti* were institutions that granted loans to the needy, not merely for survival but to help them develop economically and become self-sufficient. They were to be found in nearly every diocese and Benedict XIII warmly recommended their preservation and promotion to bishops. (15)

The education of the people was elementary. The vast majority could not read nor write. Great efforts were made to remedy this situation by sodalities and religious institutes dedicated to teaching, such as the Barnabites, Fathers of the Pious Schools, Brothers of the Christian Schools, while in the cities Jesuit schools continued until the time of their suppression. Governors with Enlightenment tendencies obliged various convents of nuns and monasteries of friars to open schools for the people. Greater attention was given during this period to female education, particularly as new religious institutes were founded with this end in view: Ursulines, the Angeliche,

Daughters of Charity, Maestre Pie, or merely dedicated ladies with episcopal approbation. The daughters of well-to-do families continued to receive a good education in convents. Even the local and state governments appeared to take more interest in education, either supporting existent church schools or opening new ones.

The character of the people was placid and happy. Even though culturally and economically limited, they found an outlet for their joy in popular songs and family or community festivities which served as an escape from the everyday routine. (16)

5. Soldiers, police and bandits

The various States did not possess a national army under a common flag. There were regiments with their own flags or special corps throughout the 1700s. Usually these were formed by volunteers recruited in the State or abroad - Italians from the different regions, Swiss, Spaniards, etc. The salary received held them together but at the same time favored desertions. Officers were usually the younger sons of nobles or wealthy families, well educated, with a deep sense of loyalty to their king and a chivalrous spirit. Military chaplains provided spiritual assistance. In the Garrison State, Paul of the Cross came across soldiers of the most varied origin, religion, and morality. In general the officers were very courteous and sought his spiritual assistance which was favorably received by the military. In order to reduce military expenses, the Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany made radical reforms, dismantling various fortresses no longer useful in the new historical situation.

For the administration of justice and the preservation of public order there were policemen under the command of a constable. The members of these forces came from the most miserable classes and, although the people despised them, they kept their jobs out of sheer necessity. Pope Benedict XIV, who planned catechism classes for them, could not find a church in Rome that would receive them. He then let it be known "that he was disposed to

do so in the antechamber of his own palace should the other churches refuse to receive them." Later he entrusted them to Fr. J.B. De Rossi who joyfully agreed "to be among the vilest in men's estimation and the most abhorred by all." It is well to bear this social prejudice in mind. It helps one to understand the attitude of St. Paul of the Cross and the course mapped out by him for his institute. Even in this area a profound renewal was made by the grand duke of Tuscany, Leopold, and he recommended that his successor be watchful so that "no abuses, violence or extortions" were committed by the police, but also that he should not tolerate their being despised or insulted. (17)

European and Italian society possessed another distinguishing element: bandits. Not all of them were violent. They were mostly evaders of customs laws or duties, or professional smugglers. Laws restrictive of trade between and within each State were innumerable. Each old feudal holding, region, or municipality within a State had its own taxes for nearly every type of merchandise. It is not surprising that smugglers abounded. Such transgressions were punishable not only by imprisonment but also by death, which explains why many took to the forests and turned to a low life of robbery and extortion. The large forests and the lack of roads made hiding easy. On his missions, Paul of the Cross and later Gaspar de Buffalo sought them out, awakening in them a sense of human dignity, of conscience, and leading them to a life free of crime. His compassion for them possibly derived from his knowledge of how easily even honest men could be inculpably incriminated by such legislation. His own father had known prison walls for having transgressed the customs laws of another municipality. (18)

6. Roads, travel and mail service

The Italian and European road system of communications fundamentally followed that marked out by the old Roman roads. With stone pavements and bridges constructed by hard labor, these roads still survived despite inadequate maintenance. The Cassia highway was the one

most used for communications and on it converged the postal service and the faster transport by postillion. The Aurelia highway from Rome to Genoa made transportation difficult because of the marshes in Lazio and Tuscany. At local and regional levels there were thousands of paths and mule trails known only to experts, particularly when they led through forests or through uninhabited countryside. These trails were reserved for pedestrians or beasts of burden while other trails served only for moving cattle to varied pastures. In general the roads allowed only one vehicle to pass and, according to the season, were covered either with dust or mud; the wooden bridges were often in precarious condition, and rivers or streams had to be waded. This made many roads useless for heavy freight transportation. They were fit only for the postal service, for travellers, or for transporting less voluminous or less costly products.

Whether in Italy or on the Continent the rhythm of movement was that of the pedestrian, the mule or the horse - a speed of about four or five kilometers an hour. Only journeys with stage horses exchanged at given places allowed for a speed of ten to fifteen kilometers per hour, and a maximum of twenty kilometers at a gallop. Five days travel were necessary to go from Argentario to Rome on foot; in 1744, it took our religious four days to go from Argentario to Vetralla. The Passionists destined for the Ceccano foundation in 1748 took eight full days from Vetralla to Ferentino by way of Civita Castellana, Monterotondo and Tivoli. Nearly three days of walking were necessary from Vetralla to Rome; on horseback it could be done in one day at full trot. Cardinal Serbelloni traveling in 1762 from Milan to Rome by way of Loreto took seventeen days using post horses.

Precisely because of the difficulties of road travel, communications by the waterways predominated. All rivers were put to service and notwithstanding the risks, boats were preferred both because of swiftness and reduced freight expense. Because of his love of poverty, Paul of the Cross often had recourse to this means of transportation, though in a limited manner. He had also restricted himself in the use of horses or carriages, considering

them not accessible to the people and less so to the poor. Speed depended on the type of vessel used, on the sails, and on favorable weather and winds. In 1721 the voyage of the Portuguese cardinals from Lisbon to Leghorn was considered a record in speed - nine days of navigation. The vessel was a special *felucca*. Portercole to Rome could be done in a day and a half. Generally from Civitavecchia to Palermo it took from ten to twelve days, while from Palermo to Naples it was a matter of four to five days' sailing.

The postal service was organized at State level though run by private agents. Originally the postage was paid by the receiver, but soon this was changed and was paid instead by the sender which facilitated collecting the fares. Considering the times, the service was generally secure and fast as can be seen from the founder's correspondence, which was occasionally entrusted to private persons or trustworthy businessmen. The cost of postage was high in relation to the economic level of the people. This explains why letter writing was not common and why religious orders appealed to the government, particularly in the Papal States, to obtain a reduction or condonation of postage, or the transmission of letters free of postage as Paul requested in 1774.

The limited means of communication helped to consolidate the local life of each village, especially in the midlands and mountainous regions. This gave rise to local and provincial independence, but also contributed to the abuse of power by lordlings and extortioners. It also had its influence on Christian life. On the one hand it nurtured religious practice, defending it from external deviating influences; yet, on the other, it created obstacles for visits of bishops who desired closer and more effective ties with their parish priests, their clerics, and religious. The risk of functioning independently on the part of the collegiate church or of the archdeaconry with its swarm of priests and clerics was ever present.

There was, however, a bright side to this situation. It helped the people to feel more at home in a most congenial atmosphere, one in which they were treated as

objects of attention and dialogue. This served to create a kind of local joyousness, which today we call folklore, but which, arising from social and religious influences, gave a unifying and gratifying sense to life. (19)

D. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ITALY

1. Dioceses and parishes

The Church was present in this period with about 350 episcopal sees spread throughout Italy, particularly in the kingdom of Naples, with an average of 45,000 souls to each. Though the sees were rather small in size, various factors conspired against an adequate pastoral care. In the first place bad roads or no roads at all made the visits of bishops difficult; in the marshes the bishops were absent from their sees six months of the year out of dread of the climate. Neapolitan bishops resided mostly in the capital rather than in their dioceses; other bishops, because of advanced age, could not face the risks involved in travelling. The diocesan see was the administrative center but it should also have been the dynamic promoter of pastoral life and activity. As a whole the bishops did strive to be about their mission. There were zealous bishops who were solicitous for the instruction of their people, using all means available - popular missions, catechetical instruction given by the confraternities - and providing for a better formation of their clerics. Their efforts at times were frustrated by lack of means or personnel who would be competent and willing to help. The superabundance of clergy was of little or no use. The bishops themselves were the first to acknowledge and denounce their uselessness. Yet they could do nothing about it because they were powerless over benefices dependent on patrons or lay people. They themselves were slaves to the system of benefices or foundations for celebrating masses or offices that required personnel to satisfy those obligations.

As mentioned elsewhere, this entire period was subject to the problems of reform by the governors of the

Enlightenment who one-sidedly commanded what was to be done in the formation of the clergy, in liturgy, and in catechesis. This led to unending conflicts of jurisdiction that took up all the bishops' time and exhausted them. Bishops on the whole were loyal to the pope's magisterium and, precisely because of their loyalty to the church, the Jansenistic attempts of Bishop Matteo Ricci and the grand duke of Tuscany received no support. In the history of the Congregation we meet bishops who were wholeheartedly dedicated to their office and solicitous for the spiritual welfare of their people and clergy. There were bishops with wealthy endowments but these were also bishops who could scarcely make ends meet for themselves or for their episcopal family. (20)

As a result of the Council of Trent, the parish was reinstated as the fundamental nucleus of the local church and as the center of catechetical instruction and sacramental life. In this century the parish experienced a renewal everywhere, though for different reasons. The Jansenist movement fostered it because of its peculiar ecclesiology. The so-called "parochialism" was seen as a reflection of the democratization in civil society. This meant parish priests were the bishop's collaborators but with their own rights. The governments of the Enlightenment visualized and fostered the parish as the hinge of socio-religious activities and considered the pastor more as a civil functionary than a churchman. This government tendency was found to be very strong in Austrian zones of influence, as also in Tuscany; it was less so in Piedmont, Liguria and Venice. The Roman Synod of 1725 gave a fresh impulse to parishes, promoting the catechetical activity proper to pastors. They were supposed to seek helpers, but they alone were responsible for the people's instruction. The influence of Saints Charles Borromeo and Gregory Barbarigo was still quite noticeable in northern Italy, keeping very much alive the parochial pastoral activity supported by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the oratories, and a greater participation of the faithful. In southern Italy the faithful were more attracted to the religious orders that were closer to the people, as their bishops mostly resided in the capital and their pastors often appeared to be preoccupied with economic

affairs. This would appear to be the reason why parish activity in southern zones had less influence than elsewhere, despite the salutary work of St. Alphonsus Liguori, Bishops Cavalieri and Falcoia and other zealous bishops.

The parish was a strongly centralized system: only in the parish church was the Blessed Sacrament reserved; the baptismal font was scarcely permitted even in churches that arose to serve newly populated areas. Yet the pastor was still restricted, not only by the sodalities but also by lay patrons and lay administrators who controlled ecclesiastical goods, particularly in southern Italy. Often the pastor's ministry was obstructed, if not hindered, by clergy not dedicated to the care of souls, who did not collaborate or who worked independently. Notwithstanding these limitations, it can be said that, on the whole, the parish responded to the needs of the people, partly because parishioners were not too numerous and partly because they could count on the help of confraternities, religious, and hermits. They could also find support in sturdy Christian homes. During the second half of the century, when religious institutes were suppressed by the States dominated by the Enlightenment and later during the French occupation, the parish was the only mainstay left to the people of God. (21)

2. The clergy

About the middle of the century a fair estimate placed the number of Italian churchmen at 126,000 priests and clerics. This was equivalent to a minimum of 1% to a maximum of 5 or 6% of the population, according to the make-up of the different States and cities. The existence and consistency of available ecclesiastical benefices had its effect on the distribution of the clergy. Generally the countryside was destitute of clergy, particularly as regards quality. (22) Their greater numbers came from the well-to-do classes and from the nobility, because they alone could provide the patrimony which was required by law as a title for ordination. Besides, an ecclesiastical career meant, for the younger sons and others, a means

of livelihood and a highway to social prestige. The system of benefices and pious foundations, the interest of which was for the celebration of Masses on feasts in an oratory or altar, constituted a title and a necessity for the ordination of priests to satisfy these pious legacies. In the south many churches functioned on lay benefices. Their goods were pooled and shared by a certain number of ecclesiastics called participants (*participanti*) who had to be local citizens. They were chosen by the lay patron. The bishop's right was limited to the examination of the candidates regarding doctrine. The wealthy and aristocratic families sponsoring these churches had founded and administered the benefices in favor of their own younger sons while the first-born sons continued to inherit the total family estate. In some instances the city administration sponsored these benefices for its select citizens who were not the first-born of a family. During the eighteenth century three-fourths of the churches fell under the domination of such lay benefices. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, why bishops had difficulties in developing pastoral programs. To these churches must be added those founded by the king, barons or other gentlemen who controlled them as sole patrons. The clergymen who enjoyed these benefices were more or less well off. Many other tonsured or minor clerics lived with them or dependent on them, as they awaited the vacancy of some benefice they might request in order to better their position. Neither the bishop nor the Holy See could do anything about this situation because the king was opposed to any change. (23)

We must admit, however, that in general during this century, the clergy - at times only because of social pressure - gave no noticeable moral scandal; but they gave sufficient ground for gossip by the emptiness of their lives. Loafing on the streets or in taverns, hunting and gambling, they frequently gave the impression of being absorbed chiefly in worldly affairs. In their contact with the people they dealt mostly with business affairs, complaining about tithes, collecting the fruits of their benefices, or seeking advice on how to improve the soil, etc. All this contributed to damage the pastoral image of the priest as mediator of evangelization. Since

the clergy who were not dedicated to the care of souls were more numerous than those in the parish ministry, it is no wonder that a negative image prevailed in many areas, and that the followers of the Enlightenment held them in ridicule.

The efforts of the Council of Trent regarding seminaries aimed at improving the formation of aspirants to the priesthood by removing them from lay influence and seeking to form persons wholly consecrated by vocation to a priestly life and to the sacred ministry. However, seminaries were not built everywhere, and those that were built often lacked sufficient economic means to be able to function. In 1725 Benedict XIII instituted the Congregation for Seminaries in order to supervise their progress and to promote their establishment wherever they were non-existent. During this century many seminarians spent only a few months in the seminary, and many others never went near them. The result was a deficient educational preparation along with inadequate spiritual and pastoral formation. Such a system could not nourish a truly great priest and produce men fully dedicated to the service of Christ and the evangelization of the people. The complaints which came from responsible bishops and religious concerning the clergy were by no means exaggerated. Recognizing these facts as real, the government took upon itself the task of making radical changes, particularly as it held the view that the pastor should be a well-formed, competent civil servant and capable also of satisfying the people in things spiritual. To enter the clerical state candidates submitted to examination by the government, and its consent was required for admission. Only a restricted number could be admitted to orders after giving documentary proof of the existence of a benefice. Seminaries were organized with good study programs but they were independent of the Holy See, and often the texts used were not entirely orthodox. Some improvement in pastoral practice was noticeable in north and central Italy, but less in the south. Associations were formed by priests who sought mutual assistance for their personal priestly life and ministry. (24)

3. The laity

Since the early Middle Ages many confraternities and sodalities existed throughout Catholic Europe. These experienced a renewal after the Council of Trent and often acquired fresh impulse, thanks to the popes. Through these institutions the laity became involved in parish activities and were of precious assistance in maintaining popular religiosity. Those with the most numerous members and spread through all Europe were the confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament and of Our Lady of the Rosary. There were, of course, many others dedicated to the various mysteries of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints. Among those patronized by the popes was that of Christian Doctrine, so strongly recommended and propagated by St. Charles Borromeo. Through them the laity collaborated with parish priests in the religious instruction of children. From them the laity also received a more intense religious formation and were stimulated to a more vital spiritual life and to a social commitment towards a more evangelical life. Charitable and social assistance, the maintenance of sacred edifices, various works of worship were different ways in which the laity together with the clergy contributed to the socio-religious welfare of the villages in their own cultural context. Furthermore these confraternities rendered a signal service by eliminating class distinctions; rich and poor, nobles and middle-class were united by common ideals and attitude. However, from the second half of the century onwards, a crisis arose for these meritorious institutions. Among the causes were the formation of confraternities for different social classes, the impoverishment of churches due to economic instability, and the confiscation of their properties by the State. A lamentable consequence of this decline, which became total when the French Revolution brought on their suppression, was the severance of the relationship which existed between one's social profession and his religious commitment. This in turn was a most important contributing factor to the dechristianization of the masses in the 1800s.

In Turin about 1770, there appeared the first associations known as "Christian Friendship" for the spread

of truly orthodox literature. These were followed by others called "Priestly Friendship" with the purpose of securing priests of sound orthodoxy and spirituality for preaching to the people. This association was a secret society. Even St. Alphonsus in his time founded "a secret congregation of the most fervent brothers" in honor of our Lady. Religious congregations affiliated men and women as tertiaries; the former on some conditions could live with the religious but the women lived in their own homes or were grouped in houses called "conservatories" without, however, strict obligation of enclosure. In the south a new form of female religious life arose: women who were unable to provide the necessary dowry for entering convents, remained at home particularly committed to living a Christian life, not infrequently taking private vows under the guidance of a spiritual director.

Often confraternities were a burden on parochial life because of narrow-mindedness; and conflicts concerning autonomy or prestige were frequent. Yet, despite these weaknesses, they had an immense positive influence on the lives of lay people, making them aware of their commitment to keep Christianity alive in their environment, to help their neighbors, to promote Christian fraternity by means of hospitals, to provide grain supplies, to establish hospices for pilgrims, to provide for orphans, to bury the dead, etc. (25)

4. Religious instruction and practice of the people

The chief means employed for fostering a conscientious, constant and practical religious faith were: catechetical instruction, ordinary and extraordinary preaching of missions, the frequent reception of the sacraments, and devotion to our Lady and the saints.

Following the dispositions of Trent and of the 1725 Roman Synod, the bishops on pastoral visitations and in local synods upheld the decisive importance of catechetical instruction. This was the duty incumbent on parish priests with the aid of other clerics and of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Every Sunday catechism

classes were to be given children and adults. In many parishes, however, this was neglected or done poorly, either because of the indolence of the people or the inadequacy of the pastors. No doubt, one of the obstacles to this instruction was widespread illiteracy among the people, which meant that everything had to be done orally. Various expedients were tried in this and in the previous century to obviate the difficulty, including formulas sung to well-known airs, either religious or profane. Bishops and religious were unanimously agreed that, outside the cities, religious ignorance was wide spread. The situation was even worse among seasonal laborers, country folk, and sailors.

Other means of religious instruction were Sunday sermons, Advent and Lenten preaching, and periodic missions. Without doubt, the influence of legislation, of vigilance and the commitment of many pastors assisted by religious, especially those dedicated to itinerant preaching, were effective. Country people did make progress, but their insights were not sufficiently grounded, and they relapsed when no longer supported by a religious environment and social pressure.

Insistence on sacramental life was another feature of pastoral care. Obviously the sacraments of Christian initiation were stressed, but emphasis was placed on the frequency of penance and the Eucharist as a means of cultivating a stalwart Christian life. The observance of yearly confession and communion was kept unanimously. Social pressure and ecclesiastical control did not allow for deviation.

Participation in Sunday or feast day mass was less strictly adhered to. Parochial schedules were not always convenient, or else periods of intense labor in the fields did not permit attendance without serious inconvenience. These difficulties and the desire to increase working days provoked the tendency to diminish feasts of precept in order to facilitate - so it was said - the better observance of those which remained. Benedict XIV, accepting this tendency towards an "adapted devotion," required a

survey among the bishops and granted a reduction of feast days to those countries that requested it. (26)

The Eucharist was the center of all worship. Importance was given to the tabernacle which held the Eucharist, the ineffable presence of the Lord Jesus, and before it a lamp always burned as a symbol of the faith of the Church. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration on feast day evenings, during novenas, and annually for the 40 hours devotion in memory of the 40 hours the dead body of Christ rested in the tomb. The majority of the faithful received communion once a year, though there were some exceptions. A greater frequency, especially among men, would have aroused comments. St. Paul of the Cross, a strenuous defender of frequent and even daily communion, constantly struggled to overcome this mentality. (27) All missionaries of this period were ardent promoters of the practice of visiting the Blessed Sacrament. Outstanding among them was St. Alphonsus Liguori. The faithful followed the liturgical year, especially Advent, Lent and Holy Week meditating on the mysteries of Christ's life, passion, death and resurrection. They found great help in the Lenten sermons and other catechetical discourses which prepared them for their annual confession at Eastertime or during Advent.

Devotion to our Blessed Lady was on the increase during this century. The Rosary Confraternity or that of Our Lady of Mount Carmel led to spreading the month of May devotions, the ringing of the Angelus bells three times a day, the recitation of the Rosary privately at home or publicly in the churches, particularly on Saturdays. The faithful were also attracted to devotion to the saints as friends of God, to the souls in purgatory as brethren in need of their help but who in turn intercede for their benefactors. These devotions found concrete expression in altars erected in churches, in shrines built at crossroads, in pictures and images venerated in homes. Annual pilgrimages to shrines which existed in nearly every diocese served as a reminder that life on earth was but a journey toward our heavenly home.

Notwithstanding all this, a certain belief in spirits and in witchcraft, accompanied by recourse to magic and propitiatory rites, remained quite alive in the minds of the people. Such beliefs, however, varied greatly according to the region and to the degree of religious instruction.

Within the context of religious formation and practice we must include the preaching of popular missions which served to remedy, as far as possible, insufficient catechetical instruction, and to awaken the indifferent by reminding them of God, creator and judge of all. Nearly all the missionaries strove to bring back the wayward, something that was missing in ordinary pastoral work. Besides, many missionaries, particularly of some institutes, sought to present God not simply as judge, but above all as a Father whose love for each one is so great that he gave his only Son. All this served to reinforce the reasons for religious practice.

Many people, it is true, may have had many evil and negative tendencies, yet there were very many who lived honest, upright lives both on the social and family levels. Many people lived the Gospel in all sincerity. Unfortunately we lack sufficient studies and research to place in bold relief the positive aspects of so many men and women whose lives made God present to the world and who were instrumental in creating a more human and serene social and domestic environment. Saints Paul of the Cross and Alphonsus Liguori, together with so many other preachers and saints of their time, never ceased repeating that all are called to holiness, even those who are considered outcasts, living on the fringe of society. The solicitude of such holy men entrusted to their respective institutes the guidance of all the faithful in meditation and continuous prayer. This aimed at making people aware of their dignity and capacity to make a personal response to God's personal love. (28)

E. RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ITALY

1. Women religious

Canon law at this time recognized as religious only those women who took solemn vows and lived in cloistered convents as prescribed by Trent and by Pius V. (29) Other pious women who did not enter convents, either because they could not afford the dowry or because they were not inclined to cloistered life, even if they lived in community with simple or private vows, were considered "pious women", or "tertiaries" if affiliated with some religious order. This concept delayed the appearance of female congregations dedicated to apostolic works. Thus in the preceding century St. Vincent de Paul, in order to found the Daughters of Charity, had recourse to the canonical state known as "pious association," as did the Italian congregation of the "Maestre Pie" in the century we are considering. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Italian nuns numbered about 60,000. Many of them were only such through family pressure. Trent had ordered bishops to examine the postulant's vocation before vestition and profession, but because the unfortunate novice in most cases did not have the courage to oppose family pressure, she assured the bishop she was entering of her own free will. Even as the number of these nuns decreased, this type still remained, thus lessening the quality of religious life. Existing legislation allowed the parlors to be open, and continuous contact with persons of both sexes gave way to dissipation of spirit, as well as to transgressions of poverty and of the common life. References to this situation are found in official documents and also in some works of St. Alphonsus (The True Spouse, Useful Hints for Bishops....), particularly those in which he warns bishops regarding the prescribed examination: "Ill luck would have it that in our days the majority become nuns not so much to dedicate themselves to God as to do the will of their relatives or for other purposes. Hence it happens that little spirit is found in many convents.... And of what use is it to the Church of God to admit to our convents so many young women without a vocation? It only serves to make harems of enclosed women who do not live exemplary lives (as is evident).

They are restless, and in all their lifetime only make trouble for the monasteries and bishops." (30) Many references are also to be found in the letters of St. Paul of the Cross regarding excessive visiting in the parlors which disturbs the recollection and peace of the convents.

The eighteenth century witnessed a vast improvement in female religious life thanks to the vigilance of bishops, of responsible superiors, and of the nuns themselves. This was more noticeable in central and northern Italy where the family atmosphere appeared more open. Convents reformed during the previous century continued to flourish and new ones were founded or reformed during this period in which religious consecration was lived authentically and at times heroically. The fervor of these nuns compensated for the mediocrity of those who entered with little conviction, and offered a valid contribution to the Christian vitality of the people. In his letters St. Paul of the Cross recalled with admiration some of these convents: the Capuchins, the Carmelites, the Visitation, the convents founded by the Ven. Mother Lilia in the Viterbo district, and many houses of sisters of active life with which he was in contact. The history of these convents awaits an objective presentation to place them in their proper perspective and undo the damage caused by a certain type of literature portraying nuns who were forced to enter convents.

The custom of solemnly celebrating vestitions and professions continued in this period particularly in the south and in big cities, despite the solicitous exhortations of church authorities. The practice of receiving and using personal gifts, authorized in many convents, easily led to greed for money, to ties of excessive friendships with relatives and other persons, to internal divisions in which social class distinction was already reflected in the separation of nuns into choir sisters and lay sisters. A constant attitude of the reformed convents was to oppose such feasts and gifts, committing themselves to a perfect common life. With this in view Paul of the Cross prescribed for the Passionist Nuns: "The religious individually must be perfectly poor. They may not receive any property or donations from their relatives or other secu-

lars, or any other gifts sent to them. When anything is sent without their request, let it be put at the disposal of the community. It is considered a fault to ask or receive anything without permission." No fireworks were permitted on the occasion of vestitions or professions; no musicians were to be invited nor "sonnets recited nor refreshments served nor other things" which could cause distraction. He even forbade the offering of "chocolate to those who came to celebrate mass, or to other persons that come to the monastery parlor." The reformist governments of the second half of the century forbade all vestition and profession feasts and, at least in Tuscany, obliged the relatives to donate to the local hospital the amount of the dowry due to the convent. Besides, as we recalled elsewhere, they obliged the convent to open schools for girls, thus widening the sphere of educational activity which had been restricted to internal students. (31)

2. Men Religious

Towards the middle of this century in Italy there were about 65,000 male religious, the highest percentage being in the kingdom of Naples and Sicily and the lowest in the duchy of Piacenza and in the zones of the marshes.

Many religious excelled in sacred and secular education, many others by their fervent lives and apostolic zeal rose above mediocrity. Old and new religious orders served the various needs of the Christian community. While the Franciscans, Dominicans, Servites, Augustinians and Jesuits were involved in sacred and secular education without neglecting preaching, the Vincentians, Capuchins, Pious Workers, Doctrinarians and others attended preferentially to the people, catechizing and supporting them in their Christian way of life. The Redemptorists and the Passionists were added to these in the 1700s. The order of St. Camillus, the Fatebenefratelli, the Trinitarians together with the military orders looked after the sick, while the brothers of the Christian Schools, the Scolopians, the Barnabites and others were involved in the edu-

cation of the children, both of the working class and of the wealthy. Even with their limitations and defects, religious had an undeniably positive influence on the civil and ecclesiastical life of the 1700s. Yet withal they found themselves involved in the struggle against the court of Rome, either because the State feared them as allies of the pope or because it coveted the wealth possessed by the religious institutes. It also annoyed the State that the religious witnessed too clearly to the existence of God and the value of revelation, so opposed to theistic and enlightened rationalism. The arbitrary reforms made by the government concerned the number of postulants to be admitted, the age of profession, the previous government examination of vocations, the prohibition of contact with superiors residing outside the State, and the absurdity of purely contemplative communities. The fiercest struggle was against the Jesuits who were suppressed in 1773. The development of the Redemptorist and Passionist Congregations was conditioned by this struggle and by opposition to religious life. Paul of the Cross never could make a foundation outside the Papal States. The numerical decrease of religious, due to state intervention and later to the Napoleonic suppression, imposed on religious and ecclesiastical authorities a period of salutary reconsideration. A basis more solid and more in keeping with the original charism of each institute was laid down for religious life in the nineteenth century.

Life in many convents and monasteries as a matter of fact did not always correspond fully to the founder's ideals, particularly in what concerned the common life. At times, this was not satisfactorily achieved either because of laxity in living one's vocation or because of the introduction of worldly privileges which proved detrimental to true fraternity. Such privileges were granted to men with academic degrees, to celebrated preachers, to professors, ex-professors, preachers and superiors. They were permitted special living quarters, private service of a lay brother, their own money, travelling privileges, etc. which were all contrary to brotherly communion. They frequently sought the protection of those in power and often lived outside the community. Even the small monasteries which Pope Innocent suppressed in the 1600s

continued to exist to the detriment of regular observance and apostolic efficiency. On the whole it must be said that religious vocations were more sincere than those of ecclesiastics; the choice was more exacting, especially in newly founded orders or reformed congregations, and community control discouraged all relaxation. Besides, the "mirage" of a career which enticed ecclesiastical vocations was entirely absent in those who entered monasteries.

As a heritage received from Trent, demands of and appeals to "observance" resounded throughout the 1700s from the more observant religious orders and from the Holy See. These were taken up again at the restoration after the Napoleonic suppression. For a better understanding of this effort, we append some of the elements characterizing it. (32)

3. The reform of religious and of the "observance"

In all religious institutes such phrases as "regular observance," "strict regular observance," "observance according to rule," etc. are warning signals of the danger of spiritual or institutional decadence.

a) The contents of the observance. When we speak of "observance" we mean that religious life in the Church is a valid evangelical testimony only if it is lived according to the rule approved by the Church. Only this fidelity to the rule guarantees the authenticity of religious life and preserves it from the whims of individuals who produce only confusion in a community. A peaceful community atmosphere hinges on the fidelity of all to the one rule which all promised to live by when they became part of the community. The rule is an unchangeable reference point in all its complex spiritual, ascetical and disciplinary dispositions. The possibility of changes in the juridical structure in given circumstances is admitted as it may help the community in its fidelity to the rule. The commitment to fostering the observance is not an appeal to a material fidelity to the rule, but an appeal to that ardent charity which animated the founder and the

first generation which gave life to the institute. What is desirable is a new manifestation of fervor in order to create an atmosphere that permits a deeper experience of God and its attestation in a communion of life as in the early Christian community. The task of reformers and superiors of communities, therefore, is to help religious to live in such a way as to obtain the gift of mystical union with God, thus becoming more authentic witnesses before all. The means for preparing one for this experience may be synthesized in the following:

Common life, that is, living in the solitude of a cloister, sharing the same roof, the same means of sustenance and spiritual goods.

Union with God, attained by prolonged prayer, not only liturgical, but also personal meditation which occupied a prominent place in the daily schedule and was prolonged throughout the day by a profound silence of adoration in God's presence.

Austere and poor life, as a means of imitating Christ's poverty, in detachment from the world and its maxims in order to dispose oneself for union with God and in reparation for the sins of the brethren.

Already present in monastic and mendicant orders, these elements were more strictly restored in the period of reform, both as a reaction to existing abuses and as a preventive of future ones. Some monasteries adopted the use of the grate and turnstile in the parlors. The administration of the few goods possessed and the acquisition of the necessities of life were entrusted to lay persons. Hence the syndic (*sindaco*) of early Passionist days. To avoid any dissipation of brothers on the quest, a lay person was chosen to collect alms for the community as was done by other pious institutes. In the beginning, Paul of the Cross did not want his religious begging, precisely to avoid distractions. Instead, he chose a person to collect what the people spontaneously offered for the Passionist community. His tendency was to build small, poor retreats provided with the bare essentials in

order primarily to focus attention on God and to testify to detachment from comforts which he considered unnecessary for true happiness. Houses were to be built in solitary places; a strict enclosure was imposed, not admitting, except for grave reasons, even persons of the same sex to the religious house, nor permitting the religious to leave the solitude save for apostolic motives.

Of little avail would it be to live within the convent if it were not a life lived in charity, sharing community goods, and in the sincere commitment to share the good effect of prayer. Hence the vigilance that a perfect uniformity in dwelling, in dress and in food be observed, abolishing all privileges whatsoever. From this loyal sharing of vocation in the same faith, and from a union of hearts not divided by privileges nor individualism tending to seek first place or the favor of the powerful, the community achieved communion in prayer, in the Eucharist and in fraternal joy.

b) Observance and austerity of life: All the manifestations of the austere penitential life at the time of the reform were impressive. The poverty of the reformed monks and friars was strict and loyally adhered to. They went barefoot in all seasons as an expression of penance, poverty and simplicity of life. Even their habits were made of the poorest cloth used by the poor of the region. A wooden plank or a sack of straw was their bed. Hair shirts and disciplines were used several times a week. Fasts were prolonged: from the Feast of the Holy Cross in September until Easter, and two or three times a week during the rest of the year. This became the common norm of the "observant." In some communities, "to fast" meant not only abstinence from meat but also from eggs and dairy products and on Fridays to be content with bread and water. These ascetical practices, animated by the fervor of charity, disposed the soul for contemplation and mystical union with God. To obtain this gift great importance was attached to methodical meditation. Prescriptions as to time devoted to meditation varied from three-quarters of an hour to two and one-half hours or more daily according to the institute. This meditation was prepared for and supported by prolonged reading of the sa-

cred scriptures and the lives of the saints. "By keeping the observance and by penetrating the meaning of the rule which they lived with ideal generosity, monks and friars rediscovered their authentic vocation and, thus, the charism of their founders animating the rule. Spiritual reading and meditation provided further assistance. Meditating the word of God that had inspired the charism of the founders, monks and friars discovered the profound motives and the intimate religious experience which would sustain their efforts in the daily living of the rule. In reading the works of the fathers of the Church and the writings of their founders, they discovered the traditional interpretation and the historical basis of the evangelical counsels, of community life and of the apostolate. Thus the 'observance,' as in every true Church reform, reflected its original source: the message of Christ, re-read and re-lived under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to conform one's own experience to it, despite any deviating influence." (33)

c) The problem of studies: In reformed religious life and in the new institutes which desired to live as "ob-servant", it was not easy to allot time to studies without exposing religious to the risks of laxity. The tendency which prevailed was that of a strict religious formation, either in the monasteries or in centers of reformed observance. Among the mendicants, when the principle of admitting some to degrees was accepted, the candidates, besides having intellectual endowments, had to be men of great fervor and virtue in order to guarantee a proper balance between fervent observant life, the sciences and apostolic zeal. This led to a process of selection among the students. Some were destined for academic degrees in those institutions created for this purpose, while the rest continued their formation in the ordinary houses studying Scripture, moral cases, liturgy, etc. in order to become proficient popular preachers and confessors.

d) The superior's role of animating: In order to maintain the observance and prevent relaxation, the new methodology of government entrusted to superiors a role of continuous animation in the review of life in chapters of faults. Major superiors made canonical visitations, meti-

culously inquiring whether the communities were observing the rule. They corrected, encouraged and published decrees to assure the keeping of the observance, and, at the same time, inspired interior attitudes of fervor and charity.

The foregoing remarks on the "observance" help us to understand the background of eighteenth century religious life and the preoccupations of superiors and formators who saw novitiate life being regulated by Clement VIII's constitutions on the one hand and, on the other, the fresh thrust toward renewal of Innocent X who had suppressed small monasteries. Paul of the Cross founded this kind of "observant" religious life with characteristic features distinguishing it from "non-observant" monasteries and convents. His concern was that Passionist religious - both men and women - be "observant," that they be faithful to the letter of the rule, and live it in a spirit of faith and charity. He wanted them to be austere and detached from the world in order to be absorbed into the mystery of God discovered in the Incarnate Word's human experience and death on the cross. They were to transmit it then to the poor and ignorant in a very simple style of preaching, teaching them to meditate upon it so as to grasp more thoroughly the motives of God's love at the root of their faith, and thus become capable of living in faith in the midst of a world attacking faith and disrupting Christian living.

F. INDIVIDUAL HERMITS

Hermits were to be found in many Italian dioceses in the 1700s. There were no bonds between them. Each, individually, would present himself to the bishop to request permission to dwell near some sanctuary in the country, or some hermitage, to care for it, to see to its upkeep, to quest for the needs of worship and for his own sustenance. The hermit thus living in solitude fulfilled his Christian life. The mere written permission of the bishop constituted anyone a hermit and gave him a share in ecclesiastical privilege. During this period many

hermits were to be found in central and southern Italy, but in the second half of the century their numbers decreased because of the struggle with state reformers who considered them loafers. The social background of these hermits was quite varied: some poor, some rich, some cultured, some clerics and even priests. Generally they did not belong to the locality but came from other regions or from foreign countries. They were well received by the people, who respected and willingly helped them because they took care of certain places dear to the hearts of the faithful of that district.

Church authorities and even the 1725 Roman Synod saw to it that the hermits led Christian lives, that they reported regularly to the parish to receive the sacraments and to maintain union with the pastor. The spirituality of the hermits was very elementary, possibly because of their limited religious education. Their influence on the people, withal, was positive as they kept up many holy places and helped people turn their thoughts to God. (34)

The first bishops who gave hospitality to Paul of the Cross and his brother John Baptist considered them hermits both on Monte Argentario and in Gaeta, and Paul himself affixed to his signature the word "hermit." Yet his living as a hermit was solely external, for the sake of episcopal authority who did not wish him to take any further steps in regard to founding the Congregation. But Paul clearly thought of himself as a religious and unequivocally tended towards the foundation of a new Congregation, not of hermits but of apostolic men. Paul may have had the idea of living alone only in the first stage of his inspiration to solitude and penance, independent of any foundation. This idea was made clearer in the summer of 1720. After that decisive event, he thought no more about an eremitic life, and he no longer viewed the elements of solitude and penance as pertaining to himself alone, but as a distinguishing feature of a religious life which would be lived together with others called to the same Congregation, that was characterized by a very clear charism and apostolic objective.

G. CATHOLICISM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In our effort to present an understanding of the complex movement of the ideas and tensions of the eighteenth century, we may have given the false impression of loss and menacing ruin. Certainly what gave way was the external structure of a society which considered itself Christian and which lived in a Christian framework. One entered and left that society by means of Christian rites - baptism, anointing, obsequies. It was not possible to exist officially except as a Christian. It was a civil obligation fulfilled by a certain number of actions which were socially binding. But who can say what was the intensity of personal faith and religious fervor in those times? In studying this period, one of the difficulties is precisely that of evaluating how deeply the Gospel message had penetrated the lives of the people.

The philosophy of the time in its various manifestations strove to create a new framework of life, another social structure. It criticized and ridiculed the weak points of the former structure, reducing everything to obscurantism. On the Catholic side the new tendencies were not judged for the values they contained or for their place in a Christian context. (35) An ongoing instruction of the masses of Christians was lacking, as well as a more adequate presentation of God's revelation of himself as Father, thus giving a greater sense of trust and joy to daily Christian life. What still prevailed was the fifteenth century image of a terrible God born of the religious anxieties of that time. (36) Church structures, however, were unprepared to offer such cultural reflection or renewed pastoral attitudes since the clergy was not competent by vocation, formation or religious sensitivity to Christianize the masses effectively, or re-examine its own structures, which were no longer serviceable to a growing society and were even harmful to the Church. (37)

Yet in this time the activity of popular missionaries like Leonard of Port Maurice, Alphonsus Liguori, Paul of the Cross and so many others in union with these vigorous charismatic personalities sought to reach each single person, particularly those of the masses in greater need.

These missionaries proclaimed to the people God's personal love as revealed in the human experience of Christ Jesus, the man-God. They desired that all trust in God, be converted and persevere not from motives of fear but of love. They wanted to open to everyone, even the illiterate, the way to intimate union with God through meditation.

A new Christianity developed around these men and the schools they created, with confessors and spiritual directors, bishops and priests who lived the experience of God and were inspired by the same sentiments. It was a Christianity of greater awareness and fulfillment. Recourse to their correspondence, diaries, and other documents is necessary to perceive how a majority of people in every walk of life lived their faith sincerely and expressed it in actions coherent with the Gospel. Perusing the letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, we come across cardinals like Crescenzi, Rezzonico, Ganganelli, Belluga, bishops such as Oldo, Cavalieri, Garagni, and others who lived fervent lives and fulfilled their duties with zeal. We find priests like Tuccinardi, Sardi, Cerruti, Suscioli, Sisti, Di Stefano, and others who had a great awareness of their vocation to the service of God and of the people. We come across couples like Fossi, Danei, Costantini, Ercolani, Frattini and Palomba who lived an intense Christian family spirituality and exerted a beneficial influence on their surroundings. There were women like Lucy Burlini, Agnes Grazi, Rose Calabresi, Theresa Danei, who lived consecrated lives in their own family circles, who were dedicated to their work but were also a support to many of their friends in leading Christian lives; and there were also nuns who led fervent religious lives with heroic charity. (38)

It must be admitted, therefore, that, notwithstanding the limitations and errors in pastoral methods, many of the clergy, religious and lay persons of all ranks were conscious of their faith, even though not always sufficiently enlightened. In such lacunae can be found some of the causes responsible for the nineteenth century Christian situation. (39)

Paul of the Cross, a witness to the contradictions of his century, to the attacks on Christianity from scholars and governments, a saddened spectator of the evils derived from deficient church structures, was convinced that he was being called by God to contribute towards the betterment of ecclesiastics and the people by placing before them the greatest revelation of God's infinite love as manifested in Christ's painful experience. That infinite love, "remembered" attentively, would move individuals and encourage them to experience in their own lives the same love and the same sentiments as Christ Jesus. (40)

FOOTNOTES

1. R. Guardin, La fine dell'epoca moderna (Brescia, 1959), p. 36.
2. S. Mandolfo, Linee di storia sociale del pensiero e dell'educazione dall'illuminismo ad oggi (Catania, 1974), pp. 18-19; cf. entire chapter; A. Prandi, "Chiesa e mondo cattolico," in Nuove questioni di storia moderna, II (Milano, 1964), pp. 1107-1108; G. Rudé, L'Europa del settecento, storia e cultura (Bari, 1974), pp. 228-229.
3. Mandolfo, op. cit., pp. 20-28; G. Ricuperati, "Il pensiero politico degli illuministi," in Storia delle idee politiche, economiche e sociali (Torino, 1975), vol. IV, 2, pp. 245-402.
4. Rudé, op. cit., ch. VI-VIII, XI; Ricuperati, op. cit.; Pietro Leopoldo, Relazione del governo della Toscana, vol. I (Firenze, 1969), pp. 163-244; P. Goubert, L'ancien regime; I poteri (Milano, 1976), pp. 357-362, 371-404, 478-479, 551, 586.
5. Cf. L. Dal Pane, Storia del lavoro in Italia: Dagli inizi del sec. XVIII al 1815 (Milano, 1958); E. Ronchetti, "Gli utilitaristi," ibid., pp. 531-596; Goubert, op. cit., pp. 509-550; Pietro Leopoldo, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 247-362.
6. G. Alberigo, Lo sviluppo della dottrina sui poteri nella chiesa universale: Momenti essenziali tra il XVI e il XIX secolo (Roma, 1964); T. Bertone, Il governo della Chiesa nel pensiero di Benedetto XIV (Roma, 1977), pp. 43-50, 114-119.
7. E. Preclin and E. Jarry, Le lotte politiche e dottrinali nei sec. XVII e XVIII (Torino, 1974); V.E. Giuntella, Roma nel settecento (Bologna, 1971), cf. ch. I; J. Delumeau, Il cattolicesimo dal XVI al XVIII secolo (Milano, 1978).
8. F. Giorgini, La Maremma Toscana nel settecento: Aspetti sociali e religiosi (S. Gabriele, TE, 1968), pp. 28-29.
9. Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 24-28; G. DeRosa, "L'emarginazione sociale in Calabria," in RSCI (1978), n. 13, pp. 18-19.
10. Cf. J.L. Flandrin, Famille: Parenté, maison, sexualité dans l'ancienne société (Paris, 1976), reviewed in RSSR (1977), n. 12, pp. 305-306.
11. For southern Italy cf. G. De Rosa, "L'emarginazione sociale in Calabria nel sec. XVIII: il problema degli esposti," in RSSR (1978), n. 13, pp. 5-29.

12. Giuntella, op. cit., pp. 66-67; for the wretchedly poor in Rome cf. V. Monachino, La carità cristiana in Roma (Bologna, 1968), pp. 214-218.

13. Pitré, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 216-319; Giuntella, op. cit., pp. 93-95, 141-143; Orlandi, op. cit., pp. 35-39, 239; Bonicelli, op. cit., pp. 50-79.

14. Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 260-262.

15. Besides the works cited in the previous notes, cf. G.M. Muzzarelli, "Un bilancio storiografico sui monti de pietà: 1956-1976," in RSCI (197?), pp. 165-183; La carità cristiana in Roma, pp. 226-231; A. DeSpirito, "La visita pastorale nel beneventano di V.M. Orsini," in RSSR (1976), n. 9, p. 251.

16. To works previously cited add: G. Pelliccia, "Educazione della donna in Roma nel '600," in Palestra del clero (1980), pp. 815-826; G.L. Masetti Zannini, Motivi storici della educazione femminile in Italia (1500-1600) (Bari, 1980).

17. Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 210-214.

18. Giorgini, ibid. p. 40, 214-216; on the father of Paul, see E. Zoffoli, S. Paolo della Croce: Storia Critica (Roma, 1963), vol. I, pp. 74-76, 81.

19. Let. II, 425; IV, 138-139; Bollettino 1924, pp. 368-369; Giammaria, Annali n. 572, 581, 739.

20. Preclin and Jarry, op. cit., pp. 80-84; Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 47-53, 135-139.

21. Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 53-55; F. Salimbeni, "La parrocchia del Mezzogiorno nell'età moderna e contemporanea," in RSSR (1977), n. 12, pp. 251-258; A. Cestaro, "Le strutture ecclesiastiche del Mezzogiorno del cinquecento all'età contemporanea," in op. cit., pp. 182-184.

22. It is necessary to elaborate statistics diocese by diocese to have exact numbers. Cf. A. Planica, "Chiesa e società nel '700 meridionale, vecchio e nuovo clero nel quadro della legislazione riformatrice" in RSSR (1975), n. 7-8, pp. 121-187. Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 78-79, 92-99.

23. G. De Rosa, "Pertinenze ecclesiastiche e santità nella storia sociale e religiosa della Basilicata dal XVIII al XIX secolo," in RSSR (1975), n. 7-8, pp. 17-31; cf also the authors cited in the preceding note.

24. Cestaro, "La struttura ecclesiastiche del mezzogiorno," in RSSR (1975), n. 7-8, pp. 87-90; Processi IV, 299-300; Let. II, 687.

25. Giuntella, op. cit., pp. 148-150; Giorgini, op. cit., 206-209; Bonicelli, op. cit., pp. 161-167.

26. S. Marino, "La situazione economico-religiosa italiana nelle risposte al questionario sulla riduzione delle feste di precetto del 1742," in RSCI (1977), pp. 454-481.
27. Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 161-219.
28. Bonicelli, op. cit., pp. 53-69. For a study on pilgrims and pilgrimages cf. R. Oursel, Pellegrini del Medio evo (Milano, 1979). For parochial missions, cf. Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 220-254.
29. J. Leclercq and F. Cubelli, "Clausura," in Diz. Ist. Perf., vol. II, col. 1166-1178.
30. A. De'Liguori, Selva di materie predicabili ed istruttive (Napoli, 1760), pp. 643-644.
31. Pelliccia, "Educazione della donna in Roma nel '600," in Palestra del clero (1980), pp. 854-858; Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 146-155.
32. Pitré, op. cit., vol II, 131-149; Preclin and Jarry, op. cit., pp. 88-92; Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 140-145.
33. M. Fois, "L'osservanza come espressione della Chiesa sempre renovanda," in Problemi di storia della Chiesa nei sec. XV-XVII (Napoli, 1979), p. 92. Cf. his entire treatment as background for this section.
34. F. Ferrero, "Eremitismo individuale in occidente," in Diz. Ist. Perf., vol. III, col. 1246-1258. Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 156-160.
35. Cf. A. Rotondo, L'censura ecclesiastica e la cultura (Torino, 1974); A. Prandi, Cristianesimo offeso e difeso (Bologna, 1975).
36. Cf. J. Dulumeau, Il cattolicesimo dal XVI al XVIII sec. (Milano, 1975), p. 284.
37. Let. II, 229, 231.
38. Zoffoli, op. cit., III, pp. 92-94, presents a list of people who in the 1700s lived the Gospel loyally and whose causes for beatification are in process. Cf. also G. De Sanctis, Anna Maria Massari-Danei: Madre di Santi (Roma, 1971).
39. Preclin and Jarry, op. cit., pp. 79-80; N. Perin, "Pietà popolare e mentalità religiosa," in RSSR (1976), n. 9, pp. 317-375; A. Prandi, "Italie au 18 siecle, in Dictionnaire de spiritualité, vol. VII/2, col. 2258-2266.
40. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione della Passione di Gesu: Cos'è e cosa vuole (Roma, 1978), notizia '47, n. 1-2.

Chapter II

ORIGIN OF THE CONGREGATION INSPIRATION AND CHARISM

A. THE FOUNDER AND HIS VOCATION

1. Physical aspect and character

Paul Danei was born in Ovada on January 3, 1694, and died in Rome on October 18, 1775. The second of fifteen children of Luke Danei and Anna Marie Massari, he was the eldest of the six who survived infant mortality. Strongly built, over five and a half feet in height, with a long face and aquiline nose, black piercing eyes, a strong, broad forehead, a thick head of hair combed back as was the custom then, and a sonorous voice, Paul presented an imposing appearance joined to a courteous and respectable social bearing. (1) Strambi describes him as a man of "both grave and majestic appearance, amiable, tall of stature, of a serene and naturally modest countenance, bright and calm eyes, sonorous and penetrating voice, and manners full of affability and respect yet without affectation; his temperament was sanguine and very sensitive." Other witnesses agree with this description and the painters Conca and Della Porta portray him in like manner. (2) From his parents he inherited a robust constitution and longevity. His father lived to be sixty-nine and his mother, despite her fifteen pregnancies, reached seventy-four. Of the surviving children, Catherine lived to be thirty-five, John Baptist died at seventy, Paul was over eighty-one, Anthony eighty-two, Joseph eighty-four and Theresa eighty-five. When we consider the well-known difficulties of the times, these are certainly respectable ages.

Up to 1719 Paul was not known to have suffered any serious ailment. However, during that year he did become seriously ill. It is probable that the excessive penances to which he submitted himself after what he called his

"conversion" were partly responsible. He fully recovered from this sickness. The first indication of malaria appeared in the autumn of 1727 with a fever that prostrated him in Rome on his return from Castellazzo after his father's death. This intermittent fever never completely left him, notwithstanding his care to avoid traveling through the marshes in the more dangerous months. Another ailment which intermittently accompanied him throughout his life was sciatica which he contracted in 1741. His journeys, often on icy ground and in freezing winds, aggravated this condition and obliged him at times to take to his bed, as happened in 1745. Another uncomfortable malady he frequently experienced was heart palpitations which appeared in violent form in February 1744. Over the years he also suffered from inflammation of the eyes, deafness, dizziness, heaviness of head, lack of appetite and skin trouble. From 1767 onwards his health was uncertain. He was obliged to forego long journeys and delegate to other religious his duties as visitor. The division of the Congregation into provinces in 1769 pleased him because he was convinced of the impossibility of keeping up regular contact with his religious. Yet, despite his physical sufferings, his work continued and he kept in touch by correspondence with the personnel and affairs of the Congregation. At times, the demands of his office and apostolic work made him face limited journeys. Till the very end he was fully alert to what was going on around him, evaluating events critically in order to form his judgments and decisions.

His attitude towards suffering was one of patience and constancy in keeping up his work as founder, apostle and head of the Congregation. To make his pains more bearable he sang spiritual songs or the Litany of Our Lady. (3) In all simplicity and without affectation he had recourse to medicine and took all necessary or advisable precautions, yet never relented in fulfilling his duties. He passed on to his religious this concern for one's health, dictating norms providing that the same attention and care be given to all, whether priests or brothers, superiors or subjects. He reduced some of the penitential practices characteristic of the beginnings of his conversion, but always held to an austerity whose ri-

gor took into account the need to keep strong in order to cope with a strenuous apostolate and an intense community life. His rule instructed the religious not to allow themselves to be carried away by indiscreet fervor and did not permit them to perform penances other than those prescribed, and never without the specific approval of the superior "in order not to lose the merit of obedience or injure their health to the detriment of the observance." (4)

Besides holiness and physical vigor he possessed "a unique vivacity and shrewdness." (5) He was endowed with a most retentive memory, a keen intelligence capable of speculation and critical penetration, but more inclined to be practical. (6) Thanks to these intellectual gifts he was able to acquire a good general education and a sufficiently deep knowledge of dogmatic and moral theology. Sustained by supernatural gifts and mystical experiences, he could delve into the depths of spiritual theology with balance and penetration, yet remain fully attuned to the entire Christian mystery.

Witnesses agree in describing his character as "fiery and ardent" or "sanguine and very sensitive." (7) Although naturally inclined to anger and excitement, he always retained self-control, and the effort it cost him was at times visible to others. (8) This tendency occasionally showed itself in the way he raised his voice, which made him appear somewhat resentful though he was not so. It was a result of his desire to improve things, to correct, or to foster God's glory. Rose Calabresi recalls: "He (Father Paul) used to tell me that in his grave internal afflictions a loud word would sometimes escape him, due to his natural ardor and high voice, and, occasionally, either because he was anguished or because he wanted promptly done what was for the glory of God, these things would happen. Later, reflecting on what had happened and fearing he had annoyed someone, he felt so much remorse, sorrow and compassion that he begged pardon." (9) By temperament he loved sincerity and detested all pretense. When, however, he had to intervene, he did so with good grace but without excessive beating around the bush and, due to his sanguine tem-

perament, his face would become flushed. This, added to his normally high-pitched voice, would sometimes alarm others. (10)

It was not only his sensitivity that made the founder feel all events intensely. It was also his effort to do things with care and great presence of mind, and his conviction that every action would, or would not, cooperate with the plan of salvation wrought by the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. From a psychological point of view, this caused him intense suffering as can be seen by an attentive perusal of his letters. His soul quivers at every event: he is possessed of fear, of joy, of alternating sentiments and states of mind which leave him at times full of enthusiasm, at other times full of fear, but always realistic with christian insight. He could keep his balance - thanks to his common sense, his courage when faced with risks, his trust in persons, his efforts to seek the most practical means to succeed in his undertakings, his capacity for cultivating good and well-chosen social relations, and above all to his full and trustful surrender to God's loving providence revealed in the Passion of Christ. This sensitivity and emotion, united to the spiritual trials which afflicted him for many years, cast him at times subject to a spell of interior depression which he combatted with great energy in order to be able to deal with others calmly. He himself confessed this state of mind to Father John Mary: "Since I have some free time today, on my knees I must beg your pardon if at times I pen some harsh words, ill-sounding and full of melancholy and depression, because, believe me, I am in a most deplorable state. God preserve all the world from such a state. But I deserve this, and it is a miracle if I am not totally lost. I find it difficult to put up with myself and there are days - nearly always - when I don't know how to bear with myself. Yet still with great fatigue I make an effort to bear with others, but I always fail." (11)

Witnesses both in the congregation and outside it agree unanimously in testifying to what Fr. Joseph Suscioli said: "Though inclined to anger by temperament, Paul was nevertheless always affable, well-mannered, and

even-tempered on all occasions." Fr. Valentine presents him as "a most amiable man in his manners, ravishing the hearts of all those with whom he came in contact by his most gentle and exceedingly sweet way of dealing with them." (12) He knew how to cultivate and maintain social relations with everybody, relations marked by serenity, esteem, gratitude, and affability.

An officer from the garriston state of Orbetello, Joseph Rocchi, held that the great "affability and gentleness" of the founder accounted for so many seeking him for confession. (13) Sister Mary Crucified Costantini confirms "that he was affable with everyone, adapting himself equally to choir sisters and lay sisters; and I have heard eulogies of him on this point from the poor people who came to our convent when I was in charge of the parlor." (14) Fr. John Lucattini admired in Paul "an affability and gentleness towards all classes, high or low, rich or poor, and a great sense of gratitude for even the slightest favor done him." (15) Quotations could be endless; everyone was deeply moved by his courtesy, good breeding, and respect devoid of all affectation or servility. These character traits, while giving him balance and capacity for interpersonal relationships, were reflected within the Congregation. He always inculcated sincerity, affability and gentle relations, and demanded these qualities especially of superiors.

Another aspect of his character was his promptness in fulfilling the duties of his office. He was speedy in transacting business but never precipitous. To this trait he attributed his ability to bring to a happy conclusion the laborious work of the foundation, to carry on his abundant correspondence, and to maintain contact with people without neglecting prayer or the apostolate. (16) He demanded of his religious a similar promptness united to a prudent discernment as one aspect of fraternal life and of solicitude for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Fr. Joseph Claris recalls: "When he had come to a mature decision, the haste with which he expected its fulfillment is indescribable; among us everyone remembers this promptness." (17) To the superiors of the Congregation he would say: "Let the rector be very brief in conversing

with seculars and speedily dispatch all affairs." (18) His desire was that the requests of penitents in our churches be attended to promptly but always respecting the community duties of our religious. (19) These characteristic traits portray a man in whom a deep mystical experience, and an assiduous practice of austerity and asceticism were wedded to a humaneness in all his social contacts and in his dealings with the religious and the people. These traits fascinated everyone and made for a serene life together.

2. His family environment and its influence on Paul's character

His family circle provided important support in the development of Paul's natural gifts. A whole set of circumstances in his life gave him many practical experiences: journeys, business dealings and other contacts with people in which he began to understand the workings of the human soul in both men and women. These experiences developed in him certain attitudes of compassion, of understanding the needs of others, of ease in treating women and the subject of motherhood, of knowing how to accept things and events, and an appreciation of the peace and communion of the family environment and of religious communities which he considered the supreme good to be safeguarded at all costs.

The family surroundings in Paul's youth up to 1720 were serene. They were founded on the mutually loyal fidelity of his parents and animated by a deep faith in God. Luke Danei (1659-1727) and Anna Marie Massari (1672-1746) were married on January 6, 1692, in Ovada. Paul's youth was spent beside his mother, who was exhausted by thirteen other pregnancies and pained by the loss of nine of her children. While Paul helped his father carry on his business which was the only source of income, he became more and more aware of his mother's sacrifice. (20)

His mother's courage and peace, derived from the thought of Christ crucified, was instilled in young Paul.

The family home, though filled with the shouting of the little ones, was a place of peace and austerity as a result of the frequent visits of death, on the one hand, and the type of education imparted by the parents, on the other. The parents dreaded evil companions and hence were reluctant to allow their sons and daughters to join the flocks of other children. Neither were they prone to permit games, particularly card-playing, as at that time it was closely allied to drinking among young people, wasting money, and creating difficulties for their families. By word and example the parents instilled in their children a sense of deep faith in God, a great love for Jesus crucified, the ideal of the lives of the saints, uprightness of life, solidarity among the members of the family and relations, and care for the poor. Economic conditions and the region's political situation obliged the Danei family to move many times between 1701 and 1717, with serious discomfort for all but especially for his mother. For Paul this meant greater difficulty in pursuing a regular course of studies, but it permitted him to come in contact with different towns and cities and hence to cultivate a greater broad-mindedness - the faculty of appreciating the qualities and the limitations of diverse "nationalities" - and to acquire that social ease which later enabled him to approach people of every region and every social rank.

Between 1692 and 1710, his mother lived in an almost continuous state of pregnancy, and then after a respite of nine years she was pregnant again in 1720 for the last time. In willingness to give life she found herself constantly at grips with death, and this impressed in Paul and his surviving brothers and sisters a deep sense of the seriousness and the uncertainty of life. Three of them became priests, Paul, John Baptist and Anthony; and the other three, Joseph, Theresa and Catherine, remained single.

During this period Paul kept up his studies as far as the different places where he lived offered him an opportunity. He did his grammar school work more or less regularly with the Carmelites in Cremolino, and perhaps with the Dominicans in Ovada. It seems certain also that

he took courses as a day student in the seminary of Genoa during the five years his family lived in that diocese. Privately he read books he found in the libraries of his priest-uncles or in those of the Confraternity of the Annunciation, and acquired a fair knowledge of the works of Saint Francis de Sales.

Before his ordination to the priesthood he studied more regularly, and later he always continued to dedicate himself to study of the sacred scriptures and the works of theologians on spiritual and moral theology and direction of souls. He himself more than once referred to this whole-hearted dedication to study. Writing to Canon Cerruti, his one-time spiritual director in Alessandria, he said: "God who chooses the weak and stupid of this world, has deigned to give me as an alms some ability for learning (this I say for your guidance). He has given me the capacity to prepare sermons, instructions, etc., and to study moral theology for confessions. I have also been engaged in other studies which I have made an effort to continue as much as possible." (21) By means of his intellectual endowments and his dedication to study, even with limited time, Paul, docile to the gifts of the spirit of wisdom, acquired a good education in spiritual and mystical theology, as well as knowledge of human and historical sciences which made his conversation agreeable and instructive.

3. The discovery of Paul's vocation: 1713-1720

What has been said up to now gives a good portrait of the founder until the time he began that spiritual experience which was to make him gradually aware both of his vocation as founder and of the particular charism which he must later communicate to the future Congregation. The introduction with which Paul himself prefaced the 1720 rule given to his bishop together with his "diary" (an account of his forty-day retreat in Castellazzo) will help us to understand this spiritual evolution. Keeping in mind Paul's personal human qualities, his Christian sincerity, and his ardent desire that the bishop point out clearly the path he must follow, we can view

this document as a mirror in which Paul soberly and humbly reflects what he sees in himself. All this assures us of the truthfulness of the document and the validity of his affirmations which we will use as a basis for the historical reconstruction of those years and of the maturing process of his awareness as founder. (22)

a. **"My most loving God has converted me to penance":
1713**

Paul was living with his family in the state of Genoa, probably in Campo Ligure, when one day towards the middle of 1713 (23) he heard in his parish church a simple sermon, "a familiar talk", which moved him deeply. A never-before-experienced interior light nearly blinded him and he acquired a quasi-experiential knowledge of the ineffable reality of God. He perceived God as a Person whose all-powerful greatness hovers over him and loves him personally. He experienced God as "his" God, infinitely great, while he himself was very insignificant. In that glowing light he viewed his own life as unworthy of God; he felt an immense sorrow overwhelm him and proposed "to give himself up to a holy and perfect life." Following this event, which he called his "conversion," Paul made a general confession with deepest contrition for his faults, manifested by violently striking his breast with a stone. Paul felt God as his "Supreme Good," his "beloved Good," and also simply as "the Abyss of Greatness," "the Infinite," the "Eternal," "the Im-mense," "the Infinite Good," not as an abstraction of a distant being but as the mystery of a person deeply within him to whom he felt totally bound. His adherence to God was no longer an intellectual act, but a living in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. (24)

This spiritual conversion worked in Paul a profound interior transformation which was true and lasting, and it initiated him into the mystical life and the grace of enlightenment by which God was to manifest his will regarding the Congregation. Paul continued to work for his family, but now in a conscious and constant communion with "his" God, courageously overcoming a period of great doubt and temptation against faith. He increased the time

dedicated to prayer and to corporal penances, which, at times, might perhaps seem excessive. Such penances, however, were the fruit of the grace of conversion by which salvation was no longer perceived as a reality of faith demanding a loving adherence, but as an interior event in which he felt himself totally and intimately involved: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (25)

b. Desire for martyrdom; crusader: 1715-1716

On December 8, 1714 the Turks declared war on Venice and the Christian West. Confronted by this, Clement XI sought to unite the Christian princes in helping Venice. On May 31, 1715 he proclaimed an extraordinary penitential jubilee and encouraged Christians to enroll as volunteer crusaders under Venetian leadership. In the fervor of his conversion, Paul welcomed the invitation, and was filled with the desire to shed his blood in defense of the faith and of all who believed in Christ. He was certain that John Baptist, now 20, could take his place in helping the family. It was probably at the end of 1715 that he left for Crema, the enrollment center for the volunteer crusaders. But while there, on the Thursday before Lent, February 20, 1716 during the Forty Hours adoration in one of the churches, an inner voice assured him that he was not called to that type of service for Christians and the Catholic faith. He took his leave, fully certain that armed defense was not the service he was called to, but still uncertain as to which service was to be his. He returned to his family but almost immediately left for Novello (Cuneo), where he lodged with a childless couple till the end of 1716. From here he moved into the diocese of Tortona but the exact place is not known. Finally, sometime in 1718, he returned to Castellazzo, fulfilling the desire of his uncle, Fr. Christopher, who wished to make him his heir. The reason for Paul's residence in Novello and in the diocese of Tortona must have been to attend to some family business, for he later wrote: "I was employed in duties of charity in order to assist my parents." (26) Also he journeyed at times to Genoa as will be seen later. While his acceptance of the invitation to the crusade shows his growing

understanding of the cross of Jesus as something concerning him personally, it also signified a development in his awareness of the Church as a mother whose voice must be faithfully received and obeyed even to the point of self-sacrifice because it is the very voice of Christ himself. This principle is to be found throughout Paul's whole life.

c. "In solitude, in profound poverty, to lead a penitential life": 1717

In one of his journeys to Genoa in 1717, while passing by Sestri, Paul lifted his eyes, as he had done so often before, to the little chapel of our Lady on the solitary heights of Gazzo. On that occasion he felt "his heart moved by the desire for that solitude." His duties towards his own family did not allow him to fulfill the desire but the inspiration never left him. By degrees as this desire became more "intense," it was no longer directed towards "a particular" geographical solitude, but rather to "solitude" itself wherever it might be. Paul felt certain of what he perceived because "my dear God gives me these inspirations with great peace of soul."

"After some time," possibly towards the end of 1717 when his desire for solitude was on the increase, "I had the idea of wearing a poor black tunic of the ordinary coarse wool fabric found in these parts, of going bare-foot, of living in radical poverty - in short, by God's grace, of leading a penitential life." He felt impelled to satisfy this inspiration without reference to any particular place. The important thing was "to withdraw into solitude either there or anywhere else...in response to God's loving invitation, for in his infinite goodness he was calling me to leave the world."

Paul understood that he was not to be merely a fervent Christian within the family circle, but that he must retire from the world either in a hermitage or in an existing religious order. Hence he began to search for a suitable way to free himself from the duty of helping his family "in order to go into solitude" as he himself wrote. To be the founder of a new religious order did not enter

his mind at this time. But what did penetrate into his very soul was the pressing demand of what was to be a constitutive element of the future Congregation: "to lead a penitential life." This expression within the context of the spiritual tradition of his time meant:

- withdrawing into solitude, apart from the company of others, in order to gain a better experience of God; living a life of austerity, such as wearing unrefined woolen clothes, excluding linen, going barefoot, eating less food and fasting frequently, using hair-shirts, taking the discipline, sleeping on a simple, poor bed and frequently on the floor; wearing black clothing as a sign of mourning for one's own sins; and in remembrance of the death of Jesus which was caused by sin; possessing nothing, that is, becoming free and austere as John the Baptist, the unsurpassed model of austerity and penance. (27) It was in this sense that Paul clearly understood the traditional meaning of to "lead a penitential life" when he expressed his desire for:
- withdrawing into solitude;
- wearing a poor tunic, black in color and of ordinary coarse wool;
- going barefoot;
- living in "radical poverty," possessing nothing, asking for nothing.

This understanding was to enter into the spirituality of the Congregation, later expressed in Paul's own words: "The spirit of the Congregation is one of solitude and penance." (28)

While still living in the diocese of Tortona, Paul intensified his life of prayer and penance but continued to help his family. The inspiration which "never again left my heart" was his secret alone, communicated perhaps only to his spiritual director. Who his director then was is not known. It is probable that he already knew

the renowned Capuchin, Father Columban.

d. "Gather companions...to promote the fear of God"

Towards the end of 1717 or early 1718, while Paul sought to settle the family situation so as to withdraw into solitude or enter some existing institute, he felt "another inspiration to gather companions who would live together in unity to promote the fear of God in souls (this was my main wish)." It was an answer to his state of uncertainty regarding the future: "I did not know what God wanted of me, so for this reason I did not think of anything further, but tried to free myself from household matters so as to withdraw from them later on."

Paul began to understand that he was not to enter an existing institute, but perhaps he still did not fully grasp the meaning of "to gather companions who would live together in unity." Would it perhaps not be sufficient to form a group of companions committed to a more radical living of the Gospel and helping their neighbors in living a more Christian life? Possibly by advice of his spiritual director, Paul prudently attached little importance to this voice: "Although I paid no attention to the idea of gathering companions, it always remained in my heart." He continued attending to business in order to help his family. Meanwhile Fr. Christopher, alone in Castellazzo and perhaps ill (he died in November 1718) called Paul to his home in order to make him his heir. According to Sardi's testimony, Paul moved to Castellazzo before his family did and, while there, contracted a serious leg infection. His mother and other members of the family came from Ovada to assist him. The same Sardi tells of an episode during Paul's illness which he says "was confirmed by his mother and others who were always by his side." Paul, "in moments of very high fever uttered indecent words and even horrid blasphemies not only against the saints but also against the most holy names of Jesus and Mary. When he recovered and his mother and other friends told him about this, he said: 'Well, it is only just that I should now exalt and praise these names that I have insulted and blasphemed during my illness'." (29) Was this occurrence a reflection of the tremendous

interior sufferings Paul experienced at a time when he was anxiously pondering his eternal salvation? Or had he, as some think, a vision of hell, experiencing in some degree the pain of loss, that is, the separation from God, whom he already knew and felt to be "his Supreme Good?" It is true that in the future he was to speak on hell and its tremendous reality with such vividness as to terrify both himself and his audience. And the name of Jesus branded on his chest - could it not be interpreted as an act of reparation, or was it simply the gesture of a lover for him who was his "All?"

Fr. Christopher, his uncle, made clear to Paul his desire to name him his heir on condition that he contract marriage and preserve the family surname. The mentality of the time concerning heredity favored the first-born male in order to avoid dividing the family property. Paul, consistently inspired to a penitential life, "renounced all the inheritance in favor of his brothers and dedicated himself entirely to God's service." (30) The inheritance must have been a great help to the family because Paul could now more freely dispose of himself and his time. Otherwise we could not explain the long hours dedicated to prayer, participating in several Masses, fasting and harsh penances, works of mercy, visiting the sick, teaching catechism, animating groups of young men devoted to prayer and good works. (31)

e. The definitive enlightenment: summer 1720

During 1718 Paul's desire for solitude increased while the inspiration to gather companions persisted in his heart. (32) But a new experience awaited him: an inner vision which brought new light and moved him to see more clearly the designs of God on his life. One summer day in 1720, during "the grain harvest time," after having prayed long and with great recollection after communion in the Capuchin church, Paul was on his way home. When he came to a street corner to turn towards his home, "I was raised up in God in the deepest recollection with complete forgetfulness of all else and with great interior peace. At this moment I saw myself clothed in a long black garment with a white cross on my

breast, and below the cross the holy name of Jesus was written in white letters. At that instant I heard these very words spoken to me: 'This signifies how pure and spotless that heart should be which must bear the holy name of Jesus graven upon it.' On seeing and hearing this I began to weep and then the vision ended." (33)

The symbolic language of the habit and the "sign" which adorned it could very easily be understood by Paul: in the mentality and religious culture of the age this meant a religious institute and its particular spirituality.

There was a further inner vision, whether the same day or some days later we do not know. (34) Paul himself describes it: "Shortly afterwards I saw in spirit the tunic presented to me with the holy name of Jesus and the cross all in white, but the tunic was black. I pressed it joyfully to my heart." This third interior vision assured Paul that his life must be lived within the context of the significance of the black tunic and of that "sign" with the cross and the name of Jesus. At the same time he experienced an interior certitude that it was God himself who was acting and calling. He affirmed that he saw no external images or "any bodily form as if it were a man; no, but I saw it in God! The soul knows that it is God because he makes it understand this through interior movements of the heart and infused knowledge in the mind." He stressed that "In spirit I saw myself vested....In spirit I saw the tunic presented to me;" hence, positively excluding any external images or apparitions. From this it can be inferred that one should not pay too much attention to a certain tradition which speaks of a visible appearance of Our Lady dressed in the habit of the future Congregation or handing the habit to Paul. Father John Mary declared that Paul confided to him that "he accepted and understood the presence of the Blessed Virgin but did not see her with his bodily eyes." (35) There is no reason to doubt the mediating presence of Mary in these circumstances which were so decisive for Paul and for the good of the Church. Yet Paul has been careful to let us know that his decision to found the

Congregation was an act of obedience to a precise and clear inspiration or divine light approved by the Church.

The first generation of Passionists was aware that the Congregation and its particular spirit were the outcome of an explicit divine inspiration. Fr. Valentine Bizzarri used to recall that when Paul visited the students, "he sought to make known to them that the foundation was entirely the work of God and he encouraged us to place our confidence in him since all things are possible for those who trust in God. He frequently exhorted us to be zealous in the practice of virtue and instilled in us the desire to persevere in the Institute we had embraced." (36)

Brother Francis Franceschi declared that "Paul had a special revelation from God to found" the Passionist Congregation. Later he also revealed that some of the older religious spoke of a vision of our Lady which they knew of from Sardi's writings. His testimony emphasized that "Paul reminded us all that he wore mourning in order to keep uninterrupted the memory of the Divine Redeemer who died for us." Presenting the Congregation to his friends, Paul himself clearly recalled the interior inspirations without any reference to visions: "Our most merciful God in his infinite goodness granted strong and gentle inspirations to establish this poor Congregation in the Church." (37)

After the definitive interior inspiration experienced in the summer of 1720, Paul was able to unite all his previous inspirations: thus solitude, poverty, the gathering of companions were all symbolized by the black tunic and the "sign;" and these were meant to keep alive the "continuous memory" of the Passion and death of Jesus. He wrote: "After these visions of the tunic and the sign, God gave me a stronger, more compelling desire to gather companions and, with the approval of Holy Mother Church, to found a congregation called 'The Poor of Jesus.' After this God permanently infused into my soul the form of the holy rule to be observed by the Poor of Jesus and by me." (38)

There is no doubt that for Paul, "to gather companions" meant founding a new Congregation with a title evoking penance: "the Poor of Jesus," but whose spirit and purpose would center on the Passion of Jesus. "The main reason for dressing in black (according to the special inspiration given me by God) is to mourn in memory of the Passion and death of Jesus, so that we never neglect to keep within us a continuous and sorrowful remembrance." It is also clear that in the expression "to promote the holy fear of God" there is a particular emphasis which justifies the foundation of a new Congregation, though the pastoral means to achieve this end in their initial formulation appeared rather general. In fact the religious must keep a remembrance of the Passion of Jesus and promote it particularly by teaching the people how to meditate on it: "Each one of the poor of Jesus must strive to instill in everyone the pious meditation of the sufferings of our most gentle Jesus." (39)

The process clarifying Paul's particular vocation in the Church was by that time complete. He himself was careful to point out its stages in order to aid the bishop in forming an objective judgment of God's workings. He felt himself totally launched into the mystery of the Passion and death of Jesus as the definitive moment of the revelation of God's loving mercy and of the tragic reality of sin. At the same time he was made to understand the dangers which in his time were a menace to faith because of the influence of various currents of thought, the anti-christian activities of sects and governments, and the mediocrity of so many priests and religious who were harming the mission of the Church. And the cause of all this was the forgetfulness of how much God loves the human person to the point of giving the life of his Incarnate Word. "The great Father of mercies has been pleased to raise up a new order or institute in his holy Church at this pitiable and distressing time when we now see openly at work every kind of iniquity, with harm also to our faith which is keenly affected in many areas of Christianity. The world is sliding into a profound forgetfulness of the most bitter sufferings Jesus Christ our true Good endured out of love, while the memory of his

most holy Passion is practically extinct in the faithful." (40) It can be said that, for Paul, the individual's capital sin and the greatest risk for the ecclesial community was forgetfulness of God's love shown in the Passion of Jesus. The new contribution of the Congregation was to testify by its lifestyle, by the habit, especially the "sign," and by teaching meditation upon the memory of the Passion of Jesus as "the most efficacious means for obtaining every good." (41)

The truthfulness of what went on in Paul's soul can be inferred also from his sincere desire of submitting himself to the examination and approval of the Church: "I defer to the judgment of my superiors, submitting to whatever they decide under the grace of the Holy Spirit....In all I submit to the judgment of my superiors." (42)

f. Discernment and authenticity of the inspiration to found the Congregation

In his early years, Paul made an initial discernment with the help of his spiritual directors. After his confession to the parish priest at the time of his "conversion" and before returning to Castellazzo, he must have also taken counsel of Fr. Columban of Genoa. In fact, when writing to Bishop Gattinara on November 25, 1720, this religious stated that he had known Paul for several years. In Castellazzo he turned for help to one of the parish priests who submitted Paul's spirituality to many tests, but without affording him any positive help. For a brief period he was directed by Fr. Jerome of Tortona, a Capuchin, and then was under the direction of the penitentiary of the cathedral of Alessandria, Canon Policarp Cerruti. Canon Cerruti submitted Paul to severe tests, particularly regarding the "lights," and he obliged Paul to return to a beginner's method of prayer. But on the whole the Canon succeeded in understanding and helping him. Bonds of friendship and gratitude united Paul to Cerruti, who always trusted him and sent him various young postulants. (43) It appears to have been Cerruti who counseled Paul to present himself to the Barnabite bishop, Bishop Francis M. Arborio di Gattinara. Before

doing so Paul seems to have traveled to Ponte Decimo to meet with Fr. Columban again, "who was well informed of his spirit and conduct and by whom he was counseled to make every effort and study all the means necessary to carry out his holy vocation and to respond to the heavenly inspirations. Hence on his return to Castellazzo he presented himself almost immediately to the bishop. Thus reads the testimony of Paul Sardi, who closely followed his friend's activities. (44) Paul made a general confession to the bishop, "then he gave him a detailed account of all the lights the Lord had given him." Bishop Gattinara heard him attentively, but for the sake of greater prudence he "would have him seek counsel from the most learned and pious men in those parts." (45) At last, sufficiently satisfied as to the credibility of Paul's affirmations, the bishop consented to clothe Paul in the black penitential tunic. The bishop's decision was probably made known to Paul towards the end of October or at the beginning of November. The founder desired to be vested on November 21st, dedicated to the memory of our Lady's Presentation, that he be sustained by her maternal protection in his consecration to God. However, since the 22nd fell on a Friday, he preferred to postpone the ceremony to that day as being more significant for the purpose of dedicating himself to remember and mourn the Passion of Jesus.

4. Paul's vestition and the historic beginning of the Congregation: November 22, 1720

Back in Castellazzo Paul broke the news of his decision to his parents, brothers and sisters and took leave of them. Despite their deep religiosity the last days were heart-rending for all, including Paul himself. The family needs, though alleviated by Fr. Christopher's inheritance, were by no means solved. Another baby girl had been added to the family and everything still seemed to require Paul's presence and work. He himself recalled those interior tensions some 17 years later, recounting them to young Appiani (later Father Francis Anthony) when encouraging him to leave his parents: "Oh, if you only knew the trials that I myself experienced before embracing the kind of life I now lead! The devil suggested

great fears to me. I was touched with compassion for my parents whom I was leaving in great poverty, and whose every hope in this world rested on me. I experienced interior desolation, depression, doubts. It seemed to me that I would never be able to persevere in my vocation. The devil suggested to me that I was deceived, that I could serve God in some other way, that this was no kind of life for me, etc., and other things that I pass over in silence. To crown my misfortune, all devotion had vanished. I felt dry and was tried in every way. Even the sound of the church bells disturbed me. Everyone seemed happy except me! I can never hope to explain those fierce assaults, and I was more strongly attacked by them when I was about to be vested in the habit and to leave my poor home." (46)

Paul had bought the coarse cloth which was used by the poor of Genoa. He had dyed it black in order to be faithful to the significance he had understood in spirit. (47)

On the 21st he visited the churches of Castellazzo, took leave of his friends and, at home in the evening after the usual family rosary, on his knees "begged pardon of all the family," then recited the *Te Deum* and the *Miserere*. (48) Of the family members, only John Baptist who shared Paul's sentiments, was serene and joyful.

The early morning of November 22nd saw Paul leaving for Castellazzo alone, taking with him only the tunic for his vestition and a breviary. In the afternoon in his private chapel, Bishop Gattinara blessed the tunic and vested Paul, who was fully aware that he was beginning to respond to the inspirations he had received concerning the new Passionist religious family, which precisely on that late afternoon humbly entered into the history of the Church.

The bishop, nevertheless, although vesting Paul in the habit, seems to have had no intention of establishing a new foundation. As a matter of fact he commanded Paul to withdraw into solitude, to take note of what went on within his spirit and put in writing the rules he would

give the Congregation, so that he could examine and decide what would happen in the future. Bishop Gattinara considered Paul a simple Christian dressed in a "black penitential tunic," (as he later said in his letters of recommendation), someone more or less resembling a hermit, and he never consented to others joining him to start a community. (49)

That very evening of his vestition, Paul returned to Castellazzo and went directly to the church of Saints Charles and Ann, settling down in a poor room which was attached to the church.

5. Forty days' mystical experience and the writing of the rule: November 22, 1720 - January 1, 1721

On the morning of November 23rd a strange and, at the same time, moving spectacle met the faithful coming into Saints Charles and Ann for the early Masses: Paul Danei, well known to them, was there wrapped in a black tunic of coarse cloth, resembling a sack, and without a cowl, his hair close-cropped, his beard unkempt, barefoot and numb with the cold. He was greeted by members of his own family and several friends, among them Sardi. Some admired him, others pitied him. Sardi and some other friends provided him with bread and firewood. The founder informs us that the bishop had assigned that retreat to him, and, despite the repugnance he felt, he set himself to write the rule because "it was some time since I was inspired by God, and besides I had been ordered to do so." (50) These desert days were to be memorable in Paul's life and in the history of Catholic spirituality. In fact, obedient to the bishop, he daily jotted down what was happening to him spiritually, and the experience God put him through in that period was of immense value to him and to the Congregation. He matured fully as a Christian committed to transformation in Christ and as the herald of a yet unknown message. The Congregation, in turn, saw in the rule written during those days a concrete expression of the divine inspiration concerning the Passionist vocation, an expression formulated in an atmosphere of intense mystical experience.

During the first days Paul was assailed by depression, fear, and sadness, although all this was borne in a spirit of filial abandonment to God's loving mercy. He held colloquies with Jesus on his bitter Passion; he desired "to be crucified with Jesus," "really to feel his sufferings and to be on the cross with him." He had a mystical experience of these sufferings which appeared to him as "torments infused in the soul" but which "broke his heart." Yet he became ever more aware that the cross of Christ was the joy of his soul. His appreciation of the value of eternal salvation increased by this experience, and in his anxiety to be of help to others he felt he would not refuse "to be torn to pieces for a single soul. Indeed, I felt that I would die when I saw the loss of so many souls who did not experience the fruit of the Passion of my Jesus." (December 4th) His desire to see the Congregation established became more intense and he prayed to God "to found the holy Congregation quickly, and to provide members for it to his greater glory and for the good of their neighbors - this with great desire and fervor." (December 7th) "For the happy outcome of the holy inspiration," that is, the founding of the Institute, he prayed to the Blessed Virgin "and to all the angels and saints, especially the holy founders" and he seemed "in spirit to see them prostrate before the holy majesty of God praying for this." He was also intensely enlightened regarding the charism: "I had a keen infused knowledge of the sufferings of my Jesus, and I felt so ardent a desire to be perfectly united with him that I really wished to feel his sufferings and to be on the cross with him."

What matured ever more in him was the understanding of the apostolic universality of his call, and he prayed that the fruits of the Passion of Jesus be efficacious for all: faithful, sinners, non-Catholics, especially the English. These last were also named on December 26th, and throughout all his life they were to be present in the mind and prayers of the founder and to become part of the apostolic intentions of the Institute.

In order that the Congregation might enter as soon as possible into the service of the entire Church, Paul

was disposed to go to Rome "for this great and wonderful work of God" and felt "a strong urge with great sweetness" to write the rule "for the Poor of Jesus." (November 27th)

On the last day of his retreat, as in a marvellous synthesis, he experienced deepest union with God and had a particular understanding of the mediative influence of the humanity of Christ as a means of attaining to the knowledge and love of God. "Through the infinite love of our dear God I was raised up in spirit to great recollection...especially after holy communion...it seemed to me that I was melting away in God....I also had knowledge of the soul united in a bond of love to the Sacred Humanity and at the same time dissolved and raised to the deep and conscious felt knowledge of the Divinity. For since Jesus is both God and man the soul cannot be united in love to the sacred humanity without being at the same time dissolved and brought to a deep and conscious felt knowledge of the Divinity." (51)

Paul thus received a deep insight into the place Christ's loving and lovable yet painful experience must hold in the life of every Christian. He never tired of repeating that the Passion of Jesus is the greatest wonder of God's love and the doorway to the fathomless sea of divine charity. From this privileged insight we can see the Passion of Jesus as the charismatic synthesis which unifies a life of solitude, penance, poverty, and apostolate. It is, moreover, a powerful motivation in the effort to combat self-centeredness and to be open to others as was Jesus in total self-surrender.

The rule for the Congregation was written in this period, December 2 to 7 - a period in which Paul, by a gift of God, experienced intensely the value and reality of God's love for each individual as manifested in the Passion and resurrection of Jesus. The founder attests that he wrote "as quickly as if someone were dictating to me; I felt the words coming from the heart." (52) He already had in mind "the form of the holy rule," that is, "the more substantial things of the rule and the Institute." (53) He said matins before daybreak and spent

some time in prolonged prayer and participated in the Eucharist, "then I left prayer full of courage and began to write. The infernal enemy did not fail to assault me by stirring up feelings of repugnance and making difficulties about my doing this. But since God had inspired me to this task and as I had been given orders to do it, without more ado and by God's grace I set to work." (54)

It was not until the present century that the "Diary" came to the attention of scholars of spiritual theology, who hold it to be one of the best eighteenth century mystical documents. We must also keep in mind that the man who wrote the rule of the Congregation was accustomed to the realism of a serene but nevertheless hard family life. He was used to the risks of traveling and trade, a man elevated by gradual stages to an intense mystical union with God and to a sapiential knowledge of the Paschal mystery - a mystery which was to be the centre of the spiritual and apostolic life of the Congregation. Consequently that rule should attract the deep, reverent attention of all Passionists in order to know and appreciate the spirituality and the exigencies of their own vocation.

Paul came out of his retreat weakened in body but so illumined in spirit that he was certain that "the soul was in its infinite Good." Hence he concluded: "It desires nothing else but his glory and his love and that he be feared and loved by all." (55) He hastened to submit to the bishop the record of what took place in his soul during those days. and the rule he wrote for the Congregation. Bishop Gattinara once more sent him on to Father Columban to ask his opinion. With his usual promptness, Paul went on his way despite the severe cold of winter and the difficult mountain roads. On the Epiphany, January 6, 1721, he reached the Bocchetta pass exhausted, numb with cold, without provisions and covered with snow. Some policemen came to his assistance, making him take some food and helping him to overcome the unpleasant situation. Paul remembered with life-long gratitude this humanitarian and charitable gesture and wherever, on journeys or missions, he met with police he paid special attention to them. (56). According to Sardi, Father Columban carefully studied the rule and returned it to

the bishop "declaring it to be truly holy and worthy to be presented to the Holy See for approval." (57)

It is difficult to know exactly what the bishop's mind was. He certainly had a high opinion of Paul as a person and he gave evidence to this by vesting him with the penitential tunic, by allowing him to teach catechism and preach, and more so when in letters of recommendation he declared Paul a man of outstanding virtue. He did not seem convinced, however, of the timeliness of the projected foundation, or else he saw its realization too difficult and so preferred not to intervene. In 1741 when Paul informed him of the Papal approbation, Bishop Gattinara's answer was very vague and he made no reference to the beginnings in which he himself was involved. As a matter of fact he did not allow companions to join Paul. Besides, nothing indicates that he took any steps - as did Bishop Cavallieri in 1725 - to put Paul in contact with the pope or any officials of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars competent in these affairs.

Paul ended this period unmistakably certain of the call from God to found a new Congregation. Obediently he began the work, though he was in complete darkness as to the way in which it could be achieved. He said to the bishop: "I trust my Crucified Lord so much that I am more than certain everything will turn out well. God has given me the inspiration and an absolutely certain sign of what he wills. Why should I fear? Were I to doubt this, it seems to me that I would commit a sin of infidelity." (58)

B. PAUL'S AWARENESS OF BEING A FOUNDER (59)

1. His refusal to be called Founder; his sense of responsibility for the birth and growth of the Congregation

Father Joseph Del Re recalls that Paul confided to him one day that "when the Lord desired that he be founder of a new Congregation he was frightened and

cried out, 'And how do you expect me to do this?' God gave him to understand interiorly that he would be an instrument of the divine Power. That is why he always affirmed with certainty, 'Jesus Christ has founded this Congregation.' At other times he would say, 'If my friends only knew what pain they cause by calling me founder of this holy Congregation, they certainly would not do it because this title is a torment to me. The founder is the Crucified and I am only a wretch.'" In letters or documents he had to sign, he never used this title. (60)

Once wholly convinced that the inspiration came from God, he took courage and pledged his word to collaborate in obedience and with full trust in God. "God does not wish to do everything by himself," was his usual expression. (61) So with all the talents of mind and heart he set to work. His contemporaries recalled the courage and tenacious perseverance with which Paul undertook the foundation in such difficult historical circumstances, i.e., the multiplicity of existing religious orders, and the struggle of governments and rationalists against religious institutes. Witnesses remarked upon yet another obstacle: that of making it credible that the new institute truly had a new contribution to offer the Church by promoting the memory of the Passion of Jesus. Many, testifies Fr. Joseph Vigna, "scoffed at the institute" or criticized the purpose of the Congregation, saying that "the Passion of Jesus Christ is professed by all religious orders, particularly the Franciscan Order;" or by saying that 'the Lord's Passion should be imprinted on the hearts not on the habit,' or by using terms of disrespect when referring to the 'sign' worn by our religious on the breast." (62)

Paul, quite conscious of his God-given mediation in giving rise to the Congregation, on one occasion affirmed it in all simplicity: "My courage and my trust in God have made the Congregation move ahead. Otherwise it would have been destroyed by the strong opposition it met." (63) To close readers of his letters the objectivity of this statement will be clear. He felt his responsibility keenly, allowing himself no rest in seeking the most op-

portune means - spiritual and social contacts, timely interventions - by which the Congregation could fulfill its purpose, expanding and making itself known in the Church according to God's will. Precisely because he considered himself God's co-worker, after having done everything possible, he resigned himself to what God permitted, serenely yet in suffering. In external difficulties, when vocations were insufficient, or when professed religious left, fully trusting in God, he would exclaim in the midst of his pain: "God needs no one; I trust in him; the Congregation is his; his were the inspirations I received to found it; he will take care of its progress; my hope is in God." He trusted that God would send others to embrace the Institute, replacing those who had left or were called by God to another life. (64) But lukewarmness in his religious was a suffering that gave him no peace. He considered this a failure in his collaboration with God.

Fearing that the lack of fervent charity might become the disintegrating principle of the life of the Congregation, from 1758 onwards he always insisted on resigning his superiorship as general. His reason was that on account of his illness he was no longer able to keep in touch with his religious in order to animate, correct, and uphold them in their fidelity to God, which alone could preserve and develop the Congregation. This attitude reveals likewise that he considered his mission to have come to an end once the Congregation had been officially recognized by the brief of Benedict XIV in 1746 and he could count on a sufficient number of well-formed religious who possessed a true sense of responsibility towards their Passionist vocation. It meant trust in his children. (66)

This responsibility for the life of the Congregation appeared in a particular manner when he wished to transmit to others the knowledge God had given him regarding the demands of the Passionist vocation. Hence his hurry for the approbation of the rule. He was painfully vigilant in making the official reviewers of the rule understand the motives of his firmness in certain fundamental points concerning the charism, which he called "spirit" or "vocation." He feared they would interpret his

firmness as stubbornness or intolerance. Had we the letters and explanations he sent to these reviewers we would be in a better position to evaluate the reasons he put forward for preserving, in his view, some fundamental characteristics. He was overjoyed when he verified that nothing essential had been changed in the approbation of the rule. He saw this as fidelity to the divine inspiration of which he considered himself depositary, not master. After the first approbation of the rule in 1741, writing to his former spiritual director Fr. Policarp Cerruti, he said: "The pope has approved the rules which are the same as those inspired by the Father of lights and seen and examined by you. Some things have been added, some removed, for the better establishment of the work and in accord with the lights God has given me in the course of these years, in which I, too, have learned a lot from experience." (67) Another reason for joy was that the rule was not only identical with his inspiration but founded on the Gospel. He wrote: "I let you know that the rules and constitutions have been left untouched except for a very few things that do not affect the essence of the same, being approved as they were...based on the infallible truth of the holy Gospel." (68)

It was this self-same sense of responsibility that moved him to take into account the strength of his religious and accept the advice to mitigate somewhat the fast and reduce the abstinence. He also accepted the suggestion of the reviewing commission to make better arrangements for the night rest and to provide for the students. He expected this to favor the stability of the Congregation and help to safeguard the fundamental points concerning prayer, detachment from the world, solitude, poverty and assiduous apostolic work. All these should be regulated by a "well-ordered charity," so that the specific contribution to the Church would be authentic and lasting. These motives are observable when we study the various revisions of the rule, as well as the norms and guidelines given in the regulations and circulars to help the observance of the rule.

Awareness of his responsibility as a father, so to speak, could be seen also in his care that the lifestyle

of the communities and the individual religious reflected faithfully the charism or specific vocation of the Institute. In this he felt a certainty which was not simply that of a superior but of one who knows what is essential for the life of the Congregation and traces its guidelines authoritatively. This can be seen in the letters he addressed to the masters of novices, Fathers Fulgentius and Peter. (69) When dictating certain norms for the formation of students, he explicitly appealed to this authority which he was ever conscious of even if he did not always refer to it: "I, therefore, ordain and command with all the authority over the Congregation given me by almighty God...." (70) He repeated the same phrase when, in extraordinary circumstances, he requested the communities to celebrate some masses without the corresponding stipend: "I appeal, even with that authority and faculty that God has given me over all our Congregation, I appeal and beg Your Reverence to have celebrated...." (71)

The religious themselves were convinced that he "as father and founder possessed the true spirit of the Congregation" and that his prudence in guiding it was conspicuous "considering that he more than the rest had the true spirit." (72) They were certain that the rules given by him were approved by the Holy See because they were "acknowledged as filled with holy discretion and in conformity with the spirit of the Gospel." (73)

It is in this context that we must view the election of Paul as superior general by the unanimous consent of his religious up to some months previous to his death.

2. What he calls his Congregation and how he views its future

Ordinarily Paul spoke of the Congregation as "the Lord's work." At times, many nuances embellished this phrase: "holy work," "great work of God," "work of the Almighty Hand," "great wonder of God." (74) Other times he called it "little fold" of the Divine Shepherd or "plant of the Lord's vineyard." (75) Contemplating the Congregation as God's work, he was convinced that, if it

remained faithful to the Lord's plan, it would spread over the whole world and endure "till the end of the world with profit to Holy Church," on condition it maintained the characteristics inspired by God. On his deathbed he reaffirmed what he so often had said in his lifetime: "I recommend to all, and especially to superiors, continually to preserve and foster in the Congregation, the spirit of prayer, the spirit of solitude and the spirit of poverty. Be certain that if these three things are maintained, the Congregation shall shine as the sun in the sight of God and men." (76) He trusted that the Congregation, by the joyous fidelity of its religious, would spread throughout the world as a burning furnace of charity, "enlightening all." (77) He also called the Congregation a "tree" or a "mustard seed" in the field of the Church, which, sprinkled with the Precious Blood of Christ, would, by the preaching of his bitter torments, seasonably yield sweet, ripe fruit, seasoned by every blessing even for the neighbor." (78)

Aware of the link between fidelity and the future of the Congregation, he was solicitous that charity, unity, loyal observance of the rule with an interior motive should reign in the Institute. If the Congregation were not observant of the rule as an expression of the will of God, it would be useless to the Church and disappear, abandoned by God. In the course of a controversy with the bishop of Frascati, Paul said he could not permit some fundamental points of the rule to be neglected. These concerned solitude, prayer and fidelity to our proper ministries, because "on that foundation our Congregation is built, and, if this is demolished, the edifice is totally ruined because it is relegated to the fringe of the vocation God has given us." For this reason he was ready to lose the retreat in that diocese and all the retreats of the Congregation rather than tolerate a life alien to our vocation. (79) But he prayed and begged prayers that Jesus Crucified would guard the Congregation, which was the fruit of his cross, passion and death, and would send vocations "with the true spirit and the will to become saints, to help souls and to spread devotion to the most holy Passion." (80)

3. How Paul viewed the Congregation in relation to the Church

Paul viewed God's action in willing the Congregation as a salvific intervention which developed in and for the Church. "Our great Father of mercies has been pleased to raise up a new Institute in his holy Church," he states in one of his "Chronicles." (81) He sought the pope's approval not from purely juridic motives, but because of his conviction that the pope with the guidance of the Holy Spirit must discern the divine inspirations and "plant this tiny plant in the evangelical field and in the vineyard of the Church...to enkindle in the hearts of the faithful the most tender, loving and continuous memory of the most holy Passion." (82) When he received word of the first approval of the rule in 1741, he evinced this conviction to the secretary of the papal commission: "I adore and love the divine will that can only will what is best; and I am the more assured of God's loving will in this matter, inasmuch as he has deigned to infuse it into the hearts of the eminent cardinals and of you, to whom God has entrusted this work through the voice of Christ's vicar." (83)

In imitation of Jesus Crucified, the Passionist religious must work for the Church even at the cost of their own lives. Writing to Benedict XIV, Paul says: "An ardent hope arises in my heart that God will fill these poor men (Passionists) with his Holy Spirit in order that they may be...instruments of his glory in loyal combat, even giving their lifeblood for our mother the Church." (84) In the 1768 "Chronicle" he reaffirmed that "free from temporal things...with hearts full of God's love, they may undertake great things for the glory of God and for the defense of Holy Church even at the cost of their own lives, sparing neither privation nor labor." (85) He reiterated this deep-rooted belief in his circular letters and, to add force, he reminded the religious of the needs of the Church, the public opposition to it, the problems of the popes known to him through his Roman friends, especially the cardinals, and even through the popes themselves, Benedict XIV, Clement XIII and Clement XIV. On May 18, 1769 he ordered that they "offer up all their

spiritual exercises for the pressing needs of the Church, for the election of the sovereign pontiff and for the present calamitous state of Christendom," establishing that the community pray the Litany of the Saints towards the end of prayer. On December 10, 1773 he reminded them that in the Congregation "prayers and sacrifices are daily offered up for Holy Church and for the prosperity of Clement XIV." (86)

The service the Congregation offered the Church consisted in the witness of a virtuous life conformed to Jesus Crucified, so that, at the very sight of a Passionist, the people would be moved to conversion or to perseverance in virtue. Another service was that of collaborating with the bishops in proclaiming the word of God, catechizing and teaching meditation on the Passion of Jesus as a means towards conversion and progress in Christian living. His longing was ever to have holy men, intellectually well endowed, submissive to the Holy Spirit and "burning with love;" men who would enkindle divine love "in the hearts of their neighbors by preaching the sufferings of our crucified love." He longed for men so open to the mystery of God "that like trumpets of the Holy Spirit," they would go from place to place "preaching all that Jesus did and suffered out of love for everyone, because the majority have forgotten it. This is to be deplored as the cause of so much evil abounding in the world." (87)

Paul must have rejoiced immensely when Clement XIV's Bull of approval welcomed into the Church this traditional, but at the same time, original contribution to the pastoral endeavors of the Church. "Desirous that the mystery of the most holy Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ be ever in the minds and hearts of the faithful as the most high and powerful sacrament of divine mercy and pledge of Christian hope and salvation...we have decided to grant our Apostolic favors on those who, by preaching and example, strive to stimulate the faithful to share in the Passion of Christ. We wish, therefore, to favor with special graces Father Paul of the Cross, superior of said Congregation, and the members of

the Institute dedicated to such a pious and praiseworthy work." (88)

The Congregation would fulfill a singular service for the vitality of the Church by leading the clergy to a greater awareness of their vocation and to living it more intensely. It was for this that Paul, from the very beginning, wanted men dedicated to preaching retreats for the clergy. He wanted to have a retreat house for them attached to the monastery, and during missions he gave particular attention to guiding the clergy towards meditation or encouraging its continued practice. He hoped that the popes would promote the moral and pastoral reform of the clergy and religious on whom depended the formation of the Christian people and the preservation of the fruits of the missions. (89)

For Paul one thing was evident: in order to defend the Church from the varied forms of persecution and "to curb the pride of those whose obnoxious licentiousness and errors are the ruin of the Catholic world," an enlightened and courageous action of the pope was necessary. The Congregation would contribute with the prophetic life-witness of its religious who, while seeking the experience of God in solitude and poverty, intercede for their fellowmen and then go forth to proclaim the Saviour's loving mercy. Paul reaffirmed this contribution: "The most efficacious means for eradicating vice and implanting true piety is meditation on the sufferings of our divine Saviour; and, since the majority of the faithful have forgotten how much our loving Jesus has done and suffered, they continue to live in the horrible quagmire of iniquity. Hence to awaken them from such a detestable slumber it is necessary to hasten the sending of zealous workers, truly poor in spirit and detached from all creatures. With the trumpet of the divine Word, by means of the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ, these workers will awaken poor sinners who sit in the darkness and shadow of death, so that God may be glorified by so many souls converted and by many others who dedicate themselves to holy prayer and a holy life." (90)

The Congregation would also collaborate with the Church in reuniting Christians, spreading the Catholic faith and accepting the mission to work among non-Catholics and non-believers. This commitment appears in the original inspiration, is confirmed by the forty days' retreat, and is inserted into the rule. (91)

C. THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARISM AND ITS EVANGELICAL FOUNDATION

In the summer of 1720 Paul received the definitive enlightenment: "God infused into my soul in a lasting manner the form of the holy rule to be observed" by the members of the Congregation. The "form" is the mold within which an image is modeled. The word also indicates a norm of life molding a person or group, and giving them a particular spirit and specific style. By this word Paul conveyed to us the idea of a special enlightenment which allowed him to re-read Christ's discourse to his apostles and disciples before sending them forth on their mission. In that teaching, Paul discovered the privileged rule for the Passionist life. He himself confirmed this interpretation when he wrote: "Their life is like that of the apostles; and more, it totally conforms to theirs. The apostles' conduct is the norm for the constitutions which endeavor to form a man totally God-centered, a man of prayer, detached from the world, from things, from himself, so that he may in all truth be called a disciple of Christ and may beget many children for Heaven...."(92)

This text reveals that the apostles' form of life was, for Paul, that lived by the Passionists. So that when he says "God infused...the form of the rule," we must have recourse to a particular interior light to understand that discourse of Christ as addressed to the members of the new Congregation, so that each of them should prepare himself to become "a man totally God-centered, totally apostolic" in such a way as to be called "in all truth a disciple of Jesus Christ."

Without wishing to descend to exegetical questions, I present a comparison between the fundamental points of the rule and the missionary discourse of Christ to highlight the latter's influence. It is evident in the perspective of the evangelists that the norms marked out by Christ had not a pre-Paschal value only but also indicated the norms which the apostles and their successors would carry on in time as the Master gradually sends workers into his vineyard which is the Church. These norms which Cerfaux calls "the Apostle's highway code" (93) become typical norms, models of conduct for the evangelizing mission of the Church at all times. This code demands:

- the "call" of Christ who chooses the apostle, "worker" for the kingdom;
- the "mission" Jesus entrusts to the apostle;
- the freedom in rigorous poverty by which the apostle carries out his mission;
- the peace to be offered to all;
- trust in the faithfulness of God who will see to the apostle's sustenance;
- the return to Jesus after the mission to rest with him in solitude;
- communion with the other apostles, two by two;
- the flight from vainglory and the applause of the crowds, and rejoicing only because God loves the apostle and, out of sheer love, wishes to use his collaboration.

Paul was not the first to read that discourse and adopt it as a rule of life. The itinerant preachers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and later the Dominicans and Franciscans, planned their existence and their type of itinerant evangelization and communitarian poverty on that discourse which was assumed as a rule of life, and hence called "apostolic life" or life of "imitation of the apostles." (94) As a matter of fact, they live in solitude with Jesus as the apostles did; they go forth on mission by his virtue and power alone; they return again to rest again more intensely with him. Paul took on that discourse as "the form of the holy rule" to mold the Passionists.

We shall study some fundamental aspects of the Passionist rule in the light of that norm of apostolic life:

The call. As with the apostles, the call must come from God. Therefore, whoever feels inspired to enter "the retreat of penance" in order to share the destiny of Jesus and drink his chalice should "examine whether he is truly prepared...to suffer many things, to be mocked and despised, and to bear hardships and vexations willingly for love of Christ." Imitating the apostles he will leave everything, mindful of the counsel of Jesus: "sell what you possess and give it to the poor." (95)

The postulant who enters the retreat must be aware of the words of Jesus: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." That is why at the beginning of the novitiate, on receiving the black habit at vestition, he is reminded of the specific commitment of the Congregation to mourn in "memory of the Passion and death of Jesus;" a cross is placed on his shoulder and he is told, "Accept the cross of Christ, deny yourself, that you may share eternal life with him." A crown of thorns is placed on his head with the words: "Receive the crown of thorns of Jesus, humble yourself under the powerful hand of God and be subject to every creature for love of God." This rite evoked, even visually, the instructions by which Jesus had exhorted his apostles to become sharers in his destiny. Obedient to the Father in all the concrete circumstances of life, even to death on the cross, they become sharers in the power of his resurrection also. Towards the end of the ceremony, in this eschatological perspective, the superior and the brethren of the community "should manifest cheerfulness to the new brother, encouraging him to carry his cross with our most sweet Jesus." (96) This evangelical realism reaches its climax at the moment of profession. After the reading of St. John's narrative of the Passion, when the obedient death of Christ is proclaimed, the novice pronounces his vows, thus expressing his will to share the mystery of the life and death of Jesus. (97)

The mission. As the apostles and disciples, the Passionists will also go on missions two by two. They shall

wear only one tunic and a poor mantle, shall walk bare-footed, at least in the retreat and while preaching, but during journeys they may use "poor sandals because of the rough roads." They may cover their heads with "a poor hat to protect themselves from the sun and rain, although it is advisable they go bareheaded as they should do in church or at home." (98) They shall not carry money for the journey. (99) In the retreat they shall always observe fast and abstinence from meat, but when travelling, having entered the house of a benefactor, they shall offer peace with the evangelical formula "peace be to this house" and will eat what is put before them." (100) Sent by Christ, two by two, they will show forth the charity which unites them to him, working in peace and harmony so that all men may see "that in the house of the Lord we walk with one accord, having become the good odor of Christ in every place." (101) If the town or people do not accept the message of salvation, they must continue working in peace, keeping silence about those who contradict or despise them, especially at the beginning, never complaining of the country-folk, the treatment or the small audience. Even if they are not aided by other priests in hearing confessions, let them continue to do what they can "in peace, gentleness, and without anxiety, not lamenting if people do not confess, but in all things commit themselves to God to whom the souls belong." (102)

The return from the mission. After the mission, the religious must flee from the applause and thanks of the crowd so as not to turn attention from the Savior Jesus towards themselves, "useless servants." They shall depart almost secretly to return to their brethren in solitude where they shall rest physically and spiritually in colloquy with Jesus, listening with greater attention and recommending to him those who have received the message of salvation. "The servants of God after having worked for the salvation of their neighbor in holy apostolic efforts" shall retire into more rigorous solitude, "according to the advice Jesus gave his apostles: 'rest a little' in this way inflaming themselves more in the love of Jesus Christ, and always disposing themselves to go out anew

with greater fervor to sow the seed of the divine Word." (103)

This adherence to the Gospel is the essential core of the rule in its divers aspects:

- **solitude:** to be with Jesus and to become capable of understanding and falling in love with him;
- **prayer and penance:** to arm oneself to overcome that diabolical power that can only be combated by fasting and prayer; (Mk 9:28)
- **absolute poverty:** to trust only in the love and power of Jesus whom they represent, and thus to be free to preach conversion to the poor and to the rich;
- **fulfilling their essential mission in the Church:** the itinerant preaching of the salvation flowing from the Paschal mystery and the fostering of a continuous memory of this event as "a most efficacious means for destroying vice and conducting souls to great holiness in a short time;" reconciling individuals, communities and families. (104)

This form of "apostolic life" shared by those who live the spirituality of Christ's missionary discourse is characterized by the particular charism which proclaims that Christ has died and has risen for love of each person. It urges all to remember this infinite love.

That Paul should have planned the text of the rule on this form of "apostolic life" can also be inferred from Bishop Cavalieri's notes. He would have preferred a more literal adherence to the Gospel. For example: where Paul admitted the use of sandals or hat against the inclemency of the weather or the difficulties of journeys Cavalieri noted: "They shall use no kind of footwear, shoes, sandals, soles, clogs or anything whatsoever to protect the soles of the feet." As regards headgear he observed: "There is no record of Christ ever having worn a hat or anything to protect his head from the inclemency of the weather." (105) These were commentaries on Paul's text.

One needs to pay very careful attention to this teaching of Paul, to this aspect of the Passionist charism which is grounded in the Gospel in order to understand the organization and spirituality of the Congregation in its proper light; and, within this spirituality, to realize the intimate connection between solitude and "apostolic life," between prayer, poverty, penance, living together with Jesus and going out to fulfill a "mission," then returning to the community.

The Paschal mystery casts light on all of this: the source from which spring reconciliation and a call to men of diverse background to live as brothers gathered around Christ crucified; the source of hope illuminating the community with the motive and power of the message of salvation it proclaims to the brethren, and of the confidence it instills in them so that they are able to create a social community in which the peace proclaimed from the cross prevails.

Paul's journey towards the discovery of his vocation may induce some to think that the organization of Passionist life is a combination of hermitical and monastic elements, while, instead, it is the well thought out plan that grew out of his keen understanding of the missionary discourse with the focus on the Paschal mystery. From this flows those demands which the founder, in light of his charism, considered essential for a prophetic proclamation of the love of Jesus revealed on the cross. Paul was attracted by the first of his inspirations which impelled him towards solitude, poverty and penance as values and as the means of being with God in a contemplative hermitic attitude. But, as already seen, we must keep in mind the decisive inspiration he had in the summer of 1720. This was reinforced by the forty days' mystical experience that made him understand the missionary discourse as "the form of the holy rule" of the new Congregation. Because of this, he entered into the spiritual current of the apostolic life, known also as "the imitation of the apostles." Thus, solitude, poverty and penance were reinterpreted in the light of the apostolic life in the sense in which it was then understood. In other words, the fundamental task of the Congregation and its members

is to stand at the feet of Jesus Crucified in order to acquire the wisdom of the cross and the fervor of charity which will fit them to assume the mission of "spreading the seed of the Divine Word by promoting in the hearts of the faithful the devout memory of the Passion and death of Jesus our true Good." (106)

Paul himself explained all this very well, not only in practice but also in his two "Chronicles" on the Congregation and in many of his letters. (107) "The form of the holy rule" of which Paul speaks must be looked for in "the form of life of the apostles," which he understood as a life-style suitable for the fulfillment of the specific mission to remember and promote the memory of the saving love Jesus manifested in his Passion.

FOOTNOTES

1. The box which holds his body measures 1.9 meters. Dr. Zacchi, who in 1967 measured the saint's skeleton as it is presently preserved, says that he must have been over 5 ft. 7 in. tall, cf. Acta C.P. XXIV (1966-68) part II, 1967, p. 33.

2. Strambi, Vita, 196. The portrait of Conca is preserved in the Passionist monastery of Itri, that of Della Porta at Sts. John and Paul.

3. Processi II, 393, 445.

4. Reg. et const. 136/II/14-17.

5. Processi I, 470.

6. Moretti, the handwriting expert, defines it: "Endowed with an intelligence quantitatively higher than average, qualitatively very uncomplicated... It can be said, therefore, that his was an intelligence bent more to the practical," G. Moretti, I Santi nella scrittura, (Padova, 1952), p. 319. Fr. John Mary Cioni says he was endowed with rare talent and openness of mind....with a very good memory," Processi I, 138, 140.

7. Processi I, 182. Strambi, Vita, 196.

8. Processi I, 267.

9. Processi IV, 163, cf. also 156.

10. Processi III, 443-444.

11. Processi I, 182.

12. Processi I, 395-396. Fr. John Mary stresses: "The Servant of God distinguished himself in the virtues of friendliness, affability, gratefulness, and truthfulness...." Processi I, 166.

13. Processi II, 139. Cf. also Processi II, 331, 392, 445, etc.

14. Processi II, 515.

15. Processi II, 545.

16. Processi I, 142.

17. Processi I, 643.

18. Let. IV, 273, n. 4. Cf. also St. Paul of the Cross, Guida per l'animazione, nn. 158, 164, 168.

19. Br. Bartholomew confirms as do so many: "Fr. Paul required great haste in the service of God and also in one's own duties," Processi IV, 257. Cf. also Processi IV, 44-45.

20. G. De Sanctis, Anna Maria Massari-Danei, Madre di

Santi, (Roma, 1972), offers a reconstruction of the Christian life of the mother of Paul whom he called "santa".

21. Let. II, 275. For further coverage, cf. Zoffoli, op. cit. II, 77-208.

22. The document is printed in Let. IV, 217-221; while the resumé of his spirit or diario is in Let. I, 1-18.

23. Processi I, 32.

24. Cf. Let. where the expressions often return: "our dear God," "my Good," "my dear Jesus," "my Supreme Good." Cf. also Processi III, 146, 147; Reg. et const. 2/I/51; 8/I/18 "Jesus our true Good;" 20/I/50: "our most sweet Jesus."

25. Gal. 2:20. Cf. Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 13-127.

26. Let. IV, 217. For further documentation cf. Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 128-136.

27. Michel Dortel-Claudot, Mode de vie. Niveau de vie et pauvreté de la Compagnie de Jésus (Rome, 1973), pp. 48-49.

28. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida per l-animazione, p. 12.

29. Deposition of Sardi in A.G. A. I-I, 5.

30. ibid.

31. Cf. Sardi's testimony in AG. A. I-I,5.

32. Let. IV, 218.

33. That there were various "inspirations" or "lights," as Paul says, is certain, but it is difficult to indicate the sequence. Cf. Let. II, 272. Cf. also Processi I, 37-38; and Processi I. 40.

34 It does not seem to me that it can be months because Paul will be vested November 22 of the same year and, since before that conclusion, there were prolonged conversations and examinations on the part of the bishop who also sent him to Fr. Columban. It must be admitted that there was a period of meetings of not less than two or three months.

35. Processi I, 38.

36. Par. f. 2107rv., Processi III, 332-333.

37. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n 2.

38. Let. IV, 219-220.

39. Let. IV, 220-221.

40. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n 1.

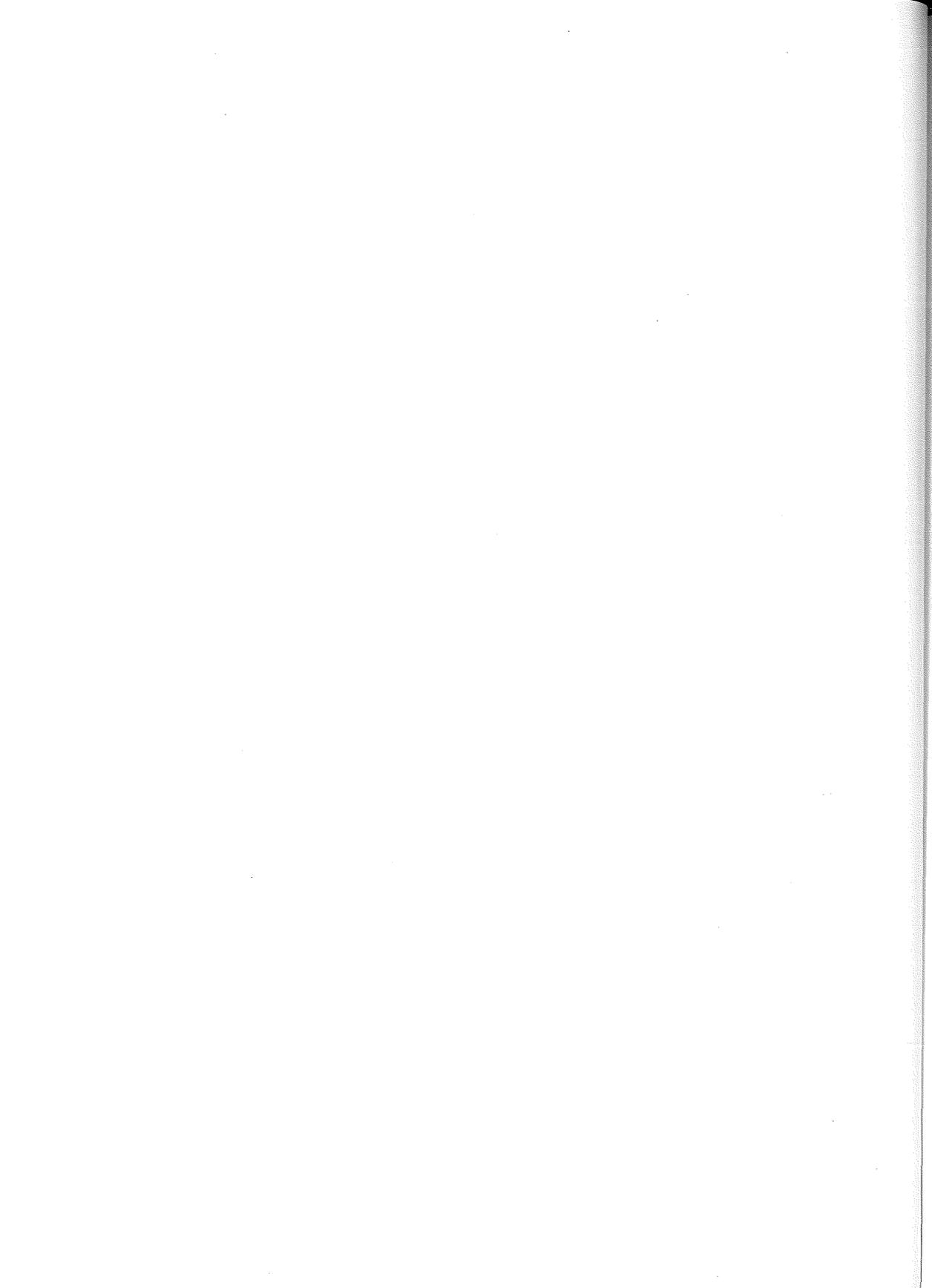
41. Ibid., n. 2. Cf. also Reg. et const. 4/I/4-7; 56/I/55ff.; 78/I/3-17.

42. Let. IV, 219, 221. In the cited letter Fr. Columban recalls that Paul passed through all the degrees of prayer and that he is "endowed by God with the prophetic instinct," in AG. A. I-I/3.

43. A few letters of Paul to Cerruti are preserved in Let. II, 271-288.
44. Sardi's deposition in AG., A. I-I/5.
45. Fr. John Mary in Processi I, 41.
46. Let. I, 410-411.
47. Processi II, 31.
48. The sister Teresa affirms it. Processi II, 28.
49. On November 27, 1720, Fr. Columban asked for the vestition of Schiaffino and Michelini, cf. the letter in AG. A. I-I/3 or in Zoffoli, op. cit., II, 1007-1010.
50. Let. IV, 221.
51. Let. I, 17. Cf. also C. Brovetto, Introduzione alla spiritualità de S. Paolo della Croce (S. Gabriele TE, 1955), pp. 81-82.
52. Let. IV, 221.
53. Let. IV, 220. Processi I, 43.
54. Let. IV, 221.
55. Let. I, 17. Cf. also C. Brovetto, Struttura apostolica della congregazione dei Passionisti (Roma, 1978), pp. 8-9.
56. Processi I, 43; IV, 315. Strambi, Vita 28-29.
57. Documento Sardi, in AG. A. I-I/5.
58. Let. I, 22.
59. Today they are studying with great interest the awareness of founders concerning their mission, the charism of the institutes they founded, the social and religious aspect of their influence, etc. A good article is in Diz. Ist. Perf., IV, col. 96-108, under Fondatore.
60. Processi IV, 294, 386, 390. Cf. also Processi III, 163.
61. Processi II, 325.
62. Processi III, 423; cf. also ibid., 122, 196; IV, 364, 415.
63. Processi IV, 223.
64. Processi IV, 225.
65. Processi IV, 365. Cf. also Let. IV, 266-269, a circular after solemn vows were denied them.
66. Processi III, 162; cf. also the Capitular Acts from 1758 to 1775, and the circulars written after these Chapters to announce his reelection.
67. Let. II, 272.
68. Let. II, 270.
69. Cf. Let. II, 68-206 to Fr. Fulgentius; Let. III, 437-455, to Fr. Peter.
70. Let. III, 273.

71. Let. III, 308. Cf. Let. III, 128; IV, 332.
72. Processi III, 444, 446.
73. Processi III, 250.
74. Cf. Let. IV, analytic index: Congregazione dei Passionisti.
75. Let. IV, 242, 247, 248, etc.
76. Processi II, 512; Let. IV, 256.
77. Let. II, 122.
78. Let. II, 94, 216.
79. Let. III, 418-419.
80. Let. IV, 417; V, 258.
81. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n 1.
82. Let. IV, 204, 219, 221. Cf. also Let. V, 237.
83. Let. II, 215.
84. Let. IV, 195-196.
85. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n 5.
86. Let. IV, 245. Cf. also Let. IV, 248, 261, 286, 289; and Processi III, 190-191.
87. Let. IV, 228-230, 245, 250, 260, 262, 269, 285, 294.
88. Bull Supremi apostolatus, # 3, 13. The same concept is in the Bull Praeclara virtutum of Pius VI, # 6.
89. Reg. et const. 4/I-III/47-56. Let. I, 377-378; Let. II, 8, 346, 659-660. Let. III, 419. Let. IV, 213. About the promoting of mental prayer among the clergy cf. Let. II, 231, 235; Processi III, 237-244; also Processi IV, 299-300.
90. Let. II, 213, 215-216.
91. Reg. et const. 8/I-III/56ff. Let. I, 14, 16.
92. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 3. Cf. also Processi III, 189; Processi IV, 213, 377.
93. L. Cerfaux, "Il discorso missionario di Gesu," in Le Missioni cattoliche (Milano, 1962), pp. 5-6.
94. M.H. Vicaire, L'imitazione degli apostoli (Roma, 1964). M.J. Lagrange, Evangile selon St. Matthieu (Paris, 1947), p. 198. Idem, Evangile selon St. Marc (Paris, 1947), pp. 152-153.
95. Reg. et const. 10/I/8-55. For the founder the missionary discourse is the connecting thread for reading the Gospels.
96. Ibid. 20/I/15-50
97. Ibid. 36/I/14-18.
98. Ibid. 12/I/15-60
99. Ibid. 48/I/8-36.
100. Ibid. 64/I/14-28.
101. Ibid. 96/II/43-47.

102. Ibid. 96/II/5-65.
103. Ibid. 8/I/4-15; 96/II-III/65ff.
104. Ibid. 58/I/65-68.
105. Ibid. p. 153 where the notes of Bishop Cavalieri are cited.
106. Ibid. 8/I/13-18.
107. Ibid. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione. Cf. also Let. IV, analytic index, under: Congregazione dei passionisti.



Chapter III

IN SEARCH OF A WAY TO FOUND THE CONGREGATION: 1721-1728

A. FIRST ATTEMPTS AT CASTELLAZZO: January - September 1721

1. Paul, "least of the Poor of Jesus"

Throughout all of 1721 Paul signed himself "least of the Poor of Jesus" or "the least servant of the Poor of Jesus." It was one of the signs that indicated his commitment to proceeding with the foundation. On returning from his visit to Father Columban, he withdrew with the bishop's permission to the country church of the Blessed Trinity, about one kilometer from town. Shortly after, on January 25th, the bishop allowed him to transfer to the church of St. Stephan the First Martyr, which was nearer to town. That church had several rooms in good condition thanks to the care of Father Christopher, the previous chaplain. Nearness to the town would permit Paul to hear Mass daily and attend to people in their spiritual needs, while at the same time his silence and solitude were sufficiently guaranteed. The place responded to his aspirations: "I could not find a more suitable and holier place, nor more retired from the noise of the world except by going into the desert. I hope that if I cooperate with our good God's holy inspirations this will be just the solitude to which God has led me in order to speak to my heart." (1) He broke his fast only once a day. He wished to do so every other day but before asking this permission, he prudently decided to await a "stronger inspiration."

On Sunday, January 26th, he began his apostolic activity. He went through the town, explaining Christian doctrine to the people and calling them to meditate on the Passion. (2) Paul Sardi, an eye-witness, describes this activity during the Lenten season of that year: "He brought the women together in the church in the afternoon

and the men in the evening, giving each group an exhortation to the practice of virtue and teaching them to meditate on the Passion of Jesus. On Sundays he made it a point to gather the people for the prescribed afternoon catechism, helping the priests and the school teachers who catechized the various groups present. When catechism ended, he assembled them all and gave them a meditation on the eternal truths and on the Passion." According to Sardi, Paul spoke with propriety, deep conviction and fervor, thus moving many to conversion and giving the confessors plenty of work. (3)

This apostolic experience had a double effect on Paul. On the one hand he began putting into practice the ideal of his future Congregation, and on the other, he gave to bishops and others a sample of what the Congregation might do despite the existence of other institutes. In his personal life he sought to adhere strictly to the written rule, spending long hours in prayer, observing the liturgical prayer of the Divine Office and partaking of Holy Mass which for him was the vital element of each day. He lived in the most absolute poverty, content with what was spontaneously offered him, not wishing to accumulate anything, and distributing what was left over to the poor. Even his apostolic ministry was inspired by the rule for he instructed people in the principal mysteries of the faith, prepared them for the worthy reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and communion, taught them to meditate on the Passion of Jesus, and promoted devotion to the Eucharist. By teaching the people simple songs or hymns on the Passion of Jesus, he helped them to keep this mystery in mind. (4)

It appears that Paul took some concrete steps to obtain the bishop's permission to form a community, that is, to gather companions. In this connection Fr. Columban's letter to the bishop is more easily understood. He reminded the bishop that Anthony Schiaffino and Michelangelo Michelini were "companions desired by Paul." On January 27th, it was Paul himself who informed the bishop of his desire that Paul Sardi be vested as he was, and on March 11th, he again spoke to him about Sardi and another companion. John Baptist, who visited his

brother daily, was also awaiting his hour. The simple permission of the bishop could have allowed these men to form the first nucleus of the Congregation. The bishop had it in his power to authorize a community of hermits under his jurisdiction, and in fact many existed. Faced by the bishop's reluctance, Paul requested permission to go to Rome. (5)

2. "To go to the feet of His Holiness": 1721

On November 27, 1720 - the fifth day of his retreat - Paul noted: "I had a particular urge to go to Rome for this great and wonderful work of God." By this he meant to get permission to found the Congregation. He had repeatedly spoken to the bishop about this desire, but finally on March 11, 1721 he wrote to him urging the request: "I should inform Your Excellency that I feel an ever stronger inspiration to leave for Rome...to go to the feet of His Holiness - this is my great desire. I beg you to be kind enough to grant me this permission so that I may follow the inspiration of my spouse Jesus Christ. I will say nothing about companions as I know for sure that when I am at the feet of His Holiness, God will make the whole world see his mercies. So much do I trust my crucified Lord that I am more than certain everything will turn out well. God has given me the inspiration and an absolutely certain sign of what he wills. Why should I fear? Were I to doubt this, it seems that I would commit a sin of infidelity." (6)

Over a month later, April 17, 1721, Bishop Gattinara gave Paul a letter of recommendation, stating that he had vested him in the black penitential garb he wore and declaring him radiant with uncommon virtues. (7) Paul, however, was engaged in catechetical duties till after Easter, as we understand from his letter to the Marquise Del Pozzo. Meanwhile on March 19th, Clement XI died and the Holy See was vacant until the election of his successor Innocent XIII on the 8th of May. These events and also probably the approach of summer delayed Paul's departure. In the meantime he perhaps preached on the es-

tates of the Marquise Del Pozzo at Porto Nuovo and Retorto. (8)

Towards the end of August he left for Genoa where he was the guest of the Marquis Jerome Pallavicini who provided him with traveling facilities. We are not certain whether John Baptist went with him to Genoa or traveled later to see him off. (9) Paul set sail from Genoa in the first days of September but on the 8th the wind fell and his vessel was stilled near Monte Argentario. While the sailors went ashore to gather figs with which they later treated Paul, he became absorbed in contemplating the mountain and felt a strong inclination to retire there in solitude and prayer. On the morning of the 9th he was in Civitavecchia. Before going ashore for the usual quarantine he wrote to his brother John Baptist assuring him he had a fair voyage and "very favorable weather;" he had been slightly seasick on the first day, but on the whole "very kindly treated." He told him how during the voyage he felt great spiritual fervor and trust in God and said he was "ready to go to the ends of the earth for love of our dear Jesus. No fear ruled my heart." (10)

He was required to spend about ten days in quarantine, so he took advantage of the time to make a clean copy of the rule written at St. Charles' as well as to catechize his fellow travellers. (11) Around the 20th he started for Rome along the Aurelia Highway, and after almost two days of intense walking, entered the city by Porta Cavallegeri beside St. Peter's Basilica. He found lodgings in the Holy Trinity Hospice near Ponte Sisto. The following day, possibly the 25th or 26th, he went to the Quirinal, then to the papal palace where he asked to speak to the master of the sacred palace and, we presume, to present his bishop's letters of recommendation of which none has come down to us. (12) He was summarily sent away. Paul felt terribly desolate, with perhaps a passing doubt as to the validity of the effort made. However, he quickly recovered his calm and courage by contemplating the human failure of the cross of Christ. Then, almost as an act of reaffirming his fidelity to what God had given him to understand by so many inspirations he went to St. Mary Major's where before Our Lady

he "vowed to promote devotion to the Passion in the hearts of the faithful and, to this end, to endeavor to gather companions." (13)

This vow, which he expressed with the same ardor as his request to the bishop, decidedly confirmed his trust in God: "God has given me the inspiration and an absolutely certain sign of what he wills. Why should I fear? Were I to doubt it, it seems to me that I would commit a sin of infidelity." (14) This vow, as it were, closed the phase of Paul's inner enlightenment as founder, and his first attempts to put this ideal into effect. For him it meant putting into practice the charism of the Institute and the firm commitment to found the Congregation. By this vow, Paul was definitely launched into the future with full certainty as to the will of God, though still uncertain as to the ways and time of its accomplishment.

3. Scouting journey to Argentario: October 1721

Defeated yet triumphant, Paul embarked the following day, the 26th or 27th of September, at Ripa Grande (Rome's port) for Fiumicino and from there he took another boat to Santa Severa. After Mass and receiving some bread as alms, he set off overland for Civitavecchia where he arrived in the evening hours and found shelter in the "Portico della Sanità." Finding no available transport to Argentario, he encountered for the first time the road he would travel so often in the future. At Tarquinia the Augustinians gave him lodging as did a Corsican priest in Montalto di Castro on the following evening. The last lap of the road was particularly painful since he felt depressed and sad, not meeting a soul on these plains and not knowing the pathways. Night overtook him and he found refuge in one of the huts used by the laborers in the marshes. Lice and fleas literally assaulted him and, since he had no other tunic into which to change, he could not get rid of them till his arrival in Castellazzo.

Finally he arrived in Portercole where Fr. Anthony Serra, the archpriest, received him cordially and gave him information concerning the former monastery of the Augustinians which was dedicated to the Annunciation. Paul found it suitable for his purpose. After a couple of days he set out in quest of the bishop to get his permission and to bring his brother John Baptist. A long, roundabout journey awaited him. At Pitigliano he was told that the bishop was absent for six months, having gone to Pienza to avoid contracting malaria. After obtaining the bishop's permission, he left Pienza for Livorno, then traveled by sea to Genoa, arriving finally at Castellazzo in the first days of November.

John Baptist received the black penitential tunic from Bishop Gattinara on November 28, 1721. Both brothers then withdrew to St. Stephen to live according to the rule. Paul still signed himself "least of the Poor of Jesus." The founder wanted to take other companions with him but on the 31st of December a letter from Bishop Fulvius Salvi of Pitigliano authorized him to take but one companion, because to form a community, "the decision of the visible head of the Church of God, that is, the supreme pontiff, is necessary." (15) Both bishops, Gattinara and Salvi, feared to allow a community to be set up without the permission or consent of the pope, since it could be interpreted as the beginning of a new congregation. This fear was a typical reaction following the reforms accomplished by the seventeenth century popes in suppressing small convents and placing many juridical obstacles to the opening of new houses or institutes.

B. FIRST DWELLING ON ARGENTARIO:

THE HERMITAGE OF THE ANNUNCIATION: 1722-1723

Seeing the permission which Bishop Salvi had granted Paul to dwell on Monte Argentario, Bishop Gattinara permitted him to leave his diocese. (16) On the first Sunday of Lent, Paul and John Baptist left for Genoa. On the evening before, Paul had given his parents, brothers and sisters a farewell letter "in order to act upon the

inspirations from heaven." (17) Arriving at Civitavecchia, they complied with the usual quarantine requirements. Then, barefooted and bareheaded, without provisions, they reached Portercole on Holy Thursday just in time to participate in the celebration of Holy Mass. Until Easter they were guests of the archpriest. Later they introduced themselves to Don Bartolomé Espejo y Vera, the governor of the Garrison State, and to Bishop Salvi of Pitigliano. The hermitage that was to be their dwelling consisted of the bare walls and some miserable furniture. As a matter of fact the edifice, formerly an Augustinian hermits' monastery, had suffered serious damage during the wars at the beginning of the century. It was fairly large with five rooms upstairs and five on the ground floor. The church was dedicated to the Annunciation of our Blessed Lady. There was also a garden which belonged to the benefice of the parish of Portercole; it had been cultivated by the hermits. (18)

The two brothers lived on the free-will offerings of the people. They fasted every day and at times their fast was absolute, since, because they were unknown, offerings were frequently wanting and they had to make do with edible leaves and herbs. On feast days Paul went to Portercole and John Baptist to Porto S. Stefano to teach catechism, and give instructions on meditation of the Passion of Jesus. While there they also participated at Mass. The people considered them hermits while Paul himself during 1723 signed himself "unworthy hermit." Although admitting that they dressed as hermits, the bishop was fully aware that they did not intend to be hermits and even knew the name they wished to adopt: "The Poor of Jesus." This was clear from Bishop Salvi's letter (June 27, 1723) in which he stressed the contemplative and apostolic character of their lives, the observance of evangelical poverty, wearing a coarse tunic without mantle or linen shirt, not making use of a staff, and always going barefoot and bareheaded. (19)

Monte Argentario was enchanting in its solitude and peacefulness. However, it did not offer bright prospects for development of the foundation either by way of vocations or aid in building a house there. Portercole had

scarcely three hundred inhabitants, who were generally very poor. It was possibly this that moved Paul to accept the invitation Bishop Pignatelli of Gaeta had extended him. He had come to know of Paul through the sailors and officers of the Garrison State who frequented Gaeta, then part of the same Austrian domains.

C. PILGRIMS TOWARDS SOUTH ITALY: 1723-1726

On June 27, 1723, Paul and John Baptist officially took leave of Bishop Salvi of Pitigliano and arrived in Gaeta by August. Fr. Perrone, the bishop's secretary, was amazed to see them dressed "with only one tunic of very coarse black cloth from neck to foot, without a cowl, head and feet completely bare." He also noticed they wore no shirt, and were thus further tormented by the coarse tunic. In small leather sacks hanging from their waists they carried their breviaries "which they used as pillows whenever I saw them sleeping on the floor." (20) Bishop Pignatelli gave them permission to dwell in the hermitage of Our Lady of the Chain (*Madonna della Catena*) which was spacious, in fair condition, and sufficiently solitary. From the very beginning he employed them in apostolic activities, teaching Christian doctrine to adults on Sundays or feast days and catechism to children in the cathedral. These tasks were not apt to cause envy or jealousy among the local clergy or religious. It was, in fact, one of the problems of the time, to find clergy who were willing to take on so fundamental an apostolate. Bishop Pignatelli authorized them, moreover, to assist the dying when called to do so. This meant they had to be at the bedside of the sick, recite the ritual prayers, console the dying and their relatives. The parish priests, content simply to administering the sacraments, seldom carried out these duties. In September the bishop had Paul preach the spiritual exercises to the clerics to be ordained that same year. This he did in the Church of the Nativity of our Lady, called dell'Olive. (21)

The brothers continued their former manner of life here, according to the spirit of the rule. People noticed they never asked for anything, never received money and were always content with whatever was offered them. As prescribed by rule, they fasted every day; after evening prayer they took the discipline "for the length of time it took to recite the *Miserere* slowly." (22)

Paul was also busy trying to establish the Congregation. He approached the hermits of Our Lady of the Chain and surrounding places to investigate the possibility of establishing a religious community. Yet in spite of the admiration and esteem in which the brothers were held and the amazement of the people at seeing them "always happy, content and satisfied," (23) they found great difficulty in trying to set up the kind of community that would reflect "the form of the rule" Paul had in mind.

For reasons unknown to us both brothers returned to Castellazzo in September of 1723 and were forced to remain there until February of the following year due to the illness of Fr. John Baptist. While there they resided once more in St. Stephen. (24) Back in Gaeta they resumed their apostolate under Bishop Pignatelli who treated them with trust. In May or June of 1724 they received a pressing invitation from Bishop Emilio Cavalieri of the diocese of Troia. The fame of the two hermits, particularly their devotion to the Holy Eucharist, had greatly impressed him. Before accepting, Paul first consulted Cardinal Cienfuegos whose acquaintance he had made the previous year. The cardinal encouraged them to go, as "God does not always manifest what he wishes from his servants by interior inspirations, but at times he uses exterior means to disclose his all-powerful will." (25) Meanwhile, Innocent XIII died on March 7, 1724. The Dominican, Benedict XIII, succeeded him on May 29th. This pope was desirous of giving a fresh impulse to Christian life, especially to clergy and religious.

Upon their arrival after a painful journey in the great summer heat in which John Baptist's life was endangered by a sunstroke, Bishop Cavalieri gave Paul and

John Baptist a hearty welcome. The bishop, a member of the Congregation of Pious Workers, had been bishop of Troia since 1694 and had experience both of religious life and popular missions. As bishop he had achieved a notable reform at all diocesan levels, with particular dedication to the spiritual and educational formation of the clergy in a model seminary. He was well educated himself and led an exemplary religious life. (26)

The nearly six months' stay with Bishop Cavalieri was a most profitable one to Paul. It helped him adapt his mystical intuitions both to the practical approach and the institutional demands of the Church and society. The bishop examined the rules, gave practical indications for their improvement and counselled Paul how to proceed. He informed the brothers that they could not expect approval of the Holy See as an order with solemn vows until after a period of trial lived in organized communities. Hence it would be necessary to obtain from the Holy See the appointment of a benevolent bishop who could admit the new foundation as a community with simple vows and who would be able to ordain priests under the title of poverty. It was very clear to Bishop Cavalieri that without priests in the community it would be impossible fully to achieve the purpose of the Congregation: "I have read the rules with great spiritual consolation, yet a still more lively consolation have I had in seeing them observed....If these rules are not approved, or at least tolerated, by the Holy See, you will hardly find anyone, following the rule of prudence, to join your institute. Besides, it is not the practice nor custom of the Holy See solemnly to approve by bull an institute numbering but two brothers...and mere laymen....In my opinion, in order that laymen may join and be ordained, and that ecclesiastics may join you without incurring suspension (because they must renounce their patrimony or benefice), it is necessary that the rule of your institute be observed by many in one or more dioceses and its usefulness proved by experience, so that it may be properly approved by the Holy See. Therefore, I would think that, if you obtain from the Holy See a benevolent ordinary who permits you to live in community and approves your rule, by his ordinary faculties he can admit you to simple

vows and ordain you under the Title of Poverty" titulum paupertatis." (27)

Paul's journey to Rome in the Jubilee year of 1725 was an attempt to obtain permission from the Holy See to form a community and receive companions under the jurisdiction of a benevolent bishop who could ordain priests under the title of poverty or common board, although the religious had only simple and not solemn vows. Bishop Cavalieri recommended various persons who could help Paul obtain an audience with the pope, since he himself because of illness could not take part in the Roman Synod which Benedict XIII had convoked for April 15th.

D. THE MEETING WITH BENEDICT XIII: May 1725

Early in March Paul was in Rome. He contacted those whom Bishop Cavalieri had recommended and also visited Bishop Pignatelli, who was in Rome with his secretary, Fr. Perrone, for the Roman Synod. With John Baptist he hastened to visit the Basilicas to gain the Jubilee indulgences. A chance meeting with Bishop Crescenzi (1694-1768) occurred during their visit to St. Peter's. This Bishop, then a canon at St. Peter's, was later to become papal nuncio in Paris, and the cardinal archbishop of Ferrara. (28) He was favorably impressed by Paul's account and introduced him to Cardinal Pierre Marcellinus Corradini (1658-1743) with whom he shared the desire of church renewal for both clergy and religious. (29) Benedict XIII was due to visit the Navicella church (*Santa Maria in Domnica*) on the Celian Hill to inspect the restoration work in progress. The cardinal made the necessary arrangements for Paul to have a brief interview with the pope on that occasion. This probably took place on May 21, 1725 when Paul received the pope's oral approval for his long-cherished project of gathering companions. (30)

What did this meeting signify? From Bishop Cavalieri's letters it seems Paul held that he obtained from the Holy Father a general approval of the projected foun-

dation and its purpose plus the permission to gather companions. . "What consolation it affords me that with the blessing of our Lord you can live together with others desirous of imitating you;...Blessed be the Lord who has permitted his vicar to approve your desires." (31) That the pope did not intend giving an official approbation for a new foundation is evident. He must have limited himself to expressing a benevolent appreciation of the ideal presented by Paul besides encouraging him to go ahead in accord with the norms approved by the Church. Such an approval had no juridic value as it could not be proved by documents. Certainly neither Bishop Crescenzi nor Cardinal Corradini, who no doubt were present, ever gave any immediate testimony, nor did Paul make any attempt to obtain it after Bishop Cavalieri told him such testimony was necessary in order that a benevolent bishop accept his assertion. The pope's benevolent words only served to give Paul peace of mind and interior certitude. "...blessed be the Lord who permitted his vicar to approve of your convictions. However, he only gave his consent so that you might have peace of mind. This is of no avail for the future and stability of the foundation unless some cardinal can testify to the *vivae vocis oraculo*....And who knows if, after having others join you, a more solemn and magnificent approval of your way of life will be forthcoming; he who trusts in the Lord will not be confounded." (32)

For Paul and the first generation of Passionists this simple and informal audience constituted the first approval of the Congregation by the Holy See and the launching of its foundation. This conviction is thus expressed by Paul's first biographer:

"The holy pontiff without any difficulty and with extreme clemency, *vivae vocis oraculo*, immediately granted him all he desired, and by his authority laid the foundation of this poor and humble Congregation." (33)

Paul and John Baptist lodged in Trastevere close to the church of St. Benedict in Piscinula, in the house where Fr. Emilio Lami with the support of Cardinal Cor-

radini took care of those suffering from scabies, ringworm and leprosy. They also helped in this charitable work. Paul frequently visited Bishop Pignatelli, told him of the pope's benevolence and asked to be allowed to persist in his attempts to set up a community at Our Lady of the Chain. With the consent of the bishop of Gaeta, Paul went back to that city towards the end of June. (34)

E. ATTEMPTED FOUNDATION AT OUR LADY OF CHAIN: 1725-1726

Back at Our Lady of the Chain Paul renewed his contacts with the hermits there and welcomed the arrival of a priest who wished to give their new life a trial. Bishop Cavalieri rejoiced on seeing this new attempt at a foundation and promised to send, if he could find him, "a man of such strong spirit" who could face the difficulties of the life Paul envisioned. "For your way of life a firm vocation is needed." (35) Difficulties soon arose with the lay patrons of the church; perhaps this was prompted by the hermits. In a letter of September 30, 1725, Bishop Cavalieri suggested to Paul that he avoid lawsuits with the lay patrons, as such lawsuits were usually drawn out and the bishops could do nothing about them. At the same time he advised Paul to be careful lest the church of the Annunciation on Monte Argentario be in the same position due to lay patronage. This reference to the Annunciation church could lead us to suppose that Paul had manifested to his friend in Troia a desire to return there, but nothing certain can be affirmed. What is certain is that the hermits did not agree with Paul's style of life. "Oh how much I pity you," wrote Bishop Cavalieri on April 30, 1726. "The Lord is allowing you to experience the same fate as his Divine Son....I also pity the Bishop; when it is a question of dealing with lay patrons, the bishop's power is very limited. Moreover, when you have to live together with others who do not belong to your institute, you will never find peace." (36) The bishop ended his letter by offering Paul various churches and places for a foundation in his own diocese and promised him all support.

F. SERVING THE SICK IN SAN GALLICANO HOSPITAL: 1726-1728

We learn from Bishop Cavalieri's letter of April 30, 1726 that in March of that year Paul had decided to return to Rome to the new hospital of San Gallicano. He was encouraged to do so by Cardinal Corradini and Father Emilio Lami with the full support of Benedict XIII. As a sincere friend, Bishop Cavalieri did not approve such a decision but, on the other hand, encouraged Paul to go ahead with the new foundation. "In carrying out your project of going to the new hospital in Rome I can foresee all possible and imaginable difficulties. I judge your work there to be directly contrary to your vocation - to that which the Lord has shown he wishes of you, no matter what human reason may suggest. It is necessary to hope against hope. Our salvation is nearer than we thought. Abraham, our father in faith, even when going to sacrifice his son, believed he was to be the father of all believers. And more sublime is the example of Christ Jesus who submitted to the will of his heavenly Father. In the humiliation of the cross Christ did what gave glory to the Father, and, in that same humiliation, the Father willed the glory of His Son...Constancy! Do not withdraw because of difficulties." (37)

Face to face with the clear stand of the bishop, why did Paul not give in? He still persisted with the idea of the hospital in Rome: Was he tired of failures? Did he fear God's hour had not come? From Bishop Cavalieri's words it would appear that discouragement played an important part. This is very human even in the saints. It is also difficult to grasp why Paul did not accept any of his friends' offers to start the foundation in the diocese of Troia. A possible supposition is that he feared excessive interference from episcopal authority, especially keeping in mind some of Bishop Cavalieri's observations regarding the rule in which he emphasized the authority of the bishop in the government of the Congregation. (38) Nevertheless, we cannot affirm this with certainty. As a matter of fact, in accord with the juridical structures of the time, Paul could not dream of exemption from episcopal jurisdiction till the Holy See had

approved the new foundation as an order with solemn vows.

Towards the end of April or the beginning of May 1726, Paul left the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Chain and retired to that of our Lady of the City (*Madonna della Civita*) outside Itri, not far from Gaeta. The conviction of his friends was that he wished to flee from the ever more numerous crowds that flocked to the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Chain. However, the true motive was that he saw no possibility of starting the new foundation there. Why did Paul remain four months at *Madonna della Civita*? Was it for further reflection before committing himself to work in the Roman hospital? Or to make one more attempt in that spacious and peaceful spot? (39) We may keep in mind that until he went to Rome Paul had signed himself "Poor of Jesus." He was to drop this title during his Roman hospital days and would take it up once more on Argentario. (40)

Paul left Itri to embark from Gaeta towards the middle of September. (41) Writing from Rome on September 21st, he informed Fr. Tuccinardi of his intention to settle down at San Gallicano. "Here we are, safely arrived in Rome, thanks be to God. We shall have no further journey to make because God has arranged otherwise. We are staying at the hospital which seems to us more suitable to our purpose of being totally sacrificed to God's love." (42) From these words it seems Paul had not entirely decided to stay at the hospital in Rome when he left Itri; perhaps a further consideration of the difficulties encountered so far concerning the foundation or perhaps the exchange of ideas with Roman friends led him to desist for the time being from further attempts, and to conclude that if the inspiration came from God, he would certainly have found the way to its accomplishment. This hypothesis seems supported by Paul's own words: "When the Lord truly wills anything of his servants in order to be glorified through them, he certainly motivates them until he obtains it. I took refuge in my work at San Gallicano and, by his constant prodding, the Lord convinced me to leave there. He called me to attend to the work he willed from me." (43)

The task of the two brothers was the material and spiritual assistance of the sick. A certain Fr. Ricinelli who had come with them from Gaeta and who stayed but a short time recalled: "I observed that they purposely sought to serve those who were infected with scabies. They taught them Christian doctrine and piously exhorted them." (44) Fr. Emilio Lami, the prior of the hospital, and Cardinal Corradini, its protector, admired the virtue and dedication of the two brothers in fulfilling their duties and sought to persuade them to become ordained priests, "that they might render greater and more useful service to the pious place." (45) Paul himself confirmed that these two persons were responsible for the initiative. "The superiors wish us to be ordained priests." (46) Bishop Cavalieri had already suggested that the purpose of the Congregation would be better attained if the religious were priests, and probably exhorted Paul to go on for the priesthood. Perhaps Paul had in mind this advice of Bishop Cavalieri and the persuasive action of Lami and Corradini when he said to Tuccinardi, "I don't have time to give a long account of what Divine Providence has done for us in this matter" of preparing for the priesthood, even though for the service of the hospital, he had already obtained the pope's permission to continue "in the same habit and lifestyle as at present." (47) Before receiving the subdiaconate both brothers must have taken the simple vow of perseverance in the service of the hospital. On June 7, 1727, Benedict XIII raised them to the priesthood in the choir chapel of the Pietà at St. Peter's. (48) For Paul, the priesthood meant a renewed dedication to study. From June to November, he attended the lectures of Fr. Dominic Mary of the Observant Minors and parish priest of St. Bartholomew on the Tiberina Island. He informed Tuccinardi that he intended to continue these studies as the opportunities arose. (49) The two brothers were thus better fitted to fulfill the purpose of the Congregation, not only introducing souls to the mystery of God's love but also sanctifying them by the administration of the sacraments. At the same time Paul and John Baptist found themselves ordained priests without any title of patrimony, so much so that they could preserve the ideal of evangelical poverty to which they had been attracted during the period of the inspirations. It was also a situ-

ation in which their ministerial priesthood came in contact with the poor and outcast; furthermore, their service constituted the reason and purpose of their ordination.

Their father's unexpected death on July 27, 1727, obliged the two brothers to return to Castellazzo. On the 26th of October they were back in Rome "in good health." (50) Shortly after, however, John Baptist and Paul fell ill with malaria and for about eighteen days the founder was not able to celebrate Mass. On December 20th he began to improve but remained in a weakened condition all through that winter. (51) This situation convinced their superiors that the environment did not agree with them. Added to this was the burden of a new hospital regulation which obliged all those connected with it to administer the treatment for those suffering from ringworm, which consisted of blood-letting from the head. In spite of their good will, the two Danei brothers had always felt an invincible repugnance for this procedure. "We hadn't the heart to do it." The superiors of the hospital would not make an exception, their reason being to "ensure proper discipline in the place and greater uniformity in the community." (52)

Besides reasons of poor health we must also consider Paul's ever stronger inner conviction that he must go back to Monte Argentario. This was revealed in a letter of Bishop Crescenzi: "I am convinced that in solitude there you will find the peace that, perhaps on account of the various tasks, you could not find in the hospital." (53) The decision was evidently reached during the month of December 1727 because on January 12 of the following year Cardinal Corradini presented a petition to the Holy Father requesting that the brothers be dispensed from the vow of perseverance in hospital service and be given the faculty to celebrate Mass for one year even if, by right, they lacked a benefice. The request was granted on February 1, 1728. Paul himself alluded to these reasons when he informed Tuccinardi about the dispensation "to allow us to retire into solitude and to persevere in our own lifestyle." (54) "To persevere in our own lifestyle." This phrase makes us think Paul had his doubts that hospital service, though an exercise of great charity to

the outcasts of society, was the way that God had established for him and for the Congregation he was to found. The juridical ordination title still remained that of service to the outcasts of society, but this was to be carried out in administering the Word of God by giving them to understand how God loves them in Jesus and how he helps them heal the illness of sin.

Thus ended the long period of inspirations, of inner clarification as to the nature of the Congregation and the search for a way to accomplish what was recognized as the will of God. Paul had acquired a human and spiritual maturity through his contact with persons of diverse cultural and social background. He possessed a practical knowledge of what he must do to accomplish his purposes. He had also intensified his theological and spiritual preparation by personal study and by associating with those who were educated and experienced. But in a special way he was enlightened by the wisdom received from God in long hours of prayer. Finally, he had established close relationships with those individuals who would be of invaluable help in the foundation of the Congregation.

FOOTNOTES

1. Let. I, 19. For the way Paul signed his name cf. Let. I, 20-32.
2. Let. I, 19.
3. Documento Sardi in AG. A. I-I/5. Processi II, 72.
4. In front of the door of the church he had put a little table with a basket and a sign: "Make an offering to the poor of Jesus Christ." Whatever he found there he shared with "many other people of Castellazzo," documento Sardi in AG. A. I-I/5. Cf. Reg. et const. 86/I/11-62, for what concerns the catechesis and teaching of meditation.
5. The letter of Fr. Columban is published in Zoffoli, op. cit., II, 1007. The request of Paul is in Let. I, 19, 22.
6. Let. I, 22.
7. The text can be read in Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 227.
8. Let. I, 26-27; Processi II, 11.
9. John Mary in Processi I, 45, says "He left from Alessandria, to set out for Genoa where he went to meet his brother John Baptist."
10. Let. I, 52.
11. Processi I, 45.
12. Br. Bartholomew testified: "The Master of the Chamber, seeing him dressed in that fashion, told him: 'Go away, you tramp, we don't need you here; we get so many rogues,...; scam'," Processi IV, 286.
13. Strambi, Vita, 147. G. J. Gerharts, S.J., Insuper promitto. Die feierlichen sondergelübde katolischer Ordens (Roma, 1966), p. 203.
14. Let. I, 22.
15. Let. I, 30. Cf. E. Boaga, La soppressione innocenziana dei piccoli conventi in Italia (Roma, 1971), to have an idea of the concepts of observance, laxity, and rigidity in the norms for the establishment of religious houses and therefore of new institutes.
16. The document in Positio... Ioannis Baptistae, p. 3; Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 256.
17. Let. I, 53-57.
18. Arch. Vesc. Pitigliano, Visite Vescovile XXI, f. 70rv.; XXII-XXIII, f. 387v.

19. The letter of recommendation of Bishop Salvi of June 27, 1723 in Positio... Ioannes Baptistae, pp. 4-5; also in Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 284.
20. Processi II, 91,
21. Processi II, 92, 142.
22. Processi II, 94, 146.
23. Processi II, 103, 133.
24. Let. I, 34-35.
25. Cf. the text of the letter of the cardinal in Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 290; and in Bollettino 1929, pp. 150-151.
26. G. Rossi, Della vita di mons. Emilio Giacomo Cavalieri, della Congregazione dei Pii Operai, Vescovo di Troia (Napoli, 1741). The letters of this true friend of Paul are published in Bollettino 1929, pp. 232-239.
27. The notes of Cavalieri on the text of the Rule are in Reg. et const., pp. 151-154.
28. Cf. the letter of Bishop Crescenzi in AG. A.I-I, 17/3-2.
29. G. De Sanctis, Pier Marcellino Corradini cardinale zelante (Roma, 1971), p. 854.
30. Cracas, Diario Ordinario (Roma, 1725), n. 1217, p. 9. Diario delle funzione... di Benedetto XIII, f, 75v-76v., in the Casanatense Library, MS 1318.
31. Letters of July 2 and 7, 1725 in Bollettino, 1929, pp. 232-233.
32. Letter of July 7, 1725, ibid.
33. Strambi, Vita, 58.
34. Processi II, 91. Bishop Cavalieri directs his letter of July 2, 1725 to Gaeta, indicating that Paul had already returned to Gaeta.
35. In Bollettino 1929, pp. 234-235. Processi I, 54.
36. In Bollettino 1929, pp. 236-237.
37. Ibid.
38. Among the observations Bishop Cavalieri stated: "they will be subject to the Holy See etc., but under the immediate jurisdiction of the episcopal ordinary of the diocese...." Regulae et const., pp. 153-154.
39. The witnesses of Gaeta included Fr. Ricinelli who accompanied them. They said they departed from Our Lady of the Chain after Easter which fell on April 21. The letter of Bishop Cavalieri of April 30 is still directed to Our Lady of the Chain, therefore it can be supposed that the departure may have taken place at the beginning of May or toward the end of April.
40. Let. I, 63, 66, 68, 85.

41. According to Fr. John Mary's deposition, Paul went down from Itri on Saturday, September 14, "to leave immediately for Rome for affairs of the glory of God," Processi I, 54.

42. Let. I, 69. Don Ricinelli also had gone to the hospital with the two brothers and remained there about ten days.

43. Processi I, 56, Fr. John Mary's testimony.

44. Processi II, 108.

45. G. De Sanctis, Pier Marcellino Corradini, p. 479.

46. Let. I, 73. Cf. also De Sanctis, op. cit., p. 477.

47. Let. I, 73.

48. The Pope celebrated a low Mass in the presence of 113 ordinando, 29 for the priesthood. Diario delle funzioni... di Benedetto XIII, f. 159v-160r, in the Casanatense library, M.S. 1318.

49. Let. I, 75.

50. Let. I, 39.

51. Let. I, 76-78.

52. Let. I, 78-79, the letter which explains the reasons for requesting the dispensation of the vow of perseverance.

53. Letter of March 13, 1728 in AG., A. I-I, 17, 1-1. Also in Positio... Ioannis Baptistae, p. 20.

54. Let. I, 79.

Chapter IV

GEOGRAPHICAL AND NUMERICAL GROWTH OF THE CONGREGATION: 1728-1775

A. THE FIRST PASSIONIST COMMUNITY: 1728-1741

1. Saint Anthony's hermitage on Argentario: 1728-1737

Early in March 1728 Paul and John Baptist were back on Monte Argentario. After so much wandering Paul was filled with wonder, and he wrote: "Divine Providence has led us here - a sequel which was very, very hidden from us." (1) The Annunciation hermitage with its ten cells was occupied by Fr. Anthony Schiaffino who had been ordained by the bishop of Gaeta in 1726 and had come with some companions to Argentario, possibly soon after Paul's departure. His purpose was likewise to form a religious community but he would not accept Paul's offer to join forces. With the permission of the parish priest Paul and his brother withdrew to St. Anthony's hermitage higher up on the mountain. The hermitage consisted of two rooms and a small chapel. They set everything in order and kept the place in such cleanliness that the episcopal visitors in 1729 and 1733 said of it: "The church was visited and found well kept and clean. Their cells were visited, one upstairs and the other downstairs, and were orderly and neat; in the cell upstairs there were four beds kept tidy and spotless:" (2) In order to gain space they put up a shed outside to serve as kitchen and storeroom for the few things they had. In this hermitage the Congregation became a reality. Here Paul, John Baptist and their first companions lived the rule of life both in its contemplative and apostolic aspects. They concretized their life style. Here, too, Paul became more aware of human limitations as he saw the first postulants depart one by one, unable to bear the initial austerities.

The first lay brother postulant, Mark Arpeo from the diocese of Sarzana, entered at the end of 1728. On March 31, 1729, the bishop of Pitigliano approved Paul and John Baptist for hearing confessions and exhorted them, in exercising their apostolate, to develop still more what they had begun. The year 1730 seemed to mark the beginning of a more vigorous community. Four postulants entered: Anthony Danei, Fr. Angelo Di Stefano, and two more from the diocese of Sessa Aurunca. Paul, overjoyed, informed Bishop Crescenzi in August, and also told him of arrangements for a new retreat and of his desire to present a petition for papal approval of the rule. In autumn the two postulants from Sessa Aurunca left and Fr. Angelo Di Stefano as well. It was a severe blow to Paul. Bishop Crescenzi, however, encouraged him in a letter of November 18th: "When God truly wills to give you companions, he will not only send them, but he will also give them perseverance in their vocations....It is evident the hour has not yet come." (3) From 1731 till the end of 1733 the community was composed of the three Danei brothers. It is uncertain whether Bro. Mark Arpeo was still with them. From the report given the bishop of Pitigliano during the 1733 pastoral visitation, we see that they lived the Passionist life according to rule in its contemplative, penitential, and apostolic dimensions. (4) Towards the end of this year two postulants entered as lay brothers: Mark, of Neapolitan origin, and Joseph Orlandini from Orbetello. On July 14, 1734, the bishop of Pitigliano ordained Anthony Danei a priest; and in 1735 Fulgentius Pastorelli joined the community. He was a priest from Pereta, where Paul had preached a mission in 1731. Fulgentius became Paul's most faithful companion till his death in 1755. He was fully identified with the founder's charism, enriching it with his own natural and supernatural gifts and becoming an ideal master of novices.

Despite the ups and downs that gave the community a sense of uncertainty at times, the blessing of the new retreat dedicated to the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple took place on September 14, 1737. The community numbered five priests: the three Danei brothers, Fulgentius and Charles; and four lay brothers: Peter, Hyacinth and two others whose names are unknown to us.

2. The first "retreat": 1731-1737

The growth of the community, even though unsteady, demanded either enlargement of the hermitage or the building of a new "retreat" according to rule. Another shed had been previously put up beside the one serving as a kitchen. The setup imposed no small sacrifices on the religious in addition to presenting an unattractive aspect. Writing to his young friend Appiani, Paul himself acknowledged this: "If I were not afraid that you would find this poor hovel in which we are living utterly distasteful - for it is very cramped - I would invite you to come now." (5) It seems that early in 1730 Paul had come across a benefactor in Portercole well disposed to help in the building of a new retreat. However, the departure of the postulants from Sessa Aurunca, plus some uncharitable remarks that were circulating regarding the foundation, discouraged the benefactor. Meanwhile Paul was in touch with the bishop of Massa Marittima regarding a foundation on the island of Elba. Both Paul and the bishop approached the Princess of Piombino, Eleanore Ludovisi Boncompagni, and also sought the support of Bishop Crescenzi and Cardinal Corradini. The negotiations were exceedingly prolonged and finally came to naught, partly due to the character of the princess and partly due to opposition of the clergy on the island. (6)

In 1731 Paul turned to the Garrison State's capital, Orbetello, hoping for a foundation in that territory. The complicated negotiations concerning this foundation, begun in the first half of 1731 and ending with the solemn possession in 1737, are known in detail from the life of the founder. Commenting upon the slowness in dealings and the delays in construction, Paul wrote humourously to young Appiani in November 1736: "...Much fatigue is caused by journeys back and forth to provide what is needed to hasten our entrance, but divine Providence disposes that help should not be found in order that our appetites may be whetted by the delay and we may walk with greater fervor in the way of the Lord." (7)

The retreat, as it was called in the rule, was dedicated to the Presentation of our Blessed Lady. In ad-

dition to the church, it consisted of fifteen cells, infirmary and other necessary places: choir, sacristy, library, kitchen, refectory, storeroom, community room, etc., all fulfilling the prescriptions of the primitive rule: "The church shall be of moderate size, with no more than three chapels; care will be taken that everything be as decent and clean as possible. The cells of the retreat shall be about seven feet in width and about nine in length, if possible rather less than more. Offices are to be proportionate to the number of brothers who are to be in the house; so also the refectory; the corridor of the dormitory shall be of such width as to allow the passage of two persons; care should be taken that the walls of the cells, dormitory and offices be not too white in order that all reflect poverty and holy recollection." (8)

With time the building suffered the consequences of various interruptions during its construction and of the poor quality of building materials necessarily used. It had to be repaired frequently, and shortly after the founder's death had to be practically rebuilt in 1778. Poverty, almost misery, accompanied its beginnings, so much so that in 1741 there was still no equipment for making bread and Paul had to rely on the charity of the Grazi family. (9) Only in 1741 did he obtain permission to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the church of the retreat. This retreat was the formative and operational center of the Congregation until Paul transferred the generalate first to St. Angelo at Vetralla and later to Rome, and the novitiate to the new retreat of St. Giuseppe built for that purpose on the same Monte Argentario.

3. Papal approval of the rule and public profession of vows: 1741

While Paul was busy forming the few postulants who entered and taking care of the material needs of the Congregation, he was also working intensely to obtain papal approbation of the rule. This approbation would mean passing from the juridical status of a "pious union of priests living in common under the local bishop's jurisdiction" to that of a Congregation or religious order of

pontifical right which would be exempt from the jurisdiction of the local ordinary. An account of the stages of these negotiations will be found in another chapter. Benedict XIV granted the first approbation on May 15, 1741. Paul received the pontifical document together with cardinal Altieri's written permission to keep the Blessed Sacrament in the church on May 30th of the same year. The bearer was the Canon, Fr. Angelo Di Stefano, who was coming to join the Passionist community for the second time. The founder and his six companions, John Baptist and Anthony Danei, Fulgentius Pastorelli, Charles Salemmi, Peter Cavalieri, and the postulant, Bro. Joseph Pitruzzello, were extremely happy. They now constituted a religious community acknowledged by the Holy See at least concerning the rule, but the document excluded the approbation of the Congregation as a moral person. There was, however, a certain juridical stability and a recognition of the charism expressed in the rule. The founder exclaimed: "Let all creatures exalt the infinite mercy of God who has deigned to crown this his own work. Oh how loving is his bounty! He sends the calm after the tempest, and the sunshine after the clouded skies. Blessed be his Holy Name for ever." (10)

Paul saw in these events the confirmation of the inspiration which God had given him at Castellazzo. He wrote: "My poor soul has been somewhat cheered, rejoicing in the fulfillment of the divine designs, and our religious as well. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit." (11) The "divine designs" were equivalent here to God's will manifested to Paul at Castellazzo. The approval also brought to Paul's mind the words of his old friend Bishop Cavalieri who encouraged him to trust in God even when everything seemed in darkness: "Oh what a divine work this is! With what mighty and secret providence has God directed it to now. I now experience what a bishop, a great servant of God, told me years ago, that this was entirely God's work and that he would accomplish it by mighty, hidden and secret ways never dreamt of by me." (12)

On the feast of Corpus Christi, June 1, 1741, Paul and his companions sang the *Te Deum* after the Mass and

placed the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. The community was now complete with the sacramental presence of Jesus who had constituted it and was its bond of union. The divine presence served to stress the content of the "apostolic life" - to be with Jesus, to be instructed by him, to live of his life, to go forth to proclaim him. As Paul himself expressed it: "On Thursday, consecrated to the solemnity of the Body of Christ, our infinite sacramental Love was placed in the tabernacle of this Church, and his little ones experienced together spiritual heavenly consolations on reflecting that, after so many sufferings, the most loving Shepherd, Father and Master has come to stay day and night with his little fold of poor children and ignorant disciples." (13)

After a ten day intense spiritual retreat, five religious together with Paul pronounced their public vows on June 11, 1741, while Canon Di Stefano and Brother Joseph began their novitiate. The title of "The Poor of Jesus" gave way to that of "The Congregation of The Least Regular Discalced Clerics Under The Invocation of The Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ." Each of the religious substituted for his surname that of a mystery in the life of Jesus or the name of a saint to indicate his incorporation into a new family: Paul of the Cross, John Baptist of St. Michael the Archangel, Anthony of the Passion, Fulgentius of Jesus, Charles of the Mother of God, Joseph of Holy Mary. The "sign," emblem of the charism of the Congregation, was placed on the tunics of the newly professed for the first time. Indeed it would seem that the retreat tended to dispose their hearts to receive the full significance of the "sign" which the pontifical commission had some difficulty in granting. Paul wrote to the secretary of the commission, Bishop Garagni, "Would that we could have with us our sacramental Love while we perform our spiritual exercises for the renewal or making of our simple vows, as the case may be. But above all, to dispose ourselves to receive that most holy sign of salvation, announcing to all peoples that we are destined to preach the most bitter sufferings of our Jesus and to promote true devotion in all hearts." (14)

Paul hastened to have the approbation of the rule officially registered in the abbatial Curia of Orbetello, since the community was no longer a "Pious Union of Priests" under the local ordinary's jurisdiction. (15) To make the Congregation known and to awaken interest in vocations so as to assure its growth, Paul informed his mother, as well as the bishops of Sovana and Pitigliano, Bishop Gattinara, the bishop of his home diocese, other bishops in whose dioceses he had preached, and persons whom he had helped spiritually. (16)

Although Paul was intensely engaged in the organizational development of the Congregation, his apostolic work did not decrease. There was then a gradual increase of popular missions, spiritual exercises to religious and the clergy, and spiritual conferences and confessions. There were letters of spiritual direction and the receiving of individuals who wished to spend some time in prayer with the community.

B. FIRST STABLE GROWTH OF PERSONNEL AND HOUSES: 1741-1744

1. The first novitiate

This period marked a very important phase for stabilizing the constant influx of postulants, and their perseverance, and for the geographical expansion of the Congregation in the dioceses of Viterbo and Orte within the Papal States. Overcome by discouragement, Canon Di Stefano left in early 1742. Seeing the congregation reduced to its "minimum and weak foundations," (17) Paul begged prayers of the monasteries where he had preached and of other friends, while with the few companions left he kept up his tireless apostolic work. He remarked, "Everybody is on the move to offer us retreats but the laborers are not to be seen. I do not understand this mystery." (18) Not only were there no new entrants, but towards the end of 1742 Paul himself dismissed Anthony Danei as he could not live in peace, and Charles Salemmi left of his own free will. So only three priests remained:

Paul, John Baptist and Fulgentius together with three lay brothers: Joseph Pitruzzello, professed on June 13, 1742, Joseph di St. Anthony vested on January 25, 1742, and James Gianiel vested on December 18, 1742. After twelve years the community had dwindled to six, the same number as in 1730, but those six were destined to persevere and become the nucleus of the nascent Congregation. At this time Paul wrote: "Great and horrible storms have risen against this poor little ship, but the Divine Pilot guides it to save it from shipwreck. Even if my sins are clamoring to heaven, God's mercy does not forsake me." (19) Did he refer perhaps to the Capuchin opposition to the Vetralla foundation? Or did some malicious talk spread in Orbetello after the departure of several religious from the little community?

Meanwhile, suffering but hopeful, seeing the insistent demands for missions and foundations, and becoming ever more aware of the needs of the church and the scarce numbers of religious, Paul exclaimed, "The harvest is great but the laborers are few. Ah, my God! Should twelve truly apostolic men who despise themselves, their life and the world come to our Congregation, they would be sufficient to bring the knowledge of the Crucified to the whole world. One learned and holy man would be a St. Paul for our time." (20) Finally, after so many hopes and sufferings, the year 1743 became the turning point, the time of hopes fulfilled. Many candidates, highly worthy both spiritually and intellectually, entered and they were to form the supporting group of the young Congregation. On June 19, 1743, Fr. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli, began his novitiate. Formerly he had been an expert in formation and professor in the Congregation of Christian Doctrine. Thankful to God, Paul wrote, "With most unusual devotion Pastorelli was vested this morning....God has visited us with his magnanimous providence." (21) Seven other candidates entered later: John Thomas Rivarola, already a priest, Bonaventure Magnasco, Dominic Bartolotti, Bernardine Rotilio, Francis Cosimelli, Joseph Mary Ferrari and Joseph Mary Villavecchia. Paul and his little community felt encouraged. He wrote, "The retreat is almost full of servants of God who have recently come....See what God does and what tricks he plays on us poor peo-

ple." In July he could say, "Now the retreat is full and there is no more room. All the cells are occupied. Therefore it will be better to put the four lay brothers in one room in order to keep the cells for the priests and clerics." (22) They were now fourteen in all. Fr. Fulgentius Pastorelli, first master of novices, animated the fervent young group. With amiable peacefulness he formed them in solid virtue and apostolic zeal, and made them aware of their duty to give the church and the people a valid evangelical contribution in announcing to them God's love as revealed in Christ's painful experience. The novices now constituted the vast majority of the little community, as Paul and John Baptist were frequently out on missions, spiritual exercises, or business of the Congregation. (23)

2. Foundation of the retreats of St. Angelo at Vetralla and of St. Eutizio: 1744

After the mission Paul preached at Vetralla in 1742, the civil and ecclesiastical authorities and the people requested a foundation there on Monte Fogliano. Bureaucratic difficulties and Capuchin opposition prolonged the negotiations, and the final success was due to the constant support of the local authorities, the bishop of Viterbo, and other friends in Rome. In the meantime negotiations were in process for the foundation of St. Eutizio, near Soriano nel Cimino, a feudal benefice of the Albani family. Paul's friend, Count Garagni, seems to have been responsible for suggesting to Cardinal Alessandro Albani that he entrust that small sanctuary to the Passionists. Alessandro spoke to his brother, Cardinal Annibale, and in the autumn of 1743 the cardinal and Paul agreed in principle to the foundation. On February 1, 1744, Paul began a mission in Soriano to prepare the population for the coming of the Passionists, and privately took possession of the sanctuary and the attached house.

Dispensing some months of the novitiate period, Paul admitted eight novices to profession on the second Sunday of Lent, March 1, 1744. To stimulate them to sanctity and encourage them for the sacrifices that awaited them in the new foundations, he delivered a stirring sermon on

the apostolic mission which Jesus entrusted to them, "Go you also into my vineyard." (24) The following day in a moving farewell, Paul and nine religious departed for the two foundations from the only community which up to that time represented the entire Congregation. After a four day journey, barefoot and scourged by the north wind, they arrived at Vetralla, and were welcomed by the benefactor, Peter Brugiotti. The clergy and principal gentlemen of the town solemnly received them "with manifestations of unique piety and devotion." Having entered the main church, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, the arch-priest delivered an address of welcome and all those present accompanied the religious to the benefactor's home. The Canons and other gentlemen first washed the feet of the guests and then served them at table. Everybody was greatly moved and the religious were filled with confusion by these demonstrations of good will. Next day, March 6th, Friday, the religious, authorities of the town and people in great numbers walked in procession the four kilometers up to the hermitage. Dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, it stood amidst the forests of Monte Fogliano, 605 meters above sea level. The local magistrate read the document by which the hermitage and surrounding garden were handed over to the Congregation. The hymn of thanksgiving, *Te Deum*, was sung, followed by a "brief but very devout sermon" by the prior, Mancini. Finally Paul sang the Mass and consecrated the hosts that were to be kept in the church and with which he first held a procession in the square in front of the church. After giving the blessing he deposited the sacred hosts in the tabernacle. This ceremony of reposing the Blessed Sacrament was for Paul most important because it meant "putting the Sovereign Lord in his home." (25) Though the panoramic view was delightful, the state of the hermitage was deplorable. John Baptist, who had arrived a few days early, could do little to remedy the situation. The religious would endure severe sacrifices over many years. Paul left five religious there under the guidance of his brother, Fr. John Baptist, who had been elected superior by the community of the Presentation as prescribed by the rule. (26) These religious were joined by the last remaining hermit of St. Angelo, Bro. John Baptist, who persevered faithfully to the end.

On March 7th Paul and the remaining religious set out for Soriano. The following day, the third Sunday of Lent, together with the authorities and the people from the parish church, they arrived at the sanctuary of St. Eutizio, where the celebration of Mass and the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament completed the official taking of possession. The church and the few available quarters were in good condition. Fr. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli, elected superior by the Presentation community, remained there with four cleric students and some brothers. Paul stayed with them for about a month, then returned to St. Angelo on April 7th, where he found the religious "in fervent and exact observance," notwithstanding the misery of their lack of sustenance. On April 10th with Fr. John Baptist he left for St. Eutizio, spending Saturday and Sunday of Easter week with the community there, then continued the journey to the mission in Civita Castellana. (27)

In all three communities life was fervent and joyous in spite of the extreme poverty of the houses. The religious were convinced of a special call from God and happy to offer the Church a distinctive contribution by living in conformity with Christ crucified. Grateful to God, Paul pointed this out: "It's a marvellous sight to see the fervent spirit with which the religious strive to acquire virtue, chiefly the young, who if not kept in check would go too far....In all three houses God is served with great fervor...our good God stirs up brave and fervent workers for our Institute." (28)

During the second half of 1744 two more clerics and a lay brother entered, so that the year began with six professed and closed with seventeen professed religious and several novices.

C. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONGREGATION: 1745-1747

1. Revision and new approval of the rule: 1746

The 1741 papal approbation was given only by "re-script" pending the numerical increase of members and houses of the Congregation, thus proving its divine inspiration and its usefulness to the Church. By this time both conditions were being fulfilled and Paul sought approval of a revised text of the rule and of the Congregation as an order with solemn vows. By this approval he hoped to acquire greater juridical stability for the Congregation, exemption from local ordinaries, and the authority to have his clerics ordained under the title "of poverty" or "common board" without dimissorial letters from their bishops of origin, and likewise to found the Passionist nuns. Benedict XIV approved the rule, but not the Congregation, in a brief dated April 18, 1746. Hence neither solemn vows nor authority for ordinations without episcopal dimissorials was granted. Regarding exemption a concession was made for those communities composed of twelve professed religious. Even with these limitations the approval was a step forward in the stability of the Congregation and in the knowledge and appreciation of the Church. Moved by lively gratitude Paul ordered a triduum of thanksgiving in all the houses from June 30th to July 2nd. When he received the brief, he had it solemnly published in all three communities in their respective conventual chapters. The account of how this was done in St. Eutizio on May 21st has come down to us. "Gathered together in the conventual chapter the *Veni Creator* was sung, then Paul handed over the brief to the local superior who had it read in a clear and intelligible voice before all the community and accepted by the same." (29) On July 19th the pope singled out the congregation by granting the superior general the authority to designate capable religious as **apostolic missionaries** for Italy. It was an honorary and distinctive title inasmuch as it gave a kind of investiture from the Holy See for the ministry of popular missions. On September 16th the Holy See approved our proper ritual for the vestition and profession of novices. (30)

2. Paul's first official election as superior general: May 1746

To date no canonical elections had been held in the Congregation. Paul acted and was acknowledged by all, within and outside the Congregation, as sole superior. However, with the new approbation of the rule and with the reality of three communities with their respective superiors, the official election of the superior general was necessary. By rule he was to be called "Preposito." (31) The election was held in each community by the professed religious assembled in the conventual chapter beginning at the retreat of the Presentation. On May 5th, Thursday, it was held in St. Eutizio. The minutes of this election have come down to us: the three members of the conventual chapter having assembled, the minutes of the other two community chapters were read "in which as superior general of the Congregation the Most Reverend Paul of the Cross, founder of the same, was elected for this intermediate time till the general chapter, and this in consequence of the brief extended by Rome. The chapter fathers with one mind and consent by voice and by secret ballot concurred in the election and with this the chapter ended with the usual formalities, and of which authentic testimony is given the same father in order that he may canonically exercise his new duty and office."

Paul, however, did not officially accept the election until the 21st of May, since he did not have in his possession the original brief that Cardinal Altieri was to bring to St. Eutizio. Writing to Fr. Fulgentius on May 7th, he said: "I have not yet accepted the office of general although all the chapters have ended. I await the publication of the brief; hence do not look on me as being in that office. When the brief arrives you will be duly informed of everything, but for the love of God treat me as usual without the least title, etc." (32) When the document arrived the chapter assembled in St. Eutizio on Thursday, May 21st, and the brief approving the rule was read as also the minutes of the chapters of the three communities "in which was contained the election of our superior general; all agreed to elect as superior general the Most Reverend Paul of the Cross. In the presence of

all the chapter, he accepted the office until a new election, and all the chapter, one by one, promised him obedience, and acknowledged him as superior general." (33) On accepting the office Paul relinquished that of rector of the Presentation to Fr. Fulgentius, master of novices, who had so often substituted for him in his long absences. In the first days of June the founder was obliged to make some changes in order that Fr. Fulgentius might recover his failing health. Fulgentius went to St. Eutizio for treatment and Marcoaurelius assumed the office of master of novices but retained his title as rector of St. Eutizio.

3. First general chapter, Monte Argentario: 1747

The three year term prescribed by the rule for local superiors elected in 1744 expired in 1747. Superiors were also members of the general chapter. There was also need to choose general consultors, never yet elected, and to clarify certain points of the rule in view of the practical organization of the institute. On March 7, 1747, Paul convoked the general chapter for April 10th to be held at the Presentation retreat. The capitulars were only three as Fr. Fulgentius was in St. Eutizio on account of his health. These were: Paul, John Baptist and Marcoaurelius, assisted by Fr. Francis Anthony Appiani as secretary. The result of the election was: Paul as superior general and rector of the Presentation, John Baptist as first consultor and rector of St. Angelo, Fulgentius as second consultor, Thomas Struzziari as rector of St. Eutizio and Marcoaurelius as master of novices. Several aspects of community life were specified in view of the growth of the Congregation and because there were not as yet common regulations.

Fr. Struzziari immediately resigned his office and Paul accepted the resignation in order that he (Struzziari) "might have more leisure to work in the Lord's vineyard in holy missions" and that he might "live more peacefully." On May 14th, since he was there for his health, Fr. Fulgentius was elected as rector of the monastery to replace Fr. Thomas. In the autumn, however, a student house was set up in St. Angelo at Vetralla and

Fr. Marcoaurelius was chosen as professor and director of students. Fr. Fulgentius was again named master of novices and also elected rector of the Presentation to replace Fr. Paul who had temporarily assumed the rectorship of St. Eutizio. Paul was later replaced there by Fr. Francis Anthony Appiani. (34)

D. THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL: 1748-1750

1. Foundation of St. Mary di Corniano near Ceccano: 1748

Wearisome negotiations were under way for foundations in Toscanella (today Tuscania), in Terracina on the sea and on the Celian Hill in Rome near the church of St. Thomas in formis. Meanwhile the way was cleared for expansion towards the south of the Papal States near the border with the kingdom of Naples. The first idea of a foundation in Ceccano was due to Fr. Cajetan Giannini, apostolic missionary, friend and companion of Fr. Thomas Struzzieri before the latter became a Passionist. On June 4, 1747, the town council approved the foundation of a Passionist community in the Abbey of St. Mary di Corniano and the attached hermitage outside the town. Legal proceedings were soon begun with Bishop Fabrizio Borgia, the ordinary, with Prince Colonna, in whose fief the hermitage was situated, as well as with the Congregation for Good Government in Rome. In order to obviate future difficulties and opposition the opinion of the superiors of the Reformed Minor Friars of Pofi and Vallecorsa was also requested.

Early in October 1747, Paul's delegate, Fr. Thomas, together with Fr. Anthony Danei, who had rejoined the Congregation in 1743, went to Ceccano to oversee the foundation. Having visited the sites and while negotiations concerning the property were being carried out, Frs. Struzzieri and Danei preached a series of missions in the surrounding towns, acceding to the bishop's dispositions and with Paul's approval. On December 18, 1747, the contract was drawn up by which the diocesan curia transferred to the Passionist Congregation the

church of St. Mary di Corniano. On the following day the deeds were signed by which the Ceccano town council gave the Congregation the ownership of the hermitage and a plot of ground. On December 21st Fr. Thomas took possession privately although with a concourse of people because "of the existing fear that the holy religious of Pofi with the best of intentions might impede the fulfillment of the public desires." They began the more urgent repairs immediately in order to put the ill-conditioned edifice at least in a state able to shelter the religious from the rain. Work went on, but as it happened to be the worst season for that type of work, it went very slowly. Writing to Paul, Struzziere warned him not to come before the 13th of January or, better still, after the 14th because otherwise "besides the great confusion, he and the religious would be constrained to sleep on the road." Writing to the bishop on December 23rd and 28th, Paul told him he had no news and begged him to remind Fr. Thomas of the essential things to be done for the foundation: "to have the lodgings prepared for the religious of the new retreat, ten or eleven poor mattresses according to rule, a proportionate number of blankets, pillows filled with straw and other little things that with poverty in mind I noted down for him before his departure." (35) Truly, only what was indispensable!

Paul, just over a long illness, left St. Eutizio on the 4th or 5th of January with one priest, two deacons, two subdeacons and two lay brothers. The group wished to spend the long journey in edifying recollection "to the greater glory of God, gladly accepting whatever inconvenience or suffering it might entail, and for this they are all more anxious than myself." (36) On foot, with severe cold as far as Tivoli, and in the rain from Tivoli to Ferentino, where they arrived on the evening of Thursday, January 11, they were exhausted by the strain of a long and uncomfortable journey. They reached Ceccano on the afternoon of the 13th and on the following day, Sunday, although it was snowing, Paul, bearing the crucifix, with a rope about his neck and a crown of thorns on his head, set out for the abbey accompanied by the bishop, the local authorities and townspeople. At a certain spot on the road Paul got a glimpse of the abbey

and received a painful impression: "A mountain fell upon my heart, and I knew it was not an adequate place; rather I thought it was a sepulchre," he wrote. (37) On arriving, his grief had grown so excessive at the sight of the miserable state of the building, that he had a moment's hesitation whether to continue with the ceremony or to go back. He celebrated the Mass and regained his calm. "Here some prodigious events for the foundation of this retreat took place of which I'll tell you personally," he wrote to Fr. Fulgentius. (38) What these events were that so changed Paul's mind and later led him to refuse other offers of better sites for building, we shall never know: "After entrusting myself to God and having consulted experts, I would not think of changing the retreat of St. Mary di Corniano for any other place. That Sovereign Lady has received us, has protected us and she will always assist us." (39)

The new retreat consisted of four bedrooms, each fit to hold three beds, a kitchen, refectory and a place for the choir. The walls were extremely damp and on rainy days any amount of water came in through the roof. According to the mildest estimate no more than eight religious could live there unless one wished to see them all ill. The place was infested with fleas and the "floors littered with goats' dung, as goats had been sheltered there before our arrival." (40) Fr. John Mary, a member of the first community, recalls that the place was more open than closed, and one Christmas day, because of wind and snow coming in from windows without panes or oil-cloth, the shutters had to be closed and a lamp lighted. (41) The community endured serious discomforts and illnesses, as the opposition of the mendicants obliged suspension of all repair work. The religious bore the weight of all this suffering with courageous joy, and gave a shining witness of the Crucified Love proclaimed by their habit and by the "sign." They were an efficacious influence not only in the reform of Christian life, but also in entering into the socio-ecclesial context of a region that had defied the passing of time. "Our dear God is to be greatly praised," wrote Paul, "at seeing these blessed children so exact in observance in the

midst of so much anguish and discomfort from holy poverty." (42)

2. Foundation of the retreat of Our Lady of the Oak at Toscanella: 1748

On February 11th Paul set out for Rome. Having recently recovered from a bout of fever, he traveled by carriage, which Bishop Borgia of Ferentino had placed at his disposal. On the morning of the 16th Benedict XIV, who promised him a brief for the ordination of clerics with the title of "common board," received him "with extreme charity." (43) Paul took note of the negotiations concerning the foundation of St. Thomas on the Celian Hill, which was soon to vanish forever due to opposition of the canons of St. Peter's basilica to which it belonged. He also learned from Cardinal Odonna's secretary that the mendicant friars were "up in arms" because of the Ceccano foundation. (44) Full of hope, he then set out for Toscanella to conclude the foundation there, so dear to the bishop of Viterbo. The first idea of this foundation went back to the mission Paul preached there in 1743. For a long time Paul had his doubts regarding its suitability as it was in the vicinity of the marshes and hence exposed to malaria. However, the bishop was most insistent and took it upon himself to get the approval of the civil authorities and even the intervention of the pope to silence the mendicants' opposition. In June 1746 Paul made his decision and on the 26th of that month, together with John Baptist, took possession privately, because: "God has given me his gentle impulses and things have concurred to convince me it is God's will." (45)

The negligence of the promoters of the foundation made the material difficulties ever greater. Towards the end of March 1748 Paul sent John Baptist to provide the necessities, but those responsible persuaded him to postpone the foundation until May. Paul was not notified in time and so on March 19th he set off on foot with a handful of religious, scourged by a cutting north wind which froze the half-naked travelers. In two days they

arrived in Toscanella. When they found nobody, Paul was grieved. He wanted to go on to St. Angelo at Vetralla but, because of the late hour and exhaustion of his religious, he decided to spend the night there. During the night young Joseph Turletti became ill and this impeded their departure in the morning. Meanwhile the bishop arrived insisting they take possession and sought to provide what was most essential. He himself called on some of the leaders and even gave an offering to provide doors and windows and the more urgent repairs. On March 24th, the third Sunday of Lent, Paul and his religious, the bishop and a small crowd set out from the cathedral to the small sanctuary some two kilometers outside the town. When the religious were left to themselves they discovered that everything was wanting: the most elementary food-stuffs, blankets and a minimum of furniture. "Here we are as if in the open air; almost without blankets; nothing has been provided according to the list I left....Never yet has a retreat been founded in such poverty....The religious are content and cheerful, etc. I hope great good will be done for the people" (46). Fr. Dominic Bartolotti was named superior. On hearing that Paul intended to leave on March 29th he was filled with anguish at finding himself, humanly speaking, in so desperate a situation among unknown and indifferent people. He accompanied Paul part of the way beseeching him not to leave him there. But Paul obliged him to return, encouraging him to trust in God: "Enough....Go home; observe the rule; don't doubt, keep up your courage, because God tries his servants as he will." The next day Lucy Burlini from Piansano arrived with a companion and for a long time helped the community. The religious had much to suffer, as the hermitage had only two very small rooms and a larger one that served as a common dormitory. They were also in dire need of blankets and personal linen. But they shared the Passion of Jesus with joyous faith, contributing to the Christianization of the surrounding peoples by their example, assiduous prayer and apostolic works proper to the Congregation. Nevertheless, in general the Toscanella citizens stiffened in their attitude "of extreme and terrific coldness" as Paul expressed it, but "God will help us, and we wish more to help them spiritually than to receive large alms, which

they are not inclined to give." (47) Only some years later, thanks to a benefactor from Corneto, were the religious able to add a small wing with a sufficient number of cells. According to a clause in the foundation deeds, the religious annually left the retreat from June 29th to November 1st for fear of malaria; only two or three remained to look after the place. (48) Of this retreat only ruins and the apse of the church are left today.

3. The opposition of the mendicant friars: 1748-1750

Bent on the reform of the religious, the sixteenth and seventeenth century popes limited the erection of new monasteries in order to avoid burdening the districts where they begged, and also to hinder foolish competition between them. On July 23, 1603, Clement VIII decreed that no monastery should have more religious than those that could be maintained by the ordinary alms the district could supply. He commanded the bishops not to authorize new foundations without first obtaining the consent of the superiors of the existing monasteries in the neighborhood. On August 17, 1622, in order to give more effect to the norms of his predecessor, Gregory XV ruled that no new foundations be admitted that were not capable of maintaining at least twelve religious. Also any that qualified had to obtain permission of the superiors of existing foundations within a radius of twelve kilometers. Those with less than twelve religious were to pass under the jurisdiction of the local ordinary.

The Passionist foundations of St. Angelo at Vetralla, St. Eutizio and Toscanella were established with the pope's special permission, thus supplanting the consent of the mendicant friars existing in these zones. The Ceccano foundation, however, was outside the twelve km. limit and, therefore, could be organized without their permission, even though the bishop had asked it to avoid possible minor difficulties.

The Passionists preached many missions and retreats in southern Lazio during 1747 and 1748. The outstanding preacher among them was Fr. Thomas Struzzieri who was

admired everywhere and frequently requested for permanent foundations. Mendicant monasteries abounded in this zone and the popular attraction towards the new Congregation began to alarm the friars. They felt hurt because the new arrivals declared their purpose was to revive the memory of Christ's Passion, while the Franciscan family was conscious of announcing not only the Crucified but the reflected glory in their possession of St. Francis who had received Christ's stigmata. They also feared that by turning too enthusiastically towards the new Congregation the people would reduce their alms to the Franciscan monasteries. They feared this in spite of the fact that the Passionists did not go begging from door to door as did the mendicants, but were content with spontaneous offerings made to the Congregation through the "accountants." The contemporaries called the mendicants' state of mind "rite jealousy" or "envy of popular devotion."

In southern Lazio the Minor Observants, the Reformed Friars of St. Bonaventure, and the Capuchins organized and conducted the opposition with great tenacity. In February, 1748, the Reformed Minors presented the pope with their first plea through their cardinal protector, Colonna. The pope handed it over to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars which was competent in this matter. Following the usual procedure, the Congregation requested information from Bishop Borgia. The friars lamented that, notwithstanding the sentence given in 1737 against a Capuchin attempt at founding in Ceccano, "some religious called passionaries" were founding a house in that town without the permission of the Reformed Minors' superiors. Whilst the Capuchins "profess strict poverty and only receive what is given in accord with the means and poverty of the places where they dwell....On the contrary the passionaries quest and receive money and everything else without exception." What is more, they said, in every town they have a person entrusted with this quest, who is chosen from among the most influential people and thus harming other religious. On March 21st Bishop Borgia calmly replied that he himself unnecessarily had requested the consent of the friars of Pofi and Vallecorsa for the Passionist foundation at Ceccano. The town's population had increased, industry and agriculture

had progressed so that the Passionists could be very well provided for without impeding the usual alms to those who formerly begged. The foundation, moreover, was promoted by the bishop with the explicit consent of the cathedral chapter and in response to repeated entreaties of clergy and people not alone of Ceccano but of all the diocese. It was the case of a new religious community that helped out in diocesan pastoral work by "missions, sermons and catechism and contributed marvellously to the needed reform of the clergy."

In April 1748 it was the turn of the Capuchins of Alatri to advance a new plea against "The Missionary Fathers of the Passion of Jesus Christ dressed with a new garb in the shape of a heart all embroidered with instruments of penance to distinguish them from other religious. They captivate the esteem of the people to the detriment of others, because it is their most unique privilege to stir up trouble, to cause turmoil, disturb and upset the people and religious. In Vetralla they had appropriated an area of woods with grave damage to the people. Besides, this *holy* company of the Passion of Jesus Christ has deceived the people of Vetralla inducing them not to give the traditional funeral candle to the Capuchins in order to possess it themselves. Now if these just arrived *passionaries* go around plundering others it will not be long before they despoil and plunder us (the Capuchins) in their own monasteries."

This appeal ended up in the hands of the bishop of Alatri for his information and vote. The bishop gave it to Fr. Struzziere who in turn sent it on to the founder in order that he get from the Vetralla city council the necessary testimonials as to the true situation. Meanwhile, the Capuchins engaged in a lively campaign working to constitute a league of all the friars of the civil province of Marittima and Campagna: Franciscans, Reformed Friars of St. Bonaventure and discalced Augustinians to promote a joint appeal to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars against the Passionists who were being established in that province. It is true that in the years 1747-1748 transactions were under way for the foundation of five retreats in southern Lazio: Ceccano, Terracina, St. Sosio,

Paliano and Vico, besides Toscanella in the north. This could have given the impression that the new Congregation was invading the province. Even Bishop Oddo, who patronized the Terracina foundation, brought this to the attention of the founder. In his answer of September 3, 1748, Paul explained: "Your Excellency has well said that in these beginnings the less done, the better! and it's the naked truth; and even if I were so blind, however, when the question of the Vico foundation arose I wrote saying to do nothing about it, but my letter arrived there late...I had no other purpose but the foundations of Ceccano and Terracina; but then bishops wrote time and again to Fr. Thomas saying how anxious they were for our retreats, for the communities, and so he with all holy intention agreed to see about it." Struzzieri had previously received full authority from Fr. Paul to act "as he thought best for the greater glory of God and the welfare of the Congregation." The Capuchins had truly used the projected foundation of Vico to motivate themselves and others to oppose the Congregation, but "because I trust they act with good intentions, I look on them with special affection as instruments of the divine will...." (49) On July 24th, 1748, the Apostolic Camera decreed that all works in progress for the Passionists foundations be suspended and that those already begun be demolished.

Paul's first reaction was to promote a crusade of prayers among the religious. "Our poor retreats have taken up spiritual arms and each religious strives to defend his post by more fervent prayers, mortifications, and above all by the exact regular observance - these are the arms each one of us wields to obtain victory from the Most High." (50) He appealed to the most fervent convents he knew, begging prayers for the Congregation, seriously imperilled by the vastness of the opposition that was supported by the moral, juridical, and friendly weight that so many friars had. Particularly meaningful was what he wrote to the Capuchin nuns of Santa Flora (Grosseto) whom he highly esteemed for their austerity of life and intense prayer. He gave them a brief account of the numerical state of the Congregation, explained how the religious were striving to lead "a life of great per-

fection," and told them that the foundations of Ceccano and Terracina had caused "the rising of all the friars' monasteries in that large province." "I have not the least doubt," he wrote, "that those blessed religious are moved by good intentions. In my poor heart I love them more than before, but my suffering is great. The devil makes a big uproar in trying to impede, or rather to destroy, works of God that are helpful to souls such as missions and other pious exercises which promote in all hearts a true devotion to the suffering Jesus, our true Life." Paul entreated them to offer prayers, penances, communions to God for assistance to the Congregation. He exclaimed "Appeal to Our Sorrowful Mother; point out to the Eternal Father his own Divine Son Crucified and the forgetfulness there is in the world of his most holy Passion. And now that this poor little fold, gathered on the mountains and in solitude wishes to war on hell and promote the memory of the sufferings of Jesus, so many tempests are provoked against us. I know it is a good sign. I know that now God wishes to do great things." He told them it was because he knew that "this work is the fruit of prayer" that he was entreating them to pray. (51)

In the meantime Paul wisely set in motion the network of his social connections not only with the bishops involved in the Passionist foundations, but with other cardinals and officials of the Roman Congregations, also directly approaching the cardinal protectors of opposing congregations. Well grounded in theology and canon law, Struzziere helped him in furnishing efficacious arguments and documents to the attorneys, Palleschi and Petrarca, who defended the Passionists. Meanwhile the Capuchins of Soriano and Valentano were combating the foundations of St. Eutizio and Toscanella. And, as if this were not enough, rumors were spreading about the Congregation. Among others was the rumor that Fr. Struzziere had left the Congregation followed by seventeen other religious. "Where those fancies were dreamt I do not know," wrote Paul. "I have answered my friend who told me about them that, instead of their having left, ten more have recently joined in addition to others who have requested admission." (52) The building of the Ceccano, Terracina and Paliano retreats was suspended, but permission was ob-

tained not to demolish them, as was prescribed in the original decree.

After many postponements and expectations, on January 2, 1749, Cardinal Gentili obtained a rescript remanding the cause from the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to a special commission composed of Cardinals Albani, Gentili, Besozzi, Cavalchini and the secretary, Bishop Ferroni. The commission was ordered to answer this question: can a new Congregation be permitted to found its retreats with the sole consent of the ordinaries of the places notwithstanding the opposition of the mendicant orders? With a favorable decision, all opposition might have immediately ceased for the foundations of Ceccano, Terracino and Paliano which Cardinal Gentili had so much at heart. But on April 28, 1749, commission meetings were rendered useless because of a postponement requested and obtained by the opposing party. (53) The commission, however, decided that each town or city interested in a Passionist foundation should make its own request for it, at the same time expressing:

- the economic situation and the real possibilities for the upkeep of the new monastery without detriment to other existing institutes;
- the distance the other monasteries are from the intended foundation;
- the need they have for the Passionists. (54)

The various towns or cities soon presented pertinent documentation in favor of the Passionists. The commitments of the respective members of the commission on one hand, and, on the other, the intense activity of the Passionist adversaries held up the commission meeting until April 7, 1750. It decided to allow the Passionist Congregation peaceful possession of the retreat of Ceccano and permission to continue building the Terracina and Paliano retreats. Without any vain boasting, Paul wrote to Bishop Borgia of Ferentino: "Thanks be to God, the cause has been decided in our favor." (55) Thus ended a painful litigation which had jeopardized the very existence of the

Congregation and brought intense anguish to all the religious, particularly to those living in Ceccano. "It is now a time for patience, for peaceful silence," wrote Paul in August 1749, "a time to remain withdrawn, like the apostles in prayer and fasting for fear of the Jews, and we for fear of the very servants of God because we are insignificant." (56) This unpleasant trial served to unite still more the bishops, clergy and people to the infant Congregation which appeared full of vitality and was the leaven of evangelical zeal in the dioceses where it worked so energetically that it unintentionally cast a shadow on the valid contribution made by other religious institutes of that time. (57)

E. TRIENNIAL ELECTION OF LOCAL SUPERIORS: 1750

In April 1750 the term of office of rectors elected in 1747 was due to expire. So on February 10, 1750, an intermediate chapter between general chapters, was convoked. Its members were: Paul as superior general, and perhaps rector of St. Eutizio, John Baptist as consultor and rector of St. Angelo at Vetralla, Fulgentius as consultor general and rector of the Presentation. Absent was Fr. Francis Anthony Appiani who in some documents figures as rector of St. Eutizio; perhaps the office was juridically retained by Paul, who had taken over when Fulgentius was named master of novices and rector of the Presentation. The capitulars elected Fr. Fulgentius as rector of the Presentation, Fr. Francis Anthony Appiani as rector of St. Angelo at Vetralla, Fr. Stephen Barberi as rector of St. Eutizio, Fr. Anthony Danei as rector of Ceccano, Fr. Luke Anthony Bianchini as rector of Toscanella (Tuscania). Fr. Fulgentius resigned his office as consultor general, considering he would be too distant from the general's residence in St. Angelo and, consequently, of little help when urgent affairs required it. This resignation was accepted and Fr. Marcoarelius was elected in his place as "the more serious, older and, nearest to the general," in the words of the chapter acts. (58)

It seems that those elected but not present then in Monte Argentario did not accept the election results because Fr. Anthony and Fr. Stephen never exercised their office and Fr. Luke Anthony was superior not in Toscanella but in St. Eutizio. There is no word of an election of novice master because according to the 1746 rule the superior general and his consultors provided for this office.

Despite the difficulties consequent on the mendicants' opposition, knowledge of the Congregation became more widespread and the number of postulants requesting entry increased. In 1749 nine clerics and five lay brothers were professed, so that at the beginning of 1750 there was a total of forty-four clerics and fifteen lay brothers. The apostolic activity expanded fruitfully, and among the famous missions we must recall that of Camerino in 1750 of which the diocese published a printed account, and that of S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Rome December 7-21, 1749 preached by Frs. Paul, Struzzieri and Marcoaurelius in preparation for the Holy Year. (59)

F. FOUNDATIONS OF ST. SOSIO AND OF TERRACINA: 1751-1752

The clergy and faithful of Falvaterra were stirred by the mission Frs. Thomas Struzzieri and Anthony Danei preached there in 1748. They were anxious to have a Passionist community in their midst. On April 22nd Bishop Tartagni, the Ordinary, welcomed the request and placed the sanctuary of St. Sosio at their disposal. On the occasion of the patronal feasts, authorities and people took upon themselves the task of collecting the necessary means for repairing and enlarging the existing edifice. However, these works and the building of other absolutely necessary locations were not begun till the autumn of 1750. Convinced that the works already done were sufficient for the purpose, Paul established a community of twelve religious there on March 12, 1751 after taking possession of the place. According to the foundation deeds, these religious would be committed "in accordance with

their constitutions...to administer the sacrament of penance, teach catechism, and exercise every other ministry not only in the churches of St. Sosio and Falvaterra but also in the surrounding area, particularly in Ceprano, where they were to give spiritual attention to the sick, preach missions, retreats to the diocesan clergy and particularly at the local seminary, as also to nuns when requested by the bishop." (60)

The church which Fr. Thomas and his community found was small and damp, so much so that in 1772 a new one, still extant, was begun on a better site. The narrow premises made the house almost devoid of light and the inconveniences and privations were neither few nor slight. However, the religious suffered joyously and the example of their virtues, their solitude, their spirit of prayer and apostolic zeal had a decided influence on the Christian life of the people, who flocked to them even from towns of the bordering kingdom of Naples. Later on, however, opposition and calumnies unfortunately rose against some of the religious, who were brought before the Holy Office in 1768. But the case was dismissed with high praise for them. Another source of opposition came from one of the first benefactors, Amati, who was not allowed to build a villa on a hill above the retreat because it would affect the privacy of the retreat and hinder the necessary freedom of the religious. (61)

In February, 1748, Bishop Joachim Oldo of Terracina, deeply moved by the apostolic zeal of the new Congregation, requested a foundation. Having received Paul's affirmative answer, he presented his request to the city council, which readily agreed to grant them a site known as Monte St. Angelo. (62) Having obtained the consent of the Dominican and Conventual friars resident in the city, the bishop began the building in May at his own expense. Paul was anxious that the structure be poor: "It is certain," he wrote, "that the poorer the building, the more helpful it will be for the recollection of the religious and for the edification and compunction of seculars." But he insisted that the choir be "without dampness, comfortable, dry and well sealed, especially in winter." (63) According to plans, a retreat house for

clergy and laity should have been attached to the house for the religious. The mendicants' opposition, however, caused the work to be suspended and the bishop died on November 3, 1749. The canons, as compensation for the bishop's funeral expenses, impounded the building materials which he had bought. On May 16, 1750, private possession was taken of the house but the building could not be continued. The mission given by Fr. Thomas in 1751 stimulated a desire among the people of that city to complete the building. Some benefactors helped in many ways and the canons, having been repaid their 40 scudi for the bishop's funeral, lifted the ban on the materials. For quite some time Paul had been anxious to have the building in suitable condition for a community there, thus leaving room in the Presentation retreat for postulants seeking admission. (64) However, he was not in a position to do so until February 6, 1752. The first community was made up of five priests, four students including two deacons, and two lay brothers under the superiorship of Fr. Anthony Danei. Paul named Fr. John Mary Cioni as spiritual director, though only a deacon. Fr. Bernardine Rotilio was vice-rector. The building was still unfinished: no pavement nor altar in the church, the choir "spouted water from all the walls," the religious had to seek refuge in a drier room for their common prayer, and the corridors had no doors nor windows so the drafts went through the house. There were not sufficient blankets for all and the fireplace that would have provided some comfort was unfinished. Paul himself remarked: "The retreat is beautiful (as to location and climate) and in solitude, but the religious are sorely tried by the discomforts of holy poverty which they bear cheerfully." (65) Truly the religious had taken seriously what the rule enjoined them. "Poverty would not be truly poverty if it were not uncomfortable; wherefore let none of the brethren seek comfort but follow Jesus Christ." (66) During the summer of that same year the fervor and exemplary conduct of the religious was severely tried in consequence of the rector's imprudence which gave rise to gossip against the Congregation. Fr. Anthony Danei was deposed and Fr. Bernardino succeeded him as rector until the following chapter. (67) Hand in hand with the geographical expansion of the Congregation went the numerical increase: at

the end of 1752 the Congregation numbered sixty clerics and nineteen professed lay brothers.

G. SECOND GENERAL CHAPTER, ST. ANGELO AT VETRALLA: 1753

On December 10, 1752, Paul convoked the second general chapter. The ten capitulars met on March 12, 1753, in the retreat of St. Angelo at Vetralla, which had by now become the fixed residence of the superior general, because of its healthier climate and its location in the Papal States very near the Via Cassia which favored speedier communications. The ten capitulars were the seven rectors and the three members of the general curia. They thanked God for the state of the Congregation, which appeared full of life: sixty-seven clerics and twenty-four lay brothers lived in the retreats where all were committed to assiduous prayer and apostolic activity, in great demand and eminently fruitful.

Paul was confirmed in the office of superior general together with his consultors, John Baptist Danei and Marco Aurelio Pastorelli. This confirmation was a tacit approval of the wise guidance of the Congregation through the difficult years of the mendicants' opposition and of the painstaking work in obtaining from the Holy See permission to ordain clerics under the title of "common board" or "poverty" and trying to obtain solemn vows. As a greater aid to the general in keeping in touch with his religious and overseeing the growth of the Congregation in the area south of Rome, the chapter wished to choose a provincial but without dividing the Congregation into provinces. The provincial would have jurisdiction solely over those retreats the general would assign him. The election fell on Fr. Thomas Struzzieri who accepted out of obedience. He was given as consultors Frs. Dominic Bartolotti and Joseph Del Re.

Besides the chapter elections, twelve decrees were made "to maintain ever more the regular observance and the good progress of the Congregation." These decrees

concerned certain points of the rule: poverty, solitude, fasts, correspondence, spiritual direction of lay people, especially women, and other details of everyday life. The formation of postulants and students deserves particular attention and will be treated in a separate chapter.

In a long Latin circular letter Paul notified the religious of his re-election and of his purpose to be the servant of all, while demanding of all a generous effort in the perfect observance of the rule. He begged their prayers that the Congregation might obtain the grace of solemn vows, and ended by inculcating filial and prompt obedience. To superiors he enjoined prudence and charity if they wished to be trusted by their religious.

Besides the government of the retreats, the founder entrusted Fr. Thomas with the duty of accepting and organizing apostolic ministries in his region. The chapter, moreover, elected Frs. Bernardine Rotilio and Costanzo Bartolotti as companions to Struzzieri in missionary campaigns. This was unique in the history of this period.

In the month of August the founder withdrew "as usual for retreat in preparation for the feast of the Assumption." During this time he drew up norms which he forwarded to Fr. Struzzieri on August 11th to make known to the religious under his charge. In these four decrees he commanded that religious disclose their thoughts and their temptations only to their spiritual director; that no one send or receive letters but through the superior; that rectors never allow guests in their houses to eat meat and much less that they ever agree to cook meat in the kitchens for third parties; and finally, that never, even though requested by distinguished benefactors, could they purchase duty-free goods (a privilege which the houses enjoyed) for non-religious third parties, because this would defraud tax collectors and expose the communities to ill fame. (68) We have not sufficient documentation to be able to say what events, if any, gave occasion for these norms. It can be reasonably supposed that they were only preventive measures.

H. FIRST PROVINCIAL CHAPTER, ST. ANGELO AT VETRALLA: 1755

This was the first true provincial chapter even though the Congregation was not yet divided into provinces, because it was the first time a provincial and his consultors took part. In the 1750 intermediate chapter held at the expiration of the rectors' triennium there was no provincial present. On this occasion Paul convoked the chapter for the retreats north of Rome, while he was the provincial for the retreats directly subject to him. Struzzi-eri declared in his circular letter that the chapter was being convoked six months beforehand for "just and holy motives" which would be communicated at the chapter. Among other reasons was the need to elect a substitute for Fr. Fulgentius Pastorelli who had died at the age of forty-four while fulfilling the offices of master of novices and rector of the Presentation, and to elect a rector for St. Mary di Pugliano, close to Paliano, to be opened shortly. Paul tended before the chapter to favor a substitute for Fr. Thomas as he could scarcely "follow the observance due to his absence on missions and I see the retreats giving way somewhat," he wrote on August 12, 1755. (69) The capitulars confirmed Struzzi-eri, giving him as consultors Frs. Francesco Anthony Appiani and Joachim Barberi. Paul approved both the elections and decrees on the only day of sessions, October 13, 1755. The most important decision of this chapter was that which gave local superiors *license letters* for one year only, to be confirmed annually after a serious and objective examination of their government by the respective major superior. This proposal was to be adopted in the 1758 general legislation and eventually included in the text of the rule. Norms were given regulating the quest, which seemed already an accepted practice, and limiting the goods to be asked for. It was established that requests for cloth from the plant installed at St. Angelo should be entered not later than Easter. It also determined that provincial consultors would precede rectors in public places but were subject to them as regards regular discipline. At the end of the chapter Paul published a circular letter approving the chapter decrees and adding seven more so that the Congregation's apostolic activity

would "be regulated by well ordered charity." He established the length of time to be given to apostolic ministries in such a way that each apostolic worker would spend a sufficient time during the year with the community "to fit himself for the contemplative exercises proper to our retreats." He pointed out the criteria for discerning the justification for release from solitude or from seeking the means of sustenance, which derived chiefly from observance of the rule. He finally reminded them of the "common regulations" already published that year, encouraging their observance in order to vitalize daily actions so that "the external observance of the rule be always animated and accompanied by the inner spirit of the heart." (70)

I. FOUNDATION OF THE RETREAT OF ST. MARY di PUGLIANO AT PALIANO: 1755

On November 23, 1755, Fr. Thomas Struzzieri, provincial, in the name of and by special delegation from Fr. Paul, the superior general, took solemn possession of the retreat of St. Mary di Pugliano, located about four km. from the town of Paliano. The initiative for this foundation came from Fr. Isidore Calzelli, a friend of Fr. Struzzieri before he became a Passionist. It was Calzelli who from 1747 on began to take an interest in the foundation and to seek the means for its accomplishment, always in perfect agreement with Frs. Paul and Struzzieri. He had no end of sufferings. He was frequently left alone in directing the building and overseeing the adaptations of the old hermitage. As a result the building turned out to be narrow and poorly done.

During the last stages Struzzieri also stayed there in order to see to the water system and indispensable furnishing. The community of twelve religious under the care of Fr. Joseph Del Re included three clerical students and four lay brothers. The good religious wanted for many necessities in food, clothing and living quarters. Space was so restricted that they were forced to sleep two

each in cells that were small and in some cases without light. But the religious did not fail in their commitment to the Passion of Jesus. "Great was the consolation, peace, charity and union" that reigned among them, edifying the people by their example. With the help of benefactors from Anagni and the surrounding districts improvements were made later. In 1772 the small wing which held kitchen and refectory, with the corresponding upper-storey cells, collapsed, but fortunately without any casualties. A new, larger and more solid wing was built at great expense. The whole result was sufficiently functional as Fr. John Mary testified: "poor, yes, but a devout and fervent retreat in which our Lord and his Blessed Mother are very well served." (71)

J. CRISIS OF GROWTH: THIRD GENERAL CHAPTER, ST. ANGELO AT VETRALLA: 1758

The third general chapter was held from the 22nd to the 25th of February, 1758, thirteen months before it was due. In the acts of the same we read: "Some very important circumstances require that our young Congregation be aided in the best manner possible to avoid any falling away from the fervor of spirit, which could be feared if suitable and timely measures were not taken. The anticipation of our third general chapter would appear as the only remedy left, as other measures would not seem efficacious, at least in the present emergency. Hence as the various most urgent causes came to the notice of most reverend father general and were verified by him, he prudently submitted them to his reverend consultors for discussion, and with their consent decided upon the convoking this chapter." These "very important circumstances" and "most urgent causes" could not have been Paul's personal desire to relinquish his office as superior. There must have been other reasons traceable to the state of mind of some religious and to some events of the previous five years, as for example:

the problem of dismissals: fourteen professed among whom eight were priests;

the imprudent behavior of some religious from Terracina and St. Sosio that gave rise to malicious talk, and even calumnies at St. Sosio regarding the morality of four religious, including the rector and vice rector;

certain dissatisfaction among the religious because of the severity of some superiors;

the very grave and chronic economic straits of the retreats.

Fundamentally, these motives seem credible because of:

Paul's order to the capitulars not to give way "to lamentations and outbursts about their troubles or other events occurring during their government and not to reveal anything that took place in their retreats except what would serve for edification;"

the prohibition against "useless discourses regarding the election of superiors;"

the circular letter of February 23rd, which insisted at length on the prompt and full obedience of religious, but likewise recommending that superiors be mirrors of that regular observance which they must exact of others, and that they also be meek and charitable towards the religious;

the insertion in the chapter's legislation of the norm passed in the 1755 provincial chapter regarding rectors, namely, that their *license letters* be given for one year only and be annually confirmed by the major superior after a careful examination of their conduct.

Finally, the absence of the second provincial consultant, Fr. Stephen Barberi, "because of important reasons known to Father General," gives the impression that something was amiss.

This was the inevitable crisis of growth to which even the Passionist Congregation was subject, notwithstanding the solicitude of the founder and his co-workers from the early days. It must be kept in mind that these religious, scarcely professed, were sent out to the various foundations where they had to endure the severest trials and where heroic virtue was required. Generally, great praise is due to them for their capacity to face up to new and difficult situations despite inexperienced superiors, for they were all young and constituted the first generation of the rising Institute.

To the aforesaid reasons for anticipating the chapter we must add Paul's personal desire to give up the superiorship and dedicate himself solely to the apostolate and to contemplation.

The twelve capitulars unanimously confirmed Paul as superior general. Fr. Struzziere was chosen first consultor and Fr. John Baptist, second. In view of the increasing contacts with the Holy See because of the affairs of the solemn vows and of the mission to infidels, a procurator general was elected for the first time. The choice fell on Struzziere who, practically speaking, had exercised this office together with the founder. In Struzziere's place as provincial Fr. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli was elected. Of the rectors elected in this chapter, three were to leave the Congregation in 1764 - Frs. Luke Anthony Bianchini, Clement Maioli and Charles Marchiandi.

The thirty-three chapter decrees concerned the personal and communitarian practice of poverty; the administration, which now passed from the former "accountants" to the local superior; preparation and choice of preachers; the revision and approbation of young priests' sermons; divine worship in Passionist churches; mutual relations among the religious and dealings with seculars; and fasts of rule, which were made more bearable for different physical constitutions. (72)

K. FOUNDATION OF THE BLESSED TRINITY RETREAT ON MONTE CAVO: 1758

On the heights of Monte Cavo, 949 meters above sea level, facing Rome and with a spectacular view over all the Roman plain and marshes as far as the sea, existed the former Trinitarian monastery. Paul's first thought of taking over this monastery went back to 1742. His motive for requesting it was the possibility of working in favor of "those poor living in the Roman marshes and countryside." With this in mind he wrote to Garagni; but two months later he informed him that it would be preferable to wait "till it please God." (73) In the meantime he found it more useful to concentrate on the foundations of Vetralla and Toscanella. (74) Failing to get a house or hospice in Rome, Paul made a new attempt to get the monastery of Monte Cavo, "a high and beautiful mountain overlooking the metropolis of the world," as he wrote on June 15th. Again on July 2, 1757, he predicted that a community could be established there in the autumn or, more certainly, the following March, while assuring that the property already belonged to the Congregation. (75)

Paul designated Struzzieri to carry out the foundation. Fr. Thomas went to Prince Colonna who gave the Congregation a perpetual lease on the structure and a plot of ground for orchard, plus 600 *scudi* as a contribution towards the more urgent repairs of the building. As a token of vassalage the prince requested "a yearly contribution of a bunch of fresh flowers to be presented on Trinity Sunday." Struzzieri with two lay brothers stayed on the mount overseeing the work. All suffered very much, particularly in January, 1758, when they ran the risk of dying of cold and hunger, since they did not have sufficient provisions of bread or firewood. On Palm Sunday, March 19, 1758, the inaugural ceremonies were held. The procession of twelve Passionists (seven clerics and five lay brothers) started from the collegiate church of Rocca di Papa followed by a large concourse of people with blessed palms and olive branches in their hands singing "hymns of praise to the Most High." Going up the mountain they were swept by a terrific wind that "seemed as if it would sweep them all away." The elected rector

of the community was Fr. Luke Anthony Bianchini. Once the ceremony was over the weather grew still worse, and for fifteen days the religious had to stay indoors without seeing a ray of sunshine, under a freezing rain and surrounded by fog.

When Paul accepted the foundation he expected that a wing of cells would be built "in a spot more sheltered from the southeast wind and less damp, but the person who had undertaken the work and promised to finish it did not keep his word, pleading that the benefactor for that wing had died." Recalling this incident, Paul encouraged the community to hope that it would be done in the future, and as to fog and winds he told them to cast away fear, as in St. Angelo there were winds and in St. Eutizio there was no shortage of fog. He also informed them that the account of the foundation had been read in the refectory. "The circumstances surrounding this foundation which were pointed out to me fill me with a lively hope that God will be greatly glorified." He stimulated them all to bear patiently "the discomforts of poverty and of everything else" as partakers in the Passion of Jesus so that "they may be victims offered as holocaust and that such a sacrifice may give forth an exquisite perfume of all virtues to peoples far and near." (76) Shortly after, he begged prayers of the Vetralla convent: "Pray to the Lord that they may persevere in spite of the great harshness of that mount and the great poverty those religious endure, even though content in Jesus Christ." (77)

It was not until 1770, thanks to considerable help from the cardinal Duke of York, that some improvements could be made in the building, which had badly deteriorated from the dampness. In 1774 with the proceeds of the sale of the hospice in Rome (Most Holy Crucified) a new wing of cells was built which afforded a dry and more comfortable dwelling. The construction of the new church did not begin until 1778. The religious were dearly loved by the people, and chiefly by the cardinal bishops of Frascati, but very specially by the cardinal Duke of York who at one time felt hurt by Paul's attitude in not allowing his religious to be engaged in activities other

than those prescribed by the rule and approved by the Holy See. (78)

L. LAST ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN SOLEMN VOWS: 1758-1760

In the theological and juridical context of the time, solemn vows meant living in a state of life of greater perfection, inasmuch as solemn vows demanded a radical renouncement of all one's own goods including family inheritance, thus closing for good all return to the family even in force of civil legislation, which recognized church law. Regarding the ecclesial community, only members of "orders with solemn vows" were considered true religious. They enjoyed exemption from local ordinaries and, with testimonial letters from the major superior, could promote clerics to orders under the title of "common board." To lack solemn vows also implied a want of stability as a moral person in the Church or, as Paul expressed it, of stability "in a life of poverty and humility." (79) He also feared that without solemn vows the Congregation would scarcely ever be able to have outstanding members. Furthermore, solemn vows would open the way to a project he had cherished since 1734 - the foundation of the Passionist nuns.

The founder very often said that from the beginning the lights he received" concerned solemn vows" and he certainly spoke in this sense in the 1720 rule. (80) On August 19, 1751, he repeated this to his religious: "Moved by the aforesaid light given by the Divine Goodness every time we had recourse to the Holy See for the approval of our holy rule, we constantly begged the grace of solemn vows, even though in this beginning it has pleased the Lord to inspire his vicar, the sovereign pontiff, to grant only the grace of simple vows in approving of the holy rule, as you all know, considering that the Congregation was only in its infancy." (81) The religious occasionally would discuss among themselves whether the church considered them "religious" in the canonical sense of the word. A letter from Fr. Marcoarelius to Fr. John Mary, master of novices, dated January 20, 1758, gives evidence

of this state of mind even though he treated it with great calmness. They were conscious of "being true religious as regards what is substantial, though not as to what constitutes perfection. For this (juridical perfection) the individual must profess one of the ancient rules and add the obligation of solemn vows." Yet, to be religious as regards what is substantial, "the profession of simple vows is sufficient, because he who professes them obliges himself to persevere in that state. Considering then that by means of the vows we seek what is more perfect, along with the obligation of permanence" by force of the constitutions, the necessary stability is had. (82)

Now that the controversy with the mendicants had happily ended and, with it, the peril of suppression, Paul again began his efforts to obtain solemn vows. On August 19, 1751, he sent a pressing appeal to his religious for "assiduous, fervent, and most humble prayers, backed by a lively faith, constant hope and ardent charity, in order to move the Heavenly Father for great mercy on this miserable world, and, at the same time, to finish this work his infinite Goodness has begun, by raising it to solemn vows, so that it may spread with greater prosperity and happiness over all the world and there be holy workers everywhere." He reminded the religious that other institutes had initially been approved with simple vows and later raised to solemn vows, and the same grace could be hoped for because the Congregation was growing in members and in houses. Indeed, the Congregation "has the greatest need of priest-members to make and provide the foundations. This shows how necessary is the grace of solemn vows in order that our Congregation have the privileges of other orders, especially for ordaining our men under the title of holy poverty, which we profess for the Lord's greater glory. In order that the Lord grant what we desire for his greater glory, it is necessary that you, very dear children, all united in true charity, cry out day and night to the Lord to grant us this grace. Ask for this grace with lively faith without wavering and certain of obtaining it through Jesus Christ our Lord. Point out the suffering Son to the Divine Father. Tell him the greater part of the world lives forgetful of the Passion, and because of this his

Divine Majesty is greatly offended. Tell him the world does not deserve a merciful visitation...but Jesus Christ deserves it....Offer Jesus in the blessed Eucharist to the Eternal Father particularly after communion. Tell him that for love of him he cannot deny us such a grace. Tell him whatever love may inspire in you. Present as intercessors the most holy Virgin Mary, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Joseph, St. Mary Magdalen, all the angels and saints; have recourse especially to the sorrows of Mary; pray, pray, beloved brethren, but pray with faith without wavering." They must, he said, add to prayer the sincere practice of all virtues and the faithful observance of the rule. He asked the rectors to remind the religious every evening of this duty, and to add to the prayers of the discipline the liturgical prayer, **FOR ANY NEED**, and requested the priests to remember this intention in their daily Mass. (83) The circular reflects with what anxiety Paul undertook this task which he considered vital for the Congregation.

Two days previously, August 17, 1751, he had sent Lucy Burlini an urgent message requesting her prayers for this intention. Paul's own words convey the full import of the historic moment lived by the founder and his companions. This is how he addresses his spiritual daughter on the subject: "In this sea of the most holy Passion cry out to God for me and for the Congregation, and after holy communion offer to the Eternal Father his own Divine Son. Do it every day, begging him to spread this work throughout the world and to raise it to solemn vows. My blessed daughter! if you only knew the hardships I am suffering, particularly in having my subjects ordained. I have to go begging for the title of "common board." The Holy Father has given me ordinations for eight, and sometimes for twelve cases, but they are now finished, and I know the pope has difficulty in granting me others because the Congregation is only beginning. Besides, one has to struggle to get dimissorial letters from bishops who are far away. Oh how many difficulties! I do everything for the love of God. The lights, however, were for solemn vows and I have constantly asked for them, but so far only simple vows have been granted.

The Holy See so acted toward St. Camillus de Lellis and the Scolopians and others, but later raised them to solemn vows. Cry out then; let us wrench the grace from his hands; let us appeal to our Blessed Lady, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Joseph and all the angels and saints. Take care; do not be idle, for now is the time...by faith, humility and charity and by constant prayer all will be obtained because this must be the fruit of prayers. And you, poor soul, humble yourself, seeing that God honors me by giving you, through prayer, a share in this divine work. Let me add: if this grace is not obtained, that affair that God let you know about under the symbol of the doves (Passionist nuns) shall not come about. You understand me of course? Without help we will never grow and spread; we will never have very capable members. See how necessary it is, then, to cry out for such a grace. Offer the suffering Jesus to his Father. Tell him that if the world does not deserve this merciful visitation, Jesus merits it; tell him and speak frankly to him, but with deepest reverence...that the world is forgetful of the sufferings of Jesus, the miracle of miracles of God's love, and ask that he send his servants to this Congregation, so that it can sound the trumpet of holy preaching, to awaken a sleeping world...and Fr. Giannantonio must also do his part at the holy altar. This is worth more than anything else. If not, I'll settle with him." (84)

According to available documents it does not appear that Paul took any concrete steps during the years 1751-1752 to obtain solemn vows, despite what the above two letters might lead us to suppose. At the end of the second general chapter, March 12, 1753, he again exhorted his religious to pray that God deign to establish the Congregation with solemn vows. Only then would it become an unassailable wall against the enemies of the cross of Christ, by infusing into all hearts the memory and true devotion to the Passion, and increasing the fire of divine charity in people. (85) In 1753 through Cardinal Crescenzi, and in 1756 through the cardinal secretary of state, Valenti, he obtained other canonical titles for the ordination of some religious. Yet no reference is made to any steps being taken for solemn vows, which are not

even mentioned in the 1758 general chapter. Although Benedict XIV was always benevolent toward the Congregation, Paul perhaps surmised that his request stood no chance of success and abstained from presenting it so as not to endanger the future.

Paul's hopes revived when on July 7, 1758, Cardinal Charles Rezzonico was elected pope as Clement XIII. He had followed the development of the Congregation since 1739 when the then Bishop Crescenzi had asked him to take his place in assisting the rising Congregation before he departed for the Paris nunciature. (86) Notified of the election, Paul set out for Rome and on the 12th of July he wrote: "I have been in Rome at the feet of the sovereign pontiff who I trust will be favorably disposed to the Congregation. Now is the time to pray a great deal to his Divine Majesty. Therefore I beg you to have holy souls multiply their prayers, especially N. Let her cry to God, offering the Father the most holy Passion of his Son, so that the pope may favor us and establish this humble work." (87)

While in Rome he must certainly have had a meeting with Cardinal Crescenzi, because when he returned to St. Angelo on July 22nd he sent the cardinal a petition to be presented to the pope. Crescenzi replied on August 5th, saying that in due time he would present it. But he also warned his friend that "there cannot be any immediate favorable answer to the petition as it concerns affairs that take time and study and require your presence in Rome to promote the cause and to overcome the difficulties that may arise. It is necessary, therefore, "continued the cardinal, "to offer up fervent prayers to the Lord that he may perfect this work which is his very own, and that he enlighten and assist the pope for the benefit of the Congregation, both as regards solemn vows and the retreat in Rome, for the benefit of the neighboring populations and also for the greater fervor of your religious, by making them more constant in the good work begun." (88)

Besides solemn vows Paul was asking for a house in Rome and, as appears from other letters, he hoped to get

the church of St. Bibbiana with its attached premises. He turned to the convents where he had preached and to other virtuous persons whom he knew for "fervent and incessant prayers in order that the Lord dispose what is to his greater glory and for the profit of souls, giving us, and especially his vicar, the necessary enlightenment." He also added a recommendation "to cry out to that glorious virgin and martyr, St. Bibbiana, to intercede for she knows it well because she sees it in God," that is, the foundation in her church. (89)

To his own religious he not only recommended fervent observance, but asked that besides "the prayers all say, especially during Holy Mass, after matins and before beginning mental prayer, the entire community pray the litany of the saints kneeling down." He also requested that during that special "lent" observed in the Congregation as a preparation for the feast of the Assumption, all should beg "our Blessed Lady to take from the hands of her divine Son the grace so necessary to the establishment of the Congregation with solemn vows; but," he insisted, "do it with all your heart." (90)

The Congregation now numbered nine retreats, seventy-three clerics and forty lay brothers besides a fair number of novices. It had completed its internal organization at general, provincial and local levels. It included an intense and praiseworthy apostolate. So, according to Paul, he could hopefully look forward to the favorable outcome of his request. He was not, however, so certain, and in September 1758 he wrote: "Regarding the supreme pontiff, I have no other support but that which is proper to all children of the Church. I think I will find things rather difficult, and as regards the retreat in Rome I do not see the least opening." (91) Since there was no answer from the Holy See, Paul again went to the pope in the month of November. The Holy Father proved to be well disposed and formed a commission of cardinals to examine the request. (92) The summer of 1759 came around, and no news. The procurator, Fr. Struzzieri, had an audience with the pope at Castel Gandolfo and heard from him "not as pope but confidentially" that he wished

to create a commission of cardinals his way in order that a favorable outcome could be expected. (93)

Meanwhile Paul and Fr. Struzziere were preparing material that might be helpful in overcoming difficulties. Among other things Struzziere drew up a "brief account giving examples of some Congregations with the number of houses and members they possessed when raised by solemn vows to the perfection of a religious institute, the purpose of each, the title granted, the difficulties encountered, and the privileges obtained." Its purpose was to show that the institutes mentioned were not greatly developed at the time they were raised to solemn vows. Indeed, some of them had only begun, not having even a house of their own and only about ten members. As to the title, the compiler's purpose was to forestall or answer the objection to giving the Congregation as title a mystery of the Passion. He said: "We have many instances in which the Holy See solemnly approved divers congregations under any title, mystery or article referring to Jesus Christ, to our Blessed Lady, or under the invocation of some saint." He gave a list of twelve between male and female institutes. According to Fr. John Mary this historic account was signed by the lawyer Durani and the procurator Julius Caesar Serpieri, printed and handed to the members of the cardinals' commission, but no copy has come down to us.

In the first months of 1759, fourteen bishops to whom the Passionists were well known gave testimonial letters in which they vouched for the exemplary life of the Passionists, their labors in the sanctification of souls, their efforts in promoting the memory of the Passion of Jesus, and requested the Holy See to give stability to the Congregation by solemn vows. Paul had asked for these testimonials to support his petition. It appears, however, that they were never presented, as the originals are in our archives. We also learn from Fr. John Mary that "the holy father suggested that the petition (for solemn vows) be made by the entire Congregation as a body; wherefore, except for a few, all signed it." We suppose that Paul received this suggestion when he saw the pope in November, but we have no idea how the peti-

tion was conceived or how the signatures were collected. A great friend of Paul's, Stephen Cencelli, testified to having heard from him that when he was called to the presence of the commission he ceased to insist on his petition when the cardinals "made him verify that some of them (religious) had already declared they did not wish solemn vows." Hence it is probable that the signatures were collected in passing through the retreats and that all signed; then those who were not pleased, wrote to the commission asking to be relieved from making solemn vows. Thus Fr. John Mary's expression "except for a few, all signed" must be understood in this context. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain how the founder could tell the cardinals that "all seemed content" to commit themselves by solemn vows. (94)

The pontifical commission was finally instituted early in 1760, and composed of Cardinals Spinelli, Portocarrero, Paolucci, Conti, and Erba-Odescalchi. The first three knew the Passionists very well as they had them in their respective dioceses. On the 14th of November Paul was in Rome and visited each member of the commission to clear up doubts and difficulties. He then awaited the result. (95) The final session was held on November 23, 1760. Paul, who forty years previously had received the decisive enlightenment regarding the Congregation, was in the waiting room of the building where the meeting was in progress. Twice he was called to give his opinion on some difficulties, especially concerning the austerity of life and poverty.

Finally the members of the commission:

considering the rigorous life of the Congregation and the very strict poverty professed, and fearing the houses of study could not subsist without having a fixed income not admitted by the founder;

considering also the inconveniences found in the existing orders where solemn vows meant they could not be freed from incorrigible subjects and the negative consequences of this on the community;

considering also the still restricted membership of the Congregation and its few years of life;

concluded that for now it was not expedient to grant solemn vows.

The fundamental reason for this denial must be sought in the cardinals' conviction that such an austere life could only be lived by very generous volunteers, and consequently it was prudent to give the religious freedom to leave when they could stand it no more. Fr. John MARY says, "The congregation (commission) resolved that, since the life was so penitential and the Institute so strict and rigorous, it was more expedient that the Congregation retain simple vows in order that the door remain open, and those willing and spontaneous remain, but never those restless and constrained." (96)

Still, the commission's resolution left an opening for a future occasion, but Paul would never again renew his request, not even under Clement XIV when success appeared certain. As a matter of fact he himself became convinced that it was better that those dissatisfied could leave or the incorrigible be dismissed, thus leaving the religious community in peace and with religious who were animated by good will and by a generous life commitment. Yet in spite of being inwardly well prepared, whatsoever the outcome, Paul felt intensely the bitter disillusionment after so much work, expectations, and hope. It seems the greatest bitterness came when he learned from the cardinals that some of his religious were opposed to solemn vows, and he interpreted this as a sign of the cooling of fervor in the Congregation. He was laden with this impression when he penned that lengthy circular letter on November 30, 1760, in which he informed the religious of the outcome of the commission's meeting. He reminded them that the requested public and private prayers, the weekly celebration of a Holy Mass in each retreat, were all intended from the very beginning to request "from the Lord that his holy will be always done, and that the affairs of the Congregation should turn out conformably to God's designs. I can assure you they have risen up to the Divine Majesty and have had the effect I wished for, that

is, the fulfillment of God's will." And he seemed to find peace in the thought that he had done everything in his power that the request be granted. Thus did he express it on both occasions when he was called before the commission: the negative answer "has come from persons well disposed to grant solemn vows but who, however, judged it expedient to postpone the concession." The reason, he said, must be sought in the falling away of the Congregation from "the first observance and fervor." In fact:

the former fraternal charity no longer exists;

blind obedience and true humility have declined; indolence reigns in regard to exercises prescribed by rule, and lukewarmness in rising to praise God in choir by day and by night;

mental prayer is full of drowsiness, distractions, and with little or no reverence for God's presence;

the dealings with seculars are not edifying, but too loquacious and with little modesty;

the love of poverty is little less than extinguished, while gluttony is not mortified.

Everything has been devoured by "the love of self-comfort and not of the holy penance that makes us crucify our flesh with all its vices and concupiscences. This, he concluded, is the reason that the grace of solemn vows has not been granted us at present, and the Holy Spirit has inspired the Cardinals to sign the decree **FOR NOW**, that is, to let us know that once lukewarmness has been destroyed and the primitive fervor regained, the Congregation will immediately be raised to a true order with solemn vows. This I assure you in the Lord."

These expressions portray Paul as resigned to the blow yet hopeful for a good he deemed necessary for the Congregation. Therefore he continued in his circular letters to encourage the religious to regain their fervor in a careful and energetic practice of humility, obedience and fraternal charity. He asked that they avail them-

selves of the approaching Advent to be born again "in the Divine Word to a life completely holy and rich in every virtue" so as to "deserve to be the foundation stones of this holy order by the infinite merits of Jesus Christ. Thus, together with our neighbors converted by us, we will sing in heaven the eternal mercies of God." (97)

M. APPROVAL OF SOME ADDITIONS TO THE RULE AND CONCESSION OF SOME FACULTIES: 1760

In a separate memorandum Paul had jotted down "small additions" to the rule. Among others he had requested that the superior general dispense from simple vows "for a just reason and with the consent of his council, the provincial and the rector of the retreat to which the subject to be dispensed and dismissed belonged." He also asked for the grace that the clerics of the Congregation be ordained "without the dimissorials of their proper ordinary under the title of 'common board'." On November 25th the pope approved the additions and granted the dispensation from the simple vows, according to the favorable opinion of the cardinals' commission that had studied the affair of the solemn vows. (98)

The additions to the rule were:

that parish work does not pertain to the proper works of the Congregation;

that the rector may keep money in the house in a proper safe, locked with two keys, one to be kept by him and the other by the vice-rector;

that before they set out for the first time on missions the religious must submit their sermons in writing to the two theologians appointed by the major superior;

that missionaries back from the missions should make an eight or ten day retreat. (99)

On January 3, 1761, Paul notified his religious of the permission received to dispense simple vows, exhorting each one desirous of leaving to present his request and its reasons, assuring them all that "they will be immediately consoled and dispensed without need of having recourse to the Sacred Penitentiary." He ended with words that may cause wonder: "Therefore, he who for a just cause wishes to leave the Congregation, for his peace of mind will not find a better occasion than that of the aforesaid provincial chapter. Let them then write the above mentioned request having sought counsel from God in prayer and from their spiritual director, and they may rest assured that we will relieve them with the dispensation from vows, with our certificate and permission." (100) During 1761, four priests and one lay brother left.

N. PASTORAL MEANS FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL AND PROVINCIAL CHAPTER: 1761

Paul stressed renewal of the religious life in his circular letter of November 30, 1760. Fr. Marcoaurelius, the provincial, took up this same theme in his letter of December 17, 1760, convoking the provincial chapter to be held in St. Angelo at Vetralla on February 22, 1761. Among other things he wrote: "I entreat all in the Lord to dedicate themselves very earnestly to their spiritual renewal by means of a more exact observance of the holy rule, according to what our most reverend father general has recently written to all the retreats; and to multiply their prayers so that the Lord may inspire the capitulars to elect superiors who will be fit to promote his glory, the holy observance, and to nourish his subjects in accord with the true spirit of our vocation. Thus they will promote especially the spiritual advancement of our Congregation, which is deprived, through our own fault, of its total and full perfection, as father general well remarked in his letter...." He ordered the recital of the *Veni Creator* daily up to February 25th. (101)

Pope Clement XIII, as requested, sent a special blessing with his letter of February 18, 1761: "Willingly

and with fatherly love we grant it (apostolic blessing) together with our warmest wishes that you make a choice of superiors and other officials that may redound to the greatest advantage of your Congregation. We encourage you all to persevere constantly in your holy exercises and apostolic labors, always meriting the reward of God's ministers in the salvation of souls, and to respond likewise to the esteem in which your holy Institute is held and to maintain the opinion so firmly established in the minds of the faithful. We recommend to your prayers," he ended, "the needs of the Holy Church." (102)

Paul approached this chapter with a certain anxiety, due perhaps to the instability he feared in some religious. On April 13th he wrote to Fr. Dominic Bartolotti begging him "as a particular favor" that if elected to the rectorship of any retreat not to renounce it as he had done before because "the Congregation is in need and has few good and trustworthy subjects;" while he, by the grace of God, has "the lovely grace of a steady vocation and a great love for the Congregation engraved on his heart." (103)

The chapter was held in St. Angelo at Vetralla on May 4th, since it had been postponed on account of the illness of Frs. Paul and Marcaurelius. Two rectors were missing - one had been dismissed shortly before, and the other was ill. Fr. Marcoaurelius was confirmed as provincial, assisted by Frs. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi and Luke Anthony Bianchini as consultors. Fr. John Mary succeeded Fr. Struzzieri as consultor general. The latter had gone to Corsica with the apostolic visitor, Bishop De Angelis. After the election of rectors, eleven decrees were issued to regulate administration, relations between rector and vicar, the questing zones for the Southern Lazio retreats, the admission of oblates, and the declaration to be made by novices should they leave the Congregation.

Paul was always anxious for the spiritual and apostolic renewal and progress of the Congregation. Bearing in mind the observations of the 1758 general chapter and of the circular letter of November, 1760, at the close of the chapter he handed each rector "a brief regulation

based not only on the lights received from God but also on long experience in the government of the Congregation." There were twelve points, reminding the superior among others:

to be "the mirror of good example," a lover of solitude, and to be found in his cell to hear the religious;

to preserve the solitude of the retreats and to avoid sending religious out of the house without grave necessity;

to watch over the correspondence so that no useless or distracting news entered the retreat;

to correct the religious, always with great gentleness and in a suitable time and manner.

He ended by exhorting the superiors to lead by word and example in pointing out what holds priority in a Passionist retreat: "Let the rector endeavour to be a lover of prayer, solitude, interior recollection and exercise of virtue; in this manner his retreat will be as a garden of delights for His Divine Majesty." (104) This latter letter formed part of the regulations up to 1964.

Fr. Marcoaurelius, the provincial, on his way back to Ceccano passed through Rome and had an audience with Clement XIII who renewed his exhortation that the religious live up to the esteem that he and the people had of them. From Paliano, on May 22nd, the provincial "exhorted all the religious to the fervent observance of the rule. This is what we desire of you, as is also desired by his holiness Clement XIII. We had an audience with him on our return from the chapter and, with that great zeal he has for the glory of God and the good name and prosperity of our poor Congregation, with true fatherly love and telling words, he has exhorted us to watch over this little fold and to promote more and more the fervor and observance in this growing Congregation, so that it will give great glory to God and be of profit to the Church. He added, moreover, that if vigilance is not exercised at the beginnings of a Congregation, relax-

ation, decline from the first fervour and, what is worse, lukewarmness easily enter in....Beloved Brethren, well did you live in prompt and blind obedience, an almost scrupulous poverty, careful attention to common acts, prayer, recollection, fervour...but what obstacle has come across that good path that would have soon led you to intimate union with God? Ah! renew your spirit. Such is God's will, such is the Holy Father's intention, such is our most ardent desire, such is the duty which is yours." (105)

The harmony between Paul's goals and anxieties and Marcoarelius' in promoting a strong renewal of the religious was evident. Still, Paul was worried as to the survival of the Congregation. On July 16, 1761, he wrote: "I tell you secretly the affairs of the Congregation are in great trouble...stir yourself up to pray very much for our Congregation. I think it hangs by a thread in the midst of so many storms, tepidity, etc." (106) It is no easy task to verify the level of fervor or mediocrity that these pastoral admonitions presume. That some signs of tiredness should exist is quite understandable if we bear in mind the rigid austerity of the rule in that period and the harsh sacrifices the religious had to put up with in the foundations, as we have seen, and which the sources describe in all their crude reality. Besides, it is also possible there were signs of some impatience as regards the meticulousness of the rule's prescriptions of the regulations published in 1756; but particularly of the decrees issued in the acts of foundation of the retreats, in canonical visitations - prescriptions that regulated every single moment and every single act of the religious, public or private, inside or outside the retreat.

The historian, Fr. Philip, recalls that these provisions constituted a "thick hedge" to impede the beginnings of relaxation but, he adds, the prescription of "such minute things and with such great severity must have appeared as eccentricities to anyone fond of his own liberty and not used to guarding his own heart." Still, if the Congregation aspired to a place in the Church and to make its charism credible, it had to take its inspiration from the more fervent institutes. The preoccupation to im-

print on the Congregation those features of the apostolic spirituality that its vow of consecration to the Passion of Jesus presupposed caused the appeals and measures to multiply and, though apparently necessary to the psychology of the time, probably not all of the religious succeeded in fully accepting them. (107)

O. ST. JOSEPH'S, A RETREAT FOR NOVICES ONLY: 1761

Paul had noticed that in the retreat of the Presentation the health of the postulants suffered shortly after their arrival and particularly in summer. For that reason and with the advice of medical doctors he thought of founding another retreat on Argentario but in a healthier spot, one not exposed to the influence of malaria and with a brighter landscape that would be of relief to the novices. His intention was that the new retreat should form one moral body with the Presentation and the two be considered one community. With this in view he wrote to the abbot of Orbetello: "I'm assured by the doctors that the novices will keep healthy, and in this retreat there will be a wing of cells left available to receive ten or twelve retreatants, clerics or laymen." (108)

Early in November 1753 he chose the site and on the 23rd of the same month sent his request to Charles, the king of Naples, for a plot of state land on which to build. This he did through the minister and royal mayor, Don José Ignacio de Masdeu. On the 5th of December a favorable answer arrived in Orbetello but, for reasons we do not know, possession was not handed over until April 12, 1755. On the same day the founder requested permission of the abbot of Orbetello to proceed with the foundation. On April 20th, Cardinal Sciarra said he would be happy to contribute to the building of the new retreat, as an aid to the health of the religious so necessary for the apostolate, and so that he himself could send "many more to make the spiritual exercises." (109) Work progressed, thanks to the offerings of various persons, particularly Joseph Francis Sanchez of Orbetello, and to the unceasing and skilled labor of Brothers Ubald Corrazzini,

Charles Risoluti, Aloysius Basili and Michelangelo Coli, expert masons, kilnmen and ironworkers. With a true spirit of sacrifice, the other religious also helped by carrying building materials. As a matter of fact, for want of roads all transporting of the materials had to be done by shouldering the burdens or by mule pack.

Fr. Fulgentius' death on April 16, 1755, lack of funds and difficulty in procuring water delayed the work, extending it into the summer of 1761. Paul requested the pope's permission to bless the church as a public oratory so it could also serve the local shepherds in fulfilling their obligation of Mass. Paul told the pope that "the retreat radiates devotion..." and that "for the greater recollection of the young men and as a precaution it was thought best to build the church within the cloister where women may not enter, but only men - this has seemed more suitable and fitting to all because of its great solitude." (110) The church was blessed and dedicated to St. Joseph, who was set before the novices as a model of labor and a master of prayerful silence. The blessing was held on July 16, 1761. The retreat was designed as a quadrangle with the church placed in the center of one side and the wings containing the cells and other premises on the other three sides, thus enclosing the cloister and allowing for only one entrance. In this way the religious were bound to pass constantly before Jesus present in the Eucharist, the living memorial of the Passion, and hence to keep him in mind as central to life and community. Of all the foundations made up to that time, this one demanded fewer sacrifices of the occupants because, being juridically and economically one sole entity with the Presentation retreat, they shared the goods of the one community. The novices passed under the immediate direction of the vice-master, Fr. Louis Borell, while the master, who as also rector, Fr. Joseph Del Re, lived in the Presentation retreat. In 1762 Fr. Ludovico was named master and was given an assistant, while Fr. Joseph remained as rector of both groups constituting one single community.

Paul was unable to participate in the opening of the retreat and only saw it in March 1762. In the intro-

duction to the decrees he issued on this occasion he recalled the scope of the work: "this retreat has been founded to serve as a novitiate and to be a seedbed of saints to provide the Congregation with stalwart and competent men, who will be intimately united with God by charity, to work for the salvation of souls by being sonorous trumpets of the Holy Spirit, to proclaim to all men the sufferings of Jesus Christ - the most efficacious means for the destruction of sin - and to urge souls to perfection." In ten points he gave some norms regulating the relations between the two Argentario retreats and the enclosure. He placed the novitiate under the immediate dependence of the superior general, and ended up begging the rector "to guard with the utmost diligence this holy retreat as a sanctuary entrusted to him by the Lord to bring up for him holy and truly apostolic men who will be the good odour of Christ in every place and in them will be glorified the most Holy Name of Jesus Christ." (111)

**P. FOURTH GENERAL CHAPTER, ST. ANGELO AT VETRALLA:
1764**

On October 25, 1763, Paul convoked the fourth general chapter, to be held in St. Angelo at Vetralla on February 22, 1764. The capitulars were asked to convene there on the 18th so that all would make the Triduum together, in beseeching the Holy Spirit to grant them good superiors, capable of helping the growth of the Congregation. (112) The term now ending had been wearisome, with many tribulations, but also filled with fruitful apostolic activity and with greater stability for the Congregation even though the tiredness or the crisis spoken of had left its mark with the exodus of twenty-two religious, of whom fourteen were either priests or deacons. Compared with the preceding term there were five fewer clerics, while the lay brothers had increased by eight. The general situation was fairly peaceful. Before the chapter Paul obtained the pope's dispensation in order that Fr. Marcoaurelius might be elected for a third term. Fr. Mar-

coarelius, on the other hand, had procured the same faculty for Paul.

Fr. Philip's comment was: "Unknown to one another they had mutually nailed each other more firmly to his cross, so neither one could complain when he was elected." (113) Paul was re-elected unanimously to the great satisfaction and consolation of all the religious. As general consultors Frs. John Baptist Danei and John Mary Cioni were re-elected. Fr. John Mary had been first elected when Fr. Struzzieri left for Corsica, retaining only his office of procurator. Fr. Struzzieri was re-elected as procurator as it was expected he would return shortly. Fr. Marcoarelius was reconfirmed as provincial with Frs. Luke Antonio Bianchini and Marcellinus Marcelliani as consultors. Before proceeding to the election of rectors the chapter renewed the former norm that, though elected for a three-year term, their *license* was to be renewed annually, and further renewal depended on the major superior's positive judgment with his council after examining the rector's conduct. Decrees of former chapters were revised, abrogating some and instituting others concerning the distribution and renewal of religious clothing and the maintenance of peace between the two retreats on Monte Argentario. Some points concerning "tertiaries" were also clarified.

Perhaps because of some regrettable incidents, a decree was issued obliging lay brothers to fulfill the office of cook for at least seven years, and after that "at every call of the superior" with the threat of canonical sanctions and expulsion if they did not obey. The chapter accepted a benefactor's offer of a house at Orbetello which he had donated as an hospice for the sick, particularly those of the retreats of St. Angelo, Toscanella and St. Eutizio. Another decree regulated the use of the crucifix - till then all the religious carried the crucifix externally at the waist and hanging by a string from the collar. The new decree reserved this faculty to priest-religious, while clerics and lay brothers were allowed to wear it under the habit.

In a circular letter dated February 23rd Paul announced his re-election. In it he recalled the ardent desire he had "long had of withdrawing into one of the retreats of profound solitude with no other thought but to stay at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to weep over my sins and prepare myself for a holy death, in prayer and fasting, and in silence and in hope." He let them know that this "ardent desire" still persisted. But "not to oppose the divine will manifested by our general chapter, I have agreed to sacrifice myself anew to the burden imposed on me." He requested, in the same terms used in 1758, the collaboration of the religious and superiors: "Help me to bear the cross of this wearisome government, which I have willingly embraced in submission to the Divine Will for your service, and, all united with great zeal and fidelity, with pure intention and humble hearts, let us take care that everyone in the Congregation maintain the most exact observance of our rule and constitutions, as also our regulations which are a compendium of the same, and likewise the decrees made or to be made during visitations. Thus in our holy life the Sovereign Giver of all good will be blessed and glorified and praised by all peoples and nations." (114)

Q. SOLIDARITY WITH THE FAMINE VICTIMS

The eighteenth century experienced various famines that hit nations on a large scale. One of these afflicted nearly all of Italy between 1762 and 1767, reaching dramatic extremes in the kingdom of Naples and almost all central Italy including Tuscany. Natural adversities affected the crops, and the already uncertain food situation turned disastrous particularly from 1764 to 1767. (115) It was a severe blow to the Congregation, which depended for its maintenance on the spontaneous offerings of the people. In 1765 it was decided to close down the novitiate at least for one year, in order to palliate the difficulty of the upkeep of the religious. In the meantime epidemics broke out in some retreats, as we shall see later. The Congregation, however, did not close itself up within its own problems. Rather it strove to manifest its nearness to

the people, particularly the most afflicted, as its apostolic vocation demanded. Paul gave instructions designed to assure the needs of the religious and to succor the famine victims who knocked at the retreats' doors. It was small help in comparison to the immensity of the scourge, but significant of the involvement of our religious in the social context. Writing from St. Angelo in 1764, the founder recalled: "More than to others it pertains to the religious to share in the divine scourge by voluntary mortification, abstaining from superfluities in food and other things, so that their abstinence may serve to relieve the poor who are dying of hunger." In addition, he suggested besides:

"Make the bread with slightly sifted flour.

"Diminish the pittance by at least one third of the usual, applying this same rule to oil, so as to spare expenses. This small discomfort for poverty's sake will be of great merit.

"Abstain from lunch and if notable weakness is felt it is advisable to take something less than usual but only to strengthen the stomach, leaving the rest for the love of God and the poor."

"It is advisable to be sparing with visitors as regards bread and other things." (116)

The provincial, Fr. Marcoaurelius, besides assuring compliance with Paul's suggestions, reminded the religious to pray and do penance to obtain God's mercy for the people, toward whom they should feel themselves bound by gratitude. (117)

In various retreats many religious became seriously ill, perhaps because of the hardships of the famine or of some epidemic flu. At St. Angelo at Vetralla nearly all, including three of the household staff, had to remain in bed for many days. Fr. John Baptist did not recover from the flu and died on August 30, 1765, surrounded by his brethren whom Paul led in singing the *Salve*. Paul's sorrow was deep but his faith was strong. The people and

authorities of Vetralla, deeply moved and full of admiration for the virtues of the deceased, participated in John Baptist's obsequies which were austere and simple as required by rule. (118)

R. NEW ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN ORDINATION OF PASSIONIST CLERICS: 1765

Since it was not an order with solemn vows nor recognized as a moral person by the Church, the Congregation had not the faculty of promoting its clerics to the priesthood using the title of "common board" which, for religious, supplied the required ecclesiastical benefice. Paul attempted once more to obtain this faculty in order that the Congregation, as he expressed it, "should not remain as a body without a soul". Early in 1765 he sought the aid of Bishop De Angelis. On April 18th he reminded him that Benedict XIV had approved the Congregation, at least generically, so there was no need for a special commission to examine the request he was about to present. He stressed particularly that he had no intention "of going through the channels of these blessed congregations which are not very speedy, and this makes me so impatient in my old age. As I am heading for the grave at great strides, I would like, if possible, to see things well settled for the greater glory of God - the only end of all my desires and efforts....Therefore I've resolved in the Lord to go as soon as I can in person to the feet of the Holy Father and before him reveal my needs with evangelical freedom for the good order and establishment of this work. I will remind him of the patronage he always had and which should now be more paternal, flattering myself in the conviction that I will attain everything immediately from His Holiness. If not, it will be convenient to await patiently the hand of God in more favorable circumstances, not doubting that the promises of the supreme fidelity of Almighty God are to be fulfilled."

Paul sent drafts of his memoranda to Bishops De Angelis and Garampi for correction and presentation "to our lord (the pope) in order to obtain this grace without

passing through congregations, because through them either a very long time passes or the desired end is not attained. I know from past experience that they will find nothing but difficulties and one must incur expenses and prepare many documents." Paul requests the pope:

to grant the confirmation of the Congregation;

to grant the superior general that his subjects - professed and having made the oath of perseverance - may be ordained under the title of "common board" either by the local ordinary of their place of residence or with his permission by any other bishop, with the sole testimonial letters of the superior general.

Another request was "to confirm and establish the jurisdiction of the general so that he might authorize his priest-subjects to hear confessions of the religious at home or on journeys." (119) By June 1st there was no answer from Bishop Garampi. Meanwhile Bishop De Angelis brought to the founder's attention the difficulties of obtaining what he wanted without passing through the congregations. On June 4th he insisted that Bishop De Angelis get absolutely directly from the pope what he requested, and should the pope want a commission he asked that it be composed of Cardinal Negroni and Bishops De Angelis and Garampi. Thus with persons who knew the Passionists he would not have "to struggle with procurators, lawyers and printed documents." Again on July 6th he begged that everything possible be done to avoid going through the congregations to get those faculties so necessary for the future of the Institute. Otherwise "let us do nothing more, but await for God to open another way....Let us bury everything in a deep silence and await that which our blessed God provides for us and for his Church."

The summer holidays and Bishop De Angelis' departure further blocked negotiations. In November the founder sent two religious to see about things and to seek the intervention of Cardinal Nicholas Antonelli, secretary for memoranda, who spoke to the pope. Contrary to all Paul's expectations and desires, his holiness handed over

the petition to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Consistent with what he so often affirmed, the founder decided "not to take any further steps at present, but to await more favorable winds and a more suitable opportunity." (120)

Why Clement XIII, who was so attached to Paul and who had, as Cardinal, favored him so much, granted him so little must be attributed to the pope's character. This is what Fr. John Mary insinuates when writing about the Most Holy Crucified hospice: "It was his habit that everything should go through its proper channels and he would resolve nothing by himself. Thus it was necessary to suffer and to face many difficulties in trying to obtain the desired grace, despite his great affection for Paul and for the Congregation...." The affair remained unresolved until September 9, 1768, when the founder obtained the authority to ordain 24 clerics. The radical solution, however, and the solemn approbation of the Institute finally came under Clement XIV. (121)

S. THE CONGREGATION CONSOLIDATES AND DEVELOPS: 1766-1769

1. The 1766 provincial chapter

The election of local superiors due in February 1767 was moved forward to October 18, 1766, in order to effect a gradual change of the provincial and general chapters to the month of May and so avoid travelling in winter. The convocation by the provincial, Fr. Marcoaurelius, was dated August 19, 1766; that by Paul to the retreats of his jurisdiction has not come down to us. Nine rectors and the provincial met in St. Angelo under the presidency of Paul of the Cross, superior general. No consultors assisted, since Fr. Marcelliano had died on October 21, 1764, Fr. Luke Antony was exclaustrated, and no replacements had been made in the meantime. Fr. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi was elected provincial with Frs. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli and Vincenzo Bertolotti as consultors. Apart from the rector of the Presentation another rector

was elected for the novitiate house and this rector was made master of novices by the general according to the prescriptions of the rule. The founder and the capitulars decided to move up the future general chapter to May 9, 1769. Some norms were discussed to regulate the relations between the two communities on Argentario. These were signed by the general and the provincial in the name of all the capitulars and inserted in the *license letters* of the respective rectors. (122)

2. The hospice of the Most Holy Crucified in Rome: 1767

From the time the founder began to deal with the Holy See regarding the affairs of the Congregation he saw the need of a house in Rome. Having to lodge with benefactors had its inconveniences. The repeated attempts, begun in 1746, to get a base in the capital were always in vain. The house opened on Monte Cavo did not solve the situation for it necessitated a whole day's walk to Rome and the seeking of hospitality for the night. In 1765 Paul made one more effort to find a solution. While he was busy with the affairs concerning ordinations, he had others searching for a suitable place at a price in line with the poverty of the Congregation.

Finally an opportunity arose of purchasing "a small house with corresponding garden, close to the chapel of St. Mary Queen, on the wide street of St. John Lateran." This house belonged to the Jesuits.

On May 18, 1766, Paul delegated Fr. John Mary Cioni to look after the affair. The purchase, however, was made by the benefactor Anthony Frattini in his own name, paying 550 *scudi* for it. On November 4, 1766, the founder delegated Fr. John Mary to accept Frattini's generous donation of the house in the name of the Congregation. Clement XIII was still hesitant about admitting the Institute into Rome. He sent Paul's request to the cardinal vicar, Mark Anthony Colonna, who benevolently supported the Passionists' petition. The favorable rescript arrived on November 8, 1766.

Paul, on November 12th, visited the house on his way to Monte Cavo. From Terracina he wrote to Cardinal Ganganelli, whom he knew through Bishop Charles Angeletti: "I reckon this hospice in Rome, close to St. John Lateran, shall be like a mustard seed which His Divine Majesty now plants in that holy city, but with great faith that He will make it grow into a large fruitful tree." He also informed him that there would be room for "three prepared priests, of mature age, learned, pious and well prepared for work, together with a lay brother and a young pious layman to help out." (123) The more urgent repairs, to eliminate the dampness of the walls and put up the partitions for cells, were completed and on January 9, 1767, Frs. John Mary Cioni and Joseph Del Rè, with Brother Sebastian Nicolini and young Dominic, took official possession of the house. Fr. Joseph fell ill on account of the dampness of the place and the scarcity of nourishment provoked by the famine.

Returning from his visit to the retreats south of Rome, Paul arrived at the hospice on May 6th and gave his approval to a project of enlargement so as to house more religious. Four more cells were built and a large common hall with fireplace and other services. A small, simple chapel was erected and adorned with a painting of the descent from the cross donated by Cardinal Pirelli. On Monday of holy week, 1767, Bishop Garampi blessed it and celebrated Mass in it for the first time. The house could now hold nine religious. The observance was kept as in other retreats except that the office of readings was anticipated the evening before. Every day after vespers and sometimes in the morning they went to the neighboring St. John's hospital to hear confessions and give catechetical instruction. On first Sundays and on feasts of Our Lady they took care of the parish of Torre Pignataro. Persons seeking spiritual direction soon frequented the hospice, especially after the founder established himself definitively there in the summer of 1769 in obedience to the wishes of Clement XIV. He transferred the general curia there from the retreat of St. Angelo at Vetralla. (124)

3. Farewell pastoral visit to the religious south of Rome: 1766-1767

For almost fourteen years Paul had not personally visited his religious in the communities south of the capital in the civil province known as Marittima and Campagna. He therefore wrote to them: "As from decrepit age, aches and pains I feel death is approaching, I have resolved in the Lord to come and give you my last farewell and embrace my dearest brothers dwelling in the retreats of Campagna." His purpose was also to give spiritual exercises in the different communities "to encourage them to become saints." (125)

He began at Monte Cavo in mid November. He spent the cold winter months in Terracina and was back at the hospice in Rome the first days of May, 1767. The visit consisted in giving conferences or exhortations and meditations to all the religious and holding private talks with the individual religious, exhorting them to continuous progress and perseverance. In each retreat he left various decrees which witness to his care in forestalling difficulties. This visit also served to strengthen the ties that bound the Passionist communities to the civil and ecclesiastical communities because of Paul's great ascendancy everywhere. As secretary of the general visitation, Fr. Nicholas Serelli accompanied Paul in order to draft the decrees and recommendations he left to the communities. The founder felt this was his last visit and expressed his decrees with the force of a last bequest. In St. Sosio and Ceccano he ended the series of decrees with these words: "We beg you to observe faithfully the orders given in this holy general visitation, which will serve to stimulate you to tend more fervently to perfection. Imploring your devout and fervent prayers that the Lord may grant me a holy death, I embrace you all for the last time in the sacred wounds of Jesus Christ and I impart to you my paternal blessing." He also promised to give them "last admonitions from our residence of St. Angelo or from that retreat where God will permit our death, and to sign them after God's mercy has given me the grace to receive the last sacraments." (126)

Back in Rome, in the audience given him by Clement XIII, he informed the pope of the progress of the Congregation and thanked him for allowing the Institute to have a hospice in Rome. The pope as a signal favor would not allow him the ceremonial kissing of the foot but instead gave him his ring to kiss. With his characteristic diplomacy, Paul made it a point to visit five cardinals before leaving Rome, among them the cardinal vicar and Ganganelli. Cardinals Ganganelli and Pirelli returned the visit at the hospice, while other prelates of the curia, among them Garampi, deemed it an honor to talk with Paul.

After his return to St. Angelo at Vetralla, while being cured of a serious illness, he was constantly thinking of the foundations of Roccastrada (Grosseta) in Tuscany still unfinished, and that of Corneto, which had made little headway. He was particularly interested in a foundation near Naples and for that purpose sent suitable instructions to the provincial, Fr. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi. (127) His physical condition did not allow him to pursue his visit to the retreats north of Rome until 1770.

T. RETREAT OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS AT CORNETO (now Tarquinia): 1769

Like many other earlier foundations, that of Tarquinia owes its origin to Paul's intermittent missionary apostolate in that city, but especially to the 1759 mission he preached with Fr. John Baptist Danei and Fr. Marco-aurelius Pastorelli. Several citizens wished a Passionist foundation there and on January 25, 1759, they obtained the consent of the city council. Bishop Giustiniani, the ordinary, not only favored but strongly supported the request of the city authorities to the pope and the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, who replied favorably on August 17, 1759. When it came to concrete execution of the project, however, the zeal of the promoters waned and nothing was done for about six years. Another mission preached in 1765 by Frs. John Mary Cioni, John Baptist Gorresio and Frontinus Porino served to awaken once more the citizens' desire to establish the foundation. The

city council chose a committee formed by representatives of the various social classes to collect offerings and building material. The building took about three years' work on a site known as the "estate of St. Pantalion" on a hillside east of the Marta River. The promoters preferred this district since it would meet "a particular need of the great number of poor shepherds found there, principally in the winter. Since they were far from the city these shepherds were deprived of all spiritual assistance and of the sacraments, and very often in the winter were obliged to miss Mass." Paul would have preferred the site called "Cura di San Martino" where there was sufficient water and a vegetable garden. He gave in to the reasoning of the promoters, however, who also encountered another difficulty in exchanging a plot belonging to an ecclesiastical benefice. In time they came to realize that the site was not wholly appropriate because of the lack of water. (128) Fr. Sebastian Giampaoli, delegate of the founder, with the assistance of the clergy, civil authorities and a large concourse of people took solemn possession of the retreat on March 17, 1769. That popular enthusiasm was not short lived. Bishop Giustiniani and the people persevered in their benevolence towards the Passionists, helping them to finish off and furnish the house. Paul later said that the retreat appeared to him "one of the best in the Congregation." However, difficulties were not lacking, particularly because of the water shortage, but they were not the hardships of the first foundations. A community of seventeen religious began immediately to live there, giving witness of a community of prayer and apostolate as Paul desired: "I trust the Lord will be greatly glorified and praised day and night with great spiritual profit for that city and the poor country people, who are deprived of almost all spiritual assistance." (129)

U. FIFTH GENERAL CHAPTER, ST. ANGELO AT VETRALLA: 1769

The fifth general chapter was held with ten months' anticipation as agreed during the 1766 provincial chap-

ter. It proved to be one of considerable importance for the definitive organization of the Congregation:

it was the last general chapter in which rectors took part by right;

the Congregation was divided into provinces, as prescribed by rule;

the office of the procurator general was more clearly defined, and the procurator given the right to participate in the general chapter and given precedence over all the consultors general;

theological study was better organized, and suitable provisions were made for the health of the students.

Availing themselves of the papal dispensation, the fifteen capitulars unanimously confirmed Paul in the office of superior general. He not only declined the office orally and emphatically, but, to dispel all doubts, he gave a formal written declaration in which he spoke of the Congregation as a work of God whose "servant and subject" he considered himself and recalled having served it "nearly all the days of my life without sparing fatigue, overwork, discomforts even to the detriment of my health." Now however "in my decrepit age, ill, deaf, powerless and filled with vices, I feel in conscience obliged to renounce the election as superior general." The capitulars did not allow themselves to be convinced and Paul, "finally overcome by the chapter's solicitous insistence and moved by the most urgent motive of obedience (to his confessor), adoring the divine will in the dispositions of the chapter, and overcoming his repugnance by conforming to the holy will of God, accepted the new confirmation." Frs. John Mary Cioni and Marcoaurelius Pastorelli were given him as consultors and Fr. Candidus Costa as procurator.

This chapter also marked the full spiritual renewal of the Congregation as ardently promoted by the founder, by the provincial, and by the provincial and general chapters. In the period from 1765 to 1769 there had been

an increase of twenty-two clerics and four lay brothers, as compared with the former period. The division into provinces came at a very hopeful moment. The Presentation province comprised the retreats of St. Angelo, St. Eutizio, Toscanella and Corneto in the Papal States, and the two retreats on Monte Argentario in the Garrison State, namely, the Presentation and St. Joseph. The province of the Sorrowful Virgin comprised the five retreats south of Rome: Ceccano, St. Sosio, Paliano, Terracina, and Monte Cavo, all in the Papal States. The hospice of the Most Holy Crucified in Rome was directly dependent on the superior general. Fr. Charles Joseph Marchiandi was elected provincial of the Sorrowful Virgin province with Frs. Joseph Del Re and Stephen Barberi as consultors. Fr. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi was chosen to preside over the Presentation province, receiving as counsellors Frs. John Baptist Porta and John Baptist Gorresio. The general chapter also elected the rectors and two masters of novices. The division of the Congregation into two administrative sections, though implying incorporation of the religious into a determined province, did not however signify an impediment to their transfer from one to another nor their election in another province.

At the closing of the general chapter Paul, writing to Fr. John Baptist Porta, gave him a summary: "I did all in my power not to be again elected general and after the election I presented in writing my formal renunciation, but in spite of this renunciation and my verbal refusal accompanied by tears, I had to submit obediently to the prayers of the chapter expressed by the president; so I've agreed once more to serve the Congregation, despite my decrepit age of 76 years, sick, weak, crippled and deaf. To ease my conscience the chapter has deemed it convenient to divide the Congregation, which has now twelve houses, into two provinces, as has been done canonically. The first province is the one here, that is the province of the Patrimony of St. Peter under the invocation and protection of our Blessed Lady's Presentation, and the other is that of Campagna and Marittima, under the invocation and protection of Our Lady of Sorrows. I was greatly pleased with this arrangement, because the two provincials serve as two props, one to the east, an-

other to the west, to keep the holy observance going and to remedy any disorders should they arise - which God forbid - more so as I am helpless to visit and provide for all needs, even though I have appointed as my visitor general Fr. John Mary of St. Ignatius, first consultant, to represent me in all." (130)

Paul informed the religious of his re-election in a circular letter that stressed his acceptance only under obedience "notwithstanding our formal renunciation...so it is my duty now to inform you that on the 9th of this month we were again elected as your general, and with great sorrow and tears we have accepted, to testify to the love we have always had and shall always have for you." He exhorted them to the faithful observance of the rule and to be as "a true portrait of Jesus Christ. Strive," he insisted, "that the virtue of Jesus Christ may shine in you, that is, in your countenance, in your bearing, in your acts, so that everyone may praise His Divine Majesty at the mere sight of a son of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and that sinners be converted simply by seeing you." He assured them of his constant prayers and said that he had embraced them "with the greatest possible tenderness and love in the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, where I have placed you all to contemplate and love you there all the days of my life and, we hope, throughout all eternity." Finally, recalling the conclave then in progress to provide a successor to Clement XIII who had died on February 2, 1769, he recommended prayers "for the present needs of the Church, the election of the sovereign pontiff and for the present calamitous state of Christendom," that is, for the struggles which under various pretexts arose against the Church and religious orders, especially the Jesuits. To this effect he ordered the daily recital of the litany of the saints and corresponding prayers during evening prayer. The tone of the circular letter was peaceful and hopeful, as peaceful also had been the atmosphere of the general chapter. The founder had returned from his visit to the retreats south of Rome comforted by the regular life and the apostolic work of the communities. Another consolation was the understanding that existed between the Passionist communities and the civil and ecclesiastical

communities. During the visitation he wrote to Cardinal Ganganelli, "Thanks to the Lord, I have nothing to complain about in the Congregation, because the holy observance is usually well kept, with peace and true charity." (131)

V. "I LEAVE THE CONGREGATION WELL GROUNDED AND ESTABLISHED IN THE CHURCH": 1769

When the chapter had ended one of Paul's first moves was to commission Frs. John MARY Cioni and John Baptist Gorresio to prepare a new text of the rule including the modifications and additions made by the general chapters. He wished it to be properly done in order to present it to the new pope. The conclave, in session since February, finally elected Cardinal Anthony Ganganelli, who took the name of Clement XIV, as Peter's successor. Paul was overjoyed and felt certain that the Franciscan pope would complete the establishment of the Congregation. On May 25th he set out for Rome to render homage to his friend, the new pope, and to request the approval of the Congregation with simple vows and the communication of the privileges of existing orders and congregations. He expected later on to ask for the approval of the rule. Just then, what he had most at heart was the establishing of the Institute as a stable moral person with the faculty of having clerics ordained under the title of "common board" with the sole dimissorials of the superior general. He was received on May 29th with very special signs of benevolence by the pope, who had sent one of the palace carriages for him. The pope accepted his request and promised him a ready answer. However, in the initial confusion of his pontificate, the pope mislaid the petition and when he became aware of it, immediately notified Paul. The founder saw in this the hand of God - a providential opportunity to make but one petition only which would request the establishment of the Institute and a new approbation of the rule including some modifications. Admitted to an audience on June 19th, he presented a more detailed memorandum together with the text of the rule. He requested:

that the Institute be approved as a Congregation with simple vows;

that the rule be confirmed with the modifications and additions the general chapters had made;

that the faculty be granted to have clerics ordained on the sole testimonials of the major superior by the local ordinary of the candidate's residence or, with the permission of the said ordinary, by any other bishop and always under the title of poverty;

that the Congregation enjoy the communication of all the privileges and graces of the orders and congregations, whether regular or secular;

that the quest proper to the Congregation might be made not only in the diocese to which the retreat belonged, but also, with the consent of the ordinary, in other dioceses without being impeded by the mendicant friars. (132)

The pope immediately entrusted the memorandum to Bishops Joseph Garampi and Xavier Zelada for its examination. Paul could very well write: "The pope loves me very much. He received me with extraordinary delicacy and charity." (133) Both appointees worked carefully and constantly, and were in constant touch with the founder, so much so that by the end of July they had finished their work and presented it to the pope on August 14th. In an exquisitely delicate gesture Clement XIV informed Paul the very next day, the feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady. (134) The summer holidays and other inevitable setbacks delayed the delivery of the brief specifically approving the rule to November 15th, while the bull *Supremi Apostolatus*, dated November 16th, was delivered on the 23rd of the same month. The bull contained the approbation of the Congregation, to which, besides juridic personality, other faculties were acknowledged. It stated that:

the Institute is established as a Congregation of simple vows;

the Congregation may erect houses with churches in which to celebrate the divine offices and Mass;

it may hold general and provincial chapters;

clerics may be ordained on the sole testimonials of the general or provincial under the title of "common board" or "of poverty;"

the general chapter and the superior general with the consent of his council can, for just causes, dispense simple vows and dismiss religious;

the Congregation may quest everywhere with the sole permission of the ordinary and shares all the privileges and indulgences granted to other existing orders and congregations;

all bishops are exhorted by the pope to receive benignly the members of the Institute and to consider them as "indefatigable laborers in the Lord's vineyard."

The deep emotion of Paul and his companions upon receiving such a favorable document which was delivered with so many signs of the Pope's esteem and affection is readily understandable. The *Te Deum* sung in the Most Holy Crucified hospice on its reception expressed their thanksgiving for all God's gifts throughout 49 long years of work and worry which began on that faraway 20th November, 1720. The trustful hope that animated Paul when writing to his bishop on March 11, 1721, requesting permission to go to Rome was now fulfilled: "I should inform Your Excellency that I feel an ever stronger inspiration to leave for Rome...when I am at the feet of His Holiness, God will make the whole world see his mercies. So much do I trust in my Crucified Lord that I am more than certain everything will turn out well. God has given me the inspiration and an absolutely certain sign of what he wills. Why should I fear?" (135) The facts were more than sufficient proof of a divine inspiration in the origin of the Congregation and proof that Paul was animated by a particular vocation or "charism" in founding the new Congregation. He could now look to the future with great-

er confidence. "Before dying," he wrote, "I leave the Congregation well grounded and established in the Church." He was anxious, however, that juridical stability signify also a greater vitality of the Institute, so that all men might be saved by the Passion of Christ. "I beg you," he continued, "that you also thank the Lord, and beseech God to send holy and learned men, so that the devout memory of the sacred Passion be spread throughout the whole world." (136)

At the end of 1769 the professed religious, living in twelve communities, numbered 142, of whom 90 were clerics. The news of solemn approbation brought joy and assurance for the future to all the religious, stimulating them to a greater awareness of their responsibility of being what the pope defined them, "coadjutors in the proclamation of the Word for the edification of their neighbor and the salvation of souls." The religious were also spurred on to continue their efforts "to arouse all Christians, by preaching and example, to share in the Passion of Christ." (137)

The pope wished to put the crowning touch on his work by issuing both brief and bull as a donation, free of charge, thus sparing Paul the worry of finding the considerable sum necessary to defray the expenses of these documents. (138) Almost as a compensation for what he had granted Paul, the pope asked him and other Passionists to preach a mission in a Roman church during September 1769 in preparation for the extraordinary jubilee he was about to proclaim. Paul attempted to excuse himself but, faced by the insistence of the cardinal vicar and other friends, he agreed to do so in S. Maria in Trastevere. Unfortunately, his ailments became more acute on the days preceding the mission, so he was unable to take an active part until some days after the commencement. This preaching was a confirmation of the specific mission of the Congregation and the crowning of the long road from Castellazzo to Rome. (139)

The founder was satisfied with this ending and saw in it God's answer to his hopes. Joyfully he gave news of the audience in which the pope had shown him the pre-



St. Paul of the Cross: a detail from the painting of 1773 by Gian D. Della Porta. The painting is at the monastery of Sts. John and Paul, Rome.



Bishop Thomas Struzzi, first Passionist Bishop. He died in 1780.

pared documents: "Last Sunday, the 6th, the pope granted me a long audience in his bedroom. It is that of a poor religious, with a poor bed, two chairs, a crucifix, images of our Lady, St. Francis and St. Joseph of Cupertino, and nothing but the bare, pure white walls. He is a man of holy life; his usual charitable delicacy towards me is inexplicable. With his own hands he showed me the bull, rich in privileges, and the brief where the rule and constitutions are quoted from the bull about to be dispatched, and all absolutely free." (140)

W. THE CONGREGATION'S PROGRESS: 1769-1772

On November 10, 1769, Paul informed Fr. John Baptist Gorresio: "The cardinal vicar and more particularly the Holy Father have ordered me to stay in Rome for many reasons beneficial to the poor Congregation." He already knew that probably he would have in Rome "a large house and a good church, as is hoped and desired even by the superiors, especially by the eminent cardinal vicar, who is very interested in us." (141)

Paul was longing to accomplish his personal visit to the communities north of Rome. On March 19th Clement XIV received him in a "long and secret audience" and Paul told him of this wish and of the progress made in the construction of the convent for the nuns. The pope promised to approve the rule for the convent and granted him permission to leave Rome but on condition of notifying the cardinal vicar. The cardinal had no difficulty in granting the requested leave, on the condition that he be back in Rome before the feast of St. John the Baptist, patron of the Lateran Basilica. (142) Leaving Rome by carriage on March 27th, Paul was in Tarquinia on the 29th, carefully inspecting the building of the new convent. On the 30th he was in the nearby community of his own religious with whom he celebrated Easter. The community was delighted by his preaching of the spiritual exercises and by the opportunity they had to confer privately with him. From there he left by sea for Argentario in order to avoid the bad roads in winter. He embarked

at Tarquinia, but owing to contrary winds, had to disembark at Montalto di Castro and continue his journey on horseback, as no carriage could be found. On April 22nd he opened the visitation at the Presentation retreat. On the 24th he received a letter from the pope in answer to one he had written from Tarquinia informing the pope of his journey and the progress of the convent building, and assuring him that he and all the Congregation incessantly recommended him to God. (143)

On his visit to the two retreats on Monte Argentario "he encouraged the religious with fervent and lively zeal to the exercise of virtue and the practice of union with God. He spoke to the novices with loving tenderness." (144) He found both communities in true fraternal harmony and faithful to their religious and apostolic duties and exhorted them to be "mirrors of every virtue and good example so that whoever sees them will find in them a living portrait of Jesus Christ, especially in these marshes, as in the past I have known inveterate sinners to be converted after seeing our religious modest and exemplary. And in this manner," he concluded, "your life will be a continuous mission." (145)

At the request of an influential roman friend Paul had to return quickly to Rome, so he delegated Fr. John MARY Cioni to continue the visitation of the other three retreats. On May 20th he had an audience with the holy father and then visited the cardinal vicar. Shortly afterwards his arthritic pains and other ailments returned more acutely but he continued with the foundation of the Passionist nuns, finishing the definitive text of their rule and presenting it for the pope's approval. This was granted on September 3, 1770. (146)

He dedicated the first half of 1771 to the foundation of the Passionist nuns which finally took place on May 3, 1771. On account of his ailments, Paul was unable to be present. There was a moment when his condition became so serious that he seemed to be at death's door. "The superiors of the Congregation visited him, and he gave salutary advice to all." (147) He recovered, however, and entrusted the visitation and the preaching of retreats to

Fr. John Mary for Our Lady of Sorrow province in the autumn of 1771, and to the Presentation province in the first months of 1772, in preparation for the provincial chapters. (148) The chapter of Our Lady of Sorrows province was held at Terracina on May 9, 1772, presided over by Fr. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli, as Paul's delegate. After many ballots Fr. Vincent Bertolotti was elected provincial, with Frs. Charles Joseph Marchiandi and Stephen Barberi as consultors. The chapter of the Presentation province was postponed to May 18th because the capitulars had been assigned to administer the sacrament of reconciliation to the convicts at Civitavecchia where Frs. John Baptist Gorresio, Vincent Strambi and Anthony Galvagno were preaching the mission. In the general's name Fr. John Mary Cioni presided at the chapter in which Fr. John Baptist Gorresio was elected provincial, and as consultors Frs. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi and Joseph Del Re. (149)

X. RETREAT OF SAINTS JOHN AND PAUL AT ROME: 1773

Reference has already been made to Paul's certainty in November 1769 that Clement XIV would provide a retreat in Rome. In May 1770 Paul had to interrupt the visitation to return quickly to Rome, as a friend - we know not who - told him he was convinced that the donation was soon to be realized. Up to 1772 the founder continually repeated that the pope "is well disposed to give us a house and church, but so far none is to be found." It was then necessary to pray that "if it be for God's greater glory, he give us a house here...." (150) On March 27, 1773, he had "certain hopes that in a short time the Divine Bounty will provide us with a house here in Rome" (151). Shortly before the Jesuit suppression he had mentioned to the pope that, should this happen, the novitiate house attached to St. Andrew at the Quirinal would be suitable for the Passionist Congregation. On August 9, 1773, a commission of cardinals was created to settle the properties of the Jesuits, who were suppressed on July 21st. Among the members of the commission was a friend of Paul, Cardinal De Zelada. He foresaw the diffi-

culties other members would find in assigning St. Andrew to the Passionists, and thus informed Paul and suggested instead the house and basilica of Sts. John and Paul, which was then isolated in open country and consequently more in keeping with the spirit of the Congregation. The Vincentians could occupy the ex-Jesuit novitiate. On August 23rd the secretary of the commission informed Paul that the pope had approved the projected exchange: the Vincentians to St. Andrew at the Quirinal and the Passionists to Sts. John and Paul. Paul hastened to assure the pope of his satisfaction with the proposal and to refute some rumors that the Passionists were few, that they were used to the woods, and hence the basilica would be ill-kept, etc. The founder announced that he had thirty religious in readiness (fourteen priests, nine students and seven lay brothers) as members of the new community. (152)

On his return from Castel Gandolfo in October 1773 the pope learned that transactions were still not completed and, due to some understandable difficulties, the Vincentians had not left Sts. John and Paul, even though the offer to be near the pope's palace was quite flattering. Cardinal De Zelada's solicitude confirmed the pope in his adherence to the project as outlined. On October 30th while thanking the pope, Paul encouraged him to complete the negotiations for the Passionist house "where continuous memory will be made of the most sacred Passion of our Divine Redeemer and which will be an everlasting memorial to all Christendom" of the zeal with which the pope "has promoted in the hearts of the faithful the devout memory of the same sacred Passion in order that all may practice it till the end of time." (153)

After the departure of the Vincentians, a few Passionists privately took possession of the complex on December 7th. Then on the afternoon of December 9th, without any publicity, the Most Holy Crucified hospice was left permanently and official possession taken of the house and basilica dedicated to the Saints John and Paul. The seventeen religious (twelve priests and five brothers) sang the *Te Deum* before the Blessed Sacrament exposed and, after praying at the tomb of the martyrs, went up

to the monastery. Having greeted the few friends who had come, the religious prayed vespers and compline. At midnight they rose to chant matins and lauds, praying for the needs of the Church and the pope, who was ever more in anguish over the difficulties that he was encountering. On December 10th Paul drew up some norms for the Celian Hill community that it might be "the good odour of Christ in every place but particularly in this holy city, where, more than elsewhere, holiness of life, modesty, the pattern of all virtues should shine, that the religious be holy in body and spirit and life-like portraits of Jesus Crucified to the greater glory of God." On the same day he sent a circular letter to all the retreats of the Congregation inviting everyone to thank God "for the new and splendid blessing granted to the Congregation" and, so that order and peace might be kept, he ordered that nobody should come to Rome without previous permission from the general, and that for expenses or business in the city the superiors should send one of the employees but notifying beforehand the religious in charge. He also forbade sending benefactors or other persons to seek hospitality there or entrusting business affairs for third parties to religious of the community. He sent a thanksgiving letter to the pope for the approval of the Congregation as a moral person and for having given it in Rome "a church, a house, and a place to serve the Divine Majesty in holiness and justice all our days, to contemplate lovingly the most bitter pains of the Crucified, and to copy in ourselves the virtues of such a Divine Model." (154)

The community, composed of thirty-four religious, had as its first superior Fr. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi. This numerous and select community could fulfill decorously the liturgical service of the basilica, the ministries in the city, and particularly in the surrounding countryside which from the Celian Hill extended to the marshes and the sea. It was also able to keep the garden in shape and to receive retreatants or other persons who came for confession or spiritual advice. It was Paul's desire "that in the new retreat perfect observance and great fervor of virtue be kept up." In order that the religious in the new retreat serve the Father in a true

spirit of virtue and holiness, he fervently exhorted them "to maintain an inviolable peace and fraternal charity with a decided purpose of tending to holy perfection." After the feast of the Epiphany, 1774, the students began their classes under the direction of Fr. Vincent Mary Strambi, thus laying the foundation for that house of study which was organized on an interprovincial level, and was of profit to the entire Congregation for many years. Now almost permanently confined to his cell because of his ailments, Paul would occasionally call all the community, but more frequently individual students, giving them "suitable advice in order that all would become men of prayer and true servants of God." (155)

In the meantime Fr. Marcoaurelius' health became gradually worse. One day the founder had himself carried to visit him. "They encouraged one another to suffer, they consoled one another mutually with holy discourses, and they separated in tears, never again to see each other alive." Fr. Marcoaurelius died a holy death on March 16, 1774. (156) On the feast of Sts. John and Paul, titulars of the basilica, the pope visited the basilica. Then going up to the monastery, he greeted not only the religious but also many secular ecclesiastics. Afterward he was alone with Paul. Intense was the joy of the two friends in that last meeting in the house the pope had given to the founder and his poor Congregation. But Paul's joy was turned into immense sorrow about two months later on hearing of the death of Clement XIV on the 21st September. He ordered solemn suffrages to be offered up in all the retreats for him who had solidly established the Congregation in the Church and given it a worthy residence in Rome. (157)

After a conclave lasting about four months Pius VI was elected pope on February 15, 1775. Paul had not known him personally. But on March 5th, for the Forty Hours adoration, the pope visited Sts. John and Paul's basilica. In the sacristy he received the homage of all the religious, giving them great consolation. He then wished to go up to the cell where Paul lay on his sickbed. Paul received him with the greatest emotion. On leaving, the pope "gave him an affectionate kiss on his

forehead with his apostolic blessing and left him with the spiritual consolation of having been visited by two popes within eight months." (158)

What a long way from that September day in 1721 when Paul was stopped before the door of the papal palace, though in his heart of hearts he was certain of the work of the Congregation. Now it was a reality in the Church. It had been blessed and honored by the pope's visit! We may well understand the joy of his religious as expressed by Bro. Bartolomeo in these words: "Divine Providence has disposed that in the short time we are in this house we should be visited by two popes. It is a clear sign that the Lord wishes to protect the poor Congregation in such stormy times for religious institutes." (159)

Y. LAST GENERAL CHAPTER PRESIDED OVER BY THE FOUNDER: 1775

The 1775 general chapter was the last to be presided over by the founder and the first in which only the general superior, the general and provincial consultors and the procurator general had active voice. It was likewise the first to be held in Sts. John and Paul, the new central house of the Congregation. Paul wished that all the rectors, as members of the provincial chapter, be also present in the generalate and hold the chapters for this time in the central house. This would give him the opportunity of meeting for the last time all those responsible for the Institute, and through them give "a tender and paternal embrace to all the religious of the Congregation, with the last loving advice and remembrance as a spiritual testament of his fatherly feelings towards the Congregation and his most beloved children." He had in mind, moreover, a revision of the text of the rule, and his desire was to do this together with all those responsible for the Institute. As the deceased consultant general, Fr. Marcoaurelius, had not been replaced, the members of the chapter were only nine. On the morning of May 15th the electors confirmed Paul in his office

and demanded his acceptance. Frs. John Baptist Gorresio and Candidus Costa were elected consultors and Fr. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi as procurator general. Paul publicly chose as secretary general Fr. Dominic Ferreri, who had served him formerly in that capacity.

On the afternoon of the 15th and on the following day the provincial chapters were held. Fr. John Mary Cioni was elected provincial of the Presentation province; in Our Lady of Sorrows province Fr. Vincent Bertolotti was confirmed in office. On the morning of the 17th all the members of the general and provincial chapters came together and Paul disclosed "his pious and holy intention of reviewing the rule, chapter by chapter, taking away such things as, through our poverty, could not be put into practice or were difficult to observe at all times. He wanted to make additions if necessary or clarify what was ambiguous or not well understood, thus giving the observance steady firmness. Finally he gave them all his last parting words, and showed his sincere and paternal sentiments towards the Congregation and its children and more so towards the universal mother, the Church, and the Holy See to which he always felt most attached." The work of revision went on to the 20th of May.

During the months preceding the chapter, Paul would have Fr. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi come to his cell to read to him each chapter of the rule "and when anything turned up that he felt needed clarification or change he would dictate the additions, explanations or changes he thought suitable, and, even though they were very wise and suitable to the needs, he did not trust his own judgment, but in his humility required the opinion of the older fathers." At the chapter meeting he had the changes, additions and explanations read out, requesting the capitulars to give their opinion with full freedom. As these notes have not come down to us it is difficult to evaluate objectively the work of the chapter, the various attitudes of the capitulars towards the points raised, and to understand why the structure of the "formal study" was changed. It had been the fruit of years of reflection. It is still more difficult to explain why two general chapters, at three and nine years' distance, had to issue

no less than twenty-eight decrees to give clarity or precision to some points of the rule.

The definitive text was compiled after the chapter ended but adhered faithfully to what had been agreed in the general assembly, although the capitulars wished to give "the general the faculty to accommodate, or better, declare and insert in the rules whatever he judged convenient for the common good and which could have escaped the notice of the capitulars."

The chapter issued very few other decrees. These inculcated effective charity among the religious and towards the sick, and abolished tertiaries and oblates.

On May 20th, at the end of the chapter, Paul addressed all the capitulars once more. He thanked God for the favors bestowed during the chapter and exhorted all "to uphold charity and peace not only with others, but also each one in his own soul, and principally the superiors who must be watchful of the observance and the true good of the religious. They should correct faults, but with peace of heart, serene mind and purity of intention. They should incline more to charity, mildness and meekness than to rigor and severity, treating everybody, whether priests, clerics or lay brothers, with equal good humor and friendliness." (160)

The chapter ended with mutual manifestations of esteem and trust. The majority of those who had taken part were seeing their founder for the last time. He was fast approaching the end of his earthly pilgrimage.

Z. NEW SOLEMN APPROVAL OF THE CONGREGATION AND THE RULE: 1775

When Paul presented the new text of the rule for the pope's approval he quite frankly asked him to name Cardinal De Zelada, member of the former commission under Clement XIV, and Cardinal Delle Lanze, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Council, as reviewers. On

July 3rd the pope received the request. By August 21st the work of revision was over and on September 15th Pius VI signed the bull *Praeclara virtutum exempla*, reaffirming the solemn approbation of the Congregation with all the privileges Clement had granted and approving the new text of the rule. (161) Paul could look upon this event with lively satisfaction. It had been speedy and gratuitous and it was a new manifestation of the esteem with which the Holy See held the Congregation, by giving it further juridical and pastoral consistency in the Church. The blessing given by Benedict XIII, with the oral permission to gather companions, had been most fruitful: here was Paul - fifty years later - ending the 1775 Holy Year surrounded by 176 companions living in twelve retreats. From these centres of intense prayer life and fraternal communion radiated the memory of the Passion of Jesus, as the founder had envisaged long before in the inspirations from heaven in the year 1720.

AA. "FATHER PAUL, WHEN IN HEAVEN REMEMBER THE POOR CONGREGATION": October 18, 1775

Charity and harmony were the themes Paul repeated in chapters, in circular letters announcing his re-election, in conversations with religious in his cell, and finally at the moment he was about to entrust the Congregation to those whom he had formed and whose filial affection he felt. Before solemn reception of viaticum on August 30, 1775, he repeated this message with still more moving force: "First of all, I earnestly recommend observance of the holy precept given by Jesus Christ to his disciples 'By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples'." He then recalled the love they owed the Congregation, made effective by living "the spirit of prayer, the spirit of solitude and the spirit of poverty." Such a lifestyle would make them worthy of the place they held in the Church, and he recommended "with special emphasis, filial love and complete submission." They must remember, however, that a true contemplative attitude would urge them toward the apostolate and hence they should "try to labor as

much as possible for the good of Holy Church, for the salvation of poor souls by missions, retreats, and other works according to our Institute, promoting in all hearts devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ."

On September 29th, having summoned the first consultant, the procurator general and the rector of the house (the second general consultant was absent on a mission) he recommended anew the life and growth of the Congregation: "I die happily because I leave the Congregation in your hands, but I recommend that you have a great love for the Congregation and the observance." On the afternoon of October 18th, the religious returning from vespers were called to his cell to pray with him at his passing to God. A few moments before he expired Bishop Struzziari said to him: "Father Paul, in heaven remember the poor Congregation for which you have worked so much, and us its poor children!" "With particular fervor Paul nodded affirmatively," and without a word closed his eyes, and after about fifteen minutes died peacefully. It was about 4:45 p.m. He had lived eighty-one years and nine months. (162)

The Congregation, up to then so intimately bound to Paul and left by him "well grounded and established in the field of the Gospel and vineyard of the Lord," (163) began a new period in its history. It was without that psychological security Paul's physical presence as founder had given, but it possessed the certainty of being able to face the trials of its further development in the Church because "it is the work of God" as Paul repeatedly had said. At that moment the Congregation consisted of twelve retreats in central Italy, ten in the Papal States, and two on Monte Argentario, which were politically dependent on the kingdom of Naples. The figures, from the first profession in 1741 to the end of 1775 were:

184 clerics	98 lay brothers	professed
32 "	15 " "	deceased
44 "	15 " "	dismissed
108 "	68 " "	living.

F O O T N O T E S

1. Let. I, 78.
2. Arch. Vesc. Pitigliano, Visite Vesc. XXII-XXIII, f. 387v.
3. Cf. letters of Bishop Crescenzi of August 26 and November 18, 1730, in AG. A. I-I, 17, 1-3, 1-5.
4. Cf. the document in Reg. et const., pp. 155-156.
5. Let. I, 406.
6. Cf. letters of Bishop Ciani: Sept. 10, 1730; Aug. 6 and Oct. 3, 1735, in AG. A. IV-I/1-1. Bishop Crescenzi: Aug. 26, 1730, in AG. A. I-I, 17, 1-3. Princess Boncompagni: Aug. 20 and Sept. 3, 1735, in AG. A. IV-I/1-1.
7. Let. I, 404.
8. Reg. e const. 6/I/25-52. For all the documentation on the foundation of the first retreat cf. Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 410-486.
9. Let. I, 274.
10. Let. II, 217.
11. Let. II, 252.
12. Let. II, 220.
13. Let. V, 38.
14. Let. II, 218.
15. Arch. Prioria Orbetello, Materie ecclesiastiche 1739-1742, f. 167v-169v.
16. Let. I, 91-93; 268-269; 419-421; 479; 481; II, 217; 219; 251-252; 269-277; V, 37-39. 17 Let. II, 221.
18. Let. II, 227.
19. Let. I, 551.
20. Processi IV, 229.
21. Let. I, 298; II, 433.
22. Let. II, 278, 280.
23. Giammaria, Vita del servo di Dio p. Fulgenzio di Gesu, (in AG) f. 34-38.
24. Giammaria, Annali, n. 247; Let. IV, 196-197. B. Silvestrelli, Memorie dei religiosi dei primi 50 anni (Rome, 1886), p. 6.
25. Let. II, 349, V, 142.
26. According to an old recollection, the election of the two new superiors of communities was done by the whole community acting as a chapter, in AG. A.V.I/I. Paul also recalls it: Let. II, 350.

27. Let. II, 351. Giammaria, "Storia della fondazione," in Bollettino 1923, pp. 333-338.
28. Let. II, 243; 284. Cf. Giammaria, "Storia della fondazione," in Bollettino 1923, pp. 313-314.
29. Arch. S. Eutizio, Memorie - Libro delli atti capitolari del ritiro di S. Eutizio.
30. Let. IV, 301; II, 150.
31. Reg. et const. 126/II/5-32.
32. Let. II, 76-77.
33. Arch. S. Eutizio, Memoria - Libro delli atti capitolari del ritiro di S. Eutizio. Silvestrelli, Biografia dei primi compagni, p. 83.
34. Decreti e rac., pp. 1-2 and decrees 1-24. Arch. Presentazione, Antica platea, heading 2.
35. Let. V, 69-70, 72. Cf. also Ravasi, Mons. Struzzieri, pp. 67-71.
36. Let. V, 72.
37. Let. V. 106.
38. Let. I, 132.
39. Let. V, 113. Cf. also Let. II, 172.
40. Let. V, 112.
41. Giammaria, "Storia della fondazione," in Bollettino 1924, p. 113.
42. Let. II, 132. Cf. also Let. V, 106, 109.
43. Let. V, 76.
44. Let. II, 134.
45. Let. II, 91. Cf. also Let. II, 232).
46. Let. II, 135-136. Cf. Let. II, 560-563; II, 753.
47. Let. II, 568.
48. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1924, pp. 175-183. Cf. also Let. V, 138-139.
49. Let. II, 667-668.
50. Let. II, 663, 148
51. Let. V, 149-150. Let. II, 672, 681.
52. Let. II, 698; cf. Let. II, 756; IV, analytic index, under: persecuzioni; Let. V, analytic index, under: Lite.
53. Let. V, 93. Let. II, 681, 693-694 of May 3, 1749.
54. Besides the other documents on the matter, cf. Let. II, 693.
55. Let. V, 113.
56. Let. II, 702.
57. In this period of external difficulties for the Congregation, Paul used to repeat that the "external opposition

did not discourage him, but only that from within the Congregation would give pain, that is, should the holy observance, union and charity not flourish," Processi IV, 365. For the documentation on the whole dispute cf. Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 681-877. Ravasi, Mons. Struzziari, pp. 75-83.

58. Bollettino 1929, pp. 6-9.

59. The fact that the Passionists were called to preach the missions in Rome with the other Orders and Institutes who were preaching in other churches was an honor and an act of benevolent attention by the Pope just when the discussion was going on with the Friars. Cf. Diario di Roma, 1749, N. 5052, p. 9; Arch. Vat., Instr. Miscell., N. 4939, f. 119; Let. II, 842-843; 746.

60. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1924, pp. 209-217.

61. Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 896-917.

62. Let. II, 651-654.

63. Let. II, 654, 659, 683.

64. Let. II, 378. Cf. also Let. V, 115-116.

65. Let. I, 612. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1924, pp. 239-249, 276-284, 313-315, 340-347.

66. Reg. et const. 54/I/6-11. Let. V, 133.

67. Let. II, 824.

68. Let. IV, 242-249. Decreti e rac., p. (2)-(3); decr. n. 25-71.

69. Let. II, 479.

70. Let. IV, 250-253.

71. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1925, pp. 41-47, 72-85, 183-191, 232-234. Ravasi, Mons. Struzziari, pp., 87-91. G. De Sanctis, S. Maria di Pugliano presso Paliano (Paliano, 1974).

72. Decreti e rac., p. (3)-(5), decr. n. 72-104. Let. IV, 255-256; Let. III, 338.

73. Let. II, 225, 229.

74. Let. II, 239.

75. Let. II, 394. Cf. also Let. III, 155.

76. Let. III, 510-511.

77. Let. IV, 322. Ravasi, Mons. Struzziari, pp. 91-93.

78. Let. III, 417-420. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1925, pp. 234-244.

79. Let. I, 719. To understand the expression of Paul it is necessary to recall that Gregory XIII found great resistance among theologians and jurists when he declared with the

constitution Ascendente Domino on May 25, 1584 that the students and coadjutors of the Society of Jesus with simple vows were true religious. It was Leo XIII with the constitution Conditae a Christo in 1900 who resolved the question, deciding that simple vows are constitutive of canonical religious life on a par with solemn vows.

80. Let. II, 726.
81. Let. IV, 229-230.
82. Letters of Marcoaurelius, in AG. B. I-I/5-3/1-6.
83. Let. IV, 229-231.
84. Let. II, 725-726.
85. Let. IV, 245.
86. On March 25, 1739 Bishop Crescenzi informs Paul of his probable nomination as Nuncio to France; he assures him that he will recommend him to Card. Rezzonico, in AG. A. I-I, 17.
87. Let. V, 177-178.
88. In AG. A. I-I, 17.
89. Let. V, 151; 181. Let. III, 537. Let. III, 118.
90. Let. IV, 266, 324; Let. III, 190. Also AG. A. III-IV, 2-2.
91. Let. I, 698. Cf. also Let. III, 166, 541.
92. Let. III, 517. Card. Crescenzi on Dec. 19, 1759 in AG. A. I-I, 17.
93. Let. III, 169.
94. From the breve notizia in AG. A. I-I, 27 there is the original ms., but no printed copy.
95. Let. III, 231.
96. Giammaria, Annali, n. 444. Processi I, 357; 75; Processi IV, 189, 288, 351.
97. Let. IV, 266-269.
98. Bollettino 1926, p. 244; Acta C.P. XII (1933-35), 267-271; Let. IV, 271-272.
99. Reg. et const., p. XXIV.
100. Let. IV, 271-272. Giammaria, Annali, n. 445.
101. Bollettino 1923, pp. 268-269.
102. Ibid. p. 269.
103. Let. III, 576.
104. Let. IV, 272-273.
105. Bollettino 1923, p. 267.
106. Let. I, 522.
107. Filippo, Storia Add., vol. I, f. 140. Cf. also Zoffoli, op. cit., I, 1121-1124.
108. Let. IV, 213. Cf. also Let. IV, 212.

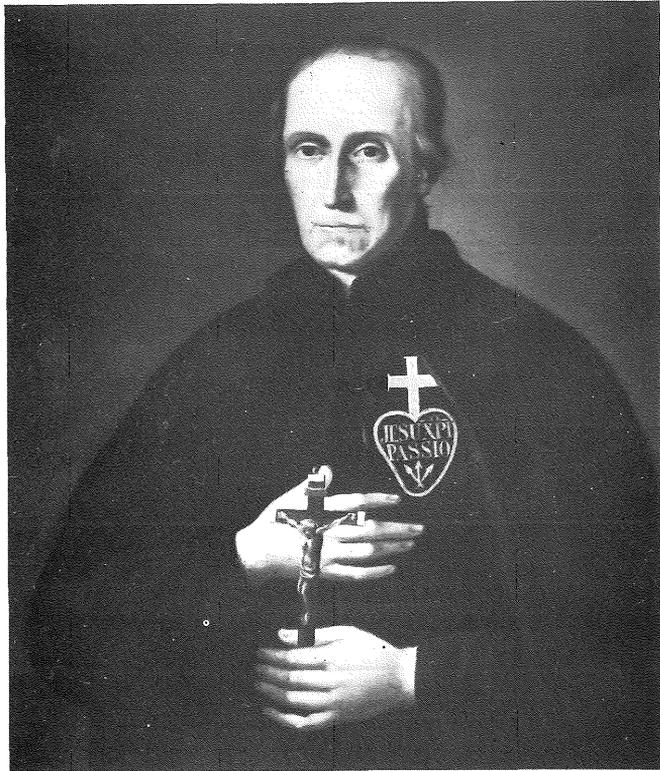
109. Let. IV, 212-214. Documents in authentic copies in AG. B II-I/2-1.
110. Let. IV, 200-201.
111. Text of the decrees in AG., Giammaria, Annali, n. 450.
112. Let. IV, 275-276.
113. Filippo, Storia Prov. Add., vol. I, f. 273.
114. Let. IV, 276-277.
115. Giammaria, Annali, n. 479.
116. Let. IV, 277-279. The temporary cloister of the novitiate is expressed in Let. III, 425. Cf. also Processi III, 198.
117. Filippo, Storia Prov. Ad., vol. I, f. 277.
118. Giammaria, Annali, n. 483, the founder, "on the advice of doctors, dispensed with eating meat ad tempus." Paul speaks of this epidemic in Let. I, 764. Cf. also G. de Sanctis, Il S. Fratello di S. Paolo della Croce (Napoli, 1963), pp. 510-527. Processi I, 268.
119. To Bishop De Angelis: Let. III, 563-668; to Bishop Garampi: Let. III, 723.
120. To Bishop De Angelis: Let. III, 569-571.
121. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1926, pp. 77-78.
122. Acts of the Chapter in Bollettino 1924, pp. 233-238. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. I, f. 332-333.
123. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1926, pp. 74-88. Giammaria, Annali, n. 485, 492-505. Delegates Fr. John Mary: Let. IV, 306-307.
124. Cf. preceding note. For the benefactors who most distinguished themselves with contributions for the acquisition, restoration, and enlargement of the house cf. AG. B. IV/I/1-1.
125. Let. III, 304, 686. Strambi, Vita, 143. Giammaria, Annali, n. 506-508. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. I, f. 335-361.
126. Let. II, 763.
127. Processi IV, 207. Let. III, 276-278. Giammaria, Annali, n. 510.
128. Giammaria, "Storie delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1925, p. 342.
129. Let. III, 823. Let. V, 209-211: the instructions for the service of taking possession of the Retreat.
130. Let. III, 768; Let. V, 171. Decreti e rac., p. (6)-(7), decr. n. 123-134. Giammaria, Annali, n. 526-528. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. II, f. 2-9.



Fr. Fulgentius Pastorelli



Ven. John Baptist Danei



Bro. Bartholomew of St. Aloysius. Infirmarian of St. Paul of the Cross.

131. Let. IV, 284-286; Let. III, 800.
132. Reg. et const., pp. 173-174; Giammaria, Annali, n. 529-539.
133. Let. III, 826. Cf. also Let. III, 266; 326. Giammaria, Annali, n. 540-545.
134. Giammaria, Annali, n. 546-548.
135. Let. I, 22.
136. Let. III, 828.
137. The Bull. Supremi apostulatus, # 1,3.
138. Let. III, 267. Giammaria, Annali, n. 560-563.
139. Giammaria, Annali, n. 549-559. Let. III, 713.
140. Let. III, 713. Cf. Reg. et const., pp. XXV-XXVII.
141. Let. III, 713.
142. Let. V, 204. Giammaria, Annali, n. 567-569.
143. Arch. Vat. Epistulae ad Principes Clementis XIV, vol. 165, f. 493-495. It was cited by Strambi, Vita, 154-155; by A. Theiner, Storia di Clemente XIV, Firenze 1854, vol. 4, pp. 90-91.
144. Strambi, Vita, 153-154. Giammaria, Annali, n. 587.
145. The decrees issued by the community at Tarquinia, in AG. Cf. also Giammaria, Annali, n. 585.
146. Let. II, 794; III, 268; IV, 138. Giammaria, Annali, n. 591-595.
147. Giammaria, Annali, n. 623, we do not know if the phrase "superiors of the Congregation" refers only to Provincials and their consultors or also to rectors.
148. Giammaria, Annali, n. 624-634.
149. Giammaria, Annali, n. 641-643. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. II, f. 30-32. 150 Let. I, 794, 796, 797.
151. Let. I, 811, 813.
152. Let. IV, 204-205.
153. Let. IV, 207. L. Ravasi, Due secoli di S. Paolo della Croce sul Celio (Roma, 1973). He records the original documents of the Commission, the act of assigning the church and house, and the arrangements which came from the founder for the new community.
154. Let. IV, 207-208; 286-288.
155. Strambi, Vita, 176.
156. Giammaria, Vita del servo di Dio p. Marcoaurelio, f. 189. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. II, f. 60-61.
157. Strambi, Vita, 177, 398. Giammaria, Annali, n. 668, 670.
158. Giammaria, Annali, n. 670. Processi I, 86.

159. Br. Bartholomew to Fr. Nicholas Costantini, March 8, 1775 in Bollettino 1924, p. 367.

160. Cf. Atti del sesto capitolo generale, in Bollettino 1929, pp. 75-89. Decreti e rac., p. (7)-(9); decr. n. 135-147. Giammaria, Annali, n. 672-675. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. II, f. 71-75.

161. Reg. et const., pp. XXVII-XXIX. Let. V, 250-251.

162. Cf. the circular letter of the Vice-General, Fr. Gorresio, with which he announced the death of the founder to the religious, "the record of his last testament" and the obsequies, in Bollettino 1929, pp. 105-116. Strambi, Vita, 190-192.

163. Let. III, 118. The Congregation was well established but only in central Italy and specifically in the Papal States even though the founder had tried to enter various regions of Italy. It turns out that Paul attempted at least 23 foundations from Piedmont to Sicily, on Corsica, the Marches, Molise, Apulia, Tuscany, and Naples, but always unsuccessfully, cf. documents in AG. A. IV-I/1-1.

Chapter V

THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

A. THOSE CALLED TO THE CONGREGATION

1. Means for making the Congregation known and for promoting vocations

References have been made in previous chapters to the very difficult period which witnessed the birth of the Congregation. The difficulties sprang in part from the multiplicity of existing religious orders and congregations, but more so from the opposition of governments and from influences of the enlightenment and rationalism. Besides, Paul had espoused the ideal of striving for a renewed religious lifestyle as sponsored by the Holy See, which since the Council of Trent and particularly in the preceding century had done so much in order that religious be exemplary and holy. In 1750 a holy religious thus described the Congregation: it is not an Order since it does not have solemn vows, and neither is it "a reformed old order, but a new Congregation, recently founded and established in God's Church....It is a totally apostolic institute that professes, together with the solitude of mind also that of the body, serving our dear Lord in prayer and fasting, in silence and in hope." (1) Furthermore, until 1769 it was not juridically recognized as a distinct moral person, and in the years 1748-1750 it ran the risk of being suppressed because of the opposition of the mendicants who, directly or indirectly, had spread many rumours against it. (2) No wonder, then, that at the time of the first professions, June 11, 1741, it numbered only five priests, one lay brother and two postulants. Though rejoicing at this progress, Paul noted: "The work is still an infant and will perish in its infancy if deprived of holy workers to feed and nourish it spiritually in order that it may grow. Pray then that God may send holy workers." (3)

Anxious to do God's work, the founder strove methodically to make the Congregation known and esteemed, and to enlist the support of pious souls and priests in contact with young men. His first concern was to pray and then beg the prayers of his companions and of other truly spiritual persons, especially nuns, to obtain from God fit subjects. When giving his first retreat at the Tarquinia Benedictine convent he obtained the assurance that all the religious would recite a Hail Mary after the choir observance to obtain holy vocations for the nascent Congregation. This practice was still being faithfully kept up at the time of processes for Paul's canonization. (4)

Paul made every effort to ensure that his religious, as individuals and as a community, always gave a true witness of evangelical life, both for the glory of God and that people might acquire a correct picture of the Congregation and young men be attracted to it. (5)

A very important and effective means which Paul used to seek and develop vocations was letter writing. Very illustrative of this is his correspondence with Francis A. Appiani, Thomas Struzziere and the Strambi family. In a letter to Appiani in 1737, among other things he says: "Be of good cheer, dear friend. Jesus awaits you, Mary invites you. All Heaven encourages you and tells you that the royal throne and crown are prepared for you also, and the Good God will give them to you as a present for having abandoned these earthly trifles....I trust I will soon embrace you in the heart of Jesus and together we shall praise this Holy Name and chant eternally his divine mercies." (6) To Fr. Tuccinardi he writes: "Come on now! Jesus invites you to bid a last farewell to the world and to come and promote his greater glory. Have no doubt that your heart will rejoice and His Divine Majesty will make you enjoy that longed-for peace that surpasses all understanding, even though thorns will not be wanting. Anyway, what is that servant of God who is not crucified?" Paul then smooths out for him the difficulty he finds in having to assist his aged mother, telling him he may send her Mass stipends. (7) After urging him to study and to make progress in his sacramental

life and in mental prayer on the Passion of Jesus, he exhorts Paulinus Fossi: "Give yourself entirely to the gentle Jesus. Give him all your heart, your soul, your will, all, all the senses of your body - eyes, tongue, hands and all the rest - in order that all may be burnt in the heart of Jesus....and all go up in fire and ashes....How I long to see you vested in the habit of the Passion with the sacred "sign" on your breast...." (8)

Many entered the Congregation after knowing Paul or his companions through missions or retreats. In 1741 the founder begged Canon Cerruti, his former spiritual director, to get missions for him in the diocese of Alessandria, telling him he felt certain that he would thus acquire "some good workers for the increase of the nascent Congregation." (9) When sending his religious on missions to Camerino and Fabriano in 1750 he recommended that they have "prayers offered up always for the Congregation," that it be the good odour of Christ in every place, and if they met "postulants who would enter the Congregation, to examine and encourage them," to get suitable information about them and their exact addresses and transmit all this to him, and he would get in touch by letter with the prospective candidates. (10)

About half the religious who entered the Congregation in Paul's lifetime, however, were oriented towards it by the prudent intervention of zealous priests and spiritual directors, friends and admirers of the Congregation. Paul sent them accounts of the true purpose of the Congregation, kept them informed of its growth, gave them proofs of his esteem, and acknowledged them as his best benefactors. He distinguished particularly the priest friends he had such as Cerruti, Sardi, Randone and Gargagni in northern Italy. In Rome he had Fr. Ciarelli and in Vetralla Fr. Pieri. (11)

On August 10, 1752, he sent these friends and his religious an instruction for receiving postulants. But in a very special manner this was directed to "those most devout ecclesiastics who with holy apostolic zeal strive to send subjects to the Congregation, assuring them of the ever grateful remembrance of the Congregation in Christ

Jesus, giving them a perpetual share, in life, at death and after death, of all the prayers and petitions, besides the extraordinary merits they will acquire because of the untold number of souls saved through the ministry of those whom they have sent. (12)

GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGINS OF THE RELIGIOUS IN PAUL'S LIFETIME (13)

Civil Province	Died in Congregation	Left	Totals
Alessandria	9	2	11
Asti	-	1	1
Bologna	1	-	1
Cuneo	47	16	63
Imperia	2	1	3
Genoa	4	2	6
Turin	1	1	2
Savona	1	-	1
Trent	-	1	1
Udine	1	-	1
Varese	1	-	1
Venice	-	1	1
Vicenza	1	-	1
Totals, Northern Italy	<u>68</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>93</u>
Elba (Island of)	17	8	25
Florence	1	-	1
Lucca	16	5	21
Grossetto	4	4	8
Viterbo	40	18	58
Rome	7	4	11
Frosinone	20	6	26
Perugia	-	1	1
Ancona	1	-	1
Pesaro	2	-	2
Aquila	1	-	1
Rieti	-	1	1
Terni	4	6	10

Macerata	-	1	1
Latina	-	1	1
Pistoia	-	1	1
Totals, Central Italy	<u>113</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>169</u>
Naples	1	1	2
Sicily	1	-	1
Totals, Southern Italy	<u>2</u>	<u>.1</u>	<u>3</u>
France (Nice)	2	2	4
Switzerland	1	1	2
Spain	1	-	1
Brazil (by way of Portugal)	-	1	1

The Congregation, though established in Lazio and on Monte Argentario thanks to the spiritual activity and social contacts of the founder, could count on members from a much wider geographical area, which favored within it a broader outlook, that was enriched by the cultural values proper to the various "nations" as they were then called. The provinces which more generously contributed Passionist vocations were those of Cuneo, Viterbo, Frosinone, the Island of Elba, and Lucca, followed by Alessandria, Rome and Terni. Of these religious, thirty-two were priests before entering; the rest were formed in the Congregation. As may be seen from the outline below, the majority of those who entered as clerics did so within the 15-25 age bracket. Among lay brothers the age of admission was slightly higher. The founder's desire which was inserted in the rule was that young men under twenty-five be admitted, "as they were more amenable and better disposed to conform to the spirit of the Congregation." For reception of postulants above that age the superior general's approval was necessary. (14)

AGES OF RELIGIOUS ON ENTERING THE CONGREGATION

Age	Clerics	Age	Lay Brothers
15-17	33	15-17	4
18-19	36	18-20	16
20-25	66	21-25	40
26-29	24	26-29	15
30-35	8	30-35	4
39	1	36	1
40-49	5		
50-57	4		

2. Discernment of vocations

Paul was convinced that the embodiment of the Congregation's spirituality and the development of its appropriate apostolate could only be hoped for from young men with a clear and certain vocation that was coupled with sufficiently balanced human and spiritual dispositions.

In the very first text of the rule he wrote: "Before any servant of God is admitted to the retreat of penance, let him examine well whether God is calling him to it. Let him do this by prayer, fasting and frequent reception of the sacraments, withdrawing himself from worldly concerns. Let him seek the advice of his confessor and other servants of Jesus Christ. Let him see if he is resolved to suffer much, to be despised and ridiculed, and to endure calumnies and other hardships for the love of our Saviour" - a severe discernment, but clear as crystal, as to what the Congregation expected of those who wished to share its life. The 1741 rule specified that this discernment was not restricted to postulant-confessor but extended to Congregation-postulant in dialogue and examination. (15) The founder was ever fond of blending realistic information with clear formulations but coupled with great encouragement so as to help the candidate overcome subsequent psychological fears or other difficulties.

He wrote to Appiani and two other postulants from the Island of Elba telling them he was sending Fr. Fulgentius "who will speak with my heart and will let you read our rule so that you may examine everything well. I can assure you everything will be most tasteful to your spiritual palate if you come with the dispositions Fr. Fulgentius will suggest to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Come in the name of Jesus Christ. I wait to serve, help and console you in all those duties the weakness of my poor spirit will allow." (16) On another occasion he reminded Appiani: "Our life is very penitential, but also very pleasant and reasonable." (17)

These same sentiments and practices emerge from the 1752 "Instruction for the Admission of Postulants," an honest exposition of the seriousness of Passionist life, and the clear commitment required on the postulant's part, but always conveyed in an atmosphere of trust in God who calls and makes pleasant a life crucified out of love. "Let the postulant be careful to answer frankly all questions...let him not fear. Let him trust all will be made easy with the help of God, as is experienced by those already vested who come from every condition of life, some born and bred in comfort and delicacy. Seen from a distance this Congregation seems frightening, but from near by it is consoling and mild....Take heart, come with good will, good intention and with the aforesaid dispositions, and experience will show you how light is Christ's yoke. You will experience true peace of soul and, on your arrival, will see it shining on the countenances of your brother religious. You will discover with what charity you will be treated by superiors, what gentleness in correcting, and the mutual holy love that exists among the religious united as in one heart in Christ Jesus." (18)

It is important to note, on the one hand, the psychological approach of being both demanding and encouraging, and on the other, the trust Paul had in the testimony of his religious as a means of giving postulants a sure proof of their fraternal love and of the peace Jesus communicates. In order that the discernment process be more certain and the postulant take time to reflect on his

free choice, Paul wished that superiors not be anxious about the candidates that came along. To Appiani he wrote: "I want you to become a great saint, but as regards joining our Congregation or not, even if I do desire it, my desire rests on the Divine Will and does not make me feel anxious about anything else." (19) Fr. John Baptist shared this attitude and greatly feared that candidates would be admitted simply "for the sake of numbers," with great risk of "weakening the spirit of the Institute and cooling its fervor." He frequently repeated: "Not many; few but good." Writing to a religious he reaffirmed this conviction: "By constant prayer we must seek that God in his goodness deign to keep the Congregation purged and keep away from it those who would cause restlessness and scandal as well as those delicate and incapable of keeping up the observance. May he provide it with upright men who will be lovers of the truth revealed by God, most strong and vigorous bulwarks of this Congregation against all false masters and adversaries that have arisen or are rising in the world. Then, continuing to pray, leave all the care of providing for it to the hidden but infallible and indefatigable providence of the Most High...." (20)

Gradually the examination of clerics became more exacting. As a condition for admission to the novitiate they were required to have completed the study of the humanities and have a sufficient knowledge of the Latin language. (21) In 1758 Fr. Marco Aurelius wrote to the master of novices: "I'm glad you have many novices this year too, but are they flourishing? I doubt it very much, for I've heard that some, besides being unusually small in stature, are small in understanding, not even able to read. Is it possible that the father master does not know the need of study and of people suitable for our ministries? I am not convinced of it. But because the persons from whom I have such information are trustworthy, I say to your reverence, be careful, be careful." (22)

After the examination of their vocation and its requirements, the postulants, even though accepted, ordinarily had to stay home for some months dedicated "seri-

ously to devotion, study, prayer and frequenting the sacraments." (23)

On entering the novitiate the postulant was still kept on probation for about a fortnight so that the superior, the master and the community might know him and be able to make an objective evaluation of him in the community chapter before permitting him to begin his novitiate. The postulant, though treated charitably, with fraternal kindness and bearing in mind also his background, was submitted to some trials concerning humility, patience, docility and sincerity. He had to perform tasks which in the thinking of the time were proper only to women or servants, such as sweeping the floors, cleaning the toilets, washing the dishes, serving at table; or was required to eat on the floor while the others sat at table. He had to accuse himself of his faults or be reproved publicly in the refectory without excusing himself, or to kneel outside the refectory door begging the prayers of the brethren. These and many other things had the purpose of ascertaining that the postulant "is quite determined to die to himself, and to his own evil inclinations in order to live solely for God, in God and through God, hiding his own life in the most holy life of Jesus Christ, who out of love for us and for our example, chose to make himself the reproach of men and the outcast of the people." (24) The discernment of the postulant's fitness made by the local chapter of the novitiate community represented a further guarantee of the success of the young man who was beginning the religious life.

B. SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF THE RELIGIOUS

1. The novitiate and the masters of novices

The rule made no distinction between clerics and lay brothers in what concerned spiritual formation because the Passionist vocation was one and the same for both. Yet in practice a certain distinction existed due to differing degrees of education between clerics and lay novices. The former were allowed more time for study and

reading, while the lay novices, even when able to read, had to dedicate more time to manual work. There was only one novitiate house (first the Presentation, later St. Joseph's Retreat) but for reasons of space or other community needs brother novices sometimes had to spend their novitiate elsewhere. As a matter of fact, during the founder's lifetime thirty-seven brothers - more than one-third - were novices and were professed at St. Angelo at Vetralla, St. Eutizio, Terracina, Ceccano, St. Sosio and also Paliano. (25)

The importance given the novitiate is evident from the fact that in the years 1741 and 1746 the chapter of the rule dealing with the formation of novices and the duties of the master was completely rewritten and never again revised. Paul chose as masters of novices the best religious he could find, who were well prepared spiritually and doctrinally, of even temperament, apt to encourage the young to be very open. The masters who succeeded one another in this period initiated that school of spirituality which was to be at the root of Passionist formation, so effective in developing both an interior asceticism and an apostolate outlook. They were:

Fr. Fulgentius Pastorelli:	1741 to June 1746 and from December 1747 until his death on April 6th, 1755;
Fr. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli:	June 1746 to December 1747;
Fr. John Mary Cioni:	1755 to 1759;
Fr. Joseph Del Re:	1759 to 1762;
Fr. Louis Borell:	1762 to 1764 when "he resigned freely;
Fr. Peter Vico:	1764 to April 14th, 1773 (his death);
Fr. Bartholomew Iallonghi:	1773 "for a short time";
Fr. Anthony Pucci:	1773 to 1781.

Frs. Fulgentius and Marcoaurelius established the doctrinal and pedagogical basis and the external rules and transmitted them to their successors. They, together with Frs. John Mary and Peter, always combined a serene and kindly manner with seriousness and firmness in dealing with the young men. Fr. Marcoaurelius greatly

influenced the external policy as he had educational experience in his former Congregation of Christian Doctrine.

The duty of choosing a master of novices pertained to the superior general with his council up to 1775 and then devolved upon the provincial chapter, and outside the chapter, to the general or provincial superior with his respective council. (26) The master had to possess a solid spiritual doctrine, and be well informed through the study of works on asceticism, morality and spiritual direction. But above all he had to shine by an exemplary life "to teach more by example than by words." He needed great self control so as "to show a peaceful countenance so that they (the novices) may be more trustful in disclosing their hearts and be more encouraged to walk in the way of holy perfection." Paul explained this quality to Fr. Peter: "Treat the novices with all gentleness and charity, striving to have a peaceful, meek and gentle heart so as to be of great profit to these little lambs. This must be done with the heart of a father and of a tender mother; thus they will be kept fervent, courageous and in holy contentment." Correction was prudently given but always with great charity and good grace. "If they make a mistake, let him correct them with mildness and prudence. Should they deserve some penance, let him impose it with discretion, for gentleness helps them to amend and an opportune penance helps them to overcome their fault." The master took every care to console the novices, discover their troubles and help them to discuss these with him and overcome them. Paul was aware that at the beginning young men may feel homesick, dry and bored, so "the master will console them with great charity when they are dejected and tempted." The master was to preserve peacefulness through attentive and serene vigilance over all his novices, without ever losing sight even of their physical needs, such as food and necessary sleep. To accomplish this the master placed all his trust in God, beseeching him continually for the necessary enlightenment, and at the same time seeking help in study and the advice of experts. (27)

2. Formative goals of the novitiate

The purpose of formation was clear: "The novitiate is instituted to form new men," that is, "to form a man who is totally God-centered, totally apostolic, a man of prayer, detached from the world, from things, and from himself so that he may in all truth be called a disciple of Jesus Christ, and may become fit to beget many children for Heaven...." (28)

Summarizing the chapter of the rule, Paul thus explains to Fr. Fulgentius the formative goals and their gradual acquisition, beginning with the solid foundation of humility and the purification of the motives for acting, to the obtaining of mystical union through the divine nativity in Jesus by first being immersed in his death: "Let us work that they may acquire a solid inner virtue, deep humility, simplicity, purity of intention, clearness of conscience, a well ordered interior life and truly deep recollection. Later, if anyone should feel called to greater penance, he may be granted it after a proper examination and trial. Oh! how much I desire that our men become accustomed to being men of interior life, constant in enduring interior struggles, trials and sufferings which are so necessary for the purification of the spirit, in order that at every moment that spiritual nativity in Christ Jesus be renewed in most pure faith and holy love. But the secret is to know how to bear these ordeals in silence and hope." (29)

The novices were to be given objective information about the Congregation and the new contribution it intended to make in the Church by its spirituality. They were also to be told about the difficulties it encountered and the progress it was making. (30) This knowledge would aid them in greater penetration into the spirit of the Congregation, and in assuming an inner attitude which manifested even outwardly the continuous control of themselves and their senses, particularly their eyes and their imaginations, so as to acquire that internal peace and freedom from images which is so necessary for obtaining the gift of intimate union with God in prayer. The custody of the eyes, that is, keeping them ordinarily

fixed on the earth, with only passing glances at people, and never fixing their gaze on faces, formed an important part of what was then called "modesty." (31)

They were trained to acquire a deep, sincere and felt humility in order to experience the obedience and humility of Jesus. (32) Humble and peaceful in spirit, the novices were urged to purify their motives in acting, doing everything as one who is in the presence of God and to please God. As Fr. Fulgentius put it: to act "for the love of God, to please God, because God so wills it, doing everything as from God, in God, for God, to God, with God, and with the rare and beautiful virtue of a true and sincere purity of intention, gilding everything with the merits of the most Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, even the most insignificant acts and accompanying them with holy affections and appropriate loving short prayers." (33)

To maintain recollection and to favor that inner unity of life centered on the presence of Jesus, Fr. Marcoarelius compiled a series of phrases or short prayers with words taken from Scripture as an aid to living their varied daily experiences in the sentiments of Christ. He also had the novices commit to memory the so-called "Monk's Alphabet" of Thomas a Kempis, as an aid to recalling and assimilating during the day some very important ascetic admonitions. Likewise, following the practice of other institutes, he introduced the custom of recalling during recreation the *Presence of God*. All instantly kept silence, while reflecting on and adoring the divine presence; then whoever was in charge said, "Jesus and Mary be praised," to which all answered "For ever and ever." This usage was kept up in the Congregation until about the middle of our century. However, another custom introduced by the same Fr. Marcoarelius did not survive. It was to avoid anyone indulging in murmuring during recreation. If a novice heard some uncharitable word, he would say aloud "Charity towards the neighbor," and all would change the subject. (34)

The novices were given daily instructions on the value of the sacraments of the eucharist and of reconcili-

ation and their fruitful reception, on the virtues proper to Passionist religious life, on the contents of the rule and the motives for observing it with fervent fidelity as the sure path "for reaching the summit of perfection." (35) The instructions were studied more thoroughly and developed in the moral reflections which the novices made on scriptural texts they had committed to memory, or in their private spiritual reading which lasted an hour, or in that done in common in choir or at table. The personal spiritual conference with the master, at least weekly, gave the individual novice the chance to apply what he had heard to his own personal situation. The examination of conscience, twice a day, aided him in concretely applying to his personal life all he had learned theoretically.

Particular attention was given to training in mental prayer. Its importance for Passionist religious life was explained; the method was taught orally, but it was also taken down in writing. At the beginning of the course the master himself would meditate in an audible voice so as to help the novices become familiar with the method, that they might not give way to a simple exercise of reasoning but learn to give suitable space to the affections which move the will, and to the deep personal sentiments that tend to give a steadier psychological and spiritual adherence to God, which is then demonstrated in the faithful practice of the resolutions. Particular attention was reserved for the life of Jesus, especially his Passion and death, not only out of fidelity to the charism, but also because of a deep conviction that the humanity of Jesus is the only way of entering into the contemplation of God's infinite love.

The Passionist method of prayer did not differ much from that in general use at that time. Greater stress was given to the loving dialogue with Jesus as a means more conducive to full personal union with God and to making firmer decisions in one's own life. Furthermore, it seems that this method of loving dialogue was found to be better suited for allowing oneself to be permeated by the workings of the Holy Spirit and being introduced into the prayer of mystical union. The need for feeling oneself a

contemporary to the events, or present to and permeated by the truths meditated was greatly emphasized. As a help to this attitude of faith and openness to dialogue, some traditional questions were proposed:

1. Who suffers? Who acts? Who is it that gives us the example? etc.
2. What is he doing? What is he suffering? What example does he give us? etc.
3. Why is he doing so? Why is he suffering? etc.
4. How does he suffer? In what spirit is he suffering? etc.

The novice was advised to stop wherever he felt at ease, more moved, wherever he felt greater inward attention, without worrying about exhausting all the series of questions. He was also warned to be patient when he felt dry, bored or distracted. He was forearmed to maintain peace and trust in God and be certain that the Holy Spirit would enkindle him with his love. He was exhorted to end prayer by making some very definite resolution on a necessary virtue, and to conclude by beseeching God for the needs of the Church, of all people, for the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the just. (36)

This discursive-affective method was indicated as a means of initiating prayer, with the assurance that if faithfully practiced, God sooner or later would give him the gift of prayer, that is, the state of contemplation which is no longer discursive, but almost intuitive, along with inner enlightenment on the mystery of God, of his love, of conformity to the will of God, and of acting with the mind of Jesus. Paul was convinced that if novices committed themselves faithfully to sincere humility, to prompt and joyous obedience, to control of their emotivity, they would, by God's mercy, attain to the "gift of holy prayer and union with God," that is, to infused prayer. Rather, he trusted that towards the end of the novitiate, the novices would normally be in a condition to be instructed in the doctrine of the "mystical death," which meant for the founder "a most high perfection and holiness." Paul wished the masters of novices to live always in such a way as to be able to receive all God

wished to grant them, that is, an always greater gift of prayer, recollection, of interior solitude, so that reposing in God they might have that "true science of the saints to communicate to the novices and make them saints." This desire was a reality in those masters Paul appointed for the formation of the young men sent by God to the Congregation. (37)

3. A novice's day; bodily health and mental balance

The novice's day was intense and it demanded all his energies to live it with the required dispositions to attain the predetermined goals. The daily schedule we give below shows there were no spare moments. Even the recreation periods demanded a measure of control in the external bearing to be maintained, in the tone of voice used, in the companion with whom one had to speak and who might be of little support. This system could have easily led a young man to the verge of a nervous breakdown, or fixation as it was then called, if the serene attitude of the master had been lacking, or the good will of all to remain in good spirits. In addition to the acts that demanded constant attention, each novice had to accuse himself of his external faults in the refectory twice a week, and would then receive the master's warning or reproof, more or less mild, and a penance to fulfill. Other acts of humility were: prostrating outside the refectory to be walked over by those passing, and kneeling down to beg prayers, which was reminiscent of ancient penitential practices of public sinners begging prayers outside the church door. In the early days of the Congregation the young men had much to suffer from the intense cold, lack of sufficient blankets, drafty closed premises, and meager food which was taken only twice a day. The effort exacted by prayer, by self-control, by concentrating wholly on God was likely to lead the young men to scruples, boredom and psychological stress. Paul was quite aware of this and worried. This impelled him to caution the masters to be always peaceful, serene and affable, particularly when they had to correct or deal with those who were bored, tempted or worried. (3)

THE NOVICES' DAY IN THE FOUNDER'S TIME

Our time	Observance	1700's time
0 - 2:00	Matins & Lauds + 1 hour mental prayer	7:00- 9:00
2:00- 5:00	Repose after nocturnal prayer	9:00-12:00
5:00- 7:00	Prime, tierce, mental prayer, Mass	12:00-14:00
7:00- 8:00	Chapter on prayer; warm up; order rooms	14:00-15:00
8:00- 8:30	Study	15:00-15:30
8:30- 9:00	Class	15:30-16:00
9:00- 9:30	Examination of conscience; spiritual reading	16:00-16:30
9:30-10:00	Manual offices	16:30-17:00
10:00-10:40	Last Mass; sext and none	17:00-17:40
10:40-11:10	Lunch	17:40-18:10
11:10-12:10	Recreation	18:10-19:10
12:10-13:10	Siesta or time in one's room	19:10-20:10
13:10-13:40	Vespers, spiritual reading, adoration of Blessed Sacrament	20:10-20:40
13:40-14:10	Rosary procession by novices	20:40-21:10
14:10-15:00	Study	21:10-22:00
15:00-15:30	Spiritual reading, examination of conscience	22:00-22:30
15:30-16:10	Walk in common, novices and master	22:30-23:10
16:10-17:20	Compline - mental prayer	23:10-24:20
17:20-17:50	Dinner	24:20-24:50
17:50-18:30	Recreation	24:50- 1:30
18:30-19:00	Rosary and blessing by superior	1:30- 2:00
19:00-24:00	Strict silence - night repose	2:00- 7:00

On communion days the chapter on prayer was omitted in order to give time for thanksgiving. On Sunday and feast day afternoons after vespers until compline, a walk was taken in common. In summer there was a change in the time of prayer, an extra half hour was given for siesta, and there were slight variations as to recreations after meals.

A counterbalancing factor in all this lay in the variety of activities: the passing from prayer to study, to

manual labor, to social encounters with their brother religious. The evening walks for the professed religious were solitary and silent, but for the novices the half hour walk was spent in dialogue with each one's designated companion. On feast day afternoons there was a break from the usual routine allowing for a two or more hours' walk. This open air exercise with the contemplation of nature had a calming influence on the nerves and on the whole system.

A psychological balance and a normal growth in human-christian maturity could only be achieved if there were an authentic atmosphere of faith and true fervor in all members of the community. And yet, in spite of general objective difficulties and particular worries, all documents testify that, in general, both individuals and communities lived in a climate of serenity and peace which was greatly satisfying.

The founder was particularly vigilant that neither novices nor professed religious should give way to anxieties or scruples. To Fr. Peter, then master, he recommended: "Above all be most watchful on these three or four points: 1. Let them (the novices) never entertain fixed ideas but fulfill all their duties with a tranquil mind. 2. Let them never open the door to scruples or sadness, but let them at once manifest to you all those interior troubles from which novices usually suffer, especially at the beginning. 3. Let them not force their minds to remain fixed on the presence of God, but from time to time they can recite some ejaculations...without haste and in all gentlenessOtherwise these (efforts) would ruin the young men and make them useless for anything." (40) Two other things worried Paul regarding novices: food and sleep. He wrote to Fr. Fulgentius: "Take all care that the novices first of all remain fervent and relaxed, but also that they take the necessary food and (this is very important) that they sleep well; that after night matins they take the three hours' repose until prime." (41)

The novices were expected to be very sincere and open with the master, disclosing to him "all their temp-

tations, afflictions, depressions and aridities." This was a sure sign of their will to persevere. Paul assured them that "if they are faithful in disclosing themselves to their director, that great God who resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble will grant them great graces, they will enjoy a heavenly peace, they will be enriched with an inestimable treasure of virtues and will arrive at a true holy perfection, which may God in his infinite mercy grant to us all." (42)

4. Discernment for admission to profession

Every three months the novitiate community chapter was called upon to give its opinion of each novice's conduct, and to decide whether he deserved to continue or should be dismissed. The chapter suggested some points to the master that should be brought to the attention of the novice for his improvement. As the end of the year of trial approached, the chapter met again to decide on the admission to profession. A real progress in prayer and an improvement in his behavior was expected, although a particular defect could be tolerated provided it was not stubbornness, and that the novice showed by his deeds "a firm resolve to serve God in the best possible manner."

Another requisite was that the novice be of sound health, sufficient to keep the observance and fulfill the apostolate proper to the Congregation. Those who suffered from slight ailments, such as headaches, could be admitted, since these did not impede the common life, but could be "occasions for growing in the perfection of God's love." Canonical admission required two-thirds of the votes of the local chapter. (43) Having been notified of his admission, the novice made a retreat as an immediate preparation for his profession, which was then perpetual.

Then, in the presence of the religious community, which was presided over by the major superior or his delegate, the novice listened to the Passion narrative according to St. John while prostrate on the ground and covered by a pall symbolic of his death to the world. When the death of Jesus was announced, he rose and go-

ing before the superior manifested his will of sharing in Christ's death so as "to arise with Jesus triumphant in heaven." (44) "The admirable sign of salvation with the most sweet name of Jesus and the title of the most holy Passion" on it was then given the newly professed to remind him of the reality of his union with Jesus crucified and to herald "the infinite love of Jesus Christ as manifested especially in his most holy Passion and Death." (45)

The newly professed then received a cross on his shoulders and a crown of thorns on his head, and proceeded processionally with his fellow religious to signify his will to tread the path of life together with Jesus, bearing in his flesh the marks of the Passion. He felt encouraged, however, thinking of "the precious joys of the Heart of Jesus" of which he had an experimental proof in "the cheerful countenance" of his professed brothers who gave him the sign of "holy peace while encouraging him to bear his cross with the meek Jesus." (46)

5. Change of the family name

The novice assumed a devotional surname at vestition to express the entry into a new family founded not on ties of heredity, but on faith in Jesus who had called each one of its members from diverse environments to constitute a new and unique communion of life with him and with one another. In the founder's lifetime the baptismal name was kept, since it already expressed the rebirth in Christ; only a new surname of faith was assumed to indicate that the baptismal rebirth was being taken to its ultimate consequences in order to be a new creature in Christ in a new family founded "on the kinship of the saints." (47) The devotional surname, freely chosen, also expressed the devotion of the individual religious or reminded him of some significant fact in his life of faith. Consistent with the founder's teaching that the humanity of the Incarnate Word is the highway leading to the contemplation of the uncreated love of the Blessed Trinity, no fewer than seventy-nine religious, of whom twenty-six were lay brothers, chose as a devotional surname some

aspect of Christ's human experience. On the other hand, sixty-two religious, of whom twenty-four were lay brothers, placed their trust in the Blessed Virgin Mary as a guide to greater conformity with Christ. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity, or the divine person of the Holy Spirit, was the object of the particular devotion of fifteen religious, of whom four were lay brothers. Finally, ninety-seven religious, among them thirty-four lay brothers, placed themselves under the patronage of one of forty-four saints.

DEVOTIONAL SURNAMENES OF THE RELIGIOUS PROFESSED DURING THE LIFETIME OF THE FOUNDER (48)

	Clerics	Lay brothers	Totals
of the Blessed Trinity	5	1	
of the Holy Spirit	4	3	
of the Divine Love	1	-	
of the Love of God	1	-	
			15
of the Incarnate Word	1	-	
of the Incarnate Wisdom	1	-	
of the Incarnation	-	1	
of the Holy Redeemer	2	1	
of Jesus	3	3	
of the Name of Jesus	1	-	
of Jesus and Mary	4	1	
of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	1	-	
of the Blessed Sacrament	2	2	
of Jesus Suffering	1	-	
of Jesus Agonizing	1	-	
of the Agony of Jesus	2	-	
of Jesus Scourged	1	-	
of the Scourging	1	1	
of the Crown of Thorns	2	-	
of the Wounds of Jesus	5	2	
of the Side of Jesus	4	2	
of the Heart of Jesus	7	4	
of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary	1	1	
of the Crucified	5	-	

of the Passion	4	2	
of Calvary	1	-	
of the Infant Jesus	2	5	
of the Circumcision	1	-	
of the Cross	1	-	
of the Crucifixion	-	1	
			80
of Holy Mary	2	3	
of the Name of Mary	1	-	
of the Mother of God	5	1	
of the Heart of Mary	3	2	
of the Conception	4		
of the Purification	3	-	
of the Presentation	4	1	
of the Holy Annunciation	1	-	
of the Visitation	1	-	
of the of the Assumption	2	2	
of the Sorrowful Heart of Mary	2	-	
of the Sorrowful Virgin	3	6	
of the Sorrowful Mother	1	-	
of the Seven Dolors of Mary	4	-	
of the Compassion	-	1	
of our Lady of Mt. Carmel	1	-	
of our Lady of the Oak	-	1	
of the Virgin Mary	1	-	
			62
of the Holy Family	1	-	
of the Seraphim	-	1	
of the Guardian Angel	-	1	
of St. Michael the Archangel	4	3	
of St. Raphael	1	-	
of St. Gabriel the Archangel	1	-	
			12
of Paradise	1	-	
of St. Joseph	6	5	
of St. John the Baptist	1	3	
of St. Peter	3	1	
of St. Paul	4	1	
of St. Andrew	2	-	
of St. John	3	-	
of St. Thomas	1	-	
of St. Stephen	1	-	
of St. Lawrence	3	-	

of St. Augustine	2	-
of St. Ignatius	2	-
of St. Joachim	1	1
of St. Anne	2	1
of St. Mary Magdalen	3	-
of St. Margaret of Cortona	1	-
of St. M. Magdalen de Pazzi	1	-
of St. Theresa	3	1
of St. Gertrude	1	-
of St. Defendente	1	-
of St. Lucy	1	-
of St. Catherine of Siena	1	-
of St. Corona, Martyr	1	-
of St. Blaise	1	-
of St. Aloysius	5	6
of St. Philip Neri	1	1
of St. Anthony	5	2
of St. Dominic	2	-
of St. Charles	1	-
of St. Stanislaus Kostka	3	-
of St. Theobald	1	-
of St. Vincent Ferrer	1	2
of St. Anthony of Padua	1	-
of St. Francis Xavier	2	3
of St. Nicholas of Tolentino	-	1
of St. Eutizio	-	1
of St. Tholomeus	-	1
of St. Francis de Sales	-	1
of St. Hilary	-	1
of St. Innocenzo	-	1
of St. Hyacinth	1	1
of St. Athanasius	1	-
of St. Secondo, Martyr	1	-
of St. Nicholas	1	-
of St. Martin	1	-
of All the Saints	1	-

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C. SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF CLERICAL STUDENTS

Among Passionists, as in other post-Tridentine congregations, the period of clerical studies was considered

a continuation of the novitiate, so no further year or years of probation were provided for. The daily program - sharing the eucharist, chanting the liturgy of the hours, mental prayer, study - was really full, except for the periods of some relief, namely, the solitary walk in the open air and doing house chores, which were passed in silence, and recreation time. The director was the spiritual guide with all the duties and rights of a master of novices. Both director and students were, as religious, subject to the rector of the community in the general running of the house.

In November, 1747, Fr. Marcoaurelius became the first director of students and inaugurated that atmosphere of fervor which he had created during the novitiate while master of the same young men. So great was their fervor that, notwithstanding the cold of the ill-sheltered retreat of St. Angelo at Vetralla, "they all went barefoot for a number of years and he (Marcoaurelius) was always the first in observance and mortification." (49) The students kept up the penitential practices they learned in the novitiate. At least twice a month they had a spiritual conference with their director, and took part in the usual novenas of the community in preparation for the principal feasts. The director trained his students particularly in the virtues of obedience and humility, demanding punctuality in all acts of common observance, exactitude in all duties assigned as a service to the community, and performance in a spirit of fraternal love. He also helped them to acquire an ever deeper conviction of the need of doing everything for the love of God and of living in loving union with him during the day. The students were also encouraged toward this goal in their conversations with the founder and his brother Fr. John Baptist, and by the 1755 regulations, which were meant as an aid to living the ideal proposed by the rule: "Let everyone, as far as possible, seek to maintain in all their occupations a gentle, loving attention to the presence of God. Oh! what an angelic exercise this is. It is a way of being in constant prayer and of scenting all our acts with the sweet balm of Divine Love." (50)

With this formation and the concrete practices of community life in mind, it is easy to understand why the founder and his co-workers saw no problem in reducing for the students the time dedicated to mental prayer in order to allow more time for the study of the sacred sciences. From 1728 to 1746 the students dedicated three and a half hours daily to mental prayer. From 1746 to 1753 the students in "formal study" had two and a half hours' prayer in winter and two hours in summer. From 1753 to 1769, they had one hour and a half a day, and from 1769 to 1775 only about one hour. The reduction was due to measures taken during this period concerning students in "formal study." Besides the times assigned to mental prayer, the students took part in the daily Mass, and on days when they received communion an extra half hour was given to thanksgiving. These young men also took part in the liturgy of the hours, except during the 1769-1775 period when they were dispensed from the night office. The dispensations regarding mental prayer held only on class days.

Solitude, silence, spiritual reading at meals, solitary walk, peaceful dialogue on spiritual matters during recreation, more intense dedication to prayer and review of life on feast days - all created an environment favorable to deep union with God, and in Him with all those to whom they must proclaim the salvation wrought by Christ. To this the superior added his encouraging word twice a week, in the prescribed examen and in the Friday chapter, "two acts strongly but gently suitable for profit and spiritual progress." (51) In order that spiritual vigor might not be diminished by study, from 1747 to 1769 the students made retreats at the end of their holidays, during the Christmas novena and Holy Week. (52)

By these means and principles, which their formators wisely applied, the young men came to know the values of the Passionist life which they frequently witnessed being lived to an heroic degree by their directors and by religious who were no longer students. Such testimony could not be ignored and the students very naturally followed the example given. Many times in his letters Paul thanked God for that fervor. (53) It is true

that during the founder's lifetime, of 280 professed religious, fifty-eight either left or were dismissed. Among these were twenty-seven priests, fifteen students and sixteen lay brothers. (54) Many lacked the steadfastness to continue in that high standard of life which demanded almost continual heroism. Others were lost due to the limitations of their fellow religious, as we shall see in the chapter on the Passionist community. On the whole, however, the work of spiritual formation was effective and molded individuals who were profoundly united to God, models of authentic virtue, zealous in helping others and competent in guiding them in the knowledge of God's love as revealed in the passion and resurrection of Jesus. They were credible witnesses to the joy of sharing in the mystery of the life of Christ, and initiators of a true school of spirituality.

D. INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

1. Its organization and norms

Up to 1746 the rule provided for about three hours dedicated daily to the study of the sacred sciences. (55) Until 1744, the only one who had studied for the priesthood in the Congregation was Anthony Danei, who had been helped by his brother priests, and was ordained in 1734. It was in 1744 that we had the first students, but divided out of necessity between the two retreats of St. Angelo at Vetralla and St. Eutizio. Meanwhile the novitiate was filled, and some organization responding to the needs of the Congregation was imperative. Two men of solid theological, pastoral and oratorical education had already entered: Fr. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli (professed March 1, 1744) and Fr. Thomas Struzziari (professed April 16, 1745). Fr. Marcoaurelius had the added experience of having taught philosophy and theology in his former congregation for several years. It is very probable that Paul availed himself of these religious when drawing up

the norms for the intellectual formation inserted in the text of the rule approved in 1746.

The pontifical decree *Etsi decretis*, of March 16, 1675, forbade the teaching of the humanities in monasteries or religious orders to candidates in preparation for the novitiate. (56) These studies normally had to be completed before entering a religious novitiate. The Passionist Congregation, adhering to this usage, organized only the study of philosophy and theology in its various branches. The candidates should have finished their grammar and rhetoric courses. In other words, they should have studied their mother tongue, the Latin language, mathematics and the elements of civil history. (57) The institutional course in preparation for the priesthood in the Congregation was contemplated as a six year course. It started with two years of philosophy, followed by three years of dogmatic and moral theology, while the sixth year was totally devoted to the study of Sacred Scripture and the Fathers of the Church. During the last year some time was allowed for practical apostolic experiences. Everything was geared to the formation of excellent catechists, preachers of popular missions, retreat directors for clergy and religious, and expert confessors and spiritual directors.

The 1746 program of studies began with an act of hope in God, author of the new Congregation: "should it please God's infinite goodness to spread, as we trust, this holy work...." At that moment this hope was a reality in the foundations of St. Angelo at Vetralla and St. Eutizio, while other requests for foundations were arriving from other bishops. Then followed the norms which, compared to the 1741 text, were new:

"In every province, a house shall be set apart for study, where the young men shall apply themselves to philosophy and theology, that they may become better prepared for the care of souls in the Lord's vineyard, according to our state. The study shall be of six years.

"The first two years shall be spent in the study of philosophy, putting aside less important questions and

keeping far from novelties. Concentration shall be on the more essential matters in preparation for a more serious study of theology, especially dogmatic and moral, so necessary to men of our profession. The theological course shall last three years.

"The sixth year shall then be given to the study of Sacred Scripture and the Fathers, and to some individual ministry. At the end of this year there shall be a general examination of all the studies, so that the capabilities of the subjects may be known and those suitable be approved for the apostolic ministry of holy missions.

"Besides this general examination, there shall be another general examination by two examiners in the presence of the rector of the house at the end of each scholastic year on the studies covered that year. After the exams, the diligent and capable (with the consent of the major superior) will continue studies and the negligent and unfit, should there be any, will be sent away." (58)

Such norms placed the Congregation on a level with the best systems of that time in this field. The selection of students by examinations was admitted as a common practice, as a proof of their natural talents and good will. From the text of the rule it would appear that this selection was made annually. Those who were not fit to keep up with the courses in the *house of study* were sent to other retreats and dedicated to the study of moral theology and Sacred Scripture to fit them to be good confessors and catechists, to teach meditation and preach homilies. In these houses there was no study of philosophy, and dogma was reduced to the text of the **Catechism of the Council of Trent** for the use of parish priests.

In the "Chronicle" of 1768 Paul says: "Since it is the obligation of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion to apply themselves to sacred preaching and to the direction of souls, it is necessary to train the young men and prepare them competently for such an exalted ministry. For this training some retreats are designated for formal studies, one for philosophy and another for scholastic theology, both dogmatic and moral. Every year the young men

who are more capable and more open-minded are selected to be sent to the houses of study. In all other retreats there is the study of moral theology, Sacred Scripture, the Fathers and other suitable studies, the composition of sermons and catechism, etc." (59)

The legislation contemplated two student groups chosen in view of their intellectual endowments and formed by distinct courses. The more talented were sent to formal study or the study retreat; the less talented to some of the other retreats. A general examination equivalent to one for the doctorate ended the first group's course. It was held before a board of three examiners who were chosen by the major superior with his council and presided over by the same superior or his delegate. The board's verdict, confirmed by the major superior, was the official qualification for the preaching of popular missions. (60) The general chapter of 1753 made the selection stricter. After the normal six year course it projected another specific course of sacred eloquence in every province in the future, so that "when the Congregation is in better condition, after the theological course has ended, the young men chosen as more fit and capable, under a good master, will attend to preparing themselves for holy missions." The 1758 general chapter prescribed that at the end of this specific preparation a further examination be held before two examiners appointed by the major superior. The examiners had to review the sermons, the catechetical instructions and other writings, and could even demand of each candidate the preaching of a sermon in order to judge his talents better. Only after this examination, if approved, would the major superior issue an official document qualifying the religious for the preaching of popular missions. (61)

The general chapters gave the "formal study" students various exemptions in the 1769 rule, in order to provide more time and better conditions for serious and profound study. These exemptions gave a specific character to the formal study houses. They had their own schedule which was substantially similar to that of other retreats, but reduced in some common acts of piety so as to give more time to study.

Between 1746 and 1753 these "study retreats" allowed for four and a half hours of study, since students and professors (or "lectors," as they were then called) were dispensed from participating in the Mass celebrated before lunch. From 1753 to 1769 students had instead six and a half hours for study and class, and as in these study retreats matins was recited and not chanted, assistance was not demanded at Mass before lunch or at the liturgical hours of sext and none, spiritual reading was done only once a day, and only a half hour meditation was required at night, morning and evening. In 1769 there was a further increase in study time, since rising for matins and the night meditation were dispensed. This special schedule held only on class days, while on other days, feast days and holidays, both students and "lectors" followed the full observance as in the other retreats. On the days the students were allowed communion, three times a week and on non-continuous feast days, they had an extra half hour of thanksgiving. For reasons of health other precautions were also taken. Students in formal study were permitted a light morning collation and on Fridays they could add a plate of herbs to the fast day meal. (62)

These norms show the efforts made from 1746 to 1769 to improve the structures of intellectual formation, although practical difficulties often hindered the application of what was being gradually discussed and foreseen on the legislative level. Then, suddenly, this legislative growth ceased in 1775. In this general chapter the principle of selection of students was removed and formal study retreats with their own observance were abolished. Indeed before 1775 "formal study" meant a house, one for every province, chosen by the major superior, endowed with a proper horarium and other prerogatives apt to favor a pastoral and intellectual formation which was adapted to the apostolic ends of the Congregation. Whereas, from 1775 onwards the term "formal study" indicated a student group following a regular course of studies in any retreat. On the other hand, a student who, for a reason approved by the competent superior, was formed outside the student group, was said to be out of "formal study." (63) The dispensation from rising for matins was

withdrawn from the students, but left for lectors. What remained was the reduction of mental prayer time on class days: half an hour at night, in the morning and in the afternoon, and on the days of eucharistic communion the half hour thanksgiving remained. (64)

What were the reasons in 1775 for putting the students back in the situation they were in before 1746, leaving scarcely half an hour more for study than during 1746-1753? Documentation is lacking for answering this question. Perhaps it was feared that the formal study institution with its "special observance" might create within the community a class mentality, bringing back in a different manner the difficulties lamented by other institutes on account of the privileges and attitudes of those with academic degrees, of which we spoke in the first chapter. Perhaps there was also some fear that the professed formed in these retreats would not be able in time to conform totally to the observance in the other retreats, or that the priests would apply for similar privileges as they had to prepare sermons, etc. (65) The facts show, however, that unanimity was lacking as to the solving of a real problem concerning the formation of young men who must acquire the necessary knowledge for the demanding task of missionary ministry. Such difficulties, in varying degrees, have been handed on in the course of the Congregation's history.

2. Doctrinal trend and the scholastic method

From the beginning of formal study the trend was to follow the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas. Fr. Marco Aurelius, the first professor, proclaimed this with conviction. One of his first disciples recalls: "Both in philosophy and theology he wished to be a faithful disciple of St. Thomas and strove to keep Passionist schools inviolably to the sound teaching of the Angelic Doctor, a bitter enemy of novelties and lax doctrines especially regarding morality." (66) The 1753 chapter confirmed this choice, which later passed into the text of the 1769 rule. (67) What guided the doctrinal choice and the dogmatic-moral trend was the pastoral scope proper to a Congregation

working among the poor and giving careful attention to the teaching of catechism and meditation. The religious needed to have the certainty of dogma and a moral grounding to be able to help people become aware of God's love, mercy and justice in contemplating Jesus crucified. From this derived a serious attitude that was far from both laxity and rigorism, a seriousness that made people aware of the malice of sin, but at the same time encouraged trust in God and moved people to conversion and to perseverance for love of him who had given his life for each individual person. It is from this viewpoint that we must contemplate the founder's concern that the Passionists be well grounded in the doctrinal integrity proper to the Church, and that they keep apart from the discussions then so much in vogue regarding grace and predestination. He wished that students and professors alike would avoid useless questions which only provoked anguish of spirit, and impeded union with God and peace of mind. That is why, whenever possible, he went among the students and questioned them on those topics, exhorting them to hold firmly to the formulae of the Creed, whether it be that of St. Athanasius which he frequently quoted or that used in the liturgy. (68)

Class and study methods were those in use in other institutes. The lector or professor dictated, explained and commented on the lesson. The students, for want of printed texts because of the poverty of the Congregation, took down the lessons in writing, which also helped in memorizing them. They sought explanations of what they had not correctly understood and answered the professor's questions. The 1746 rule describes the method thus: "There shall be one and a half hours for study every morning after tierce. When the days are longer, two hours, not counting the time the lector dictates, explains and teaches." (69) Besides the classes there were study sessions, called *circoli* or *conclusioni*, (70) which always took place in the afternoon. In these the student in charge summarized the questions proposed in class and answered the objections made by the president or his fellow students. Occasionally during the year public discussions or dissertations were held to encourage students in public speaking, and the religious community also took

part in these. If the founder was at home he willingly assisted, and he insisted that they have a good grasp of dogma to be able to expound and defend it. (71)

In formal study retreats the scholastic year usually began in September and ended at the beginning of August. In other retreats the scholastic term depended sometimes on the availability of students or lectors, and sometimes it had to await the profession of novices. (72)

Even though students could not count on printed texts, the house library from the very beginning was well provided with works on dogmatic, moral, spiritual and mystical theology and on Sacred Scripture. (73) The theological doctrine imparted to the students can be followed closely through those books, through a manuscript attributed to Fr. Marcoaurelius entitled *Investibulum Theologiae*, or through Strambi's notes. Strambi's only complete text is his notes corresponding to the lessons of the sixth year, which was dedicated to Sacred Scripture and the Fathers and to pastoral and oratorical preparation for the apostolic ministry of preaching. (74) These two religious left a deep imprint on the doctrinal trend and the methodology of study in the Congregation. In both can be detected a deep knowledge of St. Thomas and his commentators, but always with continual references to Sacred Scripture, which truly appears as the foundation of their thought and the motivation of their actions, and which they strove to instill in their students. In Strambi, moreover, one can glimpse a special preference for St. Paul the Apostle, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, and among the more modern authors, for St. Francis de Sales, Melchior Cano, Bossuet and various others he frequently quotes. (75) In the intellectual and spiritual formation great care was taken to give a high and well founded idea of the Church as a mystical body intimately united by the Holy Spirit to the only head, Christ the Lord, and in the communion of the same faith and the same sacraments, under the guidance of the vicar of Christ and of the lawful bishops. It is a mystical body that embraces all believers from the beginning of the world to Christ's last coming. Membership in the body and soul of the Church was stressed; thus those who belong in good faith

to the soul of the Church are more numerous than those who visibly belong to it. The Church was presented as "Holy Mother Church" to whom reverence, love, and dedication are due, as also necessity of working for it so that it may transmit to everyone the salvation wrought by Christ. The Catholic faith was to be defended even at the risk of one's own life, and, even at the cost of seeing persons or nations separating from it, no compromise was possible on the integrity of faith because faith is the revelation of the truth made by God himself. (76)

3. Practical realization of the intellectual formation

In theory the Congregation's intellectual formation of clerics was on a level with that of similar institutes and the best seminaries of the time. However, the good organizational norms, conceived and desired even in the difficult moments of the initial growth of the Congregation, did not achieve their full historical realization. On March 1, 1744, six clerics were professed and immediately dispersed: two to St. Angelo at Vetralla under the direction of Fr. John Baptist Danei, three to the new community of St. Eutizio under Fr. Marco Aurelius Pastorelli, while one remained in the Presentation retreat. The manifold difficulties of the new foundations, deprived of even the most necessary things, forcibly limited the study of these willing young men. At St. Angelo "the hermitage was in the most deplorable condition...the only conveniences were a few cells, and these poorly sheltered and drafty, so much so that the poor religious were constrained to sleep more than one to a cell...and what is worse, ill provided with provisions." The two clerics helped the superior and the other religious in carrying timber and other materials urgently needed for the new building. (77)

In need of priests for the foundations south of Rome, Paul had two of the more advanced clerics ordained in 1745, and others in 1747, though they had not completed their normal course of studies. Meanwhile, between February 13 and June 21, 1747, ten novices, of whom one was a priest, were professed. The nine clerics, with

three students not yet ordained, were brought together in St. Angelo to constitute the "formal study" group according to the 1746 rule. The founder entrusted the teaching to Fr. Marcoaurelius so as to leave Fr. Struzziere free for missions, through which he not only saved souls but gained prestige and esteem for the Congregation. Fr. Fulgentius, who had been on a rest cure in St. Eutizio, was sent back to Monte Argentario as master of novices. Paul knew he was demanding a great sacrifice of him so he told him: "Do not be upset over the decision in your regard. The Congregation is in no small need, so what is one to do? At times my own burden seems unbearable; and at others it seems lighter than a feather. God will help us. One needs a stout heart...." (78)

Towards the middle of November 1747 Fr. Marcoaurelius, with the title of "master," assumed direction of the first formal study of philosophy and theology. The discreet number of twelve students, a teacher who was well versed in doctrine and known for his apostolic zeal and vast spiritual experience, made a little group of professed religious who were true witnesses to the transcendence of God and to the value of persons redeemed by the crucified and risen Christ. They constituted an ideal formative community, full of hope.

On December 2, 1747, Paul joyfully wrote: "I have good news from the St. Angelo retreat. Our young men have begun their study, their faces are brighter and they have regained strength. God inspires me to insist on this because once health goes the observance goes with it. Therefore I strive to have them given due nourishment according to rule. It's a question of young men who can easily be ruined." (79) However, in 1748 Paul was constrained to take some men from their St. Angelo study group for the foundation at Ceccano in order that "the choir observance be provided for and missions could be continued in those parts. Necessity demands it," Paul said to Fr. Fulgentius. (80)

In the meantime, some students remained at St. Eutizio to increase the numbers and keep up the choir observance while the few priests were out on missions. Un-

der the guidance of the rector, these students studied moral theology, but in 1748 two of them were sent with a priest to the Ceccano foundation, while the others went to the new retreat of Our Lady of the Oak at Toscanella. (81)

The 1748-49 scholastic year began with small groups of students scattered in all the existing retreats, though the more solid group remained at St. Angelo following a more regular course. The study of dogmatic theology was begun there, while in the retreats of St. Eutizio, Toscanella and Ceccano the few students in residence studied the **Catechism of the Council of Trent** and moral theology in a climate of severe material and psychological difficulties because of the mendicants' opposition, then in full force. Paul suffered anguish at not having sufficient men for all the needs. Writing to Fr. Fulgentius on September 26 1748, he told him of the decision to make Fr. Luke Anthony Bianchini lector of moral theology at St. Eutizio. "Urgency demands it," he said. "We must serve God and the Congregation as God wills." (82)

The dispersion continued throughout the founder's lifetime and there was practically no retreat without students. The larger groups were at St. Angelo at Vetralla, in Ceccano after the mendicant controversy, and finally at Sts. John and Paul. What were the reasons for this dispersion which partially annulled the wise norms instituted in the intellectual formation plan? Paul frequently speaks of urgency, necessity, accomplished facts, which in spite of himself constrained him to remove students from formal study and sometimes even to abbreviate their intellectual formation. The urgency he speaks about can be referred to the need of responding to pressing demands of bishops and people for Passionist communities. To meet these requests meant the consolidation of the Congregation, broadening the apostolic area, and opening up greater possibilities for new vocations. It was also a way of asserting to the Holy See that the new Congregation was well accepted by the ordinaries and hence could be raised to a religious order with solemn vows. Above all there was the need of providing for the vitality of the retreats. For the founder, a retreat made sense only if it

was a peaceful community, fully alive spiritually in its unceasing praise of God night and day, thus giving to the people the constant witness of a community of faith and prayer. Moreover, only thus would a retreat in solitude offer the religious returning home from outside missionary work that fervent atmosphere to help them plunge once more into the contemplation of their crucified love, Christ Jesus. (83)

That rhythm of life which Paul desired could only be achieved by a sufficiently numerous religious community, keeping in mind that some would be away on preaching assignments. Therefore Paul placed students in all the retreats to maintain the atmosphere of religious life within them and to provide necessary support for the continuity of the life of prayer and the liturgical hours of praise by day and night. An economic reason must be added to his spiritual and apostolic reasons: no single retreat was in a condition to maintain a considerable number of students solely on spontaneous offerings, as the founder wished in the beginning, and not even with the very reduced quest permitted later. Paul held that a fixed income for the houses of study was incompatible with the spiritual and apostolic purpose of the Congregation, notwithstanding the pressure the pontifical commissions that examined the various revisions of the rule put upon him. The superiors of the various communities had not only to provide for the upkeep of the religious but had also to undertake new buildings or repairs of the existing ones, besides gradually trying to furnish the religious with those necessary things that no foundation had offered them.

As already recalled, in St. Angelo's retreat structural work was imperative, and yet in 1753 the poverty was such that not even a mattress could be acquired for the sick or for visitors (84), and in 1766 the superior found the building "so deteriorated and badly built" that without loss of time he had to begin its restoration. (85) The Toscanella retreat "consisted in nothing else but a church and a poor and ruined hermitage, destitute of everything....In those beginnings even the necessary food was wanting...." (86) The Ceccano retreat was in very bad

condition and remained unfinished for a number of years on account of the controversy with the mendicant friars. In consequence, the religious had to endure serious inconveniences. (87) In 1751 three clerics were sent to the St. Sosio foundation, but the building was still incomplete and the religious had much to suffer there. (88) In 1742 four students were sent as members to the new community of Terracina, and even here the building was not yet finished, the doors and windows were not made, the blankets were insufficient and provisions scarce. (89)

Three students took part in the Paliano foundation in 1755, finding there a situation similar to that of the other foundations as regards the building and the want of many necessities. (90) The Monte Cavo foundation in 1758 did not offer a better situation to the two clerics of the new community, particularly on account of the cold, dampness, and scarcity of food. (91) Such great sufferings and poverty, even though endured with heroic faith and peace of mind, could not but have a negative influence on studies.

Yet another need urged the founder to place students in the first foundations: the juridic condition for exemption from the local ordinary's jurisdiction. Only communities with at least twelve religious enjoyed this privilege. (92)

For these reasons the intellectual formation progressed differently from that which was projected and approved several times even in the more difficult moments at the beginning of the Congregation. (93)

4. Promotion of clerics to sacred orders

We have seen elsewhere the juridical difficulties the Congregation encountered for the ordination of its clerics until 1769. We here offer some additional information concerning this subject. Solemn vows were juridically an indispensable requisite for assuring the permanence of a religious in his institute. As the Passionist clerics lacked this condition, before being granted the title of "common

board" for ordination as subdeacons, an oath was required "to persevere until death in the Congregation and never, for whatsoever reason, to seek a dispensation from the simple vows or absolution from them." (94) This oath guaranteed the subject's commitment to remain in the Congregation. If he left he would not be suspended from the celebration of the Eucharist if he were a priest until he obtained some canonical benefice in the diocese of his origin or with some other benevolent bishop. The religious who did not receive the subdiaconate were not bound to take this oath. It was only in the 1778 general chapter that the obligation was imposed on all without distinction before admittance to simple vows. (95) Ordinations were permitted in the first years of the Congregation after one or two years from profession, which was then perpetual. The 1753 chapter decreed that some should be admitted to the priesthood before they were five years professed. (96)

When the time for receiving Holy Orders drew near, a more intense training was given in the rubrics of the liturgy so that they be performed with fidelity, simplicity and devotion and without tedious delays for the public. The founder's suggestion was that the devout celebration of Holy Mass should not exceed an half hour. What he did insist on was that a half hour's prayer should precede and follow the celebration. Paul exercised and demanded vigilance to insure that candidates for ordination should first acquire steadiness in the practice of virtue. A witness tells us: "If he did not judge them well grounded in virtue and steady in their vocation he would not have them ordained. He also recommended this to the superiors. If he observed some treating church affairs without decorum and care, he would say they had no ecclesiastical spirit and would not allow their ordination without a previous prolonged trial." (97) Experience taught him that ordination could be an occasion for relaxation, so the 1755 regulations established: "Let clerics strive to acquire solid virtue, particularly obedience, humility and recollection. Otherwise when they are promoted to the priestly dignity they will fall into such a deep abyss of relaxation as to become incorrigible. They will be the heaviest cross for superiors, the scandal of the community, and a plague for the Congregation. It is

not known whether the spirit of the clerics is good or bad till they are ordained priests." (98)

No special external solemnity accompanied ordination, as would happen later, even though the community surrounded the ordained cleric with fraternal spiritual joy. Besides, in that period, ordinations were not held in the retreat churches. Those who were to be ordained had to go to the cathedral or the bishop's chapel.

5. Pastoral and missionary formation

"The primary end of this growing Congregation is to prepare oneself by prayer, penance, fasting, tears and mourning to help the neighbor, to sanctify souls, and to convert sinners." (99) Because of this apostolic scope a reasonable intelligence, clear and intelligible speech, and a courteous and sociable bearing were demanded of the postulant so that he might suitably carry out the Congregation's mission. In the novitiate his memory was exercised in learning scriptural texts by heart. He recited to improve diction and the use of his voice, as also to overcome the psychological fear of public speaking. Paul wrote to Fr. Fulgentius: "As to the novices preaching during walk periods or other times, I am grateful. But I would wish such preaching be done in a restrained and soft voice, because the habit is thus acquired of speaking affectionately, and it would be best if at present they got used to catechetics." (100) During student life they were introduced to their first experiences in preaching or reciting some discourse before the community, helping the director in the catechism for the brothers, and even outside the retreat to shepherds and others. There were cases when advanced students were sent on missions with other religious.

During the summer at St. Angelo, when at noon the shepherds and woodsmen gathered round the fountain close to the retreat, Fr. Marcaurelius would send a student to teach them Christian doctrine. Likewise, on Sundays after vespers when Fr. Marcoarelius gave catechism class to the lay brothers, he had the students take part so they

would learn the method; at times he would also get one of them to give the explanations. Paul joyfully notified Fr. Fulgentius of this: "On feastedays here father master teaches Christian doctrine to all, clerics and lay brothers. Occasionally a cleric does it....If you could only see with what grace the doctrine is taught here. It is very instructive and at times causes laughter, but all are in love with this holy exercise. Whoever aspires to be a good missionary must first be a good catechist. So, if they deliver a discourse, let them do it in a very medium voice, without seeking to prove they have strong voices. It is sufficient that they exercise the manner of delivery. With the passing of the years the voice develops more than you imagine, but efforts tend to waste it, more so in the young who acquire a bitter, fierce, dry and cold spirit. So if they do it, let it be with a soft voice." (101)

Putting students in contact with the spiritual needs of the people fulfilled a point of the rule which spoke of the ministries being exercised in the neighborhood of the retreat: "The superior may send some competent brother, priest or cleric to places near the retreat on Sundays to impart Christian doctrine and other exercises of piety, principally to promote devotion to the Passion." (102)

The pastoral formation and the preparation for preaching was done in a methodical manner in the sixth year of formal study. It was an introduction to the knowledge and understanding of Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and to the concrete manner of explaining Catholic beliefs to the faithful. Practical experiences of pastoral activities, which varied according to the lectors or local superiors, were added to theory. St. Vincent Mary Strambi gave this sixth year a more concrete and organized structure. He had been lector for many years and had prepared his classes in writing with a view to future publication, which never took place. (103) In his introduction he expressed his wish that his readers be pervaded by the sciences of Sacred Scripture and mystical theology together with the study of the magisterium of the Church, of the Fathers, and of modern authors of apologetics. He anticipated other subjects to be

studied: the rules of rhetoric and the method of composing the various types of sermons demanded by the apostolic scope of the Congregation. (104) The chief source of the doctrine to be expounded, with the examples to confirm it and to help listeners to retain it, was Sacred Scripture, together with the writings of the Fathers, the lives of the saints and the history of the Church. The study of the Sacred Scripture would give the students "the most sublime and magnificent idea possible of its excellency." The young men would fall in love with it and study it "with true love." It was necessary that the students be introduced to each single book of the Bible, but particularly to more thorough study of those books which are most useful for preaching and those which are most necessary "to finding in Sacred Scripture the many hidden ways of arriving at a more intimate union with God as well as mastering the fundamentals of mystical theology." (105) The same directives were given for the study of the Fathers of the Church.

Mindful of the prevalent errors concerning faith, the existence of God, the duties of man, the pastoral power of the pope, etc., Strambi attached special importance to preparing young men to face these situations. He composed "An outline of a work on the duties of man taken from the sentences of the Holy Fathers." (106) He led the young men to the knowledge and appreciation of pontifical letters and constitutions so as to increase in them "together with veneration for the pronouncements of the Sovereign Pontiffs, the desire to nourish themselves with their heavenly doctrine." (107) He also taught the young men the manner of helping simple people "to discover the poison insidiously administered to the less cautious, without their being aware of it." (108)

The sixth year became for all practical purposes the specific preparatory course for missions, since the 1753 general chapter decision relative to a seventh year for that purpose never materialized in that period. (109) Even when the students had finished their regular course a lector or an experienced missionary helped them prepare their sermons. This preparation was taken very seriously so that they might fulfill the ministry of the Word

with decorum and efficacy. Evidence of the effectiveness of this preparation was the great demand for Passionist missions and retreats. However, the number of men dedicated to popular missions was not excessive, thus revealing to some extent that there was a certain rigor in admitting them to this demanding task.

6. Ongoing intellectual and spiritual formation

Ongoing formation is an aid to keeping the religious ever on the alert so that the passage of time may not dull their ideas. For ongoing spiritual formation Paul provided: 1. conferences, or personal dialogue with the spiritual director; 2. instructions, or exhortations of the superior or of someone appointed by him; 3. periods of more profound solitude and retreat after apostolic activities outside the house.

The constant and confidential dialogue of the religious with his superior as spiritual director was considered a most important means. But from the beginning, to encourage openness it was deemed necessary that in every retreat there should be a religious whose office as spiritual director would be a help to the superior. The text of the 1736 rule reads: "Let the brethren approach him (the superior) as a father, opening their hearts to him with their troubles, temptations, inclinations and depressions; and know that in doing this His Divine Majesty will give them the grace to retire feeling better and consoled. A spiritual director shall also be chosen so that should anyone be unwilling to open his mind to the rector, he may do so to the spiritual director." (110)

In the 1755 regulations a whole chapter was dedicated to the spiritual director. There, he is presented as the person "on whom depends, in great part, the peace of the religious, the observance of the rule, and the good of the retreat." He must inspire the religious to magnanimity: "With a generous heart let him strive above all to instill in the soul a great hope and trust in God, for when this is wanting many become discouraged by their faults, desist or make no progress towards perfection."

The religious are counselled not to let a week or two pass without having this conference with the superior or spiritual director, and to carry it out with great faith in God. After the conference the religious is to go before "the Blessed Sacrament for a very brief time, make an offering of himself, resolve to observe what God has deigned to teach him, beg for his grace and help, and manifest his wish to acquire holiness in order to fulfill his most holy will." Back in his room he will write down the teachings received and reflect on them in order to put them in practice. (111)

The superior's instruction or exhortation, or that of the person whom he had appointed, was held in the so called "common examen," in the brief discourse that ended the day, and in the chapter of faults.

The "common examen" appears in the 1746 rule. Clement VIII imposed this obligation on all superiors as a means of reform or progress in the communities. (112) This instruction on the virtues, on the responsibility of the religious life, etc., lasted half an hour and its purpose was to illustrate, convince and stimulate everyone to practice those things which were common knowledge. Paul recommended that the speaker carefully prepare "by study, but more so by prayer and recollection, asking the Lord to inspire him to say what is most helpful to the religious whom he will contemplate in the loving side of Jesus, with an ardent desire to see them all saints so they may propagate the glory of God and proclaim the Crucified Love to the world." (113)

Every evening before the religious retired for the night repose, the superior recommended to all that they "love God above all things, and one another with holy charity, and that they observe the holy rule." (114) In other words, he reminded them of the motives for acting so as to develop their spiritual growth.

The "chapter of faults" was a monastic institution. This served as a communitarian review of life, in which the religious accused themselves of their external faults, and the superior, besides recalling each to his duty,

proposed new motives encouraging everyone to fidelity to duty and to a greater appreciation of the vocation and apostolic mission to which they had been called. (115)

Another element contributing to ongoing formation was the reading of books of ascetical and spiritual theology or lives of the saints. This was done daily in private for about half an hour, and in common for about fifteen minutes. (116)

Towards this same end it was prescribed that "apostolic laborers" return to the solitude of the retreat "to regain energies, to acquire greater spirit and to rest at the feet of the Crucified." (117) In such a way they would be continually renewed in fervor, in the knowledge of Jesus and of the value of souls loved by Christ, and be ready to go out again "to spread more fervently the seed of the divine word, and promote the devout memory of the Passion of Jesus." (118)

For ongoing intellectual formation certain means were provided which the religious could use either privately or in common. First among these was the obligation of study, for which the daily schedule reserved a certain number of hours: about three hours between 1728 and 1741, about three and a half hours between 1741 and 1746, and about four hours between 1746-1775. This daily period had to be dedicated to the study of Sacred Scripture, ascetical and moral theology, and to the preparation of sermons. (119) Paul reaffirmed this duty in the regulations, especially for confessors and spiritual directors, who required a more thorough study of moral and ascetical-mystical theology, and for missionaries and preachers. (120)

Following the prescriptions of common law, the practice was introduced at the beginning of holding conferences twice a week on moral theology or the solution of moral cases. In 1775 these were reduced to only once a week. (121) Even the recreations were at times used for discussing pastoral and moral problems. In 1758 a prescription was issued demanding that religious about to begin the preaching ministry should submit to revision

their written sermons and catechetical talks. This was certainly a stimulus to study. (122) Another aid to ongoing formation was the library. Each house had to provide and care for one, and no book could be loaned outside the house without the written permission of the general or provincial superior. (123) Paul wished to see his religious as constant in their spiritual duty as in that of study, but always for the glory of God, for divine wisdom, and for helping their neighbor. He wrote to Fr. John Mary: "regarding preaching, strive to become ever more competent by moderate study. A little but done continuously will obtain this end." (124)

E. THE LAY BROTHERS

1. Name and position in the Congregation

The Passionist lay brothers derive their name and position from the mendicant orders. In these institutes the brothers formed a unique body linked by the same religious vocation and profession, but distinguished by the occupations exercised, by their intellectual formation and by their special juridical situation as concerned offices implying jurisdiction. Yet there was a real interdependence between the cleric and the lay friar inasmuch as each felt he needed the other to constitute a working community both on the internal and apostolic plane. In the Capuchin order the lay friars possessed a juridic weight not inferior to that of the friar priests, since their order originated as a reform to recapture St. Francis' original inspiration, and the lay brothers kept these rights up to the 1700s when they were almost totally deprived of them.

In the Congregation's juridical and historical documents they are called lay brothers (*fratelli laici*) or simply laymen (*laici*) or sometimes the brothers (*i fratelli*), when priests, clerics or tertiaries are spoken of in the text. It is hard to say what Paul's thoughts were when he wrote the first rule in 1720. It would seem he never posed the question whether the Poor of Jesus should be

priests or laymen. After reading the text of the rule, Bishop Cavalieri drew Paul's attention to the need of being or having priests in order to accomplish more fully the apostolic life proper to the Congregation, and suggested he specify what instruction should be given the lay brothers. (125)

The first postulant who presented himself at the hermitage of St. Anthony on Monte Argentario in 1728 was to be a lay brother, a certain Bro. Mark Arpeo from Sarzana, who after some years left the community. On October 19, 1728, Paul informed Fr. Tuccinardi: "Divine Providence has provided us with an excellent lay brother who is dressed as we are and attends to the practice of his vocation. We didn't want him, but God wanted him, so he remained here and we are very happy about it. He does all the necessary work about the place which gives us more reason for greater recollection and attention to prayer and the rest." (126) Thus the lay brother made his entry into the Congregation in full equality of life and vocational scope even though occupied in diverse material tasks. Paul illustrated the position of the lay brother in the Congregation by the image of a mother in the household. A good mother, even though working to keep the home clean and orderly, to prepare good healthy meals for the family, etc., though tied to the home more than other members of the family, does not by any means feel herself a slave or suffer any feeling of inferiority. She gives warmth and meaning to her activity by the love she bears her family and they, in turn, value above all else this love by which they feel united and welcome. Paul frequently expressed this conviction saying: "I have great love for our poor brothers because they are true mothers to us, and if anyone in the Congregation does not love them, believe me, he has not the spirit of Jesus Christ. To whom, after God, do we owe our livelihood, if not to the poor brothers? Who, in bad weather, at inconvenient times, with loss of sleep, goes in search of our food? Who cooks the food and works in our gardens? Who keeps us neat and tidy? Who assists us in our infirmities and needs, by day and by night, if not our brothers, who are our mothers?" (127)

As mothers, the brothers took care of the house and of everything in the house "as things that belong to God and are given in trust by God." (128) They felt themselves responsible for the health of the religious. Hence, though tedious, the office of cook, had to be carefully done as the physical welfare of the religious depended on it, as well as their means of working for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. (129)

2. Relations between clerics and lay brothers

On the vocational and communitarian plane, clerics and lay brothers were to feel themselves equal in all save where the priestly function demanded a mutually accepted distinction. This was the fundamental principle underlying relations between the two classes of members in the Congregation, though the conditioned attitudes and customs of the time were not always overcome.

In the 1741 rule Paul established a common recreation for clerics and lay brothers, although in a former text he had preferred the custom of other religious orders having separate recreations. Paul had justified the distinction by the reverence due to the priestly character which might suffer from an excessive familiarity. The principle of charity and its demands led him, however, to overcome these fears and allow a common recreation "so as better to preserve holy union and charity." From the same principle of charity he ordered that suffrages be the same for priests, clerics and lay brothers "without any difference in order that an equal charity may shine." (130)

This same principle of charity is to be found in all the letters and documents of the founder whether in reference to medical care, clothing or food. In 1767 he decreed for the Ceccano retreat: "It will be the rector's duty to provide them (the sick) with good soup, as also medicines according to their needs, taking care to have an equal charity, both for priests and lay brothers." In the refectory, too, "in food and drink, all must observe perfect equality, without any distinction." He recommended

to the cook: "In preparing the pittances, let there be no partiality, but prepare the plates equally and let them be served without distinction." (131) In the process for canonization a witness testified to this doctrine and practice: "I wish you all to be humble, yes, but I want no difference between priests and lay brothers. I do want the priestly character to be respected; but as to the demands of charity I wish all to be treated equally, sick or sound; but I have ordered that when they are sick all be treated as major superiors, because in this we must all be equal." (132)

The founder himself felt that being treated equally should not diminish the respect and reverence due to the priests. In the 1746 rule he reminded the lay brothers: "Let them have the deepest reverence for the priests, respecting them as ministers of the great God of Majesty." Likewise in the 1755 regulations he pointed out: "Let the lay brothers be respectful to clerics, priests, and particularly to superiors. Let them not take advantage of their cordiality." In a canonical visitation decree he noted: "Let the lay brothers recall they are in the company of priests to whom they owe all respect and not interrupt them when they speak, so that all emanate harmony, peace and charity." (133)

It is not clear whether this desire for equality ever gave lay brothers active voice in the election of the local superior or in the admission of novices to profession. The texts of the 1736 and 1741 rule affirm: "all the brothers of the said Congregation must come together before the superior and take part in the same (admission of a novice) each giving his vote." Speaking of the election of the superior it says: "they shall all come together and shall give their secret vote." Taken as written, and even in the context of the respective chapters, these phrases lead us to suppose that on both these occasions the lay brothers voted equally with the priests. However, the 1746 text is explicit in not granting this right: "although professed, the lay brothers shall never vote or have a voice in the chapter." Later, speaking of the election of the superior, "electors" are named, as in opposition to non-electors. Up to 1775 the lay brothers had the possi-

bility of giving their opinion in the Friday chapter if requested and "nominally questioned by the superior." The 1775 revision excluded both lay brothers and clerics not subdeacons from participation in that part of the chapter in which community affairs were discussed. (134)

As the Congregation gradually became organized minor differences, but of some social importance, were noticeable. For example, regarding dress, in 1728 Paul wrote: "the lay brother is dressed as we are." The 1746 rule specified that the brothers should wear the "sign" only on the habit but not on the mantle. The 1775 text distinguished the clerics from the lay brothers even more, granting the former the use of the priest's biretta. The 1747 chapter decreed that the collar of the brothers' habit be lower than that of the clerics, and the mantle be without collar. (135) Little things, but indicative of subjection to social conditioning in force within the institutes as a sign of class distinction.

As regards liturgical prayer the difference originated from a cultural necessity, inasmuch as the liturgy of the hours was in Latin, and so necessarily restricted to clerics. The lay brothers participated in the choir observance by reciting what was known as "the breviary of the poor" or "the breviary of the uneducated," that is, a series of Paters and Aves according to the various hours of the breviary. They took part in the community Mass together with the clerics. There was, however, a distinction as regards the frequency of eucharistic communion. The 1736 and 1741 rules granted the lay brothers communion on "all feast days and three times a week in Lent and Advent." The 1746 text specified instead that they might receive communion on all non-continuous feast days and on Fridays, provided Thursday was not a feast day; in Advent and Lent they might receive it three times a week. The clerics, on the other hand, could receive three times a week besides non-continuous feast days throughout the year." (136)

3. Tasks and offices of the lay brothers

From the beginning the lay brothers had care of all the house chores necessary for community life: the good order and cleanliness of the house, care of the sick, laundry and clothing, kitchen, refectory, vegetable garden, etc., and after 1750 also of the quest. The founder took care to give norms for the proper fulfillment of these offices. Subsequent general and provincial chapters, as also canonical visitors made these norms more detailed. In the first regulations more importance was given to the spiritual animation of manual labor, opening up the mind and heart of the lay brother to the apostolic work of the Congregation in which he must feel he has a share in virtue of his Passionist vocation and profession. (137) A task entrusted to the brothers in the early days and up to 1764, was that of carrying the money and making the purchases when an "accountant" or tertiary was wanting, so that a priest or the superior should not handle the money. In fact, the 1736 rule prescribed: "should monies be given for the church or for Mass stipends, or out of charity for the Congregation... they shall be handed to the syndic...in the case of necessity the superior may have a lay brother receive them....The superior may engage one of the more faithful, devout and modest of the lay brothers to make the necessary expenditures for the Congregation." (138) This custom arose, perhaps, from the desire that the Congregation be really poor and detached from material goods. The fact that the priests and the superiors, the more visible part of the Congregation, themselves tried to be dependent on others for their needs could help to create a favorable impression. When tertiaries were wanting, the lay brothers were assigned as companions to priests who had duties outside the retreat. In that period social custom required that religious go out with a companion, and so to leave priests freer for study and prayer, lay brothers or tertiaries were given as travelling companions. Lay brothers were sent on missions when the missionary group had separate living quarters and did their own cooking. (139)

By fulfilling the various manual offices, the lay brothers allowed the priests greater freedom for study,

sermon writing, preaching, and for complying with other ministries proper to the Congregation. They made a truly valid contribution to the apostolate. The door-keepers and the brothers dedicated to the quest could have a more direct influence on those with whom they came in contact by their conversation or words of encouragement. The lay brothers, however, were not allowed a direct involvement in the apostolate. Rather, in 1758 at St. Eutizio, Paul wrote: "It will not be permitted to any of our lay brothers to teach Christian doctrine in the chapels, churches, etc." (140) Did he judge them unprepared? Did he fear difficulties with the parish priests?

4. Spiritual formation of the brothers

The same qualities and talents required of cleric postulants were required of those postulants who desired to be lay brothers, except on the educational level, and a greater physical fitness was necessary. Fr. John Mary Cioni later summarized the founder's teaching and the early traditions in these words: "those to be accepted as lay brothers are especially required to possess a robust constitution and to offer hope of being able to perform everything, even farm work and caring for the vegetable garden and other domestic tasks. But they should not be excessively rough, uncouth and incompetent." (141) With these postulants, usually from less cultured backgrounds, formation helped to develop correct and courteous behaviour, so that community life would be characterized by ordinary politeness in addition to having charity and a real care for one another as its inspiration. The many recommendations on good manners which were found in the novices' regulations were meant particularly for the lay brothers. The fact, elsewhere recalled, that many of the lay brothers were initiated into the religious life outside the novitiate and entrusted to the rector or other priests of the community may explain why they did not receive a more suitable cultural and spiritual formation.

The spiritual formation consisted in catechetical instruction so necessary for these postulants. They also received instructions on prayer, on the obligations of the

religious vows and on the scope of the Congregation, as did the clerics. But when they were not in the novitiate house, it is doubtful these instructions were given with the necessary regularity and care. Fr. John Mary Cioni recommended that lay postulants be given catechism twice a week "on the duties of the Christian and on the due dispositions for the worthy reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and the eucharist." (142)

Paul proposed to the lay brothers a high standard of holiness, no less demanding than that which he proposed to clerics, a holiness which for the brothers should be the manifestation of charity in the fulfillment of their offices: "Let them be diligent, prompt and exact in complying with the duties of the office assigned to them, preferring it to any other particular devotion of theirs, and recognizing God's will in it. Therefore, let them do everything with great diligence and purity of intention, as one who works in the presence of and for God. Let them love one another, avoiding conflicts, and help each other with great charity, as true brothers in Christ Jesus." This goal of perfect charity and the norms of the 1755 common regulations concerning the spiritual animation which the brothers were asked to put into their manual labor, permit us to suppose a very serious effort in spiritual formation. (143)

Fr. John Mary Cioni, one-time master of novices, thus summarized the novitiate formative effort: the master and the vice-master shall instruct the novices, especially the lay brothers "in the manner of performing both vocal and mental prayer, but particularly shall explain to them the holy rule, chiefly those sections which concern their office and tasks and the obligation the religious acquires of tending toward perfection in virtue of his profession. He will also explain to them the duties imposed by the vows, principally that of holy poverty, and strive to instill in the hearts of the lay brothers a great love for this virtue, since they must manage all the goods of the retreat, guarding and distributing them to the religious community." (144)

The assistance given the lay brothers for their spiritual growth was more intense during the five years following their profession. The 1747 general chapter decreed that newly professed brothers should be under the care of the master or director of students, according to the retreats they were in. A great part of this assistance was left to the good will of the rectors. These "must show the brothers a pleasant countenance, for they are encouraged to the observance and service of God by the benevolent look of the superior," wrote Paul. At least once a week the rector had to instruct the lay brothers, or have them instructed "in what pertains to the faith, prayer and the observance of the rule." Such instruction was normally given on Sunday afternoons after vespers, taking some time from the common walk permitted on those days. In the St. Eutizio retreat in 1753 Paul ordered that besides Christian doctrine, the brothers should be instructed in the manner of serving at Mass "and at least once a month an instruction should be given to refresh their memory on the manner of prayer, reception of communion, recollection in the midst of their external occupations, advising and exhorting them to raise their minds to God frequently by fervent aspirations." In 1758 he specified that the instruction on meditation could be held on Friday, but not omitting the Sunday catechism. (145)

The lay brothers employed in the quest were exhorted to spend one hour in mental prayer both morning and evening. They could do this, however, while travelling in silence and recollection. As Paul suggested to brother James Gianiel, "In your journeys keep recollected, going without haste or anxiety, in peace, quiet and with your heart serenely and wholly in God. In the morning at the beginning of your journey keep silence with your companion for about an hour, and while walking make your mental prayer as if you were in church, meditating on the passion of Jesus, his journeys, toils and sufferings for love of us, and unite your own toils and sufferings to his. Frequently awaken your faith in the presence of God and practice frequent ejaculatory prayers. Towards evening keep another hour of silence with your companion in mental prayer, and then recite together a third part of the rosary. Be brief in asking for alms. Ask with few,

humble and efficacious words, and all will be well, more so if you put the sacred Passion before our benefactors, for whose sake you seek alms, imitating Christ's humility." (146)

In 1766, to safeguard the spiritual welfare of the lay brothers who quested, it was established that when the questing campaign had ended, they should have "six or eight days" of spiritual retreat, during which time the superior should not employ them in anything, except in a very urgent case. Even in this disposition there was a sense of equality, offering the brothers the same means of spiritual renewal that were offered to missionaries and students. (147)

5. Professional formation of the lay brothers

The professional formation of the lay brothers consisted in learning during the novitiate the manner of fulfilling the domestic offices competently, especially baking and cooking. They could not be admitted to profession if they had not given proof of having mastered the fundamental offices for the material well-being of the community. (148) A lay brother who was both expert in the job and an exemplary religious imparted the practical training. Other crafts such as mason, carpenter, weaver, gardener, were learned as need demanded, while some brothers knew them before entering the Congregation.

The lay brothers employed in heavy work such as gardening, building, or carpentry could take a moderate morning collation prepared by the one in charge. This consisted of "some bread with a small portion of cheese or something similar, and some wine, that is, one or two cups of wine with water as is passed in the refectory." (149)

The contribution of the lay brothers to the material progress of the Congregation was remarkable. They helped in the building or rebuilding of the various houses, or worked as carpenters on the necessary furniture and equipment, or cultivated the vegetable gardens in the

various retreats. At St. Angelo, St. Joseph, St. Eutizio and Paliano they had to start from scratch. They also contributed by the quest when this became the normal means of supporting the communities. At the same time they carried on the tasks of maintaining the houses, besides the offices of cook, tailor and infirmarian.

In addition to this material contribution, the lay brothers spiritually helped the Congregation through their sometimes heroic fidelity in living their vocations. They opened themselves up to the gift of contemplation through lives of penance, being absorbed in the memory of the Passion of Jesus as reflected in their daily work, and they offered an example of life and prayer so that the poor and humble might also live this transforming memory.

Their number was impressive, so much so that more than once the founder did not accept some brother postulants because the Congregation included a number that equaled or surpassed half of its members. At the time of the founder's death the lay brothers numbered sixty-five, compared to 110 clerics, of whom eighty-two were priests and twenty-eight students. The social situation favored vocations as lay brothers, but the austerity of the Passionist life did not facilitate perseverance in those who did not feel a true vocation. Yet fewer brothers left than clerics or priests. Were they more virtuous than the clerics or had they before them a less ambitious prospect than the clerics, which helped their stability?

F. TERTIARIES: SIGNIFICANCE OF THEIR PRESENCE IN THE CONGREGATION

In harmony with the custom of his time, Paul admitted to the Congregation some men of good will who were disposed to render service to the communities, which in turn offered them their spiritual help in compensation and the assurance of assistance in illness and old age. These men, called tertiaries, constituted a third category of members within the Congregation. They were also

known as oblates, since they offered themselves and were dedicated to the communities. We might say they functioned as intermediaries between the religious and society in what concerned material affairs. Their first tasks in the early days were, in the absence of the syndic, to pay the laborer's wages, to make the purchases, to collect the offerings left with the syndic, and to do the questing - all this under the supervision of the local superior. They also worked in the garden and accompanied religious when duty required they leave the retreat, condescending thus to the social conventions of the time which thought it unseemly that religious be out alone. It was chiefly from this motive that in 1755 Paul recommended that in each retreat there should be one or two trustworthy tertiaries. (150)

Up to 1761 rectors could accept tertiary postulants. From that date on, permission was required from the major superior, and in 1764 a further requisite was the consent of the local chapter of the retreat where the postulant was to be admitted. As from that date, too, the postulant had to sign a document, as religious postulants did, attesting that he would claim no compensation in case of leaving or being dismissed. The express permission of the major superior was needed for a tertiary's vestition. The tertiary's habit was similar to that of the religious, but three fingers shorter and with a low collar; the mantle had no collar and was closed in front. When they had vowed perseverance in the Congregation, the tertiaries could wear the "sign" of the Passion, but only outside the house, and it was to be somewhat smaller than that used by the religious. They wore shoes but without socks; special permission was needed from the major superior to use the religious sandals. (151) Their underwear was that of the religious except that on the quest they were allowed linen instead of wool. They ate with the religious in the refectory, but could not partake of the recreation.

Their permanence in the Congregation was assured by the ruling that only the major superior could dismiss them and only for grave reasons. In ill health or old age they were cared for in the same manner as the reli-

gious. At death, solemn obsequies and Mass were sung in the retreat to which they were attached. All the priests of the province applied one Mass for them, and clerics and lay brothers recited the entire rosary.

The main reason for the presence of the tertiaries was the sharing of the gift of the Passionist vocation and personal sanctification through their consecration to the Passion of Jesus - not merely the material help they could give to the Congregation or the community. The tertiaries recited the same prayers prescribed for the lay brothers "in memory of the Passion of our Crucified Love." They could receive communion every eight days, or more frequently as the rector judged, and on account of work they were dispensed from the rule of fast but were urged to fast on Fridays "in memory of the Passion of Jesus." (152)

The tertiaries were most helpful to the Congregation in the early days, for they made possible the observance of the poverty as foreseen in the rule which did not allow religious to handle money or to be employed in the quest. Several of the tertiaries shone by their edifying Christian lives, no less fervent than that of the religious with whom they lived.

Yet the future of this institution was not too clear to Paul or to his religious. Therefore, in 1775, with the approbation of the capitulars, he decreed the abolition of the tertiaries "for just and holy motives." Provision was made, however, for those already admitted: they could persevere as tertiaries or, if they preferred, make their novitiate as lay brothers and be admitted to profession. (153) What were those "just and holy motives?" Perhaps misunderstandings with the lay brothers? Perhaps strained relations between the local superiors and lay brothers who may have resented that purchases and quest were entrusted to tertiaries? Or was it perhaps fear of the excessive growth of the lay element, both tertiaries and lay brothers? (154) The number of tertiaries was never excessive: in 1760 there were only thirteen. A total of twenty tertiaries were vested and all persevered save three who were dismissed. (155)

FOOTNOTES

1. It is Fr. Dominic Ferreri who, on May 30, 1750, in the name of Br. James Gianiel, writes about this to his brother, in: Positio servi Dei Jacobi, p. 38.

2. Besides what was said in chap. 4, # 4, keep in mind these words of Fulgentius Pastorelli from November 12, 1750: "Nor am I surprised that the devil does everything possible to destroy this poor Congregation of ours, provoking the most tempestuous storms to demolish it, because he is aware that it will be mother to as many saints as there are those who observe the Rules exactly," in Positio servi Dei Jacobi, pp. 53-54. Cf. also Let. I, 409, 430; and Let. II, 224.

3. Let. I, 481. Let. II, 221-222.

4. Processi II, 581. Cf. also Processi III, 64; Let. III, 445; also Let. IV under Vocazione religiosa in analytic index.

5. Let. IV, 294. Let. III, 287.

6. Let. I, 408; cf. also the other letters before his entrance into the Congregation. For the vocation of Strambi, Let. IV, 74-81. About Struzzieri: L. Ravasi, Il Servo di Dio Mons. Tommaso Struzzieri (Milan, 1965), pp. 54-55.

7. Let. I, 83.

8. Let. III, 650-651.

9. Let. II, 275.

10. Let. III, 16.

11. For Fr. Pieri, Let. II, 429-436; Let. V, 37-40.

12. Let. IV, 237.

13. Cf. Bartoli, Catalogo. Let. II, 667.

14. Reg. et const. 1746, p. 159, n. 25. The founder preferred the age between 19 and 20, Let. III, 124, n. 5.

15. Reg. et const. 10/I-II/12-31.

16. Let. I, 426.

17. Let. I, 398. Also in the notizie the founder insists that the penance of the Congregation is reasonable, S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 15, 20.

18. Let. IV, 233-237. Cf. also S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 14.

19. Let. I, 429.

20. Giammaria, Vita del Ven. P. Giov. Battista, p. 166.

21. Cf. Circular of 1752: Let. IV, 235. Cf. also Let. IV, 111-112; Let. III, 124, 158-159.

22. The letter of January 20, 1758 in AG. B. I-I/5-3, 1-6.

23. Let. IV, 237. cf. Let. III, 447; also Let. III, 153.
24. Reg. et const. 16/II/34ff. Let. III, 153.
25. Bartoli, Catalogo, pp. XI-XII.
26. Reg. et const. 22-23/I-V/3-8.
27. Cf. Reg. et const. p. 160, n. 33-51. Let. III, 437-438.
28. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia 147, n. 3.
29. Let. III, 440.
30. Let. II, 150; cf. also Let. III, 439, n. 7.
31. Let. II, 148.
31. Giammaria, Vita del P. Marcoaurelio, f. 230-231. To understand the content of "modesty", it is necessary to keep in mind the cultural context of the epoch. Cf. also Reg. et const. 24/III/2-16.
32. Reg. et const. in the places where he speaks of vows, of prayer, of the formation of novices. Let. III, 449, n. 7. cf. Reg. et const. 10/I-III/10-55. Let. III, 450.
33. Positio servi Dei Jacobi, p. 67. Cf. also Reg. et const. 76/I-III/44-54. Let. III, 452.
34. Giammaria, Vita del P. Marcoaurelio, f. 172, 214. Let. III, 438, n. 1.
35. Positio servi Dei Jacobi, p. 53. To understand the contents and the pivotal position that the notion "observance" had in the formation of the novices and students, it is useful to read this document. Cf. also Let. IV, under Osservanza in the analytic index.
36. For the description of the method of mental prayer, I have made use of the oldest copy of the Regulations for novices which is in AG. A. II-IV/4-10, f. 144-165.
37. Paul was convinced that "our religious by solitude and the austere life they profess are called to a higher prayer," Processi III, 460. cf. Let. III, 437.
38. Cf. letters to Masters already cited. Giammaria, Vita del P. Fulgenzio, f. 36-37. Giammaria, Vita del P. Marcoaurelio, p. 173.
39. The schedule is drawn up keeping in mind the text of the Rule, the Regulations for the novices, and other documents (decrees, letters).
40. Let. III, 438-439.
41. Let. II, 84.
42. Reg. et const. 28/II/4-35.
43. Reg. et const. 34/I-III/34ff. The trimestral chapter to decide on the progress of the novices is spoken of in the

"register of chapters" of the retreat of St. Angelo, of August 25, 1754.

44. Let. V, 16. cf. anche Let. I, 480; Reg. et const. 36/III/10-12.

45. Let. III, 453.

46. Reg. et const. 20/I-III/8-50; 36/I-III/1-33.

47. Let. I, 497.

48. Bartoli, Catalogo, pp. VII-VIII. The first case of the change of baptismal name was in 1770, and from that date through all of 1775, names were changed by 11 clerics and 3 brothers.

49. Giammaria, Vita del P. Marcoaurelio, f. 178. Processi I, 70.

50. Reg. et const. 76/I-III/44-53.

51. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida. n. 114.

52. Decreti e rac. decr. 12, 2; 38, 2. Reg. et const. 85/IV-V/8-16.

53. Let. II, 243. Let. II, 667. Let. II, 701, August 12, 1749. Processi IV, 239.

54. Bartoli, Catalogo, p. XVI.

55. The declaration of Anthony Danei during the episcopal pastoral visit of April 30, 1733 in Reg. et const., p. 155.

56. Cf. Agathangelus a Langasco, OFM Cap., De Institutione clericorum in disciplinis inferioribus (Roma, 1936), pp. 100-103.

57. Paul affirms many times: "In our Congregation we only teach philosophy and theology; hence it is necessary that the subjects are well founded in the Latin language," Let. II, 640. Cf. also Let. II, 37; III, 119.

58. Reg. et const. 80/III/19ff.

59. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n. 29-30.

60. Reg. et const. 82/III/14-26; p. 165, n. 139.

61. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 57; 77. Reg. et const. 88/IV/5-25.

62. Reg. et const. 78/III/2-5; 82/III/27-32; 83/IV/35-64. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 56; 129. Let. III, 273.

63. Reg. et const. 80/81/III-V/10ff.

64. Ibid. 83/IV-V/35ff.

65. An echo of these fears is found in the words of the Superior General, Fr. Bernard Prelini, in 1878. cf. Decreti e rac., p. 141 line 30-35.

66. Giammaria, Vita del P. Marcoaurelio, f. 180.

67. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 56, 1: "in the schools of the Congregation the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor St. Thomas is taught, and all the sons of our Congregation are bound to follow it." Cf. also Reg. et const. 81/IV/19-24.

68. Processi I, 368-369.

69. Reg. et const., p. 165, n. 133.

70. Let. III, 652.

71. Processi I, 368.

72. Cf. Let. III, 279-280; 446.

73. Paul explicitly names a few manuals: Let. III, 769; Let. III 769. Letter to Garampi in Bibl. Vat. Lat. 12550, f. 163rv. Let. II, 151. Naturally there were the works of St. Thomas, St. Francis de Sales, St. Teresa of Jesus, St. John of the Cross, etc.

74. That the manuscript is Fr. Marcoaurelius' can be deduced from the grand eulogy it gives St. Thomas and which re-echoes what Fr. John Mary says as cited above in the text. It is very clear in exposition and well informed.

75. Strambi appears very dedicated in the year of study to Sacred Scripture, to the Holy Fathers in order to deepen the students' appreciation of the worth of the living teaching of the Church; to the contemporary pontifical documents and the study of current authors of apologetics to face the current difficulties which confronted the Church in the fields of philosophy, theology, and law. About the study of mystical theology, it must be affirmed that the first Passionist teachers were well acquainted with the best authors of the time on the theme of prayer, on the discernment of spirits, on spiritual guidance, etc. The libraries of the first retreats give testimony to it even today.

76. "Holy Mother Church": cf. Reg. et const. 54/I-II/26; 68/I-II/26; 142/I-III/39. Cf. Investibulum Theologiae, Prolegomenon 4: De Ecclesia. Cf. also Processi III, 190.

77. Let. II, 350. Biografie Rel. Pas. Sac., f. 238-239; 313-314 327-328; Bollettino 1923, pp. 310-312; 335-336.

78. Let. II, 118.

79. Let. II, 123.

80. Let. II, 160.

81. Let. II, 167-169, Biografie Rel. Pas. Sac., f. 239-240.

82. Let. II, 167-168; Let. II, 168; Let. III, 273; 279-280; 446; Let. V, 132.

83. Cf. S. Paolo della Croce; La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 6, 22, 24; notizia '68, n. 4, 9, 11. Reg. et const.

8/I-III/1-20; 98/II-III/19-41. Cf. also C. Naselli, La solitudine e il deserto nella spiritualità passionista (Roma, 1978), pp. 27-43.

84. Let. II, 712.

85. Biografie Rel. Pas. Sac., f. 200.

86. ibid. f. 328. Cf. also Let. V, 138.

87. Biografie Rel. Pas. Sac., f. 239-240.

88. Bollettino 1924, pp. 212-213.

89. Op. cit. 1924, pp. 277-279.

90. Op. cit. 1925, pp. 232-233.

91. Op. cit. 1925, pp. 242-243. Let. III, 510-511.

92. Reg. et const. 4-5/III-IV/15ff.

93. At times the transfer of some students to a Retreat was determined by the fact that there was a vacancy there, or else that it was necessary to reenforce that community, cf. for example, Let. III, 273; 446.

94. Here is the public oath of the three clerics in the Retreat of St. Sosio in 1751: "On the 11th day of October 1751: Gathered in the presence of the Most Rev. General, Paul of the Cross, the Clerics, Confraters Sebastian of the Purification of Mary Most Holy, Marian of St. Lawrence, and John Baptist of the Infant Jesus have sworn, tactis sacris Evangeliiis, to persevere unto death in the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of Jesus Christ and never to seek for whatever reason the dispensation of the simple vows, or their dissolution; for that reason, after having sworn in the hands of Fr. General as above in the presence of Very Rev. Fr. Rector and of the herementioned witnesses, they have signed this in their own hand, and in the same act the Rev. Fr. General has assigned to them the title of the common table for the validity of their ordination by power of the Apostolic indult." The signatures follow. Arch. S. Sozio.

95. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 151.

96. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 58.

97. Processi IV, 253, 385. Let. III, 716.

98. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 307.

99. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 22; notizia 68, n. 29.

100. Let. IV, 235-236; Let. II, 149.

101. Let. II, 149-150. Fr. Aloysius Massimi as a student preached retreats, Biografie Rel. Pas. Sac., f. 117-118. Fr. John Mary Cioni, as a student deacon, was sent on missions,

Filippo, Storia Prov. Ad., vol. II, f. 259; cf. also Bollettino 1924, p. 280.

102. Reg. et const. 132/II-IV/40ff.
103. Cf. note 74.
104. He writes in the introduction: "Ordinarily no science is learned well without a teacher, so it seems that the advantage of the young men requires that they be directed in the exercises to be done in the study of the Divine Scriptures, in the lessons of the Fathers.
105. Processi I, 369.
106. Ibid. f. 106-107.
107. Metodo di Studio, f. 119-134.
108. Metodo di studio, f. 153-168.
109. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 57.
110. Reg. et const. 122/I/3-37.
111. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 129-137, 188-195.
112. Reg. et const. 24/III/60ff; 124/III/27-40. Clement VIII, De reformatione regularium, n. 38.
113. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 115-125.
114. Reg. et const. 144/I/10-24; 106/II/40-51. Decr. e rac., decr. n. 8.
115. Reg. et const. 126/I-V/35ff.
116. Op. cit. 78/I-III/50-55; 70/II-III/63-66.
117. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 24, notizia '68, n. 4, 11.
118. Reg. et const. 8/I-III/1-20; 98/II-III/19-42.
119. Op. cit. 8/II-III/44-46; 78/I-III/43ff. Cf. also Decr. e rac., decr. n. 6. Cf. also AG. fondo Strambi, cas. 2, n.4.
120. Let. II, 146-147, 717. Let. IV, 107, S. Paolo, Guida, n. 192, 209.
121. Reg. et const. 104/II-V/7-14.
122. Decr. e rac., decr. n. 77; Reg. et const. 89/IV-V/7-21.
123. Reg. et const. 52/I-III/54-59; 53/IV-V/39-43; 47/IV-V/13-14. Decr. e rac., decr. n. 119, 125, 5°. For books acquired for the library or for the students cf. Let. V, 74; 127.
124. Let. III, 146.
125. Reg. et const. p. 154, n. 4.
126. Let. V, 18.
127. Processi IV, 232-233.
128. Reg. et const. p. 164, n. 128.
129. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 252.
130. Reg. et const. p. 167, n. 170; p. 171, n. 238.

131. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 264. Visita Can. Ceccano 1767, II, 7.
132. Processi III, 218.
133. Reg. et const. p. 164, n. 128; S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 308. Decreti visita S. Sozio 1767, n. 5.
134. Reg. et const. 34/I-II/36-40; 110/I-II/30ff; p. 161, n. 56; p. 169, n. 216; 127/V/13-15.
135. Reg. et const. 12/III/33-36; 13/V/44-46; Decr. e rac., decr. n. 1, 25, 116.
136. Reg. et const. 74/I-V/49 ff; 78/III-V/2-6.
137. Cf. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 241-303; 308.
138. Reg. et const. 44/I/19ff. Decr. e rac., decr. n. 107.
139. Reg. et const. 48/I/30-35, 48.
140. Decreti visita S. Eutizio, decr. for the church n. 3.
141. Norms for the novitiate of Paliano in 1788.
142. Norms for the novitiate of Terracina in 1784, decr. n. 9.
143. Reg. et const. p. 164, n. 127, 128. Cf. also S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, index.
144. Norms for the novitiate of Terracina in 1784, decr. n. 9.
145. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 176; Decr. e rac., decr. n. 19; Reg. et const. 124/I-V/61f; Decreti visita S. Eutizio 1753, decrees for the Lay Brothers, n. 4; visita 1758, decrees for the house, n. 3.
146. Let. IV, 28-29.
147. Let. IV, 281, n. 3.
148. Decreti visita S. Giuseppe 1765, 1771; decr. e rac., decr. n. 131.
149. Decr. e rac., decr. n. 144. Cf. Let. IV, 279.
150. Let. IV, 252; Let. II, 130, 167, 707.
151. Let. IV, 263. Let. III, 255. Decr. e rac., decr. n. 78, 80, 142. Prov. Chapter 1761, decr. n. 11, in Bollettino 1923, p. 272, n. 11.
152. Let. IV, 264.
153. Decr. e rac. decr. n. 142.
154. Let. IV, 263-264. These preoccupations can indicate a care to prevent abuse and to be clear on what was expected of the tertiaries, but they can also indicate that displeasing events had already occurred which had to be avoided in the future.
155. Bartoli, Catalogo, pp. 277-282.

Chapter VI

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CONGREGATION

A. GENERAL REMARKS

To grasp fully the proper charism and the characteristic spirituality of the Congregation Paul acquired by special enlightenment from God, I refer the readers to the second chapter of this work. From the light he received and from the mystical experience of his forty-day retreat, Paul came to understand the ways of faith and charity proper to him who is called to share in the Passion of Christ - reliving his divine attitudes and intentions in order to convey them with efficacy to the people. What we must now study are the elements of solitude, poverty and penance as attitudes and practices disposing the soul for the contemplation of the Passion of Jesus, from which develops, on the one hand, the overwhelming realization of God's merciful love, and, on the other, the tragic and destructive reality of sin. This must be done while bearing in mind what we referred to in the second chapter as the knowledge of faith and understanding of the Gospel doctrine of "the imitation of the apostles." The aim of this intended contemplation is intimate union of the human person with the God who is love through the humanity of Jesus, and the guidance of each person, even the less endowed and those on the fringes of society, toward this intimate union with the saving God in whom full self-discovery takes place.

Though a deep historical and theological study would be most fascinating, it is impossible to attempt it here. Hence I only hint at some aspects that should be more thoroughly studied for an objective understanding of the spirituality of the Congregation. These aspects are five in number:

1. A spirituality centered on Christ "the Crucified Love."

The spirituality Paul lived and transmitted to the Congregation as part of its charism is totally centred in Christ, whom Paul frequently called by the simple expression of "the Crucified Love." By this term he not only referred to the interpersonal relationship between the religious and Christ, but also to the reality of being mindful of the Passion of Jesus, that is, reflecting with grateful affection on the love with which God has so loved each person as to give his only-begotten Son (Jn 3:16). What is worthy of study is the primacy given in Passionist spirituality to the contemplation and love of the Word Incarnate, who precisely in his humanity is the necessary and perennial mediator of our salvation, not only in the historic moment of his Passion lived in love and obedience, but also now in his glory and constituted by the Father as Lord and Saviour. Convinced of this, Paul prescribed that before beginning every single hour of the liturgical office, his religious proclaim the concluding words of the apostle's Christological Hymn (Phil 2:6-11). This passage is of fundamental importance for understanding Passionist spirituality centred on Jesus crucified. Paul does not stop at the historic fact of an humiliated Christ, but delves into the depths of that love which led him to suffer and be glorified. Thus Paul lovingly abandons himself to him whose wounded humanity, now glorified, is at the right hand of God for the salvation of those who trust in him. In this sense, the founder never ceased repeating that Christ, crucified God-man, is the only access to the Father, and that it is only through him and united to his humanity that access is possible to the One and Triune God. (1)

2. A spirituality that gives the highest prominence to the presence of the loving and merciful God revealed in the suffering humanity of Christ crucified.

This aspect should be studied not only as a walking in God's presence - so frequently recommended by the founder and the first masters (2) - but also as being mindful of the Passion of Jesus with special awareness of

God's love. What also deserves study is the spirituality of the presence-memory particularly in reference to the eucharistic presence of Jesus which held such a privileged place in the spirituality of individual religious and communities. (3) Spirituality of the divine presence later finds its outlet in the pattern of 'spiritual direction and formation given to religious, leading them to interior recollection in worshipful dialogue with God who is present and to adoration of the divine presence in the just we meet, in the nature we admire, and in the things we use. (4) The spirituality of the divine presence should also be studied in connection with liturgical prayer in union with the whole Church, the mystical body of Christ, with personal and community prayer, and with the external and internal silence which in the "houses of solitude" constitutes the appropriate atmosphere for worshipful perception, enjoyment and listening to this divine presence.

3. A spirituality of mystical union.

By this I mean that the whole ascetical plan of Passionist life, its method of prayer, its manner of leading religious to radical poverty, to loving dedication to Christ crucified is ordained to ease the way towards mystical union with God "passing through the godly door that is Christ crucified and appropriating to ourselves his sufferings." (5) The founder considered this mystical union a gift implicitly contained in the call to share in the charism of the Congregation. A special interior knowledge - a gift of God - is necessary to understand the Passion of Jesus as a "work entirely of love," and to appropriate to oneself by faith and charity the sufferings of Jesus and the love with which he endured them. A trustful preparation is necessary, because God will give what is needful to live the charism fully in one's own personal experience, and present the memory of the Passion of Jesus to others as something valid and satisfying. (6) Paul was convinced that the efficaciousness of Christ's redemptive sacrifice and his evangelization derived from his being continuously united to the Father in loving obedience; likewise, that the apostles were truly evangelizers because mystically united to Christ who for

them surpassed any and every other good. The Passionists greatly need "the gift of continual interior recollection in order to live a truly apostolic life, which is nothing else than working for souls in uninterrupted prayer and contemplation. This doesn't mean continually praying on one's knees, but in that high interior recollection, wholly submerged in God's love." (7) Thus shall they be united to the redemptive passion of Jesus in order to help souls receive the benefits of redemption. For the founder, the Passionist must be a "mystical apostle" who sees in the Passion of Christ both the tragic situation of sinners and God's saving love for them. This will irresistibly urge him to make amends for the deeds of sinners in the body of Christ, thus aiding them to conversion and to union with God in Jesus who wishes to save them. (8)

4. A spirituality of pilgrimage, rooted in that of the apostolic life, which is an itinerant asceticism.

Sent by Jesus, the Passionists travel the roads of the world content with a staff and tunic, barefoot, peniless, trusting only in him who sends them and whom they proclaim. Their only riches are Christ, his divine power, his peace. This last they communicate to those who are disposed to receive it. They must have no attachment to anyone or anything, in order not to become comfortable and settled in one house or in one environment. This apostolic and pilgrim spirituality demands abandoning the area of their labors which might ensure a welcoming and reassuring atmosphere. Almost unknown and unaccompanied, they should depart from the place of work, either to return to solitude with Christ and their brethren or to continue their pilgrimage elsewhere. This spirituality was in the early days implied in the desire of not possessing even a house, so that everything be provisional and thus the apostle be ever ready to go from place to place. The preference that apostolic workers have for solitary places, marshes, islands, and other apparently more abandoned areas for the fulfillment of their mission manifests a pilgrim choice as opposed to the seeking of comfortable and inviting places to stop and settle down. The signposts on the highway of the Congre-

gation's mission read: the welfare of the spiritually poorest and most in need of religious instruction. (9)

It is evident from the founder's intention that if a place, otherwise interesting or convenient, is unfit for a house of solitude or does not allow the observance of the rule, no foundation should be made, and if made, it should be abandoned. This is a powerful call to the pilgrim spirituality whose norm is: carry the message where others do not; withdraw from where the evangelical way of life as expressed in the rule approved by the Holy See is made impossible. (10)

5. A spirituality of fraternal communion.

Called like the apostles to live with Christ crucified, eucharistically present in their midst in a memorial of his passion and resurrection, the religious should love one another as Christ loves each one of them. In virtue of their charism they must manifest the efficacy of being mindful of the Passion of Jesus by living in harmony, overcoming the limitations of life in common, and working peacefully towards their personal fulfillment. Their apostolic life calls for union and fraternal harmony. The founder reverts constantly in his teaching to the precept of love which Jesus gave on the night he was betrayed and gave himself in the Eucharist before doing so on the cross. Paul recalled it in the 1775 general chapter and bequeathed it as his last will and testament before receiving holy viaticum. This aspect of Passionist spirituality will be dealt with in the chapters on community and government, but it awaits a more thorough study in reference to the charism and the apostolic life. (11)

The aforesaid points will be developed further. (12) The fundamental points of the Congregation's spirituality as understood and actuated in this period are presented here in an historic perspective.

B. THE VOW OF PROMOTING DEVOTION TO AND GRATEFUL MEMORY OF THE PASSION AND DEATH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

This phrasing of the 1746 rule (13) expresses the vow which is characteristic of the spirituality and apostolic activity of the Congregation, even though, as we pointed out in the second chapter, Passionist spirituality is linked with that of the "imitation of the apostles" also known as "the spirituality of the apostolic life."

1. When was the vow introduced into the rule?

Paul was aware that he must found a Congregation dedicated to recalling the Passion of Jesus and to promoting its memory among the people. In the primitive rule of 1720, however, no mention was made of any such vow. We gather this from the fact that Bishop Cavalieri, who read the text and left written observations on it, says only: "In it shall be made the three vows, called substantial in religion, chastity, poverty, etc. An explanation should be given as regards the perfection with which each one must be observed." He also speaks of simple profession and of solemn vows to be obtained from the Holy See, and he alludes to the ritual of profession, but he is silent concerning any specific vow. (14) If such an outstanding feature had existed, it certainly would not have escaped the bishop's notice. The desire to commit himself by vow must have matured in Paul during his stay in Rome in September, 1721, after he failed to gain admission to the holy father as had been his purpose from November 27, 1720 onward, (15) as we have seen in chapter III. Paul had eagerly looked forward to the audience with the holy father as a concrete beginning of the work of foundation and as a further guarantee of the validity of the inspirations he had received. It is needless to say how great must have been his disappointment, though he bore it with resignation. In this state, certain of the divine inspiration though in darkness as to how it was to be accomplished, the resolve matured to commit himself to it by vow. In St. Mary Major's he reconfirmed his will of obedience to God by "vowing to promote devo-

tion to the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the faithful, and to gather companions for this purpose." Such is the testimony of St. Vincent Mary Strambi. (16) Fr. John Mary Cioni expressed it in similar terms: "he vowed not only to instill this devotion in the hearts of the faithful, but also to gather companions who would have the same purpose and goal." (17)

At that time the vow certainly concerned Paul as founder. Its formulation implied two commitments: a) to promote the memory of and devotion to the Passion of Jesus, and b) to gather companions in order to found a Congregation that would continue the same commitment. As a religious-moral obligation, the vow strengthened and supported Paul in his years of laborious search (1721-1728) for the manner and means of initiating the Congregation. During these years he came in contact with other religious institutes having a specific vow marking their spirituality and apostolate. Among these were the Fate-benefratelli, not far from the St. Gallicano hospital, who made a fourth vow "of perpetual hospitality in life service to the sick poor." (18) The clerics regular of the Pious Schools added to their three vows that of taking particular care of the instruction of youth and not to aspire to any superior office within or without the institute. (19) While in St. Gallicano Paul himself made a specific vow of perpetual service to the hospital. We should, however, keep in mind that from an early age Paul's spiritual tendency was to make particular vows to fulfill some purpose or resolution as a more perfect act of the virtue of religion.

These circumstances, and the esteem of the vow in itself as a more stable commitment and hence more apt to preserve the distinctive element of the new Congregation, (20) induced Paul to introduce it into the rule. The members would assume this particular vow when each had clearly grasped the meaning of the symbolic language of the black habit, the "sign", and the other elements specified in the rule. The vow found its way into the rule about 1730 when Paul was preparing the text for presentation to the Holy See and which he later passed on to Cardinal Altieri. In the chapter on "The Probation of No-

vices" we find: "...the novice will profess the simple vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, adding a fourth vow to promote among the faithful the devout memory of the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ." (21) The text points out the addition of the specific vow. This addition naturally called for the adding of a new chapter in order to explain the manner of observing the vow, its object and actualization, so as not to open the way to uncertainties causing possible anxieties and scruples.

2. The meaning of "memory" and "devotion"

The formulation of the vow and the explanation of how it was to be fulfilled, contained two expressions: "to recall" and "to promote devotion" to the Passion of Jesus. Both expressions were used indifferently in the rule and in the founder's letters.. According to the founder's mind, they have an identical meaning albeit with slight shades of difference. Paul used the word "memory" preceded generally by the qualifying word "grateful," in the sense that the Passion of Jesus is not only a stimulant to gratitude, but that it is also pleasant and joyous to remember. He frequently used the term "dèvotion" preceded by the adjective "solid," "true," to stress that it was not a matter of devotional exercises but of "devotion" as a Christian attitude of dedication to God's service. The fact that "to promote devotion" was joined to the teaching of meditation on the Passion leads us to understand that what Paul had in mind was authentic "devotion," which, according to St. Thomas, is nourished by the meditation of God's benefits, the most excellent of which is that of the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. "Devotion" in this sense is equivalent to "memory", because both lead us to keep in mind God's benefits through the Passion of Jesus and to resolve to live our own temporal experience with the same interior attitudes of Jesus, while at the same time experiencing both the joy of God's love thus manifested and a holy sorrow from the awareness of our own sins and those of others as causes of that Passion. (22)

From the very beginning the words "memory" and "remembrance" appear in the rule when it explains the motive for dressing in black and when the scope of the Congregation is indicated. (23) However, while describing the profession, the 1736 and 1741 rules use the word "devotion" which appears likewise in the title of the chapter explaining the observance of the vow. In the 1746 text of the rule, on both occasions, the formula used is: "to promote the religious cult and the grateful memory of the Passion and Death of Jesus." (24) In the formula of profession the expression remains: "to promote, according to my strength, in the hearts of the faithful, devotion to the Passion of our Lord." This possibly is due to the fact that this formula was presented to the Pontifical Commission after the 1741 text of the rule and probably never submitted to the 1746 commission or translated into Latin, and thus was inserted unchanged into the 1775 rule. The official texts of the Holy See use the expression "to promote the memory" of the passion of Jesus. The 1746 examiners spoke of the vow "of promoting the religious cult towards the sacred mysteries of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ." (25) Those of 1769 stressed the obligation incumbent on religious of "exciting and promoting among the faithful the memory and the cult of the life-giving Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ." (26) The 1769 bull of approbation underlines "the vow of promoting the veneration of the holy cross and the grateful remembrance of the Passion." Almost identical expressions are found in the 1775 bull. (27)

The rule for the Passionist nuns presented to the Holy See in 1770, when speaking of the manner of profession and observing the specific vow, uses the formula "to promote the religious cult and the grateful remembrance of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ" but within the chapter it uses the word "devotion." (28) Paul uses both formulas indifferently in his letters and "chronicles" of the Congregation. Thus it would appear that for him both expressions had the same meaning and expressed the same life commitment.

In conclusion: the expression "to promote the grateful memory" is more in conformity with the original and

the official expression, even though in the history of the Congregation this expression is only retained in the text of the rule and has disappeared almost completely in the current use. Both expressions, however, signified from the very beginning the same reality of the Passionist charism. To "remember" means to have in mind in a psychologically significant manner some person or event, together with feelings of joy, gratitude or sorrow because one looks upon them as a part of one's own life. "Memory" is clearly opposed to "forgetfulness," to psychological and affective neglect. The expression to promote "a true, solid devotion" means to create an interior attitude of thankfulness towards Jesus by means of a fully loving knowledge of what he has done for us. Arising from this knowledge is the will to reproduce in oneself the interior attitude of Jesus. As Paul wrote to Garagni: *A true devotee of the Passion of Jesus is he who aspires to be a true imitator of Jesus Christ.* (29)

3. Content of the vow: Does not imply devotional exercises as such but a definite apostolic commitment to fulfill the charism of the Congregation.

The vow is a moral-juridical formulation summarizing the scope of the Congregation's activity in the Church, for which it requests approbation for its existence. It is not therefore a vow binding to some pious or devout devotional exercises, nor a vow regarding directly the life of the religious within the cloister and the interior attitudes they must acquire and possess. As a matter of fact, when the founder spoke of the manner of observing the vow, the only norm he gave concerned the duty deriving therefrom to meditate the Passion of Jesus with the people and the way to instruct the various classes in that meditation, striving to persuade them to dedicate daily at least a short time to this exercise in order to become fervent Christians. This implied an apostolic attitude and action involving the lives of all members of the Congregation at all stages of their existence, so that by prayer, penance and various forms of preaching indicated in the rule, people would be instructed and led to the meditation of the Passion - the only guarantee to so-

lid conversion and progress in union with God. (30) The vow sums up and specifies the apostolic purpose Paul expounds in the introduction to the 1720 rule: "to have zeal for his honor, to promote in souls the holy fear of God, procuring the destruction of sin. Therefore, each of the poor of Jesus shall strive to inculcate in every one the pious meditation of the sufferings of our most sweet Jesus." (31) Even those who are not priests, or priests not involved in apostolic activity, can and must fulfill the vow "begging the divine Majesty to spread throughout the world this most holy devotion, granting fervor and zeal to its promoters." (32) To allay doubts in the religious as to concrete compliance, some practices were later enjoined as an external commitment to the vow. Perhaps with the passing of time such practices provoked excessive attention and tended to diminish the more ample scope of the vow, reducing it to a mere devotional exercise. For this reason the 1741 text of the rule prescribed daily, besides the community prayer, "an half hour meditation on some mystery of the Passion of Jesus," beseeching God's help for those engaged in spreading this devotion. This applied to religious other than priests and to priests who were not actively engaged in the ministry. In 1746 this half-hour prayer was replaced by the recital of five our fathers, hail marys and gloria bes for the same end. (33) This restriction or materializing of the vow to the recital of a certain number of prayers was imposed to avoid scruples, as the founder himself attested when writing to his friend Cerruti. After having recalled what must be done by lay brothers, clerics and priests not involved in the ministry, he concluded: "In short, everything is so well explained that it removes all scruples. All has been submitted to six months' rigorous examination by Rome." (34)

When announcing the approval of the 1741 rule, Paul spoke of the specific vow as a credential of the Congregation's particular apostolic scope. He informed Cerruti: "The primary end of the Institute is to seek one's own perfection by total detachment from all created things, living in rigorous poverty, prayer and fasting. The secondary end, but likewise primary for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, is to seek by

apostolic works the conversion of sinners by promoting in the hearts of the faithful devotion to the most sacred Passion of Jesus Christ. This is done on missions and in other exercises of piety, giving the meditation on the Passion after the mission sermon...professing a fourth vow for this purpose....The vow of promoting devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ is well explained and consists of preaching it, that is, meditating it aloud for approximately half an hour after the mission sermon. Likewise the people must be instructed in holy meditation, in catechism, in the confessional, in conferences, etc." (35)

The vow clarifies and specifies what the Passionist, while fulfilling some common form of pastoral work, must do for the benefit of God's people in virtue of his charism:

- *meditate aloud the Passion of Jesus, together with the people;*
- *teach all classes of people how to meditate on it;*
- *strive to persuade individuals to dedicate a period of time daily to meditation on the Passion in order to persevere as fervent Christians.*

The vow presupposes the individual and communitarian living of the memory of the Passion as a preceding and qualifying condition for a Passionist existence. The wisdom of the cross cannot be fruitfully proclaimed unless the individual is permeated by it and his whole life regulated by the interior sentiments of Jesus during his earthly experience, particularly in his Passion.

Though the primitive text of the rule did not express it as a vow, the content of the vow was nonetheless present in the life commitment of the religious and in their work for their neighbor. As has been recalled, Paul was enlightened as to the particular charism by the symbolic language of the "black habit" and the "sign." Both symbols were an evident message of the centrality of the Passion in the life and work of the new Congregation. (36) The vow, therefore, is only a means towards stability, towards assuring permanence of the essential element of the charism, which was already present in the initial

moment of the founder's definitive enlightenment as to his mission.

4. What the vow means for the Congregation in the Church

The vow, as already stated, did not create the essential element of the Passionist charism. It gave the charism a precise and stable formulation, binding it to the moral and juridical commitment it implies, so that no doubt is left as to the mind of the founder. The vow specifies the message the Congregation must convey to the historic period in which it exists.

Paul's epoch was marked by a growing secularization of the state, the family, the economy, the sciences, and by the phenomena of theoretical and practical agnosticism and atheism which were to reach their fullest manifestation during and after the French Revolution. Christianity was gradually losing its global influence on social and political life and was being unilaterally confined to a private and strictly personal decision of the individual based on his own faith. The individual found himself by degrees deprived of all external support for his Christian practices and decisions. Besides, the economic and industrial development gradually demanded emigration towards new centers of work. The migrants who became the "working masses" or the "labor forces" were usually poorly instructed in their faith. Deprived of the support of their homeland's moral and religious traditions, they were more likely than others to lose their personal identity and become collectivized. Hence, because of this dispersion they were ambiguous in their behavior, unfulfilled as persons, and uncertain of their true and eternal destiny. In virtue of its specific vow the Congregation strove to appeal to those individuals deemed capable of thoughtful reflection, of becoming aware of God's love, and of facing up to their true destiny, thus maintaining their proper Christian identity in the midst of a society calculated to disperse them as a "labor force" or as victims of consumerism.

The memory of the Passion, which the Congregation wished to instill in the hearts of the people through meditating the attitudes with which Christ assumed his human experience, tends to rescue the individual from external things destructive of his personality, and leads him to an inner life, an inner life which Rahner tells us means faith in the presence of the love of God even in his apparent unknowableness because of the growth of sin and atheism in the world, of which believers and unbelievers alike are victims. That inner or interior life is not an individualistic luxury of religious introversion but the faith of one who believes with his whole heart in the spirit being being in action even in the midst of a world ever more lacking in concrete manifestations of the divine love in public life. It is the strengthening of faith and love within man, independent of the external supports offered by a Christian society. It means agonizing with Christ and in Christ, in Gethsemani and on Calvary, over this godless situation, yet loving the world in Christ notwithstanding the apparent uselessness of this love. (37) The vow manifests the Congregation's appreciation of each person, regardless of that person's education or social rank. The Congregation is called to give preferential attention to those most in need of religious instruction and human encouragement, as the most exposed to the ethical-religious dangers arising from a new social situation. (38)

Moreover, the vow contained the Congregation's express conviction that all Christians, even if culturally poor, were called to the perfection of charity. Hence the meditation of the divine benefits of redemption was taught to all, even the unlettered, in order that they might flee from vice and become saints. (39)

Even the Passionist community as such was bound by the vow, inasmuch as each member was involved in its meaning and was bound to contribute towards it. Likewise, because the community was a place of experiential knowledge of Jesus crucified, whoever entered a retreat had to be able to discover in it a place where Jesus crucified was everything; where he might learn to pray and "to taste the sweetness of a dear and loved solitude at

the feet of the Crucified." (40) The vow also meant a limitation of the community. The Congregation could not allow its forces to be spent in a multiplicity of undertakings, even though requested. It had to concentrate its forces upon the fulfillment of its specific mission with great expertise. For this it was necessary that in solitude, in interior and exterior silence, it cultivated a continuous prayerful contemplation of the mystery of Christ crucified, in order that it might efficaciously transmit God's love for mankind. (41)

C. SOLITUDE, SILENCE, ENCLOSURE

The material aspect of solitude demanded that houses be built "away from the noise of the world" and at a distance "of two or three miles" from the towns. (42) All Paul's foundations were at that distance or greater, the only exception being the Roman foundation. This, however, though within the walls of the old city, enjoyed at that time sufficient solitude because the city dwellings began in Piazza Venezia, and the Celian hill was a rural area with very few houses. (43) Paul admitted a certain flexibility in this matter, as we gather from the instructions he gave a religious sent to verify the possibility of a Neapolitan foundation. If the desirable solitary site could not be found, another within the city limits could be accepted "provided it be in a place well apart from the turmoil of the city." The reason for this flexibility was his expectation that the Lord would be greatly glorified by the establishment of the Congregation for the neighbors' spiritual benefit. (44)

Solitude for Paul meant not only founding the house in an uninhabited place but also having a convenient amount of land reserved for the religious with the purpose of protecting the atmosphere of silence and the liberty of movement in solitary or common walks without being subjected to disturbance by the curious. At the same time the land served the purpose of providing the community with a vegetable garden, orchard and firewood. The basic motive was the liberty of the religious.

Hence he opposed family dwellings close to the retreat, especially if from them the interior of the garden and the rooms could be seen. (45)

This demand for solitude also influenced even the name of the Passionist house. In the rule it is called "retreat house," or simply "retreat," or at times "retreat of penance." (46) For the founder, "retreat" had a deep biblical origin and connotation as well as recalling the example of Jesus, who "retreated" into solitude far from the crowds to pray. He called his apostles into solitude to form them for, and to rest after, the "mission" (47), and the retreat into solitude became for Paul the foundation stone of "apostolic life" for "the Passionist apostolic worker." The founder did not elaborate a theory, but lived the mystic experience of his forty days' retreat at Castellazzo, where his initial inspired call to solitude was clarified. (see Chapter II) The purpose of solitude is "apostolic" in the meaning given this word in the spirituality "of the imitation of the apostles" or of "the apostolic life," of which we have spoken elsewhere. "The retreats shall be founded in secluded places, in the most convenient and best manner possible...that the servants of God, after their apostolic labors, may withdraw from society and the noise of the world to devote themselves in solitude to their own spiritual advancement, to prayer, fasting and other pious exercises by which they may be more and more inflamed with divine love, grow stronger in Christian virtue, and become better prepared for gathering the abundant fruits of the word of God, which they have to scatter, and to the utmost of their power excite everywhere a love of piety and a grateful remembrance of and veneration for the Passion and Death of Christ our Lord." (48) On other occasions the founder affirmed the purpose of solitude: that the religious "have every opportunity to sanctify themselves for the benefit of the neighbor." (49)

Solitude must be faithfully lived if it is to fulfill its "apostolic" purpose. It shall be dispensed only "in order to help the neighbor or from some other motive of obedience." (50) Superiors, above all, should not absent themselves "without serious need," and only when unable

to supply the need by letter, an oblate, or another religious. (51) Other religious might be authorized to leave the solitude only for apostolic motives or for affairs that could be otherwise fulfilled. The reasons for this were that they might not diminish the fervor of recollection and union with God or the duty of study, and that the brethren at home be not overburdened. (52) The socio-religious sensibility and the canonical norms of that time required a religious to travel on foot, and never unaccompanied. To avoid having the religious frequently leaving the retreat, Paul suggested that an "oblate" or a lay brother serve as a companion, so that the community's liturgical prayer be not hindered. (53) That the religious might not lose the spiritual profit derived from a properly lived solitude, Paul desired that they not go out on the quest, or if so, that it be reduced to the indispensable. (54)

Religious solitude must be a place of silence and peace; hence, seculars should not be called for festive or other motives or, much less, be admitted within the community. Solely for spiritual reasons they might be accepted at the places and times designated for that purpose, but without taking part in the common recreation of the religious. (55) Benefactors should be gratefully welcomed but always in the context of a strongly religious atmosphere, which requires modesty, speaking in a low voice and with due respect for the places reserved to the religious. When brought into the retreat or refectory they are asked to respect the silence and peace of the place. They converse only with the religious assigned by the superior, while the others courteously greet them in passing and go their way. (56)

It was contrary to the purpose of religious solitude to bring into the community news of things seen or heard outside the retreat when obedience required their going out. "Care should be taken not to introduce worldly news into the retreat, and let nobody dare to fill the world with news of the retreat." (57)

On leaving the retreat, whether on business or on apostolic work, solitude was also kept as an attitude of

recollection. They should walk in silence or speak with their companion of God and his kingdom. They were not to join secular travellers, especially should there be women among them, nor show themselves avid as to news. On entering a town they should go first and foremost to visit Him for whom they are working, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Later, if they have spare time, they should visit the sick or imprisoned in order to comfort them and remind them how God loves them in Jesus Crucified. They must return to the retreat promptly and without any detour. (58)

Solitude favors and stimulates internal and external silence, so that one can "drive away from the mind or memory whatever is not of God nor relating to God." (59) The religious is thus capable of welcoming and understanding the voice of God coming from nature or from the silence of the cross of Christ. (60) Paul would exclaim: "Oh how necessary is silence in a religious house, and most of all for him who wishes to talk with God in holy prayer." (61) At other times he would recall with great conviction: silence is as it were "the soul of a well ordered community and produces recollection." He was very happy to testify to the love his religious had for solitude and to their willingness to adhere to the rule that allowed them to speak "of useful and holy things" for an hour and a half during the midday and evening recreations, and for a slightly longer time in the afternoon recreation or during the walk on Thursdays and feast days. (62) In order to stress the urgency and importance of silence, the rule dedicated a whole chapter to this theme. It distinguished a time of absolute silence, comprising the time from the end of the evening recreation till the end of the morning prayer; and from the end of the midday recreation till the end of prayer after vespers. During this time no talking was allowed in any place, and if a just motive necessitated speaking, it was to be done in a low voice. Outside of these periods and where work was done for the Congregation, necessary speaking was allowed in the study or offices, but always in a low voice and without calling aloud for anybody. A call bell with conventional signals was used for the religious when needed, as was the custom in other institutes. It was never permitted

to speak in the choir, the refectory or the dormitory corridor except for urgent needs and in a low voice. (63) To avoid the likelihood of breaking silence and undermining the spiritual purpose in allowing individual rooms to each religious, it was forbidden to enter another's room without express permission of the superior unless the fellow religious was ill. The room was meant to be a private sacred oratory in which interpersonal communication with Jesus freely took place. (64)

The enclosure was prescribed as a safeguard for solitude and silence, as well as a measure of prudence in dealings with women. The rule did not mention this expressly because the Congregation, not having solemn vows, could not enjoy papal enclosure; so the prudent norms used in the communities came from decrees of the superior general. Once the Congregation was approved as an Institute of simple vows, the papal enclosure, binding in regular orders, was imposed and observed in the retreats and hospices of the Congregation and in such parts of the garden designated by the major superior. (65) From the very beginning this enclosure was strictly observed in the Passionist community despite the lack of a binding norm. In 1753 the general chapter declared that even the novitiate churches ought to be considered as within the enclosure limits. (66) Not even men were admitted into the retreat, the garden or the offices without the superior's special permission, which was given only for well specified reasons. In such cases the superior himself or his delegate accompanied these persons, warning them courteously to speak softly so as not to disturb the recollection of the religious. (67)

Understood and lived from this perspective, solitude became a school of formation for intimacy with God and for study in view of the apostolate. In this solitude, as the founder wished, the majority of his religious "became fit to receive heavenly light towards the acquiring of true wisdom." (68)

D. THE CONGREGATION'S "SPIRITUAL EXERCISES"

The rule includes under this title the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, united to personal meditation and the eucharistic celebration in the community. Mental prayer, the prayerful chanting of the psalms and liturgical prayers, according to the rite of the Roman Catholic Church, unite and mutually nourish one another, and within this context, the Eucharist becomes the climax of Christian prayer in that portion of the church which is the Passionist community. These exercises (*exercitationes* in the 1746 Latin version) gave the religious living in solitude the feeling of ceaselessly praising God in thanksgiving for the benefits of salvation which Christ wrought, and of interceding with this same Jesus and his mystical body, the Church, so that each person effectively received the fruits of salvation and lived for the praise of God. These exercises were held in the following order:

TIME	COMMUNITY ACT
Midnight	Matins and Lauds one hour's mental prayer
At daybreak or sunrise	Prime one hour's mental prayer Tierce conventual or community Mass
An hour before lunch (about 10:30)	Sext Last Mass None
13:30-14:00	Vespers about ten minutes silent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Fifteen minutes spiritual reading in common
17:30-18:00	Compline one hour's mental prayer

This blending of liturgical and personal prayer was found in the first community in St. Anthony's hermitage,

(69) and it continued in the hermitage of our Lady of the Chain at Gaeta, as witnesses have confirmed that Paul and John Baptist recited the divine office with several hours of meditation in between. (70) From Bishop Cavalieri's notes on the primitive rule we can infer it spoke of the divine office and mental prayer. (71)

Paul's knowledge of the liturgical cycle came not only from his careful Christian formation, but also from his frequent attendance at confraternities that were committed to celebrating the liturgy. He was acquainted as well with the Dominicans of Ovada, the Carmelites of Cremolino and the Capuchins of Castellazzo. This enabled him to appreciate the daily periodic celebration of God's praise together with the Church. In the above mentioned institutes, since they were orders with solemn vows, the divine office, which was celebrated in the choir as a community act, was a strict canonical obligation. From the very beginning, as seen elsewhere, Paul had in mind a Congregation with solemn vows and it is probable that this desire may have influenced his acceptance of the divine office. This motivation, however, even if probable was still very weak. I believe the motive must be sought in his faith in the official prayers of the Church as Christ's mystical body. Besides, the sobriety of the liturgy, laden with the ever-present word of God which he held in great esteem, may have had its influence on him, as it led him to greater piety, to the knowledge of God's continuous presence, and immersed him in the Trinitarian reality in a manner that no other pious exercise could achieve. (72)

The union of personal meditation with the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours was a manner of broadening and deepening what the founder, following in the steps of Sts. Augustine and Benedict, wished to be done while chanting or reciting the psalms and the sacred scriptures. "The chanting should be done in a penitential tone, neither too slow nor too fast, with due pause, in order to savor more fruitfully the sweet nourishment of the divine Scripture." (73) The acceptance of the seven-hour divine office as a communitarian celebration night and day continued a tradition of the early

monks which St. Benedict codified in the west. (74) It also became part of the vital movement of the regular congregations born after the Tridentine council. The fulfilling of this service of praise and adoration to God was not viewed as an impediment to the "apostolic life." On the contrary, it appeared as the true continuation of the life of the apostles who took part in the various hours of the divine praise held daily in the temple of Jerusalem. (75)

The above mentioned schedule became a steady Passionist community institution with only very slight variations in the several revisions of the rule. The principal modification took place in 1769 when the examiners of the rule, after discussing the problem with the founder and Fr. John Mary, suggested to the holy father that five hours' sleep be assured before rising for matins, in order to preserve the strength of the religious who were also engaged in active works of the apostolate. Before that date, scarcely four hours of rest were allowed in summer before rising at midnight. (76) Another modification concerned the time allotted to mental prayer after matins. It was established in 1746 that mental prayer after matins should be a full hour in winter and only half an hour in summer. Apparently the reason for this was to assure at least three full hours' rest after matins before rising again for prime at sunrise. (77) In 1741 the hours of sext and none were united and chanted before the celebration of the last Mass, while from 1746 onward the celebration of Mass preceded the chanting of the liturgical hours. The 1736 text provided for the celebration of Mass between the hours of sext and none. In 1775, on the other hand, celebration of the last Mass was separated from the liturgical hours of sext and none and held at the time most suitable to each community. In 1746 the hours of prime and tierce were united and preceded mental prayer. (78)

From the 1746 text we infer that the praying of the divine office was a type of chant: it says "they shall sing in a penitential tone." On the other hand we have the fact that the 1753 general chapter allowed clerics in formal study to recite matins in a "low and fluent voice"

so as to allot more time for study. (79) That the chanting was done with devotion shows it was not merely lip service but intoned with a heart full of lively faith in the divine presence and in the company of the angels. (80) A standing position was adopted during all the office, save for the readings. "Let them recite the whole of the divine office standing in testimony of humility and reverence towards God; let them, however, sit while the lessons are read at matins." (81) Thus the liturgical norms which permitted the psalms to be recited sitting down were not followed, nor the habit of keeping the head covered when in church or choir. (82)

In conformity with the general rubrics of the breviary for an orderly celebration, there was an hebdomadary, a priest religious by turn, whilst two other religious or clerics read the lessons of the first two nocturns of matins, the invitatory and the versicles. The 1758 general chapter determined that two religious, one on either side of the choir, chosen by the superior, should intone the psalms and hymns. (83) On solemnities vespers and matins were sung in Gregorian chant. (84)

This detailed external organization of the liturgical prayer, together with the meditation which prepared for and was nourished by it, was the hinge of the Passionist contemplative-apostolic day. The celebration of the salvific mystery was a manner of sharing by faith in the heavenly liturgy which the angels render to the Lamb who was slain: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and benediction. And every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and such as are on the sea, and all that are in them, I heard all saying: To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honor and glory and power, forever and ever" (Apoc. 5: 12-14). These words of the heavenly liturgy found an echo in the Christological hymn of the letter to the Philippians which the founder desired should be proclaimed by the Passionists before each hour of the divine office: "Before the commencement of each canonical hour (with the permission of Holy Mother Church) profoundly inclining, they shall reverently

pronounce these words: 'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father'." Phil 2:10-11 (85)

Thus, within the biblical framework, the Passionist Congregation wished to manifest its God-given charism by the office of the canonical hours, by the meditation that precedes or follows this, and by the celebration of the Eucharist. It wished to celebrate, to commemorate the mystery of love of the Word made man, who was humiliated, sacrificed in obedience to the Father, glorified, and made Lord and saviour, in whose name alone is salvation to be found.

The particular concentration on the Passion of Jesus in the celebration of the divine office sprung from Paul's conviction that "our solemnities have their roots in the Passion of Jesus Christ." He sought to emphasize this by obtaining authorization from Clement XIV (January 10, 1773) for some proper offices related to the principal mysteries of the Passion. (86) He also requested some of his religious to compose an office for the solemn celebration of the charism of the Congregation by a global commemoration of the Passion. On September 27, 1758, he wrote to Fr. John Mary Cioni asking him to encourage Fr. Candido Costa to do so. But that good religious did not feel up to it. Later he made the same request to Fr. Thomas Struzieri, but the office was not approved by the Holy See until 1776. (87)

According to tradition, the seven hours of the divine office referred to the seven principal mysteries of the Passion. The Passionists received this tradition through Billuart's theological course and it was stressed in the formation of the religious. They were exhorted "to be mindful of these same holy mysteries, meditating on them devoutly during the corresponding hour of the office."

Summarizing Billuart's Latin verses, the following correspondence was proposed:

Matins:	Jesus is taken captive
Prime:	Jesus is derided
Tierce:	Jesus is condemned to death
Sext:	Jesus is crucified
None:	Jesus is pierced by the lance.
Vespers:	Jesus is taken down from the cross
Compline:	Jesus is placed in the sepulchre. (88)

Paul and his first companions were deeply convinced that the liturgical praise the Passionists celebrated was performed in union with the angels and the heavenly church, praising God for having made to himself a new people taken from all tribes, tongues and nations. (89) Each community as such was persuaded that this perennial praise was a most important part of their "apostolic" life, and consequently it was never omitted even when members were reduced to two, or a day of greater recreation took place. (90) The sound of the bell which convoked the religious to choir served to remind the people that the religious community was praising God also in their name. The sound of the bell did not annoy the majority of people, but served to edify and encourage them. (91)

E. MENTAL PRAYER

We saw in the first section of this chapter that the spirituality of the Congregation, centered in the revelation of God's love in the Passion of Jesus, strongly tends to contemplation and mystical union with God, which is considered as a gift implicit in its vocation because necessary for the total fulfillment of its charism. The rule leaves no room for doubt when it affirms: "One of the principal ends of this least Congregation is not only to apply ourselves untiringly to holy prayer so as to devote

ourselves to holy union with God, but also to lead others to do the same, teaching them this holy exercise in the best and easiest manner possible." The regulations explain this passage as a commitment "not only to pray, but to give oneself earnestly to prayer, taking it very much to heart." (92) The founder himself viewed this commitment as one with the "apostolic mission" of promoting "with great zeal in the hearts of the faithful the devout memory of the Passion and Death of Jesus, our true Good." (93)

So convinced was the founder of this fact that in this period he prescribed that no less than three hours daily be given to mental prayer; to this was added another half hour by those who assisted at the last Mass. Furthermore, all partook of fifteen minutes' silent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in two periods: after vespers and after the evening recreation. Besides the approximately two hours dedicated to the divine office, the rosary, a quarter of an hour of spiritual reading in common, and about seven minutes examination of conscience, the community as such dedicated in all about three and three-quarter hours daily to meditation. According to the testimony of Anthony Danei, in 1733 the priests devoted two hours to mental prayer in the afternoon and the clerical students and lay brothers only one hour. As was seen above, from 1746 to 1775 prayer was reduced by half an hour, taken in the summer from the night and in winter from the morning prayer. (94) This distribution remained unaltered from 1775 to 1914, even though the wording was changed in reference to prayer after prime. No further distinction was made between winter and summer. However, the instruction that after prime "there shall be an hour's meditation during which time it is permitted to celebrate or hear mass" meant that the prescribed prayer was at all times of the year half an hour for all. The priests after celebrating and the other religious on days of communion made further prayer as thanksgiving, the duration of which was not officially determined, but in practice meant about half an hour. (95)

"To apply...untiringly" to prayer held also when travelling or on ministries outside the retreat. The rule prescribed at least one hour at the most convenient time. In 1753 missionaries were commanded to make this meditation in common. This disposition was mitigated in 1758 in favor of those who were in poor health. (96) The time of prayer was reduced, but it aimed at ensuring a journey "without anxiety, in peace, with a serene heart absorbed in God" and reviving "frequently faith in God's presence" by ejaculatory prayers. (97) For students in "formal study" the time allotted to mental prayer was also reduced: between 1746 and 1753 they had about two hours in summer and two and a half in winter; from 1753 to 1769 they had one and a half hours, and between 1769 and 1775 only one hour, since during this last period they were dispensed from rising at midnight. On days when they received communion an extra half hour was added as thanksgiving. During school holidays they followed the common observance. (98) The reduction of time consecrated to prayer meant involving the young men more intense recollection during the day so that their union with God might be truly profound. As an aid to this, on leaving the novitiate they were given a booklet entitled "An Easy Method Towards Union With God." This helped them, by the living memory of the Passion, to raise their hearts to God from whatsoever things or events surrounded them, and it ended with the phrase from St. Augustine: "The ardour of love is the continuous cry of the heart." Fr. Marcoarelius' short prayers had the same end in view: to transform by acts of faith and love the various events of the day. (99) The compilation of this memorandum was probably influenced by a booklet then widely circulating and found in all Passionist libraries, called "Exercises for Remaining in God's Presence." (100) The doctrine was derived mostly from the teachings of St. Francis de Sales and St. Theresa of Jesus. With the same end in view the practice of calling "the presence of God" during recreation was introduced, first among the novices and students, later among the professed religious. When called, all fell silent, thinking of the reality of God's presence in each one and among them as a community. If, by chance, any uncharitable remarks were being made, they were immediately dropped. These were small but va-

lid stratagems for keeping alive the fervor of charity, already assured by the intensity of daily prayer, solitude and mortification, and thus seeking to fulfill the ideal of the rule: "Let each one strive to renew his faith, keeping as far as possible in all his works, a loving sweet attention to God's holy presence, as this is an easy manner of praying continually and of scenting all actions with the sweet balm of holy love." (101)

These incitements were reinforced by stressing the example of "the fervent person who never lacks time for prayer" as well as by the rule's threat to the negligent of finding themselves "in an abyss of lukewarmness from which derive almost incurable evils." (102) The founder never let an opportunity pass of encouraging his religious to prayer, either privately or publicly. Recounting what he had seen and heard and what was common knowledge among the religious, Strambi recalls that Paul nearly always talked of God during recreation. "He would present himself with all simplicity and grace; and then would lead the conversation gently towards God, the love of God, conversing with God. He would narrate some event or experience, and in this, I'd say, he possessed an almost heavenly art; hence, those who heard him were entranced." At other times, in the instructions or "examens" he would frequently speak of prayer and the manner of disposing oneself for the grace of intimate union with God. Strambi tells us: in order that his religious "dispose themselves for the grace of prayer, he advised them particularly to keep themselves in the divine presence, not by a dry and barren study, but lovingly, quietly and tranquilly so that they might be imbued by the spirit of God. And he stressed doing this frequently as a most powerful means for binding the soul to God in the holy union of charity." (103) He insisted particularly on recollection during the day "as a disposition for praying well and as a sure sign of prayer well accomplished." He exhorted them to keep the imagination and intellect as free as possible from all vain or created images, as was partially indicated above when treating of solitude and silence. (104)

The superiors were to encourage the religious and be watchful as to their fidelity to a commitment so vital to themselves, the Congregation and its apostolic mission. "As the devil does all in his power to impede" the religious from dedicating themselves to prayer, let the rector use "all imaginable solicitude and be all eyes to see that no one ever neglects it." Such was the norm of the regulations. (105) However, good example (106) and timely instructions had to precede this vigilance. (107) During this period the testimony of the lives of the religious as well as the acts of canonical visitations testify that prayer was taken very seriously and that the majority received the gift of mystical union with God. The hardships of the first foundations, borne heroically, the joy and serenity with which the majority faced the austerities of the rule, the profound solitude of the houses, were evidence that their prayer was fruitful. Prayer gave them a certainty of God's love, and a deep brotherly communion in Jesus, which made them capable of persevering in the Congregation as well as being balanced and efficacious apostles. (108)

In the chapter on the apostolate (VIII) some remarks will be made on the method of prayer as proposed and followed in the Congregation with reference to instructing others in meditation. Here we shall deal particularly with the method taught in the novitiate. Both Paul and his first companions were assiduous readers of St. Theresa of Jesus, St. Frances de Sales, and some works of St. Bonaventure, Cardinal Bona, Scupoli, Ven. Louis de la Puente, St. Peter Alcantara, Thomas a Kempis, etc. I also believe that the Dominican A. Massoulié had an important influence through his "Treatise on True Prayer, Refuting Quietist Errors and Explaining the Maxims of the Saints on the Interior Life, According to the Principles of Saint Thomas."

After having refuted some quietist errors concerning contemplation, the quiet of the spirit, etc., the author speaks of mortification and the practice of virtues as a necessary preparation. He then proceeds to explain a method of prayer on the principles laid down by St. Thomas and illustrates the true nature of the contemplation

that unites one to God, the part played in it by the intellect, and the more relevant part reserved to the will by the affections, as well as the feeling of wonder that favors the infusion of the Holy Spirit and produces serious resolutions for the practice of virtue. He is very forceful in stressing the need of passing through the sacred humanity of Jesus in order to arrive at the uncreated Trinity. (109)

In the method taught in the Congregation, the first and foremost preparation consists in living the prescribed solitude of the rule in a full loving silence and with the certainty of being with God and in God. The expression of this life is the assiduous attention given to living virtuously, with full dominion over one's senses and in a trustful surrender to God's will. The immediate preparation is to revive one's faith in God's presence so as to stimulate sentiments of trust and humility, sorrow for sins and hope in the mercy of God who loves us. It is recommended that the event or truths which are the objects of our meditation be made as real as possible. This vivid memory is an aid to keeping the imagination and intellect fixed on the divine person of Jesus or on the mystery of faith that is being meditated. We are also helped by questions that facilitate colloquy with Jesus or a soliloquy with oneself and God. The founder and the first formators greatly recommended this colloquy as a favorable disposition for moving the will to affections and love and allowing oneself to be led by the motions of the Holy Spirit. This part of meditation is explained at length in the "Instruction to the novices," "because the act of the intellect is useless unless united to the affection of the will." In fact we read in it: "the knowledge of the event is the foundation of meditation, but the fruit of it is that the will, man's chief faculty, produces various affections, because it alone is responsible before God, it alone directs our affections and actions towards God." (110) Resolutions are then made; God is thanked for the gift of prayer; his help is asked in order to be faithful to the resolutions, which shall be as concrete as possible and not merely general. Meditation should end by praying briefly for the needs of the universal church, for those who govern, for the conversion of infidels and

heretics, for relatives. Open to the needs of all people, this closing prayer must spring from the knowledge, full of wonder, of the benefits of redemption, and from zeal for the glory of God and the eternal salvation of our neighbour, which should grow when prayer is well made. A highly recommended practice was the making of a "spiritual bouquet" consisting in a word or thought related to the Passion or other Christian mystery, which would be helpful for recalling during the day the affections and resolutions made at prayer. (111)

The normal place for meditation was the choir, but it was permitted in the church once the reading of the points of meditation was over. This was done at the beginning in order not to interrupt the inner liberty of the religious with second readings. Kneeling was the recommended external position as more reverent towards God. However, it could take place sitting, in accordance with a prior understanding with the superior or spiritual director. The hands were kept folded on the breast or within the sleeves of the habit. (112) The texts for meditation varied in the early days but later became more stabilized. Among them were texts of Louis de la Puente S.J., Fr. Joseph Navarra of the Oratory of St. Philip, and the meditations on the Passion by Cajetan of Bergamo, Capuchin. (113)

F. THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

1. To live in adoration before Christ's eucharistic presence

At the time Paul founded the Congregation the Eucharist was revered in Christian life and piety thanks to the great efforts of the post-Tridentine church in promoting among the faithful a greater understanding and appreciation of this divine gift and encouraging its frequent reception. Even so, Jansenism had discouraged the tendency towards sacramental communion. (114) In his specific vocation as founder, Paul felt himself powerfully attracted towards the Eucharist instituted by Christ as a

memorial of his Passion on the night he was betrayed (I Cor. 11: 23-26). During the Castellazzo retreat God gave him a deep understanding of the Eucharistic mystery in relation to the Passion and resurrection of Jesus, and of the duty of making amends for the neglect and profanations to which it was subject and of promoting a solid devotion to it among the people. When in 1741 he obtained permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the Presentation church, Cardinal Rezzonico, among other things, said to him: "I rejoice extremely because thus some reparation will be made to his Sacramental Majesty by your adoration for the many irreverences committed daily in its presence." The founder transmitted this conviction and love to his religious as part of the spirituality proper to the Congregation. (115) One of the outstanding aspects of Paul's devotion to the Eucharist was his appreciation and happiness at having the Divine Presence in the house of solitude as its centre and foundation. As a matter of fact, the reserving of the Blessed Sacrament in a new retreat meant for him the actualization of the foundation and the beginning of community life. In his instructions for the Ceccano foundation he stated that besides the notary's act, the tabernacle and ciborium were truly important "for the ceremony of taking possession which consists in putting the sovereign Lord in his house." (116)

For this reason, he and his religious were disconsolate when at the opening of the first retreat in 1737 he had not been given permission from the ordinary to reserve the Blessed Sacrament; he thought the foundation unfinished. Before the ordinary he insisted that "it was unreasonable that nine poor religious be without the infinite sacramental Love." He had, however, to wait until 1741 to have the joy of enthroning in the retreat church "the infinite sacramental Love," and he affirmed that "the little ones gathered together felt a heavenly spiritual consolation on reflecting that, after so many sufferings, the dear, most loving shepherd, father and master, has come to stay day and night with his little lambs, poor children and ignorant disciples." (117)

The Blessed Sacrament altar and all things connected with the holy sacrifice of the Mass were kept "with

the utmost cleanliness," while fresh flowers, which the religious specifically cultivated for this, expressed the delicacy of their feelings towards the divine guest. (118) However it was the physical and spiritual presence of the religious which especially manifested their faith and realized that communion of love for which the Eucharist was instituted. In the 1736 text of the rule there was a chapter "On Devotion to the Blessed Eucharist" which stressed its importance for the vitality of the religious' spiritual life.

"Let the brethren have a most tender devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament. Let them visit it frequently with acts of profound prayer and most loving gratitude so that their hearts may burn with ever greater holy love. If there be a sufficient number of brothers in the retreat, let them do all they can to ensure that there shall always be at least one in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament." (119) In the 1741 text the title of the chapter disappeared together with the recommendation that there be always someone in actual adoration. However the central part of the chapter was incorporated with that on prayer, and put immediately after the recommendation of living continually in the presence of God. St. Vincent Strambi writes: "He inculcated this very strongly and almost commanded that all should frequently visit Jesus hidden for us in the holy tabernacle in order that in the Congregation he founded an ardent devotion and lively faith be always maintained." (120) In the regulations not only was it ardently recommended to visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently and in a spirit of adoration and gratitude, but it was likewise prescribed that the religious after conferring with his spiritual director should go "for a short time before the Blessed Sacrament, make an offering of himself, resolve to observe what his divine majesty was pleased to teach him, beg his grace and help, affirm his intention of becoming a saint to fulfill his most holy Will." (121)

A brief, silent adoration was made in common after vespers for about a quarter of an hour. The 1775 rule recommends that "a brief period of recollection be spent" before the spiritual reading in common, but the phrase

"before the Blessed Sacrament" was omitted. Until 1775 another silent adoration was made in community for about seven minutes after the evening recreation and before the rosary. "They shall go again into the church to adore the Blessed Sacrament," said the rule. This reference likewise disappeared in 1775, most probably to save time, since going to choir to continue the adoration did not seem a difficulty. In fact, the regulations prescribed that on entering the choir a genuflection be made to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the church. (122) However, the pious practice of visiting the Blessed Sacrament after meals and after supper, initially done by the novices, gradually became common to all the communities. Before leaving for their daily walk during which they could converse, the novices went before the Blessed Sacrament and as a common act of adoration recited three prayers, each one addressed to a person of the Blessed Trinity in thanksgiving for the gift of the Eucharist. The professed religious also adopted this practice before their walk in common on Thursdays and feast days. (123)

Before departing to preach missions, missionaries knelt before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to beg his blessing on the outcome of the mission that they were to carry out in his name. They also read and promised to observe the chapter of the rule on the conduct of the religious on missions. I think that Paul's faith, which envisioned the community as gathered like the apostles around the Saviour, suggested this practice. Hence, before the religious went abroad to proclaim the salvation of Jesus, they received from him the "mandate" through the obedience promised to the superior and the norms of the rule approved by Christ's vicar on earth. (124) While on journeys, if they saw a church in the distance, they prostrated themselves in adoration of the sacramental presence; and on arriving, their first visit was to the eucharistic Lord, adoring him also for those who in that town were neglectful, and begging for the salvation of the people for love of whom Jesus was in the Eucharist. (125)

I have already recalled that the rule stressed the great need for each religious to visit the Blessed Sacra-

ment frequently with a lively desire of receiving Jesus "in order that their souls, being possessed by him, might live only for God and burn in most ardent love." (126) This is the so-called "spiritual communion" which Paul defined as a "loving inclination to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, a burning desire to have him in the heart;" a seeking "frequently the sacramental love with ardent desires, yet without any effort of head or chest." (127) The founder exhorted his religious to frequent acts of spiritual communion; and in the formation of novices the content and validity of this pious practice was emphasized in order that the young men might take it to heart. (128) The religious as a whole learned and practiced this intense adoration, visiting the Blessed Sacrament frequently, often making their mental prayer before it, and in its presence making the most decisive commitments of their spiritual lives. They made every effort to keep the churches and altars of the Blessed Sacrament clean and tidy, and likewise the vestments and other articles that served the divine worship. (129)

2. The community mass and sacramental communion

The first impression one gets on reading the rule, the common regulations, the novices' regulations and the lives of the religious of this period is that mental prayer and the divine office occupied the place of honor in the community. In fact while over three hours were assigned to mental prayer, and about two to the divine office, for the celebration of the community mass only half an hour was provided, plus another half hour for the so called *last mass*. Our amazement ceases, however, when we consider what has been said in the first paragraph of this chapter: that Passionist spirituality is a spirituality of the presence of God sought after and loved, in which one lives, acts and delights. It is a divine presence that finds its fullest expression in the sacrament of the Eucharist, either as the actual sacramental presence and sacrifice of Christ, or as a communion to infuse into the faithful soul the sentiments and dispositions of Christ. Considering now the teachings and practice of the founder and the first generation of Passionists, it seems evident

that the Eucharist occupied the centre of their spirituality, and that the long hours of mental prayer, the attentive celebration of the divine office, solitude, silence and penance were only means to a further end. They were means towards a fuller perception of the divine presence and of being penetrated by it; means of preparing in the best manner possible for the reception of the Eucharistic presence of Jesus, the God-man, of living with him and in him from one communion to another, from one celebration to another. The rule, though sober in its expression, is sufficiently clear regarding this aim or attitude: "The clerical students shall ordinarily communicate three times a week and on all non-continuous feast days. They shall strive to approach the holy table with a truly angelic purity, dispose themselves by holy reflections and fervent acts of solid virtue, particularly by a lively faith, a deep humility and an ardent charity, and redouble with greater ardor the acts of these virtues after having communicated. They shall engage in loving affections in a fervent thanksgiving, ardently desiring to be transformed in Jesus, to live always in Jesus and in the most holy spirit of Jesus." (130) The phrases "truly angelic purity....dispose themselves...by holy reflections and fervent acts of solid virtue..." express the totality of the ascetic-contemplative work of the Passionist life which is sustained by the twice-daily examination of conscience made "with a true and efficacious will to amend one's faults" and by the frequent reception of the sacrament of reconciliation. The general confession, usually made by the postulants in preparation for the vestition marking the beginning of the novitiate, meant a break with the past and a commitment to a new life in conformity with that of Christ who called them. The religious were taught to appreciate the grace of the sacrament, the fruit of Christ's Passion, not only as a means of an ever more intimate reconciliation with God, but also as a means of purification so as to receive the eucharistic Christ as worthily as possible. Ordinarily it was approached weekly, but before each communion they went to the confessor at least "to receive his blessing," as was then the expression. Confession to the appointed confessors was approached freely during the night or morning meditation. (131) The eucharistic communion was the summit of this

interior movement and by it were nourished contemplation, zeal for the salvation of souls and the community's brotherly relationships.

The rule speaks in like manner regarding priests: "The priests are asked to prepare themselves with great fervor for the celebration of the divine mysteries, and after celebrating to remain with the sacramental Saviour in most affectionate thanksgiving, not being satisfied with reciting the prescribed vocal prayers, but also embracing the most sweet Jesus with holy affections and most fervent thanksgiving. They will easily do this if with true and reverent devotion they deal heart to heart with Jesus." Priests were then admonished not to celebrate by habit or in haste, lest they fall into lukewarmness: "He who prepares with devotion and does not neglect prayer will not fall into these evils." (132) These directives are also confirmed by letters addressed to young priests. To one Paul wrote: "Remember that you are now obliged to greater perfection and to be a true imitator of Jesus Christ, chiefly by humility of heart, perfect obedience, meekness, patience and perfect charity to God and your neighbor. Acquire the habit of celebrating the sacred mysteries with great and continual preparation, with holiness of life, with fervent and long mental thanksgiving afterwards....Be most devoted to holy prayer. Imitating St. Theresa, make a habit of recollection and inner solitude, and you will succeed in all if you willingly remain in your room, are most observant of silence, flee all the possible occasions of speaking. Oh! how much I urge this point of silence, so recommended by the holy Fathers! If you wish to lead a spotless life, keep silent as much as you can; if you wish to receive the gift of prayer, observe silence." (133) To another he wrote: "When you have celebrated Mass, you have been nourished by Jesus. Is it not so? Now, after Mass, why not let Jesus feed upon you, digest you and transform you into himself, burning in that fire of love that burns in his divine heart? Why not let yourself be reduced to ashes?" (134)

Recommending preparation for communion with the utmost fervor and after it disposing oneself "comfortably

with our blessed Lord to treat with him of the pressing affair of the eternal salvation and sanctification of one's soul," he quoted St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi's saying, "Only one communion devoutly received is capable of making a saint." (135)

The Eucharist was, no doubt, the center towards which all Passionist life tended. In it Paul contemplated the true synthesis of his life and that of his spiritual sons. It was from the devout celebration of the Eucharist that "the most holy virtues of Jesus" were learned. It was by allowing oneself to be eaten, digested, transformed by him received in the Eucharist that charity was enkindled, as well as the fervor for practicing all virtues to an eminent degree in order to be a defense for the Church. (136)

It is within this context of doctrinal truth and mystical experience which permeates the founder's teaching and the structure he gave to Passionist life that we must come to an objective understanding of the place held by the *conventual mass* and the so called *last mass*. The 1736 and 1741 texts of the rule speak of the *conventual mass* to be celebrated after the half hour of morning mental prayer at which all assisted. The phrase *conventual mass* no longer appears in the Latin text of 1746. It only states: "those who hold offices in the Congregation may celebrate after half an hour's meditation." In the 1775 text it is stated more simply: "after prime and tierce there shall be an hour's prayer during which time masses may be celebrated and heard." In practice, however, the celebration of the *conventual mass* was continued, following the rite and the office celebrated in the liturgy of the hours. (137)

The community gathered once more during the morning before lunch to celebrate the hours of sext and none together and participate in another community mass. In 1746 the celebration of the mass came first, followed by the liturgical hours. The change was due to the fact that the mass was not obligatory for those who "were very occupied in study for the good of souls," while all were to be present at sext and none. The 1753 general chapter

pointed out that the dispensation from the mass was restricted to the clerics in formal study and to others who had obtained a special permission. The decision of the 1775 chapter to separate the celebration of this last mass from the hours of sext and none, although dictated from practical motives, meant that in practice it was no longer a community act, although this certainly was not the intention. (138)

The liturgical usage of the time regulated the manner of assisting at mass. The mass server alone made the responses, while the rest were invited to a lively awareness that they were assisting at the "divine sacrifice, memorial of the passion of Jesus Christ" and, in consequence, uniting themselves to the intentions for which Christ offered his sacrifice on the cross. The common regulation prescribed: "When hearing mass let them employ themselves in four things: to appease God, to honor him, to thank him and to petition him." The vow of promoting the cult and devotion to the Passion ought to stimulate the participants at mass to pray "for sinners, for the conversion of infidels, for the Congregation, so that the most holy name may be known and revered, so that believing those ineffable mysteries, all people might be devout and compassionate and weep for the most bitter sufferings of Jesus and of his most holy Mother." (139) I could trace no documents to ascertain whether the community mass was celebrated in the choir or in the church; and if in the church whether the religious went there, or heard it from the choir by opening the window overlooking the sanctuary. On solemn feast days the community assisted in the church. The clerics wore surplices and took part in the Gregorian chant.

On weekdays, even in summer, both clerics and lay brothers approached communion wearing their mantles, while on feast days the clerics wore surplices. (140) It appears that on weekdays communion was received before mass, which began after an half hour meditation, so that they could unite themselves in an attitude of thanksgiving to the intentions of Jesus in renewing his sacrifice. (141)

3. Celebration of the Christian mystery

Following the Church liturgy, the balanced celebration of the entire salvific mystery springs from the pre-eminent position given the sacred humanity of Christ and to its presence in the Eucharist, but with the gaze ever fixed on the Passion as the supreme revelation of God's salvific love. Paul, together with his religious, celebrated the Incarnation of the Word and, contemplating the infant Jesus, he was transfixed with amazement before the humanly incredible reality: "A God made man for me!" This amazement was not unlike that of a Francis of Assisi or an Alphonsus Liguori. After the intensive spiritual preparation of Advent and the Christmas novena with solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and accompanied by various acts of mortification, the Nativity of the Lord Jesus was announced on the vigil by the solemn singing of the Martyrology. At night, before matins, the superior wearing surplice and cope and accompanied by the religious bearing lighted candles and singing Christmas hymns carried the image of the child Jesus processionally through the retreat.. Paul took special delight in seeing the image of the Child in swaddling-clothes "because it provoked greater admiration to see divine omnipotence, goodness and wisdom so bound." (142) He celebrated with his religious the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord with great joy and thankfulness to God. He wished "that his religious also celebrate it with great devotion as a memorable day; a day in which for our good fortune, the Lord has called us with the first fruits of the Gentiles to the knowledge of the true faith." And Strambi assures us that in making these exhortations "he was never weak, but all aflame with fervor and spirit, which greatly moved those who heard him and induced them to celebrate the sacred mysteries with great devotion." (143)

In connection with this feast a custom was introduced: in each community the religious drew a ticket by lot on which a saint was assigned as particular protector for the year just begun, and a particular virtue to be practiced as a special homage to the divine infant in memory of the magi's gifts to him and in thanksgiving

for the gift of faith. This custom was also known in other institutes. (144)

The religious then accompanied Jesus throughout his hidden life in Nazareth and his apostolic pilgrimages through contemplating preferably his humility, his silence, his sweating and fatigue on journeys, his poverty in relying on the good will of those who assisted him, and the contradictions and refusals he met with, accepting all with boundless love for his Father and for each human person he wished saved. In a very particular way the community together with its founder partook of the tragic realities commemorated during Holy Week. (145) Easter brought joy for the glorification of the Incarnate Word who had obeyed unto death on the cross and therefore had been constituted Lord and Saviour by the Father. Daily each liturgical hour was proclaimed by the Passionist community repeating the: "At the name of Jesus..." of Phil. 2:10-11. (146) The mystery of Christ led directly to the Holy Spirit of love whom he sent to those who believed in him, in order to help them recall his love and to uphold them amidst trials during their earthly pilgrimage. Paul instilled among his religious a deep veneration for, and faith in, the Holy Spirit as guide and master of true prayer, as support for an efficacious apostolate and as a purifying fire capable of making them burn with apostolic zeal. "In order that faith and love for the Holy Spirit be kept ever alive he wished that the novena be always celebrated in all the retreats of the Congregation with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and with the practice of extraordinary mortifications, besides those usually prescribed by rule." (147) It was also expected that from the presence of the Holy Spirit there would flourish that atmosphere of ardent charity in the communities, so that there would be truly fraternal relationships, full of patience and mutual acceptance, with promptness in reciprocal service and encouragement in perseverance. (148)

While referring the reader to studies already published on the spirituality of the liturgical celebration of the Christian mystery, (149) I present here some historical aspects on the manner of preparing for the celebra-

tion of feasts. The diocesan calendar of the respective retreats was followed as to feasts, and as regards liturgical ceremonies they adhered to the rubrics of the Vincentians with whom Paul and John Baptist had made their retreat prior to holy orders and priesthood. (150) The preparation of a celebration always included the study of the rubrics by the celebrant, the hebdomadary and the communities. Among the rector's duties was that "of having the religious some days previously practice the sacred functions to be performed in the church on solemnities, such as Christmas, Holy Week and Easter so that everything be performed with the decorum due his Divine Majesty. This could be done during recreation time, particularly the singing, or at some other convenient time." (151) "With the decorum due the great majesty of God" was the moving principle, born of faith, dictating that all be done seriously, attentively and solemnly in obedience to the Church. In this light all other customs must be seen, such as genuflections before the Blessed Sacrament, inclinations at the names of Jesus and Mary, and at other phrases as indicated by the liturgical norms. (152)

The music chosen by the founder coincided with the atmosphere of joy and sorrow that always pervades the spirituality of those who recall the memory of the Passion. Frequent with him was the phrase *un misto di dolore e di amore* (a blend of sorrow and love) which meant sorrow for the Passion of Jesus, joy and love for God's love revealed by the Passion, the love that gives us life and hope of eternal communion. In connection with this Paul loved a tone which he called "penitential." For feast days the Gregorian chant was adopted, to the exclusion of other styles. (153)

This love of the liturgy as a deepening of the sacred silence of meditation, in order to relish and assimilate the word of God proclaimed and the mystery of faith celebrated, gave rise within the Congregation to the conviction that we must not be overlaid with vocal prayers and exercises of piety to the detriment of meditation and to the calm and solemn recital of the divine office. However, in the closing years of this period some pious exer-

cises arose, such as the litany of the saints for the needs of the Church, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament made in common before the Thursday and feast day walks, and the Way of the Cross that gradually gained ground as a community exercise on Fridays. (154)

Thus the founder, by the attentive celebration of the mystery of Christ, prepared for and followed by long hours of meditation, by constant recollection and united to the imitation of the Divine Master, hoped there would be enkindled in himself and in his religious "so great a fire of charity as to risk burning the passers-by," he wrote with a liveliness full of faith, "and not only the passers-by, but even the far-off peoples of every tongue, nation and tribe - in a word, all creatures, so that all may know and love the supreme Good." (155)

G. MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, IN THE CONGREGATION'S SPIRITUALITY

Mary was present in the clarifying stages of Paul's vocation as founder, in the vestition with the black habit on the feast of her Presentation in the temple. She assisted the founder when in St. Mary Major's in Rome he vowed to promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus and to work for the foundation of the Institute. In places dedicated to our Blessed Lady (Annunciation at Portercole, Our Lady of the Chain at Gaeta, Our Lady of the Civita at Itri) Paul sought to start the first community and finally dedicated to Mary the first retreat in memory of her Presentation in the temple, which, according to his first companions, was erected on a spot chosen by a particular inspiration from Our Lady. (156) To Our Lady also were dedicated five out of the twelve retreats founded in this period. On the vigil of the feast of Mary's Assumption in 1769 Clement XIV notified Paul of the confirmation of the rule and the solemn approbation of the Institute. Again on the vigil of that feast in 1773 he received the minutes of the brief granting him the house and basilica of Sts. John and Paul. And on the vigil of that same feast in 1775 Pius VI informed him that all was

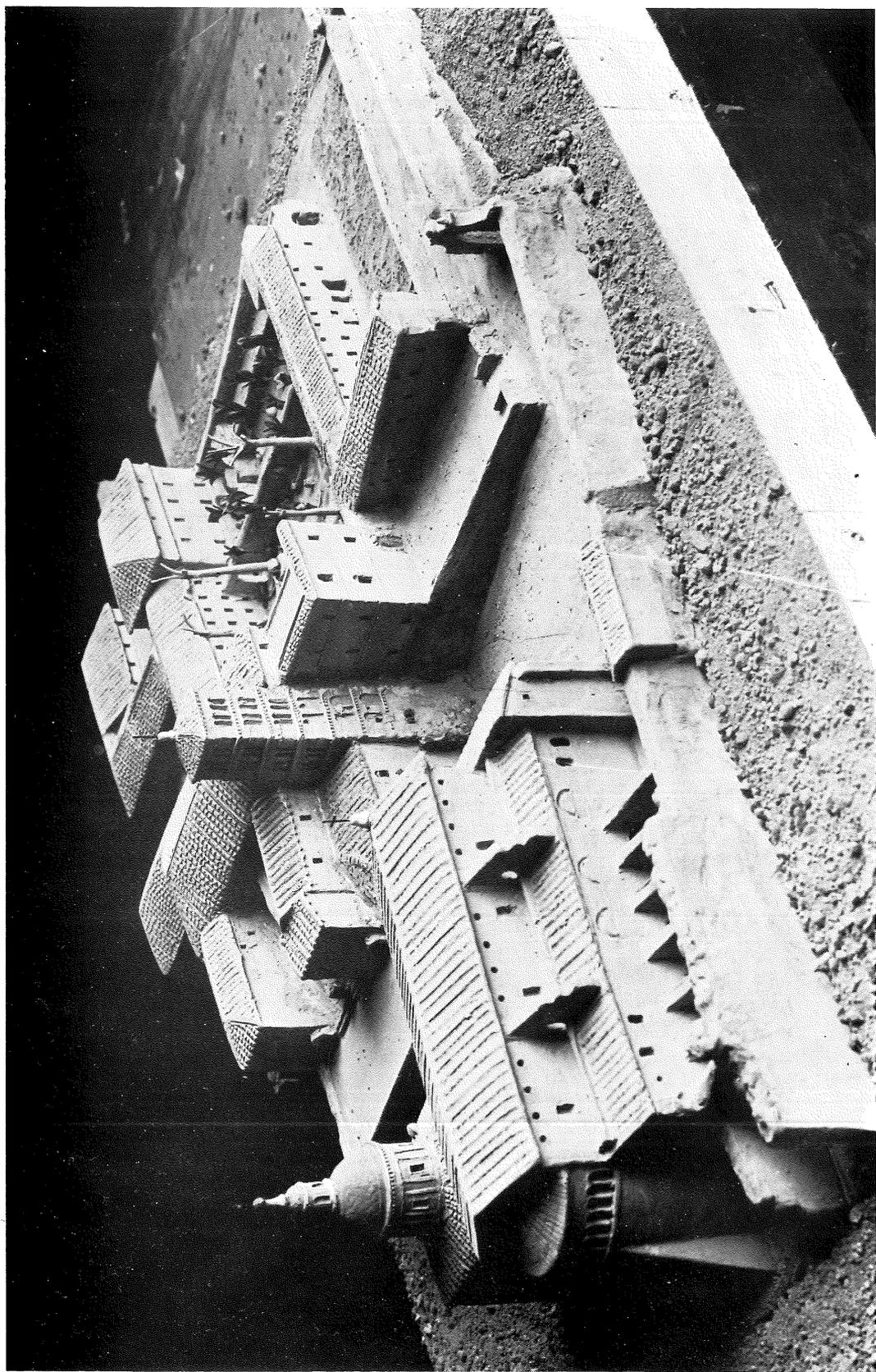
happily concluded concerning the new confirmation of the rule. Sixty-two religious took as a devotional name some title referring to Our Lady. These external aspects give us a glimpse of the intense love the founder and his religious had for Mary and of their feeling that she was part of their existence.

When inculcating devotion to Our Lady Paul always included a strong Christological motivation and an explicit reference to the Blessed Trinity. He frequently said: since the Divine Word deigned to assume our humanity "from the most pure blood of the Blessed Virgin Mary, through his infinite love for us" it can therefore be said "that the most holy flesh of Jesus is the most pure flesh of Mary ever virgin." Hence in honoring Mary we honor Jesus, "and if we go to the crucified, we find the Mother; where the Mother is, there also is the Son." (157) Based on this theological and spiritual principle the founder and the formators trained the religious to a deep veneration of Our Lady, invoking her as immaculate to assure fidelity to their vow and virtue of consecrated chastity, and revering her especially as sorrowful to obtain a better fulfillment of their fourth vow. (158) "Let the religious cherish a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, mother of God, having her as special protectress. Let them be mindful of the most bitter sorrows she suffered in the Passion and Death of her Son, and let devotion to them be promoted by word and example." (159) In reference to the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin was often remembered as daughter of the Father, mother of the Word, and spouse of the Holy Spirit. In this sense the prayers for the Assumption novena were chosen, as we shall see later.

Each community daily honored the Blessed Virgin by the recital of a third part of the rosary, while on Saturdays the singing of the litany of Loreto was added, presided over by the founder or whoever was in charge. (160) The novices recited an extra rosary in procession following a banner of Our Lady, occasionally carried by the founder himself. (161) All feasts of Our Lady, which were liturgically of second class, were preceded by a communitarian celebration by the body of novices and



Bro. Joseph Pitruzzello



Model of the basilica and monastery of Sts. John and Paul, Rome, before 1964. Except for the Founder's chapel alongside the basilica, the buildings are the same as during the Founder's time.

students, while the professed religious prepared for them privately. The novices and students also kept up the practice of "the flowers of Mary," choosing on Saturdays by lot a virtue or good work to be practiced during the week in honor of Mary.

Among Mary's feasts, that of the Presentation in the temple was especially cherished by the first community of Monte Argentario and always by the founder. As titular of the church it was always preceded by a solemn novena. During the novena Paul wished that the 66th psalm "Cry out with joy to God...." be sung because it recalled God's beneficence to him during his pilgrimages through various parts of Italy before attaining the foundation of the first stable community on Monte Argentario. "I have always considered the day of the Presentation as a very honored and holy day" he used to say. (162) In 1773 Paul obtained from Clement XIV the faculty of celebrating the feast in all his retreats as a solemnity with octave. (163) Finally the 1775 general chapter declared Mary under the title of the Presentation "as the first and principal patroness of the Congregation," ordering the feast to be solemnized with octave. (164) The intention was that Mary's generous dedication to God's service and to the mystery of redemption should be a continuous example for the religious, an incentive to feel themselves present on Calvary with Mary, and to a tireless dedication to the specific mission which God had given the Congregation in the Church. In fact all feasts of Our Lady were seen in reference to the mystery of redemption in which she had cooperated with all her being. During Lent her dolors were particularly recalled by a proper feast on the Friday before Palm Sunday, and celebration of a proper feast of the Seven Dolors was obtained for the third Sunday of September. What was not granted, however, was the celebration of this office as votive on Saturdays during the year. (165)

The feast of Mary's nativity in September, and the memorials of her divine motherhood and of her purity were celebrated on the second and third Sundays of October with special devotion. These had proper offices already in use in various dioceses and religious orders.

(166) Of all the feasts of Our Lady, that of her Assumption into heaven was undoubtedly celebrated with greater solemnity, particular preparation and spiritual joy. The religious felt as if they were sharing the joy and the glory of their own mother and they saw it as the most efficacious effect of the redemptive Passion of Jesus, thus crowning the work begun in Mary with her Immaculate Conception. Paul emphatically stressed these privileges and gifts even though still not proclaimed officially as revealed truths. (167) The great relevance given the feast of the Assumption was in keeping with the great devotion that the people of God had for this glorious ending of Mary's life. (168) As a forty day Lent prepared for the death and resurrection of Jesus, so Paul, following a devotional gesture of other servants of God, prepared for the feast of the Assumption by forty days of abstinence from all fruit, reciting daily the fifteen mysteries of the rosary, and by other acts of mortification. The nine days preceding the feast were of rigorous fast. Many religious wished to follow the founder's example but he counselled them to abstain only from fruit, beginning on the first of August. (169) It seems that in this period only one superior requested of his religious the observance of this lent in honor of Mary, from whom so many personal and community benefits had been received. This was Fr. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi, who was provincial in 1767. In his circular letter to the province he engaged in controversy with some religious who feared that the yearly observance would later be considered obligatory by superiors in force of the custom established. Perusal of the circular is helpful in understanding the fervor and the limitations of the religious of that time. After explaining the motives for urging the religious to an intense devotion to Our Lady, he wrote:

"I seem to sense that you are ready and disposed to say, 'what shall we do?' Oh! how much it pleases Mary who has given us Jesus, the blessed fruit of life, that we abstain from fruit of all sorts, so tempting to our appetite, for forty days prior to her Assumption. It may appear to some an excessive mortification; but what is such a mortification in comparison to the greatness and number of benefits received through her? How soon

such little sacrifices vanish before the abundant graces that shall be received from her most liberal hand, when these sacrifices are made with great love and with the desire of pleasing her. I exhort you as much as I can or am able to this homage, to this abstinence. I entreat you to let all heaven know how much you love so dear a lady by practising this devotion, so pleasing to her, so that she will prepare for you a plenitude of graces, gifts, and fruits - but fruits of the Holy Spirit. I oblige no one, but I desire and expect that everyone will observe this abstinence, even if only not to suffer confusion on Judgement Day when our blessed Lady will reveal the rigorous fasts that Copts, Jacobites and other oriental monks, although schismatics, observe before the Assumption even in our day. Shall these unfortunates who live outside the unity of the Church, and consequently without hope of eternal reward, shall they be more devoted than we who have the moral certainty of a temporal and eternal reward? I beg you, then, let no one neglect as tribute to Mary this small homage of grateful filial devotion. Let no false opinion dissuade you from so holy a practice. Perhaps someone less devout may suggest that practicing this annually will finally constitute a pious custom and have the force of law to which superiors will wish you to submit. What laws! What binding customs! Perhaps because Mass is heard daily, the Angelus said several times a day, holy water taken on entering the church, and other similar devotions have been continually practiced over so many uninterrupted years, but have these devout exercises ever ceased to be customs and become binding laws? What fear need there be of obligation if in exercising the abstinence from fruit you have not the least intention of assuming an obligation, and much less have superiors such an intention? If they exhort, they don't command; if they plead, they don't constrain; rather they desire that your sacrifice be voluntary and prescribed by no law but the law of love which sweetly urges true religious to honor the august queen, the most holy Mary, by this mortification." (170)

The feast was preceded by a solemn novena before the exposed Blessed Sacrament and prayers were recited in thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity for the gifts be-

stowed on Mary. (171) The provincials' circular letters on this occasion usually reminded all that this novena must include those penitential acts, originally spontaneous, but gradually acquiring the force of custom. The superiors insisted above all in offering Our Lady not only a punctual observance of the rule, but one animated by the most fervent charity. In Fr. Struzziere's circular of 1753, after an exhortation to acts of mortification and humility in and out of the refectory, he adds: "my desire is that during this novena you strive more than usual and with greater fervor to perform what is of obligation and in doing so strive for perfection. What greater pleasure can you give God, than to fulfill his most holy will signified in the holy rule? What greater motive can you give Our Lady to look lovingly on you than by striving to be and to appear true sons of the Passion of her beloved Son? If true preparation for such a great feast and genuine solid devotion to Our Lady consists in the imitation of her sublime virtues, how can you practice these more abundantly and better than by the observance of our constitutions in which there is a well-balanced blending of the true and solid virtues? If you do not attend to this and do not take to heart the punctual observance that is performed not by custom but by choice and by virtuous application of the will - if not preceding, at least accompanying the acts - all your other devotions will be of little avail - which can be justly called vain - because you will never arrive at that perfection to which we must aspire not out of self-love but for the love of God." (172)

Little wonder if after such an intense preparation the religious received from Our Lady particular graces of fervor. Paul affirmed this explicitly. Fr. Peter Vico, too, stated that during his term as novice master he received an inner certitude on that day in deciding which novices to admit to profession. (173)

A delicate gesture of Paul's trust in Mary was his blessing of water invoking Mary's intercession. He would have the religious drink it, trusting Our Lady to take care of their health during the summer. (174) To her must the religious turn as mother and superior, kneeling before her image on entering or leaving their rooms,

"begging her blessing and asking her leave to perform any act or to go from one place to another." This devotion was also a means of discerning whether the desire of leaving one's room was in order or not. The rector, moreover, must honor her, acknowledging her as the true superior of the community, offering her daily some particular act of virtue to obtain "light and grace for the perfect fulfillment of his ministry." (175) All in all, the religious responded to the founder's desire, showing sincere devotion to Our Lady, not only by their prayers, but particularly by the practice of solid virtues. As Struzziere reminded them in the above-mentioned circular, "Remember, you are the foundation stones of this nascent Congregation; from you the future religious will take norms and example. On your shoulders rests the weight of the new Institute. On your conduct depends its future expansion." (176)

H. VENERATION OF THE ANGELS AND SAINTS

In this section I shall deal only with those angels and saints to whom Paul as founder had a special devotion and which he transmitted to the Congregation.

St. Michael the Archangel. Since the early days of the Church, the archangel has been venerated as the defender of God's rights, helping Christians to be steadfast in their fidelity to God in times of trial. When living in the diocese of Troia Paul, together with his brother John Baptist, visited the saint's famous shrine on Monte Gargano. His very special devotion to the archangel increased during the building of the first retreat. A person under his spiritual direction told him how he saw "the glorious St. Michael, with sword unsheathed, surveying the walls of the retreat in an attitude of defending the Lord's little flock." In memory of this apparition an altar was erected in the first church to honor the archangel. (177) The second retreat of the Congregation was dedicated to him, and his image was displayed in all the retreats. In two of them altars were also dedicated to him. In a record of the early days we find that a cer-

tain religious had a vision of the Congregation represented "by a tree laden with luscious fruit, and close by stood the archangel Michael with a rod in his hand shaking the branches here and there and causing the decayed fruit to fall." The religious saw in this the archangel's protection in order that they keep fervent and faithful and not risk being detached from the fruitful branches of the tree. (178) Paul called St. Michael "our chief protector and father" and ordered that the antiphon "O Most Glorious St. Michael" with its corresponding prayer be sung after the evening rosary. On January 10, 1773, the privilege of celebrating the archangel's feast as a double rite with octave was obtained, the reason being that "he was always held and experienced" as "the principal patron of the Congregation." Finally in 1775 the chapter determined that, after Our Lady, "the most glorious archangel St. Michael" be held as the chief patron of the Congregation, and his feast be solemnized with octave. (179)

The Guardian Angel. With immense gratitude to God Paul embraced the Church's faith concerning the presence of angels in the lives of people. He had a special reverence towards his own guardian angel as well as those of his religious and of all persons with whom he came in contact. He inculcated this same practice among his religious, and towards this end introduced the custom of saluting these holy angels at the beginning of the noon and evening recreations with the "Holy Guardian Angels" and corresponding prayer. (180) On starting a journey, after reciting the litany of Our Lady and the "Out of the Depths" for the souls in purgatory, the religious greeted also the guardian angels with the same antiphon and prayer. (181) He also recommended acknowledging the presence of the guardian angels of the religious or of others whom they met by raising their hats or birettas or by a bow. (182) Besides receiving and transmitting this veneration to the young men he trained, Fr. Marcoarelius instilled in them a particular devotion of his own: "the rosary of the holy angels which consisted of ten decades in honor of the nine choirs of angels and the saints that are among them. Each decade was composed of one our father and three hail marys. In place of the mystery, the

prayer "Let us praise the Lord whom the angels praise, whom the cherubs and seraphs proclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy. Amen," was said. It ended by reciting seven our fathers, hail marys and glory bes in honor of the seven spirits that stand before the throne of God." (183) This devotional practice, however, never prospered in the Congregation.

Saint Joseph. Next to our Blessed Lady, Paul frequently recalled Saint Joseph and held him up for the veneration of his religious as "the great master in our dealings with God and holy prayer." To him he dedicated the novitiate retreat "begging him to be the protector of those devout youths and their master in the inner ways of the spirit." (184) All the needs of the Congregation, as in the controversy with the mendicants, were repeatedly entrusted "to the most powerful protection" of St. Joseph. He constantly recommended devotion to him and the imitation of his virtues, particularly interior silence. A witness tells us: "I heard him recommend publicly in the refectory devotion to St. Joseph by the imitation of his virtues with such words: 'Joseph never pronounced a vain or useless word but, dead to the world and to the flesh, aspired only to heavenly things'." (185)

Saint Mary Magdalen, the penitent. Paul considered this converted soul, deeply in love with Christ, who stood courageously at the foot of the cross, who guarded the tomb, who sought to complete the embalming of Christ's body and received the first announcement of the resurrection, as a model of conversion and of full union with God. He trusted she would obtain for him and his religious the true spirit of penance and solitude which despises all worldly ignominy and gossip and seeks only Jesus. According to some witnesses he had declared her "joint protectress" of the Congregation. Certainly he wished her feast kept as of rule, excluding the regular fast. He had an altar dedicated to her in the first church of the Congregation and wished the Corneto retreat dedicated to her. In his letters she is frequently presented as protectress in overcoming temptations and keeping faithful to the love of Christ. (186)

The Apostles. For Paul the Passionist life "is not unlike that of the apostles, but rather totally conformable to theirs, and their conduct has been the norm of the constitutions." (187) It is understandable, therefore, that he should have loved them and transmitted to his religious a similar love and veneration. In his time the feasts of the apostles and evangelists had greater liturgical solemnity, and even the rule gave them greater importance by dispensing the regular fast on those days. (188) Special veneration was given to St. John "because he had entered into the divinity and from it began his gospel," and likewise to the apostle St. Paul. The founder bore his name and admired his ardent love for Christ Crucified, and he loved particularly to meditate on the apostle's letters. His quotations from them are numerous and were regularly put before the novices so that they might learn to glory in the cross of Christ. (189)

I. UNITED TO THE DECEASED RELIGIOUS AND BENEFACTORS

A deep sense of gratitude and fraternal charity urged the founder to establish within the Congregation an intense communion of prayerful suffrages with the dead religious and benefactors. The 1736 and 1741 rules left to the prudent judgment of the superior to decide what suffrages were to be offered on the death of a religious. The 1746 text, however, gave more detailed norms, bearing in mind the initial expansion of the Congregation. On receiving the death notice of a religious each community recited the office of the dead, celebrated a sung mass, and each priest offered three masses for the deceased religious, while the clerics and lay brothers offered five communions, recited the entire rosary, and the whole community applied the discipline once. In 1769 when the Congregation was divided into provinces, it was decided that all the religious already professed at that time should receive suffrages from all the religious regardless of province. But those to be professed in the future would receive in suffrage from each community the entire office of the dead and a community mass, while the other particular suffrages would be had from those of their own

province. In 1775 this norm was introduced into the text of the rule. The 1761 provincial chapter decided to apply to tertiaries and oblates the same suffrages offered for the religious. The 1764 general chapter decided instead that the tertiaries receive suffrages solely in the province to which they belonged: a sung mass with office of the dead in the community where they died, a mass by each priest and the entire rosary by the clerics and lay brothers of that province. (190)

No particular suffrages were prescribed for benefactors at the time of their deaths, this being left to the prudent judgment of the local superior, who would consider the special bond that existed between the deceased and the community. However, a monthly remembrance of dead religious and benefactors was prescribed, and on different days, the office of the dead and a mass in suffrage for their souls was to be applied for each group. (191)

The founder's desire, however, was that this communion of love and prayer with the community of the deceased religious should be intense and continuous. It motivated his establishing the custom of reciting the "Out of the depths" for the deceased benefactors after the evening rosary, while leaving to the sense of brotherhood of the religious the applying of suffrages and indulgences for their fellow religious and all the departed. "We exhort the religious to willingly apply for the dead all the good works they can and gain for them all the holy indulgences usual in the Catholic Church, being certain that in God's mercy we shall receive after death from others what we while living have done for our brethren." (192)

J. SOME PIOUS EXERCISES

We have had occasion to mention attitudes of humility, penance and devotion. Here I indicate some of greater import which in the course of history have constituted important means of developing and fostering an atmosphere of prayer and penance in the Congregation.

Novenas. These were days devoted to preparing for a fuller understanding of the Christian mystery contemplated on a given solemnity by greater recollection, review of life and penance. They were something like a course of spiritual exercises leading to an inner renewal of the religious and the community. In all communities they preceded the feasts of our Lord's Nativity, Pentecost and Our Lady's Assumption, while the novena in preparation for the titular feast was restricted to the retreat in question. (193) For the novenas of the Nativity and the Assumption nearly all the religious were at home, since during Advent and the summer no popular missions were conducted. For Pentecost some religious might be absent, since the return of the missionaries was usually in mid-June. (194)

The community schedule was unaltered save for a fixed hour in the afternoon (we don't know the exact time) when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for community adoration and prayers related to the mystery. The change that was a "must" during those days was in spiritual disposition: all were stimulated to show, even externally, a more intense charity by the practice of humility, silence, recollection and penance. From the early days the custom was introduced of drawing lots on tickets which indicated what virtue to practice and on what day of the novena some external penitential acts were to be performed, such as eating while seated on the floor, leaving the pittance, keeping silence, renouncing recreation, etc.. Owing to the influence of Fr. Marcoarelius it was customary to abstain from fruit, while it was left to the rector's discretion to add "some afflictive penance" as the daily discipline. All the religious were encouraged to fulfill personally "many mutual acts of humiliation and abjection in or out of the refectory," as Struzziere suggested in 1753. He wished the last three days of the Assumption novena to be dedicated exclusively to the spiritual life, leaving aside study "and all other occupations save those that could not be deferred without serious inconvenience, the rector being free to decide the order to be observed...in prayer, reading and other pious exercises." (195) In 1760 in order to facilitate a deeper review of life, Fr. Marcoarelius during the novena allowed

each religious to choose freely as confessor or spiritual director any priest of the community approved for confessions in the diocese. (196)

The usual acts of humility performed in the refectory were: begging the necessary bread from the brethren and then eating it sitting on the floor, the accusation of external faults against the rule, prostrating outside the refectory door as if placing oneself under the feet of the brethren, thus expressing the biblical sense of prostration as an act of contrition and of begging God's pardon and mercy. It was likewise recommended that they request the prayers of the brethren by the fairly usual formula "Pray for this poor sinner." Following the founder's example, on the eve of feasts, either in choir or at the end of the evening recreation, mutual pardon was begged "for the scandal, lack of observance, bad example, or hurts given," and prayers were begged for each one's sanctification. (197)

Self accusation (culpa) in the refectory. In order that the novices be exercised in humility and patience, the rule prescribed that in the refectory they frequently accuse themselves of their faults and be publicly reprimanded by the master in order to try their virtue. The penances sometimes imposed were eating while seated on the floor, washing the dishes, helping in the kitchen, etc. (198) Individual religious kept up this custom after profession and gradually began manifesting their faults in the refectory as well as in the chapter of faults which was the prescription of the rule. The founder himself led by example, as many times a year and especially on the eve of solemnities "he would beg bread from the religious at the refectory door and eat it on his knees till the community finished their meal, having said *culpa* beforehand." (199) In the 1747 "Chronicle" of the Congregation Paul describes the rivalry in humility and penance: "In the refectory the religious even vie with one another in penances and mortifications. Some kneel in the middle of the refectory with crosses on their shoulders, others with crowns of thorns on their heads. Some have ropes around their necks, others have their hands bound as malefactors. Some prostrate at the door so that all who pass

must walk over them and trample them; others go around the refectory kissing the feet of one or other religious, and sometimes of all. Some publicly ask for pardon, imploring the help of the prayers of the brethren with such lively and deep sentiments of self accusation and evidence of their misery that they bring tears to the eyes." (200) These exuberant manifestations of the early days were gradually restrained and kept more sober. Still, it became morally binding for all to perform some of the more accepted acts, particularly that of the self-accusation of external faults against the rule. The 1755 common regulation gave a general norm as to the frequency and contents of the *culpa* (201): "Let them frequently make *culpa* in the refectory and perform the usual penances. Let them be careful that no week shall pass without at least some act of mortification. It would be a serious fault and a sign of little spirit to accuse oneself of irrelevant faults, while neglecting more serious ones out of human respect or from fear of reproof or grave penance."

It appears it was not customary for all to carry the cross. It is said of Fr. Anthony Tomasini, who was prone to irritability, that when a harsh word escaped him "he placed a rough cross on his shoulders and went to admit his fault publicly in the refectory." (202) The common usage was to prostrate as in the Friday chapter after saying *culpa* and in that position to listen to the superior's reprimand. There was no set formula for the *culpa*, each one being free to use the most opportune words.

The chapter of faults. The chapter of faults comes down to us from the beginning of cenobitical life as a means of amendment and reparation for faults committed. (203) The founder accepted it as opportune for the spiritual advancement both of individuals and communities. However, he simplified its external structure to give wider scope to the personal initiative of the religious. They were to practice this exercise "desirous of amendment and with an efficacious will to comply with the superior's command." The chapter was held on Fridays, a day that brings to mind the humiliations Christ suffered and the offering of his pardon to those who repented of their mis-

deeds. It was held in "the chapter hall," which in some retreats was distinct from the choir where eventually it would take place. All were to go with lively faith, beginning the chapter by invoking the light of the Holy Spirit. No records have been kept of what prayers were said in this period, but with time the hymn "Come Holy Spirit" prevailed. Each one accused himself of his external faults against the rules and constitutions. Then, prostrate on the floor, each one listened to the superior's words as if Christ himself were speaking, thus disposing himself to fulfill the appointed penance. These penances ordinarily consisted in prayers. For serious faults some corporal penance was imposed, such as the discipline, a fast, or eating sitting on the floor in the refectory. The founder admonished rectors to be very prudent both in reproofs and penances: "In correcting faults at *culpa* let him (the rector) be careful not to exaggerate that which is not a fault but only a trifle, otherwise the reprimands made for other real and more considerable faults will carry no weight, and will be taken as a joke, or at best looked upon as the same old story - this is what the subjects will think of it." (204)

The public manifestation of the defects of a religious by his fellows was always excluded, though customary in other orders, but whoever happened to know true defects of a fellow religious had to notify the superior so that a timely remedy be applied. The superior would secretly admonish the one at fault, at least twice, so that he might amend, thus avoiding greater faults which could be harmful also to the Congregation. Gradually a sort of hierarchy was introduced in the order of self-accusation. The novices did so first, followed by the clerics and lay brothers and finally the priests, beginning with the youngest. We do not know if up to 1775 the clerics and lay brothers left the chapter room after saying *culpa*, thus leaving the priests alone to discuss matters concerning community life. From some expressions of the 1746 and 1769 texts we infer that they remained, as it says "the lay brothers do not speak unless requested," and the 1775 text specifically excludes from the second part of the chapter both clerics and lay brothers. There is no trace in the rule of any special closing prayers being said. In

other institutes prayers were offered for living and dead benefactors, and the practice with time found its way into the Congregation, but we don't know when. This exercise was meant as a means towards an authentic advancement of the religious in the ways of virtue, and the founder truly hoped it would be a great aid towards the perfection of charity and observance. He recommended that rectors be spiritually vigilant, preparing prayerfully and prudently, so that their part in the exercise should be truly efficacious: "Let him (the rector) be most cautious when speaking in public chapter or in chapter exhortations, not hinting at things that might be interpreted as personal references; otherwise a religious might be embittered and become worse. On the contrary, let him try to speak in a meek and strong spirit, but with a quiet and calm voice so that all may perceive that in a spirit of charity he is seeking their spiritual and temporal good." (205)

The discipline of voluntary scourging. Scourging as a punishment imposed by an appointed person for faults committed is found in the early days of monasticism. Voluntary scourging by individual monks as a means of experiencing the sufferings of Christ's scourging appears in the ninth and tenth centuries. St. Peter Damian was the chief promoter among the monks of Fonteavellana and other monasteries, as well as among the laity. This penitential practice became known and spread to the people and lay confraternities through the efforts of the confraternity of the "disciplined". St. Francis de Sales deemed it a useful means to awaken devotion and recommended it to those who wished to lead a devout life. In the eighteenth century its ritual was already long established. It was performed in a common place, in the dark, while reciting the psalm *Miserere* in a penitential tone, and the "Out of the depths" for the dead, plus some additional concluding prayers. (206)

From the beginning of the congregation up to 1741 the discipline was prescribed four times a week, and daily during the Advent and Lenten seasons. From then on, the norm was three times a week, except in Advent and Lent when it was taken four times a week. The 1746

text of the rule left it to the superior's discretion to order that penance "in cases of common need of the Church or the Congregation, in particular cases of need of a neighbor, or in some novena of particular devotion." (207) Its duration was that of the prayers prescribed by the rule and by the 1758 general chapter: it began with the antiphon that was part of the Christological hymn so dear to the founder, "Christ was obedient...." (Phil.2:8); then followed the psalms *Miserere* and "Out of the depths." The antiphon was then repeated and three prayers were recited: "God, who for the redemption of the world...." in memory of the Passion; "Defend, we beseech you...." for the Congregation; and *Fidelium....* for the dead. It ended with some invocations taken from the litanies of the saints. (208)

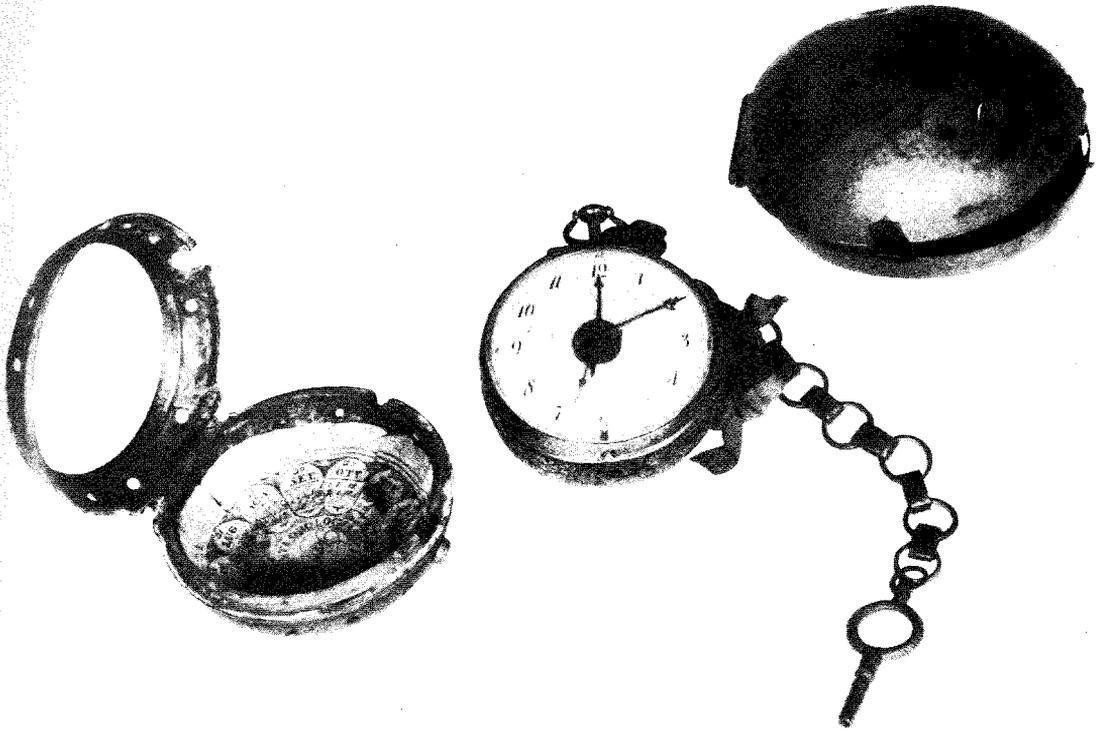
The primitive text of the rule, after evoking the thought of St. Frances de Sales that "the discipline, taken discreetly, helps to foster devotion," encouraged religious to take it three times a week "in memory of the three hours Jesus hung on the Cross." The common regulation instead suggested uniting oneself more clearly to the intentions of Jesus in his scourging, and hence "to take the discipline not from routine or habit, but with a penitential spirit as follows: 1. With a joyful heart, as God loves a cheerful giver. 2. With a sense of humility, because this penance is a trifle compared to what we deserve for the countless sins committed. 3. With lively trust that the Lord will accept this small satisfaction in virtue of the holy obedience in which it is performed. 4. Uniting this penance to the most severe sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ." (209) It was felt that this common norm ought not to quench the desire of penance, but rather enkindle it. For this reason the rule encouraged those desirous of further penances, provided they were submissive to the discernment of the superior or the spiritual director "in order not to lose the merit of obedience and not to injure their health to the detriment of the observance." (210)

K. EVANGELICAL POVERTY IN THE CONGREGATION

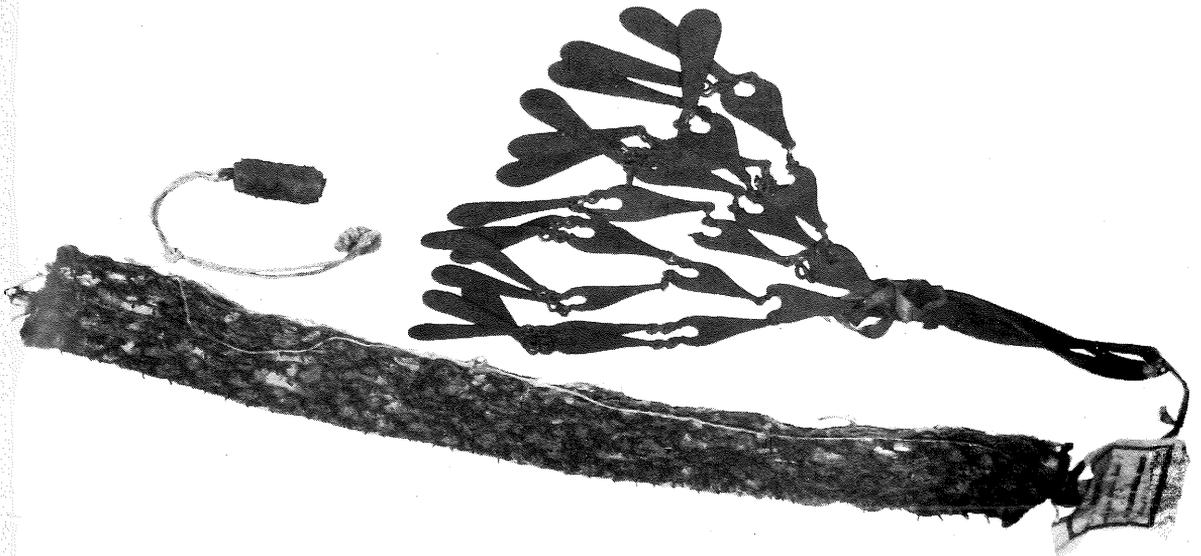
1. "Apostolic" poverty centered on the memory of Christ's Passion

In the second chapter we considered what the spirituality of the "apostolic life" meant for the Congregation. We also saw how at the moment of the decisive illumination of 1720, the founder's understanding of solitude and poverty-penance was complete and definitive: in the light of the charism, to be mindful of and promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus. From the very beginning, the religious were to live like the apostles, forming a community in which no one thought or spoke of anything as his own. Living the "apostolic life" meant that the individual possessed or disposed of nothing, while the community possessed the means necessary for the subsistence of its members, for receiving guests, for the poor and for evangelization. "The monks work to imitate the apostles," wrote St. Benedict. (211) In the new socio-religious atmosphere of the twelfth century, during the strong movement of Church reform by Gregory VII and Urban II, a new understanding of poverty matured in circles of "apostolic life" in reference to itinerant preaching. Many individuals, complying with Christ's instructions to his apostles when giving them their "mission," roamed the towns and countryside in absolute poverty, instructing the people who oftentimes were destitute of Christian instruction and spiritual help.

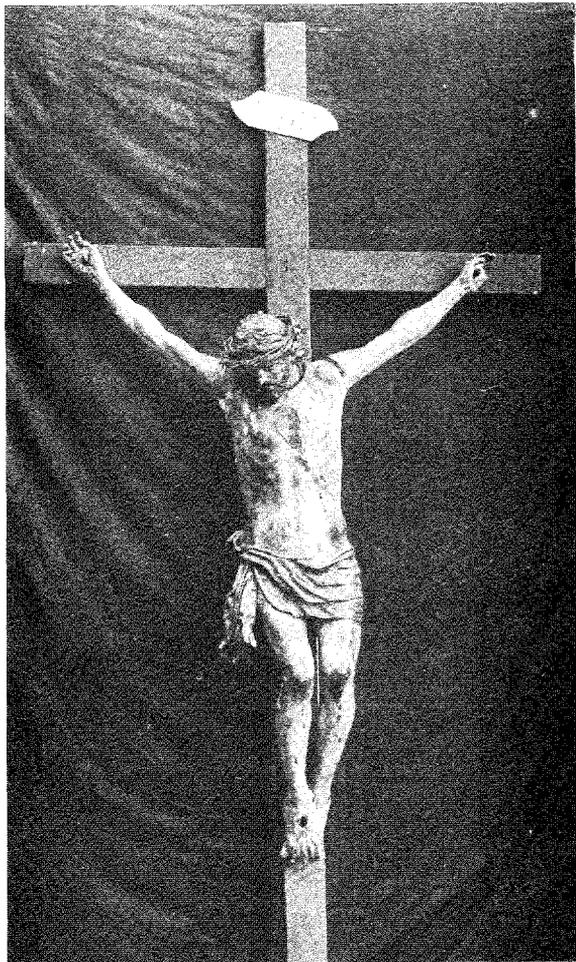
It is within the framework of what the Acts tell us of the apostles themselves that we can meditate more attentively on the common life of these "itinerant" preachers and of the primitive Christian communities. "The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power." (Acts 4:33). The conviction grew that, besides rigorous poverty in a common life, the imitation of the life of the apostles demanded itinerant preaching. (212) A new practice of evangelical poverty was thus born in religious life: poverty united to preaching and a condition for its fruitfulness. In this manner of understanding poverty, neither the individual nor the community possessed property, stable goods or fixed income, be-



Alarm pocket watch the Founder used.



"Discipline" the Founder used to scourge himself during missions. The cilice belt was worn next to the skin with the approval of the spiritual director or superior. The Founder also used the small scourge with tiny points at one end.



Large mission cross the Founder used while preaching the last mission of his life: Rome, September, 1769.

cause the individual and the community trusted entirely in God, the Lord of the harvest, who promised to take care of his "laborers." (Mt 6:33; 10:10)

The founder breathed the atmosphere of the most fervent religious movements and institutions that animated the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He took from them the more valid elements, developing the mystic aspect of the apostolic life in the light of his own particular vocation, centered "on the most stupendous work of God's love, the Passion of Jesus." "In all things," he wrote, "as true imitators of Jesus Christ, let them strive solely to show themselves poor in spirit and in fact. To obtain this good it will be very helpful to keep before their eyes the example of the life of our Saviour who for love of us deigned to be born poor, to live in poverty and die naked on the cross." (213) To imitate Christ, poor and naked on the cross, means not only accepting poverty of material goods, but also entering into that context of external weakness, ignominy and abjection which the attitude of society and worldly wisdom attach to poverty. For the candidate desirous of entering the Congregation, the rule provided the elements for understanding the ideal of poverty-penance-humility. Whoever desired to enter had to have undergone a conversion, possessing a changed heart and desiring to abandon worldly wisdom in order to become a "servant of God." As the founder expressed it, to be a "servant of God" meant being disposed like Jesus to submit oneself to God's lordship and desirous of imitating Christ's interior attitudes, with a firm resolve "to suffer much, to be despised and mocked, to endure calumnies and other things for love of Jesus Christ." Having discerned this resolution together with his spiritual director and the superiors of the Congregation, if accepted the candidate had to put his affairs in order before leaving the world, "and should anything remain he must sell it or give it to the poor, provided he has no greater obligations of charity, such as poor relatives....Let him recall Christ's counsel: 'Go, sell what thou hast and give it to the poor'." (214) The postulant developed this attitude in the novitiate by acts proper to one who is poor, penitent, humble. He was to adapt to the food and service of the "retreat of penance,"

washing the dishes, helping in the kitchen, bringing water and firewood, sweeping, etc., to show that "he loves to be despised and is well resolved to die to himself, to all worldly things and to his evil inclinations, and thus live only to God, in God, and for God, hiding his life in that of Jesus Christ," who for our love and example will-
ed to "become the outcast of men and the rejected of the people." All this was what Paul called "to be reborn in the divine Word, to die mystically with Christ in order to rise with him to a new life." (215) This meant imitating the apostles, who left all things to follow Christ and possess him alone, trusting in him, and who, as poor, bore the message of salvation. This "apostolic" poverty which centered on Christ poor and hanging naked on the cross, the founder called "the highest poverty," "total detachment from all creatures, practicing perfectly that holy poverty so necessary for the observance of the other counsels and for maintaining fervor in holy prayer." (216)

Thus understood and practiced, poverty disposes one for mystical union with God, "the only true Good" and the sole aspiration of the religious. It also renders them more fit to work fruitfully for their fellow men because they are "far from the least shade of avarice and suspicion of self-interest, it being evident to the people that the religious of the Passion do not seek their gifts, which they cannot possess, but only their eternal salvation." (217) Therefore the founder affirmed: "Poverty must be the standard of this least Congregation," that is, the most meaningful expression of their recollection of Christ's Passion and of their availability for the good of their neighbor, without sparing themselves "fatigue and sufferings, laden with the weaknesses of others, like Christ, of whom it is said 'he took upon himself our weaknesses and carried our sufferings'." (218)

We shall now study the more outstanding features of the Congregation's practice of poverty in this period. From this will be seen, on the one hand, the generous efforts to be faithful to the ideal in the concrete circumstances of life; on the other, practical difficulties which

led to modification, in non-essentials, of forms of poverty that had been conceived so radically.

2. The exclusion of stable goods and fixed income

During his lifetime Paul held that possessions and fixed income were essentially contrary to the type of "apostolic poverty" that a Congregation centered on the memory of Christ's Passion must express. "It shall not be lawful," says the rule in all its various texts, "to have any possessions or other income, either in common or individually." In 1769, bearing in mind the pressure placed on him by many and by the examiners of the 1746 and 1769 texts, the founder had the following added to the above text: "...under no title or justification for maintenance of church or sacristy." (219) In 1746 the pontifical commission would have welcomed the introduction of fixed income for the houses of formation. The founder explained with such clearness and conviction the reasons why Passionists must live in absolute poverty, that he won his point. He himself reminded his religious of the reasons, as a witness tells us: "He often told me that the sons of Christ's Passion must be detached from all creatures and not own anything, and that our Congregation must shine in this virtue of being truly poor in spirit, naked and divested of all; that the religious of this Congregation are called to great perfection and to become saints." He recalled also that Paul's fear concerning the commission was caused by the conviction that admission of the possession of goods "would be the same as demolishing the strong walls and bulwarks which upheld the Congregation." (220)

He reaffirmed this conviction in the "Chronicle" he put out the nature of the Congregation: "The other impediment (to perfection) is the attachment to temporal goods which sometimes and even ordinarily can fill the human heart and prevent it from soaring to the supreme Good. This impediment is removed by holy poverty...by reason of which it may not possess anything, not even under the title of sacristy, (ed. note: benefice for maintenance of the church and its appurtenances) except for a garden

which serves also as an enclosure. Thus, the religious, totally free from temporal things, effectively detached from earth and dead to themselves, are better disposed to receive the impressions of divine grace, so that afterwards in due time, and with hearts full of God's love, they may undertake great things for the glory of God." (221)

The rule up to 1746 had a brief chapter portraying the lively desire of radical poverty in which the Congregation intended to live: "This least Congregation declares that it does not want to have ownership of anything, but asks that Holy Mother Church should have full possession of everything, even of the alms given by the charity of benefactors." (222) That these words were not mere vague desires was proved by the prescription that, at the end of the year, having paid the necessary expenses for the upkeep of the religious and of the church, what was left over must be given to the poor so as not to have any trust funds. (223)

Under Clement XIV, the founder opposed the commission that wished to grant the Congregation the faculty of receiving legacies of goods to be sold afterwards for the Congregation's benefit. (224) Nor would he ever allow the acceptance of movable or immovable goods by inheritance, even on condition of their immediate alienation in favor of the Congregation. On March 3, 1769, he himself before the episcopal curia of Viterbo renounced an inheritance that the rector of St. Eutizio had imprudently accepted under that condition. The reason Paul gave was: "Because of the vow of most rigorous poverty professed by the Congregation, we cannot accept any inheritance, except when the will disposed the celebration of a certain number of masses, but not perpetual...."

In order to forestall the repetition of similar attempts, the founder in the 1769 general chapter had a decree issued expressly forbidding the acceptance of movable or immovable goods left by inheritance. This norm was inserted in the text of the rule. (225)

But since 1746 the Congregation had in fact owned the retreats, together with certain extensions of land around them for the safeguarding of solitude and the freedom of movement of the religious, as well as for vegetables and firewood. The 1769 bull of approval confirmed these possessions and the fact of this property ownership later found its way into the 1775 text of the rule, with the express proviso that never should the fruits of the orchard be sold. This was in order to avoid the least appearance of a fixed income. What was left over had to be given to benefactors or the poor. (226) As a secondary motive, but having weight in its historic context, Paul saw in this manner of practicing poverty an advantage as regards the expansion of the Congregation, since it would not attract the "jealousy" of governments that were underhandedly appropriating the properties of religious institutes. (227)

3. To live on spontaneous offerings

Not to possess goods or fixed income, as well as annually disposing of what remained after the upkeep of the religious, meant living without any human security for the morrow, totally trusting in God who promised in his Son Jesus to care for the "laborers" of his kingdom: "The laborer is worthy of his keep." "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice and all the rest shall be given you...." (Mt. 6:33; 10:10). The founder forbade seeking alms "by questing from door to door, but they shall live on what shall be given them by the spontaneous charity of benefactors." The pontifical commission for the 1741 text of the rule suggested removing this absolute prohibition of questing, and admitting the possibility "if necessities were wanting because of the solitude of the retreat." Yet even in this case only "the utterly necessary" could be sought. Paul introduced in the text an act of trust in God, thus showing how much he took to heart the principle of absolute poverty, even when he was exposing himself to no small risks. He says: "it shall be permitted to seek alms for what is absolutely necessary. It is to be hoped, however, that by the mercy of God, such a necessity will not arise." These words were re-

tained in the rule up to 1769. In a letter to Canon Ceruti, his old confessor, Paul renewed this trust in divine Providence and his determination to live in radical poverty, not requesting or possessing anything: "concerning poverty, it is enjoined that when food is wanting, it is allowed to quest for the strictly necessary for the day, but this has never happened and I hope it will be always so, because the good God,... will always provide for his least poor, so that they be not distracted by questing." (228)

Among the spontaneous offerings for the church and community upkeep were included alms for the celebration of masses, provided they did not involve a perpetual obligation. These alms could be in cash or in kind, the latter being restricted to grain, oil and wine, to which were added vegetables. Clement XIV's bull enumerated among the spontaneous offerings the monies willed to the Congregation as donations, or the allotment of foodstuffs, or sums of money that the civil authorities in some states or cities made to religious institutes. Yet this concession was granted on condition that the Congregation could never take legal action for claiming such offerings or legacies. In this manner it was assured that such offerings remained spontaneous, inasmuch as the Congregation acquired no right to claim them. The founder had to face this problem in 1748 during the building of the Terracina retreat. At the bishop's request, the city council was willing to give the Passionists an annual assignment of fifty *scudi* "in aid of the poor religious who are to dwell in the retreat." Paul begged time for prayer and thought. Before taking a final decision he expressed his views: "Should I believe I could accept it as pure alms, my feeling at present is that to the obligation undertaken by the city to give these alms should be added that the community should be always free to give or not give these alms away, without the Congregation or the local superior ever having a right to claim them; thus, if I'm not mistaken, the holy poverty we profess shall remain in full force." (229).

The founder's constant norm that became an unwritten law of the Congregation was never to accept any

offerings during missions, retreats or other ministries. The apostolic ministry was to be fulfilled gratuitously, adhering strictly to the ideal of the "apostolic life." (230)

Offerings in kind were discreetly encouraged by the local pastor's recommendation. Before the approval of the Congregation, with the bishop's understanding, he notified the public "of the needs of the least and poor Congregation just as he would recommend any other poor family." The syndics who collected the offerings also had a certain amount of influence because of the esteem they acquired and often too because of their social position. Up to 1769 the rule made provision for this practice. Yet from 1750 on it was gradually observed that this method was too complicated. It was not always easy to find persons disposed to assume the task. Hence in 1769 it was simply stated that at harvest time for grain, wine and oil "what is thought necessary may be requested." Living without possessions or fixed income, solely on spontaneous offerings, was a great means of defense during the controversy with the mendicant orders, as we have seen. (231)

4. The quest for what was necessary

Regarding the foundations, we have already mentioned the heroism with which the religious endured the greatest hardships when often even necessities were lacking. The chronicles record some of God's providential interventions in favor of his "servants." One evening in St. Sosio the brother cook approached the superior, Fr. Struzziere, with the information that there was not even a piece of bread for dinner. "Go to your prayers," said Father Struzziere, "and don't worry about it." Shortly before dinner the door bell rang and the porter found a lady with a basket of freshly baked bread sent by her landlord from Falvaterra. I have already mentioned the providential help given by Lucy Burlini to the first Toscanella community. On another occasion in mid-winter St. Angelo's retreat was without bread or oil. To the religious who told him of the situation the founder answered,

"Pray, and fear nothing." They, however, only laughed, saying to themselves in jest. "Yes, pray, but meanwhile the body is empty." Paul, going into the garden, prayed to the Lord "using strong, strong words with God's majesty." Shortly after, a man arrived with two mules, "one laden with bread, the other with oil." (232)

As the communities increased so also did the expenses for maintaining the buildings, the indispensable furniture, the upkeep of the religious, as well as the health expenses and those for the formation of the young. All this gradually forced upon the founder and his collaborators the conviction that the Congregation could not provide the things indispensable for survival without a minimum of questing. This was contrary to the founder's most cherished convictions. He saw in it an act implying less trust in the Lord, and also feared the dissipation it would cause among the religious, whom he loved to see in solitude, leaving it only for the purpose of proclaiming the salvation wrought by Jesus crucified. Possibly he also feared a loss of popular esteem, which would have a negative effect on the apostolate proper to the Congregation. The fear of dissipation resulting from questing moved him to introduce in the 1736 text a permission that the superior give "some help in cash to avoid distractions and wanderings consequent on the quest" to those journeying to places where the Passionists were unknown. He manifested this same fear to his former director, Canon Cerruti, as we recalled above. Writing to Fr. Fulgentius in 1748 he declared that if the extraordinary quest was necessary it would be a great benefit if it could be done by some devout laymen, to avoid having the religious roaming the city of Orbetello. (233)

But in the long run the practice of questing in case of necessity granted by the 1741 rule proved providential and it had to be used, albeit reluctantly and with longing for the ideal that could not be fulfilled in all its anticipated fullness. In case of necessity Paul did glimpse a manner of collaborating with Providence. A witness tells us: "In order that there be no fault on his part, he wished that the necessary alms be begged, thus cooperating with divine Providence and not tempting the

Lord." A painful labor, serenely accepted, gave birth to this conviction, and the fear of failing in trust of God vanished. "Having used all diligence, with due religious modesty, if the needful was not then found, he insisted that all be left to God's care, with a lively trust that nothing would be wanting. Meanwhile he exhorted the religious to observe the rule with the greatest possible perfection; as to the rest, God would provide".

With this development in his thinking the founder himself on June 23, 1746 suggested that Fr. Fulgentius, rector of the Presentation, have a quest made for grain on the threshing floors "besides what is given by the better-off benefactors." He suggested writing to the pastors asking them to notify the local people, explaining the great need of the community that constrained them to make this extraordinary quest. That same year on September 10th, while he wrote to a gentleman of Montalto requesting his usual charity, he encouraged Fr. Fulgentius "to use all diligence but without anxiety" to have "some wine collected." He advised him to ask Fr. Luke Anthony to speak to the Orbetello people and to an intimate friend of the community that they might see to questing for wine in the districts around Orbetello. On April 12, 1748, he told Fr. Fulgentius not to fear the rumors that the community was rich, for he, Paul, knew well and informed outsiders that the retreat was "short of grain and I do not lie." He reminded him that "it is necessary to use the privilege the rule gives to quest for what is necessary." He even descended to practical details: "If I were there I would have the quest for bread made once a week in St. Stefano and in Orbetello, having the pastor of Orbetello and the curate of St. Stefano announce beforehand the need of this religious community...." A note to the pastors told them how to announce and recommend this charity to the faithful, and how only great need obliged them to take this step. "In Orbetello have our lay brother or the lay people accompanied once or twice by a devout cleric who will indicate the houses that can afford to offer such alms. Thus I trust we can get along till the harvest time with what flour is left or with some more that will be provided." He recommended that this be discussed with the syndic and the benefactor

Sanchez who knew the city and its environs. Should they counsel having it done by some well disposed pious person, it would be much better. He recommended also that he should speak to the vicar general, but "only for advice, not to request permission, so as not to jeopardize" the privileges granted by the 1746 brief. Perhaps Fr. Fulgentius, the syndic and the Orbetello friends did not judge the quest expedient, because the founder on April 7, 1748, said he would be pleased if it could be avoided and necessities otherwise provided, but he disapproved of the idea of buying grain by incurring debts or using the money reserved for acquiring cloth. (234)

Begun in misery, the Toscanella retreat was surviving with great difficulty because of the "utmost and amazing coldness" of the citizens. Had the Piansano citizens not helped the religious, thanks to the efforts of Lucy Burlini, they would have remained without means of sustenance. In July, 1748, Paul wrote to the vicar general of Toscanella, Canon Andrew Pagliaricci, a friend of the religious, recommending that the quest not be made at the threshing floors, as was Bro. Hyacinth's idea, because it was against the rule. Perhaps this was because it could give the impression of begging from door to door, or because it could cause ill humor among those threshing. He stated that in the other retreats "the syndics seek well-to-do people and others available to do the questing and receiving of alms of grain, wine and oil, as the rule prescribes." He did not wish this "observance demolished," beginning with Toscanella. (235)

These letters reveal how the syndics made the quest. They were usually trustworthy persons of a certain social standing in the town, hence their requests to the administrators of the nobles, of the public bodies and of the well-to-do merited attention and obtained definite help. It was important to have competent and committed persons. Otherwise "they are useless," as the founder wrote in reference to the syndic of Toscanella. At the same time the letters reveal the growing difficulties in providing sufficient upkeep and necessary means. (236)

On August 3, 1769, Fr. John Baptist Porta, rector of the Argentario retreats, found himself in dire need of food with ten sick men in the houses. When the founder encouraged him to trust in God, he added: "It's expedient, however, to do what we can on our part," and he suggested seeking the collaboration of the bailiffs of the big landowners of Orbetello for "a general quest as was done by the St. Angelo retreat in the neighboring towns." He wrote to the Orbetello syndic, Sanchez, asking that with other benefactors he help out in the projected quest. (237) After 1761 the founder asked the prescribed royal permission from the king of Naples: "that in harvest time he may send appointed religious to receive the alms willingly given by the benefactors" to the retreats of St. Sosio and Terracina, which, though in the Papal States, worked intensely for the spiritual welfare of Neapolitan citizens. And he added, "this without the least prejudice to other mendicant orders, as God's providence provides for all." (238)

The practice of questing, foreseen at first as extraordinary, within a few years - towards 1750 - had become normal though restricted to the harvest seasons and solely for the items prescribed by rule: grain, oil and wine. The rectors, however, in daily contact with the local needs and perhaps not always having the same faith as Paul, began to stretch the number of quests and extend them to places far from the diocese in which the retreat was located. Because of this, in the first provincial chapter in 1755 the founder made a strong call to order in the observance of so important a point for the spirituality of the Congregation and for the validity of their apostolic witness. In a decree he reminded them that the quest could only be continued for the items provided for in the rule, plus vegetables. As for the retreats south of Rome, he allowed the provincial to grant permission, in true cases of need, to quest for maize, but he insisted on excluding quests that had been started for eggs, cheese, wool and money "offered to provide some of these things mentioned, although money offerings for the needs of the retreat could be accepted provided they were made spontaneously." From the same chapter Paul issued a circular letter in which, among other things, he

reaffirmed the contents of the decree: "We desire and command anew that quests not proper but rather contrary to our Institute be stopped; the common and general ones will be made according to rule, for in the exact observance of these latter rather than on any other industriousness depends our upkeep. We have," he added, "good experience of this from the retreats that give greater attention to providing for the spirit rather than the body." (239)

The 1761 provincial chapter and the 1764 general chapter defined the limits of the zone assigned to each retreat for the quest. The questors who exceeded the appointed limits were to be punished and what was collected given to the retreat corresponding to that zone. Some alterations were made in the rule provided for the new situation but safeguarding the essentials of poverty. Thus the 1775 text also allowed the quest for vegetables, while the permission of the major superior was necessary for other items. But the 1769 text toned down the prohibition of questing from door to door. It was permitted "if constrained by necessity." The 1775 text stated that "ordinarily they will not do so." (240)

In deference to the rule's prescription, to canonical norms and to social conventions, the brother questors were always accompanied either by an oblate, or, lacking one (as was often the case after 1760), by another lay brother or by a secular, sometimes paid. Paul was very solicitous that the questors practice recollection. He always feared that the quest was a serious risk for the spirit of prayer of the religious. In order to meditate, he requested them to walk in silence at the beginning of the journey and at a fixed time in the afternoon, and frequently to revive their faith in God's presence, uniting their labors to those of Jesus. "When begging alms," he recommended, "do so in few words, but with humility and efficacy, then all will be well, especially if you put before the benefactors the passion of Jesus Christ, for love of which you must beg in imitation of Christ's humility." (241) Bro. Bartholomew testifies: he enjoined the questors not to be troublesome because "the poor seculars are annoyed by much insisting, and the religious with so much

wandering will lose the spirit." The same brother tells us of the transition from spontaneous offerings to the quest, saying that although Paul "trusted in God, it is not however the reason why he did not want quests to be made. He ordered them in their proper time and place....He recommended that superiors be not so solicitous of temporal things, but watch carefully that the religious live in solitude, given to prayer and diligent in the religious observance. He did not approve therefore that they should be anxious about having quests made." On October 18, 1766, the founder ordered all rectors to have the brothers make a six to eight day retreat on returning from the quest "without employing them save in the most necessary affairs of the retreat" in order that they rest physically, but more so, renew their fervor of spirit. (242)

The quest brought with it another problem: that of transportation of the goods obtained by charity. Hence all the retreats were allowed to have a donkey or pack-mule. For its upkeep a piece of grazing land was provided. (243)

The restricted cultivation of a garden for the absolutely necessary daily provisions of food-stuffs such as vegetables, greens, fruit, besides firewood for cooking, was never considered contrary to the ideal of living without fixed income or stable goods. The land was first and foremost an "enclosure" as the founder calls it, that is, a safeguard of solitude.

In the second place it served to provide the everyday necessities without disturbing the benefactors more than was necessary, or having to leave frequently the solitude with the consequent distraction from prayer and recollection. The desire, however, was that the garden would not become a source of income. Hence the 1747 chapter explicitly forbade selling its produce. In 1764 the number of beehives was restricted to the strictly necessary for providing the community with honey and forbidding its sale. Renting the Presentation's chestnut grove as well as the sale of the chestnuts were forbidden, but the surplus was to be given to the benefactors and the

poor. In Toscanella the vineyard was cut down to make space for a garden. (244)

The 1753 general chapter forbade local superiors to sell what was requested without a special permission from the major superior, so as to avoid possible abuses. This norm was confirmed by subsequent chapters because it served also to assure an authentic sharing of goods among the communities as the 1753 chapter affirmed. On the basis of this declaration the major superior could assign part of what was requested by one community to a poorer one. In order to facilitate this just internal distribution of what Providence sent his "servants," local superiors after Easter had to send the major superior "a sincere and truthful list of the alms they received in grain, oil, wine, vegetables, money, masses, etc." Some exceptions were made as in the case of the Corneto community in 1770, when the local superior was authorized to sell what was collected in the quest to pay off debts and provide for some urgent needs. Other occasional exceptions occurred in the retreats south of Rome after 1760. (245)

If made within the prescribed limits, the quest was not considered contradictory to the ideal of living from spontaneously offered alms. In fact it implied no right on the part of the religious to the things requested, but simply reminded benefactors of the community's needs, trusting to their understanding and generosity. What was received was considered spontaneously offered. Socially and theologically this way of seeking one's upkeep in imitation of Christ and the apostles was not looked upon as taking advantage of the good faith of others. The founder and his religious as well as other mendicants were convinced that they were "laborers" working for the spiritual good of others. The fidelity to life of prayer, to penance and to apostolic undertakings according to the rule the Church had approved, was the work the religious accomplished to benefit God's people, and the people in turn repaid that work with offerings for their upkeep. It was for this reason that during the apostolic ministries the "apostolic laborers" accepted no offerings, because the necessities of life - the pay to which the laborer is

entitled according to the Gospel - were given at other times. This was recalled by the bull *Supremi Apostolatus* when granting the Congregation the faculty of questing: "Because they who do not knit, nor reap, nor stow away in granaries must live by the help of others, especially those who do not cease to work night and day to nourish others spiritually...." (246)

5. The syndics and the economic administration

Fearing that the religious could become too attached to money, Paul wished that they handle it as little as possible. The desire to live poor and dependent, not as lords of what they used, made the institution of syndics seem useful, as it made the religious depend on the syndics for administering and spending what they possessed. Up to 1760, offerings in money for masses or for the upkeep of the retreat were received directly by the syndic or had to be transmitted to him as soon as possible by the superior. A decree of the 1747 general chapter allowed a maximum of ten scudi to be kept in the retreat "for urgent needs that can befall those living in solitude who cannot rely on the syndic to be at hand." This gradually paved the way for the conviction that it would be expedient to keep the money in the retreat in a double-lock safe, of which the superior held one key, and the vicar or his substitute another, as was then prescribed by canon law. In 1760 this provision was inserted in the rule as one of the additions approved by the commission appointed by the pope in the affair of solemn vows.

In the socio-religious environment of that time the syndic was an acknowledged figure. He worked in mendicant orders, in monasteries and other pious institutions. Named by the competent superior, he gave his service freely in administering the goods entrusted to him. He was really a benefactor who not only gave help, but sought to manage the community's affairs profitably, and he acted as a mediator between the community and the town and other benefactors. According to the 1741 and 1746 texts of the rule the rector together with "the older men" of the community named the syndic. But it seems

that in practice, the major superior's approval was always asked, perhaps because he was the founder. Many syndics, because of their counsel and social influence, were of immense help to the Congregation, particularly in the period of the foundation and consolidation of the retreats. But gradually it was seen how complicated it was to be always asking the syndic to pay the bills. Besides, it was not always easy to find people disposed to carry the accounts for so many of the little things that can be needed in a community. For this reason the 1764 general chapter authorized the rector either to take over direct administration, or appoint the vicar, often with the help of a lay brother. Some particularly praiseworthy syndics retained the title during all this period, as did Anthony Frattini in Rome, but their services were no longer requested as in the past. (247)

Even before the 1764 decision the administration was always under the direct and final responsibility of the rector, within the limits of the juridical laws in force. In 1749 the founder asked Fr. Fulgentius to be vigilant in choosing workers, because Angelo, the bricklayer, though a good man, was making the cost of the building expensive "by the amount of time he takes to build." In addition, he advised him to have somebody in his confidence watch the workers to see that they fulfilled their duties, rather than trusting their statements. The rector was directed to buy things as cheaply as possible and at the most suitable time, and together with the vicar keep the administration books in order. In the registers that survive we see the meticulousness of visiting inspectors in verifying the accounts and in giving clear and precise rules for a truthful compilation and diligent administration. It was in this case a service rendered to the brethren and one of respect for God's gifts received through the charity of benefactors. (248)

6. "We are poor and we must live as such"

The founder frequently had this phrase on his lips when telling his religious that solidarity with the poor must be not merely nominal but a reality in their person-

al and communal conduct. He had written in the rule: "Holy poverty would not be true poverty if it were not uncomfortable. Therefore let none of the brethren seek their own comfort, but follow Christ Jesus who had not whereon to lay his head and then died naked on the hard wood of the cross." (249) The founder's realism must be kept in mind to understand how seriously the Congregation lived poverty in buildings, furniture, and personal and communitarian habits during this period. "Let the entire building breathe poverty and religious decorum" said the rule. This meant an edifice very simple in style, with rooms about 3 by 2½ meters, a corridor one meter wide, a simple hall door, and a medium-sized church with only three chapels. From 1746 onward the number of chapels could be increased if priests were more numerous or the benefactor's piety demanded. (250) The furniture had to be poor, simple and reduced to the bare minimum particularly in the rooms, where a small wooden bed with straw mattress, no sheets, the necessary blankets, a chair, a small table, a cardboard holy picture and the crucifix were all that were allowed. (251) Refectory tables were most simple and without tablecloths. The jugs for wine and water and the plates were of simple terracotta, "not refined," and the forks and spoons of wood or bone. Each religious at table had a napkin of coarse cloth to protect his habit and to clean the cutlery. In the library, besides the books, there were paper and ink for the religious to use with the rector's permission, putting them back in their places afterward. In 1746 it was permitted to keep necessary writing materials in one's room, but the injunction remained to keep the rooms uncluttered, asking the rector each time for what was necessary, "kneeling down with all modesty and humility as in begging alms like true imitators of Christ's poor little ones." The underclothes were all in common, so none was kept in one's room; even the second habit was kept in the tailor shop. The prohibition against keeping food or drink in one's room was strict and unchanging. It was not even licit for superiors to have them, even if kept exclusively for others in need. Everything had to be kept in a room for that purpose, which was separate from the kitchen store room, and the key was generally kept by the brother infirmarian. (252)

Cleanliness and good order were to be joined to poverty, as signs of respect for others, for self and for the honor of God. (253) To ensure that religious would be certain of getting what was allowed them by rule, a series of detailed directions were given concerning distribution and renewal of underclothes and habit. This was to safeguard good order, not leaving things to the rector's whims. The rule of 1764 provided that a new habit should be given every two years by the first Sunday of October and the mantle renewed when necessary. This was in force up to the middle of the 1900's. (254)

To combine some measure of physical comfort with austerity, particularly when on journeys, a heavier habit was allowed for winter and a lighter one for summer. In 1754 a factory was set up at St. Angelo to provide the necessary cloth for habits, mantles and shirts. This was the work of a tertiary brother, Anthony Benedetti, an expert Florentine weaver. We do not know whether the factory was established for economic reasons or in order to have a uniform type of cloth for the entire Congregation. Probably both motives influenced the decision. This was not out of keeping with the economy of the time. It was not uncommon for poor families to possess a loom in the self-sufficient economy then in force. The plant had a separate administration because it had to be maintained by what it produced, and even though under the local superior's vigilance, the house could take from it no direct profit. Passionist lay brothers and teriaries, instructed by Bro. Benedict, worked there. The 1758 general chapter established that the cloth should be strong but unrefined. By Easter each year the rectors, through their provincial, had to hand in a list of the cloth their retreat needed for that year. (255)

Solidarity with the poor also meant travelling like them, that is, on foot. Use of a horse was allowed in case of illness, or in the summer months while passing through malarial areas in order to hasten the journey and avoid contracting the fever. (256) The founder's vigilance in saving the kitchen firewood, the oil in lamps, in watering the wine, in preparing the pittance in conformity with poverty and temperance became a norm for

all superiors. All this may seem excessive, yet it was fully consistent with living as the poor did, those poor of the 1700s who picked up a piece of bread, a button, a thread, who saved a drop of oil or a penny, and were far removed from the anxiety that "time is money" or the pressure of a society that must consume to produce and keep up an economic level. Speaking about Bro. James' virtue of poverty, Fr. Fulgentius presents this spiritual aspect of the Passionist community: "Besides the perfect detachment from all that could diminish the splendor of this beautiful virtue, he was most careful in picking up for the retreat even the least little thing, as do the poor who collect everything because in need of everything." (257) Bro. James' habit was patched by him up to the very limit at which it could still hold together. He was not the only one. This was the lifestyle of nearly all the religious. Bishop Struzziere himself, as provincial, appeared once at St. Angelo with so patched a habit that the founder asked him if he had no other. On receiving a negative answer the founder had a new one made for him at the same retreat. (258)

The founder, superiors and spiritual directors continually promoted the faithful practice of poverty by sound reasoning. On canonical visitations a diligent inspection was made of each religious' room. One writer tells us, "On visitations to the retreats and on other occasions, he recommended particularly this point of holy poverty; he himself looked over even the smallest things, so that there should be an exact observance." Another religious recalls how on visiting the rooms, if he found them as poor as he wished, he would be overjoyed. (259)

From documentation at hand it appears that the greater majority of the religious were faithful to poverty, and even lived it to an heroic degree at the time of the foundations. As a matter of fact, towards 1770 nearly all the retreats had to work to improve the buildings left unfinished at the time of possession. It was necessary to furnish them, lay out the gardens, improve the library, provide linen, etc. They also felt the harsh effects of the 1764-1768 famine. In 1769 the founder could write: "Our retreats are most poor, laden with debts, and even this

hospice (Most Holy Crucified) has a debt of 700 *scudi*, without any way of paying it. And yet we are in Rome. But the want is also great even among the noble families." The creditor cancelled this debt in 1771, thanks to the intervention of the syndic and benefactor, Anthony Frattini. (260) An integral part of the practice of poverty was the diligent care of community goods or of what was given for personal use. It was a way of taking good care of the community, of respecting the sacrifice of benefactors, and an act of thankfulness to God for his gifts to the community. The rule recommended that the brothers, as chief custodians, "care for the Congregation's goods as things belonging to God and given them by God, to whom they must give a strict account if through their negligence and carelessness things should be wasted" (261). Self-accusation in the refectory for breaking or destroying something, albeit involuntary, was a gesture of reparation for the damage occasioned the community and a request for God's pardon for not having taken perfect care of his goods.

The commitment of the religious to poverty was on the whole unanimous due to the general atmosphere of fervor. Their sincere practice, arising from a generous fidelity to Jesus, gave the religious that serene experience of happiness which the founder had glimpsed on receiving the form of the rule: "Blessed is the soul that faithfully practices holy poverty and detachment from all created things...because God in his infinite mercy will transform it into his most holy love." (262)

7. Fidelity to apostolic poverty guarantees the Congregation's future

A conviction Paul frequently repeated was that the guarantee of the Congregation's future lay in constant fidelity to that holy poverty which characterized his original inspiration. Greed, besides drawing us away from God, easily weakens fraternal communion and gives rise to worldly relationships and dealings with people outside. In the rule he affirmed this vigorously and threateningly: "It is certain indeed that the spirit of perfection will

reign in the Congregation while the love and observance of voluntary poverty remains intact; if this is extinguished, unbridled cupidity will upset all and the fervor and love of the holy lifestyle will decay." (263)

To preserve fraternal communion and dependence on others for the use of material, religious were forbidden to seek alms for themselves, and the founder wished that benefactors be informed that whatever they spontaneously gave an individual went for the use of the community. "Let all observe exactly this prescription of the Institute, and when occasion offers let the benefactors be informed, so that there be no deceit or error, but all be faithfully and holily in conformity with the love and respect due to religious poverty." Should anyone dare to seek alms of his own accord not only would he be severely punished and made an example, but "what has been thus received...shall be given to the poor, even though such alms should be in the form of real money." (264) The fruit of sin should not remain in the Congregation to attract God's chastisement for taking advantage of goods unjustly acquired. The founder frequently inculcated fidelity to poverty in order to see the Congregation flourish: "I recommend to you holy poverty; if you would be poor you shall be saints. On the contrary, if you seek to grow rich, you shall lose the religious spirit, and no longer will you be mirrors of the regular observance." (265)

When near death he again assured the Congregation that it would flourish and bear fruits of holiness in the Church if together with prayer and solitude, poverty also reigned. More than one witness reports this promise and adjuration of the founder in his lively desire that all the religious should be worthy of his hopes.

L. PENANCE IN THE PASSIONIST CONGREGATION

As seen in the preceding section, the spirit and practice of poverty were an eminently concrete embodiment of the spirit and practice of the penance proper to the

Congregation. The founder's maxim, "poverty would not be true poverty if it were not uncomfortable," taken seriously, meant doing authentic penance. (266) A synthesis of what Paul himself meant by a "penitential life" are the questions addressed to the postulants. These were written after the mitigations introduced in 1746:

"Do you feel ready and courageous enough to submit to all the customary observances? that is:

- a life of total abstinence from meat, but with proper and decent food;
- a moderate fast three times a week; on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays only one hot course which though not a true fast, is however, a holy abstinence, profitable even for bodily health;
- eggs and dairy products four times a week including Sundays in the retreats far removed from the sea;
- on journeys eating what the benefactors offer;
- a willingness to live in solitude, two or more miles from town, leaving it only to help the neighbor or from motives of obedience;
- in dress: a woolen shirt next to the skin, drawers only for decency's sake, habit and mantle of coarse cloth, feet bare save for sandals;
- rising at midnight for matins; psalms recited standing up;
- the discipline three times a week, but not to blood; four times in Lent and Advent;
- sleeping dressed on a straw covered mattress with a woolen blanket in a poor room;
- silence, save in common recreations;
- to submit yourself as a simple and humble child in obedience to the superior, which is the short way to becoming a saint;
- perfect submission to charitable corrections and mortifications of your self-will imposed by the superior, the spiritual director and the master." (267)

Besides these concrete manifestations of penance derived as a whole from "the exercises of the Congregation" or the acts of observance which created a style of life, Paul stressed fasting and abstinence, following in this

the penitential tradition of the church and religious life. He understood literally the Gospel words: "this kind of demon can only be cast out by prayer and fasting" (Mt. 17:20). Time and again the phrase was on Paul's lips or pen and he wrote it into the 1736 and 1741 rules. He stated that fasting was a marvellous help to prayer, and encouraged religious not to be alarmed by the seriousness of perpetual abstinence and of the fast prescribed by rule. "My dearly beloved in Jesus Christ, the fast of this least Congregation doesn't seem unusual or difficult; he who practices it will find himself always more content. It is the spirit of this least Congregation to observe the evangelical counsels in the best possible manner, after the law of God. For their perfect observance it is necessary to be men of much prayer. Now, how can we be men of much prayer without abstinence? 'Prayer and fasting are profitable,' said the archangel to Tobias; and Jesus who is our way, our truth and our life tells us 'this kind of demon can only be cast out by prayer and fasting'." (268)

Two chapters of the rule deal with fasting, a sign of the great importance the founder attached to it. But as time went by it was seen that the health of many religious declined and hence, on the basis of this experience, the founder had to take into account the suggestions of the pontifical commissions. Various mitigations were made to the primitive penitential rigor in order to arrive at such a balance that the penance could be truthfully considered "moderate," as the founder often mentioned. (269) The outline that follows shows how the practice of fasting and abstinence evolved. Prescription of even the slightest things does not reflect legalism, but exactness in the service of God, "our Supreme Good", who deserves every attention possible in response to his infinite love.

THE EVOLUTION OF FASTING

1728-1741

Abstinence: from meat, perpetual; from eggs and dairy products, daily except Christmas and its octave, Epiphany even if it fell on Friday, Easter or Pentecost with their respective octaves. On the feasts of the Trinity, Corpus Christi and its octave day, and the feasts of Our Lady's Nativity, Assumption and that of All Saints, even if these three feasts fell on a Friday, eggs and dairy products could be eaten "to the greater glory of God."

Lunch: soup and main course of cooked vegetables; bread and wine according to each one's requirements; the wine watered "for greater temperance." On feast days and Thursdays the superior could add something else provided it conformed "always with holy poverty."

Dinner: about 150 grams between bread and fruit and a little cooked salad. On feast days "a decent dinner" could be given.

Fridays: if not a feast day, only a plate of soup was given or a soup of legumes for those who wanted it; whoever wished to fast on bread and water could do so with the superior's permission.

1741-1746

In general as in the preceding period. Brothers employed in heavy work were permitted to fast only three times a week. Youths under 21 years could take "something more in the evening" except on Church fasts.

1746-1769

Abstinence from meat: perpetual. Eggs and dairy products were allowed in those retreats that could not procure fish. By a decree of the founder, we don't know what year, dairy products and eggs were permitted also on feast days not falling on Fridays, Mondays, Tuesdays or Thursdays.

Fasting: continuous in Advent and Lent; three times a week during the year; on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Fast was not kept on a feast of Our Lady, even though not of obligation, or on Christmas, Epiphany, All Saints, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the feasts of the apostles and evangelists, the conversion of St. Paul, the two feasts of the chair of St. Peter or the feast of the retreat's patron.

Lunch: on fast days soup was served and one main course either of fresh or salted fish, or eggs or dairy products. The superior might add a small plate of cooked herbs or fruit. **In the evening:** one course not containing either cheese or eggs. Except on fast days something more was served. On advice of the pontifical commission, it was decided that on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at the evening meal a hot plate of herbs or vegetables and "a few small fish" be served; about 100 grams of bread were allowed and somewhat more for the younger religious and the lay brothers employed in heavy duties.

Fridays: only soup without main course or fruit; whoever wished to fast on bread and water could do so with the superior's permission. Only on the Fridays within the octaves of Easter, Corpus Christi and Christmas a main course could be served.

1769-1775

As in the preceding period. The feast of St. Mary Magdalen, the penitent, was also exempt from fasting as prescribed in the 1736 text of the rule.

It was specified that at the evening meal on days not of fast "a modest and adequate dinner," that is, soup and one course could be served.

Fridays: Same as above; however, from the first of May to the first of October, in order to make the exhausting heat more bearable, a small plate of cooked herbs could be served in addition to the soup.

1775

Abstinence: same as before as regards meat, while fish, eggs and dairy products were indiscriminately permitted everywhere.

Fridays: as formerly for dinner; at supper all the year round, besides the soup, a small plate of herbs was allowed. The suggestion of fasting on bread and water with the superior's permission was removed.

Dinner: on feast days and Thursdays two courses were introduced and on more solemn feast days, three. In the evening only soup and one course. To add cheese and fruit was left to the superior if he could do so comfortably.

NOTE: From 1758 onward the general chapter authorized the superior to allow a little bread with watered wine to those religious who had weak stomachs on account of age, illness or because of study and heavy work. The 1769 general chapter allowed those in formal study to have a light breakfast. These also were allowed a small plate of herbs in addition to the soup at the noon meal on Fridays. On Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays they were allowed not only a small plate of herbs, but also a small main course at the evening meal. In 1775 it was decided that brothers doing extraordinary work could have as collation "a little bread with a slight portion of cheese or something similar and a little wine, that is, one or two cups of watered wine." (270)

The evolution of fasting from perpetual to three times a week, and the introduction in 1775 of two courses on Thursdays and feast days, and three on the more solemn feasts, placed the Congregation on a level with most similar institutes. At the time of its greatest austerity it was on a level, I think, with the Reformed Franciscans of the Retreats to which St. Leonard of Port Maurice belonged, and the religious of St. Francis of Paola. The increase in the number of courses is somewhat surprising and we have no documents that explain it. It is probable that it arose from a discussion on whether or not to eat meat, since some attributed the poor health of many religious to its absence. As the majority were in favor of keeping perpetual abstinence they may have favored an increase of food as a means of keeping the religious healthy and vigorous.

What remained constant in all this period was the prohibition of eating or drinking between meals without the superior's permission, which could not be easily obtained. The 1736 and 1741 texts of the rule obliged even the superior to ask the vicar's permission in such cases. We find the motive for this mortification in the very rule itself: "The more one indulges his appetites, the more molested and tormented he will be; he who lives according to his whims, shall not have peace." (271) The temptation to take something between the only two meals, ordinarily taken at 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., must oftentimes have been very strong. Fr. Anthony Tomasini,

already ordained before entering, found it very difficult at the beginning to keep fasting till dinner time. So with great cunning he would advance the hands of the clock during the instruction that preceded the divine office before meals. Troubled by his fault he accused himself of it in the refectory, and as a penance the master sent him to prayer while the community had its meals. (272) In 1766 during the founder's canonical visitation of St. Angelo at Vetralla, he decreed that no one, without express permission from the rector or vicar, should eat any herbs "were it only one fennel leaf," nor share food with a fellow religious or a secular. Transgressors would be punished by a fast on bread and water. (273) Weakness and the groans of an empty stomach could occasion strong temptations, melancholy and fear for one's perseverance, and the religious experienced this, though the majority resisted courageously. Paul himself when writing to Fr. Fulgentius announced that "after a serious conference with Frs. Marcoaurelius and John Baptist at St. Angelo it was judged necessary to give the poor young men nourishment more suitable to their age and occupation" in conformity with the 1746 rule, and told him to apply that point of the rule that allowed the superior to serve a small plate of cooked herbs and fruit on Wednesdays and Saturdays. He noted that when religious seek to mortify themselves at meals "it's seen and practiced by all. Each one leaves something as a mortification." He recommended watchfulness "so that the young men keep strong, otherwise we will turn the place into a hospital and few will persevere." He then went on to point out the temptations: "I'm most certain that when the religious have not the just and moderate food that the rule allows according to their needs, not all, but the majority at least, are sorely tempted because of the tedium of life, melancholy, heaviness, etc. It's true they are silent because they love virtue. They do not tell the local superior for fear of annoying him. The tedium, however, is great and frequently gives rise to a spirit of tepidity." And jokingly he added, "My old age has taught me something, even from my own experience." Having the rule in mind, he exhorted superiors "to satisfy each one's needs, both the weak and the more robust" and to serve something extra on feast days, especially the more solemn ones, in order

that all be more relieved even in spirit "because," he said realistically, "we have not all arrived at the peak of perfection, and we need to succor our miserable humanity as far as possible, as our holy rule does not give the body more than necessary." (274)

A robust faith and an intense union with God were needed to live this penitential life. Only the joy that comes from belonging to the living God could give the courage and strength to abstain from satisfying such a vital physical need. This was the motive for reading during meals so that conversation would not turn to food or other things, with the risk of delighting in the food or giving an opportunity for complaining, and thus depriving the Passionist penitential life of all meaning. "While eating let them keep their eyes downcast and their thoughts on God. In order to achieve this more easily and with greater spiritual advantage, let them attend to the reading with recollection; let them strive as much as possible to practice humility, mortification and interior recollection." They would thus have "the interior food of holy love" which would make the most delicate food nauseating. (275)

While insisting on fasting and mortification, the founder wished that the religious should have all they were allowed by rule. He condemned, therefore, all restriction of due nourishment in order to save money for building projects, no matter how useful. In 1749 he wrote to Fr. Fulgentius who was then constructing some necessary premises for the community: "I trust that the construction will not impede the adequate and due provisions for the religious, because the rule states that if there be a surplus of alms after the above-mentioned provisions, it shall be used for the poor or on building if necessary. Therefore it is not advisable to incur debts on building. Rather, I will not consent to its completion if surplus alms are lacking; while charity demands that the religious be provided for first." (276) In 1755 he decreed that the rector of St. Eutizio should spend no further money for the sacristy or buildings if he had not first "provided sufficiently for the needs of his religious fam-

ily both as regards food and provision of habits according to our holy poverty." (277)

Whatever was served for the nourishment of the religious, though in quantity and quality strictly in accord with prescriptions, had to be prepared with cleanliness so that it could be eaten without repugnance and without fear of harm. Recommendations on this aspect were numberless. In the letter to Fr. Fulgentius mentioned above, the founder went into details on the diligent preparation of what was to be served to the religious. Among other things he recommended that the lettuce be kept "in a cool place, being careful with the vinegar, and observing well that there be no worms." He reminded him of what had been already decided, that on Wednesdays and Saturdays a little plate be served "of good herbs, well cooked and well seasoned. Thus the religious will be healthier. It is necessary to observe that the just pittance is served, and that two pittances be served on Thursdays according to the rule. While here in St. Angelo we are poorer, care is taken that we are never wanting." He ended: "It seems to me that he who presides is obliged to this, at least to watch occasionally." In the same letter he reproved Bro. Joseph Petruzzelli, whom he esteemed highly. Out of love for poverty and penance this brother ate the leftovers, after they were half spoiled. "Brother Joseph continues eating the leftovers of three or four days. In no way do I want this," wrote Paul, "and I know I have told him, but...nothing happens. I have no use for such devotions. I want him to have soup and a warm pittance like the rest. This I desire in the name of the Lord, otherwise he will soon be in the tomb and without merit." (278)

Penitential acts were plentiful: dressing in a coarse woolen habit, not wearing even sandals, at least within the retreat and on missions up to 1748, often suffering frozen feet in winter. This happened particularly in the first young community in formal study at St. Angelo at Vetralla, where the retreat still in construction was "poorly sealed and sheltered, so that the cold came in on all sides." All went without sandals "and some had their feet badly swollen and a few lost even their toenails. Yet they appeared content in the Lord and in holy cheerful-

ness, almost forgetful of their discomforts," having an opportunity "to suffer more and to imitate better the suffering Jesus." (279) Many took the discipline beyond what was prescribed in the rule. (280) Many religious followed the example of the founder and that of his brother John Baptist, using chains and hairshirts. The spiritual director or the superior with a prudent discernment controlled these extraordinary penances, however, taking into account the subject's health and genuine spirit of penance. (281)

For the founder and his edifying companions, the austerities and the "penitential life" were part of the "apostolic life," which tends to intimate union with God by means of assiduous prayer and then guides others to the same end, as expressed in the first chapter of the rule. Hence their apparently contradictory attitudes of care for the health, cleanliness, and adequate nourishment of the religious, and at the same time the joy of seeing the religious lovingly and courageously dedicated to penance and determined to overcome temptation. The founder and his companions were aware that if we do not bear in our own flesh the wounds of Christ Crucified and do not have a daily experience of his death, we will not live in love with the "Crucified Love" nor will we intercede for the conversion of others as our vocation demands. There is the conviction, moreover, that his ascetical experience of penance and the mystical trials were "gifts" from God as a means to progress in the likeness of his Son.

I quote only some of the texts. In an exhortation he sent to the Argentario community in 1746 the founder recalled: "On the greater solemnities God usually deprives even his great servants of spiritual consolations to try their faith and fidelity. So, lift up your hearts to serve our great God and Savior Jesus Christ in purest faith and love, with stout hearts and willing spirits. Amen." As we see, this is an announcement both of joy and of penance. (282) This conviction is more clearly expressed in a letter to Struzziere, who in the winter of 1748, had made part of the journey to Terracina barefoot. The founder said to him: "Even though I rejoice in the great merit

before God from so many sufferings, especially the uncomfortable journey to Terracina, I cannot but feel sorry....Moreover, as you well know, I have given you all my faculties, and so without the least fault against the holy rule you could have had some relief by riding. Enough. Your reward is great." He then encouraged him to suffer and do penance, overcoming all natural aversions, because this was the way to acquire recollection and the gift of prayer which befits the "true apostolic life."

Let us hear his own words: "By these sufferings the good God prepares your soul for greater undertakings and above all for obtaining that highest of gifts, continuous interior recollection, in order to lead always that 'true apostolic life' which consists in working for souls and in continuous prayer and contemplation. This does not mean praying continually on your knees, but in that high interior recollection, remaining in your interior depths, totally absorbed in God's love." He then goes on to explain: "those great interior combats, those fierce aversions and desolations, those strong yearnings one experiences in sufferings, particularly in the body, as cold, weakness, pain, etc., accompanied by various wild temptations. All this is but an exceedingly great preparation for virtues to flourish in the interior temple so as to arrive at the above-mentioned most profound recollection." There is no imperfection in such things, he assured him, as they arise "from a nature disheartened by great desolations and are hence involuntary and by no means harmful to holiness," while they serve to keep one humble.

As if to encourage Struzziere he then gave him some biographical details to show that "men of penance" are profoundly human, and they are fortified, upheld and encouraged on their hard road only by a great sense of responsibility before the mystery of "the Crucified Love" and of the uncertain destiny of those who do not adhere to this saving love. "I was forgetting to tell you that, during many years on long journeys, made barefoot amidst snow and other discomforts, I myself frequently suffered such fierce pains in my feet and in the rest of

my body especially, as my habit was sparsely knit. Besides a very great interior desolation, I suffered fierce temptations against the theological virtues, temptations to impatience, impulses to blasphemy, tendencies to despair and, above all, such horrible tribulations of spirit that cannot be explained, and all this accompanied by the pains and discomforts of the journey. Imagine now, dear Father, what my condition was. And do you think I do not experience them even now? When coming from Montalto to Toscanella (March 19, 1748) we had a north wind that nearly swept us away, and one of our men fell ill.... From this secret which I share only with you, you can infer how close my heart is to yours. Courage, dear Father, God wishes to make a saint of you." (283) This enlightening letter may help us to understand the goal that was desired in the Congregation and that many religious achieved, encouraging one another in fidelity to him who had loved them and given himself up for them.

FOOTNOTES

1. Among many passages I cite only these: Processi IV, 357-358; Let. I, 256, 280; Let. III, 146, 156. Cf. Zoffoli, op. cit. III, 854-860.

2. Reg. et const. 24/III/35-40; 76/I-III/44-53. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 47-50; 263, 309. Let. IV, analytic index, under, Presenza di Dio. Cf. also Compendioso ristretto di esami per le persone religiose, e particolarmente per i Novizi, pp. 104-110.

3. Reg. et const. 78/I/21-40; 76/II-III/54ff. Let. IV, analytic index, under: Comunione Sacramentale; SS. Sacramento.

4. Processi IV, 356-357. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida. N. 76-77, 84. Cf. also Positio... Jacobi, p. 67.

5. Let. III, 156.

6. Let. III, 149. Cf. also Let. II, 150; Let. III; 439; Processi III, 460.

7. These words with others full of the deep theological science on the true nature of the "apostolic life" are directed to Fr. Struzzieri, Let. II, 752.

8. To understand well this affirmation of "mystical apostolate" signifies also being able to understand the whole thrust of the Passionist life and the insistence of the founder on prayer as the preparation and authentic way to being apostles. Cf. Reg. et const. 2/I-III/31-41; 8/I-III/1-20; 98/II-III/20-42. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47 nn. 3, 21-24. Notizia '68, n. 5.

9. Reg. et const. 94/II-III/25-35; 98/II-III/1-13; 54/I-II/22-30; notizia '47, n. 9.

10. Let. III, 154-155, 276-278, 419; Let. V, 193.

11. Reg. et const. 76/III/13-19; 102/I-III/7-26; 138/I-III/56ff. Let. IV, 290. Among all the circulars this subject is treated especially in Let. IV, 227-228.

12. These studies have been promoted by three courses of research on Passionist history and spirituality held on the international level in Rome.

13. The phrase cited is of 1746, while the texts of 1736 and 1741 said "promote devotion to the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus," Reg. et const. 56/I-III/47-53.

14. The notes of Cavalieri are in Reg. et const. pp. 152-153.

15. Diario on Nov. 27, 1720: Let. I, 4.

16. Strambi, Vita, 147.
17. PAR, f. 726r.
18. Holstenius, Codex regularum, vol. 6, p. 302.
19. Ibid. p. 149. Cf. J.G. Gerhartz Insuper promitto. Die feierlichen Sondergelübde Katholischer Ordens. Roma 1966.
20. According to A. Volpato, "Gli spirituali e l'intentio di S. Francesco," in RSCI 1979 pp. 151-152.
21. Reg. et const. 30/I/6-13.
22. Bearing in mind the teaching of St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae II-II, q. 82, a. 1, 3, 4; the teaching of S. Francesco de Sales, Introduzione alla vita devota, part I, chap. 1; it can be well understood what Paul meant using the word "devotion," "true solid devotion" in place of "grateful memory." Cf. also Dévotion, in Dict. Spir., vol. III, col. 720-722.
23. Let. IV, 220-221.
24. Reg. et const. 36/I-III/20-26; 56/I-III/48-52.
25. See the vow of the commission in Reg. et const. p. 157, n. 4.
26. See the vow of the commission in Reg. et const. p. 174, n. 9.
27. The Bull Supremi apostolatus, #3; Bull Praeclara virtutum, #2.
28. Regole e Costituzione delle religiose della SS. Croce e Passione di G.C. (Roma, 1979), n. 24, chap. X, n. 48-49.
29. Let. II, 224.
30. It seems to me that Gehartz, op. cit., pp. 202-204, excessively reduces the specific vow of the Passionists to a vow of practices of devotion, leaving in the shadows the whole movement of an ascetic-mystical life and of evangelization that it requires in order to be able to lead the people by way of meditation on the Passion of Jesus from conversion to union with God.
31. Let. IV, 220-221.
32. Reg. et const. 58/II-III/49-61.
33. Ibid. 58/II/-III/38-61. Let. III, 514.
34. Let. II, 274.
35. Let. II, 272, 273-274. Let. V, 57, 59. Let. II, 269-270.
36. To avoid repetition, I refer to what was said in chap. 2, also to: F. Giorgini, Promuovere la grata memoria e il culto della passione di Gesu (Roma, 1980), pp. 10-18. Cf. also Let. IV, 220-221. For the "sign", Let. II, 218, 272-273.

37. Rahner, "Fondamenti teologici della devozione al S. Cuore di Gesu," in Saggi di Cristologia, pp. 293-294.
38. W. Stark, The Sociology of Religion; a study of Christendom (London, 1960), vol. 3, pp. 306-314, recalls that St. Paul of the Cross, together with St. Alphonsus De' Liguori, brought a beneficial revolution to the Church through the attention to the poor and humble Christ and to the poor, who were excluded by the philosophers, by the middle class, and at times by the very people drawn to the Church.
39. Reg. et const. 4/I/5; 58/I/20-27; 78/I/10-17.
40. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 26.
41. Paul calls for a specialization of holiness that requires efficacious actualization of the charism for the benefit of the Church by requiring some limits in pastoral action and the actualization of certain characteristics in the life of the community and the individual religious.
42. Reg. et const. 2/I-III/1-5.
43. Let. II, 127-128.
44. Let. III, 276-277.
45. Let. IV, 200; Let. V, 193.
46. Reg. et const. 6/I-III/3, 24-25; 36; 50/I/4; 98/II-III/15, 47. The Latin translation says "recessus," "domus religiosi secessus," "domus solitaria." S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 6; 24-25.
47. Lk 5:16; 6:12; 9:10, 18; Mk 6:31-33.
48. Reg. et const. 6-9/I-III/1-3, 1-20; 98/II-III/20-41.
49. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, nn. 6, 21-22, 24.
50. Let. IV, 235.
51. Let. IV, 273, n. 5, 6; S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 171.
52. Let. IV, 273, n. 7; S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 170; 305. Reg. et const. 134/III/1-4. Decrees for the foundation at Sts. John and Paul, 1773, decr. n. 1, 2.
53. Let. IV, 273. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 171; Reg. et const. 128/I-III/25-26; 132/I-III/11-18.
54. Reg. et const. 48/I/31-36. Let. IV, 252, n. 6. Processi IV, 260. Cf. also Let. II, 426; III, 418.
55. Reg. et const. 4/I-III/52ff; 103/IV-V/48-53. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 26. Let. III, 741. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 12, 3; 38, 3; 85.

56. Visita can. S. Angelo 1766, decr. n. 3: visita can. Ceccano 1767, decr. II, n. 1. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 79; 138-140; 142. Decrees for the foundation of Sts. John and Paul, 1773, decr. n. 3; 5.
57. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, 322. Let. IV, 240, n. 9. Visita can. S. Angelo 1764, decr. n. 7; Visita can. S. Sozio 1767, decr. II, 5.
58. Reg. et const. 128/I-III/24ff; 132/I-III/54ff. Let. IV, 273, n. 4; 6. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 145; 148; 150; 151. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 82; 85. Let. IV, 268.
59. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 49.
60. Cf. S. Breton, Il silenzio nella spiritualità cristiana e in S. Paolo della Croce (Roma, 1980), pp. 12-16.
61. Reg. et const. 100/I/46-49. Visita can. S. Eutizio 1755, decr. n. 3; Visita can. S. Angelo 1766, decr. n. 4, 6.
62. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 10. Reg. et const. 102/I-III/7ff. Cf. also Giammaria, Mons. Struzziери, f. 188.
63. Reg. et const. 100/I-III/15ff. Cf. the constitution of Gregory IX Cum reformatione of July 1, 1228, #IV: silentium teneatur semper in oratorio monasterii, refectorio et dormitorio." Cf. also Giammaria, Mons. Struzziери, f. 192.
64. Reg. et const. 100/I-III/56ff.
65. Bull Supremi apostolatus, #4. Let. III, 730.
66. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 62, 1. 67. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 138-139; 289; 293.
68. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n. 4.
69. Reg. et const. p. 155: the deposition of Fr. Anthony Danei before episcopal visitators in 1733. the deposition of Joseph Orlandini in Processi II, 409-410.
70. Processi II, 106.
71. Notes of Bishop Cavalieri in Reg. et const. p. 154.
72. C. Naselli, La celebrazione del mistero cristiano e la liturgia delle ore in S. Paolo della Croce (Roma, 1980), pp. 29-30.
73. Reg. et const. 68/I-III/7-17, 48-55.
74. S. Benedetto, Regola, chap. 16.
75. Cf. Acts 3: 1; 10:9.
76. Reg. et const. p. 175, the vow of the commission.
77. Reg. et const. 68/III/35-59; 70/I-III/9-12. Let. II, 84.
78. Reg. et const. 70/II-III/9-53; 71/V/21-44.

79. Reg. et const. 68/I-III/7-19. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 56, 2nd. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 13.
80. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, nn. 1, 8, 10.
81. Reg. et const. p. 164, n. 113.
82. Ibid. 12/I-III/61ff.
83. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 7; 14. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 103, 2nd.
84. Decreti et rac. decr. n. 81. In 1764 the decree was not confirmed, ibid. n. 107, 2nd.
85. Reg. et const. 68/I-III/25-34. See also the extended treatment by Zoffoli, op. cit., II, 1145-1222.
86. Let. V, 244-246.
87. Let. III, 166. Bollettino 1922, pp. 296-302.
88. Struzziere utilized this method. Giammaria, Mons. Struzziere, f. 160.
89. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 1. Processi I, 162; II, 216.
90. Let. III, 260. Cf. Acto C.P. XVI (1948-50) 152. Cf. also Consuetudines 14, lines 13-18.
91. AG. A.V. I/1f. 15v-16r.
92. Reg. et const. 2/I-III/34-41. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 21.
93. Reg. et const. 8/I-III/1-20; 66/I-III/7-17. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n. 8; 11.
94. Reg. et const. 68/I-III/37-40; 69/IV-V/42-50; 70/I-III/9ff.; 108/I-III/8-10; p. 155. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 11; notizia '68, n. 8.
95. Reg. et const. 70-71/I-V/9-20; 83/V/35-42.
96. Ibid. 72-73/I-V/7-20. Let. IV, 252, n. 4. Cf. also Let. IV, 28-29; 279, nn. 1, 5.
97. Let. IV, 28, n. 2; 3.
98. Reg. et const. 82-83/III-V/28-61. Decreti et rac., decr. n. 56, 2-4; 65; 104; 129. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n. 31.
99. Regolamenti da osservarsi da' Chierici Scalzi... (AG. A. II-IV/4-10), f. 166-168.
100. The complete title is: Pratiche per mantenersi alla presenza di Dio. Rivedute, corrette ed aumentate da un ecclesiastico francese (Venezia, 1718).
101. Reg. et const. 76/I-III/44-53. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 30: Cf. Bollettino 1924, p. 343.
102. Reg. et const. 72/I-III/21-27.

103. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 22. Strambi, Vita, 267, 281.
104. Ibid. 293-294.
105. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 23.
106. Reg. et const. 124/I-III/1-50. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 153; 165. Let. 274, n. 12.
107. Reg. et const. 70/III/30-50; 124-125/III-V/28-40. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 114-128.
108. As proof of what is said consult Giammaria Cioni. Storia delle fondazioni, in Bollettino 1922-1928. Biographies or obituary notices of the religious of this period in AG. Silvestrelli, Memorie dei primi compagni di S. Paolo della Croce.
109. The first Italian edition is from 1722.
110. Compendio ristretto di esami per le persone religiose, e particolarmente per i novizi, f. 274-278. To understand better the schema adopted in the Congregation cf. F. Di Bernardo, La "meditatio vitae et passionis Domini" nella spiritualità cristiana, pp. 40-55.
111. Processi IV, 276. See Processi IV, analytic index, under Mazzetto spir. Zoffoli, op. cit. III, 862-863.
112. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 24-26.
113. Of the meditation of Fr. Louis da Ponte there are various editions both at the retreats of St. Angelo, and the Presentation, and at the novitiate.
114. For general information cf. Eucharistia. Il misterio dell'altare nel pensiero e nella vita della Chiesa. A cura di Mons. A. Piolanti (Roma, 1957), pp. 783-1024. E. Longpré, Eucharistie et expérience mystique, in Dict. Sp., vol. IV/2, col. 1586-1621.
115. Giorgini, Promuovere la grata memoria e il culto della passione di Gesù, pp. 18-21. Barsotti, L'Eucarestia in S. Paolo della Croce, pp. 10-12. Strambi, Vita, 80; 220-226; Zoffoli, op. cit., II, 1145-1183; 1459-1502.
116. Let. V, 142. Let. V, 210-211.
117. Let. I, 360; V, 38.
118. Reg. et const. 50/I-III/12ff. Strambi, Vita, 224. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 197-203. Processi I, 576.
119. Reg. et const. 78/I/21-40.
120. Ibid., 76/II-III/54ff. Strambi, Vita, 223.
121. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 319, 136.
122. Reg. et const. 70/I-III/61-66; 71/IV-V/45-50; 108-109/I-V/5-10. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 6.

123. Processi III, 281. Cf. also Processi IV, 25.
124. Reg. et const. 90/III/I-15; 98/II/50-60.
125. Ibid., 130/I-III/4-14. Strambi writes, Vita, 223.
126. Reg. et const. 76/II-III/54ff.
127. Let. III, 212; Let. I, 183; II, 626; III, 360.
128. Compendioso ristretto dei esami per... i novizi, f. 299-304.
129. A proof that the churches were kept clean and in order can be had from the absence of specific decrees on the subject emanating from the canonical visitations.
130. Cf. Jn 6:43-58. Reg. et const., p. 165, n. 132.
131. PAR 2163rv.
132. Reg. et const 72/I/III/28-56.
133. Let. III, 716. Processi, III, 279.
134. Let. III, 190, 192.
135. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 38; 40. Processi IV, 80-81.
136. Let. III, 192, 190. Barsotti, op. cit., pp. 12-19.
137. Reg. et const. 70-71/I-V/20-21; p. 164, n. 117.
138. Reg. et const. 70-71/I-V/43-59; p. 164, n. 118. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 65.
139. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 35-36. Cf. Let. IV, 148-149.
140. Ibid. n. 39.
141. Positio...Jacobi, pp. 128-129.
142. Strambi, Vita, 217. Let. II, 116.
143. Ibid. 218.
144. Biogr. alcuni Rel. Pas., f. 380-381.
145. Processi IV, 282-283.
146. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 173.
147. Strambi, Vita, 219-220. Let. III, 647.
148. Let. IV, 225-228.
149. Naselli, La celebrazione del mistero cristiano e la liturgia delle ore in S. Paolo della Croce. Zoffoli, op. cit. II, 1145-1222.
150. Processi I, 162; II, 459.
151. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 172. Processi I, 509-510; IV, 466.
152. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 6-13, 33, 39.
153. Reg. et const. 68/I-III/7-8. Let. III, 542. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 81; 107, 2; 154.

154. For example, the recitation of the Litany of the Saints, ordered for the first time on May 18, 1769. Let. IV, 286. Strambi, Vita, 399. cf. Processi I, 258; III, 143-144.
155. Strambi, Vita, 264.
156. Cf. chap. 2-4. Giammaria, Annali, n. 100, 120. Processi I, 65. Strambi, Vita, 358-367.
157. Processi I, 17; 510.
158. Reg. et const. 56/I-III/38-45.
159. Ibid., 78/III-V/19-28; 86/I-III/56-61. Strambi, Vita, 364-365. cf. Let. IV, 147.
160. Reg. et const. 208/II-III/8-20. Strambi, Vita, 366. Processi I, 634; III, 283; IV, 467.
161. Reg. et const. 26/III-V/14-19. Processi II, 464.
162. Processi I, 304; Strambi, Vita, 359-360.
163. Let. V, 245.
164. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 137.
165. Let. V, 245-246. Processi I, 634.
166. Let. V, 245. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 31, 1; 90.
167. Strambi, Vita, 359. Cf. Processi III, 282.
168. Cf. P. Toschi, "Assunzione," in Enc. Cat. II, 198-211.
169. Strambi, Vita, 360-361.
170. Circular of June 26, 1769, in AG. A. III-IV/2-3.
171. Processi IV, 467. The three prayers seem to be the same ones printed in Raccolta di orazioni e pie opere, pp. 15-20.
172. Circular of July 27, 1753 in AG. A. III-IV/2-1. AG. A. III-IV/2-2.
173. Strambi, Vita, 362. For Fr. Peter, cf. Biogr. Rel Pos. Sac., f. 234.
174. Processi I, 634; IV, 467.
175. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 43; 154.
176. Circular of July 27, 1753.
177. Processi I, 165; Strambi, Vita, 368.
178. Processi III, 284; IV, 281. Giammaria, Miscellanea, f. A6v-A7r. Virtuosa vita de' Passionisti, f. 19rv. (AG. A.V. I/1).
179. Let. I, 770; II, 726; IV, 230. Reg. et const. 108/III/15-16. Let. V, 245. Processi I, 579.
180. Strambi, Vita, 368. Processi I, 634; IV, 281.
181. Processi I, 260; 528.
182. Ibid. I, 634-635.
183. Giammaria, Vita P. Marcoaurelio, f. 210.
184. Let. II, 182; 677; 726; 820. Strambi, Vita, 370.
185. Processi III, 468.

186. Processi I, 579. Reg. et const. 60/I/23. The mention of her feast disappears in the texts of 1741 and 1746 to reappear in those of 1769 and 1775, ibid. 61/IV-V/24-26. Let. III, 705. Cf. also Let. IV, 149; 152.
187. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47; n. 3.
188. Reg. et const. 60-61/I-V/20-32.
189. Processi III, 285.
190. Reg. et const. 142-143/I-V/5-18. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 11; 37; 120; 136. Bollettino 1923, p. 272.
191. Reg. et const. 142/I-III/50ff.; 143/IV-V/56.
192. Ibid., 108-109/III-V/19-20; 142-143/III-V/21-41. Strambi, Vita, 397. Cf. also Processi III, 439.
193. Processi I, 160; IV, 357; 376.
194. Let. IV, 251, circular of October 14, 1775.
195. Circular Struzzieri July 27, 1753, AG. A. III-IV/2-1. Processi I, 307; 315. Silvestrelli, Memorie dei primi compagni, p. 113. Let. IV, 269.
196. Circular Marcoaurelio July 25, 1760, AG. A. III-IV/2-2.
197. Let. II, 131.
198. Reg. et const. 18/II-III/1-20.
199. Processi II, 467.
- 200 S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 13.
201. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 95-96.
202. Biogr. Rel. Pas. Sac., f. 300. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 127.
203. G. Ghislain, "Capitolo delle Colpe," in DIP., vol. 2, col. 176-179.
204. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 114, 122, 126-128, 266. Reg. et const. 126/I-III/36-43.
205. Reg. et const. 126/III/59-66; 127/V/13-15. Let. IV, 274, n. 10.
206. E. Bertaud, "Discipline," in Dict. Sp. III, col. 1302-1311; Holstenius, Codex Regularum, vol. 5, p. 203, n. 14.
207. Reg. et const. 134-135/III-V/50ff.
208. Ibid., 134/I-III/35-38. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 103.
209. Let. IV, 220. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 19.
210. Reg. et const. 136/I-III/8-18.
211. S. Benedetto, Regola, chap. 48.
212. St. Peter Damian, commenting on that passage of Acts, said: "Was that not perhaps said to demonstrate that only those are truly worthy of the apostolate who do not possess any

riches on earth and who, not having anything of their own, have everything in common? Only those are qualified for the office of preaching, who have nothing of their own, are independent soldiers, free of every obstacle, fighting for the Lord against vice and the demons, armed with their virtue and with the sword of the Holy Spirit." PL 145, 488, 490.

213. Reg. et const. 54/III/1-11.
214. Ibid. 10/I/12-35, cf. chap. 2, # 1, 3, 3, on the concept of poverty-penance.
215. Let. V, 13-14. Cf. also Let. II, 553, 555.
216. Let. IV, 217, 220.
217. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n. 7; notizia '47, n. 9: Let II, 551.
218. Reg. et const. 42/I-III/5-7. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 27.
219. Reg. et const. 42/I-III/7-10; 43/IV-V/14-24.
220. Processi IV, 264. Reg. et const., p. XXI. Processi II, 215.
221. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n. 5.
222. Reg. et const. 54/I-II/19-30.
223. Ibid. 48/I-II/37-47; 49/IV-V/1-10. It should be noted that up to 1746 this audit and expropriation of the leftovers had to be done every three months. Cf. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 7.
224. Strambi, Vita, 451. Let. III, 729.
225. Let. IV, 309. Strambi, Vita, 451. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 133; Reg. et const. 49/IV/10-22. Let. II, 124.
226. Bull Supremi apostolatus, #4. Reg. et const. 43/V/12-18. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 111. Reg. et const. 49/IV-V/6-10.
227. Let. III, 694. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 7.
228. Reg. et const. 44/I-III/9-19; 45/IV-V/12-13. Let. II, 274.
229. Reg. et const. 44/I-III/20ff.; 45/IV-V/41-43. Bull Supremi Apostolatus, # 10. Let. II, 657.
230. Strambi, Vita, 53-54. Let. I, 366.
231. Reg. et const. 46/I-III/24-60; 45/IV-V/16-23.
232. Giammaria, Mons. Struzziere, f. 138. Positio... Jacobi, p. 193. Giammaria, "Storie delle fondazioni:" Toscanella, in Bollettino 1924, pp. 179-182. Processi, IV, 139.
233. Reg. et const. 48/I/18-36. Let. II, 138, 274.

234. Let. II, 89, 102, 137-138, 141. Processi. I, 278; III 426, 391.
235. Let. II, 567-568.
236. Let. II, 570.
237. Let. II, 422; III, 770.
238. Let. IV, 215.
239. Bollettino 1923, p. 47. Let. IV, 252, n. 6.
240. Bollettino 1923, p. 271, decr. n. 7, 8, 9. Reg. et const. 45/IV-V/13-27. The Bull Supremi apostolatus, # 9, confirms this right of the Rule and authorizes begging not only in the diocese where the Retreat is located, but also in others with the sole permission of the Ordinary.
241. Let. IV, 28-29. Processi IV, 260.
242. Processi IV, 225; 260. Let. IV, 281, n. 3.
243. Let. V, 60.
244. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '68, n. 5. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 4, 1; 28, 1; 111. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino, 1924, pp. 182-183. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 28, 3.
- 245.) Let. III, 298. Visita canonica Corneto 1770, decr. n. 2. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 54; 73, 1; 109; 125, 1. Reg. et const. 47/IV-V/11ff.
246. Bull Supremi ap., # 9.
247. Reg. et const. 44/I-III/20ff.; 45/IV-V/41ff; 47/IV-V/1-33. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 4, 4; 29; 78; 107, 1. Let. II, 110; 113; 569.
248. Let. II, 196-197. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 168.
249. Reg. et const. 54/I-III/1-17. The same concept is found in the treatise on "Mystical Death", Let. V, 13-14.
250. Reg. et const. 6-7/I-V/35-55. Cf. also Strambi, Vita, 451 and Let. II, 659.
251. Reg. et const. 52/I-III/6-29.
252. Reg. et const. 40/I-III/4-22; 42/I-III/11ff.; 52/I-III/6-69. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 4; 69. Processi III, 158, 264-265; IV 262-263.
253. Cleanliness was recommended with an insistence that was amazing. Cf. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, analytic index under Pulizia.
254. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 21; 47; 101; 122; 126; 146. Processi I, 646.
255. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 99-101.
256. Reg. et const. 128/I-III/26-32; 129/IV-V/30-37.
257. Processi II.

258. Silvestrelli, Memorie dei primi compagni, p. 201.
259. Processi I, 645; IV, 279. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 161.
260. Let. IV, 332. Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1926, p. 88. Giammaria, Mons. Struzzieri, f. 132-133.
261. Reg. et const. 76/III/22-29; p. 164, n. 128. Processi III, 158.
262. Reg. et const. 52/I-II/70ff.; 54-55/III-V/1-11.
263. Ibid. 48/I-III/58-70.
264. Ibid. 48-49/III-V/50-57; p. 162, n. 76.
265. Processi I, 351; II, 286.
266. Reg. et const. 54/I/6-8. Cf. also G. Fiorini Morosini, L'aspetto penitenziale della spiritualità dei Minimi (Roma, 1976), pp. 71-89.
267. Let. IV, 234-235.
268. Reg. et const. 66/I/1-21.
269. S. Paolo della Croce. La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 15; notizia '68, n. 17, 20. Let. IV, 236-237.
270. Reg. et const. 60-67/I-V/1ff. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 87; 91; 95, 1, 2; 128. Let. II, 87-88; 92; 119-120. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 278.
271. Reg. et const. 40/I-III/4-15. The Costituzioni da osservarsi nella Solitudine del Ritiro, prohibited keeping anything edible in the cell, even a fruit; even to drink a little water permission had to be asked (p. 110).
272. Silvestrelli, Memorie dei primi compagni, p. 239.
273. Visita canonica 1766, decr. n. 2-3.
274. Let. II, 119-120.
275. Reg. et const. 64/I/63-66; 104/I-III/60ff.
276. Let. II, 196.
277. Visita canonica 1755, decr. n. 2.
278. Let. II, 197-198. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, nn. 252-256, 270-273, 276-284:
279. Strambi, Vita, 90-91.
280. Reg. et const. 134/I-III/30ff.
281. Reg. et const. 136/III/8-20. Let. II, 120.
282. Let. II, 115.
283. Let. II, 752-754.

Chapter VII

THE PASSIONIST COMMUNITY

The Congregation is alive and active principally in its community. In the second chapter we considered how the founder, during the period of receiving enlightenment from God, felt called to gather companions to remember and promote the memory of Christ's passion. His wish was, therefore, to form a community united to Mary on Calvary, superioress and mother (1), which would strive to conform as much as possible in its spirit to the sentiments of Jesus Crucified. The community was to be modeled and lived after the manner of the apostles; hence, it is an "apostolic community," not simply because of its pastoral works in the Church, but because of its inspired apostolic life. The founder, in his circular letters, quoted passages from Acts and from the Epistles pointing out the virtues that would adorn this Christian fraternity so that the religious would live like the apostles "in purity of spirit, in deep humility of heart and in the most perfect and fervent charity, which creates one whole out of many hearts by the bond of holy love in God, and makes them docile and unified creating harmony and peace." (2)

A. A COMMUNITY OF BROTHERS THOUGH FROM DISTINCT SOCIAL CLASSES

All members of the community are radically equal because called by the same merciful love that saved and reconciled them to God and to one another. This same merciful love led them to the knowledge of the ineffable person of the Word Incarnate and to appreciation of his greatness, beauty and value, despite being oppressed by the passion and death embraced out of love for the Father and for each human person. This reality is stressed in the rule which designates all members as "brothers"; when reference is made to the priests, it often uses the

expression "brother priests". This equality, justified and sustained by charity, tends to be a reflection of God's love, manifestly abundant for all without cultural or geographical distinction. As a help "to remain in holy union and fraternal charity," the text prescribing separation of brothers from priests during the common recreation was deleted from the 1741 rule. (3) Faithful to the inspired vision of a community continuing the life of the apostles in which "each received according to his needs" and "no one called anything his own," the founder insisted in every way that all be cared for, clothed and nourished with equal charity, without distinction between clerics or lay brothers, superiors or subjects.

The habits, mantles and underclothing were renewed and provided equally for all and at the same time. (4) The refectory was prepared equally for all without any distinction, and the food and drink were prepared and served "in perfect equality to all without any distinction." (5) The founder severely reprimanded a provincial who made use of two napkins, one on the table, the other on his habit, for an act of undue distinction. (6) The sick were assisted "with equal charity for priests and lay brothers." (7) The same loving care was taken as regards the suffrages "for priests, clerics and lay brothers without any difference so that an equal charity may shine." (8) The founder was most careful lest even the shadow of privilege be introduced. He promoted the norm forbidding honorary titles and, especially, office titles that might claim distinction and privileges in various institutes of his time. These only served to create envy and the seeking of friendship and protection of the powerful outside the community in order to obtain these titles and privileges. Furthermore, he did not admit for himself nor for other superiors any special chairs or drapery in the choir, refectory or recreation; neither did he allow that anyone be appointed to sweep his room. Each religious, beginning with the superior, took care of the cleanliness and tidiness of his own room except in case of illness. (9) Until 1746 all the professed members a single community enjoyed the equal faculty of intervening in the decisive acts of government and in the admission of new members. (10)

The thrust towards equality in all things, save where common law or some other valid motive intervened, did not impede the rise of some tendencies towards establishing differences. A result of this tendency was the decision of the 1747 general chapter, that the collar of the lay brothers' mantle should be lower in order to distinguish them from the clerics, as if the norm introduced in the 1746 rule were insufficient. The norm was that the lay brothers did not wear the "sign" on the mantle to distinguish them from the clerics and priests. (11) Fortunately, this decree was abolished in 1769. Another effect of this tendency was assigning a different number of weekly communions to clerics and lay brothers. Before 1746 lay brothers could receive on all feasts and three times a week during Lent and Advent. In 1746 a further limitation dictated that they could receive on all non-consecutive feasts and three times a week during Lent and Advent if the spiritual director did not dispose otherwise. Until 1746 the clerics had no fixed norm, but in that year they were allowed communion three times a week and on all non-consecutive feasts. (12) Likewise, from 1764 onward, the right to carry the crucifix visible over the habit was reserved to missionaries and priests, whereas the clerics and lay brothers were required to wear it under the habit. (13)

However, the 1746 prohibition against lay brothers taking part in chapters with the right to vote was due to the common law then in force. This led to the general opinion that brothers were not eligible as possible bursars or vicars, not only because of their lower level of education, but because of juridical norms. (14) Both lay brothers and clerics might take part in the chapter of faults and speak if questioned, but in 1775 even this possibility was removed for brothers and also for clerics who were not subdeacons.

The founder made every possible effort to create among the religious a deep mutual esteem and, to forestall possible divisions, repeated many times the prohibition against speaking of one's own family or "nation," that is, the region of origin, which oftentimes was politically independent. It was also forbidden to use nicknames

or to murmur. (15) In a general chapter Paul discovered that some capitulars were bent on not electing certain men of a "nation" they disliked, though the religious in question had the necessary qualities and gifts and others thought of electing them. The founder "in public chapter bitterly reprimanded all those present, saying that this was not right and should not be done, and insisted that such a thing or any similar abuse should not enter our Congregation." (16)

That fraternal communion was achieved and lived appears from the documents we possess, as in them we find no explicit reference to problems of division of classes or of difficult relationships between clerics and lay brothers, or at least, nothing serious. In canonical visitation reports where the founder included even the decrees, we often find stated explicitly: "By God's grace and mercy, we have found nothing to remedy." Thus, at St. Angelo in 1763 and in 1764, he writes: "We have found, by God's mercy, all goes well regarding the holy observance, holy peace, union and fraternal charity," and he confirmed this judgment in 1765 and in 1766. In 1767 he praised God for having found the community well regulated in all external things; and because there shone "a true and exact observance, true peace and charity, piety and devotion." (17) Visiting the Corneto community in 1770, he found it "living an exact regular observance, and principally those good religious that compose the family are devout, fervent and in perfect charity and peace among themselves." (18) In 1767 he had reason for thanking God on finding the St. Sosio community "in peace, in fraternal charity and in exact observance of the holy rule." (19) There can be no doubt these documents reflect an objective reality, knowing Paul's honesty in calling to order even the shadow of a possible defect or attitude that could lead to faults against charity. At the St. Eutizio retreat in 1749, this is what he left in writing: "We have experienced in divers circumstances that it is not only difficult, but totally impossible to maintain fervor and regular observance when religious do not strive to preserve a strong bond of most sincere charity among themselves by uprooting those initial seeds that stain it and give rise to disturbances, restlessness,

dissensions, coldness, with so much damage to their own spirit and to the Congregation. Thus, by duty of our office and to obviate disorders that can follow, trusting to the divine goodness and recommending ourselves to it, we plead, exhort, and with the fullness of authority command:

1) that no religious of this retreat of St. Eutizio shall disclose his temptations to another, but reveal and manifest them only to his superior or spiritual director,

2) that no one in common recreation allow himself to introduce, foster or sustain discourses contrary to the charity due his neighbor; no one may treat of the defects of the religious, interpret or make comments on our holy rule or on the government of the superiors or spiritual directors, or hold other discourses forbidden by the rule." (20)

In the same retreat in 1757 he expressed his satisfaction "on finding things in good order both as regards the decorum in which the church is kept, and in what concerns the regular observance, peace and charity of our religious." This judgment was confirmed in 1758 and 1759. (21) In the Ceccano visitation of 1767, he exclaimed emphatically in a page of decrees: "May the divine goodness be ever blessed, praised and thanked that his mercy has preserved this sacred retreat of St. Mary of Corniano in peace, charity and observance." (22)

On the whole, the communities witnessed a sincere understanding among their members. Yet, there were some difficulties among lay brothers which were frequently caused by kitchen tasks. The 1764 general chapter decided that, in the future, brothers must accept care of the kitchen for at least seven years, and afterwards be willing to reassume that office every time the superiors should think it necessary. For the brothers who refused, after three admonitions the local chapter would be convoked to chastise them publicly, and should they refuse to accept the penance and to amend, they would be expelled as incorrigible. (23) Something regrettable must have occurred to make such a decree necessary.

In time, when the quest became the normal means of sustenance, the brothers gradually assumed that task, since the syndics ceased to function and the tertiaries were suppressed. Before the lay brothers took over the quest, all the religious felt themselves equal in what concerned their upkeep since what Providence sent through benefactors was then handed to the syndics. Within the retreat they were all together at prayer. In the time devoted to study or work, each one was employed in various ways for the benefit of the entire community. But once the quest began, what Providence sent came to the retreat through the brothers and their work. Priests, by their apostolate, contributed nothing as it was forbidden to accept any offerings for preaching. This could have influenced the rise of a certain belief that the brothers had to maintain the clerics. I think we can detect a trace of this thinking in a text of Bro. Bartholomew, the founder's infirmarian. He tells of some of Paul's expressions at the time when it was normal for the brothers to quest. In eulogistic expressions the founder acknowledged his debt to the brothers and urged that they be appreciated "because they are our mothers." (24) From such expressions of appreciation, however, a certain mentality could be formed in some brothers and which later in history did show up in some provinces of the Congregation. But a truly lived fraternal communion was at one and the same time fruit and cause of that joy and peace which the religious, on the whole, practiced because they were convinced of being loved by God, found worthy to share in the passion and glory of Jesus and honored by Christ with the mission of reviving in the world the memory of his Passion. The spiritual gifts that God imparted to religious who were faithful in following Christ also upheld joy and peace. Ever anxious that peace and fraternal communion be always kept alive, in the last general chapter in 1775, the founder insistently recommended that all should make an effort to live concretely Christ's command to love one another as he had loved them. He renewed threats to those who dared to murmur, especially if touching the esteem and honor of the "nations" that could hurt the sensibility of those belonging to them. He wished "that concord and fraternal charity be ever preserved and increased." (25)

But conscious that being at peace with others is impossible, if not at peace with oneself, in the same chapter the founder exhorted all the religious "not only to live in peace and charity with others, but more so with oneself; and chiefly the superiors who must watch over the observance and the genuine good of the religious and correct those who fail, but always with peace of heart, calm mind and purity of intention. Let them incline more towards charity, sweetness and meekness than to rigor and severity, and in treating with all, be they priests, clerics or lay brothers, show themselves one jovial and cordial to each one."

B. THE COMMUNITY AND THE SICK AND AGED RELIGIOUS

Passing reference has been made to the equal treatment the founder wished given to sick religious without distinction of role or juridical status. The sick were to be regarded as Passionist religious, and not as priests, clerics or lay brothers, superior or subject. Particular care was taken that the sick not suffer depression or spiritual or psychological isolation, though, for some infectious cases, total separation from the community was necessary at that time. In other circumstances, separation was also inevitable because of the transfer of the sick religious to a hospice in the city where doctors and medicine were available. The hospice could be a room which some benefactor lent or a small house belonging to the Congregation and reserved for this purpose. The sick in need of a prolonged treatment with quinine against persistent malarial fever and those who had to be submitted to bloodletting were transferred to these hospices. In Orbetello, at this time, the hospice was in the Grazi home. (26) There were hospices for the sick or for religious in transit in Ceccano (27), Soriano, Viterbo and Toscanella. Occasionally, the religious of St. Angelo were taken down to Vetralla to the home of a benefactor. In 1764 the general chapter decided to open an infirmary at Viterbo, in a house the benefactor Zuccari donated for this purpose. This infirmary probably served the communities of St. Angelo, St. Eutizio and Our Lady of the

Oak (Toscanella). It probably also served as hospice for all the religious who sought relief at the city's thermal springs. The three communities "according to their means" were to meet the expenses of adapting and furnishing the house, while the expenses of the religious lodging there were to be paid by their respective communities. A brother infirmarian accompanied the sick who were taken to these hospices or infirmaries. Now and then they received the visit of the superior, and if the person became seriously ill a priest was sent for his spiritual assistance. (28)

When the house of Saints John and Paul was received as a gift from Clement XIV, it was thought to use this retreat for the sick in need of special attention. There they would be within the community, not exposed to isolation and melancholy in the hospices or the risk of becoming too familiar with seculars. The 1775 general chapter discussed this and the founder drafted a decree, approved by those present, in which after recalling "that in our retreats in solitude many illnesses cannot be properly looked after in the small towns for lack of expert doctors," therefore, the provincials and rectors are authorized to send the sick for attention to Sts. John and Paul's, advising the general or the rector of the generalate beforehand and "contributing in kind or in cash, at least the expenses of meat, medicine and linen." (29) The community's care gave the sick the certainty of being helped in overcoming their ailments but, at the same time, it was expected that they show themselves mature men with a clear cut knowledge of the wisdom of the cross. As the regulations stated: "let them see in their sufferings the will of God, making acts of resignation, being ready for life or death"; let their imagination not aggravate their ills. The infirmarian and the healthy religious who visited helped them to enter into this surrender by suggesting good sentiments, imparting a brief spiritual lesson and comforting them. (30) When the illness became more serious, this care increased. Then all the community whole-heartedly surrounded the sick brother praying that he might meet God in an act of perfect love. If he were outside in a hospice the community would, as the superior disposed, assemble in prayer. (31) Anointing

of the sick and the holy viaticum were solemnly administered, giving the sick religious the opportunity of professing his faith before the community, and of begging pardon for his faults and offenses: The founder strongly recommended the *spoglio* (divestment, giving up). Before the anointing, the religious handed over to the superior whatever he had in his cell so as to dispose himself to die totally naked and poor as Christ. Paul saw in this a disposition for a special gift of prayer and union with Christ at the moment of death. He mentioned this when he heard of the death of Fr. Joseph Cerrini. Knowing that he had divested himself of everything, he exclaimed that thus he "united himself more expeditiously to Christ Crucified." (32) This practice was a custom in the Congregation for many years. (33) On the occasion of Fr. John Baptist's death, while the community prayed around the dying man, Paul intoned the *Salva Regina*; a usage in the Congregation that was not followed everywhere. Instead, the narrative of the Passion slowly read from the gospel of St. John was constantly used, following the ritual's indications and calling to mind the mystical death the religious had performed at the moment of profession when the same narrative was read. (34) Particular care was taken that the religious died vested in the habit, thus signifying his belonging totally to Christ whose death he was about to share and his hope of being vested with him in glory. Until 1746, the rule forbade removing it even in serious illness. (35) The new text that year admitted an exception in case the doctor "for a very grave and special cause" should order it removed, but it had to be restored when death was approaching so that the religious could die in the garb of penance and sign of the memory of the Passion of Jesus. The 1747 and 1753 general chapters declared the rectors responsible for informing the doctors of the norms of the rule. The decision to remove the habit was on their consciences. In 1753, it was also declared that if the illness did not allow the dying man to put on the habit, the rector or the infirmarian was to see to it "in the manner possible and what is thought best." (36) This came to mean that if the sick man could not be vested, the habit should be conveniently put over his body. In 1775, keeping in mind the experience of former years, it was left to the doctor or

the infirmarian "for a reasonable cause" to decide whether the habit should be removed, and the obligation of putting it on the dying man was taken away. He shall be dressed with it after death. (37) There was certainly a deep spiritual motivation and beauty in the fact of dying in the habit which had been originally taken in memory of the death of Jesus, precisely at the moment of sharing the unique experience of uniting one's own death to that of Christ, and with the lively trust of passing to a new life with him.

The corpse was laid out in the church on planks placed on the pavement. A brick was laid under the head and ashes sprinkled on the forehead as a token of penance and the acceptance of the biblical sentence: you are dust, and to dust you shall return. The profession crucifix was placed in the hands. The community gathered for suffrages and the corpse was then lowered into the tomb under the pavement of the church or sacristy and left uncovered. Only in special cases, as a sign of distinction, a wooden box was used and in it was placed a glass container with a biographical sketch of the deceased. This was done for Frs. John Baptist Danei, Fulgentius Pastorelli and Peter Vico. (38)

From the beginning, the care of the sick was not only solicitous but expensive, inasmuch as the use of meat, chocolate, thermal baths, change of air to another retreat, and sometimes to another locality were permitted. But, besides the sick, careful attention was given to the aged, who were worn out by the extenuating fatigues of the early days. The 1769 general chapter expressly recommended: "have great charity and care for the poor sick and for the old men, this being the grateful sacrifice most acceptable to God." (39) So outstanding a solicitude for the health of the religious, regardless whether priests, clerics or lay brothers, it was very helpful in creating a strong unity and a psychological assurance concerning sustenance and health. It made them love the community as a family and strive to make it live and prosper. At the same time this disposition, fruit of faith and authentic charity, led to further peace, union with

God and dedication to the salvation of the people to whom they gave good witness of fraternity.

C. THE COMMUNITY'S DAILY SCHEDULE

On August 2, 1741, Paul wrote to Cerruti: "Our time is so well distributed that the days pass as moments and, in fact, I steal a little time from silent repose before vespers to write this letter and so be ready for the community exercises." (40)

The day was divided between the duties of liturgical and personal prayer, study and the fulfillment of those tasks necessary to keep the house running smoothly, along with meals and the needful rest and repose. No free time was left to the religious in which they did not know what they should do.

D A I L Y S C H E D U L E (41)

Engagements to be fulfilled	Time
Matins and lauds	00.00 - 01.00
Discipline	about 10 minutes
Meditation	01.10 - 02.10
Rising time	about 05.00
Prime, tierce, conventual mass and meditation	05.10 - 07.10
Tidy one's room, study, work	07.10 - 09.30
Private spiritual reading and examination of conscience	09.30 - 10.00
Solitary walk	10.00 - 10.30
Last mass, sext and none	10.30 - 11.30
Lunch	11.30 - 12.00
Recreation	12.00 - 12.45
Strict silence, retire to one's room	12.45 - 13.45
Vespers, silent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading in common	14.00 - 14.40
Study, work	14.40 - 16.00
Solitary walk	16.00 - 16.30

Compline and meditation	16.30 - 17.45
Dinner or "collation"	17.45 - 18.15
Recreation	18.15 - 19.00
Rosary, brief examination of conscience, superior's blessing	19.00 - 19.20
Strict silence, retire to rooms and repose	19.20 - 00.00

NOTE: On Thursday and Sunday mornings, before sext, common instruction by the superior; in the afternoon, about one hour was spent solving the moral case.

The orderly succession of acts gave the day a certain dynamic movement and left no margin for free time. The religious did not view this as a burden, but as a spiritual relief, for they felt greater assurance of always fulfilling God's will and by obedience conforming more to Christ in his affirmation that he did his Father's will in everything. This theologically grounded conviction helped the religious to a peaceful calm. They were convinced that what they did was valid in the eyes of him whom they loved with all their strength, as also for the good of their brothers whom they loved in Christ and to whom they had promised fidelity in community duties as a proof of brotherhood. The community spent about seven and a half hours or more in the choir between the divine office, eucharistic celebrations, mental prayer, rosary, spiritual reading in common and discipline. On Sundays and feast days all the morning was available for contemplation, except the time strictly necessary for the kitchen and tidying up. During this same period, in the Franciscan retreats of the reformed provinces of Tuscany and Rome, a similar amount of time was devoted to the duty of community prayer. Their constitutions provided an hour of mental prayer at midnight after matins, one hour after prime in the morning, and one hour after compline in the evening. The divine office was partly sung and partly recited. A community eucharistic celebration was scheduled in the early morning and another before sext and none. About an hour twice a day was allotted for the examination of conscience. In the "solitude of the retreat" at Incontro, close to Florence, through the efforts of St. Leonard of Port Maurice, nine hours daily were spent in choir. Even in this atmosphere of "observance", it was

recommended that nothing be done without permission "so that the religious do not take a step, or perform the least action without the merit of holy obedience." (42)

After the choir one's room was the next most sacred place. It was there that the Passionist studied, prepared himself for the sacred ministry, and immersed himself in loving colloquies with Jesus Crucified. Those working for the welfare of the community sought to maintain this colloquy with Christ by an adoring silence in God's presence while working. Those who lived in community, as for whomever entered it, manifested the primary interest of the community living intensely their union with God in whom they should meet their fellowmen interceding for them, so that they, too, might enjoy the fruits of Christ's loving mercy.

The various adaptations made to the daily schedule between 1753 and 1769 will be better understood if we bear in mind the above distribution of time. The clerics in formal study needed more time for acquiring knowledge they did not yet possess. The problem was posed in 1775 of giving clerics in formation more time for study, while at the same time insuring that they did not acquire a sense of privilege which they would find difficult to give up, after completing their course of studies.

On feast days, the schedule remained unaltered as regards the common acts of prayer, but it gave more time to contemplation during the morning since work and study were dispensed. In the afternoon, after solving the moral case, there was a two hour walk outside the retreat, but avoiding towns or frequented places. At meals something extra was served so that the body, too, might feel more relieved, as Paul wrote to Fr. Fulgentius. Three times a year the fruit in season could be enjoyed outside the refectory at the time of the community walk. Paul approved also as a kind of extraordinary holiday having meals outside the refectory or in the garden, being persuaded "that this will serve somewhat to relieve the religious from continuous application to study and prayer. Their modesty, tempered by holy joy, will not dissipate but

rather invigorate them to run ever more swiftly in the way of virtue." (43)

The daily routine of the community was but the external side of a life which was meaningful in its inner charity, the zeal for God's glory, and the salvation of their people. The means to build and develop fraternal communion in an atmosphere of authentic faith were inherent in the community's formation and spirituality. It is well to remember here that the founder also saw the necessity of a sufficient number of religious to form a lively community which would permit carrying out all that was needful for the observance at home and external activity with the least psychological strain, so that the retreats would not be left empty during mission seasons or without the perennial praise of God. His tendency was towards a community of from twelve to twenty religious, not less than twelve in order not to lose the right of exemption from episcopal jurisdiction according to the norms then in force; not more than twenty in order to avoid other problems of fraternal communion and economy. (44)

D. THE COMMUNITY AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Paul's wish for a community exempt from the jurisdiction of the local ordinary was founded on three motives: his desire to serve the universal church, his fear of episcopal interference in the internal discipline, and his reluctance to assume ministries that he deemed foreign to the Congregation's charism. This did not in the least diminish his consideration for the bishop as the natural point of contact, not only for entering the diocese, but also for exercising the pastoral ministry consonant with the rule, for the ordination of clerics and for obtaining necessary material help from the people. The bishop was esteemed, revered and obeyed within the sphere of his competence. Paul greatly respected the bishop's rights, but also would let him know with all humility the rights of the community regarding exemption. He had occasion of doing this with the ordinaries of Viterbo and Palestrina and, concerning the type of

apostolic work according to the rule, with the bishops of Frascati and Ferentino. (45) Courteous and reverent relations were to be maintained with the bishop as successor of the apostles; hence he was visited on passing his place of residence, and Paul strove to help him with all loyalty and zeal but within the limits of the rule. (46)

In the chapter on the apostolate, we shall study the contribution of the communities to the local church in the work of evangelization. I simply add here some testimonies of bishops and civil communities concerning the retreats south of Rome. These were given around 1767 when "some regulars, from an old and never extinguished jealousy," looked unfavorably on the general esteem for the new Congregation and the concourse of people who came to the churches of our retreats, particularly St. Sossio. According to the chronicler, they were influential in obtaining the royal decree forbidding religious who were not Neapolitan citizens to exercise their ministry or to quest within the kingdom. The neighboring bishops and the abbot of Monte Cassino requested and obtained from the king freedom to employ the Passionists in their proper ministries. Meanwhile, the local civil authorities upheld the Passionist communities, granting them permission to receive the alms offered by the people. On April 4, 1767, the bishop of Fondi wrote that the Passionists, whenever they were called, responded "with the greatest diligence" and helped the people of the city and the diocese of Fondi "by apostolic missions, by retreats for the nuns and by hearing confessions." They were also employed in teaching catechism and "in other works of piety, showing great zeal, often to the point of fatigue, and attracting the people by their exemplary life," adding that they were worthy of being considered "benefactors" of the city and the whole diocese. The bishop of Pontecorvo and Aquino called them "men dedicated day and night to prayer and fasting, full of zeal for the salvation of souls, always ready not only to receive and hear the penitents who flocked to their church from the entire diocese, but also to preach missions and retreats both public and private - all this fatiguing work for the benefit of souls. The patience of

the fathers drew the special applause of the people." He concluded that the people, grateful for the spiritual help and filled with esteem, gave them alms "not only spontaneously but with pleasure." The civil authorities of Sora, Arpino, Roccasecca, Pico, St. Giovanni Incarico, Pastena and Fondi were all in agreement that the Passionist community should receive the alms offered by the citizens as a sign of their recognition and esteem. (47) These favorable testimonies, like those of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities during the mendicant controversy (1748-1750), show that the Passionist community was well established in the ecclesiastical and civil social context and that the expectations of the clergy and laity requesting their coming were fully satisfied.

Cardinal Simonetti of Viterbo, who in 1749 "had been prejudiced because of some unfavorable reports" later received information from the theological canon of his cathedral and communicated to Paul: "God assists the Congregation your paternity has founded, promoting it for the benefit of the church, and we have experienced the profitable effects in this diocese." Cardinal Oddi, writing in 1752, said that having seen the documents presented, he had had removed from the acts of pastoral visitations what referred to the Passionist retreat in order to respect the exemption the community enjoyed, but, he added "that memorial will serve me for the sole end of taking pleasure in having seen and acknowledged with what exemplar and praiseworthy edification this religious family lives. I shall always profit from their example when I use it for the spiritual welfare of souls, which is my chief concern." (48)

The archpriest of Falvaterra, together with other priests, testified on June 23, 1768, that the Passionist community of St. Sosio lived according to the rule professed, possessing nothing and having no income; that the religious were "of the greatest spiritual usefulness to this country and to all our neighboring dioceses on account of their continual ministry of retreats, administration of sacraments, missions, catechism and assistance to the sick. They live observantly in their Institute, giving

good example to all, and it has never been heard, nor do we hear of any disturbance made by them, but only that they have preached the divine word with apostolic spirit and given testimony of their religious and exemplary lives." (49)

Oftentimes, a community was founded on request of the ordinary of the place; at others, through the initiative of the clergy or civil authorities. These persons together looked after the indispensable accommodation of the religious, and this created a strong bond between the community and the civil and ecclesiastical communities of the region, which was reinforced by the esteem that they had for the founder, a bond that the religious themselves eventually acquired by their fidelity to the rule. A chronicler notes: "The custom of seldom leaving the retreat, which good superiors have had so much at heart, being more concerned with spiritual than temporal advantages, was well understood by the people, who esteemed the Passionists more the less they saw of them. When they did see them, they were greatly impressed by their measured and composed exterior, their mortified eyes, their modesty, their moderate and cautious speech and sober demeanor, giving the impression that they were detached from the world and united to God." The same chronicler remarks that at the beginning in Rome many expected to see crumbling at any moment what they thought of as only apparent modesty. "But with the passing years no change was seen. The Passionists were the same, in church, at home, or walking through Rome, always a mirror of virtue, and always with a companion. They were so esteemed that even the first personages, pontiffs, cardinals, prelates, princes have given reliable proof by word and deed." (50)

Brother Joseph Mantini attributed his vocation to the esteem in which the religious were held and to their modest and virtuous deportment. This brother was a carpenter from Montefiascone, who in 1752 was working on the new choir of the church in Monticelli, close to Terracina, when two Passionists from the retreat nearby entered the church to adore the Blessed Sacrament as prescribed by rule. "Seeing them pray with all devotion

and recollection, with such composure that they were motionless all the time without raising their eyes nor looking around" notwithstanding the work that was going on, Mantini felt himself "spiritually moved. This holy emotion grew greater when, having finished their adoration and approaching the exit over which the work was going on, he saw with great wonder that they did not even look up, but without being distracted from their recollection left the church and went their way." This event was a strong factor in his decision to join their community. (51)

The founder's deep desire, infused into his first companions, was thus being fulfilled: that from the communities, where the religious served God fervently in holiness and justice, should emanate the good odor of Christ, encouraging the just to perseverance and sinners to conversion. (52) Struzzieri, as provincial in 1757, animated the religious of the Ceccano community: "Do not betray the hope that our mother, the Congregation, has in us. She wishes to see you all saints and all committed to the salvation of poor souls by promoting the devotion to Christ's most bitter sufferings." (53)

E. THE COMMUNITY AND THE POOR

Our founder's desire was that we have a first hand experience of true, uncomfortable poverty through sharing with the poor the humiliation of not being able to dispose of things, having to beg alms, sharing also their frustration in being unable to carry on big projects because of the expenses and the labor necessary. These aspects have been referred to in other chapters. What I intend to present here is the openness towards the poor, both of religious and communities, in sharing with them a small portion of what the heavenly father placed at the Congregation's disposal. As recalled, before entering the Congregation, the postulant should sell, at least in the beginning, all he had and give it to the poor. For all the retreats, the norm was that the fruits of the garden and of the two chestnut orchards of the Presentation and St.

Angelo retreats not needed for the community should be given to the poor. (54) At the end of each year, the surplus of what served the community should also be given to them. Usually, however, little or nothing was left over at the end of the year as the poverty of the communities was really great. It is well to bear in mind here, nevertheless, the good will and disposition to openness and sharing to which the religious were being trained. (55)

Strambi recalls: "He wished that in our retreats alms should be given to the poor who came in search of help; and in our retreat in Rome, there also be two fixed days a week in which bread and soup be distributed as alms to all the poor who came for it. He was solicitous that, as far as possible, this practice of charity be not wanting; and he often repeated with great affection: what is left over in the refectory is distributed at the door; it belongs to the poor." In order to be able to succour all those who came to the door of Sts. John and Paul, he ordered that when baking the bread for the religious, an extra ovenfull should be made for the poor. "It is certainly beautiful," notes Strambi, "the miracle of holy poverty: that those who possess nothing and live by begging can give help to the large numbers of poor who have recourse to them." (56) From this disposition to relieve the poor, it became customary in the Congregation for the religious to leave aside on a clean plate a small portion of their pittance to increase what was to be given to the poor. (57)

An elementary, though important manner of helping the poor, was to pay the laborers their just wages immediately in order that a delay might not affect their households. (58) It was also considered important to persuade the poor to save for their family. (59) In preaching and in personal contacts with influential persons, the sense of justice and charity was stressed and, not infrequently, concrete cases arose where together they sought means of helping the needy. On one occasion, when Paul was preaching at the Vetralla monastery, a young lady approached him saying she had an opportunity to marry but had not the least dowry to provide the bare essen-

tials and, what was worse, it was morally very dangerous for her to stay in her house. Paul called on Fr. Pileri, the nuns' confessor, to see if together with his friends he "could collect a convenient amount," while he himself would write to the rector of St. Angelo to send "a little money, despite our poverty, for which God will provide." They succeeded in obtaining a sufficient dowry for the young lady to get settled. (60) On another occasion, together with his brother John Baptist, then rector of St. Angelo, he was able to provide a poor mother with stuff for a straw mattress, sheets and a woolen blanket, plus a small amount of money for her daughter's trousseau in view of her marriage. (61)

It was this solicitude for the poor, which moved the founder to greet them first (62), that became a legacy of the first generation of Passionists, and it was considered an authentic part of evangelical poverty. The biographies of the first religious often note how God blessed this solicitude for the poor, at times in a miraculous manner. Fr. John Baptist frequently repeated, "Charity must be practiced; God provides his servants; the poor find it difficult to get somebody to help them, and in the case of women, particularly if young, they are exposed to great dangers because of misery." He collaborated fully with Paul in helping the poor, as far as the limited resources of the retreat permitted. (63) During the 1764-1767 famine all the communities, animated by Paul and by the provincial, Fr. Marcoaurelius, strove with particular solicitude to aid the victims. The founder convoked "a special chapter of the older priests" of the St. Angelo retreat to agree on the best means of supplying the needs of the community and to contribute as best they could to alleviating the hunger of the many who came in search of food. The result of the meeting was the circular letter to the other communities setting out the useful practical norms mentioned in the fourth chapter. (64) The letter also urged sharing spiritually the people's tribulations, saying "we should be the first to feel the miseries of our neighbors, to be compassionate, to make our brother's anguish our own, giving them part of our food even though scarce, and thus share the common calamity." Paul said

he was "pleased that only half the oil be given to the religious, so that what we charitably take as it were from our own mouths be distributed to the poor at the door." At the end of 1764, though only a small quantity of vegetables were left over in St. Angèlo, Paul desired that half should be kept for the religious and the other half be given to the poor. (65)

Fr. Marcoarelius, the provincial, urged the communities south of Rome to distribute bread and soup without fear of being deprived of what was necessary. He also ordered the preparation of pots of boiled vegetables and of porridge from maize that the religious had collected in order to provide for many poor that flocked to the retreats from the kingdom of Naples. At St. Sosio he had a certain amount of grain distributed. The city council of Falvaterra had given this to further the building of the church, but he said that before building a temple of stone "the living temples, that is, the poor who were dying of hunger" must be attended. (66)

The Passionists also joined in a charitable work which in that century sought to save women from sacrificing their dignity to economic needs. Two young ladies on the way to prostitution were converted during one of Struzziere's missions. He sought out good persons to help them to get a home and means. They persevered in the straight path and when the occasion for marriage arose they looked for Struzziere. He was then at Paliano preparing the poor retreat for the first community and trustfully praying to Our Lady for the necessary funds for constructing a cistern. A benefactor from Anagni sent him one hundred *scudi*, of which 30 went to the young girl and the rest for the cistern. (67)

These may appear insignificant gestures which in no way radically changed the situation, but they certainly concretely aided many, giving them not only a mouthful of bread or a dress, but also a sign of personal esteem and appreciation and of a real interest in their total welfare. We must not lose sight of the fact that the founder and his religious lived in a very definite socio-theological context. The ideas of piety and

charity dominated, though other means of helping the poor were not unknown, such as having young men learn a trade, or offering them work by which they could improve their situation or obtain a more stable one. Various initiatives were put forward during the century, although limited by the scarcity of available means. However, there was not the vision of social concerns in the modern sense. Paul and his religious were well aware that in God's designs the goods of this world were at the disposal of all. Only covetousness and greed caused them to be appropriated by a few, who were not interested in administering riches for the benefit of those who have nothing. They had no idea of moving towards a new social order that would make a realistic attempt to better the organization and distribution of resources and production.

The Passionist's sincere openness to the poor was not maintained without keeping in mind other values such as safeguarding the solitude of the retreats, the good name of the community, distinguishing the poor from the idlers and swindlers. The prudent estimation of all those values that go into the making of a religious community explains many of Paul's attitudes, for example, the decree forbidding the Ceccano community to accept retreatants gratuitously, though it could be connected with the famine still raging in 1767; the prohibition of distributing alms to women in the retreats of Ceccano and St. Sosio, because some people of the district could possibly have viewed suspiciously the frequency of women in those retreats of solitude. (68)

F. SOME WEAKNESSES OF COMMUNITY LIFE

As a whole, community life in the period was successful from the human, spiritual and apostolic points of view. Weaknesses were detectable both in men and in the structures. It could be said there was a potential risk of weakness in the heroic faith and life-commitment required to live up to the fraternal communion and the spirituality of their vocation with a good psycho-spiritual balance.

Some members of pontifical commissions deputed to examine the rules expressed this fear more than once. They stated it would be prudent to create an austere, fervent style of life which, at the same time, was realistically possible for all the religious to live, because the first fervor soon vanishes and in its wake come the crises. Should, by chance, the intensity of the affective sublimation in Christ be weakened, and the clarity of the motives for such a life diminished, the process of questioning the value of their life might set in and the tensions of community living might cause dissatisfaction. Other difficulties could come from the basic elements of solitude and radical poverty in the community's apostolic life: it was difficult to keep a balance between living in community and going on missions; between study and obtaining the necessary means for it; between living from spontaneous offerings and the real obstacles in keeping a house poor, yet, sufficiently endowed for the needs of the group. In some periods these difficulties created worries for superiors and religious when the means of subsistence could not be provided without some detriment to solitude, prayer and apostolic commitments. These were weaknesses in a structure that sought to embody a most sublime ideal of poverty and contemplation in the concrete context of a group of persons.

The community weaknesses, however, found their concrete expression in persons who were unable to keep up the initial fervor and allowed themselves to be overcome by worries or by the taste for an easier life. Malcontents suffered and caused suffering to others, creating difficulties for the community, even though at times they might licitly have a divergent opinion on some norms or ways of doing things. The period particularly noted for this discontent runs from about 1752 to 1760, as we had occasion to mention in speaking of the 1758 general chapter which was anticipated by thirteen months. Fourteen religious, including eight priests, left in this period. The documents tell us of some few religious who left lamenting they were not made superiors, thinking the founder did not esteem them as they deserved; others because they were excluded from the more appreciated ministries, such as preaching missions or retreats. (69) Two

or three religious stubbornly refused to preach a mission. On pressing demands from the bishop, the founder had promised the mission, but the religious appointed refused to go. Paul called them and sought to persuade them, explaining the bishop's insistence, the needs of the population and the engagement he had taken and must maintain. He begged them to go and overcome the difficulties they faced "assuring them that besides the charity they would practice, he would be very obliged to them for the favor done to him." The religious continued to excuse themselves. Paul then "turning to the one who led the resistance, said, "Ah! my dear, I've become aware that you have neither courage nor zeal for the glory of God; it displeases me, yet it behooves me to adore the Lord's judgments and acknowledge that all this comes from my sins. The devil has won, but God will provide. Were I not ill, without hesitation I would immediately leave to help my neighbor. Go to your rooms. I have nothing more to say." On the following day the religious, now in a better spirit, presented themselves to the founder begging pardon for their resistance and showing themselves disposed to accept the mission, which turned out to be very profitable (70).

At times Paul's desire, like that of other superiors, to seek perfection in the observance of certain external styles of modesty, could make him appear, and perhaps be, a bit of a nuisance. At a summer evening's recreation, Paul observed some who were seeking fresh air seated with their feet uncovered. He reproved them indirectly by speaking of the heat of the day, then remarking that not even in bed would he leave his feet uncovered. Having said this, he left. One of the religious exclaimed, but not within Paul's hearing, "Thanks for the correction!" (71)

The same motive of seeking perfection regarding observance of solitude led the founder to be very vigilant, particularly at the return to the retreat of those who had finished their duties away from the retreat. He insisted with superiors that religious were not to stay out unnecessarily. At St. Angelo two lay brothers who were sent on duty to the neighborhood returned somewhat late. Paul

called them to order as he thought they should have been home sooner. One of them losing his patience answered "arrogantly, complaining that he had been out all day on duty and had not even had lunch, so he should not be treated in such a manner." The founder calmly answered: "Poor man, so you have not had lunch. Hurry to dinner and tell the cook to treat you well. Tell him I said so. Do you not know, brother, that I love you?" With these and other words he calmed the tired and hungry brother. (72)

When provincial, Fr. Marcoaurelius called the attention of a local superior to some defect. Though a good religious, the superior could not tolerate the correction and let no occasion pass without referring to it, but Fr. Marcoaurelius did not accept the challenge. (73) On another occasion, Struzzieri notified a religious by letter of some slight shortcomings. The religious in reply justified himself, adding that moreover he felt aggrieved by the observations. Struzzieri replied "I promise you that in the future I'll be careful in not letting you know." Words that were sufficient to bring the religious to his senses and make him change his attitude. (74) A highly esteemed local superior was Fr. Sebastian Giampaoli. By his patience and kindly ways he helped many "rather strange" religious to persevere laudably, while had they come across another superior "they would not have," notes Fr. Giampaoli's biographer. (75)

These insignificant incidents reveal the human weaknesses which, not foreign to any group, appeared in the Passionist community. A few isolated cases caused the founder and communities untold suffering and public murmurings and demanded much patience and vigilance on the part of the religious in order not to lose the hard earned esteem in which the people and church and civil authorities held them. A painful case occurred in Terracina shortly after the retreat was founded. Fr. Anthony Danei, the first rector, more from thoughtlessness than malice, committed some imprudences in dealing with women, causing murmurings and criticisms against the Congregation, which in southern Italy had just overcome the mendicant's opposition. Such was the founder's anguish

that he could not eat nor sleep and the religious "cried like babies, one of them to the extent of spitting blood from pain." On July 25, 1752, Paul ordered extraordinary prayers and penances "for the poor nascent Congregation in great need of God's help and grace." He exhorted all to have recourse to Our Lady and from August 2nd to 14th to take a more prolonged daily discipline, fast except on Sundays and feast days and communicate more frequently with the rector's counsel. All priests were to offer up their masses for his intentions on the feast of the Assumption. He ended encouraging all to beg the divine mercy "through Mary to help us in such great needs, having lively faith that she will hear us if we are unanimous in prayer, in true charity and of one heart in the observance." After some months, the murmurings ceased and the good behavior of the religious regained the former esteem. Fr. Antonio, removed immediately after the events, strove to follow his brother's counsels. (76)

Unfortunately, some eight years later, another rector left from the same community. This was Fr. James Vanni. The general council elected him rector in 1758 to replace Fr. Joseph Del Re who had been transferred to Paliano. Fr. James was professed in 1747 under Fr. Marcoarelius and for many years was seriously committed to the common life. But, in 1756, the founder was known to be pleased because the provincial had removed this father from St. Sosio. Evidently something was amiss. Raised to superiorship, he had become very friendly with another priest of the retreat who was already lax and would eventually leave the Congregation. Together with this priest Fr. James began to go out frequently, even horseback riding, to meet his friends. The major superiors tried to bring about his amendment but to no avail. On discovering that he was seeking a benefice in order to leave the Congregation, they transferred him to another community until the coming chapter but did not depose him. Having left the retreat accompanied by a consultor, at a stop on the way, he left his companion, went to Terracina and, before the bishop, deposed the Passionist habit and donned clerical attire. For some time he remained in the city at a friend's house causing

great pain to the religious community which became the object of jovial commentaries. (77)

The Congregation suffered a severe example of weakness when Fr. Clement Maioli left, taking with him a brother and a tertiary from St. Eutizio. He was a native of Orvieto who had entered the Congregation as a priest and took his community life very seriously. In 1755 he was elected rector of the Presentation where he remained for six years. In Orbetello where he frequently went on the pretext of directing some pious person, he made numerous friends in whose homes he would spend long hours. He was called to order and admonished several times in the hope of amendment. In 1761 "as subjects were lacking" he was elected rector of St. Eutizio. He took the separation from Orbetello very hard and he blamed the Presentation religious. His former life continued in the new retreat and one day towards the end of his term, "partly out of fear of losing his rectorship, but more from being influenced by the devil and ill-advised by his false friends, he dressed as a secular priest" and left for the neighboring town, which must have been Soriano, and from there went on to his home city. The community was discredited and became the object of gossip in that area, more so as Bro. Joachim and the tertiary Turrenius also left. The bitter discovery that he had taken some documents from the retreat archives and a certain amount of money added to the pain of his departure. The brother, on his part, had cunningly managed to get from the vicar a blank sheet of paper with the seal of the Congregation with which he justified before the public the sixteen *scudi* stolen and taken with him. (78)

More painful still for all the Congregation was the case of Fr. Charles Joseph Marchiandi, native of Asti, most esteemed for his doctrinal learning and the talents that made him a brilliant orator and a capable person. Because of these qualities and the needs of the Congregation, he was elected rector of Monte Cavo scarcely four years after ordination. In 1762, he was rector at the Presentation and from 1765 to 1769 he succeeded as general consultor Fr. John Baptist who had died in 1765. From 1769 to 1772, he was provincial of Our Mother of

Sorrows province. To the religious aware of his talents, his government seemed "mediocre," but for him this was a time of continuous cooling in his spiritual life. He gradually took greater exemptions and comforts and his dealings with seculars increased. The charitable admonitions of the founder and of others were of no avail. In 1772 he was not confirmed as provincial but still elected consultor. The new provincial felt that he could not in conscience grant him permission to keep a certain sum of money which he said he held in custody. Seeing himself subject to the common norms as the other religious and without the liberty to deal with his friends, he decided to leave. With the excuse of settling some family affairs, after much insistence he obtained the founder's permission to go to his home. The appointed return time elapsed, and he did not return. After repeated orders to do so, he left his home but instead of going to Rome as commanded, he stopped off in Orbetello with his friends, dining frequently with them. After a further command in 1774 to go to Rome, he returned again to his home. There a new order awaited him to return immediately to the retreat or he would be expelled. He chose to stay at home and by order of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, he deposed the religious habit before the bishop of Asti. News of this event caused untold affliction to the sick founder and to all the religious, not only because of the defection but the manner in which Fr. Charles behaved. In many places there were uncomplimentary remarks made about the congregation. In his chronicles, the historian, Fr. Philip, wrote: "This bitter news tells us that neither good principles, nor doctrine, nor age, nor offices held can assure a vocation if man relaxes in his spirit and nourishes his own passions." (79)

If communities had to endure various aspects of weakness, they still were kept unsullied from grave faults against consecrated chastity. Fr. John Mary recalls: "A great care and utmost caution was always taken to keep the Congregation spotless and free from the least stain of impurity. Therefore, by the Lord's mercy the religious have been outstanding in this angelic virtue, striving to guard it with the greatest modesty and cau-

tion possible." He then speaks of seven religious, three clerics, three lay brothers and one priest expelled because of suspicion of possible faults in this area. The suspicion was not public, but the severity used was evidence of the conviction of "our blessed fathers, that nothing could blacken more the good name of the Congregation than things touching on holy purity, since this little Congregation must be a enclosed garden, a sealed fountain in order that its heavenly fragrance be ever verified." (cfr. Cant. 4: 12-13) (80)

A scrupulous young lady, ill-advised by a priest not too friendly to the Congregation, accused four religious of the St. Sosio community, including the rector, of solicitation in the confessional. The examination ordered by the bishop had a favorable result for the religious, but the priest still had the case taken to the Holy Office causing the religious much suffering. The rector, Fr. Peter Vico, was removed notwithstanding the fact that all esteemed him. After a few years he was elected novice master, and always received the founder's manifestations of trust. On his deathbed early in April 1773, he had the joy of learning that his accuser had made a public retraction. (81)

The examples of weakness were a source of suffering. They were, furthermore, the cause of many precautions and preventive measures against any possible relaxation and abuses which imperceptibly could weaken regular life, the glory of God, and the good of the religious and people. These norms are to be found not so much in general chapters as in the decrees of canonical visitations and in circular letters. Minor norms, but they were a defense to guard the Lord's vineyard and keep out the foxes that could harm it. The multiplicity of the rules might give the impression of a tendency to bridle the movements of persons in everything but, in general, they were justified, and the religious well understood them as a means of exercising obedience and doing nothing without the superior's blessing. This method of government was used not only by Paul, it was common to all the institutes of that time bent on keeping up the fervor of religious life. In St. Leonard's constitutions for the

Solitude of the Incontro retreat near Florence in 1716, it was stressed that nothing should be done without the superior's permission, even changing a habit, or underclothes, washing one's feet, cutting nails, speaking to guests or members of the order. (82) The risk in the multiplicity of norms and prohibitions lay in their being imposed by superiors not too well balanced and lacking a deep sense of understanding and charity, in whose hands they could become negative; also, if the religious themselves were not clearly enlightened as to their life and the norms given them as means to an end, they might develop feelings of constriction or think they were being treated as automatons.

These experiences gave Fr. John Mary Cioni occasion to reflect on the causes for leaving the Congregation and of other weaknesses, and derive from them some wise affirmations that were transmitted to the Congregation. Among the causes that lead to the ruin of religious, he assigned, as first, the dissipation of spirit from which come the difficulties and tediousness in the Congregation's life of prayer, solitude, obedience and penance. This is apt to happen chiefly at three stages of the religious life: first, on leaving the novitiate, when young clerics might think that the commitment to the inner life can be lessened because of study or other offices; second, after ordination for the clerics and after the first outings for the quest or other occupations for the lay brothers; and third, when assuming for the first time some stable office or charge, because of the risk of feeling oneself free or one's own master, besides having to face new responsibilities which could cause worry, the lessening of recollection and of inner attention to God, to prayer and dependence on superiors. Experience shows the disadvantages of confirming men in office for too long a time and especially in the same place. A period of rest should be given religious from offices of responsibility so they will not find it too difficult to live as subjects, or become too attached to places or persons, causing a trauma when they are removed.

It has also been seen that no good effects come from giving religious an office or charge as an incentive

for them to improve. That is why Fr. John Mary recommended never entrusting offices of responsibility or administration to one not truly humble, steady in his vocation, fervent in common life, and docile to superiors, and to the norms of the rule.

Finally, caution must be exercised in permitting visits to relatives or the home town because "attachment to one's own blood relatives attracts the religious" and "meeting the kinsfolk anew awakens the devil's temptations," as Fr. John Mary affirmed when quoting other examples. (83)

In closing this chapter on Passionist community life, I think Fr. John Mary's words could be quoted. After relating the weaknesses of the period, he writes: "The practice of the most signal virtues is common to the true sons of this Congregation, and, precisely because they are common to all, are scarcely admired in the individuals of this body." (84)

FOOTNOTES

1. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 43; 154.
2. Let. IV, 257. Cf. Let. IV, 244-249. Cf. Acts 1:14; 4:32-35.
3. Reg. et const. 102/I/18-34. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 308.
4. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 21; 47; 101, 2; 122. Visita can. Ceccano 1767, decr. n. 12. AG. B. V-I/2-7.
5. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 264. Visita can. Ceccano 1767, decr. n. 11.
6. Processi III, 267.
7. Visita can. Ceccano 1767, decr. n. 7. Processi IV, 233.
8. Reg. et const. 142-143/III-V/5-19; p. 171, n. 238.
9. Strambi, Vita, 482. The practice of no religious having his cell swept by others passed into the customs of the institute, cf. Consuetudines, p. 88, line 9-11; p. 131, line 53-57.
10. Reg. et const. 34/I-III/35-44.
11. Ibid. 12/III/33-36. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 1; 25; 116; 125, 8.
12. Reg. et const. 74/I-V/49-61; 78/III-V/2-5.
13. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 113.
14. However the brothers are also the ones who, by order of the superior, pay out the money to the workers and for shopping when the syndic or an oblate cannot do it, cf. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 29, 1; 78, 2. Reg. et const. 44/III/34ff.
15. S. Paolo della croce, Guida, n. 106; 109; 111; 306; 308; 312; 314. Visita can. S. Angelo 1766, decr. n. 6.
16. Processi III, 449-450.
17. Visita can. S. Angelo the cited years.
18. Visita can. Corneto 1770.
19. Visita can. S. Sosio 1767.
20. Visita can. S. Eutizio 1749.
21. Ibid. the cited years.
22. Visita can. Ceccano 1767.
23. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 115. Cf. Regolamenti comuni, 1826, General notices n. 6; Regolamenti comuni 1935, n. 266.
24. Processi IV, 232-233.
25. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 141; also p. (8). Processi I, 88.
26. Let. I, 285. Cf. also Let. II, 381.

27. Visita can. Ceccano 1767, decr. n. 7; Visita can. S. Angelo 1766, decr. n. 6; Visita can. S. Eutizio 1753, decr. for laybrothers n. 5; Visita 1769, decr. n. 6.

28. Visita can. S. Eutizio 1759, decr. n. 6. Visita can. Ceccano 1767, decr. n. 7.

29. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 140. Let. IV, 290, n. 1.

30. Reg. et const. 138/I-III/56-63. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 300; 324.

31. Reg. et const. 140/I-III/28-43.

32. Processi I, 539.

33. Consuetudines, p. 29.

34. Silvestrelli, Memorie dei primi compagni, p. 59; 230. Reg. et const. 36/I-III/14-26.

35. Reg. et const. 140/I-II/25-28.

36. Ibid. 140/III/25-29; 141/IV/25-31. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 17; 43.

37. Reg. et const. 141/V/25-31.

38. Giammaria, Vita... Giambattista, p. 223.

39. Processi III, 440.

40. Let. II, 273.

41. In the circular of April 14, 1747, Paul speaks of "a Regulation regarding the distribution of time for retreats" daily, that is the schedule, but I was not able to find any schedule for this period, Let. IV, 224.

42. Costituzioni da osservarsi nella Solitudine del Ritiro della Provincia Riformata di Toscana. Firenze 1716, pp. 31-32; 76-82.

43. Let. II, 120; V, 265. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 94.

44. Let. II, 659. Consuetudines, p. 164, n. 4. Naselli, La Solitudine e il deserto, p. 31.

45. The Ordinary of Viterbo made two visitations to the church of the Retreat of St. Angelo, cf. documents in AG. IV-III/1-9. In 1771 the delegate of Card. Stoppani, the bishop of Palestrina, wanted to perform the visitation in the Passionist church in Paliano, even though the provincial made him see the actual documents which showed the right of exemption of the religious. However, as in the two preceding cases, after making protestations, the visitor was admitted, while reserving the right to appeal to the Holy See. The founder in fact asked the Pope for an explicit and detailed declaration on the exemption of the Passionists in virtue of the Bull Supremi apostolatus. The declaration was conceded through the Holy Congregation of the Council on September 21, 1771, cf. Let. V, 242-243; the

protest of the provincial is in AG. B. IV-III/1-14. Cf. G. De Sanctis, De Exemptione ecclesiarum congregationes Passionis a visitatione Ordinarii loci (Napoli, 1947), pp. 117-122.

46. Let. II, 333-361; 653-702; Let. V, 56-141.

47. Filippo, Stor. Prov. Ad., vol. I, f. 364-367. Original documents in AG. B. IV, III/1-13.

48. The letter of the canonical theologian of April 3, 1749 and the letter of Card. Oddi of August 31, 1752, in AG. B. IV, III/1-9.

49. Testimonial regarding the accusation against the Passionist confessors, in AG. B. IV, III/31-12.

50. F. Antonaroli, Virtuosa Vita dei Passionist, f. 14v-15v.

51. Filippo, Stor. Prov. Ad., vol. I, f. 355-357.

52. Cf. Chap. on the apostolate # 3, 1.

53. For instance Let. IV, 228-229; 238. Cf. also Giammaria, "Storia delle fondazioni," in Bollettino 1925, p. 349.

54. Filippo, Stor. Prov. Ad., vol. I, f. 194.

55. Cf. the chapters on the formation and on the spirituality of the Congregation.

56. Strambi, Vita, 306-307. Processi III, 216, 390; I, 369; 417.

57. Consuetudines, p. 276, line 25-31. Cf. also Let. II, 119.

58. Processi III, 259-260.

59. Ibid., 254.

60. Processi III, 106-107.

61. Strambi, Vita, 311-312. Processi I, 137, 252. Other examples in Processi III, 441.

62. Strambi Vita, 402.

63. Giammaria, Vita, pp. 117-118.

64. Let. IV, 277-279.

65. Strambi, Vita, 307. Let. IV, 277. Giammaria, Annali, n. 479. Processi III, 441.

66. Giammaria, Vita p. Marcoaurelio, f. 215.

67. Giammaria, Mons. Struzziere, f. 215. Cf. also Processi I, 126.

68. Visita can. Ceccano 1767, decrees for the Retreat, decr. n. 2, 13. Visita can. S. Sosio 1767, decrees for the Retreat, decr. n. 8.

69. Processi III, 260; Giammaria, Miscellanea, f. A15v. Let. II, 199-200.

70. Processi III, 257.

71. Processi I, 262.

72. Processi I, 372. Other events in Processi II, 393; 467.
73. Silvestrelli, Memorie dei primi compagni. p. 116. Cf. also AG., B. I-I, 5-3.
74. Giammaria, Mons. Struzzieri, f. 173-174.
75. Biogr. Rel. Pas. Sac., f. 233.
76. Giammaria, Storia delle fondazioni, in Bollettino 1924, p. 281. Giammaria, Annali, n. 366. Filippo, Storia Prov. Ad., vol. I, f. 118-119. Let. III, 219.
77. Filippo, Storia Prov. Ad., vol. I, f. 245-246. Giammaria, Miscellanea, f. A2rv. Let. III, 433.
78. Giammaria, Miscellanea, f. A3rv., Bartoli, Catalogo, pp. 40; 190; 282. Cf. also ibid. p. 79.
79. Filippo, Storia Prov. Ad., vol. II, f. 67-69. Giammaria, Miscellanea, f. A3v-A4v. Bartoli, Catalogo, p. 50.
80. Giammaria, Miscellanea, f. A7v-A8.
81. Filippo, Storia Prov. Ad., vol. I, f. 223-233. Biogr. Rel. Pas. Sac., f. 219-220; 231-232.
82. Costituzioni da osservarsi nella Solitudine del Ritiro della Provincia Riformata di Toscana, pp. 40; 41-45.
83. Giammaria, Miscellanea, f. A2r-A16r.
84. Ibid., f. A17r.



Chapter VIII

"HOLY APOSTOLIC LABORS FOR THE NEIGHBOUR'S SALVATION"

A. PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE APOSTOLIC SCOPE OF THE CONGREGATION

The apostolic nature of the Congregation that God called him to found was clear to Paul from the beginning of the decisive enlightenment received in the summer of 1720: "to gather companions to live together and promote the holy fear of God in souls (this being the chief desire)." (1) The understanding of the Congregation's specific apostolic mission which he had already glimpsed in the black habit and the "sign," signifying the name of Jesus and his Passion, matured in Paul during his mystical experiences during the retreat at Castellazzo. The Congregation was to have "a continuous and sorrowful remembrance" of the Passion of Jesus as the supreme revelation of God's love and to proclaim this mystery of love by a life-witness and by teaching everyone "the devout meditation of the sufferings of our sweet Jesus." (2) The receiving "of the form of the holy rule infused in his spirit," meant for Paul a re-reading of Christ's discourse to the twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples as a reference for the Passionist life. Passionists were to fulfill their missions animated by the saving power of Jesus, known and appreciated by a continuous "being with him" in the solitude to which they returned after having accomplished their missions.

Paul expressed this global understanding of the apostolic mission by stressing the importance of having the Congregation provide for the prayer life of its religious in order that they might obtain that union of love with God and be thus fit to teach others to meditate on the Passion of Jesus: "One of the principal ends of this least Congregation is not only to apply ourselves untiringly to holy prayer, but also to lead others to do the

same, teaching them this holy exercise in the best and easiest manner possible." (3) The phrase "being with Jesus" expresses the idea of that intimate union with God through continuous prayer, which was fostered by the solitude of the retreats, penance and silence. The characteristic aspect of this apostolic service is to guide the neighbor to the same intimate union with God, by instructing him in meditation on the Passion of Jesus "the most efficacious means for destroying vice and leading souls to great holiness in a short time." (4) To speak of prayer and of union with God to persons of all and every category certainly meant having a marvelous trust in the transforming power of the Passion of Jesus. Paul was fully convinced that if people were mindful of the infinite love with which Christ suffered his passion, they would be capable of bearing their temporal experience with the selfsame sentiments. (5) The founder, therefore, pleaded for prayers in order that God would provide the Congregation with fervent religious, "holy men, who as trumpets of the Holy Spirit would go forth to preach what Christ did and suffered for love of men - something wholly forgotten by most people and hence calling forth inconsolable tears at the cause of so much iniquity in the world. He wanted holy laborers who by preaching the sufferings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would awaken those in the slumber of sin to shed saving tears of compunction, and by the continuous, devout meditation on the same sufferings be enkindled ever more to live, in God's holy love." (6)

The Congregation's apostolate consists fundamentally in preaching the love manifested by Jesus in his Passion in order that sinners come to the knowledge of the gravity of their sin, do penance, be converted and, being instructed in meditating Christ's life and passion, acquire a grateful memory of it and from then on live and work in the selfsame sentiments of Jesus. To outsiders, Paul presented the Congregation as tending essentially to apostolic mission as a special gift to offer for the good of the people. He indicated, likewise, the limits of external activity in order that the mission be efficacious and in harmony with the peculiar charism God gave it. Paul took his starting point from the fact that the chief

cause of the sins that flood the world is the forgetfulness of God's love as manifested in the Passion of Jesus. God, in his mercy, called the Passionist Congregation into being to awaken in the minds and hearts of the peoples "the grateful memory" of this revelation of God's love. People would be moved by this extraordinary manifestation of God's mercy and be converted. But what would give them stability in virtue and advance them in the perfection of charity according to their state in life, would be this meditation taught and perseveringly adhered to. Thus, though the Congregation may employ ordinary forms of evangelization, such as missions, retreats, catechesis, sermons, spiritual direction and hearing confessions, it still adds to all these a special mission which is teaching meditation and striving to persuade people to use it perseveringly. Therefore, the Congregation's evangelizing activity is to be a specialized one. It requires religious who are "men of prayer and recollection" with a quasi-experiential mystical knowledge of Jesus Crucified. Their external work has a time limit, inasmuch as they must spend periods of contemplation, penance and study in houses of solitude.

Their activity is also limited as to forms, because not all of these are apt for carrying out their charism. Such is the case with Lenten sermons which do not respond to the needs of the ordinary people, and usually are greatly desired by preachers in search of the human acclaim which generally accompanies them. Another case in point is parochial activity, which often impedes religious from leading a community life that is immersed in solitude, prayer and penance, as a preparation and a condition for the efficacy of their charismatic contribution to the ordinary pastoral work. (7)

B. UNDERSTANDING OF THE HOLY SEE AND BISHOPS OF THE CONGREGATION'S APOSTOLIC MISSION

The Holy See's understanding of the Congregation's mission and what was expected of it is expressed in the documents of approval. In the 1741 approbation, both the

votes of the examiners and the apostolic rescript indicate a Congregation committed "to the sole scope of sacred missions" and they assigned to it the more abandoned zones in order that the people might receive the help they needed. The examiners of the 1746 text mentioned specifically the vow of promoting "the religious devotion towards the sacred mysteries of the Passion" of Jesus and the missions to be given in socially and religiously underdeveloped areas. Those deputed to examine the 1769 text of the rule suggested to the pope that approval of the Congregation and its rule would be very useful "in fostering the cult of the divine Passion and propagating sacred missions." From the study and examination of the constitutions they got the impression that the scope of the Congregation "was not so much the contemplative life but, rather, the so-called active life, having to endure great labors in the task of sacred missions and in seeking the salvation of their neighbors to whom they are totally consecrated." Because of this, some mitigation of the austerities practiced was deemed advisable. In the bull, the pope gave as the reason for approving the Congregation the fact that the apostolic mission as outlined in the constitutions and proved by experience was of the highest importance.

"We desire that the mystery of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, the highest and most powerful sacrament of divine mercy in which are contained the motives for Christian hope and salvation, be ever fixed in the spirit and mind of the faithful; and, according to the doctrine of Blessed Peter, we understand that nothing is more useful for the Christian people than to be armed with the thought of what Christ suffered in his body, and with this thought overcome the enemies of our salvation and obtain the palm of eternal victory. We have decided that our apostolic favors should be granted to those who, by preaching and example, strive to stimulate all the faithful to a more fervent sharing in the passion of Christ. Therefore, we wish to favor with special graces Father Paul of the Cross, superior of the Congregation and the members of the Institute committed to such a pious and praiseworthy work."

The 1775 bull stressed the interest of the Holy See in the Congregation as arising from seeing it committed to the preaching of the Passion of Christ by the example of an austere, contemplative life and by the proclamation of the word of salvation in missions, retreats, and in other manners conformable to the rule which the Holy See approved. "Trusting that the same Congregation will progress and bear fruits of holiness in the people and obtain the end of eternal life," said Pius VI, "inasmuch as it preserves more intensely the primitive fervor of spirit, and its members be lovers and observers of austere poverty, and committed to strive for their own salvation and the conversion of sinners by prayer, vigils, penance, and preaching the Word of God, and shall work at the same time to imprint in the minds of all the memory of the most bitter passion of our Lord Jesus Christ....Wherefore we confirm this pious Congregation and its rule."

To show this appreciation for the style of apostolate the Congregation exercised, the pope not only granted a plenary indulgence to those who took part - a benefit granted to all preachers of missions and spiritual exercises, - but added: "We grant, or rather prescribe and command that on the last day of the mission, after strenuously recommending continual mindfulness of the Lord's Passion, they impart in our name and of the then reigning pontiff the apostolic blessing with the crucifix they carry on the missions as a pledge of reconciliation with the divine mercy." (8)

These texts imply the understanding of an itinerant preaching, performed by men with a deep experience of God acquired in contemplation, favored by an austere life of poverty and penance in the solitude of the retreats. This itinerant preaching tends to convert even the most abandoned and illiterate people and render them capable of a continuous remembrance of God's love as manifested in the Passion of Christ and, thus, to overcome all the difficulties in the way of a fervent Christian life.

All the fifteen bishops who wrote in favor of the request for solemn vows in 1759 unanimously affirmed the Passionist Congregation to be useful to God's people, in-

asmuch as by word and example the religious strove to root out evil and lead the faithful towards Christian perfection by the constant and apt teaching of meditation on the Passion of Christ. They also agreed that the chief means of their apostolate were missions and popular retreats, followed in importance by the attention given to the numerous penitents who flocked to them for confession or in search of spiritual direction. Some of the bishops, like Cardinal Spinelli, stressed "the particular method and unusual zeal of the Passionists from which the people derive the greatest profit."

The bishop of Civitacastellana recalled the high esteem the people had for the Passionists because of the austere life they led in their retreats. This moved them "to a form of piety that made them eager to hear their preaching and desirous of receiving absolution for their sins from them." Cardinal Oddi of Viterbo had high praise for the exemplary life and shining virtues of the Passionists in his diocese - their solicitude in hearing confessions to the great profit of the penitents, their apostolic missions and spiritual exercises, noting "their zeal to the point of fatigue in enkindling in people the pious remembrance of the Lord's Passion." The bishops of Segni, Ferentino and Anagni testified that devotion to the Passion was most profitable because it led people to detest vice, practice virtue and make great progress in the way of perfection. (9)

From the countless documents that have come down to us from bishops requesting missions or retreats, confessors for monasteries, or in thanksgiving for the good done in their respective dioceses, one thing is evident: that these shepherds of the church, who found in the Congregation a life of fervor and a tireless zeal in fulfilling their proper ministries in the most abandoned places, saw the efficacy of their work. However, none of them has directly mentioned what, for Paul, was the sole cause of the efficacy of Passionist preaching; that is, the proclamation of the mystery of God's love as revealed in the Passion of Jesus and the teaching of meditating on it. Did they ignore this? Or rather, did they attribute it to a peculiar gift of Paul and his companions because of

their prayerful, penitential and "observant" life? Yet, Paul was tireless in repeating in his letters to bishops that the scope of the Congregation was to teach how to meditate on the Passion of Jesus and that from this derived the full efficacy of Passionist preaching. It is clear, however, that the bishops acknowledged that the Congregation had a method all its own. They respected it as they respected the periods of sacred rest in solitude for the missionaries' physical and spiritual benefit.

An example of this is the letter from the bishop of Montefiascone-Corneto in 1773: "I hasten to manifest to my most esteemed Fr. Paul the immense consolation experienced through the holy missions given by the provincial, Fr. Vincent, and the other two religious who have brought such spiritual profit to my city. I assure your paternity I cannot find words to express adequately the immense good they have done and the blessings with which the Lord crowned their efforts. The concourse of people was most numerous. Very, very many have been the general confessions, the reconciliations have been extraordinary. Finally, I cannot but thank the Lord who has so greatly blessed my city by means of so worthy and zealous ministers. I rejoice with your paternity for having such worthy members in your Congregation. I cannot understand how Fr. John Baptist (Gorresio) can bear such tremendous stress in preaching and confessing. Fr. Vincent Strambi has conducted the retreats to the clergy with great fervor, and I pray the Lord it be to the greatest profit, as many need it. He could not have spoken better...nor more to the point. He will do great honor to the new and holy Congregation." (10)

From the foregoing, it should be sufficiently clear that both the Holy See and the bishops recognized in the Congregation an essentially apostolic element, animated by a particular charism which was demanding. They accepted and respected both precisely because it could contribute to the church that benefit which God willed to give through the establishment of the new Congregation.

C. VARIOUS PASTORAL FORMS OF THE SPECIFIC PASSIONIST APOSTOLATE

1. "To be the good odour of Christ in every place"

Paul used this biblical phrase to express the most simple and fundamental form of the apostolate: good example. Another not less meaningful expression was "to be a living portrait of Jesus Crucified," meaning that the sight alone of a Passionist should be an efficacious reminder of Jesus and his love for persons. This apostolic service was accessible to all: novices, lay brothers, sick, priests returning into silence and solitude to recuperate spiritually and physically. It meant that each religious was aware of the apostolic mission and of his special charism. Paul frequently reminded his religious of this in the Regulations: "Since promoting devotion to the most sacred Passion of Jesus Christ is the purpose of our Congregation, let them pray to Almighty God for sinners, for the conversion of infidels, for the Congregation in order that the most Holy Name be known and revered and that all peoples, believing the ineffable mysteries, may be compassionate and weep and be devoted to the most bitter sufferings of Jesus." (11)

In the solitude of their retreats, at any moment of the day, the religious survey the whole world, mindful of the particular vow that unites them to Christ, whose open arms would embrace all peoples: "Let all have at heart the conversion of sinners, the sanctification of the neighbor, the release of the souls in purgatory, and to this end let them frequently offer the passion and death and the precious blood of Jesus, and let them do this with zeal as is proper to our Institute." (12) So intense must this desire be that the religious should feel disposed to give their lives, if necessary, "so that devotion to the Passion of Jesus Crucified would spring from the ashes and be spread everywhere for the glory of the Father and for the redemption of the world." (13)

This commitment was felt and lived as vivifying each act within the retreat and when outside of it assumed the aspect of good example through the "observance

of the norms." "Let your behavior be such that all who observe you see a living portrait of Jesus Christ and his virtues shining from your features, demeanor and labors, in order that all may praise his Divine Majesty at the mere sight of the sons of the Congregation of the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ. (14) In his last visit to the Corneto community in 1770, Paul expressed the hope that the whole life of the religious be for the people an uninterrupted mission: "We exhort you all to be mirrors of every virtue, of good example and, above all, of modesty in and out of the retreat, in order that those whom you meet, especially in these marshes, find in you a living portrait of Jesus Christ. My experience tells me how many inveterate sinners have been converted and returned to a virtuous life on seeing the modesty and good example of our religious. Thus your life will be one continuous mission." (15)

Another element in this form of apostolate was the custom of dressing in black, in mourning for the Passion of Christ, and particularly of wearing the "sign." As Paul observed, that "sign" indicates to all "that we are destined to preach the most bitter sufferings of our Jesus, fostering in all a true devotion to him," while it also reminds the religious himself that the efficacy of his work comes from the Passion of Jesus, lovingly relived in his own life. To a religious who attributed to Paul's prayers the success of the spiritual exercises he had given, Paul replied: " 'No, not to me, but by the passion of Jesus Christ', indicating the sign that hung on his breast." (16)

From this point of view, the Passionist community was always apostolic, even when all its members were at home in periods of greater retirement, dedicated exclusively to contemplation, penance and study, preparing themselves "to help their neighbor." (17)

2. To teach meditation

The original and most important form of the Passionist apostolate was to meditate together with the people

the Passion of Jesus and teach them to do so personally. The 1720 text of the rule, after prescribing that each one remember the Passion of Jesus by the color of his garb, adds: "let each one strive to implant in whom he may the pious meditation on the sufferings of our most sweet Jesus." (18) It was Paul's conviction "that if people only thought of the great benefit of redemption, they would never offend God and in consequence would be saved. It seemed impossible to him that anyone could think seriously on the benefits of the Lord and not love him." (19)

The founder saw in meditation the most excellent means of understanding the mysteries of the cross of Christ and of each one's cross borne in the same sentiments as those of Jesus. He affirmed this categorically in the first chapter of his rule. (20) The fundamental principle of the Congregation's pastoral contribution was later taken up more fully in the chapter dealing with the fulfillment of the vow of promoting the devotion to and the grateful memory of the Passion of Jesus: those declared apt for preaching "must meditate with the people the most holy passion of Jesus Christ....They shall give some brief instruction upon how to meditate it and exhort all to this devotion."

The illiterate must not be excluded from this benefit, because even such persons, in their own way, are capable of calling affectionately to mind God's benefits: "To the poor country folk incapable of prolonged meditation, they shall teach brief and loving aspirations to the suffering Jesus, to be made daily during the different occasions and circumstances. They shall suggest some easy, simple and devout method, encouraging them to offer up what they must do or suffer in memory of what for love of us Jesus did and suffered. They shall make them aware of how meritorious and profitable such a holy and devout exercise will be, spiritually and temporally. These instructions should be given in simple, efficacious and affectionate language, not all at once, but distributed throughout the days of the mission."

These words indicate the importance Paul attached to this form of ministry. He says: "They should also pro-

mote this devotion in the confessional, giving penitents, according to their ability and state of life, brief and simple instructions to help them acquire this holy practice. They should encourage penitents to do this, reassuring them that by not neglecting the meditation on the Passion they will soon acquire great perfection in their state of life. For priests unable to preach, it will be sufficient that they foster this devotion in the confessional, in catechetical instructions and in private conferences." (21)

The founder again stressed the essential importance of teaching meditation on the Passion in the chapter dedicated to the manner of preaching. "In missions and other exercises let them give not only the meditation on the Passion as prescribed, but also strive to teach the people with the greatest possible simplicity and ease how to practice it, convincing them how erroneous it is to think that meditation is only for religious or ecclesiastics. Let them rest assured that God will give every sort of person the easiest and most devout manner of practicing this meditation which is the most powerful and efficacious means of uprooting sin and advancing in holiness." (22) Paul's personal experience and that of his companions confirmed the validity of this apostolic service. Paul testified: "I have seen how those who truly gave themselves up to this meditation, whether bandits or persons of loose living, experienced a true conversion. When meeting these individuals some time later and hearing their confession, I found in some no need for absolution." (23)

The teaching began with meditation aloud on the Passion of Jesus in the morning service of missions and especially in the afternoon for about half an hour after the sermon on the eternal truths. This meditation was essential and could never be omitted not even during retreats without risk of no longer being Passionists. It demanded a discursive-affective tone and a clear and serene narration of the fact in order to pass on to a reflection on the fact as is usual in personal meditation. That is, asking oneself: Who is it who suffers or acts? What is he suffering or doing? How is he suffering or

acting? Why is he suffering or acting? These questions prepared the way for a dialogue with Jesus, at times with the people themselves, in such a way as to hold the attention. The imagination and emotions were moved to affection, and the affection moved the will to resolve to avoid what had been the cause of Christ's sufferings or endangered the reception of the fruits of that love. The teaching of the meditation ended by suggesting apt resolutions which the listeners accepted as their own, being moved by the desire of conversion and the feeling of gratitude for the love of Jesus.

The practical development of the meditation was for the listeners a model to follow. Appropriate instructions suitable to the conditions and culture of the hearers were given in order that they might learn to meditate and, above all, to overcome the usual obstacles in this exercise. The method of meditation taught was that used within the Congregation for the formation of religious. From the study of the writings of Paul, John Mary and Strambi we discover they used the instructions of St. Francis de Sales in his introduction to a devout life and those of Fr. Louis de la Puente and Cardinal Bona on meditation. As a matter of fact, it was from these writers that the method of prayer given the Passionist novices and taught to the people was derived. The outline introducing Fr. John Mary Cioni's *Meditations on the Passion of Jesus*, published in the founder's lifetime, was also taken from them. It was used in the preface to the meditations on the Passion written by Strambi whose manuscripts are still unpublished. (24) The same outline is to be found in Paul's writings in the bare indications he gave for personal use to those he was guiding or helping in the ways of prayer. (25) What is predominant, however, in the Passionist method is the affective element and the colloquy with Jesus as more efficacious towards commitment and more decisive in assimilating the sentiments of Jesus as principles or motives of action. The development of the affective element was also considered as a means to prompt an attitude of trust during the day.

The Incarnate Word, Jesus, is ordinarily the object of meditation, though having as its end the deity in its

nature and attributes. If one wishes to be saved and glorify God, he or she must look to Jesus and the manner in which he lived his human experience as the only model to which the human person must conform his or her own life experience. Hence, whether it be purely meditation or "the practical manner of continuing throughout the day, the prayerful remembrance of the Passion of Jesus," both are centered on the mystery of the Passion. (26) Bearing in mind the vow of promoting true devotion and the grateful remembrance of the Passion of Jesus in the hearts of the faithful, it could not be otherwise.

In 1746 Benedict XIV published an encyclical letter urging bishops to propagate the practice of mental prayer. (27) This, no doubt, influenced Paul and his companions. Likewise, his friend Garagni encouraged Paul to foster this practice among ecclesiastics, although Paul already did this from his own convictions expressed in the rule and exercised in the ministry. (28) The 1700s witnessed a notable movement promoting mental prayer. This we gather from the numberless books dedicated to the subject and highly recommended by missionaries and spiritual directors. Among these, we may mention the two Jesuits Paolo Segneri, senior and junior, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Leonard of Port Maurice and Fr. Gaetano of Bergamo. Paul and his Congregation saw this pastoral service as something fundamental, never to be forgotten nor neglected, even though using the usual methods of itinerant preaching. Meditation should move peoples' minds, hearts and wills to concentrate on God's love revealed in the Passion of Jesus and, thus, guided by the Holy Spirit, arrive at the contemplation of the most Holy Trinity. The teaching of meditation must be upheld as the primary and fundamental apostolic commitment of the Congregation and the most suitable for introducing souls to the wisdom of the cross and making of it their life principle.

The Passionists made a special effort in places where they had conducted missions or retreats to foster perseverance and steadfastness in meditation, even at group level. Usually, a person was chosen and entrusted with the task of animating others by reading and reflec-

ting on the points of meditation. This was done, for example, in Pereta, in Montorgiali, in Orbetello and elsewhere. In Orbetello, Ronciglione and Vetralla they succeeded in establishing the custom of people visiting the Blessed Sacrament when returning in the evening from work in the fields. To this end, lights were kept burning before the tabernacle so that people could remain in adoration and meditation (29).

3. The apostolate of personal contact

The teaching of meditation on the Passion ought to lead to conversion, completed then by the sacrament of reconciliation and spiritual direction. Missions and retreats were oriented towards enlightening the mind and stimulating the will to reconciliation with God by the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. Hence, those missions and retreats were considered successful only when everybody had gone to confession. This same apostolic service was provided in the retreats and in the immediate neighborhoods to the sick who called for the Passionists and in the towns where they went on feast days either to give a meditation on the Passion or hold catechetical instruction. The isolation and social condition of the towns, where priests and people knew each other too well, called for priest-confessors who were non-residents and inspired greater trust. People came in great numbers to the retreats desirous of general, annual or devotional confession or spiritual direction or both. The rule prescribed that penitents who came to the retreat should be attended to "with all charity." Fixed commitments to go to nearby towns merely for confessions was not allowed. Exceptions were made only if missions were being given. Whenever the religious went for preaching meditations or catechism, if requested, they could also hear confessions. (30) In houses of formation or deeper solitude, Paul was opposed to hearing ladies' confessions, to avoid murmuring or the danger of upsetting the youths in formation. (31) Confessions were heard in the retreat, either in the morning or the afternoon, but never at night or immediately after lunch. Generally, the church was opened an half hour before sunrise. It was closed about midday after the li-

turgical hour of none and reopened after vespers (2:30 or 3:00 p.m.), closing time being before the evening mental prayer (around 5:00 p.m.). By church law, women were heard in the confessional in the church, while men could be heard either in the sacristy or in established parlors. Good order demanded that penitents be not taken to the rooms of the religious. (32)

Penitents were to be received courteously and attended to promptly. Confessors were reminded: "When called, let them go willingly, not feeling constrained nor with bad grace, as this would be an impediment to receiving divine help." (33) A witness recalls how careful Paul was that this service be fulfilled generously and promptly. While visiting a retreat and observing that the concourse of penitents was not attended to, he renewed the order that confessors, when called, should descend without delay. In his house of residence "he would watch that the confessors appointed to serve in church were at their duty. Should they not be there he would search for them, discreetly calling them to order, and would afterwards return to verify that they had obeyed." (34)

The founder desired that at least one approved confessor be available in each retreat, though he preferred two, particularly at St. Angelo where at Eastertide "almost all the shepherds, charcoal workers and other poor laborers from the mountain and countryside" flocked. (35) Frequently, the Passionists were called to assist the sick and dying in the vicinity of the retreats. They would visit and confess them, leaving with them a testimonial of having done so, in order that the parish priest could administer the sacraments to them, as was his right and duty. (36) In Rome, once a week, they visited, comforted and confessed the sick in the San Giovanni hospital.

Confessors had to apply themselves frequently to the study of moral and ascetical theology besides taking part in the moral case on Thursday and feast days. Every two months, in public chapter, there was the reading of the papal bull against priests who had abused the Sacrament of Reconciliation by solicitation in the confessional. In

1758 Paul added to this the public reading of the chapter on confessors, which was later taken out of the 1775 regulations. (37) In fact, the founder in 1755, guided by his personal experiences, had made a selection of the best material he had come across on pastoral administration of the sacraments and inserted it in the common regulations as a separate chapter of thirty-three articles in which "the most prudent conduct of the confessor towards penitents is marvellously portrayed." (38)

Among other things, he recommended to confessors a remote and an immediate preparation in faith and charity as dispositions for the administration of the sacrament of divine mercy. He exhorted them to be well balanced in their doctrinal position in respect to penitents, have an open mind and esteem for the various states of life, being capable of enlightening the faithful on the holiness and prerogatives of religious and matrimonial life, and being prudent in questioning, especially concerning chastity. The Passionist confessor had to be closer to the poor than to the rich, to men than women, though receiving all charitably as in the open side of Jesus. In difficult cases, he kept his peace and calm, in order to be ever prepared to receive divine light for the help of the penitents. He had to be on guard against envy of those of his colleagues who were requested more often, not heeding whether others were slower or faster in fulfilling their ministry. He was expected to have a lively interest in promoting "devotion to the Passion of Jesus with great force, efficacy, spirit and zeal, and not in a cold, perfunctory manner in order to fulfill his vow." This was the way to reach the hearts of his penitents and persuade them to give themselves up to mental prayer on the Passion of Jesus. When constrained to deny absolution, he was to do this "with good grace and charity, with mild terms helpful for the penitent to understand that it was for his own good, encouraging him not to despair, nor murmur, nor be disheartened." Precautions were taken not to accept permanent penitents, especially women who were busybodies. The general tendency was to give penitents serenity, hope and trust, always leaning towards that mercy so abundantly manifested in the Pas-

sion of Jesus, who to save one single soul "would have remained on the cross till the end of the world."

Generally all the religious willingly dedicated themselves to this service. It was a service the faithful sought and appreciated, and the bishops often mentioned their appreciation in letters requesting foundations or in thanksgiving for services rendered. These were presented to defend the existence of the Passionists, at the time of the controversy with the mendicants. This ministry was in great demand at St. Sosio, Ceccano, St. Eutizio, and limited to men, at St. Angelo and the Presentation. It is recorded of Fr. Louis Borel that, in order to prepare a person for a general confession of true conversion, he would at times preach him a retreat for some days and then confess him. "Such was the trust he inspired that the people flocked to him from everywhere." (39) Fr. Frontiniano Porrino would encourage his companions to have no fear in approaching sinners whom they foresaw could not be absolved. This human-spiritual contact would help them to reflect and dispose them for conversion. "Some good is always done," he said, "by correction, exhortation, counsel; they are set on the road for a return to God." (40)

Some Christians more inclined to piety and prayer sought spiritual direction in or out of confession, as advice and moral support in overcoming their difficulties. Paul had a high appreciation of this pastoral service, but desired it should be fulfilled with circumspection in a true spirit of faith and prudence, with enlightened discernment from the Holy Spirit. It should always be accompanied by prayer and detachment from all affection for those served, and by humility of heart. Spiritual direction, he would say, "is so sublime and difficult a task, that if possible I would exempt myself from it." (41) In the case of women, the confessional was intended "also for spiritual conferences in which each of God's ministers is strictly obliged to abstain from all that is superfluous." (42) Particular care was demanded in assuming the spiritual direction of nuns. The legislation then in force required the local ordinary's permission for access to convent parlors. Spiritual direction by mail was

permitted, but not encouraged. In such cases, letters were exempt from the superior's inspection. (43)

In order to evaluate Passionist spiritual direction in this period, it is necessary to study the chapter in the 1755 regulations, the letters of the founder, and the few that are left of Frs. Fulgentius, John Baptist Danei, Appiani and Strambi on this subject. From these documents, we can trace a line of serene austerity yet full of understanding, leading above all to trust in God, a lively hope in his divine assistance in accomplishing great things for his glory, for their own sanctification and in aid of their neighbor. Souls were led to an intense life of prayer, yet without hesitation or uncertainty, because of the insistence that they remember the concrete situations of their states of life; that they practice true charity toward those in their households or the communities in which they lived; that they bear silently and patiently the sufferings, trials and contradictions of life even when they come from the least expected quarters. They were instructed to join humility and modesty with simplicity in dealing with others, joyful conversation and care in fulfilling their duties, and contribute to the good of others and of the town. They were also taught to allow the Holy Spirit to lead them through continuous prayer for the understanding of God's love revealed in the Word Incarnate which is conducive to mystical union through the dying with Jesus. Even in the simplest of lives a mystic breath permeated all such spiritual direction as it was lived within the community. (44)

4. Reception of retreatants within the retreat

From the very beginning of the Passionist community in the narrow premises of St. Anthony's hermitage, a desire and purpose existed of sharing with others the contemplative experience in solitude at the feet of Christ Crucified. In 1732 this purpose was kept in mind while planning the first retreat. Writing to Bishop Gattinara, Paul said, "God's mercy is arranging for a retreat of penance to be built for us and our companions....In addition a retreat house will be built, not only for priests

of the neighboring dioceses (for in the bad climate of this marshy locality hardly any have a seminary) but also for laymen who at convenient times would like to come here for retreats." (45) Also in the Ceccano, Terracina and Toscanella foundations, a house for retreats attached to the retreat was contemplated, or at least a separate wing attached to the retreat. (46) Meanwhile, in the 1741 rule, the purpose was expressed of creating "a house built and destined" for those who desire to retire for a time into solitude. (47) In the end, however, this house never materialized and, in most places, not even a special section was possible due to the straightened circumstances in which most of the retreats arose. Therefore, in the 1775 revision of the rule all mention of a house for retreats was eliminated from the text, while the practice remained of receiving some persons within the retreat in a few suitable rooms. Hence, the number of retreatants depended on the number of rooms available, which varied from one or two to ten, as in Sts. John and Paul. Individuals were received, albeit the preference was to constitute small groups in order to have preaching and also create a more helpful atmosphere. The tendency was to have those groups come together during the more marked liturgical seasons such as Lent and Advent. Priests, married laymen or youths were admitted for a period of reflection on their vocations in life. Clerics sent by their bishops for a reconsideration of their vocation were received, but priests sent for motives of penance were not wanted because they could be a disturbance to the community. (48)

The retreatants, whether one or several, always had a religious designated to help them by preaching, private conferences and counseling. Also, there were suggested readings from books specially reserved for retreatants. When on retreat, the priests partook of the canonical office of the community and the Way of the Cross. (49) Particular attention was given to meditation and examination of conscience for a practical reform of life. The common meditations and spiritual reading supported all this, as well as the prolonged invocations to Our Lady, the help of the spiritual director and the community's testimony of faith and prayer. The retreat periods never

exceeded ten days. Only rarely was anyone allowed fifteen days. (50) Lack of documentation does not permit us to offer statistics on the retreatants who accepted the invitation to withdraw "to taste the sweetness of a loved solitude at the feet of the Crucified." (51)

RETREATANTS' SCHEDULE PAUL DREW UP (52)

1700s' time	Prescribed acts	1900s' time
11:30	Rise	05:30
12:00-13:00	Meditation	06:00-07:00
13:00-13:30	Participation at Mass	07:00-07:30
13:30-14:00	"warm themselves, in silence"	07:30-08:00
14:00-15:00	Spiritual reading in their room	08:00-09:00
15:00-15:30	"solitary walk in silence, thinking on the eternal truths meditated"	09:00-09:30
15:30-16:00	Examination of conscience in one's room	09:30-10:00
16:00-16:30	"recite a third part of the rosary in one's room with great devotion and make a quarter of an hour spiritual reading"	10:00-10:30
16:30-17:00	"second preached meditation"	10:30-11:00
17:00-18:00	"the meditation ended, assist at the last mass and vespers, reciting during vespers another third part of the rosary"	11:00-12:00
18:00-19:00	lunch	12:00-13:00
19:00-19:45	common recreation	13:00-13:45
19:45-20:30	"repose in one's room, without reflection but relaxing the mind"	13:45-14:30
20:45-21:15	"general examination"-reform	14:45-15:15
21:15-22:00	spiritual reading in one's room	15:15-16:00
22:00-22:30	"solitary walk outside, relax the mind, but always in silence"	16:00-16:30

22:30-23:00	recite third part of the rosary	16:30-17:00
23:00-24:00	common meditation	17:00-18:00
24:15-01:15	"collation or fast refection" then recreation	18:15-19:15
01:15-01:45	"rosary"	19:15-19:45
01:45-11:30	"repose"	19:45-05:30

Note: "Let them keep strict silence and not speak to one another except in public recreation, morning and evening. They may be free to speak to their spiritual director who shall visit them in their rooms in the morning or during the day."

5. Retreats preached away from the monastic retreat

This service of the Word applied to ecclesiastics, nuns, particular groups of laymen and entire towns. It differed from missions in duration and form. Retreats lasted from eight to ten days; their form, even when for a whole town, was without the solemn external setting proper to missions.

Retreats for clergy and in monasteries adhered to the usual style but took its specific tone from the daily meditation on the Passion and from the effort to teach personal meditation and have those taking part accept this practice. The retreats to the clergy were usually held during the mission, from the conviction that the mission would not bear fruit without a profound renewal of the clergy. If this could not be done, the local clergy or the bishop agreed to another time. Fr. John Baptist Danei might be considered a model preacher of these exercises. No less zealous and successful was St. Vincent Mary Strambi, whose knowledge of the Fathers and councils, united to a deep experience of God, attracted all hearts. A sermon to ecclesiastics on the excellence of their vocation was never wanting, as also on the excellence of the eucharist, the duty of celebrating it with faith and devotion, and on God's gift in the sacrament of reconcilia-

tion and the responsibility of priests in rightly administering this sacrament.

Particular care was taken that ecclesiastics be reconciled among themselves and with the people, or that the communion between them and the bishop be reinforced. They were encouraged to get together periodically, not only for the moral cases, but also to pray together.

The retreats for monasteries took place when invited by the respective superiors, or at times by direct request of the bishops. Besides Paul himself, others particularly distinguished in this field were Frs. John Baptist, Marco-aurelius, Fulgentius in the few courses he gave, Vincent Strambi, John Baptist Gorresio and John Mary Cioni. (53) The themes usually dealt with in monastery retreats were: the dignity of the religious vocation; the importance of the vow to be nailed to the cross with Jesus, to die mystically with him and be victorious with him in heaven; the faithful observance of the rule; fraternal charity; the excellence of the eucharist and the importance of frequent communion with fervent preparation and prolonged thanksgiving; the need of concrete and real detachment from all things and persons in order to have intimate union with God, in whose presence they must continually live with sweet, loving converse and thought. The tone of the retreats and of the exhortations in confession served to encourage hope and trust. This by no means impeded preaching the eternal truths, including a talk on hell. But the meditation on the Passion opened the hearts of the religious in trust and in the firm purposes of a more generous response. (54)

As already mentioned the popular retreats were a kind of mini-mission lasting about ten days. As for the missions, the platform was used in the church, but only because more convenient for the preacher and more helpful for the listeners. No solemn reception was held for the preachers, who were generally two or three, to meet the needs of the people. They began at about 4 or 5 p.m. with an introductory sermon and explanation of the schedule. Every day about an hour's meditation was held in the early morning; every afternoon an half-hour catechism

was followed by an hour's meditation ending with a "penitential colloquy." Then the miserere was sung to organ accompaniment and "well tuned voices." Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament followed while a missionary made a colloquial prayer with Jesus "to create greater compunction in the people." Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament ended the day. (55) Whatever time was left was employed in hearing confessions, visiting the sick, or in giving conferences either for the clergy or the nuns. Frequently, these popular retreats were preached in places where missions had been held, so as to renew the fervor and make the effects more enduring. (56) At other times the Passionists were requested to supply the Lenten or Advent preaching.

Some parishes requested a different form of these popular retreats consisting of a catechetical preparation for the Easter confession. One priest attended to this, serving as extraordinary confessor to the parish at the same time. Even in this pastoral service of approximately a week's duration, the meditation on the Passion and the teaching of the method of performing it, occupied a relevant position.

6. "Spiritual exercises" in nearby towns or cities on feast days

The 1736 text of the rule dedicated a full chapter to this apostolic service the founder and his brother began at the time they settled into St. Anthony's hermitage. The scope of the service was "to teach Christian doctrine and perform other pious exercises according to our constitutions for the good of souls and chiefly to promote devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ with great fervor and zeal." If requested, the rule permitted hearing confessions. The superior could entrust this exercise to a capable priest or cleric without, however, any steady obligation. This service was given only when possible, since the preaching of missions and retreats always took preference. The rule prescribed that no obligation be taken "to go to places near the retreat to confess on feast days or at other times except on missions." Paul was

very upset when in 1741 the papal commission added to the text of the rule that the religious should participate in processions and attend to confessions in places near the retreat if the bishop requested it. The founder entreated the commission not to impose such an obligation on the religious, depriving them of the benefits of solitude "in which the spirit rests at the foot of the crucifix in prayerful recollection in order to be restored and strengthened after the weaknesses and distractions contracted through human frailty even amidst the most holy works in favor of our neighbors." His request went unheeded and he had to wait until 1746 to have that clause taken out. (57)

In 1768 it was his unpleasant duty to defend this liberty of the community before the bishop of Frascati, Cardinal Henry, Duke of York, who demanded this Sunday service from the Monte Cavo religious. Paul opposed the request as contrary to the fundamental welfare of the Congregation and even of the faithful themselves. He pointed out that the Congregation's proper service to the diocese consisted in the exemplary lives of its members, in continuous contemplation, in the preaching of missions and retreats, in giving catechisms or meditations and in hearing confessions in their own retreat church. "The religious," he said, "must cultivate and live the spirit of prayer in solitude. Only thus will the people look upon them as apostolic men who come from solitude and prayer to enkindle hearts by the fire of holy preaching that will bear much fruit." He begged that the spirit of the Congregation be preserved because "in such a way the church will always have healthy and holy workers; otherwise she will have nothing." He stated that it was his duty to defend the rule the Holy See had approved and said that if not allowed to live according to the dictates of that rule, not only would he "lose the Monte Cavo retreat, but as many as the Congregation possesses." (58)

Those assigned to such ministries had to return to the community in the afternoon "to enjoy the many benefits of the chosen solitude and in order that others attending the usual exercises of the Institute be not unduly

overburdened." (59) Religious in this period were not called upon to give panegyrics on patronal feastdays: that service implied special distinction and peculiar reward and, hence, was reserved to the local clergy. Besides, it would scarcely have been accepted as it was not in conformity with the Congregation's style, which stressed linguistic simplicity as more efficacious in approaching the people.

D. POPULAR MISSIONS

1. The Congregation's choice of popular missions

Among the Congregation's methods or forms of evangelization, popular missions have occupied the first place. They are privileged both in the rule and in the priestly formation. Because of this ministry the Congregation gained the appreciation and recognition of the Holy See as an Institute. For this same reason, bishops sought it for evangelization and to found permanent communities in their respective dioceses. Popular missions, likewise, manifested the vitality of the Congregation and its charism in attracting vocations.

The theological and pastoral foundations of popular missions explain Paul's preferential choice of this form of evangelization. The spirituality of the apostolic men who instituted itinerant preaching was based on Christ's missionary discourse to his twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples and on the ideal of apostolic community described in Acts. Hence, the ideal of the apostolic man, also known as "evangelical laborer." The Dominican theologian, Contenson, who died in 1634, wrote: "The visible mission of the divine persons is imitated by those apostolic men, clerics and religious, who evangelize the poor by fervent missions. Traveling through diverse areas, plain or mountainous, large cities or small towns, proclaiming the gospel truths and maxims in all simplicity, heedless of vain adornments and high eloquence, but giving evidence of virtue, not striving to please the ears, but to move and break hearts....Poor world! Priests

and bishops abound, but none unfortunately to break the bread to the little ones who in the valleys and small towns beg for bread. Woe, woe to the ruling prelates! Woe to the idle priests! Predestination is only accomplished by means of the missions which lead rational creatures to eternal life." (60)

Two things moved Paul to choose popular missions as the most adequate instrument for spreading the memory of the Passion of Jesus among the people: his consonance with the apostolic spirituality which represents the essential core of the rule (Chapter II) and his desire to help those more in need of being catechized. This method allowed the fulfillment of apostolic activity while safeguarding contemplation, community life and strict poverty. It had, besides the advantage of influencing all the people of a town or parish, reforming not only the individuals but also society. Popular missions, moreover, were distinguished by their simple and popular oratory, more consonant with the poverty and humility of the wisdom of the cross and so different from the refined oratorical style of panegyrics and Lenten sermons.

2. The method of the popular missions

At the time of the Congregation's birth, apostolic workers used fundamentally the same method. Variations only touched external manifestations, duration and some complementary themes. All were agreed in rejecting flowery oratory. They aimed at moving hearts with simple and direct speech accessible to the people, by proclaiming the eternal truths, enlightening the minds by catechetical instruction, disposing persons for a good general confession, which should mark the beginning of a Christian life more in conformity with the Gospel, and proved as such by reconciliation between persons and families. To convoke the people, bells were rung in the evening, or boys bearing bells and a crucifix, accompanied by a preacher, walked the streets occasionally proclaiming apt slogans calling the people and inviting them to conversion. In spite of the variety, all missionaries strove to impress upon the clergy a greater sensibility as to the

dignity of their vocation and their responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their flocks. They sought, as well, to give new life to the confraternities which were as hinges of the towns' Christian life. Usually after taking leave of the people, all the missionaries departed unaccompanied. The Jesuits and other workers used much external manifestations with penitential processions in southern Italy, but Vincentian missionaries almost never used them.

A detailed description of the methods in use towards the middle of the 1700s was compiled by the Capuchin, Fr. Amedeus da Castrovillari. Paul knew of this work. (61) Paul's method comes so close as to seem identical with that used by Fr. Amedeus da Castrovillari or St. Leonard of Port Maurice or even the Pious Workers of which Bishop Cavalieri was a member. It differs very much from that used by the Jesuits and is also somewhat different from that used by the Vincentians. Paul's original contribution and that of his Institute is the prominent place given the meditation on the Passion of Jesus, which becomes an integral part of every sermon on the eternal truths. Moreover, the teaching of meditation, which was joined to the catechism, served to promote spirituality and to give a wholly particular tone favorable to compunction and true conversion.

3. The Passionist method

We possess no written method. The chapter of the 1741 rule on popular missions is more concerned with the lifestyle and conduct of the missionaries, indicating that it be wholly irreproachable and "apostolic", thus assuring the success of the mission. As to the mission ceremonies and exercises, we must rely on the founder's letters, on the depositions of witnesses in the processes of canonization and the account of the 1750 Camerino mission.

Normally, the request for a mission came from the bishop; in rare cases, from the local pastor or the civil authorities. It was the bishop's concern to see to the religious instruction of his flock, and in 1745 it was Be-

nedict XIV who urged the bishops of the kingdom of Naples to organize missions in all zones as the most adequate means of remedying religious ignorance and negligence in Christian living. (62) Once the mission had been accepted, the necessary faculties were obtained from the bishop for absolving reserved cases or censures in order to facilitate the reconciliation of penitents. The bishop himself notified the local pastor or vicar, at the same time identifying the preachers and indicating the time of the mission. Sometimes the bishop entrusted to the preacher the duty of communicating this information together with the document of his appointment. The people were notified of the mission beforehand, but there were no special preparation for this extraordinary event. The people themselves were generally sufficiently well disposed to welcome the preaching; although there could be some resistance from the nobles or middle class if it were to be held at carnival time. In small cities and towns, the announcement of a mission soon became public domain. What was most important was selecting the best time for a mission. The majority of people were occupied in agricultural or rural tasks; hence, such seasons as harvest of grain, sowing or grape-gathering had to be respected. Among other things to be prepared were "a good platform about two meters high and of proportionate length, for the decorous performance of the sacred functions. It had to be strong and rightly situated for the separation of men and women." (63)

The solemn entry of the missionaries was usually held between 4 and 5 p.m. The missionaries waited at a distance of about one or two kilometers from the town and sent word of their arrival. At the time arranged, the people were called by the ringing of the bells, the clergy and the civil authorities gathered processionally in front of the church or in some other appointed place. The first among the clerical dignitaries carried the crucifix the missionaries had sent beforehand. The clergy and the confraternities chanted the 85th Psalm, while the people after every versicle repeated: *Blessed be the names of Jesus and Mary*. The missionaries approached barefooted and with the staff in hand, at least up to 1750. The missionary appointed held a brief "colloquy" addressing the

crucifix, with a theme generally hinging on the peace God offered the townsfolk through the mission. He then received the image of the Crucified and the procession started towards the main church: the missionaries led, followed by the clergy, then men and women, all chanting the *Benedictus*, the people again answering after each versicle *Blessed be the names of Jesus and Mary*. On entering the church, the "Come Holy Ghost" was sung. The superior of the mission gave the introductory sermon announcing God's pressing invitation to renounce a life of sin and be reconciled to him in this time of grace, recommending them not to expose themselves to being called again. (64)

The following was the usual morning distribution of the exercises: catechism on the commandments for nearly an hour, especially for rural workers; Holy Mass, during which the acts of faith, hope and charity were repeated according to the needs of the people; this was followed by apt instructions on how to recall the passion of Jesus in the course of the day and how to learn to meditate on it. Then the missionaries were available for confessions, for visiting the sick, or for receiving those who came seeking advice or counsel. The afternoon was the more demanding part of the program. The function always ended shortly after sunset so as to allow people to return to their homes in daylight, since artificial lighting was unheard of in the country roads. The bells were rung at a fixed time in the afternoon to call the people from the fields. During the first days, a missionary bearing the crucifix and accompanied by clerics went through the principal streets inviting all to the mission. When people began to arrive - or while arriving - songs and hymns relating to catechism were sung. Then began a half hour catechetical instruction on the manner of examining one's conscience, on confessing with the proper dispositions and of devoutly receiving holy communion. Before the sermon, some practical instructions were given concerning the mission. Next came a nearly full hour sermon on the eternal truths, which moved the audience, followed by a meditation on the passion for 20 or 30 minutes. The meditation was meant to open the hearts to hope in God's pardon, moving them to conversion and steadfastness in their re-

solutions. During five or six evenings, about half an hour after the *Angelus* the men were gathered together in a church and were presented "most efficaciously with strong and vehement sermons inviting them to penance. Each one was free, there being no lights, to offer up to God some small sacrifice or mortification in atonement for his sins." In the meantime, at home, the women-folk recited five our fathers and hail marys for the conversion of sinners. The purpose of this practice, called oratorio was to help men become aware of their sins, to repent and prepare themselves for a good confession. (65)

According to the Camerino mission report, the following is the order in which the sermons on the eternal truths were developed:

1st Day: **The great value of the soul**, showing how precious it is and God's love in sending his Son for its salvation.

2nd Day: **Gravity of Mortal Sin**; it would never be committed if the great harm it does to souls were considered, and that it caused the death of Christ.

3rd Day: **The perfect confession**, the most efficacious means for reconciliation with God. Its parts and how to make a good confession.

4th Day: **The sin of impurity.**

5th Day: **Love for one's enemy.**

6th Day: **The deplorable state of one in mortal sin at the hour of death.**

7th Day: **The most grievous sin of scandal.**

8th Day: **God has determined to pardon a certain number of sins and not more.**

9th Day: **The particular judgment of the soul on leaving the body.**

10th Day: **Hell.** Paul preached "a most frightening sermon with such fervor of spirit that the audience, wholly moved, gave signs of true repentance and compunction, deafening the air with sighs and shouts. Preaching this great truth he showed how the damned in hell shall suffer both in soul and body - the soul in all its faculties, the body in all its parts - and so well did he describe the damned and so strikingly their sufferings that they seemed real".

11th Day: **How God abandons the obstinate soul,** "showing that such an abandonment is the worst evil a soul can suffer."

12th Day: **The Eucharist,** in preparation for the men's general communion.

13th Day: **Eternity** "with such fiery spirit did he preach the terrible sermon on eternity, that he produced a holy horror in all," and he urged reconciliation and peace-making.

14th Day: **Perseverance in Christian living;** closing sermon. (66)

All Passionist missionaries followed this outline, making allowance for adaptations as demanded by the particular needs of a place or the missionary's own capabilities. St. Vincent Strambi, for example, offered a theological, biblical and patristic richness, joined to a simplicity of exposition far surpassing that of his fellow religious. From the very founder down, however, all offered the contents of faith laden with mystic fervor and accompanied by exemplary lives, so much so, that people were convinced more so by their life witness, supported by divine grace than by their words. Faith in the saving Passion of Christ moved them to give primary importance to the meditation following the sermon on the eternal truths.

The Passion narrative was organized by Paul as follows:

1. Jesus takes leave of his Blessed Mother.
2. Jesus prays and agonizes in Gethsemane.
3. Jesus is betrayed by Judas and made captive.
4. Jesus is conducted before Annas.
5. Jesus before Caiphas.
6. Jesus before Pilate and Herod.
7. Jesus is scourged.
8. Jesus is crowned with thorns.
9. Jesus is shown to the people by Pilate who condemns him to death.
10. Jesus carries his cross to Calvary and meets his Blessed Mother.
11. Jesus is crucified.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross and buried.

Paul takes the contents of these meditations from the Gospel narratives or from the writings of various authors. The scene is depicted with many details that attract the fancy of the listeners, generally of limited education. Greater space is given to loving colloquys with the Lord Jesus, the blessed Virgin, the persons taking part in the Passion and the people themselves, in order to get them affectionately involved and so make firm purposes of conversion. In these writings and meditations the appeal to the emotions abounds precisely because of the needs of the audience before him. As a matter of fact, he and his religious recommend eliminating this

sensible element as far as possible when preaching to religious or to persons already advanced in the ways of prayer. It should be used very soberly as a starting point to penetrate the intimacy of Christ's heart and sound the depths of his love and adherence to the will of his Father. (67)

As an aid in moving the minds and hearts of the people some external dramatic actions were joined to preaching. In this period of the Congregation those external manifestations were more limited than they would be in the future. The contact of the Passionists in southern Italy with other missionaries brought the introduction of ceremonies hitherto not used. Paul did use some penitential practices such as scourging himself with such rigor that priests present feared he might faint and many times would wrest the scourge from his hands. At the beginning of his ministry he did this every evening, but later he restricted this practice to the more important moments of the mission. When preaching on the crowning with thorns he would sometimes take a crown of thorns and press it to his head till the blood flowed. When meditating on Christ condemned to death, he would wear a cord round his neck as a symbol of the condemnation. The other Passionists also took the discipline, but omitted it when the social situation so demanded, as in the 1769 mission of Urbino. (68)

From the evening when the sermon on "the deplorable state of a soul in mortal sin" was preached until the end of the mission, Paul adopted the practice of tolling the bell for half an hour in all the churches of the town, to remind sinners they were dead before God, and as an invitation to pray for their conversion, reciting five our fathers and hail marys in honor of the five wounds of Christ Crucified. (69)

There was a pedagogical purpose to these penitential manifestations: to shake the sluggishness of individuals for whom such language was a valid motive for reflection when used by persons of sincere faith and when not merely external dramatics. One witness recalls: "Paul knew from experience how little or nothing the ordinary

and ignorant people understood of the doctrine and the reasoning of the sermon, although he used a very simple and easily understandable style. He realized that something more was needed, in appealing to the senses...to excite sinners to true sorrow and compunction, he would be the first to give the example." (70) Such gestures, together with the tone of voice, the stress on certain phrases, the questions asked, held the attention of the people. On these occasions the audience was made to repeat certain expressions in harmony with the theme of the sermon: "No more sin!" or "Peace, oh Lord! Pardon, oh Lord! Lord, pardon and mercy!" This created an emotional atmosphere that gave rise to purpose of amendment. Paul desired no abuse in this matter, but that people be led to enter a personal relationship with Jesus by meditating his Passion with faith and discovering solid motives for perseverance. For this reason, after some initial experiences, he abolished penitential processions because he became aware that they rather dissipated than favored recollection. (71) Yet, he respected the criteria of other missionaries. Paul himself would expose on the platform an image of Our Lady as sorrowful mother, and St. Vincent Strambi, one of Our Lady of Holy Hope. Generally, however, in this period the practice of solemnly carrying the image of Our Lady was unknown. Fr. John Baptist Gorresio introduced it later. (72)

Some meditations apparently called for some special accompanying ceremony, particularly that on the crucifixion and death of Jesus. On such afternoons, the crucifix was removed previously from the platform, and during the meditation, after pondering on nature's mourning the death of the Son of God, Paul had the crucifix brought in processionally by the clergy accompanied by lighted candles. To it he would address an affectionate colloquy inspired by "loving and sorrowful compassion," provoking tears of repentance and acts of contrition by the people for their sins which caused the death of Jesus. The meditation on the burial of Jesus was accompanied by another ceremony. At the appointed time, the clergy brought in procession from the sacristy the image of the dead Christ while the preacher held a dramatic colloquy with the

clergy, the people, with Christ, and the Sorrowful Mother. (73)

For Paul and his companions the importance of the mission rested on the fact of instructing the people by catechism and meditation in order that they be converted and reconciled to God in the sacrament of reconciliation. For this reason, when missionaries were not engaged in preaching, they were to be wholly dedicated to hearing confessions. Men were usually heard in the missionaries' dwelling place or else in the church; the ladies only in the church. Such an exhausting task, performed with care and without undue haste, was considered the most important means for forming the conscience of well disposed persons. Missionaries were given special faculties which enabled them to solve difficult cases and absolve from censures incurred. This encouraged people. (74)

Parallel to the confessional work was the task of reconciling enemies, reuniting separated couples, removing causes of scandal, procuring restitution, adjusting contracts or the satisfaction of justice. All this required prudence, patience and the support of capable local persons chosen for prudence and reputation. Reconciliation with God must necessarily lead also to reconciliation among persons and the removal of the proximate causes and effects of sin on a social level.

At the same time, thought was given to the clergy on whom depended to a great extent the people's perseverance on the straight path. The missionaries encouraged the clergy to make a retreat or, at least, accept some discourses on the sublimity of their vocation, on their responsibility in administering the sacraments, on giving good example and on their duty of giving religious instruction to the faithful. (75) Special discourses were held for confraternities and some particular social groups in order to impress upon them their specific obligations. If the bishop requested, conferences were also given to the city or neighboring monasteries, though usually these were not taken care of during missions. Special care was given the sick. They were visited to console them and dispose them to share in the mission. The prisons were

visited and instructions given the inmates to dispose them for confession and communion. (76)

Two general communions were held on different days, one for men, the other for women. These were marked by great solemnity, with appropriate songs and *fervorini* (short inspiring talks) both for preparation and for thanksgiving. In the early days, at the closing of the mission, a general penitential procession was held previous to the final discourse and papal blessing. When the processions were abolished, the closing was held in the church. The audience was exhorted to be faithful to God, to persevere in their good resolutions and, to strengthen the good will of those present, they were urged to cry aloud *Death before sin! No more sin, my Jesus, no more! I want your friendship!* The missionary thanked the clergy, the people, and particularly those who contributed to the success of the mission, and then gave the so-called "souvenirs" or reminders of the rules to practice for a good Christian life. These generally were:

- to be faithful to morning and evening family prayers and family rosary;
- to receive communion on seven consecutive Sundays in honor of Our Lady's seven sorrows, and then to receive communion once a month;
- to remember the Passion of Jesus by making the way of the cross and on Friday afternoons when the bells tolled (about 3 p.m.) by reciting five our fathers and hail marys in memory of Christ's agony and death;
- to visit the Blessed Sacrament before entering their homes when they returned from their field labors in the afternoon;
- wherever possible a group was organized to continue together the meditation on the Passion of Jesus, as mentioned above. (77)

4. Religious and social effects of popular missions

The more outstanding positive results of popular missions are briefly indicated here, leaving analysis to another work dedicated exclusively to popular missions. These are:

- Improvement in the catechetical instruction of the people, particularly of those less educated.
- More numerous and more frequent reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist.
- Improvement in family life from a Christian point of view, as well as in human relations, conjugal fidelity, peace and mutual aid.
- New impulse in confraternities and other lay groups dedicated to piety and works of social assistance; in some places, the formation of prayer groups with particular reference to the Passion.
- A clergy at least partially moved and sustained in the awareness of their specific vocation and its responsibilities.
- Relevant effects on social life, as seen in the appeasement of spirits as enmities disappeared and open or hidden tensions were removed or diminished. The formation of conscience through preaching and confession influenced the practice of social justice and the mutual relationships between the classes. People were moved to the exercise of charity towards the sick, the poor, the orphans, and encouraged to support the existing charitable institutions.

Paul wrote: "Happy the people, if the fruit of the mission endure! They are left totally purified and devoid of scandals. Alas! the deplorable misfortune is that in a few places some are left who act as a wall against the house of Israel." (78) He meant by this that those in charge of the ordinary care of souls did not give sufficient attention to keep alive the good effects of the mis-

sion. St. Alphonsus Liguori and other missionaries called attention to this same fact.

Some bishops remarked that the fruit of the mission vanished not only because of the lack of priests who were fit to maintain the post-mission spiritual level, but also because the mission itself not always could create solid personal convictions. For this reason some, like the bishop of Perugia, preferred small group retreats as a method for a better formation. (79) By eliminating a multiplicity of external manifestations and insisting on the meditation on the Passion and making of it a steady practice, the Passionist mission strove to create precisely such conditions as would mature into a true Christian conscience, that would be steadier and more solid in living the Gospel.

A return to the mission scene was not contemplated as a means of keeping alive the fervor of the mission. Sometimes, as already recalled, after a year or so retreats were given to the people in order to renew their enthusiasm and good resolutions. This, however, was an exception. Normally missionaries did not return. This was probably due to the scarcity of personnel, or perhaps it was an accommodation to the usage proper to other missionaries of not returning to the places already evangelized till after a lapse of some years.

5. The extension of Passionist missionary preaching

An exhaustive study of Passionist missionary work and of the reasons which helped or hindered its success is impossible since up to the year 1821 no records were kept of Passionist preaching. That the preaching of missions and retreats was carried out within the limits of the Congregation's available personnel can be inferred from the founder's letters, Fr. John Mary's "Annals," the testimony of witnesses in the processes of canonization and from other documents. The phrase "we can do no more" is frequently found in the founder's letters. (80) Besides, the necessity of having "apostolic men" full of spiritual fervor, demanded that religious spend prolonged

periods in contemplation and study within the retreat. This necessarily limited the acceptance of the pressing demands for preachers from bishops, pastors and monasteries. Furthermore, the number of priests was never high: only eighty-two at the time of the founder's death; of these thirty-one were intensely dedicated to preaching. Of the twenty-four who died before 1775, only six were dedicated full-time to preaching. The rest were not considered sufficiently prepared or capable of being employed in this difficult ministry; but nearly all, however, had heard confessions and catechized in neighboring places. (81)

The geographical area in which the Passionists worked comprised the Tuscan marshes, the Island of Elba and especially the upper and lower Lazio in the present civil provinces of Viterbo and Frosinone. They also preached in the dioceses of Camerino, Urbino, Fabriano, Pesaro and in Umbria the dioceses of Spoleto, Foligno, Perugia and Todi. They attempted to preach in the diocese of Genoa, in Chiavari to be exact, but notwithstanding the archbishop's approval the mission had to be suspended by order of the civil authorities. Jurisdictional controversies limited the possibility of preachers moving to places outside their proper territory. In addition, some religious institutes took advantage of the attitude of the civil authorities to impede the entry of other religious into their zones, even though they were natives thereof but their congregation did not possess a house there. (82)

6. The Passionist missionary before, during, and after the mission

Benedict XIV in his encyclical on popular missions directed to the Neapolitan bishops described the missionary as "a prayerful and poor man who zealously announced God's word in all simplicity, following the example of the apostles." (83) The Passionist life within the retreat was ordained to the formation of the apostolic man, and the rule itself recalled this when speaking of the preparation for missions: "We prescribe no rule for

the spiritual exercises which are to precede and accompany a work of so great importance, knowing that all the religious in a retreat of our institute apply to this object above all and without intermission. Let them keep the same object in view with all earnestness during their ministry." (84) This was confirmation that the life of prayer, solitude and penance lived within the retreat was truly an "apostolic life," that is, useful and necessary to the church and to the people. That is why it was continued during the apostolic labors, albeit with the necessary adjustments. An hour's meditation in common was made at an early hour, the divine office was recited in private, mass was celebrated at the fixed time with due preparation and thanksgiving, even though abridged. The 1753 general chapter issued a decree concerning prayer in common which the founder ratified anew in 1755. (85) Anxious that recollection and austerity be preserved even while taking the nourishment necessary to bear the extraordinary fatigues of the mission, the founder was moved to prescribe that missionaries take their meals alone and in silence after a brief reading from Scripture or from the rule's chapter on missions. This appears to have been the practice of the best missionaries of his time. (86)

The mission is a community task of the Congregation which sends its religious to promote true devotion to the Passion. Missionaries keep a living bond of fraternal communion with those who remain in the retreat intent "on sanctifying themselves for the good of their neighbor." (87) While on missions, the religious keep up the community structure under a superior appointed for this period and to whom obedience is renewed at the beginning of every mission. They must give testimony of the most sincere and delicate fraternal communion to ensure the credibility of their ministry. The lengthy chapter on missions regards chiefly the calm and peace that must reign among the missionaries, the patience and gentleness they must show on all occasions, specially when difficulties arise. They must also give evidence of an absolute trust in God when faced by lack of response from the people or want of cooperation from the clergy "considering that the souls belong to God and not to us." (88) When their work

is ended, the missionaries must leave everything in the hands of God and "not seek to know from priests or seculars whether the mission was acceptable or not," but be content with having worked "with good will to please God and help souls." With all humility they should depart secretly without accompaniment, travelling in silence "to refresh their spirits in conversation with God." Back in the retreat they should rest but not neglect to participate in the community's daily "observance." Very particularly they should not leave the solitude even though insistently requested to do so. They should "recollect themselves, resting in spirit at the feet of the Crucified" and thus "be ever more enkindled in the holy love of Jesus Christ and better disposed to go forth with greater fervor to spread the seed of the divine word and to promote the devout memory of the most holy Passion and death of Jesus, our true Good." The first general chapter, 1747, decreed that missionaries, after an eight day rest "should make a retreat in order to resume the regular observance with greater energy." This decree was renewed in the 1753 chapter and later inserted in the 1760 rule. The 1775 general chapter removed the obligation of the retreat, while retaining the essentials of solitary retirement dedicated to contemplation, prayer and study. (89) Indeed, from 1775 onward, the founder searched for the best manner of balancing this physical and spiritual rest, from which he expected the efficacy of the preaching ministry and the possibility of having experts in the difficult "wisdom of the cross." It was a question of assuring the fullness of contemplation in the midst of a tireless activity for souls. This assurance was obtained by the prudent limitation of external activity in favor of the quality of the work of "an evangelical laborer who is a man of prayer, fond of solitude and detached from all creatures." (90)

The Passionist missionary work in this period with its limitations and the difficulties of achieving a perfect balance between the contemplative life within the retreat and the contemplative life in active evangelization had a valid influence in the church. It gave rise to an esteem for the Congregation which attracted vocations and evoked

requests for new foundations as stable centers for spreading the saving memory of the Passion of Jesus.

E. THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE PASSION

On April 6, 1755, in the Church of St. Mary Magdalen in the city of Veroli (Frosinone), some gentlemen with the bishop's approval initiated the Confraternity of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ for the observance of feast days. The bishop was Peter Xavier Antonini. The members were known as Magdalen's penitents. The chief object of the confraternity was to help its members sanctify feast days by catechetical teaching and instruction in the manner of mental prayer, practicing meditation, spiritual reading, fulfilling devout acts of piety, particularly the Way of the Cross, participating at mass, and being of mutual help to each other in living the Gospel. It had in mind principally "workers and peasants." These received less aid from other confraternities which gave preference to the recital or singing the office of our blessed Lady with Latin psalms, thus of little profit to those who were ignorant of the language.

The spirituality of the Passionist Congregation inspired the founders. They put aside external manifestations and stressed catechetical instruction, especially the teaching of meditation on the Passion, and strove to make it penetrate the lives of the faithful. In the first chapter of their by-laws they prescribed for feast days a half hour meditation on the Passion, morning and evening and recommended to each member a daily quarter of an hour private meditation. In order to make this meditation easier for all, they wanted the confraternity chapel provided with "tender and devout" representations of the Way of the Cross, "preferably by a good artist," because, they held, "these pathetic images strike the fancy, move to tender affections and make the meditation easier for all." Our Lady's office was not recited, since they preferred that the members, ignorant of Latin, should spend their time in meditation. Great importance was attached to the presence of a priest-moderator to give the catechetical

instruction in very simple words as well as teaching the virtues proper to the members' state of life.

Among the various community exercises the discipline was taken during the space of a *miserere* in memory of the Passion on all feasts of Advent and Lent and on Good Friday. Each member was exhorted to participate at mass daily and visit the Blessed Sacrament on return from work, make the Way of the Cross on Fridays, recite various short prayers during the day to enliven his faith in God, and beg the grace to live in an attitude of patient charity. Annually, about carnival time, all made an eight or ten day retreat. The members were persuaded to get others to join them in this exercise in order to nourish their spirit and not become lost in the carnival revelry. The obligation to practice spiritual and corporal works of mercy was treated at length in their rules.

In establishing the confraternity, the founders had in mind offering workers and peasants an aid for the sanctification of feast days. In the introduction to the rule they state: "it seems our confraternity should be called the confraternity for the observance of feast days." Having come to know the Passionists, they appreciated their spirituality but particularly the founder's conviction that it is almost impossible to sin if reflecting seriously on the Passion of Jesus, and that we cannot but make progress in virtue if we daily dedicate some time to meditation on all Jesus has done for each human person. For this reason the founders "felt strongly inspired to give it no other name than that of the Passion of Jesus. The most merciful God, they added, has willed to establish in the church of our day a religious order which, marvellously blending the parts of Magdalen and Mary, of anchorites and apostles, has as its primary object the continuous meditation of the Passion in its retreats and the spreading of that devotion among Christians by means of frequent missions. We who strongly desire that the Passion of Jesus be deeply imprinted in the hearts of our brothers wish that they bear the habit and name, as a stimulant to a constant remembrance of it. And in truth, what other or better means of sanctifying feast days than to think on God's incomprehensible love, who for our sake

came down from heaven ...to die in an abyss of ignominy and suffering? This, above all, should be the occupation of feast days: to think of the Passion of Jesus and remain tenderly absorbed in it."

To attain the greatest possible resemblance to the Passionist Congregation they prescribed that the confraternity's oratory should be outside the town in relative solitude and be called "retreat." The tunic used, both in form and material, resembled that of the Passionists. The sign given the members at profession had the shape of a heart surmounted by a cross and within the heart were represented the nails and the Saviour's five wounds. The vestition and profession ritual was likewise taken from the Passionists. At profession, the members received a crucifix which they wore under their clothing as did the Passionist lay brothers and the clerics not in orders.

Towards the end of the introduction to the rule approved by the bishop in May 5, 1772, the founders declared:

"Desirous that our pious union spread throughout Christendom we beg Most Reverend Father Paul of the Cross, General and Founder of the Passionists, to take it under his protection, promote it and have it erected in all cities and places wheresoever they shall sow the seed of the divine word, since we may say that the rules that follow have their roots in his wise counsel and holy inspirations. In conclusion (if we be allowed such a desire) to consider it as the first-born of his holy Institute and have it aggregated to the same by apostolic Bull as a third order, so it may share the treasure of holy indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs." Unfortunately, we have no other documents save a letter of the Marquis Ferdinand Bisleti of Veroli (July 21, 1804) which Fr. Philip includes in his *History of Our Mother of Sorrows Province*. This writer, after much research, discovered that all the correspondence between the principal founder of the confraternity and Fr. Thomas Struzziere "and through him with the General, Fr. Paul" had been lost during the French occupation. However, from one of the surviving founders he had heard that, before pre-

senting the rules and bylaws for the bishop's approval, Paul's opinion had been sought through Struzzieri. On suggestions received from both "some modifications were added which made the institution totally similar to the Passionist rule."

It seems that neither Paul nor other religious of this period ever accepted the pious desires of the confraternity's organizers. At least there are no documents extant to that effect. There is no trace of it ever having been mentioned or promoted on missions. There are no indications of any requests to the Holy See for the aggregation of this or other confraternities. Besides, the Congregation did not enjoy the privilege of erecting third orders as it was not an order with solemn vows. (91) Furthermore, in 1755 scarcely five years had elapsed since the opposition of the mendicant orders had ceased and the founder was seeking to obtain solemn vows. Hence he would have deemed it imprudent to officially sponsor this confraternity, presenting it as an off-shoot of the Passionist Congregation. It would have been a marvelous pretext for his opponents who were constantly spying out the Passionists' every move. A perusal of the confraternity's rule admits no doubt as to its dependence on that of the Passionists, and in it the Passionist spirituality and its apostolic methodology are evident. Hence, there would seem to have been some contact between the organizers and the Passionists as affirmed by Bisleti. He also recalled that up to 1804 five other confraternities like that of Veroli had been erected, but due to the vicissitudes of the French occupation two of them became extinct. (92)

St. Vincent Strambi's work, *On the treasures we have in Christ Jesus*, was dedicated to 1805 "to the venerable members of the confraternity newly erected in the city of Pesaro by apostolic faculty under the title of 'the passion and death of Jesus Christ'." (93) He spoke of a "new confraternity that serves under the standard of the Cross and takes its name from the Passion of Jesus Christ, our sovereign Good." I do not know if any connection existed between this and the one founded in Veroli. Certainly, the Congregation never took a favorable

stand towards the Veroli confraternity. In fact, in 1804 the Passionist general obtained from Pius VI the faculty of spiritually incorporating into the Congregation any confraternity that commemorated the Passion of Christ or the Dolors of our Lady, so that their members would share in the meritorious works of the Congregation and of the indulgences granted it by the Holy See. (94) But it was not until September 22, 1861, that Pius IX by the brief *Curavit nobis* granted permission to establish the Confraternity of the Cross and Passion of the Lord in the churches of the Congregation, and in others with the consent of the local ordinary. (95) Thus, at least partially, the desire of the Veroli confraternity founders was fulfilled. I say "partially" because "the pious society under the title of the Sacred Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ" which began at Scala Santa on May 3, 1867 did not refer itself directly to the Confraternity of the Passion inaugurated in Veroli. On the contrary, the members of the latter in 1905, when publishing the rules according to the 1772 manuscript, still requested "the Passionists to take it under their protection, to promote it and have it erected by their missionaries." It is sad to note how some juridical and contingent situations served to impede the Congregation's share in creating lay movements open to the Institute's spirituality and desirous of having their efforts towards Christian living supported and enlightened by the crucified love.

F. MISSION AMONG NON-CATHOLICS

The possibility of laboring among non-Catholics and non-Christians was contemplated in the very first rule written in Castellazzo. (96) The mystical experience of the forty day retreat moved the founder to a particular commitment of prayer and penance to obtain from God England's return to the Catholic church. (97)

The first opportunity to put this point of rule into practice came only in 1758. The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (*De Propaganda Fide*) was examining how to improve the Caucasian mission and

there was even a faint glimmer that the Passionists could be sent. Bishop Garampi helped in this affair, probably at the request of Struzziere or of Paul himself. The founder viewed this mission not only as a marvelous opportunity for his sons to offer the salvation wrought by Christ crucified to so many misled souls, but also as a help to obtain from the Holy See the solemn vows on which he was intent.

The offer of three missions was treated between 1758 and 1759: that to Mount Caucasus, to the principedoms of Valacchia and Moldavia, and to Mesopotamia. Not only did the founder favor the project but he even had chosen his men for the task: Frs. John Mary Cioni, Charles Marchiandi and Thomas Renzi. De Propaganda Fide wished to send only two men to save traveling and maintenance expenses, and Paul, though reluctant was willing to consent in order to overcome the difficulties. In the Caucasus mission there were supposed to be some descendants of Genoese refugees from the Turkish occupation of the Trebizonda Genoese colony. This mission was not entrusted to the Passionists because, among those appointed, there was no native of Genoa. As a matter of fact, it was put in the hands of the Genoese priests of the congregation of St. John the Baptist. In May 1758, the founder was offered the possibility of sending his sons to Valacchia and Moldavia, but even this second offer vanished for the Passionists, since the Franciscan superiors in charge of the mission had in the meantime remedied the disorders denounced by De Propaganda Fide, and this congregation in turn suspended the sending of other missionaries. On July 10th, 1759, Struzziere met Cardinal Spinelli, prefect of "Propaganda" and talked over with him the possibility of sending missionaries to Mesopotamia, probably to the mission of the Italian dominicans in Mossul, with a view to opening a new field of work in Kurdistan. Had everything come to a favorable conclusion, the religious would have left in the winter of 1759. Yet, even this third mission vanished for the Passionists. (98)

The religious chosen for these missions were among the best subjects of the Congregation. The founder wished to send three men rather than two, in view, I think, of

better interpersonal relationships in living together in remote places without any previous experience. It is difficult to imagine how he would have given these religious a concrete organization for life in an atmosphere and situation so different from what they were used to. Probably he would have suggested that they keep the regulations for religious on missions outside the retreat, but always with the liberty to make the necessary adjustments.

In this period of our history, we find no further attempts at missions to non-Catholics. Did the negative answer to solemn vows in 1760 close forever the hope of seeing Passionists in mission territories? Or did the Congregation's organizational worries impede other initiatives? Not until 1781 did Propaganda Fide again propose a missionary field.

F O O T N O T E S

1. Let. IV, 218.
2. Let. IV, 220-221.
3. Reg. et const. 2/I/31ff.
4. Ibid. Cf. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47 n. 2; and ibid., notizia '68, n. 3.
5. Let. IV, 140; V, 193-194. Cf. F. Giorgini, Promuovere la grata memoria e il culto della passione di Gesu (Roma, 1980), pp. 22-36.
6. Let. IV, 228-229.
7. Cf. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, the two notizie. Let. IV, analytic index under: Congregazione dei Passionisti; also under: Passione di N.S.G.C. Passione predicata. Let. V, analytic index, under: Passionisti.
8. For 1741 cf. Acta C.P. XI, p. 256-258; for 1746 cf. Acta XII, p. 161-162; Reg. et const. p. 157-158; for the texts of 1769 cf. Reg. et const. 174-175; Collectio facultatum p. 276,3.
9. The letters of the bishops and cardinals are in AG. A. I-I, 27.
10. The letter of Bishop Francis M. of September 22, 1773 in AG. A. IV-IV/1-3/5-3.
11. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 36.
12. Ibid., n. 323.
13. Let. IV, 304.
14. Let. IV, 285.
15. Visita can. 1770.
16. Let. V, 150; Let. II, 218; Processi I, 578.
17. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 21-22. Processi III, 244.
18. Let. IV, 221.
19. Processi III, 276.
20. Reg. et const. 2/1/35ff.
21. Ibid. p. 163, n. 92-95.
22. Ibid. p. 165, n. 144.
23. Processi III, 255, 276.
24. Giammaria, Esercizio de brevi ed affettuose meditazioni sopra la Ss.ma Passione di Gesu Cristo per ogni giorno del mese (Roma, 1815). The books from which our men drew the method were principally these: Ludovico da Ponte, S.J., Meditazioni sopra i principali misteri della nostra santa fede colla pratica dell'orazione mentale sopra essi (Bologna 1735), tome I, p.

IV-LXXVIII. S. Francesco di Sales, Introduzione alla vita devota, part II, chap. 2-3.

25. Cf. e.g. Let. I, 401; Let. II, 18-21, 51-54; Let. III, 358-360, 370-371; Let. V, 24-25; etc. A reconstruction of Paul's method is found in M. Bialas, C.P., La Passione di Gesu come "la piu stupenda opera del divino Amore." Meditazione della Passione di Gesu secondo l'insegnamento di Paolo della Croce (Roma, 1980). Cf. also Zoffoli, op. cit., III, 784-879.

26. An essay that can greatly help in understanding the place of Paul and the Congregation in this context of prayer in the Italian 18th century is that of M. Petrocchi, Storia della spiritualità italiana (Roma, 1979), vol. III, "La preghiera nel settecento italiano", p. 7-53. Very useful is the study of F. Di Bernardo, C.P., La "meditatio vitae et passionis Domini" nella spiritualità cristiana (Roma, 1980), esp. p. 61-70.

27. Bullarium rom (Romae, 1749), p. 161, the letter Quemadmodum of December 16, 1746.

28. Let. II, 230-231.

29. Zoffoli, op. cit. III, 788-789, 1261. Processi I, 236.

30. Reg. et const. 134/I/1-20.

31. Reg. et const. 134-135/I-V/5-21. Cf. also Let. III, 371.

32. Visita can. S. Sozio 1752, decr. n. 12; Visita can. Ceccano 1767, decrees for the Retreat n. 8. Visita can. S. Eutizio 1752, decr. n. 4; 1753 decr. n. 6. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 206.

33. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 210.

34. Processi III, 246; IV, 164.

35. Let. III, 784-785.

36. Visita can. S. Eutizio 1759, decr. n. 9.

37. Reg. et const. 104-105/II-V/7-15. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 209. Let. IV, 254. Visita can. S. Eutizio 1758, decr. II, n. 2.

38. S. Paolo della Croce. Guida, n. 208-240. Let. IV, 254; 270 n. 5.

39. Silvestrelli, Memorie...primi 50 anni, p. 143-144.

40. Filippo, Storia Ad., II, f. 49.

41. Let. I, 551; 178.

42. Visita can. S. Eutizio 1752, decr. n. 7.

43. Decr. e rac., decr. n. 86; Reg. et const. 38/III/53-57.

44. For St. Paul of the Cross, cf. Lettere; Brovetto, Introduzione alla spiritualità di S. Paolo della Croce; Zoffoli, op. cit., III, 333-901.

45. Let. I, 377-378.

46. Let. II, 346; 6590660; Let. III, 419; IV, 213; V, 136.
47. Reg. et const. 4/II/52-57.
48. Let. I, 734; Let. III, 406, 416; V, 112.
49. Let. II, 11. Processi I, 258.
50. Let. III, 419.
51. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, notizia '47, n. 26; notizia '68, n. 27.
52. This schedule is entitled "J.X.P. Regulations for **Retreatants**. Begin on the evening of February 4, and there is no other Regulation for the whole day." The ms. is in AG. The year was probably 1761, because in that year Ash Wednesday fell on February 4, and Paul was at St. Angelo at Vetralla. It is certain that it deals with Lent because Vespers is recited before dinner as happened during Lent. It also deals with laymen because they recite the entire rosary in place of the Divine Office. A schedule for the retreat in a monastery, probably preached by Strambi, does not deviate much from the Regulation, cf. AG., "Fondo Strambi," VI, 4.
53. Reg. et const. 4/I/III/47-51, 58/I-II/11-16. For Fr. John Baptist cf. Giammaria, Vita del p. Giambattista, p. 114-115.
54. Processi I, 448-455; 483; 486; 493-496; 499.
55. Let. III, 621; Let. IV, 252; Processi IV, 120-122.
56. Let. II, 345.
57. Reg. et const. 132-133/I-V/34ff. Let. II, 212.
58. Let. III, 417-420.
59. Reg. et const. 132-133/I-V/51ff.
60. V. Contenson, Theologia mentis et cordis. August Taurinorum 1768, tome I, p. 303. Cf. also chap. 2 of this vol., on the comprehension Paul had of the "apostolic life."
61. A. Da Castrovillari, Il zelo apostolico (Roma 1720), tome II, p. 11-85.
62. Bullarium rom. Romae 1746, p. 555-559, the letter Gravissimum of September 8, 1745.
63. Let. III, 221-222.
64. In the very first years it seems they made a private entrance, Processi II, 360. In April of 1738 we already find indicated the method that will be always followed afterwards, Let. II, 59-60, 362; Let. III, 542-543. In Relazione della strepitosa missione fatta in Camerino nel maggio 1750, AG., A. IV-IV/1-2, there is indicated the order of the functions and the themes preached.

65. Let. II, 841-842; Processi III, 154; Strambi, Vita, 116-117; Processi II, 189, 424-425; Reg. et const. 58-59/I-V/1-8; Let. II, 842.

66. The theme of the talks is the same as the repertory of sermons of the founder published in Bollettino 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929. Also Zoffoli, op. cit. III, 1031-1077, reports them.

67. Five meditations on the Passion of Jesus by Paul are published in Bollettino 1928, 1929. Zoffoli, op. cit., III, 1085-1098 gives the outline of each one.

68. Processi III, 82-83; II, 544; Relazione missione Camerino, 13th day.

69. Strambi, Vita, 118.

70. Processi I, 180.

71. Strambi, Vita, 116. Let. II, 56. Processi II, 610.

72. Processi III, 469. The banner is conserved in the Retreat of St. Angelo at Vetralla. Filippo, Vita del p. Giovanni Battista, f. 139.

73. Strambi, Vita, 347. S. Paolo, Prediche, f. 112v-113rv. Filippo, Vita del p. Giov. Battista, f. 113.

74. Strambi, Vita, 118; Relazione missione Camerino. Let. III, 310; V, 103. Processi III, 5.

75. Strambi, Vita, 118; Let. II, 231, 235: he tried to have the ecclesiastics accept daily mental prayer and the pledge to have a meeting each week; Processi IV, 123, 370; Giammaria, Vita del p. Giambattista, p. 104-117: commitment to evangelize and reform the clergy. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. I, f. 295, the reform of the clergy of Zagarolo during the mission of Fr. Marcellian in 1763. Filippo, Vita p. Giov. Battista, f. 17: sermons to the clergy of Urbino in 1769.

76. Processi II, 442; Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. I, f. 295.

77. Let. III, 141; S. Paolo, Prediche, f. 173r; Processi I, 681-682; III, 5, 147, 152; IV, 284; Filippo, Vita del p. Giov. Battista, f. 139.

78. Let. II, 229; Let. V, 128-129. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. I, f. 291-297. Processi III, 5, and 152.

79. On May 3, 1740 Bishop F. Riccardi of Perugia believes that it is better to give a "retreat to few people at a time, unfortunately seeing in practice that permanent fruit is not drawn from the missions but certainly is from the retreats," AG., A. IV-IV/1-2-4.

80. Cf. Let. II, 176; Let. V, 105.

81. Bartoli, Catalogo, p. XVI, 265-266. Cf. Let. IV, 250-252 for the limits of the ministries.

82. Giammaria, Annali. Zoffoli, op. cit., III, 1223-1406, gives a detailed list of the sermons given by the founder.

83. Bullarium rom (Romae 1746), p. 558 #12.

84. Reg. et const. 88/II-III/18-27.

85. Reg. et const. 88/II-III/9-36; Decreti e rac., decr. n. 53, 2. Let. IV, 252, n. 4.

86. Decr. e rac., decr. n. 53, 1; Let. IV, 252.

87. S. Paolo della Croce, La Congregazione, notizia '47, n. 6, also n. 22. Cf. also Reg. et const. 8/I-III/40-52.

88. Reg. et const. 88-89/II-V/1ff. Let. V, 127. Cf. also Let. II, 65.

89. Reg. et const. 8/I-III/1-20; 98-99/II-V/15-40; Decr. e rac., decr. n. 12, 1; 38, 1. In the circular of October 14, 1755 the founder gives the reason for this day of retreat: Let. IV, 251. The health of the missionaries also obliges to limit the missions, Let. V, 103, 109, 114, 116.

90. Let. III, 418; Let. IV, 250-252. Cf. also C. Naselli, La solitudine e il deserto nella spiritualità passionista, p. 31-35; C. Broveto, Struttura apostolica della congregazione dei passionisti, p. 9-16.

91. Cf. the letter of the bishop of Catania in AG., A. IV-I/1-1.

92. Filippo, Storia Ad., vol. I, f. 153-157: the information given by the author are the only documents we have.

93. Dei Tesori che abbiamo in Gesu Cristo nostro Salvatore, e dei Misteri della sua vivifica Passione, e Morte, fonte perenne di tutti i beni. Opera data in luce da un religioso della Congregazione della SS.ma Croce e Passione di Gesu Cristo (Macerata, 1805), tome I, pp. III-VI.

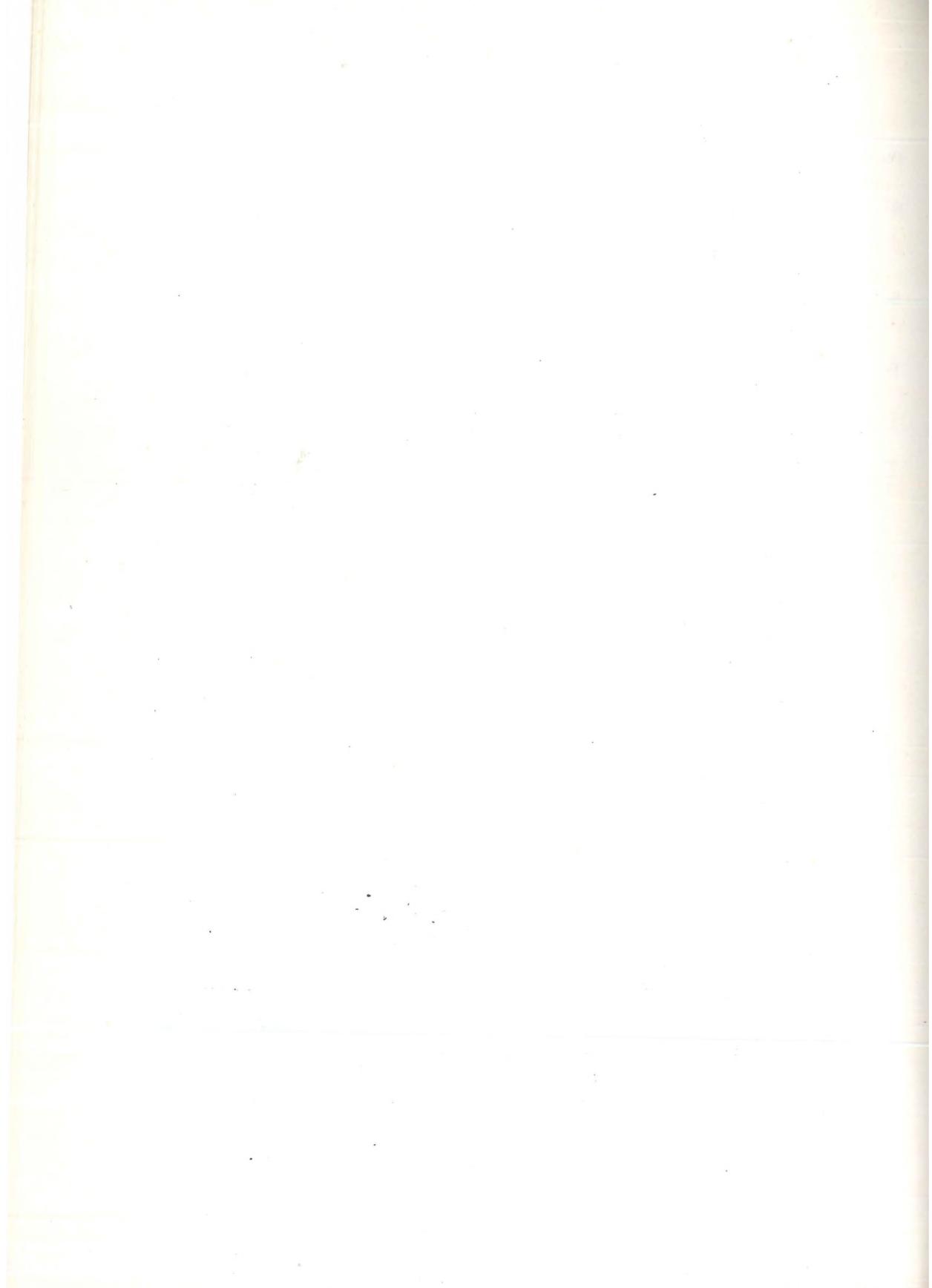
94. The document in L'Arciconfraternita della Passione (Roma, 1952), pp. 4-5. Cf. also Acta C.P. XIV (1939-41) 325-327.

95. The document in L'Arciconfraternita della Passione, pp. 7-8. Cf. also Acta C.P. XIV (1939-41) 328-330.

96. Reg. et const. 8/I-III/56ff.; see also p. 153.

97. Let. I, 14; 16.

98. The subject is exhaustively studied by C. Caulfield, Terre di missione di S. Paolo della Croce (Roma 1976), pp. 9-32. Cf. also Zoffoli, op. cit., pp. 1068-1080. Ravasi, Mons. Struzziari, pp. 111-115.



Chapter IX

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

A. PAUL'S CHOICE OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE CONGREGATION

Paul's thoughts from the very beginning were of a Congregation of pontifical right, exempt from the local ordinary's jurisdiction in view of a more universal service to the church. The universal service aspect derives from the fact that Paul, since the early days, lived the spirituality called "the imitation of the apostles" or "of the apostolic life." He found inspiration in those institutes having the same spiritual tendency. The Congregation is one large family and community subdivided into provinces and local communities in response to administrative needs and for more lively and personal contacts between superiors, religious and people. But it is still one community with a superior general who presides over all local and provincial subdivisions, and provincial superiors who aid the various local communities of a region in living faithfully the reality of Passionist life, while, at the same time, always aware of the bonds with the one family or community which is the Congregation.

This unitarian concept did not however lead to the choice of totally centralized forms of government. From the beginning the government appeared to be fairly decentralized as in the Dominican and Franciscan orders. The 1736 text of the rule provided for a local superior, called rector, for a two-year term of office, and also a superior general, called *Preposito*, "should God's infinite bounty dispose the growth of this least Congregation." (1) The 1741 text adhered to the same lines, but prolonged the term of office to three years both for rector and superior general, the latter to have two consultants. (2) It was in the 1746 text that government organization took a definite shape which survived until 1959. It remained unchanged save for the addition of new offices such as procurator general in 1769, and secretary general. In 1746

the chapter on government in the rules and constitutions was restructured in a definite form. It dealt with the general chapter, with the superior general and his consultants, with the provincial and his consultants, and with the local rector and his vicar. The manner of convoking and conducting the chapters was determined, as well as substitutions for persons who left an office vacant. It likewise spoke of the manner of fulfilling the respective offices. (3)

B.. AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL, PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL CHAPTERS

The supreme authority of the Congregation is the general chapter. In 1741 there was but one community and hence the supreme authority resided in all the professed members of that community, who exercised it in electing the local superior and also the superior general. This did happen officially when in 1746 the first election of the superior general took place, as elsewhere described. The 1746 text of the rule, taking into account the expansion of the Congregation and looking forward to still further increase, gave a better outline of the organization of the government. It limited participation in the general chapter by right to ex-general superiors, the general superior in office, his consultants, and the local rectors and novice master if the chapter were held in the novitiate. It also provided that if the Congregation be divided into provinces then those who by right participate in the general chapter shall be: ex-superiors general, the general in office, his consultants and the provincial and his consultants while the local rectors were excluded.

The chapter elected the superior general and his two consultants. Before the Congregation was divided into provinces the general chapter also elected the local rectors, provincial and his consultants. Besides elective power, the general chapter also enjoys legislative power, in virtue of which it can issue decrees for the good of the Congregation, but always within the limits of the rules and constitutions approved by the Holy See. Up to 1769 it

could interpret and make additions to the rules and constitutions approved by the Holy See, but such additions had full force of law only if confirmed by two subsequent chapters. (4) In 1769 the Holy See took away the faculty of adding to the rules, allowing only their interpretation. (5) Also in 1769 the general chapter required for a canonical election a majority of two-thirds of the valid votes, whereas before then an absolute majority was sufficient. (6)

The provincial chapter is convoked every three years by the provincial with the understanding of the superior general who presides personally or by his delegate. The chapter is empowered to choose freely the provincial and his two consultors, who in force of the bull, *Supremi apostolatus* of 1769, by the sole fact of their election are held to be confirmed in office by the Holy See. Before this date we do not know if they were confirmed by the superior general, since the rule says nothing on this. In 1775 the provincials elected by the chapter were presented to the religious of the province by the superior general quoting explicitly the paragraph of the bull. This was an official presentation serving as a guarantee to the religious that the election was valid and that those elected possessed all the rights and obligations inherent in their offices. (7) The provincial chapter also freely chose the local superiors and their vicars. In 1769 the election of the latter was reserved to the provincial, possibly as being more practical. The chapter likewise could issue decrees for the welfare of the province, but always within the norms of the constitutions. Participation in the provincial chapter is reserved to the provincial and his consultors, to the local superiors and to the novice master if the chapter is held in the retreat of his residence. (8)

The ritual or regulation of the general and provincial chapters was inspired by those in force in other institutions of the time, and this will be treated elsewhere. (9)

At the community level **the local chapter** in the 1736-1746 period comprised all the professed members of

the community without distinction of clerics or lay brothers. The rule speaks explicitly of the chapter and its powers when it deals with the admission of a novice to profession: "Not only the superior but also all the brethren of the Congregation must take part, each one giving his vote as inspired by his Divine Majesty." It also speaks of the intervention of all the brothers of the community for the election of the superior. (10) In both these cases it is clear that the chapter is the supreme collegial authority. As a matter of fact when it referred to the superior taking counsel during this period it spoke of "the older brethren of the Congregation." For example, the duration of the postulancy before beginning the novitiate is left to the opinion of the superior and of "the older members of the Congregation." Likewise, should a professed religious wish to leave the Congregation his request must be approved "by the superior and the older brethren." When some outstanding fault must be corrected the superior must first treat of it with the "older members." (11)

In 1746 it was specified that the local chapter be composed only of professed clerics, priests or those in sacred orders, that is, at least subdeacons (12), declaring that the lay brothers are always excluded. Until 1775 the phrase "elder brothers" remained in the text as to the Friday chapter or chapter of faults, but since that date it has said that after the accusation of faults, the superior shall treat of what concerns community life with the priests and clerics, at least subdeacons, excluding the simple clerics and lay brothers.

The title the elders of the Congregation, referring to the superior's counsellors, remained even in 1775 as regards the period of postulancy before vestition and the taking of steps against incorrigible religious. (13) From 1746 onward, the local chapter had power of decision as to admitting or not admitting a postulant to vestition and novitiate besides that of admitting to profession which it already had. Furthermore, from 1746 to 1775 the same local chapter had power of decision for the admittance or not of a postulant who was above 25 years of age or who had been vested in another institute even though the

confirmation of the superior general was necessary. (14) The 1747 general chapter extended the power of the local chapter obliging the superior to convoke it before undertaking a building "or other things of great importance," or sending a religious or going himself on missions outside the diocese in which the retreat was located. (15)

C. AUTHORITY OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL, THE PROVINCIAL AND THE RECTOR

In the 1736 text of the rule the superior general's authority was very definite, though contrary to Bishop Cavalieri's opinion. He wanted a superior general for each diocese in conformity with his view of a Congregation of diocesan right. Paul affirmed that the superior general "shall preside over all the houses." This became still more precise in the 1746 text, which said, "he is the head and has jurisdiction over the persons, houses and churches of the Congregation." (16) Until 1775 his written approval was required for admitting postulants to the novitiate and novices to profession, even though the local chapter's vote was necessary. (17)

The provincial's authority has been clearly indicated since 1746 when it was mentioned for the first time. He has jurisdiction over the communities of the province for its ordinary government and the duty of the annual visitation of the communities when not carried out by the superior general. (18) The 1758 general chapter authorized the provincial to choose someone to take his place when he had to be absent for some time, as, for example, on prolonged ministries. Likewise he could send a delegate for an urgent canonical visitation to a particular retreat, yet he could not delegate the general visitation of the province to other religious without the superior general's permission. Paul wished, besides, that the provincials would report to him every three months on the conduct of the religious and the communities. (19)

The local superior is included among the superiors whom the religious must obey in force of their vow. He is responsible for the good running of the community, takes

care of the well-being of the religious, their fidelity to God and to the rule. He fosters all that is conducive to the harmonious practice of fraternal charity, divine worship and apostolate according to the rule. He may not take important initiatives without the consent of the local chapter which constitutes his council. (20) Many times and in many places his power has been affirmed for granting particular permissions to religious, or dispensing individuals from disciplinary parts of the rule. The founder was careful, however, to remind local superiors not to be too condescending in granting dispensations from points of rule in order not to introduce abuses. He also demanded a monthly report from the rector of each community. (21)

D. ELECTION OF SUPERIORS AND THEIR TERMS OF OFFICE

The general and provincial chapters elected the superiors with jurisdiction at general, provincial and local levels. In the early days when the congregation consisted of only the Argentario community, the election took place in the local chapter by secret ballots. The scrutineers elected by the chapter counted the ballots under the vigilance of the president and the secretary who acted as notary public. The general or provincial consultors were also elected in the chapters. In the 1746-1769 period the vicars and masters of novices were elected in provincial chapters, while from 1769 this election was reserved to the provincial and his consultors. (22)

Norms were given in 1746 for supplying vacant offices, regardless of the reason for the vacancy. It was established that if the superior general's office became vacant during the first triennium the first consultor took his place till the end of the three years when the chapter should be convoked. The place of the second consultor who had passed to the first place, was taken either by the rector of the community, or the oldest member of the retreat of his residence." In 1769 it was decided that in a similar event the vice-general and the other consultor should elect the second consultor, while in 1775 it was established that the vice-general, the consultor and the

procurator general should elect the new consultor. (23) In 1746 a rule was made for the provinces: should the provincialship become vacant, the first consultor would take the provincial's place, but no provision was made for replacing the second consultor who passed to first place. In 1769 this was provided for, entrusting the election to the vice-provincial and his consultor as was done at the general level. Then in 1775 the new election was reserved to the superior general together with the vice-provincial and his consultor. (24)

The extra-capitular election of a superior for a new house was reserved to the general with his consultors until 1775. In the chapter of that year it was reserved to the general or provincial with their respective consultors accordingly as the house was under the immediate dependance of one or the other of these major superiors. (25) In the 1746-1775 period when the office of local superior became vacant the vicar substituted for him until the end of the term. In 1775, however, it was decided that the provincial and his consultors should freely elect a substitute. (26)

In the 1736 rule the terms of office were fixed at two years for the local superior and four for the general superior; the 1741 text fixed a three-year term for both offices. After 1746 the term of office for the local and provincial superiors was fixed at three years, while for the superior general and his consultors a six year term was established. This norm was retained throughout the entire history of the Congregation. All those elected could be confirmed in office for another period of the same duration. (27) It may be a point of interest to note the decisions regarding the manner of electing superiors and their terms of office, but of greater interest are the criteria used for the selection of candidates.

Faithful to church practice and following the usage of other institutes, Paul established "that each one strive by fervent prayers to obtain the necessary light from the infinite majesty." A triduum of prayers before the Blessed Sacrament exposed was to be made in all communities "so as to move God's infinite bounty to hear our supplica-

tions." (28) Inner peace and upright intention were demanded of the electors for a conscientious choice out of true love for the welfare of the Congregation. The rule established that because the good order, regularity and preservation of the community and of the entire Congregation depend on their leaders or superiors "therefore all those who must participate in the election of the superior of this Congregation shall be obliged to elect, without human respect, him whom they judge most fit and suitable to govern the Congregation according to the true spirit and to uphold the exact observance of the rule." It exhorted all to proceed "with all maturity, prudence and reflection." (29)

In convoking the chapters the founder carefully stressed the need of peace and unity of minds and hearts in order to make prudent decisions. For example, in 1758 he wrote: "The most efficacious preparation for receiving the Lord's light and grace consists chiefly in purity of spirit, deep humility of heart and in the most perfect and fervent charity, which makes but one heart out of many in loving union in God, and renders them docile, unanimous, agreeable, peaceful. They are then better disposed to know the divine will in the election of superiors, so that what we ardently desire in Jesus Christ for his greater glory may be effected." (30)

The basic criterion guiding the choice of persons was to find in them the capacity for governing the Congregation in the true spirit and keeping the observance in force. Therefore, what was sought in those eligible was exemplarity of life, that is, that they observe the rule faithfully, share fervently the common life, be a "friend of prayer," capable of studying and knowing the character of the religious, of keeping an inner psychological balance so as to face with equanimity the various circumstances of life and be capable of giving equal attention to all the religious; that they be fit to promote the apostolate according to rule and to develop and maintain good social relations with the ecclesiastic and civil authorities and benefactors. (31)

. Various witnesses recall that Paul, very discreetly and outside the chapter hall, proposed to the capitulars those religious "that by their exemplary life and regular observance he foresaw that the observance would be maintained by their good example. He was most attentive and vigilant in this because, he said," on the superior depends the good order of things." (32) Besides these criteria the rule, following the common law, demanded a minimum of Passionist life experience. In 1736 "ten or a minimum of six years in the Congregation" was required for the local superior, while nothing was specified as regards the superior general; in the 1741 rule, six years were required for the local superior, but again nothing of the general. Since 1746, however, at least ten years of profession have been demanded for all those elected in chapters, whether general or provincial. (33)

As to the confirmation of major superiors and their consultors, the bull *Supremi Apostolatus* affirmed that by the very fact of their election they should be considered confirmed by the Holy See and could not refuse the election without the consent of the same chapter. (34) While the 1746 rule states that provincial chapter decrees have no value without the superior general's confirmation, it says nothing concerning the election of the provincial and his consultors. (35) Hence, the superior general's letter presenting to the religious their elected provincial was merely a letter of presentation, having no force as juridical confirmation, at least from the concession of the bull of 1769. (36)

Since 1746 local superiors have had testimonial letters from the general or provincial officially declaring their canonical election. However, no mention of a confirmation by the major superiors was made, and hence the election made by the chapter was considered automatically confirmed even though the bull spoke only of major superiors and their counsellors. (37) The certainty of the local superior's duration in office was diminished in 1755. In order to anticipate some difficulties that might arise from superiors not sufficiently mature, the first provincial chapter of 1755 sought to create the juridical possibility of replacing a superior who did not proceed satis-

factorily, while avoiding traumatic effects. Therefore, for the "welfare of the whole Congregation," the founder proposed to the chapter that superiors elected for the first time should receive testimonials "for one year only, then be confirmed or not according to the success of their government" by the superior general. This was the case with five new superiors. The chapter accepted the proposal, which could appear as a transitory measure. However in the 1758 general chapter the proposal was again taken up, and the rectors present were asked whether "they judged it convenient to be elected for three years to the next provincial chapter with the declaration, however, that each year their testimonials be confirmed by the most reverend superior in these our retreats or by the provincial in those of his province. When put to the vote the answer was favorable, in such wise that the general and provincial respectively had full freedom to confirm or not confirm those rectors for another year in office, and likewise these said rectors would be free to resign." (38)

The 1764 general chapter gave greater precision to this decree by confirming it and having it introduced into the 1775 text of the rule, thus sanctioning a precarious duration in office for local superiors, who were put under examination every year and exposed to being deprived of office without a true canonical process. (39) This norm helps us to understand the Congregation's difficult situation as regards the government of local superiors in the period 1753-1758, of which we have already spoken.

"The superior general of the Congregation with the more aged brethren" elected the novice master according to the 1736 and 1741 texts of the rule. The 1746 text provided, instead, that the election be by the superior general with his consultors until the institution of the provinces when it should be made by the provincial chapter. The 1775 text, while confirming this norm entrusted the substitution to the provincial and his consultors but with the confirmation of the superior general. (40) The qualities of the candidate were to be: a knowledge of spiritual theology, of the spirit and charism of the Congregation, prudence, discernment of spirit, affability and the capa-

city for infusing certainty and calm. "He should be very pious, prudent and discreet," fit to deal with the novices "with great meekness and sweetness especially in correcting them," a man of prayer and apt in teaching it. Until 1746 it was required that he had lived at least five years in the Congregation. After that date, conforming to the directives of the Holy See, at least ten years laudably lived in the Congregation were demanded. Later in 1769, the reviewers of the rule recommended that Clement VIII's norms be followed. These required at least ten years from profession and at least thirty-five years of age. (41) As regards precedence, in the beginning he took his place after the vicar, but the 1747 chapter considered that the master should be looked upon as the superior of the novitiate, taking his place after the local superior, with authority to act in his stead during the rector's absence, at least as regards accusation of faults in the refectory and holding chapters. These decisions passed into the 1769 rule. (42)

E. SCOPE OF THE CONGREGATION'S GOVERNMENT AND THE MANNER OF EXERCISING IT

In a community that arises from faith in God everything concerning it should proceed from the same principle. For this reason the presence of the superior has been viewed as ordained primarily not for procuring the material welfare of the Congregation or simply its external apostolic development, but for the good of each individual religious: that they may know and faithfully fulfill the divine will, both as individuals and as a community of faith. The founder was categorical in placing this principle before the religious and superiors. From it he drew the consequences both in discovering the necessary qualities in choosing a superior, and in reminding the superior that above all else he must be a man of faith, of prayer and that he love each religious with the same love of God. From this principle he derived his recommendations as to how the religious should receive and treat the superior.

"Let each one bear him (the superior) great reverence and respect as he who is chosen by God to rule and direct them on the way of perfection....They will then be doing God's will, when they do the will of the superior, renouncing and denying their own." (43) From this same principle of faith springs the superior's duty of being as fit as possible for fulfilling God's designs for each religious, for the community and the Congregation: "Father rector, with God's help, shall strive to be the light of the Congregation, being most exact in the observance of the rules and constitutions....If he be faithful in prayer he will not lack heavenly doctrine in guiding the brethren to holy perfection, which may God grant us all. Amen." Even the superior general "must, like the rest, exactly observe the rules." (44) Thus they will have merited the respect and esteem of the religious.

Paul recommended that the superiors consider our Sorrowful Mother as the true superior of the community, daily honoring her with particular devotion so as to obtain the necessary help in directing the community. (45) In a circular letter to them he insisted: "Let the rector have a great love of prayer, solitude, interior recollection and every exercise of virtue. Thus he will keep his retreat as a mirror of observance, of fervor, and of every virtue, and shall be the good odour of Christ in every place. Amen." (46)

With this lively attitude of faith the superior would always be disposed to act with inner peace and psychological balance without being dominated by emotions, particularly when having to face inconveniences or administer advice or correction to religious. The founder's insistence on this attitude deserves serious attention and emphasizes the style of relationships he wished between superiors and religious. To one superior he wrote: They made you rector, be with them as one of them. Be all charity and meekness with the religious, show them the heart of a mother, but keep always a demeanor that will move them to a holy reverence and respect for the superior." (47) "Let him remember," he insisted, "that he is not the master, but should consider himself the servant of all....He must have a father's heart, or rather the ten-

der and cordial love of a mother, to demand respect, veneration, obedience and love". He must have and show "equal love towards all." He must flee partialities with all his might. (48) The founder himself made efforts "to act more with leniency than rigour" because convinced that he "who wishes to be obeyed must command little and sweetly." Many witnesses testify to this style of government. "Although superior," said one, "in commanding he showed himself a companion, using these or similar expressions: 'if you can do such a thing'...or 'would you have the charity to do...there is this to be done...' or similar terms, in no way commandeering, so that one obeyed with pleasure. If occasionally it served to use some rigor, he did so reluctantly, preferring always sweetness as with it he thought to obtain his purpose. He always sought to know the character and talents of his subjects and their virtues so to put them to good use." (49) That is why he included in the 1755 regulations: "Let him know well the character of his religious so as to approach them in the right way. Let those of choleric and sanguine temperament be treated with sweetness in order to gain their obedience; let those who are humble of heart and meek be treated harshly at times and with moderate rigor to guard their virtue; let those prone to melancholy and pusillanimity, be treated smoothly as they are in need of encouragement and courage that they may not stop on the way of the Lord." (50)

To his knowledge of the religious the superior should add an affable treatment, a relaxed countenance, and above all be easily accessible, receiving them cordially and listening "without haste as if he had nothing else to do that day, never giving signs of annoyance or of being disturbed by these visits even when frequent." (51) On the other hand, the religious were exhorted to trust the superior, turning to him "as a father, unveiling to him their hearts, their sufferings, temptations, inclinations, depressions, and let them know that whenever they do this, God will give them the grace to depart better and more consoled." (52) It was necessary for the development of this communion between superiors and religious that the latter should feel certain of finding his personal physical needs satisfied in conformity with the

poverty professed. The superior was to give sincere attention that the religious lack nothing of what was granted to them by rule, prepared and distributed charitably at the convenient time. With this in view, besides the norms given in the 1755 regulations, the founder gradually made various decrees concerning the distribution of linen and the renewal of habits. The 1755 norm read: "the superior should love poverty but let him see that no one is wanting what is necessary, and that the retreat be sufficiently provided of cloth and linen, and the religious of habits, sandals and other things the rule allows." (53)

As regards food, though wishing it should be in accord with the rule's prescriptions on fast and abstinence, he demanded it be prepared with the utmost cleanliness "well seasoned according to our poverty" so that the religious should keep healthy. The pittance should be sufficient to satisfy the needs of the religious, but equal for all, thus fostering the sense of fraternal communion. (54) The superior should excel in this care in moments of greater difficulty or need, as sickness and old age. The superior "more than the rest must shine by his charity towards the sick, visiting them frequently, consoling them and giving them all possible assistance." (55)

Care for the temporal welfare and the psychological serenity of the religious goes hand in hand with care for their growth in theological charity and all the virtues, fulfilling the demands of the Passionist vocation, with the lively hope that only thus each one will enjoy deep peacefulness, conducive to an atmosphere of joyous brotherhood, and favorable to apostolic action. This is why the superior's government tends to maintain the religious in constant awareness of their duty of justice to God and their brethren. The local superior recommends to the religious every evening "that they love God above all, and that they love one another with holy charity and be observant of the rule." (56) This daily reminder of the scope of the community's existence was better explained in the instructions the superior himself or whomever he appointed gave the religious twice a week. In the common regulations the founder treated at length the preparation

of these instructions, saying that the superior or his substitute should make them through prayer and study. As an expert on the human heart, he recommended most insistently that the speaker "have interior peace so that his heart may be disposed to receive divine inspirations. Let him be attentive both to the substance and the spirit, contemplating the religious in the loving side of Christ, with a lively desire of seeing them all saints, proclaiming the glory of God and announcing to the world the Crucified Love." With psychological delicacy he cautioned: "let him strive rather to be brief. Let him be sweet, not disheartening his audience. Let him treat them with that love which moves to more generous and lasting resolutions." (57) The purpose of this animation was to keep alive and active the motives of faith which led them to embrace the Passionist life and to feel more confident of being able to realize it radically. Only thus would the Congregation's government have fulfilled its purpose.

F. CHARITY, OBSERVANCE AND JUSTICE IN GOVERNMENT

In the first chapter of this volume we recalled that the Congregation was born when religious life in the church experienced a vigorous impulse towards conversion and fidelity to its proper vocation. All this was summarized in the phrases: "keep the observance," "promote the observance." This meant promoting the faithful practice of the rule, regulations, norms of lawful superiors regarding the vows, common life, apostolate, etc., but animated by theological charity. In this context, to be observant meant to be objectively within God's will as signified by the rule the church had approved, which also received the public profession of the religious. It also meant establishing and developing a relation of loyalty to the Congregation and to its members who accepted the postulant, trusting his word of wanting to live according to their same rule of life. The founder expressed this concept by saying to his religious, after having exhorted them to the practice of virtue: "briefly, I beg you to be most exact in the observance of every least rule, which being approved by the sovereign pontiff, vicar of Christ, as appears in our apostolic brief, has been given us by

God to attain holiness through the exact observance...."
(58)

In order that the observance glorify God and really contribute to the person's progress it must be accomplished freely and solely for the love of God. "It is necessary that the external observance of the rule be always animated and accompanied by the interior spirit of the heart." inculcated the founder. (59) An observance lived in this inner freedom, full of fervent theological charity, is also a concrete means of showing our thankfulness to God for the gift of our vocation and begging final perseverance. Fr. Fulgentius encouraged a religious: "be thankful to God by the exact, loving observance of the holy rule, by which one disposes oneself to receive the gift of final perseverance." (60) Whoever is observant in these criteria is also a just man in the biblical sense, because he fulfills the promises made to God, to his brethren and to the Church. (61)

Justice, in the Biblical sense, binds superior and religious alike in precise duties to God, to their brothers in the community, to the Congregation and the Church that approved the rules and the Congregation, and presented it to the ecclesial community with the characteristics contained in the rule. This sense of justice must move religious and superiors to comply with all that is contained in the rule, which specifies and justifies the community's presence in the Church, and the superior must demand that the religious be faithful to what he freely promised in his profession. No superior can be neutral or tolerant as regards the injustice of which the unobservant religious is guilty, be this in the interest of the religious himself, who risks frustrating God's loving design for him, or in the interest of the brethren, who have a right to see that the promises be maintained so as not to be deprived of that good which belongs to them and to the Church.

It is very important to keep this principle in mind in order to understand the sense of the "observance," of the vigilance Paul used and demanded from superiors. It will also help in understanding why Paul, despite the

cordiality and benevolence which he wished shown towards religious in daily dealings, yet wished superiors to call the offenders to amendment even by chastisements. It explains why the rule states that the superior personally should "be most exact in the observance of the rules and constitutions" but at the same time he should "be attentive in seeing that the religious observe it." (62) Although having a good opinion of all, he should keep his eyes wide open to observe the general run of the community and of each member. (63) The superior should also extend this vigilance to the health and physical welfare of the religious. (64)

The continuous watchfulness, however, should not create a sense of anxiety or worry either in the superior or the religious. Keeping himself deeply united to God, the superior should be moved in all things by the love of God and his brothers, certain of their spiritual progress. Paul assured a superior: "As regards your own profit and recollection know that you now gain more in one day watching and governing the retreat than in many years without this. Hence strive to unite the active and contemplative life keeping yourself in God's heart, in pure and naked faith, intensely wrapped in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, since love will make your own the sufferings, virtues and merits of Christ Jesus, out loved good." (65) He encouraged another superior who had many sick in his retreat to treat them "with the most delicate charity according to our poverty" and to remain hidden "in the unassailable fortress of the divine will," so that neither "the winds nor the storms can deprive you of that peace and tranquillity of spirit so necessary to do all things well and to keep yourself in lively faith in God's heart and there like an infant be sustained by God's holy love." Animated by this divine love he would make an effort to keep up the common office even if there were only two religious fit for it: "as to choir, even if there were only two, let it not be neglected, as God will be glorified as if there were thousands and shall later provide in abundance." (66)

It was necessary that the superior and his vicar, using those human and Christian traits we spoke of,

should make this vigilance peaceful, not oppressive, or as Paul called it, irksome. (67) But vigilance did not stop at simply taking note of things or forestalling inconveniences. It meant also encouraging those who were acting correctly and kindly calling to order those who were at fault, a call to order given privately at first, and afterwards even by penances if they persisted in their conduct. Correction and punishment were to serve as helps for the amendment of the offender and then as a salutary admonition to the rest, and finally as reparation for the want of fidelity and justice to God and the community. Correction and punishment were in Paul's mind, as in the socio-religious context of the time, necessary actions of government, but difficult to exercise becomingly and in a valid educational manner. Besides his own example he left many recommendations because he was convinced it was necessary to guide the religious to the observance by conviction and out of love, and that Passionist government should be the expression of God's love. While the rule recalled the obligation of correcting faults "with all exactitude," it stressed, that the superior "accompany the correction with meekness and prudence and be discreet in imposing penances. In the 1746 text he was more precise: let the superior "be discreet in imposing penances, and for what can be remedied by the oil of meekness; let him not use the vinegar of harshness, but strive to be more loved than feared by his subjects. If by agreeable manners and charitable manifestations he can make himself amiable and win the hearts and affection of his subjects, he will guide them where he wills and they will respect and obey him. Therefore, in things which the constitutions leave to his discretion, he should lean towards the most benign interpretation, striving to have them content in the Lord, with zeal for the holy observance of the rules, strongly yes, but with all exactness, not allowing the introduction of abuses, but tending, to the exact observance with all sweetness and charity without omitting any means that he judges more helpful..." (68). In a circular letter to superiors he then gave some practical directives in order that this evangelical duty might be fulfilled in such a manner that religious could see in it an act of God's merciful love: "Let the rector not neglect the due correc-

tions so as not to be guilty of any small omission, but before correcting let him observe the following points: 1. That the correction be made in the cell with all meekness. 2. That when he feels upset by anger and resentment against the offender, let him wait till his heart is at peace and his mind serene, even though he may have to delay the correction a day or two. Then he shall call the religious, correct and punish him as he shall judge expedient. Let him remember that if he does so with disdain or anger, he shall accomplish nothing, and instead of healing one wound he will open ten; but if the subject sees that the correction comes from a father's heart that is meek and charitable he will amend, he will improve and return to fervor. Let him be most cautious when speaking in public chapter or in the examens, or in the capitular exhortations, not allowing himself any particular reference that someone could interpret as directed to him personally, for then he is embittered and becomes worse. Rather let him try to speak in a meek and firm spirit, softly and not harshly, so that all can see and know that in charity and meekness he is seeking only their spiritual and temporal welfare." (69) He wrote very realistically to Fr. Fulgentius: "It is very necessary to keep to St. Bernard's saying, 'The rector must see everything, conceal much and punish few. All have good will, but to see them fly to perfection God must first give them wings.'" (70)

The penances to be imposed upon religious for faults against the observance were left to the judgment of the superior as responding better to their corrective purpose. However, in 1741 a new chapter entered the text of the rule: *Of the Penances to be Imposed on Transgressors*, with a detailed list of penances. We don't know who suggested this chapter. In many aspects it resembles those rules and constitutions of other institutes, but it seems totally foreign to Paul's mentality. It does not appear in the 1736 text and it disappeared forever in 1746. (71) During the founder's period the more outstanding penances were self-accusation of faults in public refectory or in the chapter of faults receiving a more or less strong reproof. (72) The penances to be done were kissing the brethren's feet; eating while seated on the floor,

fasting on bread and water, washing the dishes, tidying the kitchen, saying some prayers with outstretched arms, taking an extra discipline, keeping silence during recreation. Corporal penances in use in other older institutes, such as the discipline inflicted by a fellow religious by order of the superior or segregation in a reserved cell, were never introduced in the Congregation. (73)

To what extent did this philosophy and theology of government in the Congregation become a reality in this period? It is not easy to answer. On the whole, however, from the documentation on hand, it can be said the superiors succeeded to a great extent in realizing a paternal-fraternal style of government. Credit must also be given to the spirit of faith which animated the vast majority of the religious, from the oldest professed to the youngest novice. Outstanding among those who exercised authority, besides Paul himself, were Fr. Fulgentius Pastorelli, affable and attentive to all, who frequently repeated "it is necessary to lead in the observance more by love than by fear" (74), and Fr. Marco Aurelius Pastorelli, who, although in the early days he "was more given to austerity and rigor," later by experience "became much more moderate, so much so that the religious were very pleased with his prudent and charitable government. When provincial he was opposed to multiplying decrees or orders, for he was aware that a multiplicity of laws only multiplied transgressions. His habit was to correct privately, and he abstained as much as possible from making general decrees." (75)

Father John Mary Cioni succeeded in becoming very well liked by his subjects because of his serene spirit, affability and prudence in dealing with others. In promoting the observance and the spirit of the religious he avoided all extremes, convinced that an inopportune rigor did more harm than good and was never enduring. He was very moderate in making decrees: his maxim was that general laws should not be made that restrict all because of a particular fault of one individual. His wish and effort aimed at each one serving God, with a big heart and willing spirit (*corde magno et animo volenti*) as he put it. Hence he treated all with charity and good grace

so that they felt content in their vocation. In correcting, his preference was always towards meekness." (76)

Fr. Sebastian Giampaoli spent many years as superior in various retreats, particularly those where buildings needed improvement, since he was an expert in this as well as in public relations. He was a man of deep faith and intimate union with God and treated the religious cordially. "Strict with himself, he was charitable, affable and condescending with the religious; consequently his example was worth more than mere words, and all esteemed and love him." (77) Bishop Thomas Struzzieri, local and provincial superior, was notable for his prudence, goodness, wise administration and attractive exemplarity. "It is not easy," writes his biographer, a contemporary, "to tell of the watchfulness, prudence and zeal with which he faced the government of these new houses. He had a most ardent zeal for the observance and for religious perfection, but always tempered by that prudence and gentleness which adorned his noble spirit...so much so that the religious were fervent and observant, besides being happy and content, serving the Lord *corde magno et animo volenti*. (78)

It would be an excessively long list were we to recall those religious who had to face the arduous office of superior in a foundational situation with the duty of implanting a practice and tradition constituting a supporting base, creating public relations with clergy, people and authorities, as well as guiding communities animated by intense faith, and all this in the midst of an uncertain juridical status for the existence of the Congregation. The eulogies the holy founder made of the communities and the high esteem that bishops, people, and civil authorities had for the Congregation and for each community witness to the success and efficacy of the form of government and its exercise.

There were, however, superiors who failed in their duties or treated the religious with an air of vain superiority, being excessively harsh in corrections and penances or tiresome in their manner of vigilance. This seems to have happened chiefly in the 1750-1758 period.

As was recalled, one of the causes for anticipating the 1758 chapter was the tension existing in some communities due to superiors who were imprudent or who had allowed themselves to be overcome by vanity, thus deluding the hopes placed in them by the founder and their fellow religious. After the chapter Paul wrote a pressing, passionate letter exhorting the religious to the practice of virtue and fidelity to prayer. And in addressing the superiors, he insisted that they be humble, fond of solitude, prayer and the common daily life with the religious, avoiding useless outings to be with seculars. He said, "All those who preside in government, especially the rectors, must be models of all virtues to their subjects, and such will they be if with the arms of faith, trust in God and assiduous prayer they pluck the eyes out of self love! Oh what a pest is the attachment to one's own reputation, praise, honor! Oh what ravage is caused by love of self-comfort! Oh beloved, beloved! place all your care in this: if you blind self love, how much light you will have in the interior eyes of your spirit! Oh how humble of heart, meek and charitable will you be to your subjects! Oh how far from your retreats will you keep seculars! And if out of necessity you must speak with them, how quickly will you free yourself of them, making them depart full of the good odour of Christ Jesus! Oh how assiduous you'll be to prayer, choir, and all that pertains to divine worship and regular observance!" (79)

G. SOME OUTSTANDING MEANS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

The general and provincial superiors in order to form each community in Passionist spirituality, to encourage them in the solution of problems they must face, to secure the unity of the Congregation and harmony between life and rule, must, as far as possible, be living models of Passionist life and precede their subjects by good example. However, aware of human frailty, let them assiduously pray for the growth in divine charity of each religious, and apply the Mass for the religious of the Congregation or of the province on solemn feast days. (80) After good example and prayer the rule obliges the gene-

ral and provincial to make the canonical visitation "to see if the holy rules and constitutions are observed and to remedy disorders." (81)

The text of the 1741 rule required that the visitation be made once a year, while that of 1746, though keeping this norm, specified that once the provinces were formed the general's visit would take place once in his six-year term and that of the provincial yearly. The 1775 text left the general free to make the visitation whenever he chose, either personally or by a delegate, but no frequency was fixed. The yearly canonical visitation remained totally the provincial's obligation. Before 1775 the provincial could not appoint a delegate for the province visitation without permission from the general, but could do so for a single house. The 1775 rule granted him this authority for the whole province. (82) Before 1775 if the general did not intend making the visitation during that year, he notified the provincial in due time so that he could make it at its proper time. (83)

The visitation was announced by a circular letter preparing the community for what was an important event, the personal contact of each individual religious with the major superior, particularly with the founder, who after 1750 seldom met the religious south of Rome. The visitation ceremonial took its inspiration from the usage of the dioceses and other religious institutes. The visitor, particularly the general, was received with the ringing of bells. If it were the general he was received at the church door where the local superior, vested in surplice, offered him the holy water. On entering the church he made a brief visit to the Blessed Sacrament before passing into the sacristy where he greeted the religious. The visitation opened with a discourse explaining its scope. Then in the church the liturgical prayers were offered for the dead of the community buried in the church. Lastly the visitor inspected the tabernacle and ciborium and ended with the Eucharistic blessing. (84) During the visitation Paul usually conducted a retreat or at least preached several times to the religious, since he was convinced that the chief aim of the visitation was to offer the religious valid motivations for living their life

and vocation with all its demands from which should derive true peace and serenity so that eventually any incongruities would be remedied. Besides preaching, Paul received each religious personally and with calm and affable cordiality, inviting them to openness of mind and heart. One religious recalled: "His visits to the retreats were always very joyous....It would seem he went to cheer them up and thus make them better disposed to receive admonitions, corrections and opportune orders. To this end he personally preached the retreat. However, the greatest consolation of the religious during these visits, as on other occasions, was his readiness to listen to anyone who wished to speak with him in private conference for his own spiritual advancement." (85)

During the visitation Paul got information about everyone and everything. He examined the different areas of the house to make sure cleanliness, good order, poverty, etc. were observed. He made a careful inspection of the Mass registers and the administration books. He was careful of little things and always admonished superiors against being led by the maxim "A leader is not concerned with little things," because he did not consider exactness, punctuality, fidelity or even the least rule to be insignificant since all referred to God, sovereign good, infinitely lovable and worthy all our attention. (86)

Paul sought to solve on a personal level whatever concerned the individual religious. He indicated other things that concerned the entire community in detailed decrees which he read to the superior for his opinion, explaining them and asking his help in fulfilling them before publishing them. (87) In the closing meditation, sometimes held in the place reserved for the chapter of faults, he frequently centred his discourse on the love of Jesus in his passion and our obligation to return love for love, seeking to encourage those present to greater fervor and firmer resolutions. He ended by blessing all with his crucifix and after singing the *Te Deum*, presented the same crucifix to be kissed as a sign of each one's personal commitment to greater fidelity in his vocation. (88)

We find that the founder's delegated visitors and provincials of his time, especially Frs. Marcoaurelius, Struzziere and John Mary also used this method. As we noted when speaking on vigilance, the visitors were not keen on multiplying decrees without some relevant need, preferring to work on a personal level so as to obtain a more permanent improvement without disturbing the other religious. Certainly the canonical visitation was not a simple get-together, a simple verifying of facts, but an authentic discernment leading to concrete resolutions and decrees to safeguard the good order and the spiritual and apostolic growth of individuals and communities.

Other means for effecting good government and allowing the major superiors, general or provincial, to be promoters and guides, were the monthly reports which the local superiors had to present to the general before the division into provinces, and later to the provincials after the division. The provincial, moreover, had to present a report of the province to the general every three months. This obligation is mentioned in the testimonial letters given both to the local superior and to the provincials. (89). Various letters of the founder to local superiors referred to these periodic reports and were occasions for encouraging, guiding and stimulating superiors to fulfill their offices efficaciously. Paul called to order those who did not forward the report, which happened in 1754 and in 1775, three months before the founder's death. This indicates that ordinarily superiors were faithful in sending them. Unfortunately these reports have not been handed down to us, so we have been deprived of a most important source of knowing community life in this period. (90)

Still another means of animation Paul and other provincial superiors used was the circular letter to the communities on special occasions, particularly for the feasts which were preceded by novenas of prayers and mortifications. In these circulars there was frequently an appeal for the growth of the Congregation, which, being in its infancy lacked sufficient awareness of the responsibility for creating an atmosphere of life as evidence of the validity of the Passionist vocation and in order to be

a help to the Church that had received it. For instance, in his Christmas circular to the Congregation after having been denied solemn vows, the founder ended the circular encouraging the religious to a holy rivalry as to who could be most virtuous and hoping that the coming feast of the Lord's nativity would commit them still more in order to be reborn "in the Divine Word to a life all holy, rich in every virtue," so they "might deserve through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ to be the foundation stones of this holy order, and thus all together with our converted neighbors sing eternally God's mercies in heaven." (91)

In ending this chapter it can be said that the Congregation's structure of government was based on a form of decentralization and that the first generation of superiors was sufficiently successful in putting into practice the ideals that Paul strove to indicate by example, by word, and by written norms. This government built the relationships between superiors and religious on the foundation of a simplicity and familiarity outstanding at that time. The superior, whether general, provincial, or local, even externally appeared as a brother among brothers, having no distinction of seat or drapery in choir, in church, in refectory or in recreation room. There was no distinction at table, in his room, and much less in habit. The only distinction was that he preceded the others in common acts and it was the duty of religious to rise on his arrival when they were together in the recreation room or in the refectory, and to kneel when he visited them in their rooms. These were gestures of respect taken from the ecclesiastical and civil ceremonials of the time. As for everything else, the founder wished the superiors to fulfill their role of service without personal benefit. The 1736 and 1741 texts of the rule stated that the superior, though able to grant others permission to take something outside meals, for himself had to ask permission from the vicar or the senior religious of the Congregation. (92) The superior could have nothing in his room, especially food or candy, that could induce him to give himself particular concessions. In the 1736 text it was expressly forbidden. (93) This explicit norm was omitted from the 1741 text but the generic phrase remain-

ed: "nothing can be kept" except some books. During visitations the founder was watchful that all things which served all the religious were kept in the common room and that the superiors themselves should request what they needed from the religious in charge, even though a lay brother. This must have been particularly difficult for some when one thinks of the class-consciousness of the time. One witness, a lay brother, noted this in his testimony: "The servant of God was well aware that this disposition was not pleasing to the superiors. Since these things were under the care of the lay brothers, the superiors themselves were in a certain sense dependent on them when they had need of something." During one visitation Paul found that the superior kept some drink in his room for the refreshment of the religious. He "bitterly reproached the superior for this, saying that because superiors do not, as their subjects, get permission to do things...it is necessary to be careful because frequently the transgressions against poverty begin with the superiors. Therefore he commanded absolutely that in the future none should dare to keep anything whatsoever hidden, but that everything be kept either in the infirmary or tailor shop, so that the religious may avail themselves of them with the due permission." This norm was established in the 1769 general chapter and it was placed in the text of the rule approved that year. (94) During his last visit to the retreat where the provincial resided he discovered that the provincial "differently from the rest, used two napkins in the refectory, one on the table, another on his breast." Displeased by this distinction of social rank the founder exclaimed in a sarcastic tone, "Even this have we to see! He would certainly lose face otherwise. He must show by this who is superior. Let him know that I am a superior more than he, and yet I am like all the rest. Let his mortification be enough for now, otherwise I will change him, because I wish all to be equal." (95)

Another outstanding feature of the sense of fraternity and simplicity in relationships which must distinguish the service of a brother appointed to superiorship over his other brothers, was the fact that the rule established no privilege for ex-superiors. Those who ceased service as superior, even a major superior, returned to their

proper places by order of profession. Only the one who had been superior general was given active voice in general chapters. (96) No difference was foreseen in the line of suffrages as we noted in speaking of the Passionist community. (97)

For Paul, the superior "in justice must find contradictions and sufferings," and thus, while serving his brothers and building up the Congregation for the benefit of God's people, acquire the palm of martyrdom. (98)

FOOTNOTES

1. Reg. et const. 126/I/2-16.
2. Ibid. 126/II/2-32
3. Ibid. 110/III/4ff.
4. Ibid. 110/III/42-62; 114/III/35-40; 116/III/10-17;
144/III/50-60.
5. Reg. et const. 145/IV/25-28. Bull Supremi apostolatus 5.
6. Reg. et const. 113/IV/31-33.
7. Ibid. 114/III/49ff. Bull Supremi apostolatus 5. Let. IV,
318-319.
8. Reg. et const. 116-117/III-V/19-42.
9. In the chapter on regulations.
10. Reg. et const. 34/I-II/37-42; 112/I-II/20-25.
11. Ibid. 16/II/34-38; 32/I/16-18; 128/I-II/15-17.
12. Ibid. 34/III/34-44; the fact that it is explicitly said
that the brother "laymen, even those professed, must never vote
and have a voice in the Chapter," makes one think that formerly
they may not have been excluded.
13. Reg. et const. 126/I-III/46-65; 127/IV-V/10-30; 128-
129/I-V/15-17; 16/II-III/36-38; 17/IV-V/49-51.
14. Ibid. 16-17/III-V/21-31; 18-19/III-V/28-37.
15. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 22; 48, 76.
16. Reg. et const. 110-111/III-V/6-10; 126/I-II/5-11.
17. Ibid. 16-17/III-V/21-31; 36-37/III-V/36-40.
18. Reg. et const. 114-115/III-IV/35-44, 52-56.
19. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 174. Let. IV, 318.
20. Reg. et const. 120-121/I-V/5ff.
21. Ibid. 40-41/I-V/4-19; 66-67/III-V/25-34; S. Paolo della
Croce, Guida, n. 163-164, 174; Let. IV, 274, n. 11; 303.
22. Reg. et const. 114-115/III-IV/2-14; 116-117/III-V/7-
52. Cf. Reg. et const. 22-23/I-V/4-7; the Italian text of 1746
says: "Let a Director of Novices be elected for now by the
General with his Consultors, and, after the provinces are made,
by the Provincial Chapter." Ibid. p. 169 n. 33.
23. Reg. et const. 114-115/III-V/20-30; p. 168, n. 196.
24. Ibid. 116/III/38-41; 117/IV-V/60-70.
25. Ibid. 114-115/III-IV/16-20; 119/V/11-15.
26. Ibid. 118/III/1-4; 119/IV-V/7-9.
27. Ibid. 126/I-II/2-18; 116-117/III-IV/28-36; 118-119/III-
V/6-22.
28. Ibid. 110-111/I-V/29-44.

29. Ibid. p. 168, n. 185, 187.
30. Let. IV, 257.
31. Cf. Reg. et const. the chapter on superiors, especially local ones. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 153-181. Let. IV, analytic index, under Superiore.
32. Processi IV, 258.
33. Reg. et const. 112/I-II/33-34; 110-111/III-IV/55-56; 119/V/25-31.
34. Bull Supremi apostolatus, 5.
35. Reg. et const. 116/III/5ff.
36. We have only three of these letters, Let. IV, 312-313, 318-319.
37. Reg. et const. 120-121/III-V/5-10. Cf. a testimonial in Let. IV, 303-304.
38. Bollettino 1923, p. 47; Decreti e rac., decr. n. 72, 106.
39. Reg. et const. 121/V/6-20.
40. Ibid. 22-23/I-V/4-10; 114-115/III-IV/10-16; 117/V/9-10.
41. Ibid. 22-23/I-V/10ff.; p. 174 cf. votum commissioni.
42. Ibid. 114-115/III-IV/10-17; Decreti e rac. decr. n. 20.
43. Reg. et const. 120/I-III/11-25.
44. 124/I-III/1-5; 45-50; 126/I-II/7-13. It is opportune to recall that the major and local superiors took the oath of faithfully maintaining the observance of the Rule.
45. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 154-155.
46. Let. IV, 274; cf. also Let. III, 423, 762.
47. Let. III, 433.
48. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 158, 159, 175.
49. Processi III, 250; Let. I, 589; cf. also Let. III, 761-762.
50. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 160.
51. Ibid. n. 157, 176-177.
52. Reg. et const. 122/I-III/3-14. Let. I, 406.
53. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 178; Decreti e rac., decr. n. 21, 47, 101, 122, 126, 146.
54. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 241-254, 264-265. Let. II, 197-198.
55. Reg. et const. 138/I-III/56ff.
56. Ibid. 106/II-III/40-51.
57. Ibid. 124/III/25-40; S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 115, 118, 119-121.

58. Let. IV, 268. For Paul the Rule, because approved by the Holy See, is ecclesiastical law for the religious. Cf. also Processi I, 631.

59. Let. IV, 253.

60. Giammaria, Vita del p. Fulgenzio, f. 97.

61. This concept is found, for example, in the thought of Fr. John Baptist Danei, cf. Giammaria, Vita del p. Giambattista, pp. 164-169, 45-46; and Giammaria, Vita del p. Fulgenzio, f. 86, 92-96.

62. One aspect of this vigilance was the obligation imposed by the Rule to visit the cells of the religious to see if they observed the poverty they professed. The text of 1736 and 1741 obliged it each month, that of 1746 every week, while that of 1775 said: "let him visit 'often'," Reg. et const. 124/I-III/3-8, 54-60; 125/IV-V/54-56.

63. Let. IV, 273, n. 8, 9.

64. Let. II, 123, 773.

65. Let. III, 774-775.

66. Let. III, 259-260.

67. Let. II, 759; III, 249.

68. Reg. et const. 124/I-III/7-25; p. 169, n. 206.

69. Let. IV, 273, n. 10; IV, 303, 316-317.

70. Let. II, 109.

71. Reg. et const. 126/II-III/44-54; 136/II-III/34ff.

72. S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 166.

73. The gravest punishment, coming from common law however, was threatened by the General Chapter of 1753 which established deposition of those local superiors who may have impeded the religious from writing to the major superiors or who inspected the letters of the major superiors to the religious, Decreti e rac., decr. n. 69.

74. Giammaria, Vita del p. Fulgenzio, f. 81.

75. Giammaria, Vita del p. Fulgenzio e p. Marcoaurelio, f. 182; ibid., f. 227-228.

76. Silvestrelli, cenni biografici di alcuni religiosi pas., p. 55-56.

77. Ibid., p. 50.

78. Ravasi, Il servo di Dio mons. Struzzieri, pp. 102, 103; cf. also p. 95-100.

79. Let. IV, 261.

80. Reg. et const. 124/I-III/45-50; ibid., 124/I-III/1-5. Cf. also S. Paolo della Croce, Guida, n. 155.

81. Reg. et const. 126/I-II/10-16.

82. Ibid. 114/III/40-48; 117/V/31-38; 126/I-II/2-17. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 74.
83. Let. IV, 313.
84. Let. III, 284.
85. Processi IV, p. 374.
86. Processi IV, 373.
87. Ibid. 373-374.
88. Ibid. 197, 204.
89. Let. IV, 303. IV, 312-313, 316, 318-319.
90. Let. III, 265-266, 340, 573, 763-771, 774. Let. V, 220.
91. Let. IV, 268-269. For the circulars of Paul cf. Let. IV; and V, the index.
92. Reg. et const. 40/I-II/4-11.
93. Ibid. 42/I/11-15.
94. Reg. et const. 43/IV-V/59ff.; Decreti e rac., decr. n. 227; Processi III, 265.
95. Processi III, 267. Cf. Strambi, Vita, p. 482. "As long as he had the strength, he never allowed anyone to sweep his room or fix his bed for him." These practices became the custom of the Congregation, cf. Consuetudines p. 88, line 9-11; p. 130, line 50-55.
96. Reg. et const. 110-111/III-V/45-60.
97. Reg. et const. p. 170, n. 238. It is only in 1839 that we find a declaration about the suffrages made especially for the former Superiors General, cf. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 352.
98. Processi IV, 259. The concept of "martyr of charity" proper to him who exercises the office of superior with the dispositions of faith, charity, and Christian dedication returns often in the letters of Paul. Cf. Let. I, 520; III, 433, 636-638.

Chapter X

THE CONGREGATION'S RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. DRAFTING AND APPROVAL OF THE RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS

1. Paul's awareness of the rule's origin

Before passing on to examine the drafting and the pontifical approvals of the rule during the founder's lifetime, it is well to review Paul's consciousness of the rule's origin and contents. He transmitted this understanding to those who joined him, always stressing that he wrote out of obedience, in an inner attitude of deep recollection and conscious of ineffable mystical experiences: "God infused into my soul in a lasting manner the form of the Holy Rule to be observed by the Poor of Jesus....Under obedience and by the grace of the Holy Spirit I proceeded to write." (1) He pointed out that the characteristic features of the Congregation were not the fruit of his own reasoning, but of divine inspiration: "Let it be known that the intention God gave me with regard to this Congregation...." (2) Why he considered the contents of the rule as a particular divine inspiration was clarified more explicitly when he described the manner in which he wrote: "Before writing, I said matins before daybreak and spent some time in mental prayer. Then I left prayer full of courage and began to write. The infernal enemy did not fail to assault me by stirring up feelings of repugnance within me and making difficulties about my doing this. But since God had inspired me to this task and I had been ordered to do it, without more ado, by God's grace I set to work. Let it be known that when I was writing, I wrote as quickly as if someone were dictating to me; I felt the words coming from the heart. I have written this to make it known that this was a special inspiration from God because as for myself I am but wickedness and ignorance." (3) This charismatic aspect of Paul's life as founder is deserving of in-depth

theological research. However, his own personal testimony gives us to understand the inner certitude he felt of acting under a particular assistance of the Holy Spirit "without having beforehand any idea or even reading the rules of other institutes." (4) Paul was not the type to believe easily in interior locutions or inspirations without careful discernment. Yet he recalled many times, explicitly on April 26, 1749, in a letter to Bishop Oldo of Terracina, that he was still overcome by wonder because "of the lights God's mercy has given me to found the Congregation, not alone for the habit and "sign" that we wear, but also for the Holy Rules." (5)

His statements must be read and understood in the light of the mystical experiences of his forty day retreat at St. Charles at Castellazzo. On November 27th, while experiencing a deep union with the suffering Christ, he adverted to an impulse to go to Rome to obtain papal approval for the foundation, and he asked God if he truly desired that he should settle down to write the rule "for the Poor of Jesus." "I felt a strong urge to do so, with great sweetness," he noted in all simplicity. The following day while "praying to the Sovereign Good for the happy issue of the holy inspiration" of the foundation and the writing of the rule, he implored the angels and the holy founders whom he saw "in spirit" and "not in bodily form" interceding for the new Congregation. Finally, when he was about to finish the rule, and with particular fervor had asked God "that he would hasten to found this Congregation in Holy Church and for sinners," he had "a keen infused knowledge of the sufferings of my Jesus and I felt a great desire to be perfectly united with him." (6) This deep, continuous union with Jesus gave him that certainty of writing only what Jesus wished from his "poor." This certainty later moved him to that firmness regarding the spiritual characteristics of the life of the Congregation which he held to, even at the price of having to wait ever so long for a definitive approbation and of having to forego solemn vows. From here, too, sprung that veneration he had, and wished others to have, for the rule the Church approved, considering it a sure indication of the divine will.

There can be little wonder, then, that Paul communicated this certainty to his companions, helping them to see in the rule God's gratuitous initiative and not something of his own doing. Fr. John Mary Cioni states: "he received from the Lord the more substantial elements of the rule and the Institute." (7) Then, speaking of the 1720 visions, he says: "the Institute he must found and the substance of the rule to be observed by the members of the Institute were revealed to him." (8) Anthony Danei recalls having heard from various religious that the founder had written the rule "after three hours' prayer before the Blessed Sacrament; and he wrote it in great haste as if it were being dictated to him." The religious in general, as testified by Bro. Francis, were certain that the rules "were full of wisdom and conformable to the spirit of the gospel." (9)

Till the end of his days Paul thought that the various revisions of the rule, prior to a new approval, never altered the substance as it was inspired by God. He himself stressed this when announcing the first approbation in 1741: "Know, therefore, that the holy rules and constitutions have in no way been altered in what concerns their essence. A few items have been removed which were not relevant." He also gave the reason why their essence was untouched: "I tell you that the rules and constitutions as they were approved have been left essentially the same, save for some very few unessential things, because based on the infallible truth of the Holy Gospel." (10) He confirmed this when writing to his former spiritual director: "I give you a brief account of the rules, which are the same ones inspired by the Father of Lights, seen and examined by your excellency. Some things have been added, some removed only for the better establishment of the work, according to the light the merciful God has deigned to give me during the past years in which, besides, experience has taught me much." (11) These words deserve special consideration if we are to understand Paul's mentality and why he was not concerned about keeping the primitive text in the archives of the Congregation. Rather, together with other documents concerning his youth, he burned the copy which Fr. Fulgentius had obtained from Alessandria. (12) The text the

Holy See approved contained for him all that was in the original text, and improved according to other inspirations God gave him through conscientious and scholarly men's counsel, the pontifical commissions for the review, and also through life experience.

2. Contents of the primitive 1720 text

With Bishop Emilio Cavalieri's observations in view, it seems possible to infer that the primitive text was composed of twenty-four brief chapters. They treated of the Congregation's spiritual life, its scope, its particular poverty and penance inspired by an intense love of Christ crucified and sustained by continuous contemplation in order to fathom the depths of God's love as manifested in the Passion of the Incarnate Word. The whole script bore the marks of a deep spiritual and mystical animation, along pure Gospel lines, as was stressed when speaking of the foundational inspiration. It was possibly incomplete as regards structural organization, formation of candidates for the priesthood, which were perhaps unforeseen, norms for the apostolate, government, observance, penances for transgressors, etc. That these were missing or incomplete aspects can be inferred from Bishop Cavalieri's bare notes, which fortunately have come to us. (13) The bishop was a man well versed in law, a member of the Congregation of Pious Workers, deeply spiritual and capable of grasping the mystical nature of the document Paul gave him, and in a position to counsel him regarding organization. Paul accepted what he indicated in his notes, as well as other things suggested in conversation. It is likely Paul inserted these observations in the text of the rule he wrote in the second half of 1725, after returning to the hermitage of our Lady of the Chain. (14) The transcription made during the Civitavecchia quarantine, September 1721, was simply a clean copy to be presented during the hoped-for audience that never took place. (15)

3. The Altieri Codex of the rules and constitutions

The oldest complete text of the rule which has come down to us is that contained in a collection of Cardinal Lawrence Altieri's letters known as the Altieri Codex. This cardinal was Titular Abbot of the Sts. Vincent and Anastasius Abbey to whose jurisdiction pertained Orbetello and the territory in which Paul built his first retreat. The title coincides with that of those approved by the Holy See: "Jesus. Rules and Constitutions to be Observed by the Congregation of the Least Discalced Clerics Under the Title of the Holy Cross of Jesus Christ and of his Passion." Some scribe of the vicar general of Orbetello must have made the copy because it does not resemble the penmanship either of Anthony Danei or of Fr. Fulgentius, Paul's only companions at that time. The contents are divided into forty chapters. It is written in a simple, spontaneous style, with many phrases of admiration and wonder, and expressions that betray that interior mystical effluence of the 1720 text. The language is easy-flowing and at times poor.

This text must have been drafted and perhaps finished between 1729 and 1730, the period in which Paul thought of founding the first retreat, and of obtaining papal approval for the Congregation, thus easing the way for those desirous of joining him. The founder wished to go to Rome but was dissuaded by Bishop Crescenzi, who suggested he first send Cardinal Corradini a copy of the rule for a previous examination. On December 9, 1730 Bishop Crescenzi, while approving the projected journey to Rome, asked for news concerning "the modifications to the mode of life undertaken, which I believe do not alter the substance of your Institute." (16) It would appear, however, that Paul did not send the rules to Corradini, nor did he travel to Rome.

In November, 1736, the Presentation retreat being finished, Paul asked Cardinal Altieri to authorize the vicar general to bless the new church. On November 17th the cardinal gave his vicar the necessary permission but on condition that, within a month, Paul should send him the rules and constitutions. After a careful study of them

he would give his approval provided the new church, the religious and the Congregation be under the ordinary's jurisdiction. Precisely what Paul never wanted. Yet, on December 21, 1736, the rules were in the hands of the cardinal, who immediately began modifying them according to his views. Many were the corrections and notes on the chapter on poverty. On January 12, 1737, the cardinal forwarded the part of the rule he had already reviewed to his vicar in Orbetello, Msgr. Giovanni Moretti. Paul's mind on the practice of poverty and dependence on the ordinary were well known to the vicar. Hence Msgr. Moretti thought of sending his superior a memorandum entitled: "Reflections of The Vicar General on The Most Important Affair of The New Retreat of Penance and Presented for Your Excellency's Information." In it he outlined very clearly what Paul desired. He then suggested that His Eminence proceed no further in the revision of rules which in a more or less foreseeable future, if the work developed, would be approved by the Holy See. For the present the cardinal could limit himself to compiling a brief rule of life for those religious who lived as a "pious union of priests" under the local ordinary's jurisdiction.

Altieri desisted from reviewing the text and kept it in his library with other letters and memoranda concerning the Congregation. The rules, as they stood, seemed exaggerated to him, for they did not sufficiently consider the demands of the body which would be submitted to great apostolic work. He also judged necessary the possession of goods, at least for the sure upkeep of the sacristy and church. To proceed otherwise would be presuming that Divine Providence would work miracles. Precisely because of this different spiritual and psychological focus concerning poverty, the cardinal delayed the community's entrance into the new retreat. Finally a compromise was arrived at: Paul accepted the Grazi family's guarantee to the bishop for the maintenance of the church, and at the same time accepted the juridical status of a "Pious Union" living under norms given by the ordinary. Thus on September 14, 1737, the little community could take possession of the Presentation retreat. (17)

The text gives profound attention to the Gospel and particularly to Christ's discourse to the twelve apostles and the seventy-two disciples when sending them on their apostolic mission. Thus Paul indicated a Congregation formed in the spirit of the "gospel laborer," known also as "the apostolic life" of which we spoke in the second chapter.

4. The first text of the rules and constitutions approved by the Holy See: 1741

Having settled in the Presentation retreat, Paul considered making a greater effort to obtain papal approval for the rules. On November 20, 1737, he expressed his desire of going "soon to Rome to put myself at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff for the approbation of the rule." (18) On January 17, 1738, he was already in Rome hopeful that the following week he might present the rules to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. He asked for prayers because, as he said, "although he who has seen them remains edified, there is as yet no certainty of a happy outcome." (19) On February 10th he hoped to be called to Rome during Lent "to hear what the Sacred Congregation has resolved." (20) Instead, still at the beginning of 1740, we learn from a letter of Cardinal Rezzonico that the affair was still pending in the Sacred Congregation without any resolution in sight. Paul told the cardinal that he would be pleased with an approval by simple rescript, but Rezzonico thought otherwise and invited him to be patient because, if he obtained a simple rescript, he would be again in trouble were the pope to die. He concluded therefore: "I would think it much better if possible to obtain a specific confirmation from the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars even if it means to work a bit more." (21) No documents on hand give any reason for so prolonged a transaction. It was for Paul a most bitter experience, and he was to dread his future dealings with the Roman Congregations. (22)

On August 6, 1740, Benedict XIV was elected pope. Cardinal Rezzonico, in his first audience with the new pope on September 13th, presented with all delicacy "the

idea of this holy institute, the most holy end for which it is founded, the great good it is doing and its desired growth, which could be obtained were the constitutions approved by the Holy See. The Holy Father heard the entire exposition with the greatest pleasure and honored it with his approval. He told me to have one of them come to Rome with the constitutions they desire approved, that he hopes to be able to please them and that he will see to sending them back soon to their apostolic work." (23)

While communicating this cheerful news Cardinal Rezzonico invited Paul to lodge at his residence, but also let him know he would be absent from Rome during October until the vigil of All Saints Day. In order to avail himself of the continuous assistance of so important a friend, the founder went to Rome on November 13, 1740, with mixed feelings of hope and fear. (24) On November 25th he assured Agnes Grazi that the rules were in the pope's hands, and, on the whole, things seemed to be "taking a good turn, but there is no knowing what will be resolved." (25) Thanks to the ability of Cardinal Rezzonico, the pope named a special commission to examine the rule, thus removing it from the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. The examiners appointed were Cardinals Peter Corradini and Charles Rezzonico together with the abbot Count Peter Garagni as secretary. Cardinal Corradini's engagements delayed the work much longer than Paul expected. The small number of religious professions in the Congregation caused the commission some perplexity as to the convenience of approving the rules and constitutions by brief. It was in consequence thought prudent "to await a greater number of subjects and by a competent number of these be better assured of the Lord's will" before the pope should ratify the rules and constitutions in a solemn manner. As a gesture of benevolence it was decided to approve them by the amplest possible rescript, with simple vows, but without establishing the Congregation as a moral person. Exemption from the ordinary's jurisdiction was not deemed convenient. Such jurisdiction imposed also the obligation of taking part in processions in neighboring places. Notwithstanding the initial difficulties, the commission granted the use of the "sign" externally on the habit, while initially it had

been restricted to use where not visible. (26) Finally on April 10, 1741, the commission signed its favorable vote for the approval of the rule with the additions and modifications it thought convenient. While giving its sentence, it placed as a condition that the new Congregation should dedicate itself to popular missions in areas of unhealthy climate and destitute of missionary houses. (27) On May 15, 1741, Benedict XIV approved the rescript with the force of a brief and thus confirmed the rules and constitutions of the "Congregation of the Least Regular Discalced Clerics to be Erected Under the Invocation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ." (28)

Twenty years had passed since September 1721 when Paul had made his first attempt to obtain papal approval for his rule. His wish was finally realized and, in a certain sense, his God-given mission was fulfilled. Fittingly did Cardinal Rezzonico write to him: "Finally it can be said 'it is finished' since by the pontifical rescript your holy constitutions are confirmed." (29) The approved text of the rule, together with the permission to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the retreat church, were taken to Paul by Brother Angelo Mary Gabriello di Stefano, a religious who was formerly vicar of the Grand Priory of Barletta. He arrived at Monte Argentario on May 30, 1741, bearing as well a letter from Abbot Garagni saying among other things: "with these pages and the good Lord's benefits I send also my most affectionate and devoted heart." (30)

The text of the rule the Holy see approved for the first time has a more correct and polished lexical and stylistic form compared to that of 1736. Three new chapters were added: 8th: "What Must Be Done Before The Reception of Novices;" 27th: "Regulation for The Time of Sacred Missions To Ensure That Such A Ministry May Be Performed With The Greatest Possible Perfection;" and 38th: "Of The Penances To Be Imposed On The Transgressors Of The Rules and Constitutions." The chapters concerning the novice master and the local superior were clarified; other parts were united so that the whole con-

sisted of forty chapters, the same number as the 1736 text.

The approval of the rule still left other problems unsolved: the recognition of the Congregation as a moral person, the exemption from the local ordinary's jurisdiction and the ordination of clerics without testimonials from their ordinary of origin. Nevertheless, the approval meant that the Church recognized the Congregation's presence, that it had an initial juridic basis of existence that demanded its fulfillment, and consequently an assurance that the pontifical promise of a solemn approval would be a reality with the increase of subjects and retreats. On June 16, 1741, Paul wrote to Sister Cherubina Bresciani: "I inform you that, thanks to our Jesus, the Sovereign Pontiff has approved our rules and constitutions. Oh how sweet and tender is Jesus who gives the calm after the storm, the sunshine after the clouds. Be of good cheer, my daughter, intercede before God that he feed his infant Congregation at the bosom of his divine love and spray it with his most precious Blood." (31)

Paul hastened to share with others the good tidings of the approbation. He first notified the vicar general of Orbetello in order to make sure that the presentation of the papal rescript was officially registered in the curia. He also informed the bishops of Soana and Pitigliano, Alessandria, Viterbo, Bishop Gattinara of Turin, and also his mother and friends. All this for two reasons: that they might know that God's work was officially confirmed by the Church, and that they might help him by sending prospective candidates or by calling upon his men to proclaim God's love as manifested in the Passion of Christ. (32) Paul was overjoyed because the approbation had left the rule substantially as it was inspired. This verification meant for him a further guarantee of the authenticity of the original inspiration. "I tell you that the said rules and constitutions, being approved as they were, have been left essentially the same, save for some very few unessential things, because based on the infallible truth of the Gospel." (33) He was not pleased with the condition of having his retreats "immediately subject in all things and for all purposes to the bishop in whose

diocese the house was founded." Nor was he pleased by the imposition of the obligation to take part in processions held in neighboring towns. He conveyed these objections to Cardinal Rezzonico, who had written to him saying: "Write to me if things are not to your satisfaction, since there were some changes that alone I could not oppose." (34) On the whole, however, the founder was satisfied and felt that Bishop Cavalieri's words had come true, that is, that God at the right time would have the Congregation approved by ways still unknown to Paul. To Abbot Garagni he gave his impression: "I have read the constitutions and I see that God has guided your heart, your tongue, your pen, everything. They have been left in their essence, according as the divine Goodness inspired them. Something added or removed does not harm the essential, because in their beginning God has permitted this, but with time He will make his divine will clearly know." (35)

5. The 1746 solemn approbation

With the opening of two retreats in March, 1744, St. Angelo at Vetralla and St. Eutizio, together with the increase in the number of subjects, Paul detected the answer of Providence to the demands of the pontifical commission: the growth of the Congregation before granting solemn approbation. In the summer of 1744, the founder resumed his endeavors for the juridic establishment of the Congregation with the granting of solemn vows. From this approbation he expected juridic stability in the Church, exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, and the possibility of ordaining clerics under the title of "common board" or "of poverty," with the sole testimonials of the major superior. He also trusted that well gifted individuals would feel more encouraged to enter. Thus did he manifest his feelings on August 29, 1744: "Let us greatly recommend our affairs to God, above all for the solemn approval of the Congregation. For this goal I journey to Rome, as on this solemn approval, so desired by all the religious, hinges the arrival of great subjects and the spread of the Congregation with retreats, etc." (36)

Paul was in Rome toward the end of October, 1744, (37) and with the support of Cardinal Albani, who had given him the St. Eutizio retreat, he obtained from the Holy Father the nomination of a special commission composed of Cardinals Girolami, Gentili and Besozzi, with Gentili as prefect. From Cardinal Albani's letters (38), it appeared everything would be speedily resolved, but instead the transactions were prolonged for almost two years. The cardinals held that the poverty which the rules and constitutions required was too strict and most difficult to practice in a stable manner. On this account they wanted at least the houses of study to have some fixed income. They likewise held that the fast ought to be mitigated in houses of formation. Besides, considering that the religious were still few in number and not long professed, they deemed the concession of solemn vows not expedient. Impeded by illness from going to Rome, Paul wrote many letters begging the cardinals not to introduce substantial changes as to practice of the poverty which he had expressed in the rule by God's will. Lamentably, we are not in possession of this documentation. It would have enlightened our understanding of his view of the evangelical poverty necessary for a contemplative and apostolic Passionist. The cardinals acquiesced to the founder's persistence and dropped the proposals. In September 1745, Paul had an interview with Cardinal Albani in Soriano. What exactly took place in that meeting we do not know, but the outcome was that Cardinal Albani was no longer so friendly to the Congregation. It seems he even forgot to pass on to the commission the text of the rule which he had in his library, until the founder went to Rome in 1746. (39) On March 17, 1746, after two months of intense work in which Paul personally took part, the commission gave its decision. On the 26th of that month the Holy Father put his approving signature to the minutes of the brief. Paul himself in a letter to Fr. Fulgentius recalls: "God moved the congregation to send me here. Otherwise who knows how many months and possibly years would have passed without concluding this affair, perhaps relegating it to a long silence. I've been at my desk a long time, making notes and examining the writings, and everything has passed through my hands; the cardinals examined everything. God has helped me,

and I can truly say it is a miracle of God's mercy that this affair has been concluded in such a way and so quickly." (40)

The brief, dated April 18, 1746, approved the rules and constitutions, but not the Congregation as a moral person. Hence, no solemn vows were granted, nor the authority to ordain clerics with the title of "common board" by the sole testimonials of the major superior. In comparison to the previous text this one looked forward to the future and completed what was missing in the 1741 text. Norms for the intellectual formation were adequately provided as well as the organs of government to be put into force with the development of the Congregation. This text, with slight variations, remained unaltered until 1926-1929 when some canons of the Code of Canon Law were introduced.

Not all had been obtained, but certainly the greater part. Thus the founder could write on August 13, 1746: "After much struggling, the apostolic brief has been obtained. In it are inserted the whole Rules consisting of 40 chapters and translated into Latin. The brief has meant a great expense, but the work, if not finished is withal happily begun." (41) The expenses, 140 *scudi*, were benignly waived.

6. Some additions to the rules and constitutions in 1760

In conformity with the provisions of Benedict XIV's brief of approval, Paul, in his attempt to obtain solemn vows in 1760, requested some additions to the text of the rule. The particular commission the pope had appointed approved these, and on November 25, 1760, the pope himself ratified them. The additions were:

- In the 14th chapter, the declaration that the apostolic service to the local churches excluded the care of souls, namely, parishes.

- In the 15th chapter, authorization for the local superior to keep the community money in a double locked safe in the retreat. Formerly the syndics held it.

- In the 26th chapter, regarding the regulation for popular missions: a) that a religious before going out for the first time on these ministries must submit his written sermons to be examined by two theologians appointed by the major superior; b) that the missionaries returning from a "missionary campaign," which could last up to three months as a maximum, must make an eight to ten day retreat in order to ease their return to the community's contemplative silence. (42)

7. The 1769 solemn approbation

The solemn approval of the Congregation as a moral person has been recorded elsewhere. Here we deal solely with the approval of the rules and constitutions. Immediately after the 1769 general chapter, the founder commissioned Frs. John Baptist Gorresio and John Mary Cioni to insert in the rules the additions and decisions made by the general chapters according to the authority given in Benedict XIV's brief. According to Fr. John Mary's testimony, the founder wished the text of the rule to be somewhat abbreviated, and the text placed before the pope on May 29th was drawn up with this criterion in view. However, one of the examiners, Bishop Garampi, thought it best that the rules be left as Benedict XIV had approved them with only the strictly necessary additions or modifications. The founder agreed to this and had a second copy made. No copy of the first text has come down to us, but I believe it was not much different from the 1775 text, in which two short chapters were eliminated. Among the modifications and additions deserving particular attention we must enumerate the mitigations regarding fasts and the provision for five continuous hours of repose before rising for matins. It was Bishop Garampi who insisted on these modifications, because, he said, "first fervors are not lasting, and when they are wanting the way is paved for relaxation." Both examiners had expressed their opinion that the Congregation be given the

faculty of accepting legacies of immovable goods, on condition they were immediately disposed of for the benefit of the Congregation. When this project was unveiled to the founder, he was not pleased and most fervently begged this be not granted because "it would weaken the strict poverty on which the Congregation was built and established." (43) As concerns the student house, this regulation was the work of the general chapter and Fr. John Mary calls it "the students' regulations." (44) Hence, the text solemnly approved by the brief of November 15th and reconfirmed by the bull of November 16th presented few changes to the former text. The more important changes were:

- The administration was definitely entrusted to the rector and his vicar. The syndic was totally eliminated.
- The fast was mitigated for Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and feast days.
- Before rising for matins five continuous hours of repose were allowed.
- Students in formal study were dispensed from rising for matins, except on feast days and school holidays; a small collation was allowed in the morning and a pittance on Fridays at meals; it was also established that no cleric should be promoted to sacred orders until after five years of a praiseworthy life in the Congregation.
- The general chapter was deprived of the faculty which the 1746 text had granted it of making additions to the rule for grave motives.
- The superior general was given authority to dispense from the observance on some point of rule: the individuals of the Congregation by his own authority; an entire province with the consent of his consultors and of the provincial concerned, but for a fixed period.

Paul affirmed that he had been granted "the faculty to explain and determine" what concerned the mitigation of fast and the repose previous to matins. Did he mean

that, as founder, he had received a special faculty? Or did he refer to the faculty given the general with his consultors to interpret the rule authentically outside the time of general chapters? From the tone of the passage, it seems that we must look upon it as a special faculty granted him as founder. Writing to the rector of St. Angelo he said: "I likewise desire that the visitor (Fr. John Mary) inform Your Reverence how to act according to my intentions which are well known to Fr. John Mary. This information concerns the two additions made to the rule by the pope himself, that is, the five hour repose before matins where it would be better to take a quarter of an hour from the evening recreation, anticipating compliance somewhat instead of taking time from the morning; the other point concerns the evening pittance besides the hot dish added on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays when not feast days, which must be very meagre, just to eat a mouthful more of bread; this was given in favor of our young men *with the faculty granted me to explain and determine*. Likewise the morning collation for the students must not be a true collation as was understood by the rector of St. Eutizio, but a mere crouton with a little wine to strengthen the stomach and head of the students." (45)

This text of the rule was first printed in 1770 for the use of the religious. It also appeared in 1841, together with the brief, in the fourth volume of the "Continuation of Roman Briefs." The review, though completed in a relatively short time, was not precipitous. During the time it took to complete the matter, the examiners approached the founder at least three times that he might hear their views and see the minutes both of their consultative vote and of the bull. As already stated, the founder had the opportunity of making his observations and expressing his desires, thus completing the requests made in the first memoranda mislaid by the pope. The approbation was given not by means of a brief, as Paul expected, but, thanks to Clement XIV's benevolence, by means of a bull. All this made the founder exclaim: "The Sovereign Pontiff has been most propitious towards me, granting me a new and most ample bull of approval and solemn confirmation of our rules and constitutions, which

has been enriched by many privileges. So before dying I leave our Congregation well founded and established in Holy Church." On the feast of Mary's Assumption he could joyously go to St. Mary Major's "to thank the Lord and his blessed Mother for this grace, as he told the pope, because, nearly fifty years ago before that same image, I made for the first time the vow to promote devotion to the sacred Passion and to gather companions for that same end." (46)

8. The 1775 revision and solemn approval of the rules and constitutions

From a perusal of the founder's letters and of those of Fr. John Mary quoted in the foregoing paragraph, one gets the impression that all things concerning the life and organization of the Congregation, the text of the rules and the juridic personality of the Institute itself were all well established and clear. How is it then that after scarcely five and a half years the desire arose of a new revision of the rule? Did Paul want the special approbation of every pontiff he met? Were there second thoughts on the 1769 project of having an abbreviated text, later put aside in condescension to Bishop Garampi's opinion? This seems unlikely. We lack sufficient documentation to know the divers elements which could have influenced the founder and to know as well the views of his religious and friends. From Bro. Francis' testimony it appears no unanimity existed, at least regarding the expediency of submitting the rule to another revision and solemn approval. The witness affirms that in regard to Paul's intention to ask the new pope, Pius VI, "that he reconfirm the rules of the Congregation by a Bull" two cardinals and Mr. Frattini, his friend and benefactor, together with some religious of the Congregation "thought otherwise and disapproved Paul's sentiments saying to him: 'A Bull? Why a Bull? there is no need for it, the rules are already approved!'" Paul was silent for some time, but later began to manifest anew his feelings "that a new Bull was necessary. After having received various disapprovals from the fathers of the Congregation, some of them, as had happened before, finally overcome by his

insistence, resolved to present Paul's pleas to the above mentioned cardinals, which two of the fathers did." (47)

Beyond what the witness wished to prove - Paul's prudence and patience - these words convey that there was no unanimity in the Congregation as to the usefulness of a new revision and solemn approbation.

The scope of the revision appears largely in the Acts of the Chapter and in the request Paul addressed to Pius VI for a new approbation:

- to remove the ambiguities or those regulations experience taught were impossible to observe;
- to remove likewise those points that proved impossible or very difficult to observe at all times;
- "to add if necessary, or clarify what was ambiguous or not properly understood," hoping that in the future all would "be clear and put in practice by the observance." (48)

These proposals show the founder's noble purpose, but at the same time pose many problems to which there are no easy answers. The most acute problem is to understand why in 1769 after 23 years of experiencing the 1746 rule, such ambiguities and difficulties deriving from human weakness had not been detected. And now, after scarcely five and a half years' experience, what new knowledge could have been offered? How explain, besides, that if in 1775 clarifications and removal of ambiguities were necessary, why three years later in 1778 and again in 1784 did both general chapters following the founder's death publish a long list of decrees to clarify and make the rules and constitutions more precise.

Lacking documents, no recourse is left to us but to examine the facts in chronological order. Since March 1775 Paul had re-read the various chapters of the rule and dictated his thoughts to Fr. Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi. These observations were read at the general chapter on May 17, 18 and 19. All the capitulars, members of the

general and provincial chapters, were invited to give their opinions. The founder's observations have not come down to us, nor have the minutes of the capitular discussion. Certainly the fathers must have expressed a variety of opinions, but the acts of the chapter testify to the full deference of the capitular fathers present to the founder, granting him full power to accommodate the text as he thought most convenient. (49) The new text, with the additions and corrections, was presented to Pius VI together with Paul's petition, reminding him that Clement XIV's bull had ordered that, if anything were to be added to the rule, it should be presented to the Holy See for approval. Therefore he was presenting what had been agreed to in the chapter and begged that the text be sent to Cardinal delle Lanze, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Council, and to Cardinal De Zelada who was "already informed of the same rules and regulations, having examined them before" under Clement XIV. The pope's favorable reply arrived on July 3rd. (50) The positive vote of the cardinals was given on August 21st, and on September 15, 1775, Pius VI issued the bull *Præclara virtutum exempla*. What hastened the affair was the pope's sensitivity wishing to give the founder the joy of having the document in hand before his death.

Basically the text was the same as those of 1746 and 1769. Two not very significant chapters were cancelled, as their content was sufficiently clear from other points of the same rule. The first was the second chapter on supervision of the houses of the Congregation; the other was the fifth chapter on how the brethren must conduct themselves on leaving the solitude of the house. The most radical change from the former text was the suppression of "the students' regulations." Some few things impossible to observe in the absolute form in which they were expressed were also eliminated. (51)

9. Concluding remarks on the "holy rules"

This exposition of the work done on the texts of the rule goes to show the founder's solicitude that his religious have a clear document wherein to read the princi-

ples of the charism proper to the Congregation, enabling them to live faithfully the spirituality of the "apostolic life" as a community united to Mary at the foot of the Crucified.

What eludes all historical analysis is the series of anxieties, prayers, penances, physical and mental anguish that this work meant for Paul and his immediate collaborators. It was certainly the sum total of these prayers and sufferings that obtained for the religious the grace of entering into the spirit and charism which the rule wished to express and safeguard, but which must penetrate the soul and life of each religious in order to be life-giving.

These many drafts, however, while enriching the organizational aspect of the Institute, have somewhat impoverished the text as regards the simple and mystical impulse it had in the beginning. Yet, notwithstanding this, its rich spiritual content has remained unaltered in its full reality.

The text contains all that concerns the spiritual motivation as well as what constitutes its organization and daily exercise. That is the reason it is called "rules and constitutions." The unity of these two elements in certain aspects has helped to clarify the life as a whole, being unified and vivified by the spiritual element supporting the charism. In practice, however, it has also created difficulties in historic moments when a distinction was necessary between fundamental principles of rule and practical application created by historic situations.

The founder always inculcated a reverential regard for the "rules and constitutions," because of their approval by the Holy See which gave them to the Congregation as canonical law and imperative of evangelical obedience. That explains the usage of the terms "Holy Rule" or "Holy Rules": "holy" because it bears the seal of Church approval; and "rule" because it points out the path towards evangelical holiness.

B. THE REGULATIONS: THEIR DRAFTING AND CONTENTS

1. Origin and drafting of the regulations

The regulations originated in answer to a triple demand: of completing the norms for an organized community life; of favoring a certain uniformity as a distinctive element of membership in the same Congregation; and, above all, of promoting the accomplishment of the daily exercises with all the fervor of theological charity. The rules and constitutions as the fundamental and general law demanded complementary norms for their correct fulfillment in the various circumstances of daily life, thus preventing arbitrary or disorderly acts which might upset or hinder the efficacious evangelizing witness of the individuals and the communities. As all founders, Paul was worried that the rule be observed, but, above all, he desired that "the observance of the rule" should be "always animated and accompanied by the interior spirit." (52) This interior spirit is possible only if the religious "acts always with great uprightness and holy recollection" animated "by great fervor" and conducting himself "in all things as if he were in the presence of God and only to please God." (53)

The foundation of new communities, the canonical visitations, the general chapters and other particular needs gradually caused the founder to issue norms providing for the proper running of community life and ensuring likewise that the institute's development and activity did not diminish the inner vitality of the individual religious. Thus arose norms for the various offices and for the more relevant needs, as, for example, regulations for confessors, for missionaries, for the acceptance of postulants, for tertiaries, for brothers bricklayer or mason, etc. (54)

The material for the organic document which Paul would call "the Common Regulation" was garnered from the various decrees issued before 1754, from the personal experience of Paul and his collaborators, from the careful reading of ascetical works, of treatises on spiritual direction, partly from St. Francis de Sales, St. Charles

Borromeo's advice to confessors, and perhaps also from Paul Segneri, senior. In that document Paul gathered what concerned the spiritual animation which should characterize each religious in the fulfillment of his daily duties and of the particular offices towards the community and the people of God. The only ones left out were the novices, who already had their own regulations.

2. The Common Regulation

It was drawn up towards the end of 1754 or early 1755, as the text was certainly promulgated within the first half of 1755. Paul says: "Finally, we impress upon all our religious the punctual and exact observance of the holy rule and the decrees published so far for their strengthening and stability. Likewise the continuous practice of the regulations we drew up and published in all the retreats for their spiritual profit." (55)

The letter of promulgation that served as foreword to the text bears no date. Hence it is impossible to fix the month. But the doctrine, the spiritual and apostolic concern, the phraseology indicate Paul as its sure author. It appears certain, however, that Paul had recourse to Fr. Struzzieri - a man renowned for his theological, juridical and pastoral knowledge - for a uniform style in drafting the material prepared by him. (56) The document had two parts: the first (14 chapters) gave the manner of fulfilling with perfect charity the daily or periodical exercises prescribed by the rule. The second part (11 chapters) gave prudent and efficacious norms for the fulfillment of the various offices entrusted to the religious within or outside the community. The contents are mainly spiritual and psychological, permeated by a breath of calm optimism, encouraging the religious - we read in the preface - to fulfill the various daily exercises "with perfection, so that our works be full before the most pure eyes of God." We also find norms and suggestions concerning etiquette in order that social relations be marked by serious courtesy, which is supported by affable, well-bred manners so that religious "be most pleasing to God,

amiable to all the Congregation and welcome even to people." (57)

The regulations' legislative foundation was that of general chapter decrees or that of the superior general. The 1758 general chapter abolished all former decrees given by major superiors, general chapters or visitators because "the common regulations supplanted them." (58) Paul was careful to remind his religious, both in the letter of presentation and on other occasions, that the common regulations, though binding, did not oblige as the rule approved by the Holy See. "These instructions which we present to you with all our heart's affection are not rules, but a guardian of the same, in order that they be observed and not transgressed." On another occasion he was more precise: "We recommend to all the most exact observance not alone of the holy rules, but the prescribed regulations as well. Although these do not oblige as the rules, they are helpful for the observance of the same and for the interior and exterior good order, and serving marvelously the uniformity in all the Congregation." (59)

The public reading of the common regulations was repeatedly recommended, and we find in each community various dispositions to that effect. In St. Eutizio we find a decree of October 14, 1758 ordering the reading of the common regulations in the chapter held on the first week of each month "dividing the reading over eight or ten days." In the Vetralla retreat it was to be done in the refectory "on all feasts and Thursdays of the year." (60) As a matter of fact this was the norm that prevailed throughout the history of the Congregation.

The oldest copy we possess dates back to 1756, but we have no copy with the founder's signature. The founder's version was in force up to 1778 when the first revision of it was made. In 1771 Paul commissioned Fr. John Mary Cioni to adapt chiefly the first part to the needs of the Passionist nuns. He himself appended his signature to it with the wishful blessing pronounced in Italian: "May Jesus Christ our Lord eternally bless those who will observe it." (61)

The document, as the founder designed and willed it, presents to religious not only the finishing touches to the juridic organization of the Institute, but above all a spiritual aid towards a more perfect understanding of the foundational charism and how it can and must be lived. On this account it deserves an outstanding place in the study of the spirituality of the Congregation and of the means that must be used in the animation of communities.

3. The novices' regulations

Writing to the then novice master, Fr. Peter, on October 24, 1764, Paul said: "I know that in past novitiates all the novices had something in writing, or rather, regulations on how to conduct themselves, at least in exterior things" (62). Fr. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli drafted such regulations during his term of office in 1746 or 1747. Its scope was to help the young men coming from their family circle to fit in with the religious community and prepare themselves to accept the spiritual formation demanded by the rule. The novices' regulations could be defined as a directory of the daily duties to be performed and the norms of politeness to be acquired and exercised in community relations. It also gave liturgical norms, suggestions for keeping in God's presence, the attitude to observe in spiritual conferences, and the permissions to be requested. The oldest copy extant in the general archives dates back to 1790. (63)

The text we possess presents in twenty-two sections the novices' behavior in the various moments of the day. This is followed by a "spiritual alphabet" in Latin and Italian, which reminds one of the "Monk's Alphabet" attributed to Thomas a Kempis (64). The "regulation for mental prayer" then follows; it is a guide to meditation according to the method common to the spiritual masters of that time. To this is added a paragraph on "an easy way of being united to God" as helpful to a preparation for prayer and as an aid to preserve prayer's beneficent influence. It teaches how to remember God's presence, and the mystery of Christ's passion during the various events of the day. The text ends with "ejaculatory

prayers for every occasion" which Fr. Marcoaurelio composed with phrases from the psalter apt to make us mindful of God in the daily vicissitudes. (65) This document remained substantially unaltered throughout the Congregation's history, save for some additions in the 1840 and 1941 revisions.

C. GENERAL CHAPTER REGULATIONS OR RITUAL

The general chapter regulations or ritual was taken almost entirely from that in force in other institutes, and only some acts of humility can be considered proper to the Congregation.

1. Convocation of the chapter

In force of the rule and from 1769, also of the bull *Supremi Apostolatus*, the general convoked the general chapter at least three months before its celebration. (66) The founder's letters of convocation were written in Latin, except that of 1775, perhaps conforming to the common usage in ecclesiastical convocatory letters. This letter was addressed to the religious having a right to take part in the chapter, and generally they were indicated by the office they filled. (67) After expressing briefly his mentality regarding the future chapter, the general ordered those who had a right to assist to be at the appointed place on the day fixed. (68) Up to 1769 the rectors were members of the general chapter by right. (69) Usually the local superiors were reminded of the documents they should present. The rule foresaw the possibility of exacting a contribution to the community where the chapter was held. The founder spoke of this only in 1758 for the simple reason that the St. Angelo community was burdened by construction. (70)

An important part of the circular was an exhortation to intense prayer begging the Lord's assistance for the capitulars in the choices to be made. In 1747, besides the triduum, a seven day public prayer was pre-

scribed from the 10th to the 17th of April, to be performed several times a day. "In the morning before leaving choir after tierce, three our fathers, hail marys and glory bes will be recited in honor of the Blessed Trinity; after none, three our fathers and hail marys in memory of the Lord's three hours agony on the Cross; after vespers, the litany of our Lady will be recited; after compline, three our fathers, hail marys and glory bes in honor of the tears our Blessed Mother shed while standing by the cross." (71) At other times Paul limited himself to recalling the obligation of offering up fervent prayers without determining any in particular. Occasionally some prayers were prescribed for the solemn triduum before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. In 1747 the *Veni Creator Spiritus* was to be sung followed by five our fathers, hail marys and glory bes in honor of the five wounds of Jesus Crucified. In 1769 the prescription was to recite the Litany of the Saints with the usual prayers indicated in the breviary, after having exposed the Blessed Sacrament. (72)

These circulars of convocation retained a solemn form of ending. Besides the superior general's signature and seal, they also bore the secretary's signature.

2. The preliminary meetings

Preliminary meetings are spoken of neither in the rules nor in the *bull Supremi Apostolatus*. In practice, however, the capitulars though dedicated to prayer during the triduum, held conferences with the superior general, who happened to be the founder, and among themselves exchanged news and views. (73) A discourse to the capitulars was given on the last evening of the triduum, the religious community assisting. This discourse usually dealt with the qualities a good superior should possess and the vigilance with which he must perform his duties. On rare occasions the chapter acts give the name of the preacher: in 1753 Fr. Marcoaurelius Pastorelli, in 1764 Fr. John Mary Cioni, in 1769 Fr. Charles Joseph Marchiandi. The latter was rector of the Presentation and second consultor at the time of the death of Fr. John Bap-

tist Danei. In his discourse he recalled "that among other prerogatives which superiors should possess, the principal one is meekness, by which, more than by severity, laws are stabilized and kept inviolate, while at the same time subjects are guided and directed to greater perfection." In the first general chapter held at Sts. John and Paul's, St. Vincent Mary Strambi presented "a learned and fervent discourse, enumerating with lively spirit and well founded reasoning the qualities which must adorn a superior, chiefly a true charity, patience, meekness, zeal, exemplarity and fortitude. He was, at the same time, to maintain the force of the regular observance, to treat and welcome lovingly his religious subjects, and to lead them to the perfection proper to their state." (74)

On the morning the chapter began the superior general solemnly sang the Mass in honor of the Holy Spirit, except in 1769 when it was sung by Fr. John Mary Cioni, and in 1775 by Fr. John Baptist Goresio, first consultor general. (75) Immediately after the mass and while the bells rang festively, all present took part in the procession within the church singing the *Veni Creator Spiritus*. Then the capitulars proceeded in silence to the chapter hall. In 1775 the procession after Mass went from Sts. John and Paul's basilica, with capitulars and community taking part, toward the chapter hall in the so called "large chapel" on the first floor of the retreat. Once arrived there, those not taking part in the chapter were ordered to leave. Since that day this order has been necessary because in the procession from the church to the hall the entire religious community took part.

3. The formalities of the first session

No new invocation to the Holy Spirit was made at the beginning of the first session, since the proper hymn had been sung during the procession. (76) The superior general laid his seal of office on the table as an act of resignation. The next step was the electing of a president or chairman, who was not always the outgoing superior general. (77) The outgoing general performed an act of humility, saying *culpa* for the faults he might have com-

mitted in the discharge of his office. The provincial or one of the capitulars repeated this in the name of all. (78) The capitulars' opinions were then asked as to the legitimacy of the meeting. Having had an affirmative answer, the chapter proceeded to elect the secretary and two scrutineers.

4. Announcing the election results

Up to 1769 superiors were elected by an absolute majority of votes. From then on two-thirds were required. (79) After the election of the superior general, the chapter proceeded to the election of the consultors and other superiors. The community was convoked and all gathered in the church to the festive pealing of bells. Having exposed the Blessed Sacrament, the secretary announced the general's election. The founder, vested in surplice and stole, entered the church and, having adored the Blessed Sacrament, made a fervent speech to all present. He emphasized that, though aware of his own incapacity, he nevertheless accepted the election as an act of obedience to the capitulars who have indicated God's will. He then exhorted those elected to the various offices "to promote with great dedication the regular observance and to show great zeal in fostering mutual union and fraternal charity." The founder intoned the *Te Deum*, and, during the singing, received the obedience of his religious who approached to kiss his hand. Paul "embraced all most cordially, pressing them lovingly to his breast." He concluded the ceremony with benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. (80) In force of a 1747 chapter decree, the superior general took an oath "of rightly governing the Congregation." This decree was confirmed by the 1753 chapter and was extended to provincials, with the added clause of defending the Congregation's jurisdiction. (81) But from 1775 on, this oath was no longer taken. The motive for demanding it seems to have been to commit superiors to greater vigilance in their work for the good of a Congregation which was growing amidst no small difficulties, and perhaps as a psychological influence upon religious to promote a better spirit in acceptance of the superior's

vigilance as regards regular observance and the smooth running of community life.

5. The closing of the chapter

The chapter ended with the signing of the Acts by the superior general and the capitulars. Previously, however, the ritual question was asked whether the capitulars thought the chapter's program was exhausted. Before closing, the pontifical decree against priests who should abuse the Sacrament of Reconciliation by solicitation in the confessional was read. (82)

At the sound of the bell, both capitulars and religious gathered in the church. The singing of the *Te Deum* before the Blessed Sacrament exposed expressed the gratitude owed to God. Finally the superior general imparted the eucharistic blessing. (83)

The provincial chapters, though celebrated with greater simplicity, followed more or less the style of the general chapters.

F O O T N O T E S

1. Let. IV, 220.
2. Ibid. Reg. et const. 66/I/1-8.
3. Let. IV, 221.
4. Processi III, 333.
5. Let. II, 692. The same conviction is found in Let. II, 401-402.
6. Let. I, 4, 6.
7. Processi I, 43.
8. Giammaria, Annali, n. 24.
9. Processi II, 11; III, 250.
10. Let. V, 37; II, 270.
11. Let. II, 272.
12. Processi I, 35; Let. IV, 22 in the note.
13. They are in Reg. et const. p. 151-154.
14. Processi II, 93.
15. Processi I, 45.
16. Citations in Reg. et const. p. XVI.
17. Ibid. p. XVII-XVIII.
18. Let. I, 455.
19. Let. I, 204-205.
20. Let. I, 457. Cf. also Reg. et const. p. XVIII.
21. The letter of Card. Rezzonico of February 6, 1740 in AG. A. I/I/23.
22. Let. III, 565. And also: Let. III, 556.
23. The letter of Card. Rezzonico of September 14, 1740 in AG. A. I/I/23.
24. Let. I, 477,
25. Let. I, 265.
26. Let. II, 215.
27. Edited document in Acta CP. XI, p. 257.
28. Document published in Acta CP. XI, 256-257
29. Ibid. p. 260.
30. Ibid. p. 259.
31. Let. I, 479-480.
32. Let. I, 92; 269; 418; 421; 479-480; 418. Let. II, 269; 271-275.
33. Let. II, 270; the italics are mine.
34. Acta CP. XI, p. 261-262.
35. Let. II, 220. For the text of the Rule itself cf. Reg. et const. 2/II/1ff.

36. Let. I, 496.
37. Let. II, 244.
38. They are published in Acta CP. XII, p. 166-169.
39. Cf. Processi III, 66; Reg. et const. p. XX-XXI. In Acta CP. XII, p. 164
40. Let. II, 71.
41. Let. II, 287.
42. Reg. et const. p. XXIV, 45/IV/44-50; 41/IV/37-45; 45/IV/44-50; 89/IV/8-25; 99/IV/36-40. Bollettino 1926, p. 244-245; Acta XII (1933-35) 267-268.
43. Giammaria, Annali, n. 529-545; Let. III, 729-730. As to poverty, Bishop Garampi eliminated what referred to stable goods. However, he left the faculty of receiving by title of alms any sum of money even by will. Cf. the Bull Supremi apostolatus 10; Reg. et const. 49/IV/9-21.
44. Reg et const. 83/IV/43-65.
45. Let. III, 269.
46. Let. III, 828. Giammaria, Annali, n. 547. Cf. also ibid, nn. 538-539, 541-545, 548; Let. III, 267, 772.
47. Processi III, 256-257. Giammaria, Annali, n. 680.
48. Acts of the Chapter in Bollettino 1929, p. 84-85; cf. documentation in Reg. et const. p. XXVII-XXIX, Let. V, 250.
49. Bollettino 1929, p. 86.
50. Let. V, 250-251.
51. Cf. the text to note the differences with the preceding one in Reg. et const. 3/V/1ff. I remind the reader that, in consideration of the specific work on the text of the Rules and Constitutions already existent, I have limited myself here to more salient points, hoping that he will refer to this work for a more profound study.
52. Let. IV, 253.
53. Reg. et const. 24/III/35-42; cf. also ibid. 76/I-III/44-54.
54. Cf. Let. IV, 28; 250-253; 263-264; 269-271; 272-275; 279-281.
55. Let. IV, 253.
56. Filippo, Storia Ad., Vol. I, f. 183-184. Cf. Ravasi also, Mons. Struzziari, pp. 118-119.
- 57.) The document is published in the series "Ricerche di storia e spiritualità passionista", n. 2: S. Paolo della Croce, Guida per l'animazione spirituale della vita passionista: "Regolamento comune" del 1755 edited by F. Giorgini (Roma, 1980), p. 48.
58. Decreti e rac., decr. n. 98.

59. Let. IV, 291, n. 7.
60. Visita can. S. Eutizio 1758. Cf. also Visita can. S. Angelo 1763. "3. Ibid. 1764. "3.
61. The synthesis made by Fr. John Mary has impoverished the original text very much, and the arrangement of the numbers is confusing.
62. Let. III, 438.
63. The oldest extant copy is the one indicated. Since it says "ad usum P. Michaelis a Purificatione," the copy may even go back to 1780, that is, the first years of his profession, after having transcribed the "general regulation" of 1778. It is in AG. A. II. IV. 4-10.
64. It was reported in fact among his works: Ven. Viri Thomae Malleoli a Kempis, Opera omnia... Coloniae Agrippinae (1680), p. 673-676. In the regulation the introduction and the final benediction were omitted.
65. Giammaria, Compendio della vita del servo di Dio p. Marcourello, f. 172.
66. Reg. et const. 112-113/III-V/3-18; Bull. Supremi Ap., 5.
67. Let. IV, 222, 242, 255, 275, 282, 288; Let. V, 251.
68. Paul used the expression "convocamus, simulque ex auctoritatis nostrae plenitudine, tempestive ad futuros jubemus"; or: "in virtute S. Obedientiae praecipimus." In the only circular in Italian in 1775 he says: "we order and command."
69. Let. IV, 223, 243, 256, 276.
70. Let. IV, 256. Cf. Reg. et const. 112/III/1-2.
71. Let. IV, 223.
72. Let. IV, 223, 256, 276, 283.
73. Let. IV, 257-258. Cf. Bollettino 1929, p. 169.
74. Bollettino 1929, p. 42, 80-81. Processi I, 87.
75. Bollettino 1929, p. 43. Processi I, 87.
76. After 1778 they will sing the hymn Vexilla Regis prodeunt during the procession, and the Veni Creator Spiritus is sung at the beginning of the first session by the Capitulars only.
77. The capitular acts of 1753 make explicit mention of the "President of the Chapter" who is Fr. John Baptist Danei, also in 1764 and in 1775, without indicating, however, who was designated. The practice is continued in the Congregation up to 1918 when with a declaration of the Sacred Congregation of Religious it was held to be a right of the retiring General to

preside at the Chapter. Cf. also the acts of various General Chapters, Consuetudines C.P., p. 118, line 43-45.

78. Paul used to appear with a cross on his shoulder, a crown of thorns on his head, and a rope about the neck, a gesture that has been imitated during history by other Superiors General. Bollettino 1923, p. 13.

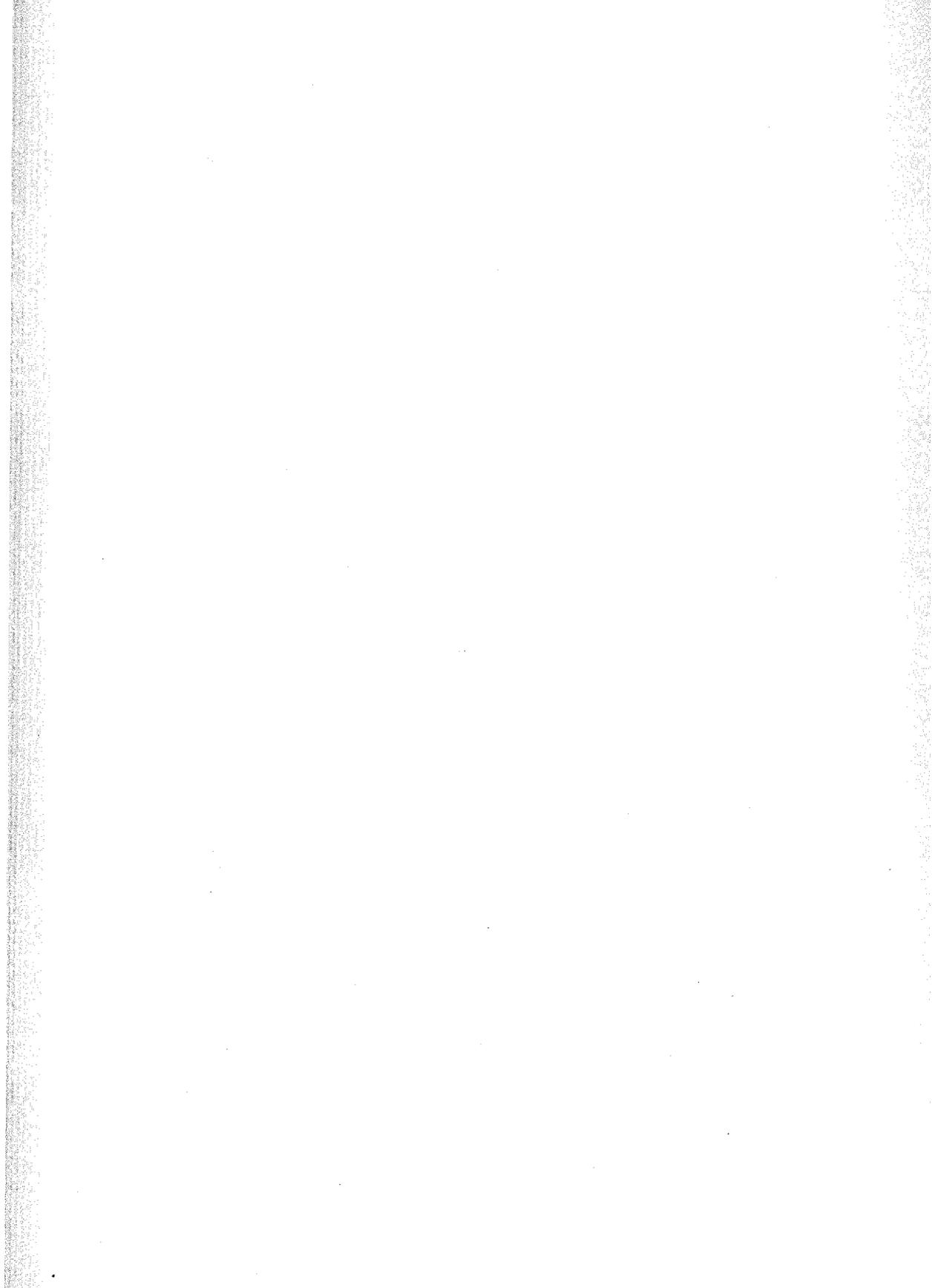
79. Reg. et const. 112-113/IV/28-33. The Latin text of 1746 does not specify the majority needed for the election, however the Italian text maintains the phrase of 1741, that is the absolute majority, ibid. p. 168, n. 190.

80. Bollettino 1923, p. 13; 1929, p. 47, 84. Cf. Reg. et const. 112-113/III-V/37-49.

81. Decreti e rac. decr. n. 24, 50. Cf. also Bollettino 1923, p. 25.

82. This reading was explicitly recorded in 1764, 1769 and 1775.

83. Before assembling in church, if the announcement of all the elections had not been made, after calling the community, it was made in the chapter hall, time permitting; otherwise it took place in the refectory.



Chapter XI

THE PASSIONIST NUNS

A. THE IDEA OF THE FOUNDATION

The thought of founding a female branch of the Congregation dedicated to living the same Passionist charism seems to date back to 1734. Its origin can be traced to the spiritual direction of Agnes Grazi (1703-1744), who met the founder in Orbetello in 1730, and of Sister Maria Cherubina Bresciani, a nun in the Piombino monastery, where the founder met her during a retreat he preached there.

Writing from Pitigliano on September 10, 1734, he told Agnes Grazi of a spiritual conference he had with two sisters "who truly wish to serve God in a great way....I trust that one day they will be sharers in our devotion." (1) This last phrase seems to refer to the monastery of Passionist nuns of which he spoke more clearly to Agnes Grazi on August 9, 1736, leading us to suppose that this matter had been mentioned before: "concerning what you say as to the women to be gathered together in this life, miracles will be needed." (2) This is almost the same as what he said to Paul Bresciani on July 12, 1735: "greater light is necessary as regards the monastery. If God wills it, he will make it understood in an unmistakable manner." (3) From 1748 onward further references are found. Paul always recommended patience, and did not know whether the project would become a reality in his lifetime. (4) Between 1750 and 1751 Lucy Burlini, a weaver from Piansano and a woman of great virtue whom Paul directed and for whom he had great esteem, told him of a vision she had concerning the monastery of Passionist nuns for which, at Paul's request, she was praying. Under the symbol of doves she thought she saw on Calvary many women mourning and weeping for the death of Jesus, seeking in various ways to show him gratitude and love. At the same time she felt a deep

certainty that *the nest*, the monastery, would be realized. (5) Paul was pleased by the Biblical image of the doves (6) and used it frequently in speaking of the purpose of the religious of the Passion. (7)

The reasons why the foundation was delayed were: Paul's worries about the establishment of the Passionist Congregation; the controversy with the mendicant orders between 1748-1750; the discouragement of repeated failures to obtain solemn vows which would have given the Congregation juridic personality and have opened the way for a female branch of the order with the right and duty of papal enclosure; and the serious economic difficulties. Without one or two very rich benefactors it was impossible to consider a monastery for nuns, because canon law required a sufficient fixed endowment to maintain it in poverty, but with adequate security to avoid the community having recourse to means that would be harmful to the common life and to solitude. (8) After 1750 Paul's letters showed a greater certainty as to the future foundation, though the time and manner were still uncertain. In 1753 a slight hope appeared of overcoming the economic difficulties. In fact, on January 18th he wrote to Bresciani: "There is a charitable institution with large resources disposed to found a retreat as a nest for the beloved doves of the Crucified." (9) Yet one difficulty remained: the Congregation's not having solemn vows was an obstacle to the Holy See's approval. This difficulty became more depressing when in 1760 the Holy See denied the solemn vows for which Paul had toiled so long. On December 7th of that year Paul wrote to Palozzi who was waiting impatiently: "In the present circumstances the monastery for the nuns cannot go ahead as our Institute does not have solemn vows, and that grace has been deferred until it shall please the Lord." (10) The founder did not lose heart in spite of these alternating hopes and fears. He kept the foundation in view by more zealous attention to the spiritual formation of the young women who might be the first religious. He sought to help them mature in their vocations and to live that spirit in the state and place in which they found themselves. Besides those who would enter in 1771, there were Agnes Grazi, Sister Maria Cherubina Bresciani and Lucy Burlini. With

this group in mind he wrote in 1761 to Thomas Fossi: "The Corneto monastery is not for your wife or your daughter. I know what I say: the first stones are already destined, and whoever is to enter there must be a soul both well disposed and holy, otherwise it will be to no avail." (11)

B. THE FOUNDATION ACCOMPLISHED

Paul met Mother Mary Crucified Costantini while preaching the retreat at the Corneto Benedictine monastery in 1737 or 1738, where she and her two sisters were nuns. Later he made the acquaintance of her brothers: Dominic, together with his wife Lucy, the canon Fr. Nicholas, and Arcangelo, the youngest and as yet unwed. On the night of March 5, 1754, Arcangelo was killed by robbers, and with his death ended the hope of an heir to the family, since Dominic and his wife were childless. The surviving brothers began to consider leaving their patrimony to some project useful to the city. Their contact with Paul led them to think of building a monastery for women religious who would live the same Passionist rule. During 1755 the idea matured within the family circle and in understanding with Paul. Paul, however, thought it unwise that he himself should take the initiative for fear of not getting the necessary approval because of the Congregation's status.

Citing letters received from Rome concerning the Congregation he said, "It will be next to impossible for me to obtain from the Holy Father the grace of making the said foundation." Because the Congregation lacked solemn vows, "it is more than probable that the pope will not wish that a monastery for women be founded until the solemn approbation be given," wherefore he suggested that Dominic send a petition via the bishop. The bishop would pass it on to the corresponding papal secretary, Msgr. Braschi, who in turn would present it to the Holy Father for his opinion. If the answer were negative, the construction of the building should be delayed. (12) During the year the decision to proceed matured. Though

Paul was decidedly in favor of the project he was reluctant to appear as the one responsible for it, fearing to complicate matters both for his Congregation and for the monastery. Hence his suggestion that the building be begun with the understanding that it was a pious work in the name of the bishop. However, as a practical man, he insisted that Dominic, before spending a cent, get the bishop to execute "a secret but authentic declaration, signed and stating clearly and in detail that the work is at your expense, that the buying of the houses and everything else done, is done according to your pious will and intention in obedience to the Lord's inspirations. Let His Excellency declare that he, for holy purposes, only lends his authoritative name, but that the work is all yours, you are paying the expenses, that you are the lawful owner of the houses, buildings and all the rest." Paul thought this declaration essential for the foundation, because should anything happen, the bishop or the diocese could claim everything for other purposes, and if the facts could not be proved properly the projected monastery would vanish.

He encouraged Dominic not to fear appearing troublesome in demanding such a document "because," he said, "you who spend the money can speak frankly and with all freedom to the secretary, so that he put before his Excellency your very just reasons....Prudence demands that you proceed thus, otherwise you err." (13) We must conclude that at this point Paul was convinced there were sufficient grounds for expecting the foundation to succeed, and that it was only for reasons of prudence and convenience that the benefactor and the bishop alone should be in the public eye. He did not go back on his word as to his commitment to the work. Rather, he took a keen interest in the plans to see that they fulfilled the requisites of the Passionist rule. On receiving architect Orlandi's reply on April 4th, he gave instructions as to the measurements of the rooms, the corridors and the other parts of the premises. He encouraged Dominic to undertake the work "with great trust in God...a generous heart and willing spirit (*corde magno et animo volenti*)...with an humble heart, with the purest intention for the sole glory of God and to prepare a nest for the pure

doves of the Crucified where they can mourn forever his most holy Passion, anointing his wounds with the balm of their tears, welling up from hearts truly burning with love. Oh, what a great work!" (14)

The Costantini family laid the foundation stone on January 29, 1759, but almost twelve years went by before the work was finished, as Fr. John Mary said, "with great expenditure on their part and not a little suffering." As time passed there were many criticisms and even jokes, as the building could not be finished on account of the bad harvests. (15) Besides these economic difficulties, misunderstandings began in 1765 between Dominic and Paul as to the tenor of life of the future religious. Considering the delicate health of the sisters, Dominic thought it necessary to allow the Passionist nuns to eat meat. He also favored the monastery having parlors as other convents had. Paul, on the contrary, wished them to adhere strictly to the rule already approved by the pope as regards fast and abstinence. He also opposed the parlor from his experience acquired from preaching in other monasteries, and held that parlors were "the ruin of monasteries." (16) The difficulty was temporarily solved thanks to the mediation of Mother Mary Crucified. (17) Yet the following year the controversy continued. Dominic insisted on the religious having meat three days a week, and moreover that they not be held to rising at midnight for prayers. Paul declared himself decidedly opposed to these proposals because they would destroy essential points in the Passionist style of life. (18) It appears that Paul's reasoning later convinced Dominic. At least this is what we infer from Paul's letter of May 24, 1768 to Mother Mary Crucified: "I thank the Lord that Dominic has consented to the observance not being violated." (19) Another difficulty arose, however, this time from the bishop. He demanded an absolute guarantee for a sufficient dowry and a stable income for the nuns' maintenance according to canon law before endorsing the decree of the monastery's erection. From what the Costantinis could offer at that time, an annual sum of 20 *scudi* per nun could be had, while the bishop demanded 50 per person. A worried Paul wrote: "If the bishop does not agree to accept for the nuns what Dominic is offering, which is

sufficient for a beginning, I do not know what will be done, because all depends on the bishop and if he does not have recourse to Rome, nothing can be done about it....I'll do what I can, but in Rome I can do nothing because of my ailments and because nothing can prosper in Rome without the notification and approval of the bishop." (20)

Mother Mary Crucified thought of going to Rome herself to beg directly from the pope the authority to open the monastery. On January 14, 1769, Paul wrote to the sister telling her how useless her journey would be: "The pope would never grant you the grace without first hearing the bishop to whom he would refer the whole affair. Hence it is better to wait with silent and resigned patience for what God will dispose from now on." (21)

The election of Pope Clement XIV, who in 1769 approved the Passionist Congregation as a moral person, gave rise to fresh hope that he might also approve the monastery and the Institute of the Passionist nuns. Paul's main concern then was to finish both the building and the text of the rule in order to conclude the foundation. The economic question once more became acute, on the one hand because of finishing and furnishing the convent, and on the other because of the dowry and fixed income prescribed by canon law.

At this time the duchess, Anna Maria Colonna Barberini, came on the scene. It was Fr. John Mary who spoke of her to Costantini, being certain that she wished to enter the new monastery and would be willing to endow it. The duchess was undoubtedly considering a religious vocation and with permission of her confessor had gone to seek counsel from Fr. Paul. She had Masses offered up in the Holy Crucifix hospice in November and December, 1768, and also in May, 1769, plus a novena of Masses for the feast of the Assumption in 1769. (22) In conversation with Paul she learned of the foundation of the new monastery in which the Passionist spirituality would be lived. She seemed inclined to retire to it, notwithstanding her initial attraction to Santa Restituta's Convent in Narni. Paul thought it prudent to trust in her good dispositions,

which certainly must have arisen from a spirit in sincere search of God, as the rest of her life was to show. The founder saw in this noble lady not only someone with a solid religious foundation, but a cultured person, experienced in world affairs, with good social connections, and thought she might be able to head the new foundation. In his letters he had words of praise for her and even called her foundress and custodian of the new community. (23) According to Fr. John Mary's testimony, she promised to contribute to the furnishing and to the endowment, and Paul proposed to go personally to Corneto to hasten the completion of the negotiations. On March 19, 1770, he had a private audience with Clement XIV, requesting his permission to absent himself from Rome in order to visit the Upper Lazio and Argentario retreats. Paul took this opportunity to speak to the pope for the first time about the monastery that was being founded and of the desire of starting the institute of Passionist nuns, and the pope manifested his interest and good will. At the end of March Paul was in Corneto with Fr. John Mary. (24) With the Costantini family he discussed the problems concerning the finishing of the building, the canonical fund for the maintenance, and other practical matters, such as the internal plan of the building, the rule and the interest of the duchess. On this occasion when the noble lady Barberini was introduced to Costantini she spoke of her commitment to contribute to the maintenance fund. (25) But the duchess never gave a cent for the building, and when the decisive moment arrived regarding the endowment she would make no commitment. She was not at peace. So she turned to the pope in search of greater light as well as moral support in overcoming her difficulties and the opposition of her family. Clement XIV replied in a long letter in the form of a brief on February 1, 1771. "You ask our advice as of a father and, should we deem it proper in the Lord, permission to embrace this new kind of life," he wrote. Encouraging her to follow that divine voice he added, "We take this opportunity to will that you, not only be...the first foundress and custodian of that monastery and Order, but also constitute you by Apostolic Authority the first superior of the same....We constitute you by these apostolic letters in form of a brief, which we forward to you, and we make

and declare you the first President of that monastery from the time you arrive there." (26)

Meanwhile the Costantinis finished the building and furnished it with the most essential items, even though incurring some debts, so as to have everything ready for the inauguration which had been fixed for the 7th of April. On April 4, 1771, the Costantinis, having declared their patrimony before an ecclesiastical notary, undertook the legal obligation to give the religious 300 *scudi* a year, taken from a fund of 12,000 *scudi*. (27) Since the episcopal see was vacant, Msgr. Lorenzo Paluzzi, the capitular vicar, having taken cognizance of the Costantini commitment, canonically erected on April 5th the monastery of the Presentation of our Blessed Lady in the Temple. On the following day he blessed the church and celebrated the first mass in the presence of a large number of people, including the postulants who had already gathered together in Corneto in the Costantini home. (28) One who had not arrived, however, was the superior of the new institute. She had retired to the Santa Restituta convent in Narni about a month before, saying that she would arrive at the appointed time. Uncertainties as to the wisdom of her choice of the new convent came over her again and she did not move, notwithstanding repeated invitations even from the bishop on Clement XIV's mandate. The inauguration had to be postponed. On April 9th, Fr. John Mary, representing the founder who was sick, returned to Rome and after consulting with Paul informed the pope of everything. The pope consented to the vestition of the postulants and the opening of the convent even without the presence of the already named superior. On April 16, 1771, a pontifical rescript granted the ordinary of Corneto permission to vest the postulants and open the convent without injury to the nomination of the duchess as superior. (29) On the morning of the 3rd of May Msgr. Paluzzi presented the Benedictine community with the pontifical authority for Mother Mary Crucified to leave in order to join the new foundation. With very deep emotion, after 38 years, she took leave of her sisters, including two blood-sisters, to follow the divine inspiration she felt inwardly. In the cathedral she met the ten postulants, and together they received the habit of the

Passion before the Mass began. (30) After the Mass was solemnly sung, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed and all started in procession towards the new building. On arriving, Msgr. Paluzzi imparted the Eucharistic blessing, and reserved the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle as a sign of the new community's entry. He then gave possession of the monastery to the eleven nuns represented by Mother Mary Crucified, "giving a brief exhortation, reminding them of their obligations, confirming them in their determination and recommending to their prayers their benefactors and the entire city." (31)

Thus began the first community of Passionist nuns, 37 years after the founder first mentioned it in his letters. Paul, himself nailed to his bed of pain in Rome, was deprived of the joy of being present, but by his sacrifice and prayers he collaborated in the happy beginning of the new community. (32)

Anna Maria Barberini entered the Corneto convent on the afternoon of May 8, 1771, and left it definitively on June 6th. (33) Her departure posed two problems, the election of a superior and the economic problem. The monastery had been opened counting on her subsidy for completing the furnishing and the necessary endowment. A request made by Paul together with the religious obtained from the pope a yearly subsidy of 300 *scudi* until the community could provide other sufficient means. (34) On May 20, 1772, the religious made their profession in the hands of the new bishop, Francis Mary Banditi, and on the following morning the first elective chapter was held in the bishop's presence. Mother Mary Crucified was elected president, Mother Angela Teresa Palozzi as vicar and first counsellor, Mother Mary Clementine Girelli as second counsellor and novice mistress. During the year of novitiate Mother Mary Crucified had guided the community as mistress of novices and interim superior. (35)

The juridic and economic difficulties of the foundation were overcome thanks to Clement XIV's benevolence towards Paul of the Cross and his Congregation. He extended this benevolence to the nuns to whom he addressed two very encouraging letters, while indicating the needs

of the universal Church and the pope as objects of their prayers: "When in this manner you are crucified to the world and the world to you, with pure hearts and in simplicity and humility living solely for Christ your spouse and in all things entirely conformed to the rules of your Institute, then your monastery will not cease to spread the pleasing fragrance of virtue and sweetness....We beg you always pray to God, the Father of mercies, for us and for the Church." (36)

Though the community had to put up with many discomforts from economic causes, yet it lived in great fervor of spirit and in authentic sisterly communion. On account of his ailments, Paul could not visit the community but nevertheless gave it close attention, receiving information from Mother Mary Crucified and writing various letters to help her build up a community worthy of its calling to stand with Mary at the foot of the cross. (37)

The Costantini family continued to assist the community despite the economic difficulties into which they had fallen. Canon Nicholas took on the "duty of agent" for their affairs. The Passionist religious also helped, and "took care of the expenses they had in Rome so that they could save some money. They willingly requested for them, worked the vegetable garden for them during the first years, and did many other similar things that were of no small help." (38) The fame of the community soon spread, so much so, that by 1775 their number had risen to twenty. (39)

C. THE RULE

1. When was it written?

The time of the drafting of the Passionist nuns' rule can be only approximately established. Before 1766 we find no reference to it in documents. On May 17, 1766, Paul told Canon Costantini in a letter that he was ready to write the rule. This gives us ground to suppose that the difficulties raised by Dominic Costantini had been

overcome. (40) It would seem from the same letter that Paul had already made an outline of the chapters and was considering working on them with two other religious in the hope of having them ready for the feast of the Assumption. He expressed the hope that the outcome of the work would be "conformable to God's will, suitable to the Institute and agreeable to the virgins who would embrace it." (41) In May, 1767, he promised to work during the summer "to put in good order the constitutions for our nuns, but," he added, "I need much light and health." (42) It was not possible, then, to finish the work in 1766 and send it, as he hoped, to Canon Costantini and to the bishop of Corneto for revision. The delay may have been due in part to Paul's pessimism as to Clement XIII's approval. As a matter of fact, had the building been finished, Paul was inclined to have the monastery opened with a rule approved only by the bishop. (43)

Clement XIV's benevolence raised Paul's spirit and he settled down to out the finishing touches to the text, fully certain of obtaining approval. On March 16, 1770, he wrote to the brother of the two Sagnéri postulants: "It is necessary that I deal earnestly with the Holy Father concerning the foundation to obtain an ample brief and the approbation of the rule and constitutions to be observed by the nuns of the Holy Passion. I have a lively trust in God of obtaining everything because the pope has a great consideration for me and for the Congregation, and treats me with the utmost charity and amiability." (44) Paul's most intimate collaborator, Fr. John Mary Cioni, wrote to Costantini on February 21, 1770: "Certainly the winds are now more favorable and it is prudent to navigate." (45) Encouraged by the hope of a happy outcome, though weak from the illness suffered on his return from the Upper Lazio retreats, Paul set himself to review and complete his work. (46)

Was the text of the rule shown to the Costantini brothers before its final draft? Paul's letter of May 17, 1766, indicated his desire of sending Dominic a copy. However this did not mean that he should amend it, because, as he mentioned, he was also sending the bishop a copy. It could have been a definitive text. Even if the

text was not examined by Costantini, it is still certain that during Paul's visit to Corneto in March 1770 the controversial points concerning the austerities to be practiced were discussed. Fr. John Mary indeed assured Canon Costantini: "As you suggested, we have put in the rule that from Easter they eat meat and may sleep without the habit, together with other appropriate mitigations, so that at present it (the rule) is very moderate. Likewise ladies may be received within the enclosure when they wish to come for retreats...." (47) To understand the mitigations concerning the austerities, it is well to remember that the founder from 1769 on had the testimony of his own religious resident not far out from the city of Corneto, so he knew that during the summer months the nuns experienced many health problems on account of the malaria from the marshy plane below. In fact, he advised them not to rise for matins from the 1st of June to the 1st of October because the air "was not totally clean." The better to resist attacks of malarial fever, he permitted them to eat meat from Easter to September 14th. (48)

2. Papal approbation of the rule

On July 1st Paul obtained a "secret audience" with the pope and presented directly to him the rules and constitutions "so that he might have them examined in all secrecy," as Fr. John Mary informed Canon Costantini. On July 21st the examiner, the conventual friar Francis Angelo Pastrovich, consultor to the Holy Office, still had them in his possession. On July 26th Clement XIV received Paul in private audience and handed him the text of the rule together with the observations of the examiner. These were ten in all. (49) Paul and his counsellors were well disposed to accept all the observations even in their smallest details, as, for example, not changing the numbering of the chapters, thus making the first chapter serve as an introduction and placing as a first chapter some few new paragraphs presented by the examiner concerning the value and the obligation of the simple vows. However, he did not accept the observations concerning the teaching of Christian doctrine every Thursday and

feast day during Lent. This was a sign that he held this teaching not only compatible with the enclosure and contemplation, but also a useful means of promoting the memory of the Passion of Jesus and teaching meditation.

The new copy of the rule was sent to the pope through his confessor, Fr. Master Sangiorgio. For a further examination Clement XIV entrusted it to the secretary of the congregation for the Council, Bishop Francis Xavier De Zelada, who fulfilled the task with extreme care, so much so that on August 24th he was at the Holy Crucifix hospice to present to Paul who was ill "some little things he noted" in the revision. The Bishop discussed these with Paul and Fr. John Mary. We do not know if Frs. Candido and Marcoaurelius, who had helped in the definitive draft of the rule, were present. On this occasion also Paul accepted with great humility the additions and explanations suggested by the reviewer. Where he stood firm was in insisting that the general of the Passionists, with all due respect to the ordinary of the place, could send capable Passionist religious three times a year so that the nuns should have "right direction according to their institute." Besides, he held that the possibility of admitting ladies within the enclosure for sharing the contemplative experience of the nuns should be retained, though he accepted, according to the desire of the reviewer, the proviso that the written permission of the ordinary be obtained. Paul had omitted this detail, thinking perhaps that the pope's approval would give the force of a particular law to the manner in which the enclosure should be observed in the Passionist monastery. (50) It would seem that discussion of the observations was held on the same day, August 24th, but their insertion in the text did not take place before the reviewer informed the pope during the audience on August 27th. (51)

On September 3, 1770, Pope Clement XIV by "rescript," valid as a "brief," approved the rules and constitutions pending a more solemn juridical approval later, when some prescriptions could be better verified by experience. (52) Bishop De Zelada himself on the 4th of September brought Paul the text of the rule with the papal

approval. (53) The joy of Paul and his close collaborators was immense. The dream came true and even though everything was not finished, the papal approval was for them a seal of the divine will.

3. Inspirational sources of the rule

Undoubtedly the primary source of the Passionist nuns' rule was the Passionist rule the Church had already approved, which stood for Paul as the sure expression of the spirituality proper to the Passionist vocation. In fact, when he discussed the lifestyle of the nuns with Dominic Costantini, he stressed the importance of fidelity to the Passionist rule. (54) Because of this, all that is contained in the rule concerning the specific life and the characteristic spirituality of their vocation, as likewise the manner of living the vows as an expression of the remembrance and promoting the memory of the Passion of Jesus, derives from the Passionist rule.

This dependence is noted particularly in the following chapters:

1. Introduction.
2. On the rite of vestition.
3. On the novices that can be admitted to profession.
4. The manner and rite of professing the simple vows.
5. On the manner of fulfilling the vows, and first on obedience.
6. On holy poverty.
7. How the religious must behave towards the mother president.
8. On the mistress of novices.
9. On the retreats of the monastery.
10. On the exercises of the lay sisters.
11. On the fast. (partly dependent, partly modified)
12. On recreation.
13. On the distribution of offices to be made before night repose.
14. On silence.
15. On prayer.
16. On the Friday chapter. (partly dependent)

17. On the divine office. (partly dependent).
18. On the discipline.
19. On the sick religious.
20. On the death and burial of the sisters, and on the suffrages.

Other sources of inspiration, though never named, are the *Constitutions of the Religious Sisters of the Visitation of Mary* of St. Francis de Sales. It may be said that the internal and organizational structure of the monastery depends on these constitutions, not alone as ideas but even in the wording, although generally Paul and his associates tended to synthesize the somewhat verbose text of the Visitation nuns. Paul admired St. Francis de Sales and knew and esteemed the Visitation monastery in Rome, to which he had sent some girls. This dependence can be seen in the following chapters or sections:

1. On the vow of obedience, in some paragraphs.
2. In one paragraph on the vow of chastity, while the section "on exterior modesty" is taken entirely.
3. On the vow of enclosure, almost totally.
4. On the election of the superior.
5. On the duties of the president.
6. On the vicar.
7. On the president's counsellors.
8. On the ordinary confessor.
9. On the extraordinary confessor, except the paragraph that concerns the presence of the Passionists.
10. On the bursar.
11. On the porter.
12. On the sacristan.
13. On Holy Communion.
14. On the renewal of the vows.
15. On the Friday chapter, in some paragraphs.
16. On the Divine office (four paragraphs).
17. On the conferences.
18. On the penances to be imposed.
19. On the various works.
20. Declaration on how the rules and constitutions oblige.

In the majority of these chapters there is not only an identity of thought, but of words, expressions and

entire phrases. It is rather curious to note that some of the observations made by the reviewer, Fr. Pastrovich, concern the Visitation text adopted by Paul. As an example, for the election of the superior Fr. Pastrovich suggested deleting the words "without being able to refuse or excuse herself, etc." These words coincide with the Visitation text, "the one who has more votes shall be the superior without being able to refuse or excuse herself nor say any humble words, but kneeling shall make the profession of faith." As to the frequency of Holy Communion Paul, had fully accepted the opinion of St. Francis de Sales that all the religious may receive communion on the days prescribed, but some chosen by the confessor may do so more frequently in order to correspond better to the desire of the Council of Trent, which urged all those present at the celebration to receive communion. Although praising the intention, Pastrovich suggested removing this particularity as liable to cause envy or partiality. In explaining the rules of enclosure Paul had literally copied the Visitation text, where children were not specified, but Pastrovich suggested they be named as in the present text. Also, the first paragraph of the chapter on the obligation of the rules, taken literally from St. Francis de Sales, did not include the reviewer's addition: they do not oblige under sin "except the essential vows mentioned in the first chapter..."

The extensive and even literal dependence on the Visitation rule and constitutions in no way diminishes the value of the rule Paul gave the Passionist nuns. It leads us to understand how prudently and wisely he incorporated whatever he found effective for the better organization of their monastery, without in any way diminishing the expression of the Passionist contemplative vocation and spirituality.

D. THE JURIDIC STATUS OF THE PASSIONIST NUNS

The female branch of the Passionists, like that of its brothers, did not have solemn vows. To be considered nuns in the canonical legislation of the time it was an

essential condition, which embraced religious women living in community as contemplatives and protected by papal enclosure. But the Passionists were not nuns in the strict canonical sense and consequently did not enjoy the rights and duties of papal enclosure. Paul, however, requested the pope to approve the foundation of a monastery of religious solely dedicated to the contemplation of Christ Crucified, segregated from worldly distractions and protected by enclosure as described by the Council of Trent. The religious would be obliged to the enclosure proper to contemplative religious, but only in force of the rule and constitutions approved by the Holy See, which for them had the same value as ecclesiastical laws. He also wished that this enclosure be observed in the sense of a particular vow. (55) For the Passionist religious the vow served to reinforce the moral obligation of observing the enclosure required by the rule approved by the Holy See. That there should be no grates nor parlors was a safeguard Paul desired, for he was deeply affected by his experience in pastoral work in monasteries of nuns. He had seen too many abuses, such as people going to speak with the nuns merely as entertainment or a pastime, so he was decidedly in favor of a radical remedy: "For greater interiority and recollection, the Passionist nuns, who should be dead to the world and buried with Christ, shall have no grates nor parlors." (56)

The papal approval placed them in the category of an institute of pontifical right but juridically independent of the Passionist Congregation. By the norms of canon law they depended juridically on the ordinary of the place. But Paul of the Cross desired a very intimate spiritual union with the Passionist nuns and a permanent influence in the formation of their proper spirituality. This was to be assured by persons appointed by the superior general of the Congregation who would reside at the monastery for one month three times a year. It seems that Paul did not share Bishop De Zelada's opinion: "as their Institute is to promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus, regarding which all priests must be well informed, I do not see the need for sending these clerics of the Passion as extraordinary confessors." (57) To be well informed as regards the mystery of the Passion of Jesus is

not sufficient. An experimental knowledge of the demands of the proper vocation is necessary, and of its various manifestations in personal and community life. Therefore Paul, though inserting the phrase suggested by the reviewer concerning the rights of the ordinary "to appoint at will and whenever he deems it convenient another extraordinary secular or regular confessor," wished to retain the authority of the Passionist superior general, with the consent of the ordinary, to send a Passionist religious three times a year. (58)

Each monastery is autonomous, without any bond with others of the same Institute. It is questionable whether the duchess Barberini, had she actually been the first superior, would have been able to establish a greater juridical link between various monasteries in virtue of the brief of February 9, 1771. The pontifical document reads: "Trusting furthermore in your piety and prudence, we grant that you may accept and aggregate to your order the foundation of new monasteries, for which your acceptance is requested." (59) Did the words "accept" and "aggregate" mean that the superior of the first monastery would have a certain authority over the new ones?

E. SOME WAYS OF PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE MEMORY OF THE PASSION OF JESUS

In addition to the assiduous contemplation of Jesus Crucified, the religious must bring to mind and promote in others this memory of the love of Jesus as manifested in his Passion. Paul indicated various possible ways of fulfilling this duty expressed in the particular vow that characterizes the institute:

- Personal meditation on the Passion of Jesus, "most helpful for perfection in all three ways of the spiritual life, the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive." (Rule, ch. 10, n. 2)

- By teaching meditation on the Passion of Jesus "when speaking or writing to their relatives or other persons outside through necessity or charity." (Rule, ch. 10, n. 1)

- By teaching the children who come for Christian doctrine to meditate on the Passion. (60)

- By receiving within the cloister ladies desirous of sharing a contemplative experience at the feet of the Crucified. (Rule, ch. 23, n. 4)

- By praying to God "to grant great fervor and spirit to the promoters of this devotion." (Rule, ch. 10, n. 2)

These ways of maintaining and promoting devotion to the Passion reflect the instructions given the Passionists who were not engaged in preaching. At the same time, if the teaching of Christian doctrine in preparation for Easter or first Communion evokes the needs of a particular pastoral situation, it also goes to show the great importance that the religious formation of young girls had for Paul. He was convinced that meditation on the Passion would help them to live an authentically Christian life and to be open to a call to the religious life if so it pleased God. The reception of ladies interested in the spiritual life for days of retreat in some periods of the year, but with a limited contact with the religious so as not to distract them from contemplation, assured an encounter with the reality of the Passionist religious life of persons capable of understanding and eventually being oriented towards that life. However, it was clear that for Paul the proper and principal manner of keeping and promoting the memory of the Passion of Jesus was as follows: "In the first place, they are to strive for perfection in God's love by living in his divine presence and by preserving indelibly written in their hearts the most holy life, Passion and Death of the loving Jesus who was sacrificed on Calvary for the world's redemption. In the second place, they endeavor to be of one heart and one soul among themselves through the sacred bond of sisterly charity and to pray fervently to His Divine Majesty for their neighbors." (61)

F. SOME ASPECTS OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE PASSIONIST NUNS

Saint Paul of the Cross expressed his idea of a Passionist nun in a letter to Mother Mary Crucified on February 16, 1765: "We wish to form a community of truly holy souls, totally detached from all created things, who will resemble the suffering Jesus and his sorrowing Mother in penance, mortification and the holy virtues." (62) He was certain that in describing this ideal he was not asking for the impossible. He presented as examples the St. Fiora Capuchins to whom he had preached, having received an excellent impression of their virtue and austerity: "the nuns of St. Fiora...fast every day and in the evening only have two apples, one raw and one cooked, with a small piece of bread, etc. They sleep on straw, rise at midnight, their feet bare in sandals, etc. and among them are refined ladies." (63) This meant that the Passionist nuns, called to stand on Calvary with the Blessed Virgin, ought to excel by their outstanding commitment to penance, to share more fully in the Passion of Jesus for the salvation of all, atoning and interceding for sinners. Thus would they succeed in being "saints and of excellent fragrance to the Crucified, and for the glory of the Crucified, to all the world and to the city of Corneto." (64)

The community manifests its remembrance of Christ's passion above all by being composed of members who are at one with each other, living in deep union of mind and heart. "To be of one heart and one soul among themselves through the sacred bond of sisterly charity" was a frequently recurring phrase both in the rule and in the few letters which still remain of the founder and of Fr. John Mary, his close collaborator in this foundation. Writing to the first professed group, Paul exhorted them: "Above everything else let holy charity shine among you, mutually loving, compassionating and helping one another. In a word, let the true spirit of the Crucified shine in all things, so that you may be shining lights to a sadly negligent world." (65) Again the following year he emphasized this unity as the best manifestation of being a community centred on the Crucified: "I desire only that

you advance in the observance of the rule and perfection of charity, and that you live wholly in the peace and union of charity, so that as true spouses of Jesus Crucified you be the good odour of Christ to all." (66)

"To mourn" for Christ Crucified is an expression Paul discerned from the earliest days of his Passionist vocation, and he repeated it frequently: "The daughters of the Passion must be in perpetual mourning for love of their Crucified Lord, not alone by their habit, but more so in mind, heart and works. They must heal his most holy wounds by the continuous exercise of the virtues, this being the purpose of their institute's establishment." (67) "To mourn" or "to be in mourning" meant for Paul a commemorating of the life springing from the death-resurrection of Christ, through whom he proposes to the religious that they "be born anew to a God-like life in the Divine Word made man" in such a way that each may say in all truth: "I live, not I, but Christ lives in me." (68) By the image of "healing" the wounds of the Crucified, the founder expresses Burlini's vision. The doves anointed the Saviour's wounds, signifying the atonement they offered for the sins of all and the intercession they made for the universal Church. These were two aspects the founder assiduously inculcated because of his keen awareness of the ecclesiastical situation both from his long apostolic ministry and his closeness to Clement XIV. He also summarized it in the regulations: "Let all have very much at heart the conversion of sinners, heretics, infidels, the sanctification of their neighbors, the freeing of the souls in Purgatory, the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, the Sovereign Pontiff, other superiors and evangelical labourers. To this end let them offer to the Eternal Father the Passion and infinite merits of Christ Jesus, this being proper to the daughters of the Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ." (69)

In his letters he frequently returned to this duty of intercession and atonement for the universal Church: "above all, have them pray for the pope and the Holy Church," he wrote on July 11, 1772. On April 16, 1773 he asked that they continue to pray not only for him "but for all the Congregation, for His Holiness, and for the

grave needs of the Church." On September 6, 1771, the pope, through Fr. John Mary, reminded the religious of this duty of their vocation: the pope "desires nothing else but that you pray incessantly, night and day, for His Holiness and for the entire Church." (70)

Growth in charity and the duty of atonement-intercession for the Church were sustained by an intense though not excessively penitential life, and particularly by a practical detachment from things and persons that Paul expressed in the phrase, "dead to all created things" and "dead to the world and buried with Christ." (71) Manifestation of this detachment was to have neither grates nor parlors and little contact with outsiders. It also entailed the poverty of one's room, reduced to a minimum of furniture: a straw bed, a small table, one or two chairs, a book and a crucifix with a few paper images, in addition to the crown of thorns used at vestition and profession. Poverty was to be the clear manifestation that the religious dwelt on Calvary, lovingly contemplating Christ "the Incarnate Word, their Lord and Spouse. He chose to be born in poverty, to live in poverty, and to die in total poverty in such a way that He died naked on the most painful tree of the Cross, out of love for us and as an example for us." (72)

While this poverty loyally lived by the religious expressed their total surrender to the love of Jesus, whose poverty became cruel Passion at the end of his life, it also proclaimed their trust that to the beatitude of poverty on earth would correspond "the utmost beatitude in Heaven."

FOOTNOTES

1. Let. I, 116.
2. Let. I, 145.
3. Let. I, 440.
4. Cf. various allusions to it in Positio super introductione causae...Maria Crucifixae a Iesu. Roma 1964, pp. 83-91. also Let. 1, 594, 595.
5. B. Bordo, Lucia Burlini. Storia di una direzione spirituale (Nettuno, 1967), p. 94.
6. Paul and his contemporaries referred to the Canticle of Canticles 5: 2; 6: 9; Isaiah 38: 14.
7. "Founding a Retreat as a nest for the beloved doves of the Crucified," Let. I, 511, 817; II, 785; III, 377.
8. Let. I, 818, of September 21, 1773.
9. Let. I, 511.
10. Let. III, 377.
11. Let. I, 725.
12. Let. II, 781; we do not know whether this entreaty was ever sent.
13. Let. II, 782-783.
14. Let. II, 782, 784-785. In the light of these affirmations the words of Fr. John Mary, who asserts that Paul did not want his name connected with initiating the construction, seem a bit strange, in Bollettino 1928, p. 20.
15. Cf. Bollettino 1928, p. 20; Let. III, 373, 383, 385, 393, 395.
16. Let. II, 304 of February 16, 1765.
17. Let. II, 305-306.
18. Let. II, 307-308.
19. Let. II, 315.
20. Let. II, 315.
21. Let. II, 318.
22. AG. Registro celebrazione Messe 1766-1769, f. 77, 78, 98, 109.
23. Let. III, 830; IV, 100. Cf. Theiner, Storia di Clement XIV, vol. II, pp. 360-365; vol. IV, pp. 155-158.
24. Let. IV, 135-136.
25. From the letters of Fr. John Mary to Fr. Nicholas Costantini it is evident that in the meeting in Corneto they spoke of this help of the duchess. Lettere Giammaria in Monastery Arch., Corneto.

26. The original Latin text in Vat. Arch., Epistulae ad Principes, Clementis Papae XIV, vol. 166, f. 413-415; the Italian rough copy is in vol. 171, f. 305-309.
27. Cf. Positio...M. Crucifixae, p. 107.
28. The document of foundation in Positio... M. Crucifixae, p. 107.
29. Documents in Positio...M. Crucifixae, p. 108-111; Let. V, 240.
30. At Vestition they also assumed religious names in order to give greater emphasis to the new state of life they were beginning: Document in Positio...M. Crucifixae, p. 116-118.
31. Document in Positio...M. Crucifixiae, p. 116-121; 134.
32. Let. II, 309.
33. Cf. Positio...M. Crucifixae, p. 146-148. Cf. also Arch. Vat., Ep. ad Principes, Clem. XIV, vol. 166, f. 413-415; vol. 171, f. 402rv.
34. Documents in Positio... M. Crucifixae, p. 124-127.
35. Ibid. p. 151, 165, 202. Three days later, Most Rev. Francis Banditi, Bishop of Montefiascone and Corneto, wrote a very tender letter to Paul: (in AG., B. IV-II, 1-2)
36. Positio...M. Crucifixae, p. 167-173; ibid. on p. 251-252 there is an interesting description of the tenor of life of the first community.
37. Let. II, 327.
38. Positio... M. Crucifixae, p. 253.
39. Ibid. p. 254.
40. Let. II, 308.
41. Let. II, 792-793.
42. Let. IV, 6.
43. Let. II, 793.
44. Let. IV, 41.
45. Monastery Arch. Tarquinia, Lettere Giammaria.
46. Let. III, 270. Cf. also Monastery Arch. Tarquinia, Lettere Giammaria, July 21 '70.
47. Mon. Arch. Tarquinia, Lettere Giammaria, July 21, '70.
48. Cf. Regole e Costituzione chap. 24, n. 12; ch. 26, n. 4.
49. Cf. document in L. Ravasi. Le monache passioniste e loro regole, p. 180-182. Cf. also Mon. Arch. Tarquinia, Lettere Giammaria, July 21 '70.
50. See the text of the observations in Ravasi, op. cit. p. 182-184.
51. Mon. Arch. Tarquinia, Lettere Giammaria, August 28, '70. Cf. also Positio...M. Crucifixiae, p. 98-99.

52. Positio...M. Crucifixae, p. 99; Let. V, 239: the request of Paul to the Pope for approbation and the text of the rescript.

53. Positio...M. Crucifixae, p. 99; Mon. Arch. Tarquinia, Lettere Giammaria, September, 1770.

54. Cf. Let. II, 304, 307-308.

55. Many other Institutes of nuns had the vow of perpetual enclosure, cf. G.J. Gerhartz, Insuper, p. 170-189. Cf. for the juridic conditions of Passionist nuns W. De Brabandere, C.P. "De religiosarum passionistarum iuridica condicione," in Commentarium pro Religiosis 1958, p. 304-316, 374-382; 1959, p. 330-344.

56. Regole e cost., chap. 11, n. 6.

57. Ravasi, op. cit. p. 183.

58. Regole e costituzione, chap. 18, n. 1.

59. Vatican Arch., Ep. ad Principes, Clem. XIV, vol. 171, f. 307rv the original Italian text is there; the Latin text is also in Theiner, Storia di Clem. XIV, vol. IV, p. 173.

60. Regole e cost., chap. 10, n. 1. Chap. 23, n. 3.

61. Regole e cost., introduction.

62. Let. II, 304.

63. Ibid.

64. Let. II, 327.

65. Let. II, 323.

66. Let. II, 326.

67. Let. II, 327.

68. Let. II, 322, 329, 331.

69. Regolamenti, chap. II, n. 14.

70. Let. II, 325, 326. Mon. Arch. Tarquinia, Lettere Giammaria. Positio...M. Crucifixae, p. 172, and Let. V, 240.

71. Let. II, 304; Regole e cost., chap. II, n. 6.

72. Regole e cost., chap. 8, 2, n. 6.

CONCLUSION

We cannot close this first period of the Congregation's history without recalling, though summarily, the contribution given the founder by those religious who joined him to keep alive the memory of the Crucified Love and to carry out Paul's heavenly inspiration. They recognized him as founder, who possessed in an eminent degree the spirit of the Institute and particular gifts of discernment to initiate and govern the Congregation. Such was their trust and esteem for him that they elected him continuously and unanimously as superior general, notwithstanding Paul's sincere and repeated efforts to be relieved. This likewise goes to show the deep esteem Paul had for his religious, and particularly for some to whom he would have had no qualms in entrusting the guidance of the Congregation, for he was certain that they would do so successfully and in conformity to God's will. There certainly existed a deep and sincere understanding between Paul and all his religious, particularly those who held offices of responsibility. There were difficulties due to human limitations, as we have seen in speaking of the community and the development of the Congregation, yet in this period internal divisions were unknown.

Witnesses in the processes of canonization more than once recall that Paul, "speaking of the rules and of other measures he was taking for the welfare of the Congregation, confided that he acted always with the advice of his more experienced men." At other times when some outside friend asked why some things were done that did not seem to agree with his ideas, he would answer: "Because Struzzieri and others think so, and I conform to them." (1) Such expressions reveal that Paul allowed his collaborators ample freedom and opportunity to contribute by their gifts of mind and heart to the development of the Congregation.

The absolute majority of the religious in this period lived exemplary and often heroic lives and were most valuable collaborators for Paul. Through them, the Con-

gregation became not only a numerical reality, but also an evangelical presence as a gift of God to the local churches, making the Passionist charism highly appreciated for its contribution to the spiritual and social welfare of the people.

However, there were some religious, nearly all from the early days, who gave a special and decisive support to the Congregation's organization and to overcoming the serious difficulties it encountered. Without wishing to wrong other most meritorious men, I think the most noteworthy are the following:

John Baptist Danei (1695-1765) was united to Paul in his vocation from 1721 till his death. He was a support to his brother as spiritual director. He collaborated actively in the making of the Congregation by his apostolate, by his brotherly and outspoken counsel, and also as first rector of the second retreat and community begun in St. Angelo at Vetralla in 1744. He was later consultor general until his death in 1765. As such he was certainly present in preparing the texts of the rule to be presented for papal approval, as also when it came to deciding on the application of the norms of the 1746 rule concerning the mitigation of fast, especially for students. Different from Paul's, his character was less outgoing, but none the less peaceful and benevolent in dealing with others. The religious of his time frequently spoke of him as "co-founder," even though, like his patron-prophet, he made way for his brother that he might grow according to God's designs. The Church recognized the heroism of his virtues on August 7, 1940. (2)

Fulgentius Pastorelli (1710-1755) was already a priest when he joined Paul in 1735. An affable and peaceful character, he resembled the founder in many aspects, particularly in his capacity for infusing confidence in the religious and in persons who had recourse to him. He was the first novice master and served in that capacity from 1741 until his death, except for a brief period of illness when Fr. Marcoarelius replaced him. He was

also the first rector of the Presentation, on Paul's leaving the office to assume the generalship. He was also elected consultor general but declined that office because of the distance between Monte Argentario and St. Angelo at Vetralla, which made him unable to give the necessary help. From the founder's letters one can infer the mutual esteem and trust they had and the burden Fr. Fulgentius bore in spite of his constantly failing health. He was left in very bad condition after being attacked by an infuriated horse that trampled him, hurting his chest and kidneys. He lived his crucifixion in serene surrender to Christ Crucified, never complaining of the burden which the service of the community and novices demanded of him. His influence in forming the religious was great. He infused in the young men love for their vocation, esteem for the rule and zeal in promoting the memory of the Passion of Jesus. (3)

Marcoarelius Pastorelli (1693-1774), as a member of the Congregation of Christian Doctrine, laudably served as professor of theology, master of novices and rector of that Congregation's houses in Rome and Civitavecchia. It was in Civitavecchia that he became acquainted with Paul. On June 1, 1743, he began his Passionist novitiate on Monte Argentario. Professed on March 1, 1744, he was chosen rector of the third foundation, St. Eutizio, that same month. He was named novice master in June, 1746, in order to allow Fr. Fulgentius to take care of his health, and in the autumn of 1747 he was called upon to organize the first formal house of study at St. Angelo as director and professor. He performed this function for twelve years, and is remembered for giving the normative and practical organization of studies a clear thomistic trend. Also in the novitiate he left the mark of his organizational capacity, instituting norms that constituted the novices' regulations and other exercises mentioned elsewhere. During this period he also fulfilled the office of consultor general. From 1758 to 1766, he was provincial for the houses south of Rome, making a valid contribution to the progress of the spiritual and apostolic life of his subjects. He was later attached to the provincial as counselor until 1769 when he was elected consultor

general. Fr. Marcoarelius was of a cheerful disposition, though reserved and austere. He was helpful to the founder in the revision of the rules, particularly in what concerned the formation of the young men and in the definitive draft of the Passionist nuns' rule. (4)

Thomas Struzzi (1706-1780) acquired a very extensive theological, oratorical and juridic formation in Rome's Nazarene College. After ordination, he preached popular missions with great profit for souls. Having made the acquaintance of the founder in Rome, he began his Passionist novitiate on February 2, 1745. As a renowned missionary he was of the greatest help to the Congregation, gaining credit from bishops, clergy and people for the nascent Congregation, and an esteem which was evidenced by requests for new foundations. The retreats south of Rome owe their existence to his apostolic endeavors, and he had an outstanding share in the huge sacrifices that had to be faced. He was of invaluable assistance to Paul in the difficult stages of the mendicant controversy from 1748 to 1750. The same may be said regarding his help to Paul in dealing with Rome concerning the mission to non-Christians and solemn vows. Fr. Thomas was rector of various communities. In 1753 he was elected first provincial and in 1758 first procurator general, though for many years he had fulfilled this office without the title. Finally in 1764, he became the first Passionist bishop. He loved the Congregation and possessed its spirit, which guided him in all actions and in his penitential life, as the founder's letters to him testify. The consonance of aims with the founder was evident in all his actions, and his presence at the dying Paul's bedside was most significant as was the request he made that Paul be mindful of the poor Congregation when in Heaven. (5)

John Mary Cioni (1727-1796) entered the Congregation in 1746, and was formed in the school of Frs. Fulgentius and Marcoarelius. He was always alert to every possibility of approaching the founder to learn his spirit and be guided by him. The letters Paul addressed to him re-

veal both the founder's esteem for him and the gifts which God gave the young man. Although still only a deacon, the founder took him along on the mission in Camerino in 1750. In 1752 Paul entrusted to him the duties of spiritual director to the new community of Terracina and later named him rector. On the death of Fr. Fulgentius in 1755 he was named novice master, an office he held until 1759. He was consultor general from 1761 to 1775 when he was elected provincial, to be returned in 1778 to the former office of consultor general. With his open, serene and affable character, and filled with the spirit of the founder, he was a great help to Paul in all these offices. He often substituted as visitator when Paul was impeded by illness. With the founder he reviewed the texts of the 1769 and 1775 rules. He took an outstanding part in concluding the foundation of the first community of Passionist nuns. In the many internal problems and difficulties of the Congregation, possibly none was closer to Paul than John Mary, while Struzziere was near Paul for the serious problems before the Holy See or with other entities or persons outside the Congregation. John Mary made a notable contribution to the welfare of the Congregation by his assiduous work in recording the events he witnessed both as regards the Institute in general and individual persons in particular. Thanks to his solicitude, we have a wealth of information regarding this period. This historic work was his way of keeping the founder and his first companions, with their ideal and life-commitment, ever present to the future members of the Congregation, so that they too might continue to make that ideal shine before God and his Church. (6)

I trust that, as we end of this volume, the reader has an adequate idea of the foundation of the Congregation as a salvific act of God's presence accompanying his Church and people on their pilgrim way. Young Paul Dagnei thought of leading a Christian life in his own environment when he heard interiorly the powerful voice of God calling him to abandon that safety and start on the way of founding a new community which would be dedicated to keeping alive among people the memory of the Crucified Love. The way seemed rash. The Congregation became a reality thanks to the readiness of Paul, his

brother and first companions, a readiness full of faith and charity. Over and above all human expectations, they believed in God and were valid witnesses of his merciful presence in the life of each person. At the time of the founder's death, the Congregation was a moral person, recognized and esteemed by the Church that had welcomed it and entrusted a specific field of labor to it.

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3. Giammaria, Vita del servo di Dio P. Fulgenzio di Gesu secondo compagno del nostro P. Fondatore, ms. in AG. Silvestrelli, Memorie dei primi compagni, pp. 65-94.

4. Giammaria, Compendio della vita del servo di Dio il P. Marcoaurelio del SS. Sacramento, ms. in AG. Silvestrelli, op. cit., p. 95-121.

5. Giammaria, Vita del servo di Dio Mons. D. Tommaso Maria Struzzieri, ms. in AG. L. Ravasi, Il servo di Dio Mons. Tommaso Struzzieri (Milano, 1965).

6. Silvestrelli, Cenni biografici di alcuni religiosi passionisti... primo periodo di cinquantanni (Roma, 1886), p. 53-63. Cf. Giovanni M. di S. Ignazio martire, Annali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C. con annotazione del P. Gaetano dell'Addolorata, C.P. (Roma, 1867), p. 3-13.

Printed in the month of December, 1987

Litotipografia Eco Editrice - St. Gabriel at Isola del Gran Sasso - Italy