

Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality - 35

Alessandro Ciciliani CP – Pablo Gonzalo CP
Andrés San Martín CP – Robert Carbonneau CP

PASSIONIST FORMATION IN HISTORY



Passionist General Curia
Piazza SS. Giovanni e Paolo, 13
Rome 2018

Printed with permission
Fr. Joachim Rego, CP
Superior General
May 16, 2018

PRESENTATION

After about a year and a half since the conclusion of the Conference on Formation that took place in Rome at the Generalate of the Passionists in October 2016, the Historical Commission wanted to offer our English-speaking religious, the presentations that were made by its members on that occasion.

Since the response of the participants of the course was very positive, the four presentations were reviewed, corrected and standardized in this single volume that enriches the series of Research in Passionist History and Spirituality in English.

Despite the fact that this is only a part of the Conference on Formation, I thought that it would be appropriate that the historical component was shared as the basis for an understanding of our tradition that every religious should possess.

With best wishes, I hope that this publication will serve our religious who want to improve the quality of the formation that is occurring in the Congregation. May the identity of the young Passionist religious grow in stages and be structured through a profound knowledge of the charism that is assimilated and expressed by a specific lifestyle.

I conclude by recalling that the conferences have been unified on the basis of the chronological order followed during the Conference, which had previously been determined among the members of the Commission precisely in order to give a chronological-thematic continuity to the topics that were presented.

Fr. Alessandro Ciciliani
President of the Historical Commission

THE HISTORY OF PASSIONIST FORMATION

Fr. Alessandro Ciciliani

Dear Brethren,

We are gathered in this place that is a holy place for us. It was made holy by the presence of our Holy Founder, Saint Paul of the Cross, and other Saints, Blesseds, Venerables, Servants of God, and distinguished brethren who have lived in this Generalate Community, or who have simply passed through on occasion.

We have come together for this very important international meeting of formation personnel (Masters of Novices and Student Directors), now getting underway with these conferences of a historical nature which we members of the Historical Commission will deliver during the next two days. As you can tell from the title of this presentation, we are beginning with a temporal perspective. We shall examine some aspects of our formation process.

There will be a brief introduction, followed by an analysis of the different formation stages, beginning with the minor seminary, then the novitiate, student life, intellectual formation, and concluding with a look at formation of our Brothers.

Saint Paul of the Cross, from the very beginning, was always attentive to the formation of his sons. Each religious in the community was supposed to give witness to an evangelical life under two aspects: the glory given to God, and the sanctification of his neighbor. He was charged with giving this witness so that his community could render a positive image of the Congregation, and thus be attractive to the young men who were in vocational discernment. Saint Paul of the Cross wished for Passionists to be holy in body and in spirit; he wanted them to be living images of Jesus Crucified, recognizable wherever they go by the perfumed air of Christ, in such a way that their lives are an ongoing mission preaching, and an encouragement to others to join them.

On March 23, 1752, he wrote to the Passionists at Terracina: «Who can say how many persons will fall in love with serving the Lord, how many hearts will be inspired, when they see in this Holy Retreat such modesty, such silence, such recollection...»¹.

¹ S. PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *Lettere ai Passionisti*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Roma, CIPI, 1998, 797.

To be such a community also meant that the community was alive and life-giving; that it would be able to attract the hearts of many young men, leading them to undertake the narrow path of the Gospel, especially the Gospel of the Passion. Thus, it would be necessary to choose candidates, guide their discernment of their vocations, and lead them along a formative process that would enable them to enter into the *modus vivendi* of the Congregation. St. Paul was convinced that only when young men whose vocations were clear, sure, and based on balanced human and spiritual attitudes, would the Congregation be able to expect the incarnation of the Congregation's spirituality in them, and their developing into the specific apostolate to which the Congregation was called.

First, we must make clear that from the start, the Founder did not wish there to be a distinction between the spiritual formation of the clerics and that of the Brothers. He says so even in the Rule: the Passionist vocation is one, what unites the Religious is the vows they profess, not the diversity of ministries carried out on the basis of their personal abilities. St. Paul, with a paternal affection, kept the welfare of the students foremost in mind. On their behalf we allowed some easing of the common life, whether at table, or in the observance. He added a breakfast dish, and eliminated their getting up at night. By these provisions, he wanted to better dispose the young religious for their studies. In fact, he always had a high esteem for the cultural education of the religious (biblical, theological, moral). First of all, we should make clear what were the essential points which should always exist in the Passionist formation. Here is what Fabiano Giorgini wrote in the introduction to the first volume of the series, "Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality", which is entitled "The Congregation of the Passion, what it is and to what it aspires":

«1. *The only source of the Congregation is God*

It is with an unmistakable clarity and in many places that St. Paul refers to the foundation of the Congregation as due only to the mercy of God, whose compassion for a world immersed in sin because it has forgotten the love of God manifest in so realistic a manner as in the Passion of His Son, Jesus. Using this new Congregation, God wishes this world to reclaim the "memory", the "remembrance" of the Passion of Jesus, "of those who, drawn to its loving invitation, cannot resist, no matter how hard their hearts."

Since it is God who is the author of the Congregation, it can look forward to fruitfully develop and work within the Church.

2. *The only reason that the Congregation is born in the Church is to promote the life-giving “memory” of the Passion of Jesus among the people of God*

This is the “raison d’etre” for the Congregation, and is the basis for Paul’s seeking the approval of the Pope and his desire to have members who are adequate for this purpose. At the beginning of his two “Notizie [Summaries]” and throughout their texts, St. Paul quite naturally and insistently makes this point. He mentions the vows taken specifically to use all means to place in the hearts and souls of persons “a continual remembrance of the Crucifix” and that it is this apostolic effort which characterizes the Congregation and assures not only “miraculous conversions of sinners,” but will stimulate the desire for Christian perfection in many people, even those with little education.

3. *The life of the Passionist Religious is likened to that of the Apostles*

They are true evangelistic laborers, and apostolic ministers, who nourish their lives with the instructions that Jesus gave to the disciples and apostles before he sending them out on mission. From this awareness that he continues the life of the apostles, the Passionist derives the urgent conviction that he must follow Christ in poverty and in solitude, that he “goes out from” and “returns to” a solitude at the feet of Jesus Crucified, “our one and only good”. There he learns to better understand the love of God, he allows himself to be transfixed by that love, and he becomes better able to take to heart the encounter of the people with Christ. He applies himself to his ministries with all appropriate means that answer to a “well-ordered charity,” without forgetting that there are some demons which are not driven out except through prayer and fasting (meditation on the Passion of Jesus).

The religious, united in a profound fraternal charity, live joyful and peaceful lives

Saint Paul emphasizes the reasonableness of the Passionist life, which may appear to be, and is, an austere life. Discretion allows for the strong and the weak to live and love the penitential life of the Congregation with joy and perseverance.

“Because our quality of life is so satisfying to the members of this poor Congregation, the Superiors should be very vigilant” to moderate anyone’s fervor.

In fact, he will say “having removed which might impede a perfect fraternal charity...it will resemble a paradise on earth for its peace, harmony, stillness, unity; not unlike that in which the first Christians lived. This nascent Congregation renews that first Christian fervor”.

The Passionist Religious help the Church through their specific mission

The efficacious contribution which Passionists offer to the Church is to continue the life of the Apostles through their contemplative-apostolic life, which is solidly centered on the memory of the Passion of Jesus. It is this awareness and conviction that the Passionists are making a distinctly effective contribution in the Church that permeates these *notizie*, as well as the other letters of Saint Paul of the Cross. This is the source of Paul's strength in facing the labors and the uncertainties presented by the development of the Institute, and in carrying out apostolic works in that social and religious climate. "The religious, having put aside temporal matters, with hearts filled with the love of God, can undertake great things for the glory of God and for the defense of the Holy Church, even at the cost of their own lives."

The religious shall be prepared with a well-rounded education for their apostolic duties

Theirs shall be a serious preparation, carried out before their priestly ordination in appropriate retreats, and which should continue to a lesser degree throughout their lives. A recognition of "such a privileged ministry" which is itinerant apostolic preaching, and the seeking of more opportune means to announce the wisdom of the cross, call for such study, which, together with prayer and penitential poverty, fashion the "apostolic worker [*l'operaio apostolico*]"².

The Apostolic School or Minor Seminary

For the first 110 years, one entered the Congregation directly through the year's novitiate, without a previous stage. Nevertheless, the Congregation, following the example of other religious orders, chose to admit to the clerical novitiate only those young men who had already adequately completed the "humanities and rhetoric" courses (today's secondary education), so that upon completing their novitiate, they would have a sufficient foundation to begin their philosophical studies.

² PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *La Congregazione della passione di Gesù cos'è e cosa vuole*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Roma, Curia Generale, 1978, 3-5 (Ricerche di Storia e Spiritualità Passionista – 1).

According to the practice of the time, reinforced by the pontifical decree *Etsi decretis* (March 16, 1675), adolescent boys were not admitted into monasteries and religious orders for their secondary education in preparation for entry into the novitiate.

Those studies, therefore, had to be fulfilled, ordinarily, prior to entry into the religious institute.

The Passionist Congregation, in accord with this practice, organized only the study of philosophy, theology, and pastoral ministries. The candidates had to have already completed courses in grammar and rhetoric, i.e., their native language, Latin (with written exercises), mathematics and history prior to their entering the novitiate.

After 1830, a number of young men experienced difficulty to become clerics because, prior to their entry into the Congregation, they had not completed the necessary pre-admission studies, whether on account of the lack of adequate schools in the vicinity of their homes, or because of the poverty of the family.

A remedy was proposed by the introduction in the Provinces, and following the novitiate, “a brief period of study” to advance the young professed in the essential fundamental courses prior to philosophy, and because the texts used in philosophy were in Latin.

The General Chapter of 1845 (Decree 369,4) assigned the responsibility for this supplemental study to the Provincials (at that time there were only two Provinces, Presentation and Addolorata — Naples, both having been established in 1769).

In 1851 a further decree (Decree 377,3) stipulated that this humanities program should not last less than a full year. The problem was experienced by Fr. Dominic Barberi, in Aston Hall, England.

In 1844, he had accepted some postulants, with the consent of the General, in order to teach them, among other things, Latin³.

The growing need to help young boys in the maturation of their vocations while they were in a social environment which became always more complex, and often enough, hostile to the Church, fostered the eventual decision to create a minor seminary, called an “alunnato”.

³ Cf. MENEGAZZO F., *P. Domenico*, Isola del Liri (FR), Ed. Pisani, 1963, 321-322.

In the meanwhile, the 1878 General Chapter (Decree 439) authorized the Provinces to organize a postulancy, even for a year prior to the novitiate so that there be a greater certainty about the vocation of the young men, and to prepare them, even academically.

Out of that postulancy gradually developed the preparatory schools [l'alunnato] that Fr. General, Bernardo Silvestrelli, so assiduously promoted. These preparatory apostolic schools (or "alunnati") developed: in France, as a project of the Provincial, Fr. Michele Cardella (1878)⁴; in Dublin (1879)⁵; at the St. Joseph Retreat on Monte Argentario (1880), where it was dependent on Fr. Generale Silvestrelli who maintained it⁶; and in Mexico (1882)⁷.

In general, one stayed in the preparatory school for two years.

The General Chapter of 1890 encouraged all of the Provinces to open preparatory seminaries, and gave some guidelines for them:

1. to accept young boys at 13 years of age;
2. to have them in the seminary no more than two years;
3. that the families share, if able, in the expenses of maintaining the boys;
4. to draft a book of regulations to be approved by the General with his Council (Decree 488).

Some Provinces, however, waited until the first decade of the 20th century to open a preparatory seminary⁸.

⁴ *Cenni necrologici* 1916, 16; DOUDIER M., *Les Passionistes en France*, Clamart, Presses Jurassiennes à Dole, 1977, 17.

⁵ *Cenni necrologici* 1883, 19. *Annals 1879*, March 1, fu aperto in Mount Argus.

⁶ AGCP, *Cronaca Praes 1863-1944*, f. 70 (datt.).

⁷ GIORGINI F., *Le Suore Passioniste Messicane. 1) I Passionisti nel Messico, 2) La Congr. Figlie della passione e di Maria SS. Addolorata*, Roma, Curia Generale, 1983, 12. (Ricerche di Storia e Spiritualità Passionista – 30).

⁸ The good work of the preparatory school of Gabiria of the CORI Province CORI shows the perseverance of the students toward the novitiate and profession. . OSÉS FELIPE D., *El Colegio Apostólico de Gabiria (1910-1967)*, Urrtxu (Guipúzcoa) 1990; for perseverance see pages 55-57, 66-67. Another good study on perseverance and departure regarding the FAM Province: PEREDA C., DE PRADA M. A., GARCÍA-LONGORIA I., *El Colegio-seminario de Zuera y la Problemática vocacional de la Provincia de la Sagrada Familia. Informe sociológico*, Madrid 1984.

The General Chapters of 1914 and 1946 (Decreets 589; 710) again record the requirement that a book of regulations for the seminary be submitted to the Superior General for approval by himself with his Council.

year	students	professed	novices
1914	291	1663	121
1920	278	1508	138
1921	486	1780	106
1922	569	1822	144
1923	603	1878	158
1928	913	2281	182
1934	1010	2779	227
1938	920	3001	206
1945	1033	3219	166
1950	1543	3394	198
1955	1872	3617	180
1962	2611	3960	196
1970	1746	3716	55
1975	1712	3177	62 ⁹ .

The *Ratio Studiorum* 1959 (66-67,69), did not make the preparatory seminary obligatory [for the Provinces], but it gave good reasons for recommending that they be built where considered necessary, and for how they should function.

The development of the preparatory seminary, requiring great economic efforts and dedication of personnel by the Provinces, reached its greatest expansion approximately between 1950 and 1970.

The statistical chart shows how the number of seminarians began to decline after 1965, until it finally disappears entirely at the beginning of the 1980's. From the chart, we notice that the number of novices did not correspond to the number of seminarians, something that should be studied more deeply in the future.

⁹ AGCP, fondo Capitoli Gen; Cap. Gen. 1914; 1920; *Acta Congregationis*, III, 347; IV, 339; V, 348; X, 190; XII, 491; XIV, 78; XV, 296; XVII, 93; XIX, 455; XXII, 277; XXIV, 157; XXV, 336; XXVII, 104; *Relatio annua* 1975.

What was the basis of the decision taken regarding the choice of those seminarians who would be considered fit for continuing their formation?

In the Provinces, in the place of minor seminaries, toward the end of the 1960's, we saw the beginnings of *discernment communities*, in which were admitted those young men who, having had some experience of us, expressed a serious interest in the Passionist vocation, but who needed to mature that interest, while they completed the necessary studies.

The Constitutions of 1984 recommended that we “seriously undertake the promotion of the Passionist vocation,” helping the candidates to mature their response “by means of seminaries or other means considered more efficacious and opportune” (n. 87).

In the last thirty years, much has been accomplished in the area of vocational promotion. Generally, today, formation begins with a minimum of a year of vocational sessions, followed by the two years of novitiate.

Formation in the Novitiate

St Paul of the Cross considered the year of novitiate a fundamental period in formation. In the two redactions of the Rule (1741 and 1746), the chapter on the Novitiate was completely rewritten. Paul always wanted the office of Master of Novices be filled by the most qualified persons he knew: religious who were skilled in spiritual, doctrinal and psychological competencies, so that they could instill calm serenity in the young men who would then be better disposed to open their souls to their Novice Master. In this regard, we remember the first three Novice Masters in our history.

The first was Fr. Fulgenzio Pastorelli, who was Master from 1741 to June 1746, and then from December 1747 to his premature death on April 6, 1755. He had a great influence on his religious in formation, whom he sought to infuse with a love for their vocation, a respect for the Rule, and zeal to promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus. The second was Marco Aurelio Pastorelli, from June 1746 to December 1747. He was the Master of Novices for the interval that Fr. Fulgenzio was recovering from illness.

The third Master was Giammaria Cioni, from the time of Fr. Fulgenzio's death, 1755, to 1759. Thus came into being a true and proper school of Passionist Spirituality, whose responsibility and duty was the formation of the religious in a double aspect: the interior life and the apostolate, the two poles of the Passionist vocation. As long as Saint Paul lived, the naming of the Master of Novices was reserved to the Superior General and his Council; after 1775, it was reserved to the Provincial Chapter. In either case, it was the duty of an elevated legislative power, in order to highlight the importance and the sensitivity of this service in formation. The Master, apart from a solid spirituality, should continue to study such fields as ascetical and moral theology, and spiritual direction.

He ought to especially shine by the example of his life, because formation is achieved more by example than by words. "The novitiate is instituted to bring about new men, and the completion of the novitiate will point out those who will become the successor religious", so wrote Saint Paul to the Master of Novices Fr. Pietro Vico (October 24, 1764)¹⁰. "To become new men" meant two things in particular to Paul:

1. to take seriously the meaning of mystical death by an interior detachment from all things and persons, beginning with himself and his self-will;
2. to achieve both in will and in practice, a humility of heart, the will to serve, and a radical detachment from oneself in order to be, in Christ, absolutely God's alone.

Through these virtues, sought after and practiced, one could enter into a "continual interior recollection," which made the novices a "man of prayer," and then an "apostolic man," who would successfully teach the people to keep the memory of the salvific love of God, revealed and communicated in the Passion of Jesus¹¹.

Formation in mental prayer was emphasized through appropriate instruction, and was summarized in a manuscript presenting the methodology of meditation. This summary was given to the novices as an appendix to the Regulations.

¹⁰ S. PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *Lettere ai Passionisti*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Roma, CIPI, 1998, 590.

¹¹ Rule chapter 8; S. PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *Lettere ai Passionisti*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), cit., 283.

The regular gathering in “chapter” was an opportunity for the novices to offer and share their experience in prayer, and it offered the Master the opportunity of evaluating the progress being made by the novices, and to help them with appropriate suggestions.

The weekly conference of the novice with the Master was largely about prayer: its difficulties, the fruit to be achieved, the influence it should have on daily recollection, and how it should help one to live out the theological virtues.

A meditative reading of the New Testament, whether to exercise the memory (every day one had to memorize a certain number of verses in Latin), or in order to develop one’s knowledge of Latin, offered an opportunity to grow in the understanding of Jesus, to grow in the desire to follow him, and to share in his experience.

Christ crucified was always presented in such a way that the disciple was focused on him, in order to profess the specific vow of the Passion as a means to embrace and grasp the saving love of the heavenly Father as manifested in the Passion of Jesus.

It was emphasized to the novice that he ought to be formed in order to live in fraternal communion with others who were called by the same Christ, so that together they might manifest the truth of the reconciliation which he had infused in their hearts and which they should manifest by allowing themselves to be loved.

Those young men who were not evidencing sufficient joy, peace and a collaborative spirit in fraternal living in community were dismissed. Such an attitude was detrimental, and was not to be compromised, because it was a pillar for future Passionist Life, which the young man intended to embrace.

The external structures of the novitiate, for example, the separation of the novitiate community from the professed, was a function of canon law. Our Founder wanted to build, on Monte Argentario, the St Joseph Retreat for only the novices.

He wanted them to have a more healthy environment than was possible at the Presentation (although both on the same Monte Argentario), because Presentation overlooked the laguna of Orbetello, which at that time was not yet reclaimed. It was a breeding ground for mosquitoes, and thus harbored malaria.

He also wanted to accustom them to a greater solitude, giving them a “desert experience” (as we would say today), both interiorly and externally, so that they could more deeply arrive at that psychological liberty which opens the door to the profound experience of being reborn in Christ, into a divine life. They would become “new”, as is suggested by the word given to this period.

In order to support recollection throughout the day, the practice was introduced of reciting the “monk’s alphabet,” and a series of ejaculations¹². At recreation, Fr. Marcoaurelio introduced the practice, known among other institutes as well, of recalling the “presence of God”. When the one responsible would call out “Presence of God,” all would be silent, and adore the presence of God in their midst; then, when the same person said, “Praised be Jesus and Mary,” all would respond “May they always be praised”. Recreation would then resume. It was a way for the novice to keep his heart continually in communion with God, no matter what the daily activities were for him. A special care was shown to keeping up the novices’ mental health, avoiding scruples, undue efforts to remain recollected or to vanquish temptations. They were to keep up their physical health by eating what the community put before them, and by taking the rest and sleep provided for in the Rule.

The novitiate was certainly an ascetical undertaking, but marked by equilibrium and humane restraint, as we would say today.

Our Founder wrote to the Master of Novices, Fr. Pietro:

«Be very vigilant...: 1) they are not to be fixated, but do everything with a quiet mind and without any straining of the head or chest; 2) ...they are never to give way to scruples and other sadness...which normally attack novices, especially in the beginning; 3) ...they are not to get fixated and force their heads in order to stay recollected in the presence of God, but from time to time make ejaculatory prayers and gentle affections...gently»¹³.

¹² The Monastic *Alphabet* seems to have originated in Thomas da Kempis. Every letter of the alphabet is associated with a spiritual maxim. A *giaculatoria* refers to a phrase by which the Lord is invoked or we recommend ourselves to Him.

¹³ S. PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *Lettere ai Passionisti*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), cit., 588, a P. Pietro Vico 24/10/1764. [English: St. Paul of the Cross, *The Letters of St. Paul of the Cross* (trans. Roger Mercurio, Frederick Sucher), III, Hyde Park NY, New City Press, 2000.]

Throughout the 1800's, the practice of experienced superiors was to not hasten in sending a young man to the novitiate once he was seen to have the desired characteristics.

He would be asked to remain for two or three months at home, which proved to be helpful for reaching a better vocational discernment. This was especially true for those young men who asked for admittance during a parish mission¹⁴.

It was strongly declared that to become a Passionist meant to become a follower of Jesus, who was crucified for love of us. To be a Passionist meant to accompany him in his Passion. Once in the novitiate, the young man was exempt for three days, at least, from rising for Matins; he was given an extra bit of bread at breakfast (il crostino), he was accompanied during the daily walk in the garden so that he could, gradually, become used to his new environment¹⁵.

He was to become convinced that as a Passionist, as part of the Passionist vocation, he was to live immersed in the love of God revealed in a special way through the incarnation of the Word and through the Passion. The means to this transformation of self and one's interior life was prayer.

Special care was to be paid to teaching the novice to meditate, and especially to live in intimate and continual union with God.

In the novitiate regulations, there was an appendix dedicated to this topic: "An easy and practical instruction on how to meditate well".

In it were summarized the instructions provided by the Master. The method was inspired by that of St. Ignatius (memory, intellect, and will), but with an emphasis on the affective response, and in the effort to practice a virtue, or to free oneself from a defect. Following the teaching of St Paul of the Cross, much attention was paid to helping the young man to understand that his vocation demands that he become a holocaust, consumed totally and exclusively with Christ Crucified, for God.

How would one be able to not only maintain, but further develop, his life of union with God once out of the novitiate and beginning the study of theology?

¹⁴ *Consuetudines Congr. SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.J.C. Editio critica textuum PP. Dominici, Seraphim, Bernardi*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Romae 1958, 2.4.

¹⁵ *Ib.*, 4, with note 4.

The student was encouraged to continue ejaculatory prayers throughout the day, and to keep up the use of the Monk's Alphabet.

Each recreation period, the novices and students, taking turns, recited one of the "letters" They were made to copy some pages from the book "A Very Easy Way of Being United with God".

These pages contained a very brief synthesis of what was suggested by a very popular book of the time¹⁶. In this period, Fr. Bernardo of the Sorrowful Virgin drafted some recommendations for the clerics who were leaving the novitiate for further study, who were then required to copy the text for themselves: "I.X.P. Reminders for the clerics leaving the novitiate for further study".

This was followed by the recommendation of fidelity to a quarter hour of spiritual reading, a spiritual conference with the Director at least every two weeks, the weekly examen over one's own progress, and dedicating for this purpose the feasts occurring when there would be neither school nor private study. In order to foster recollection and mutual assistance in matters of the spirit, the young students were encouraged, during recreation or a walk, to be with the companion who had been assigned by the Master, or in the student house, by the Lector [professor].

The conversation of the young men should touch on spiritual matters, and occasionally even on their studies. The point of this methodology was to teach the young men how to get along with anyone, always with a patient courtesy.

Every three months, the professed community was convened to give their evaluation on the conduct of the novice, to determine whether he should continue or not.

Until 1959, this evaluation was definitive-decisive; from that year to 1970, it was only consultative. In the present legislation there is no further mention of this evaluation because the law now gives each Province the faculty of determining which group should be consulted by the Provincial (Cost. 93).

¹⁶ *Pratiche per mantenersi alla presenza di Dio e metodo di conversar con esso. Con un ritratto del perfetto Cristiano cavato dalle parole della S. Scrittura, ottava impressione e seconda romana*, Lazzarini, Roma 1805. One of the two who revised this edition was "Fr. Paolo Giacinto della SS. Trinità Passionist. Ex-Lector of Sacred Theology".

In order to admit a novice to Profession, he was expected to show a verifiable progress in prayer and recollection; that he quietly fulfill his chores; that he has shown that his character is suitable for living in community in harmony with the others, and with a sense of belonging; and that he have “a firm will to advance, to his ability, to perfection according to the Constitutions” (Rule, #10).

The Constitutions of 1984 repeat these conditions for admission and the expectations to which the novice is held in numbers 77, 82, 83, 89; which is substantially a repetition of what was given in the primitive norms.

Profession was perpetual at the start. During the second half of the 1800’s, some uncertainties were noticed among the young, and some institutes began to ask the Holy See to allow the newly professed to make a temporary profession for a set time. The Passionists experienced the same apprehension. Thus, Fr. General Bernardo Silvestrelli wrote on March 12, 1899:

«The situation of that Brother cook is truly sad, and it convinces me even more of what I have believed for some time, i.e., that our perpetual profession should be delayed for three or four years. Up to now, I have been opposed by others on this, but perhaps our younger generation will be convinced in spite of them»¹⁷.

The General Chapter of 1899 discussed the problem, and charged the General with his Council “to present a study regarding the profession of our novices to the Holy See”.

This would take up the points of the discussion held during the Chapter discussion (Decree 527). The General Consulta of December 22, 1899, “having weighed the pros and cons, not just now, but other times as well”, decided against making any innovation. The point was raised again in January, 1902, but with the same result¹⁸.

Later, in 1911, the Holy See imposed a period of temporary profession before perpetual vows, and the General Chapter of 1914 established annual renewal of temporary vows for three years before final vows (Decrees 590,1; 612).

¹⁷ AGCP, *Fondo Silvestrelli*, to Fr. Salvatore Freschi.

¹⁸ AGCP, *Consulte Generali*, I, f. 192, 203.

The profession of vows, a temporary profession, to be renewed annually for a minimum of three and a maximum of nine years, only after the Second Vatican Council, whose directives were included in the Chapter Document of 1970¹⁹.

While our Founder was alive, at the time that clerics were to receive major orders, under the title of “common table [mensa comune],” they were to make an “oath of perseverance” in the Congregation.

At the General Chapters of 1778, 1784 and 1790 (Decrees 151; 185; 203), in order to “apply a remedy to human inconstancy,” it was decided that all religious should make the oath of perseverance and only then, under this guarantee of stability, would they be able to profess vows, which were, at that time, perpetual.

In a change on the question, the General Chapter of 1914 decreed that the oath of perseverance would be made after the perpetual profession, and not before the first vows as had been the practice until then (Decree 590, 2).

The oath was then abolished at the time of the revision of the Rule in 1959 so that someone not sure that he could continue under vows, would not be constrained by the oath he had taken²⁰.

Between 1798 and 1814, religious institutes had twice been forced into suppression, the second of which, under Napoleon, was extreme. It dispersed the religious into the territories of their birth.

This social environment had its effect on the professed, leaving them fearful of their future. For the young and for their families, likewise, there was a reluctance to embrace religious life.

¹⁹ Cf. *Documento Capitolare e Testi scelti dalle prime Regole*, Roma, CIPI, 1970, 49.

²⁰ In the CORM Province from 1886 to 1920, 351 young men entered as postulants, 295 were vested with the Habit and 193 professed vows: CASETTI A., *I Passionisti nell’Alta Italia*, Pianezza 1922, 307. In the CORI Province from 1910 to 1967, 1663 students entered, 646 went to the novitiate, 496 professed Vows, Osés Felipe D., *El Colegio Apostólico de Gabiria (1910-1967)*, Urretxu (Guipúzcoa) 1990, 68. Per la Provincia Michi statistiche: Doudier M., *Les Passionistes en France*, Clamart, Presses Jurassiennes à Dole, 1977, 38-41. For the PAUL Province, there is a good study by Fr. Luke Hay that gives statistics of vestitions, of those who departed during the novitiate, of the professed, and of those who departed after Profession from 1854 to 1978. *Personnel Statistics 1854 – December 1978*.

Until 1810, we had some professions each year, except for 1799 because of the closing of the novitiates in 1798. Nevertheless, in the first years of the 1800's, we can say that the arrival of candidates was moderate. The novitiates were re-opened as soon as the "Roman Republic" was ended, for all practical purposes in 1800.

The re-appearance of Napoleon at the north of Italy, however, renewed fears that he would continue his march to central Italy. In October, the Superior General had the novitiate transferred to Corneto (Tarquinia). However, after twenty-two days, when the danger had passed, the novices returned to Monte Argentario²¹.

Another problem in the Novitiate of Monte Argentario arose the Tuscany Government wished to impede professions prior to the novices' twenty-first year.

In order to circumvent the problem, the Superior General asked the Holy See to permit the profession of novices, «which the novitiate was entitled to do, but outside of Monte Argentario»²².

On December 8, 1804, Fr. General, Fr. Giuseppe Claris of Jesus Crucified, with the consent of the Council, opened a second novitiate at Sant'Angelo, Vetralla, "because of the fear of the pestilence which made safe passage through Monte Argentario impossible". Fr. Luigi of St. Anne was elected Master. The novitiate remained there until May 20, 1805, when, "any fear of contagion having passed, and with free access to Monte Argentario", the six novices (three clerics and 3 Brothers), along with their Master, Fr. Luigi of St. Anne, who was elected at the Provincial Chapter held on May 16, 1805, returned to the retreat of San Giuseppe²³.

On November 3, 1806, Fr. General joined the novices of the Addolorata Province [Naples] to the Novitiate at San Giuseppe because of the earthquake which had occurred at Monte Cavo [Naples]²⁴.

²¹ AGCP fotocopia *Registro delle vestizioni 1785-1838*, f. 37.

²² AGCP, A, III-II/1-2, la concessione, del 02/06/1801, it is published in *Acta Congregationis*, XIII, 216. In 1804 because of pestilence, in various areas of Toscana, the boarders were closed and the General in order to assist the aspirants of the Pontifical State, in November 1804, opened a second novitiate in the retreat of Sant'Angelo: AGCP, photocopy *Platea di S. Giuseppe*, 10; Circular letter of the Provincial, del 27/03/1805.

²³ Cf. AGCP, *Registro delle vestizioni 1785-1838*, (fotocopia) ff. 49-51.

²⁴ Cf. *Ib.*, f. 56.

In 1808, for fear of suppression, Fr. General, Fr. Giuseppe Claris of Jesus Crucified, asked the Holy See to be allowed to admit to Profession all of the novices who had completed six months of novitiate.

The reasons why novices left the novitiate were found in the words used: they left of their own will; they were advised to leave; or the chapter excluded them for reasons of health; or because it was more clear that they did not have the adequate characteristics to contribute to the Congregation; rarely was the reason given that they had been expelled.

The method and content of formation were those presented in the Rule, and drew from the tradition formed under the direction of the Founder, through his letters to the Masters of Novices, and from the influence of the first Masters, Fr. Marcoaurelio and Fr. Fulgenzio of Jesus. Paul asked the Master to give the young men a correct understanding of the Congregation, of its spirit, and of its mission. He wanted them to learn to love the Congregation as a gift from God, and to learn to fulfill with a perfect charity every action of the day.

He particularly insisted on their being formed by an authentic spirit of prayer which would embrace the entire day as a dialogue with Love, Crucified and Risen, who is present in the Eucharist, the center of the Community. Among the Masters of this period of the Restoration, one that stands out particularly is Fr. Bernardo Spinelli of the Sorrowful Virgin (1777-1857), who began his service as Master in Paliano, in 1815, and who had among his disciples, Blessed Dominic of the Mother of God [Barberi]; he continued as Master at Monte Argentario and in Lucca, for nearly twenty years.

He was not the only eminent Master of Novices. The fact that they were re-elected, even when a pontifical dispensation was required, shows the esteem with which they and their wisdom were held.

Some statistics will help us to better understand that particular phase of our history. In PIET province, from 1851 to 1960, the novitiate received as clerics 578 young men, of whom 407 were professed; 216 began as Brothers, of whom 128 were professed. In the CORM province, from 1886 to 1920, 351 young men entered as postulants; 295 were vested; 193 were professed.

In the province MICH, from 1842 to 1909, 130 clerics were professed, 37 of whom were French; 29 left the Congregation, 17 of whom were French; 83 were professed as Brothers, 14 were French; 37 left the Institute, 6 of whom were French. In the CORI Province, from 1910 to 1967, 1663 seminarians entered; 646 went to the novitiate; 496 were professed.

In the FAM province, between 1908 and 1965, 581 began the novitiate, of whom 418 were professed. In the same province, between 1906 and 1976, 366 clerics were professed, and after profession, 165 left the institute; 89 Brothers were professed, of whom 39 left the institute.

In the PAUL province, from 1857 to 1979, 1957 young men began the novitiate as clerics, of whom 1447 were professed, of whom 926 advanced to priesthood. Of these, 483 students left the Congregation 13 died, and 25 transferred to the CRUC and CONC provinces.

Still in the PAUL province, from 1854 to 1978 312 young men began the novitiate as Brothers, of whom 247 were professed, and 122 of these eventually left the Congregation²⁵.

The continuation of spiritual formation in the early years following profession

Just as happened to other congregations after the Council of Trent, even for us Passionists, the student years of professed students were considered a continuation of the novitiate. For this reason, any continuing years of novitiate were not considered necessary.

²⁵ Arch. Prov. Piet, Registri del noviziato. CASETTI A., *I Passionisti nell'Alta Italia*, Pianezza 1922, 307. Per Prov. Cori: OSÉS FELIPE D., *El Colegio Apostólico de Gabiria (1910-1967)*, Urretxu (Guipúzcoa) 1990, 68. For the Paul Province, Luke Hay: *Personnel Statistics 1854 – December 1978*, Prov. Paul USA 1978, 12, 87. For the MICH Province statistics: DOUDIER M., *Les Passionistes en France*, Clamart, Presses Jurassiennes à Dole, 1977, 38-41. Per Prov. Fam, C. PEREDA, M. A. DE PRADA, M. I. GARCÍA-LONGORIA, *El Colegio-seminario de Zuera y la Problemática vocacional de la Provincia de la Sagrada Familia. Informe sociológico*, Madrid 1984, f. 41-42.

These first years after profession of vows were considered a decisive time for a consolidation of the formation begun in the novitiate.

For “clerics,” this period overlapped a continuation of study, while for the “Brothers” (non clerics), a decree of the General Chapter of 1747 (Decrees 19,2; 45,2) set apart the following five years of special formation, which we will see in detail further on.

The period of student life was considered, from the start, as a continuation of the novitiate, under the guidance of the Director of Students. The daily rhythm was constant, with Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, mental prayer and study. Two exceptions provided some relief, in silence, as the students would take an outdoor walk, or tend to cleaning the different parts of the house. There was also daily recreation, when speaking was allowed.

The spiritual guide of the students was the Director, who had the rights and duties of the Master of Novices. However, both the students and the Director were fully under the Rector for the general functioning of the Community.

Fr. Marco Aurelio Pastorelli (1693-1774), who organized and directed, under the charge of the Founder, the first period of formal studies in 1747, brought into it the entire discipline of the novitiate with respect to the schedule and the use of those means well-suited to support and develop a spirit of recollection, for example:

1. a spiritual “sentiment” to be given by one student (taking turns) at the start of recreation;
2. to recite an ejaculatory prayer and one letter of the “monks alphabet” during recreation when the *presence of God* was called.;
3. on Saturday, to pick from the “flowers of Mary,” one to be fulfilled during the week in honor of Mary;
4. to meet with the Director, every two months, for a spiritual conference on one’s spiritual life;
5. custody of the eyes, not to speak with professed out of formation, and much less with outsiders, etc.

Clerics and young Brothers were restrained from contact with seculars (laity), even though their introduction to minor apostolic activities began at this time. Young religious were encouraged by conversations with the Founder, with his brother, John Baptist, and by the Regulations themselves (1755), which wanted to help put into practice what was called for by the Rule as the ideal:

«Each one will strive, to the extent possible, to remain in sweet and loving attention to the Presence of God in every activity. Oh!, what an angelic exercise this is; it is a way to remain always in prayer, and to bathe all one's actions in the soft balm of a holy love»²⁶.

From 1728, the time given to mental prayer began to be reduced in order for them to have more time for the study of the sacred sciences. This came about from the energetic intervention of Saint Paul of the Cross.

From 1728 to 1746, the prayer time for students was three and a half hours of mental prayer daily. Then, from 1746 to 1753, time for mental prayer in winter was two and a half hours, two hours in the summer. From 1753 to 1769, the time allotted for mental prayer was an hour and a half. From 1769 to 1775, one hour.

These young religious took part in the Liturgy of the Hours, with the exception of the night office between 1769 to 1775. The dispensation regarding the hours of mental prayer were applicable only for school days.

In 1744 the student body was divided between the two foundations of Sant'Angelo in Vetralla and Sant'Eutizio. Until 1746, the Rule provided for a daily period for study of some of the sacred sciences; this was for about three hours.

Thus, from 1746, the year in which a program for formal study was organized, the students were given various accommodations to provide more time and energy for dedicating themselves to serious and more intense study. These accommodations, decreed by General Chapter, were inserted into the text of the 1769 Rule.

These accommodations gave a distinct character to these houses of formal study; they had their own observance, fundamentally the same as the other houses, but with fewer common acts of piety in order to dedicate more time to fulfilling their obligations to study.

From 1746 to 1753, in the student houses, the students had four and a half hours of time for study: the students, and their Lectors (Professors) were dispensed from the Mass celebrated before the main meal at mid-day.

²⁶ GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Regulae et Constitutiones Congregationis SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.J.C.*, editio critica textuum, Romae 1958, 76/I-III/44-53. (FONTES HISTORICAE CONGREGATIONIS PASSIONIS – 1).

From 1753 to 1769, however, they had six and half hours for study and class because in those “student houses” matins was recited, not chanted; and as was said, they did not participate in the Mass before the mid-day meal, nor did they attend the Hours of Sext and None.

They attended spiritual reading only once daily, and their meditation times were in the morning, evening and night, but for only thirty minutes. In 1769, the hours for study were again increased. In fact, the students were dispensed from rising for the night office and the night meditation.

This special schedule was applicable only on school days. On other days, feasts and vacations, the students and their Lectors followed in totality the observance practiced in the other houses.

On the days that the students received Holy Communion (three times a week, and feasts), they extended their thanksgiving prayer for thirty minutes.

For the sake of their physical health, there were some other precautions taken: those in “formal study” could take a small breakfast in the morning, and on Friday, they were given a small dish of greens at the fast-day meal²⁷.

These norms demonstrate that from 1746 to 1769 efforts were undertaken to improve the system of intellectual formation, even though the practical difficulties did not allow for the immediate implementation of what was gradually becoming passing from ideas to discussion to legislation. The legislative development suddenly came to a close in 1775. At that Chapter the criteria for the selection of students are removed, and the “house of Formal Study,” having its own observance, is abolished.

In fact, before 1775, “house of Formal Study” meant a place, one for each province, chosen by the Major Superior, and given a special schedule. There were other prerogatives meant to favor an intellectual and pastoral formation which was suitable for the apostolic endeavors of the Congregation.

²⁷ Cf. *Ib.*, 78/III/2-5; 82/111/27-32; 83/IV/35-64. GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Decreti e Raccomandazioni dei Capitoli Generali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C.*, Romae 1960, n. 56; 129. (FONTES HISTORICAE CONGREGATIONIS PASSIONIS 3)

Lest study diminish the students' spiritual energies, from 1747 to 1769, the students made their spiritual exercises at the end of their vacation period, during the novena in preparation for Christmas, and during Holy Week²⁸. Since the religious would be preparing to bring people to Christ through the proclamation of their salvation in Christ, it was important to promote a profound union with God and in God.

To this end there was an emphasis on: solitude, silence, spiritual reading at the meals, the solitary walk, conversations during recreation on spiritual themes, and feast days with a special emphasis on deeper prayer and revision of life. The Superior also contributed at least twice a week some encouraging instruction.

One such time was at the Friday Chapter. «two instances, both bold and modest, which were formative for spiritual growth»²⁹.

Through these means, and through the wise application of these principles by the formation personnel, the young men would come to know the values inherent in the Passionist life. They often witnessed these values in the heroic example of their formators and of the religious who were no longer “students.”

This witness banished any indifference, and the students quite naturally followed the example around them. St. Paul of the Cross gave thanks to God quite often in his letters for this fervor. There is no denying that even during his lifetime some young religious were either dismissed, or left the congregation on their own accord. Of 280 professed in the lifetime of the Founder, 58 religious left the Congregation. Of those dismissed, there were 27 priests, 15 students and 16 Brothers³⁰. Overall, however, the work of spiritual formation was effective and shaped persons who were deeply united to God, models of genuine virtue, zealous in helping others and able to guide others in the knowledge of the Love of God revealed in the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus.

²⁸ GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Decreti e Raccomandazioni dei Capitoli Generali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C.*, cit., decr. 12, 2; 38, 2. GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Regulae et Constitutiones*, Romae 1958, 85/IV-V/8-16.

²⁹ PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *Guida per l'animazione spirituale della vita passionista. Regolamento comune del 1775*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Roma, Curia Generale, 1980, 22, n. 114. (Ricerche di Storia e Spiritualità Passionista – 2).

³⁰ BARTOLI M., *Catalogo*, XVI.

They were credible witnesses of the joy found in sharing in the mystery of the life of Christ and founders of a genuine school of spirituality.

The established program of study in preparation for priesthood in the Congregation was intended to cover six years. It began with two years of Philosophy, followed by three years of dogmatic and moral theology. Finally, the last year was dedicated completely to study of Sacred Scripture and the Fathers of the Church. During the last year there were also some practical apostolic experiences.

Everything was intended to prepare excellent catechists, preachers of popular missions, preachers of retreats to clergy and religious, expert confessors and spiritual directors.

With the years, the fear began to grow that the selection process applied to the students would gradually create an elitist mentality in the Congregation, to the detriment of unity and fraternal communion. Specifically, it was believed that the students, having grown accustomed to a series of dispensations, especially regarding the rising at night, would not be able to live the entire observance once their formation period was over and they were once again in a non-formation community. This led to a radical change in the configuration of student life which occurred in the General Chapter of 1775.

Every Province was authorized to have “one or more houses of study.” The special daily schedule for the “house of Formal Study [Studio formale]” was abolished.

From 1775, therefore, the term “Formal Study [Studio formale]” meant the group of students who, in any of the houses, were engaged in the regular course of study. Other students, who for reasons approved by the competent superior (e.g., illness) were engaged in formation outside of the student group were classified as “not engaged in formal study [non addetti allo studio formale]”³¹.

The dispensation from the night office for the students was ended, but it remained for their professors (Lectors), with the exception of feasts and vacations (Rule, 22). Thereafter, any retreat serving a group of students became the “house of Formal Study [Studio formale]”.

³¹ Cf. GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Regulae et Constitutiones Congregationis SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.J.C.*, cit., 80-81/III-V/10ss.

There remained the reduction of time for mental prayer on school days: a half hour, whether at night, in the morning and in the evening; while on the days of receiving Holy Communion, they spent a further half-hour in thanksgiving³². What could be the reason why, in 1775, the students' situation reverted to what it had been prior to 1746, leaving them, however, with the amount of time for study that they enjoyed from 1746 to 1753, which was only thirty minutes more than the time prior to 1746? Due to lack of documentation, we don't know the reasons.

Perhaps it had to do with the institution of "Formal Study [studio formale]" with its "special observance," which was feared would create among the religious a "class consciousness" that would impact the community life. This was something already lamented among other Institutes who saw the development of a privileged class based on their "graduate" status. Perhaps it was the fear that the professed who were formed in those special retreats would, over time, not be able to accept the observance as lived in the other retreats. Finally, perhaps it was the fear that the priests would accumulate special "rights," similar to those of the students, as they were preparing for their preaching assignments³³. The fact shows that there was no unanimity of views on the way to solving a real problem in formation of young men who need to acquire the necessary knowledge for the demanding ministry of the missions. This difficulty, with greater or lesser degrees of challenge, continues throughout the history of the Congregation.

The positive consequence of this change is that every community would be able to enjoy the helpful benefit of having students who brought spirit and vitality into the retreat. While the priests were about doing their apostolic ministries, the community continued its observance thanks to the significant contribution of the students the uninterrupted rhythm of liturgical prayer and the fervent vitality of the community provided by the nucleus of religious who maintained the ascetical practices typical of the Congregation.

³² *Ib.*, 83/IV-V/35ss.

³³ An echo of these fears is found in the words of the Superior General Fr. Bernardo Prelini in 1878, who recalled the dispensations given to the students of the "study retreats" as an innovation that did not help to improve studies nor holiness. cf. GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Decreti e Raccomandazioni dei Capitoli Generali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C.*, cit., 141 line 30-35.

Furthermore, the presence of the students allowed the priests who were in the retreat to dedicate more time to the study necessary for their preparation for ministries, to be available for confessions and spiritual direction for those people who came to the church of the retreat. Another positive aspect is that this division of the student religious among different retreats facilitated their economic support.

Some students had the good fortune of being taught by excellent Lectors in a setting extremely favorable to study, resulting in excellent academic achievement. However, in general, the negative consequences were manifold.

For example, it was not possible to provide each student community the best Lectors. Until 1851 (Decree 377,4) the students had a single Lector, and he combined the duties of both spiritual and academic director for all the subjects taught. Another inconvenience had to do with the small number of students, which could impede developing a spirit of study.

Finally, during the season of the “quest” (grain, wine and oil), the students and their Lector often had to supply for the role of the Brothers, necessarily reducing the time available for school.

Fr. Serafino Giammaria (1804-1879), a companion of Fr. Dominic Barberi in Belgium, and Master of Novices, wrote this summary of the Congregation’s traditions regarding the lives of its students:

«The education which a novice has received during the novitiate is hardly begun and is focused on the qualities of virtue, it is hardly enough upon which to base a judgement with respect to whether the novice should be admitted to profession or not [...]. The novice, following profession, joins a student group in order to continue his religious formation, more than to advance in the humanities [...]; the education which should be given to our students should not undermine that education which the Master of Novices has given to him, and which we accept was really given»³⁴.

³⁴ GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Consuetudines Congr. SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.J.C. Editio critica textuum PP. Dominici, Seraphim, Bernardi*, Romae 1958, 57-60; cf. anche 180-184.

The students continued to be formed in small groups in different retreats where they helped to maintain the spirit of prayer and augment the body of religious in the house.

The community was able to maintain their presence economically. The small student groups numbered 4 or 5, rarely 7; and it was an exception to find 10/12, as in Rome in 1825 and 1827, while there were 9 at Sant'Angelo in Vetralla in 1825.

At the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul, at the start of 1825, there were 10 students, 6 were already subdeacons or deacons. At the start of 1826, there were 7 students, of whom 2 were subdeacons, and studied philosophy with Fr. Ambrose of the Immaculate Conception. On January 1st of 1827, the students numbered 12, of whom 3 were priests, 2 were deacons and 2 were subdeacons³⁵.

The part of their lives that was most subject to change was the program content; this was subject to changes in the times and circumstances of their lives, especially after the Congregation spread out of Italy (Europe, Belgium, France, Holland, England, Ireland) and the expansion into the world beyond Europe (Australia, United States of America), in the era of Fr. Antonio Testa (1839-1862). This evolving change was most evident among the student communities because the novitiates had maintained a greater stability of criteria and values.

An example is when Fr. Antonio Testa, concerned for the spread of the Institute outside of Italy, wishes that the students prepare themselves for a dialogue with non-Catholics. He called for holding conferences on polemical religious subjects. Their objective was to bring this experience to their apostolate. Times had changed, and mediocrity in missions and retreats would not be acceptable. Even the physical welfare of the students was considered a factor in their formation; they were to be provided with better food, and given access to physical exercise.

Their theological and spiritual formation advanced side by side during the years after the novitiate. Their lives as students was precisely that time in which these humane subjects were combined in order to form the Passionist religious into readiness for an ascetical and missionary life.

³⁵ AGCP, *Platea SS. Giovanni e Paolo 1773-1829*, f. 114, 136, 154.

With respect to priestly ordination of clerics, the General Chapter of 1753 determined that no one should be advanced to priestly ordination except after five years of Profession³⁶.

As sacred ordination approached, it signaled a more intense concentration on the liturgical rubrics so that the young priest could fulfill them with faithful simplicity and devotion, leaving aside any affectations which might distract the people.

The Founder, suggesting that the devout celebration of the Mass not exceed thirty minutes, insisted on thirty minutes of prayer prior to the celebration of the Mass, and another thirty minutes to follow the Mass. Saint Paul wanted there to be attentive vigilance over the constant practice of virtues by the cleric prior to ordination.

«If he did not see someone well-grounded in virtue, says one witness, and firm in his vocation, he would not allow him to proceed to ordination. This was his recommendation to the superiors *pro tem* and when he saw that someone did not act about the chapel with attentive decorum, he would say that the person did not have an ecclesiastical spirit, for which reason he would not be allowed to be ordained without a long testing»³⁷.

By experience, he was convinced that ordination could also be an occasion for someone to fall back, relaxing his efforts, therefore the Regulations of 1755 say:

³⁶ GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Decreti e Raccomandazioni dei Capitoli Generali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C.*, cit., decr. n. 58.

³⁷ GAETANO DELL'ADDOLORATA (ed.), *I Processi di beatificazione e canonizzazione di S. Paolo della Croce*, IV, Roma, Postulazione generale dei PP. Passionisti, 1979, 253, 385. P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, III, Roma 1924, 716: a newly ordained priest recalled that it was «obligatory for greater perfection to be a true imitator of Jesus Christ... it was necessary to celebrate with great care..., with fervent mental thanksgiving after, that the rubrics of the missal be learned well – this is a precise obligation... studies and Mass is prepared to help others».

«The clerics should strive to acquire the most solid virtue; especially obedience, humility and recollection. Otherwise, when they shall have been elevated to the priestly dignity, they will fall into such a pit of laxness that they will be incorrigible. They will be the heaviest cross for the Superiors, the scandal of the community, and the scourge of the Congregation. The true spirit of a cleric, whether it is good or bad, will not be known until he is ordained»³⁸.

We find this concept inserted into the Regulations of 1878, under the chapters that were added that year, about the students, and the Director and Lector. It is a content that, although edited over time, remained through the Regulations of 1964.

The doctrinal orientation of the Congregation was also strictly Thomistic, both in philosophy and dogmatic theology. Out of caution that some young man, having studied philosophy prior to entry in the Congregation, would not have studied and mastered St. Thomas, he would be made to repeat the philosophy program, using the text books in use in the Congregation.

This outlook ended with the Second Vatican Council, which opened the door to different theological currents. The students began to attend the Roman Pontifical Universities with orientations different from the Thomist, for example, the Jesuits at the Gregorian and the Franciscans at the Antonianum.

During the time of the restoration of 1814, and throughout the 19th century, the Passionist religious had a strong and profound sense of belonging and of identity.

This was the result of the formation they received from formators and superiors, before the Napoleonic Suppression, who had known the Founder.

Another influence was the effort and sacrifices undertaken by the religious who remained faithful during the suppression, and who accepted the invitation to return to the Congregation, fully aware that they would have to sacrifice much to rebuild the houses, reorganize the communities, and advance the apostolate.

³⁸ PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *Guida per l'animazione spirituale della vita passionista. Regolamento comune del 1775*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Roma, Curia Generale, 1980, 38, n. 307 (Ricerche di Storia e Spiritualità Passionista – 2).

Thus, it is no surprise if, based on the conclusion of the Rule and Constitutions³⁹, the Congregation was generally called “mother” or “good mother,” and the religious felt themselves “sons” who owed the Congregation gratitude, respect and the effort to give it a glorious luster before God and the Church.

The formators and the superiors of that time inculcated this love for the Congregation as their “Mother,” by asking for fidelity to the Rule, punctuality in the observance, to become useful for the Congregation, whether in those things that promote the good of the community, and more so, by undertaking well and effectively the ministries proper to the Institute.

Another way of showing love for the “Mother Congregation” was the good example to be given at all times and places⁴⁰.

The life of the Congregation was lived concretely by each community there where it was located and where it witnessed to the charism and its apostolic service.

It was in the community that the religious were to show that they had in their hearts the love of God, revealed in the Passion, and that the love in their hearts was the root of a gratuitous love toward others, as is the love of Christ.

Formation had to work hard to inculcate a genuine equilibrium in the religious, and that he be able to love others as Jesus loves them.

The young men were asked to treat one another with serene simplicity, as well as with respect and care so that no one should be a burden to the other.

In order to achieve this goal, the young religious was taught to see Jesus in his brother. The sense of belonging was positively shown by one’s sense of being integrated in the culture of the Congregation, which is called uniformity.

³⁹ *Regole e Costituzioni della Congr. dei Chierici scalzi della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C. 1775*, chapter 38: “to all his dear sons... recommends to the Congregation observance and respect for the holy Rule and Constitutions and as a good Mother says to each one: Son , observe my commands and you will live”.

⁴⁰ AGCP, BÀRBERI D., *Breve ragguaglio della vita e virtù del fu P. Mariano di Gesù*, offer many examples of ways to educate the young and the principal points to emphasize. Other valid elements to understand are the guidance and practice of formation in: *Vita del Conf. Filippo del SS. Sacramento. Vita del Conf. Martino del SS. Crocifisso*.

It was a uniformity which touched not only the basic aspects of vows and apostolic works, but even the style of the habit, the mantle and the hat; or the kind of underwear worn, and the ritual quality of those actions spaced throughout the day and performed in common. It was an important part of the service of authority to safeguard uniformity. To distance oneself from the lived uniformity was to reject the culture which formed a bond among the persons, it was a lack of obedience, but even more, it was a recanting of the words spoken at profession, when the person was asking to enter the community and to live according to the Rule and Constitutions.

Such a mentality was active not only in the ecclesiastical society, but even in civil life, and in the revolutionary republic which did not tolerate dissent in styles, gestures and verbal expressions which it had established as a sign of acceptance of the new order of things, and therefore, as a sign of belonging.

Once again, the formation program proved its worth, overall, and produced excellent fruits of holiness, a true sense of belonging, and conferred a singular identity. This was demonstrated by the religious invited to Bulgaria and Valachia, where they confronted situations they had never imagined.

They knew how to perform their work with fidelity to Christ and to the people, keeping a profound sense of belonging, because of which, once their missionary service was fulfilled, they did not find themselves strangers to the community which they had once left and to which they were now returning.

Those religious who took the Congregation out of Italy with grand success, were formed precisely in this period of the first years of the 1800's. These were the same religious who courageously faced the new suppression of religious institutes in 1860 and beyond.

The documents of the commissions created by the General Chapters spoke quite clearly about the strength of formation in the Congregation. One must mention, however, that from the middle of the 1800's through the first 20 years of the 1900's, there was a decline in study due especially to the lack of an adequate preparation in areas of literature. In an effort to better the situation, the students were brought together, providing a better education for the Lectors, and adding Lectors in order to redistribute the load of courses, bringing a study of literature to the minor seminaries.

The frequent repetition of instructions on this matter showed the practical difficulty that often, at the local level, met efforts to harmonize the demands of the well-being of the community, the finances of the community, and the intellectual preparation of the members.

After the Second World War, many of these problems found some solutions in Lectors who were better prepared by university studies, and the admission of candidates who had already studied in secondary and higher institutions.

Student bodies were re-grouped so that toward the 1960's, every Province would have one community for philosophy and another for theology.

These were often meetings within Provinces for the Lectors, at which improvements were considered for the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the students⁴¹. The economic forecast made for the formation of the young rested quite heavily on the individual provinces.

From 1969, efforts were begun to accommodate the presence of the students in academic centers outside the retreat without prejudice to their spiritual formation as Passionists.

The object was to maintain and develop their sense of identity, their love for the community, their understanding and appreciation for living a life of prayer, of penitence and of study as elements inherent in being "Passionist Apostolic men".

Through the documentation from Chapters, and other Province meetings, one can understand the experiences had in different part of the Congregation as they tried to assure a spiritual, intellectual and apostolic formation that was adequate for the times. Among these experiences was the emergence of Catholic Theological Union at Chicago⁴².

⁴¹ Cf. On these conferences: *Proceedings of the Second Lectors Conference of Holy Cross Province*, Dec. 28-30, 1955, in *The Passionist*, IX, 1956, 313-424. *Notiziario Passionista 1956-57; 1958. Proceedings of the Third Lectors Congress of Holy Cross Province*. Dec 26-29, 1961. More information in: *The Passionist*.

⁴² BECHTOLD P., *Catholic Theological Union at Chicago. The founding years, 1965-1975. History and Memoir*, Chicago 1993.

Formation for the Religious Brothers⁴³

We will now look at the formation for the Religious Brothers in the Congregation, from the time of their beginnings. There are some differences to note.

First of all, it is clear that from the time of the Founder, Brother postulants were expected to have the same qualities and gifts as the cleric postulants, except, naturally, the scope of their educations.

A robust constitution was expected. The postulants' formation was intended to give them, especially if they came from a place of limited educational resources, a standard of correct and courteous manners so that their living in common would reflect that training as well as be marked by charity, good will, and mutual understanding. The many expectations of good manners that were listed in the handbook for novices were directed principally to the Religious Brothers.

The fact that many Brothers began their path to Religious Life outside of the novitiate community (entrusted to rectors or some religious in the community where he would complete the novitiate), means that he did not always benefit from a cultural-spiritual formation adequate for his needs.

Spiritual formation for the Brothers consisted of catechetical instruction that these postulants truly needed. Afterwards, they received instructions on prayer, on the obligations of the religious vows, on the purposes and ends of the Congregation—the same as for the clerics. However, when the Brother did not find himself a part of the Novitiate Community, it was not certain that these instructions were carried out with the regularity and effort that they required.

Saint Paul of the Cross held before the Brothers a high standard of holiness, no less demanding than that which was proposed for the clerics; the holiness of the Brother would be realized as a manifestation of charity in the fulfillment of his offices:

⁴³ I intentionally never use the term “laico” that is instead used in books and in current language, just to underline a greater unity with the clerics. What the clerics have in common with non clerics are the vows, they are both religious.

«Be diligent, prompt and exact in fulfilling the obligations of the office which shall be given you. You should prefer it to any other particular devotion of yours, seeing there the most holy will of God. Therefore, do all with great diligence and purity of intention, as someone who labors in the presence of God and for God. Encourage one another, avoiding disputes, and helping one another in your offices with great charity, as true brothers in Jesus Christ»⁴⁴.

The help provided the Brothers for their spiritual growth was more focused during the first five years following Profession.

By a decree of the General Chapter of 1747, the newly professed Brothers, at a par with the period of formation of the clerics, would remain together either with the students, or with the novices. They were under the direction of either the Master of Novices or the Director of Students, according to the community to which they were assigned. A great part of this special instruction was left to the good will of the Rectors. They should “win the confidence of the Brothers,” said Paul, “because they are encouraged in their observance and in their service of God through the positive regard of the superior.” At least once a week, the Rector should instruct, or have instructed, the Brothers “in matters of our Faith, in prayer, and in the observance of the Rules.” This instruction was usually given after Sunday vespers, with a reduction in the time given for the common walk which was allowed in those days.

In 1753, Saint Paul instructed the community at Sant’Eutizio that besides teaching the Brothers Christian Doctrine, they should also be instructed on how to serve Mass, and «at least once a month, they receive further instruction on how to pray well, to receive Holy Communion more devoutly, and how to be recollected during their working periods; they were exhorted to raise their minds to God often through the use of ejaculatory prayers»⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Regulae et Constitutiones Congregationis SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.J.C.*, cit., 164, n. 127, 128. Cf. also PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *Guida per l’animazione spirituale della vita passionista. Regolamento comune del 1775*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Roma, Curia Generale, 1980, Indice Parte seconda: Degli Uffici, (Ricerche di Storia e Spiritualità Passionista – 2).

⁴⁵ S. PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *Lettere ai Passionisti*, I, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Roma, CIPI, 1998, 890.

In 1758, he specified that the instruction on meditation could be given on Friday, without dropping the instruction on Christian Doctrine which was given on Sunday⁴⁶.

The religious brothers who were on the quest were exhorted to make an hour of mental prayer in the morning, and another in the evening; however, they were permitted to fulfill this requirement after they were on their way, in silence and recollection.

In 1766, in order to better care for the spiritual good of the Brothers who had been on the quest, it was determined that at the end of the period of questing, the Brothers should make a six or eight day retreat in the house, without the Superior's engaging them in other duties, unless it was a truly urgent case.

Here we note a sense of equality in providing the Brothers the same opportunity and means for spiritual renewal that was offered to missionaries and students⁴⁷.

The Brothers' acquisition of skills

The Brothers were taught skills during the novitiate, so that they could competently fulfill domestic chores, especially the making of bread and working in the kitchen. It was established that they would not be admitted to profession of vows if they did not show that they had learned well the fundamental offices needed for the material functioning of the community⁴⁸.

The instruction was received from a Brother who was expert in the matter, and whose religious life was exemplary.

Other occupations, like mason, carpenter, tailor, and gardener were taken up as needed. Some Brothers would have come to the Congregation with some of these skills already practiced.

⁴⁶ GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Decreti e Raccomandazioni dei Capitoli Generali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C.*, Roma 1960, decr. n. 19; GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Regulae et Constitutiones*, Romae 1958, 124/I-V/61s; Decreti visita Sant'Eutizio 1753, decreti per i Laici, n. 4; visita 1758, decreti per la casa, n. 3.

⁴⁷ P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, Roma 1924, IV, 281, n. 3.

⁴⁸ Cf. Decreti visita S. Giuseppe 1765, 1771; GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Decreti e Raccomandazioni dei Capitoli Generali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C.*, Roma 1960, decr. n. 131.

The Brothers who were engaged in fatiguing work, such as the garden, building or carpentry, could take an appropriate breakfast which was prepared for them by the one responsible.

This breakfast would consist of «a bit of bread, with a small piece of cheese, or some other like food; and a little wine, i.e., one or two small cups of watered wine, like that served in the refectory»⁴⁹.

The contribution of the Brothers for the material development of the Congregation was very great, whether by helping in the construction or remodeling of different retreats, or by working as carpenters to provide the necessary furniture, or by cultivating a garden, which in some retreats, like Sant'Angelo, San Giuseppe, Sant'Eutizio and Paliano, was made to arise out of nothing.

Afterwards, the Brothers conducted the quest when it became the normal means of support for the Community, and they carried out the chores necessary for the maintenance of the house beyond kitchen, tailor shop and infirmary.

The material needs of the retreats were great, and often, the directives regarding the Brothers were overlooked. In 1905, recognizing the norms of the Holy See, and to provide for the spiritual formation of the Brothers, it was determined that prior to entrance in the novitiate, the Brother candidate should stay in the novitiate community for six months of “probation;” and after profession, he should remain there for what time was possible, and under the direction of the Master of Novices (Decree 543). The situation did not improve much. Thus, the Vice-General, Fr. Pietro Paolo Moreschini, proposed to the General Chapter in 1908 that in order to assure the Brothers of their needed spiritual formation, they should have a protracted novitiate, lasting two years; or, that prior to their final vows, they return to the novitiate for six months to focus on their spiritual formation under the direction of the Master of Novices. He also asked that the prohibition be renewed against sending Brothers on the quest who had not completed five years in vows; and he asked that the monthly spiritual conference with the Spiritual Director or the Superior be reinstated⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Decreti e Raccomandazioni dei Capitoli Generali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C.*, Roma 1960, decr. n. 144.

⁵⁰ *Ib.*, 151.

The General Chapter confirmed the addition of a six-month postulancy (Decree 573), but did not accept the rest of the recommendation. However, afterwards, some Rectors and Directors of Students took to heart the responsibility of appropriate spiritual assistance to the Brothers, and a general improvement of their situation was achieved.

Notwithstanding a general improvement, in 1946 there was a proposal to study the causes of the deficient spiritual formation of the Brothers, on account of which many left the Congregation shortly after profession. The General Chapter recommended that the Superiors implement existing norms⁵¹.

Finally, the General Chapter of 1952 authorized (Decree 742) Provincial Chapters to determine that the Brothers, following their novitiate, would remain under the immediate direction of the Master of Novices, or Director of Students, or a designated priest, for some years. In 1958, the decree was made more precise by stating that this special period could extend even beyond perpetual profession (Decree 766, 2). The most compelling measures for the spiritual formation of the Brothers were taken by the Province of St. Paul of the Cross (USA). About 1940, reflecting on the fact that between 1890 and 1940, the Province had seen only 12 professions of Brothers, they asked themselves how to remedy this lack of Brothers, how could they receive an adequate formation.

The Provincial Chapter of 1941 (Decree 2) established that ordinarily the Brothers would remain in the novitiate until their perpetual profession. Following this period, they would be assigned a Director. The Provincial Chapter of 1953, having in mind Decree 742 of the General Chapter, reconfirmed (Decree 2), i.e., to not transfer a Brother out of the Novitiate unless he was able to be assigned to a retreat which had made provision for the formation of Brothers. It was to this end that Holy Family Retreat, West Hartford, was configured. Newly professed Brothers would take part in a three-year training program there. In 1962, the Provincial Chapter (Decree 26) reconfirmed the prior norms, with the specification that the juniorate of Brothers should last for a period comparable to that of the clerical students. These efforts led to the “Formation Program for Brothers.”

⁵¹ *Ib.*, 178; decr. 716.

Gradually, there were other initiatives among the Provinces: Holy Cross (USA), Pietà (Italy), in Spain and then at the level of the Interprovincial Conferences.

These initiatives were intended to provide a better spiritual and intellectual formation for the Brothers, as well as to better study the Brothers' vocation and place in the Congregation.

Contributing to this theological, spiritual, and juridic study of the Brothers' Role have been various meetings of Brothers at interprovincial and inter-congregational (1982) levels⁵².

Formation for Pastoral and Missionary Undertakings

We will now take a very rapid look at the pastoral and missionary formation offered so that when the Religious completed the formation program, he would be committed to the proclamation, the evangelization, and the mission: this was the goal of formation. The intellectual and spiritual formation were undertaken in view of the apostolate, the ultimate purpose of the Institute itself.

«This is the purpose of this nascent Congregation: to equip oneself through prayer, penance, fasting, cries and tears to help one's neighbor, to sanctify souls and to convert sinners»⁵³. It was for this apostolic purpose that a postulant was expected to have common sense, clear and intelligible diction, and polite and sociable manners in order to more readily carry out the proper mission of the Congregation. It was during the novitiate that novices exercised their memories by learning Scripture passage; they held recitations in order to strengthen their diction and their voices, and learning to overcome the psychological fear of being in front of the public.

Pastoral formation and preparation for preaching happened in an integral manner during the sixth year of the plan of studies, the period when the students were introduced to knowledge and understanding of the Sacred Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church.

⁵² Cf. TACCONE F. (ed.), *Il Fratello religioso nella comunità ecclesiale oggi. Atti del I° convegno intercongregazionale*, Roma 18-23 aprile 1982, Roma 1983.

⁵³ Cf. PAOLO DELLA CROCE, *La Congregazione della passione di Gesù cos'è e cosa vuole*, F. GIORGINI (ed.), Roma, Curia Generale, 1978, 11.21. (Ricerche di Storia e Spiritualità Passionista – 1).

They were to learn how to explain the Catholic Faith to the faithful. To theory were added some practical experiences of pastoral works, which would vary according to the determinations of the Lectors and the Local Superiors. The plan of study for this year had a very concrete outline, based on the work of St. Vincent Strambi who was a Lector for many years, and who drafted his lessons for possible publication, although they were never published⁵⁴.

In his introduction, he expresses his desire to weave together the studies of Sacred Scripture, mystical theology, ecclesial magisterium, the Fathers, modern authors in apologetics, while he presents principles of rhetoric and for mastery of the different kinds of preaching which are called for by the apostolic end of the Congregation⁵⁵. The resources for the doctrine to explain and the examples which will explain what is said and which will help the people to remember the lessons should be Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Fathers of the Church, lives of saints, and the history of the Church.

The study of Sacred Scripture should provide the students with a magnificent appreciation of the sublime excellence of divine Scripture, so much so that the young men will fall in love with Scripture and will study it “with a love for truth.”

⁵⁴ Of St. Vincent Strambi there remains: *Precetti di eloquenza sacra*, f. 72; that, reworked by Fr. Luca, were printed in 1838. *Metodo di studio*, f. 168, about the study of the Church Fathers and Holy Scripture and how to use the one and the other for spiritual life and for preaching. A work of great value and filled with psychological insights and methodology that is very pertinent. Thoughts on the way to explain the Gospel in parish Homilies, f. 12. There is also a miscellaneous section of lessons or apologetic works and mystical theology that reflect, at least in part, his lessons to the students. Un fascicolo ms. di Additiones et Notae ad Theologiam dogmaticam Habert. In AGCP, Fondo Strambi, cas. II, n. 5, 7, 14.

⁵⁵ He writes in the introduction, « One does not ordinarily learn a science well without master, to the point that the young profit specifically by being guided in the work they need to compose, in the study of Sacred Scripture and in the writings of the Fathers. Since in all things they need to save as much time as possible, it is obvious that it would be useful to combine, if possible, these studies adjusted according to the discretion and wisdom that, apart from any confusion and embarrassment, one topic might shed light on the other. To do this you would need a carefully designed plan or method of study. Herein we offer one, which will be approved by intelligent people, and will serve at least to give you an idea of what we want. ».

It was especially important to introduce the students to an understanding of the books of the Bible, but especially to the study of those books which were useful for preaching, and those which were needed in order «to find in Sacred Scripture the different hidden paths by which one arrived at a more intimate union with God, and the foundations of all of mystical theology»⁵⁶.

The same instructions were given for the study of the Fathers of the Church. The studies of this sixth year are also the specific preparation for the missions.

Although the decision of the General Chapter of 1753 was to create a special course for training men for the popular missions, practically a seventh year of study, was never found to be practical for implementation during this time⁵⁷.

The young men were helped to prepare for their preaching, even after the they finished the formal course of study, under the guidance of their same Lector, or another experienced missionary.

These took their responsibility seriously, wanting the religious to be both effective and inspiring. The fact that Passionists were insistently sought out for missions and spiritual exercises shows how well-prepared they were.

On the other hand, the fact that the number of religious assigned to parish missions was not excessively high shows that there was also a certain reserve about assigning men to this challenging ministry.

⁵⁶ Paul inculcated in the students, and in the teachers who followed him these expressions of faith, to cite the texts of Sacred Scripture clearly choosing the words so that all the listeners could understand them, “because, he would say, since they are divine words, they can be more deeply imprinted in the listeners” stimulating them to better meditate and be converted to God, *Processi* I, 369. The practice of citing the texts of Scripture was common among preachers, but the Founder underlined faith in the word of God that is always efficacious as Scripture itself affirms.

⁵⁷ GIORGINI F. (ed.), *Decreti e Raccomandazioni dei Capitoli Generali della Congregazione della SS. Croce e Passione di N.S.G.C.*, Roma 1960, decr. n. 57.

Formation today

This aspect is not strictly our competence, but I would like to give some suggestions which emerge from our meeting.

Today, formation should aim to rediscover the charismatic Passionist identity, w

ithout which not only is perseverance difficult, but also an inner and outer fervor, i.e., our fraternal life in community, and our apostolate.

We should have a stronger emphasis in formation on those aspects that have to do with configuration to Christ crucified, not only to be able to keep the memory of the Passion of Jesus, but to truly be a living memorial of Christ crucified. The scope of this formation is broad: personal, spiritual, communitarian, intellectual and pastoral growth.

There should be, furthermore, an evaluation to assess whether this formation approach is being inculcated in the students or not. Formation should develop in the young a deep sense of belonging to the Congregation itself; they should feel it to be their true family (a “mother,” as our Founder used to say).

Which will lead the young religious to work hard so that the Congregation will continually shine before God and before men and women, as St. Paul of the Cross desired. The example for being conformed to Christ crucified is found in the Sorrowful Mother, who gazes on him at Calvary.

Today we emphasize the human development of the candidates; we consider their aptitude for a psychic/physical equilibrium, which is indispensable if the spiritual elements are to take root and bear fruit. This unfolding of formation takes place in a context of community, of family, of mutual service, so that our life is a real witness to the whole world.

The pastoral dimension of formation is recalled daily by Pope Francis, who wishes the Church to be outward bound, looking for encounters with other persons, looking in territorial peripheries and in the existential margins of life. We should be the specialists in this regard because of our missionary tradition of going out to the poor and to be among the very poor.

Intellectual formation is essential in all of the aspects we have treated because ignorance of human, spiritual, community and missionary dimensions of life will keep one from achieving the purposes assigned to formation programs.

As we have seen, formation was always considered of great importance, from the time of St. Paul of the Cross. Intellectual formation was sought in order to produce wisdom and holiness of life.

I conclude by wishing you a successful meeting, and may the Passion of Jesus and the sorrows of Mary be always engraved on our hearts.

THE CONCEPT OF BEING PASSIONIST ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

Fr. Pablo Gonzalo

Introduction

It is always interesting to offer new studies, which help us understand properly the Founder of our Congregation, from a historical perspective, but more interestingly, if possible, with reference to those who currently are involved in formation ministry. Additionally, much largely depends on those who are invited and actually arrive in order to own those events and experiences on behalf of Him whom we honour.

It is in history, in everyone's history, St. Paul of the Cross' and our own, where all charismatic dimensions are fulfilled. Whenever we make an effort to better understand that the term "Passionist" comes from the same root, we increase the expectations of the one, who always offers new opportunities for incarnation in the histories of those who live in light of Him who is to come.

The total dynamism of the charism responds to the Gospel, which is ongoing and in constant inculturation in "men of every race, language, people and nation". (Rev. 5:9)

It is my hope that this course for formators here in Rome, will serve to integrate each of the elements that in themselves offer and orient the knowledge of different materials – philosophical, theological, psychological or pedagogical – from the spiritual realm of history, which is a necessary form that needs to be read. Thus, decisions are made within "salvation history".

For Paul of the Cross, being Passionist was something more than being a religious. It was being open to the call in a careful and very particular way. History is necessary in order to understand the history of every religious, at any time, culture or place. In this way, one can participate in this same call in the Church.

It is for this reason that it is so important to understand the specifics of the one who received this responsibility, precisely here and now, for us, in the 21st century.

We can continue being whom we are called to be starting from that fundamental tradition that today is converted in continuous transmission, and that allows others to continue to identify themselves as PASSIONISTS.

I must stress, it is always a pleasure to speak about Paul of the Cross and I dare say that he is the great unknown, sometimes even for ourselves. We have often stereotyped him in a series of events that are the most noteworthy, but that would not have sense, if these were not part of a whole. The more we see the “totality” of his person, the more we will learn about the spiritual richness of this man who insisted on being the true follower of Christ crucified, a deep lover of God.

We face this expectation as one who still needs to learn a lot, each of us, the present religious, because we want to offer much to those who follow us and who will continue knocking on our doors with the desire to be a religious.

Each one of us, that are already part of this family, and all those who will follow the footsteps of the crucified with the same desire that Paul of the Cross discovered in his own life , i.e. the loving presence that can accomplish all things.

This is because everything is offered precisely in the most eloquent way, while at the same time, seemingly less understandably. The Cross and the Mystery of salvation is a paradox that truly saves us and makes us heirs of eternal life.

Initial Fundamentals of the vocation to the “Passion of Christ”

«Look my son, how much Christ suffered for you»⁵⁸. This may well have been a phrase that Anna Maria Massari repeated to her children at a very young age. It was here that Paul’s vocation began, including that of being “Passionist”. She could not have imagined at the beginning that all her care in educating and making him feel the purity of love, would take this course of holiness. We are convinced that the determination and faith experience of this family, and in particular of this mother, deeply rooted in the spirituality of the time, was what instilled the principle of the spirituality of the Passion in the developing soul of her children.

⁵⁸ DI GENNARO S., PO 269-v.

In particular of one of them, Paul, who learned how to orientate himself to the Cross of Christ, to be nourished from it, to receive illumination from it, and eventually, to see that every Christian would try to model his life on that of the master and to seek the gentleness of his heart. He learned this from his family, specifically from his mother⁵⁹. This was his first school and therefore his first experience of the love of the Crucified⁶⁰.

Today modern psychology says that the first years of life are essential in the individual, almost with certainty the simple and serene whisper of the first prayers to Jesus on the Cross.

These were proposed by his mother and initiated in Paul a deep hunger to understand that the one who was nailed to the Cross, in the images he saw continuously in his environment, was someone more than a simple image.

Paul assures us in his own writings, that at an early age he learned to understand the Crucified as his confidant, with whom he developed a relationship and with whom he communicated, telling secrets, his desires and inspirations⁶¹.

Throughout the history of the Church, this same effect occurred in other founders and foundresses, through other suggestive images that influenced their childhood spirituality⁶².

⁵⁹ In the mouth of St. Paul of the Cross, "If am saved, as I hope I am, it will be by the grace of the education received from my mother". Spoken in the mission in Camerino, recorded afterward in the processes of Canonization: P. CIONI GIAMMARIA, PAR 230v. Also the letter written on the occasion of his death is another extraordinary example: P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, II, Roma 1924, 549 sg. 30 de septiembre de 1746.

⁶⁰ ANTONIO DANEL, PA 61.; TERESA DANEL, PA 114v y 128v-129; NICOLA COSTANTINI, POC, 167v. In the processes of Canonization, we have sufficient references to the life that was lived in that house. They are clear examples, principally offered by his sister Teresa and his brother Antonio, that allow us, to know, first hand, the piety and depth of the religious education of that house, directed principally by the mother of Paul of the Cross.

⁶¹ Especially important to understand these early experiences is the figure of the Canon Paolo Sardi (Procesos. SrCt II, 1042-1061).

⁶² ÁLVAREZ GONZÁLEZ J., *Historia de la Vida Religiosa*, tomos II y III, ed. Claretianas, (Madrid 1990). Other great founders have similar histories that are very interesting. See: St. Teresa of Jesus, St. John of the Cross of St. Francis de Sales, founder was a spiritual trajectory that is profoundly influenced by the experiences that they had with God when they were children.

The image of the Crucified will be revealed to him at other times and throughout the 81 years of his intense relationship, of the intense revelation of profound unity with God.

This will give his particular history, which we know and which we do not know an intensity so that this charism of the Passion of Christ becomes a charismatic incarnation.

We need to study this term “charismatic incarnation” because it is curious that beginning with the personal experience of this intimate relationship with God, so singular in Paul of the Cross, something completely novel occurs in the Church. For us, Passionists, it becomes a unique experiential reality with specific elements. Its objective is to become a religious vow.

This vow makes us unique and will influence not only purely psychological contemplation; it also offers the practical hope of eternity, an effect of salvation or a means to achieve it, rather than a way to promote a specific task or ministry or service in the Church as in other congregations⁶³.

It is something very different. It is a way of being that already existed since the beginning of the Church and in the world.

Only by observing the “Memory of the Crucified”, with all the richness that this term implies, all the dimensions of consecration, that we can understand all our apostolic ministry, all intercessory and saving action, all specific work and every mission in the Church.

The most engaging gift that the Founder left us is his own life and his own response to God, the mode and the historical way of how the events occurred, the charismatic testimony, the unified way, which passes from generation to generation of new men and women religious of the Passion.

⁶³ Note especially those founders that offer a 4th Vow, according to their spirituality. St. Camilo de Lelis, St. John of God, St. Vincent de Paul and others.

Passionists are made, not born: history as a process

All of this is not merely the effect of coincidence, the childhood meditation of the early life of that little boy. Over time and with each new event, new growth took place inside and outside, appropriately configured with the mastery of the Church and the spiritual rhythm of his environment.

Over time he became more alive, through close dialogue with God, duly confirmed by “feelings and spiritual sentiments”, that determined his understanding and therefore all his life choices as a religious and Founder.

Over the years, he would come to see, through the real experience of Christ Crucified, proposed to him through the deeply expressive dialog that characterized the vocation of Paul of the Cross, and the mode of his vocation.

Therefore, it would characterized all our vocations as Passionists in any place and in any time in history, in every event that is appropriately directed toward the Crucified and his return. It is this attitude of love and self-offering that Paul of the Cross assumed and thus made possible the Passionist vocation⁶⁴.

It was this dialogue, which for the Founder characterized his profound call to holiness, to which every Christian feels attracted, a perception of love and the love of God, through the deep experience of Christ and the crucified. Consequently, this was no longer his personal history and history in general, or just a “feeling”.

Rather it became a reality, an imprint, a “modus” a way of being, and had to be so intense in the Church during the tumultuous period of the 18th century.

At the dawn of the French revolution, of the Enlightenment, of despotism, in the world of the ideas and of exacerbated reason, a congregation of religious arose.

⁶⁴ P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, III, Roma 1924, 400. To T. Palozzi, 20 de junio de 1765. «May Jesus Crucified always be our consolation». There are innumerable emphatic references «Long live the Cross!», (including painted with a sign of the cross) that allow us to see the continual effect of the Cross in his thought and his motivation.

From the first draft of the Constitutions, those of 1736, a specific vow was prepared for all the religious as well as the way of fulfilling the vow — «to foster among the faithful the memory of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ»⁶⁵.

The text clearly states, “promote the memory”, not reason or faith or aligning it with science or to see if there is truth in a feeling and desire for God.

They would make this “memory” present in time, so that no generation will forget Him who lived and was crucified; so that the world will not forget true Wisdom, be conscious of the place of God and recall those events that men and women experience at all times.

The testimony that was collected in the Bulletin of the Congregation of 1746⁶⁶ will remain for posterity —“*The so called Congregation of Discalced clerics under the title and name of the Most Holy Cross and Passion of Christ. Their life is not different from that of the Apostles; moreover, it is subject to the same. Their conduct is the norm of the Constitutions, which tend to form a man totally of God, totally apostolic, a man of prayer, apart from the world, from vanities. In this way he can truly call himself a disciple of Jesus Christ, and thus be able to prepare many sons for heaven, that redound to his glory and his honor...*”.

The Passion of Christ is the foundation that motivates every candidate who is called to be a Passionist religious. This is what motivated St. Paul of the Cross to act «with the powerful weapons of the Passion of Christ, which even the hardest heart cannot resist»⁶⁷.

Knowing the figure of St. Paul of the Cross, no one can doubt the originality of the charism of the Passion of Christ received from God as a true revelation.

⁶⁵ GIORGINI F., *Regulae et Consuetudines Sanctissimae Crucis et Passionis D.N.J.C.*, ed critica; Roma 1958, 56.

⁶⁶ Curiously, this corresponds to a booklet of 8 pgs by the canon Paolo Sardi, companion of St. Paul during the first years that he lived in S. Stefano in Castelazzo. Possibly written between the time that he lived there and that served as an important basis of the spirituality of the Congregation. *Fontes his., Regulae...*, Appendix 7, 171-173

⁶⁷ *Ib.*

However, it is logical to wonder about the process that he underwent, so that the final version of this novelty was situated in the Church. First, it brought about a new religious family and together with it, a new spirituality that offers insight into the mystery of the Cross as the supreme reference point of the ministry of love⁶⁸.

On the other hand, this originality offered a new way of conceiving the apostolic dimension, in its different facets, popular missions, widely extended and used as apostolic pedagogy since the 17th century and cultivated by some congregations or religious orders such as the Lazarists, the Jesuits, the Pious Workers or even the Capuchins.

Additionally, new forms of spirituality would animate spiritual direction, especially the apostolate of spiritual exercises or catechetical care for the common people. This would become the apostolate, the epicenter of the Passionist Congregation for many years⁶⁹.

Last but not least, it would have an impact on his own vocation as a religious, since nothing odd had taken place as had been the case with some significant religious congregations that would have liked to discover their own perfection in some of them⁷⁰.

It is striking, and extraordinary, that the synthesis of all this vital praxis, all this spiritual and charismatic foundation lived intensely in each one of the significant historical moments, are filled with such novel originality. This would determine the evolution of the Founder and his Foundation.

The best proof of this is the fact that the Passionist Congregation was born in the Church with a charism that is at the same time contemplative and active, so that the religious who are professed in it throughout history, could be at the same time missionaries and contemplatives of the Crucified One.

⁶⁸ Especially the testimony of Bro. Barnaba (Fr. Barnaba, POV 1276-v) or Bro. Bartolomeo (Fr. Bartolomeo, POR 2356v.)

⁶⁹ COSTANTINI N., POC 173-v; M. TERESA DELL'ASS., POC 329v-330; RICCI D. R., POC 506-v. it describes the effect of the Popular Mission preached by Paul of the Cross.

⁷⁰ We note the Carmelites, known in Cremolino or the capuchins among those who also dealt with it Fr. Colombano.

They are apostles and proclaimers of the Gospel of the Cross, with the particular, nearly paradoxical element that this last dimension, the contemplative, which somehow motivates the religious to emerge from solitude, where it seems that all experience of God must be so personal, univocal and apparently non-transferable, to devote themselves to serve the spiritual needs of every human dimension and all men and women without distinction⁷¹.

The personal experience of the Founder – the norm of life

With everything said so far, the only possibility is that the development of every Passionist vocation begins precisely in the intimate experience of Him who shaped him out of clay, in his own life reality.

Therefore, any professed religious must necessarily recognize as a first source, the way in which Paul of the Cross was formed as a Passionist.

Throughout his career, his first steps, his first emotions and sensations of childhood and youth express themselves emotionally and take form in the singular experience of the summer of 1720, in Castellazzo. As we read in one of his letters,

«She was seen in spirit dressed completely in black, with a white cross on her chest and under the cross the most holy name of Jesus in white letters. At the same moment I felt in my heart these words – This sign represents how pure and clear the heart must be on which is sculpted holy name of Jesus»⁷².

That intuition, that of a young man who nevertheless still needed orientation, would serve throughout the coming years to remind him and his confreres who strive to live this life, to “be clothed in our Lord Jesus Christ” in the sense of the letter to the Romans⁷³ the true sense of that black tunic, beyond that of a mere habit.

⁷¹ Proceso de Canonización San Pablo de la Cruz: P. GIUSEPE DI S.M., POR 1471-1

⁷² P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, IV, Roma 1924, 218.

⁷³ Rom. 13, 14.

It would be a new form of clothing that would become an essential element for announcing to the world the merit of the birth of Christ, the continual presence of his mother Mary, the time in Gethsemane, the tragedy of Calvary, and ending with the death on the Cross.

This was the non-definitive conclusion, an apparent disaster that would lead to the greater glory of the resurrection.

Here is the theological content of a concrete and extraordinary experience, that would take a lifetime to elaborate and which became concrete in each element of his vocation and the birth of the Congregation.

Others will be called to dress in this same tunic and therefore, to being clothed interiorly with the same vocational experience.

Together with this event, with this same sensitive intuition in the form of particular dialogue, we must not forget that by the hand of Mary, precisely recalling our black Habit, how the Founder would expressed and this would remain as testimony in his canonization processes that was offered by various witnesses of the life of Paul of the Cross⁷⁴.

They would attest to his place in the Church and in the world – “the need to found a Congregation which would dress in this way and where there would be continuous mourning for the Passion and death of my beloved Son”.

Founding a Congregation is no easy task. In particular a Congregation whose purpose is apparent suffering, an active pain, a sign of mourning, and at the same time, hopeful and deeply joined to the experience of the redemption which is made present through the life and the sacrifice of those who profess it in “poverty, solitude and penance”⁷⁵.

In this way, it becomes an example of life and hope, memory and struggle. It is the crucified world as seen through other lenses that highlight injustice and the pain of those who bear them.

⁷⁴ CALABRESI R., POR 1999-v/PAR 2323-V; CIONI G., POV 126-v; CASCIOLA L., POC 594-v

⁷⁵ P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, IV, Roma 1924, 217.

This internalized reflection and the experience of living among the suffering of so many people will be what determines and recreates that confidence in the Passion of Christ, that everything has a remedy, and only in it and from it can we find the depth of God's mercy that is the true remedy⁷⁶.

The Passion of Christ: The Fundamental Element that gives birth to the Congregation

Meditation on the saving Passion and teaching others how to meditate on it, pausing to contemplate it in every event and be attentive to the response of God, will be the way by which a new school of contemplative and active life would be founded. It is a reality that is at the same time action and compassion and this will be the Passionist way of being⁷⁷.

We need to understand it precisely in this way, as something that fills everything, like an intuition with theological accents. This was the way that he lived it.

The first chapter of the Rule does not indicate any primary element that characterizes the form and the way in which the love of Jesus is available.

Through the Father, for those who profess it, there is no single or conclusive "vox Dei", so that the final conviction of the vocation of the Founder and of ours is expressed and confirmed in the manner in which we participate and preach the mysteries of the Crucified. In addition, this is only possible, if first the Passionists dedicate themselves to this objective.

This expectation will only be a reality, if the fundamental root of the vocation of Paul of the Cross, which is then given to the Passionists, comes from the experience of the Crucified, as the first place for education, as a first school, from which all learning can, over time, become teaching. So it is regarding the Passionist.

⁷⁶ P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, III, Roma 1924, 66, 24 de julio de 1750.

⁷⁷ Special mention is given to the preaching, note the form and the manner of dealing with the topic of the Passion of Christ and the details of description.

It is necessary and appropriate to understand this “experiential” dimension in the first intuitions of Paul of the Cross, because it will be those same experiences, more or less known in history that will substantiate the charism.

These experiences comprise successes and errors, preached missions, the foundation of retreats, and his relationship with hierarchy of the Church, whether small or large, clerics, religious, Laity, or Popes, i.e. the vicissitudes that the Congregation experienced as it moved toward God.

This ultimately helped and guided the experience of others that were also called to be Passionists reflecting the true “way of life” and being rooted according to the revision of various approbations of the Rule, in particular in the Rule of our nuns of the monastery of Tarquinia, between 1766 and 1770⁷⁸.

Finally, this vast theological experience and the deep spiritual dimension of the Passion of Christ became present as a true saving work of the Crucified.

This would occur in a completely mystical way, and finally, and at the end of this history, during the almost final years of his life, it would become a perfect work of spirituality, faithfully aligned with being in the Church. Additionally, the Rule of our religious Nuns, will be from the beginning and until the end, purely Passionist⁷⁹.

“Gather Companions” to recall the Passion

We know that all religious by their profession are incorporated into the Institute to which they belong. At the time of the Founder it was no different. Profession generates a divine link, based on the human factor of life in common.

For us it was always this way and remembrance that was the pillar of community life. It is seeing the Passionist at his finest and is the basis and it is important that we understand it thus.

⁷⁸ RAVASILI., *Le monache Passioniste e loro Regole. Storia, Testi, Documenti*, Roma 1970, Atender a: P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, II, Roma 1924, 304, a M^a Crucificada Constantini, 16 de febrero de 1765.

⁷⁹ P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, II, Roma 1924, 793 a Domenico Costantini, 17 de mayo de 1766.

Let us remember that from the beginning of the vocation of Paul, as the first of the inspirations he received, was the desire of gathering companions⁸⁰.

In our case, it is curious that different from other Congregations in which the founder went through various stages of discernment until reaching the key idea of a new foundation, St. Paul of the Cross received from God this idea with absolute clarity, even before defining his own vocation.

In fact, his vocation would go through different stages interspersed between mystical solitude, diverse apostolates and preaching of retreats and popular missions.

Additionally, as we know already, he was involved in the crusades and desired to even lose life as a martyr, as well as his attention to the poor and needy in the world of health thru his experience at the hospital of San Gallicano from 1726 to 1728.

Despite the first years of doubt and uncertainty, this element of “gather companions” is seen as the first inspiration. It was always constant in the thought and the heart of Paul.

As we know from history this was not an easy task for many of the first candidates that were discouraged by the demands of the life that initially the two Danei brothers professed.

All this makes it clear that the principle, the concept of being Passionist was clear in what was lived and in the how it was lived.

In word and deed, in every moment and circumstance, the lives of Paul and John Baptist were transformed into a “living charism”.

It was the same for the first Passionists, and in an admirable way, it was seen as something to be imitated.

Therefore, it became a normative element of the spirituality of the Institute. It was a model of life that became normative. It was effective and had a capacity in “word and deed”⁸¹, to evolve into religious life in the “manner of the Apostles”, a term that Paul of the Cross coined to define his work.

⁸⁰ P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, IV, Roma 1924, 230, a Mons. Gattinara, 27 de enero de 1721.

⁸¹ Term that we use to express the depth that is produced by the commitment of our Vow to remember the Passions.

As time went on, things began taking shape in the nascent Congregation and the vision of Crucified love became solidified, creating an entity, however small, but interesting Congregation, in whose heart each aspect of the life and of the apostolate of the religious was rooted. Thus, all began to make sense and the vocational invitation begins to take shape in a more orderly and systematic, conscious and spirit filled way. It therefore became attractive to other candidates who arrived until this became a regular dynamic where failure is not the general rule, as it was in the early years. Paul later realized that this model of calling would also serve others, who would be called by God in the same way as he was, to “this poor Congregation”. This is what we observe in the testimony of the first candidates, who passed into history as the true pillars and who, together with the Founder, gave “form” to this Congregation⁸², beginning with his brother, John Baptist.

In all them there is a common ideal, a formal feature that links the idea of following Christ crucified with the formal experience that Paul of the Cross lived, without this posing a problem or disorientation that God has to always be at the center.

Somehow, the love professed by Paul of the Cross, the founder, became a school of spirituality and served the first Passionists as a model of the charismatic element that the Founder received.

Additionally, the words that Paul of the Cross directed to his religious in a formal way, including the Rule, circulars or other types of documents formally or informally, as well as those that were expressed through letters or other writings aimed particularly at the religious, made a “whole”, a magisterial form, commentary, exhortation or disciplinary text, that gave shape and form to being Passionist for that time and for us, saving historical differences. It also became the Foundation and binding force of our own lives in the 21st century. The Founder is the primary source for knowledge and participation in the charism of the Passion. Reading it, learning it, understanding it is to regain the past and make it present, something necessary if we want to “remember”.

⁸² The inauguration of Monte Argentario in 1737, the official profession of the first Passionist religious on 11 de June 1741 and the approbation of the first official Rules in 1745, all of this served as “the effect of the call” and will mark the beginning of when viable candidates began to arrive.

The writings of Paul of the Cross, Source of the Charism

Between reading carefully all of his writings, in any order, we quickly realize that the experience of our Founder is the lived reality of his own experience. It was very effective and decisive since in so many ways, it turned out to be the means of highlighting the charism in him and his brothers.

It would be precisely in this writings, as for many of the religious of previous times that they would be able to consolidate and give form to a structure of thought that would unfold in a new way.

It would offer a new model for conceiving the efficacy of the Passion of Christ as the essential element in the program of redemption for every age. It would become a very consistent means of expressing this reality in the history of humanity.

It had not been possible to define the work carried out by the Founder, during his moment of interaction with the history of mankind, if these were only random elements, although sometimes it may seem that they do not follow a systematic order in the documentation that we have as well as possibly in what was lost.

In reality, it is the reference to, the attention given and the feeling toward all that the “wisdom of the cross” generates, inspires or focuses, that represents the charismatic “form” with all its spiritual wealth and apostolic dynamism, that forged not only the Passionist spirituality but at the same the Passionist. This is something very important—to every Passionist who professes it. This is something that we can call charismatic incarnation. Recalling the words of St. Vincent Mary Strambi that he wrote in the biography of our Founder, Paul of the Cross —

«he always had a burning desire to configure his life with that of Christ crucified as the primary goal and to transmit this experience in the faithful through the memory of the Cross as secondary goal. And this characterized the Founder in all those aspects that comprise the human person, in mind, and in the desire that all of his actions, his travels, his spiritual exercises, his missions would manifest the purpose of the Institute»⁸³.

⁸³ STRAMBI V., II, XVI, 345.

Therefore, since the very beginning and in the words of the Founder, we can say that the Passionists are, in his words, «sons of the Passion of Jesus Christ»⁸⁴. This is the great certainty that all Passionists have and that they truly experience in the observance of the Rule and when it prescribes that, *«they will accomplish this in seeking the highest form of perfection and therefore, it will be the best means of professing and announcing the Passion of Christ in the midst of the world»*⁸⁵.

⁸⁴ L, IV, 103, a don L. Marella, 16 de abril de 1768; Cf. *Ib.*, 312, al P. Gianmmaria, 23 de abril de 1772. There are many letters that use this expression that denotes in the Founder a clear way of configuring the Passionist with the Passion of Christ evidencing his association. It is an extraordinary form of belonging.

⁸⁵ Circular letter of 14 April 1747. It is interesting to note the references that he makes in it, the manner in which the Passionists, by living the Rule well, the Passionists receive divine grace to proclaim the Word and to make it our own. It is precisely in the area of the written circulars or orientations of the Founder, where we can see this dimension of charismatic belonging, since we can consider this concrete document together with the Rule. The form that can be called, “doctrinal” “sistematic”, that we have that refers to the Passionist charism. The same idea is repeated in the circular 2 May 1750, and is worth mentioning as a summary of everything we have stated. The letter that he writes to Clement XIV, 30 October 1773, in which he thanks the Pontiff for having given life to the Congregation and for making the Institute possible in the Church and in the world *«By affectionately contemplating the bitter wounds of the Crucified so that the virtue of their divine example can be imbued in us.»* (P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, IV, Roma 1924, 207, a Clemente XIV). Similarly, on the part of the Holy See it is interesting to note that the Brief *Singularen laetitiam* of 25 July 1772, in which the essential “charismatic” nature of the Institute is explained. *«In your hearts and in your minds may the Passion of Jesus Christ remains impressed and sculpted that is represented in the Sign that you wear. This is where the vigor and beauty of your Institute is centered. In the meditation of the Passion of Christ, you must place all your attention, all your study, all your energy. Thus you will always have present in your soul the Passion and death of your Redeemer, and nothing will disturb or dissuade you.»*

Conclusion

A real milestone in history is the active contemplation of the charism of the Passion and the corresponding Passionist Congregation.

Each of the issues experienced by the Founder enriched the immense task of the birth of our spirituality and the difficulties that the Congregation had to address during its initial existence, its life and the life of the first religious.

They defined the dedication and the apostolate, the mission and their life and therefore, the undeniable efforts made by all of them.

They had to consider a new process of incarnation in the Church in the social reality of Italy of the 1700's.

This included all that was experienced from the beginning, the first misunderstandings from the Roman Curia in the figure of Cardinal Altieri and the disproportionate attack by some mendicant orders.

However, the major obstacle was the spiritual and incipiently anticlerical climate created by the Enlightenment, that assumed more and more importance in Europe, and that influenced every choice made in the life and the mind of the Founder, every written document a "basic element" to consolidate every aspect of this nascent congregation and charism. Nothing would have been possible, if from the beginning, from his relationship with Bishop Gattinara, Paul of the Cross had not followed a schema where charism and mysticism would bring about an intimate relationship with God.

This lived experience was evaluated in all aspects from the perspective of Christ Crucified. This would be what would channel and form every one of the feelings, desires, affections and inspirations that Paul experienced at the beginning and throughout the process of becoming a Passionist. Some of his expressions are: "a great light came to me"; "I felt within me"; "seeing and feeling"; "the soul understands"; and "the insight that God gave me"⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ Common element in many of his letters and principally in his Spiritual Diary.

Thus, the revealing element of cognitive mysticism was forged so that one “inspiration” was joined to another and in this way, it was gradually clarified and he came to “understand”. This enabled him to such an extent that when he arrived at the true sense of the specific mission, in the case of Paul of the Cross, all the richness of the Passion of Christ in every aspect of knowledge and reason, tend toward this goal.

At the end, the lived experience of every event of his history became Revelation and Redemption.

All wisdom and all understanding, oriented toward the Passion of Christ, serve as the definite means by which the soul of the Founder was formed.

This is the way by which we know that everything about him was clearly Passionist and therefore, we share his same destiny, in the memory of the Crucified by which every life is fulfilled and every vocation becomes renewed.

In every Passionist religious it is the starting point, the sign of his consecration to God and from this point, the starting point for the apostolate and mission that will be the incarnational reflection of what we are called to do, beginning with what we are called TO BE.

It is by God’s will, and only by his will, as Paul of the Cross understood it, and thanks to the lights he received, by inner intelligence, the call to attend to the “invitation to love”, which is a clear demonstration of the vocational call, his own and that of others and therefore a clear statement of response to Grace.

This initial experience occurred and is expressed in this process, in the light of Christ’s Passion, and helped to distinguish those elements from those perceived lights, and serves to enlighten each of the arguments in those who see themselves as Passionist.

It is important that we recall, arriving at this final point, that each and every one of the heartfelt difficulties, as God was manifested in his crucified Son and that we have in his own words, simple and more delicate insights, possibly the person who best knew him during his lifetime was his brother John Baptist⁸⁷.

⁸⁷ P. AMEDEO DELLA MADRE DEL BUON PASTORE (ed.), *Lettere di S. Paolo della Croce*, I, Roma 1924, 52, to his brother John Baptist, 9 September 1721.

He shared much more with him than merely belonging to the same natural family. Together they gave life to a new family.

They understood family as a manifestation of God's work, a unique case in history, that was unique to the Founder, but in an equally significant way, he perceived the same calling.

All of this helps us to see how the Passion of Christ is rooted charismatically in different hearts and from the very beginning generates new Passionists.

Somehow, all equally represent the charism, in each of the times in which we live. We can affirm, without fear of mistakes, that the work of St. Paul of the Cross as Founder is the result of his own charism, of the need to give meaning to that which is received and which is a response to the call to personal holiness, to which we are all called, and was therefore a true response to God.

May he be an instrument that promotes an understanding of the great mystery of love that is Christ and his Passion in every moment of history, offering through the life of this singular man, founder, missionary, mystic, and brother, a way of living and employing the richness of the Gospel, which is the style and the life of the PASSIONISTS.

PAUL OF THE CROSS AND THE PASSIONISTS 18TH CENTURY: THE TIMES AND PLACES; PERSONALITIES AND EVENTS

Fr. Andrés Angel San Martin

History is built up on two fundamental coordinates: Space (the place) and Time.

Where did the history of St. Paul of the Cross and the founding of the Congregation initially take place? On the Apennine or Italian peninsula, which today is called Italy.

When, or at what time? Throughout the 18th century, although the infancy of Paul Francis Daneo took place in the last decade of the 17th century.

The 18th century, or as referred to in Italian, the “settecento”, continues a long, historical-cultural tradition. This time period occurs in the political era between the “ancien régime” and what we call the contemporary age, or the contemporary world. This historical era begins to develop an authentic sense of universality; or, in other words, a series of processes having global characteristics, what we call today universalization or globalization. We note great changes which affect old Europe and the new countries or nations, and the continents which forcefully make their entry into the Universal History, even taking on protagonistic roles.

The 18th Century (1700-1800) is an era in transition, and in crisis, which affects politics, society, economics, culture, thought and religion.

These forces make of the New Contemporary Era an Age of Transformations and great movements; the effect is such that we can distinguish a “before” and “after” to this century which is completely engaged in great processes, movements and revolutions.

Paul Francis Daneo (Danei family) is born in the city of Ovada, near Genoa, within the triangle formed by Genoa, Turin, and Milan, in the northwest of present Italy, and not far from the border with France. The father and mother of the future St. Paul of the Cross are Lucas Daneo and Ana Maria Massari. They also have ties to the city of Castellazzo.

The Italian territory where the Danei Family lived, and where the Passionist Congregation would be born, has a political configuration quite different from present-day Italy. Italy is part of a Europe which has been formed by the Renaissance (15th and 16th centuries), and Baroque (17th and 18th centuries) eras; it is made up of eight principal states: the Papal States, Venice, Genoa, Tuscany, Naples, the Kingdom of the two Sicilies, Milan and Parma, as well as various duchies and feudal lands.

Europe continued to be dominated by two great monarchical families. The first is the Austrian or Hapsburg family, which, during the 16th and 17th centuries, ruled over the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, the Spanish Kingdoms with their territories across the sea and in the Philippines, and to which were united the Portuguese territories in Africa and Asia.

The Bourbon dynasty had governed in France, and when the King of Spain, Carlos II (the “Hexed” or “Bewitched”) died, he bequeathed all of his territories to the future Phillip V of Spain, who becomes the first Spanish monarch of the Bourbon Family.

The entrance of the Bourbons into Spain leads to an extended struggle known as “the War of Spanish Succession,” from 1700 to 1714. It matched in opposition the pretender and future Bourbon king, Phillip V, and the descendants of the Austrian genealogical line. Throughout the 18th century, there were various wars which spread over much of the European territory, engaging in opposition many of its rulers.

From 1717 to 1720, Austria and France were united against Spain, and the competing armies reveal the European scale of this confrontation.

At the middle of the 18th century, the war of the Polish Succession (1733-1738) had its effects on the territory around Monte Argentario, which is so tied to the birth of the Passionist Congregation and where St. Paul of the Cross was pastorally engaged by reaching out to both sides of the conflict.

This war was concluded with the transfer of the “State of the *Presidi*” from Austria (which had ruled it since 1714) to the Spanish who united it with the Kingdom of Naples. In 1733, the Bourbons in France and the Bourbons in Spain sign the First “Family Compact (*Pacte de Famille*)”. We should remember that Paul of the Cross was settled on Monte Argentario in 1737.

From 1740 to 1748 we see unfold the Austrian War of Succession, with an expansive movement of troops and armies in the center of Italy. This is the last war which our Founder lived through. In Naples, the ruling king is the future Carlos III of Spain (Carlos VII of the two Sicilies, 1734 - 1759).

The governmental system of the second half of the 18th century is known as “Enlightened Despotism”, and its motto could be summed up with the phrase “All for the people, but without the people”.

It is an absolute power, and everything related to governance is directly related to an ideology likened to the Enlightenment; or, in other words, an adaptation of philosophical ideas of thinkers and ideologues of the time to political practice. Among the monarchs who were exemplars of this system the following stand out: Louis XV of France, Carlos III of Spain, Catherine II of Prussia, and Joseph II of Austria.

This type of absolutist government is marked by a paternalism and control in the face of the ideas proposed by the Encyclopedists, who considered necessary the intervention and protagonist role of the peoples in political matters. These political ideals in favor of intervention by the people are what lead to the various revolutions of the era, and make the bourgeoisie the dominant social group. The names by which the 18th century is most known are: the century of lights; the century of reason; or the century of the enlightenment. In one way or another it represents the opposition of reason to faith, and faith opposed to reason; science challenging faith.

It is the study of the sciences, and of scientific analysis, which has its proper methodology which produces knowledge beyond that given by religion. We cannot forget that this process of confrontation between faith and reason was one of the bases of Enlightenment Thought.

However, in the Mediterranean territories and kingdoms, that opposition is not quite as precise; on the contrary, many of the scientific advances came about within Catholic scientific circles.

The French Encyclopedia was the ideological foundation for this age. It is the authentic achievement of this moment which signals the transition from the Modern Age to the Contemporary Age.

The responsibility for the Encyclopedia was in the hands of Diderot and D'Alembert; many others took part, such as Voltaire and Rousseau. This enormous dictionary organized the thought of this important historical moment, and of its subsequent influence.

Neither should we forget the innovations which the scientific world produced. Science and scientific undertakings produced significant advances. Scientific expeditions brought home specimens of great interest; the botanical gardens of the time, some notable examples continue in the present, also shared in these discoveries. We can highlight within the cultural arts many notable works: paintings, sculptures and architecture which draw their primary themes from science.

A broad series of political, social, economic, cultural events, as well as some armed conflicts, both national and international in scope, brought about what we call "Revolutions." In chronological order, the first of the revolutions was that of the thirteen colonies' seeking independence; which we recognize today as the United States of America.

On December 16, 1773, in Boston, there is a mutiny against the taxation of tea; with this event begins the independence movement of those thirteen colonies under the British Empire. Those thirteen colonies were located along the eastern coast of the present United States, from north to south.

On July 4th, 1776, with George Washington at the helm, a Declaration of Independence is issued, and the independence movement advances until culminating in the Peace of Versailles (Paris 1783).

The configuration of the present-day United States is a long process lasting throughout the 19th century. The Spanish Crown sells (February 22, 1821) what is today the State of Florida, which gives the United States the beautiful peninsula where the oldest city of the United States is found, St. Augustine (founded September 8, 1565).

If you draw a diagonal line from Florida to the northwest Pacific Coast (the state of Oregon), you will divide today's United States into two halves. The southern part, which borders the Mexican republic, was part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Along the Pacific Coast there were missions organized under the missionary leadership of various Religious Orders.

It was a significant, enormous, territory, which became part of the United States through the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (1848).

Starting with 1810, independence movements had begun in territories which were under the Spanish Crown. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla and José María Morelos began insurgent movements in Latin America.

José de San Martín works for independence, building on his military mandate over Argentina and Chile, and extending throughout South America; the generals Sucre and Bolívar take part.

Some of the independence movements will continue on throughout the 19th century, as is the case with Cuba, and in southeast Asia, the Philippines (1898). The evangelization of the Philippines under Spain explains the prevalence of Catholicism. Many evangelization efforts were interrupted in Asia (e.g., China), while it was the Anglicans who began the evangelization of Australia.

These revolutions were just beginning when the life of Paul of the Cross was drawing to an end. St. Paul had accomplished an enormous task, he had carried a heavy cross, but on the horizon was a hostile and difficult environment.

The Congregation began to progress under its first General Superiors after the Founder. Passionists had practically not left Italy, and therefore, they were very much affected by the events at the start of the 19th century.

Nevertheless, a positive assessment of history shows that there was an interior strengthening of the Congregation, which helped to intensify Passionist spirituality.

We can say that the Congregation embraced its particular lifestyle and ministry of preaching.

In Europe, the most well-known revolution was that of France. It began on July 14, 1789, with the fall of the Bastille. Thereafter, the King of France, Louis XVI, is executed (January 21, 1793); shortly later, his wife, Marie Antoinette.

The bourgeoisie, or third estate, becomes a true catalyst of change; the bourgeoisie take power over the aristocracy, the clergy, and the “high clergy” in particular.

The French Revolution is followed by the era of Napoleon Bonaparte.

In a certain way, the Bonaparte Period represented a political and social regression in relation to the numerous reforms brought about during the revolution in France; however, the mandate under Napoleon consolidated what was achieved in the revolutionary era, and the achievements of the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods spread throughout Europe. France's outward orientation toward America and the rest of Europe, principally directed to ideologies, continues from the end of the 18th century, until the 20th century, even reaching as far as the middle of the 20th century.

The legal and educational reforms, as well as the spread of wars throughout the European continent served to consolidate the processes begun with the French Revolution. We should not forget events like the suppression of religious institutes in those areas of Italy under French dominion. A clear example is the suppression of our Congregation from 1810 to 1814.

Since Paul of the Cross had founded the Congregation in Italy, only a small group had left for a mission in Bulgaria. In 1796, the Napoleonic troops invaded the Italian territories and the Papal States.

That same year, Fr. Vincent Mary Strambi preached the spiritual exercises for the Roman Curia. Clerics were obliged to swear fidelity to the Emperor Napoleon; and in 1810, the communities of religious were suppressed, and with that, the retreats of the Congregation were closed. Only the Generalate was kept open with a small degree of activity.

Fr. Thomas Albesano was the Superior General at this difficult time, and the greater part of the religious were dispersed, or retired with their families. In 1814, the Congregation is restored. The life of the Congregation was exposed to many risks by taking so long a time to expand into other countries.

The second half of the 18th century brought the Industrial Revolution (First Industrial Revolution), which brought forth a series of economic, technological and social processes. The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain, starting with the textile industry and the use of steam power as its motive force. The steam engine of James Watt moves into railroading, and later, aboard ships which will allow moving goods at a much more rapid pace.

We can say that this kind of technological progress culminates in the last years of the 19th century with the invention of the internal combustion engine, which together with electric power, makes possible unimaginable progress to the future.

In order to appreciate the background of faith and religiosity in distinct Italian territories from the 18th century until the beginnings of the unification of Italy, we should examine the demographics of nearly 13 and a half million inhabitants.

The statistics totaling the number of priests, clerics, consecrated persons, and active laity equals one hundred twenty-six thousand persons.

The Church evidenced the influence of the Council of Trent, which after two centuries of Tridentine spirituality continued under its influence apart from a few devotions which gained favor and offered a new spirituality.

In the cities, the formation of the clergy and pastoral work was adequate; however, the same may not be said of the rural, farming areas.

Eight Popes stood at the helm of the Church during the life of our Founder. The most influential for the life of the nascent Congregation and in the life of St. Paul of the Cross and his brother, John Baptist, were Benedict XIV, Clement XIV and Pious VI. At a time of world change, a Congregation was born to undertake changing the world by the Passion of Christ

The bibliography which we have used for this narration consists basically of two biographies of Saint Paul of the Cross:

The monumental biography written by Fr. Enrico Zoffoli and a readable, accurate biography written by Fr. Fernando Piélagos and published by the Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos.

In addition, the First Volume of the History of the Congregation, written by Fr. Fabiano Giorgini, which corresponds with the founding years of the Passionist Congregation.

Also, the introduction to Volume I of the Letters of St. Paul of the Cross, the last edition, which was also written by Fr. Fabiano Giorgini.

To these texts should be added some of the university textbooks covering contemporary history or the history of the 18th and 19th centuries.

HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS ON PASSIONIST PRAYER, COMMUNITY AND MINISTRY

Fr. Robert Carbonneau

Part One: New Perspectives

«We live in very threatening times, and I am convinced that worse are coming. What will happen to our congregation?»⁸⁸ What is your reaction to this opening sentence of my presentation? It was written by Superior General Bernard Silvestrelli in 1906. Let me ask another question: As we live out our life of prayer, community and ministry, do these words sum up the way we understand our contemporary challenges before our Passionist Congregation in 2016? How would you answer this question: Are you optimistic or pessimistic for our Passionist future?

Another point to reflect upon: In 1956 the Commission to adapt the Passionist Constitutions completed its study. As Passionists faced changes in society and the Church we knew quite well that we had to make changes in our Passionist rule of life. However, when I compared the 1937 Rules and Regulations to the 1956 Rule of Life I was very surprised.

Very few changes were advised for our common life of prayer and community. Looking back, I think we have to conclude that the decided changes were almost all cosmetic⁸⁹.

⁸⁸ GIORGINI F., *Bernard Mary Silvestrelli, Passionist*, Translated by Patrick Rogers, C.P., Rome Passionist CIPI, 1990, 116.

⁸⁹ An English language document. The General Introduction reads in part: The Commission “were also convinced of the need for an adaptation demanded alike by the changed condition of society and the Church, and by the Apostolic purpose of our Congregation. The Capitular Fathers shared the deep conviction that the final end and the distinctive spirit of the Institute, which are the same as its very life, are able to be kept whole, only when the means of attaining that end and of fostering that spirit remain truly suitable and effective. Now among these means, there are some, which by their very nature are necessary means. Consequently, they are unchangeable”. *The Text of Our Constitutions Adapted by the Committee According to the Norms of the Special Decree of the Thirty-Sixth General Chapter*, Rome 1956.

As we know, it was not until the Extraordinary General Chapter in 1968 to 1970 did the Passionist Rules and Constitution shift in emphasis.

Delegates decided our common life was to be based more on the spiritual rather than legalistic principles of the Passionist charism. History shows we were in traditional and progressive camps.

How you, I, or any vowed Passionist responds to historical insights can help us open up a discussion about our vowed commitment to prayer, community and ministry.

These are the three areas I have been asked to address at this meeting of the Passionist International Formation.

Thank you for this opportunity. Honestly, I do find this assignment intimidating and humbling. At the same time, I ask you to share with my excitement for this topic. Precisely, in what ways does this past perspective on Passionist prayer, community and ministry make us wise and fearless Passionists for the future.

Using my skills developed as a professionally trained historian I decided to ask a basic question: Since we Passionists proclaim an awareness of the Passion of Jesus Christ Crucified, I began to wonder: how did our congregation survive events leading up to World War II (1939-1945) and its immediate aftermath?⁹⁰

Admittedly, this model of interpretation is probably not what you had expected. However, by framing my research within this lens, I hope we gain a unique perspective on Passionist history.

Specifically, I want to share my research with you by providing examples of how Passionist members living through these decades were faced with and made radical choices on how best to fulfill their commitments to Passionist prayer, community and ministry.

What lessons can we learn from this? Might it help us find the perspective and courage needed to face our contemporary life and future as Passionists?

⁹⁰ My research presumes a theological narrative. As a result of my doctorate in American and East Asian history, my focus instead has been to understand Passionists as twentieth century social and political actors. Especially in China this had led me to evaluate Passionists in relation to the ongoing chaos and suffering of Chinese society, relationship to the Vatican and as American citizens.

This is not my attempt to rewrite Passionist history. Everyone present at this meeting has their own personal and valid Passionist historical and vocation story.

Instead I suggest the following examples allow us to gain more respect for our immediate Passionist ancestors. So, as we listen let us think how these men who came before us actually lived out their commitments to prayer, community and ministry.

In my presentation I have tried to stay away from hagiography. Instead, I ask you to consider the special way that culture, social and political realities in the public sphere forced Passionists of the mid-twentieth century to live out these vowed values.

Let us keep in mind a simple fact. Like Passionists of the past, many of us continue to live our lives of prayer, community and ministry in monasteries or as a public proclamation of our charism in service to the local church and society.

The insight applied to the content for this talk comes from my own thirty plus years of study and scholarship on Passionist history.

I relied heavily on the Passionist publication: *The Passionist*. Published by Holy Cross Province (USA), My study is limited from 1943-1956⁹¹.

Most of us Passionists are familiar with the immediately following historical narrative. Until the mid-twentieth century, Passionist prayer, community and ministry was based upon a general rule of life and regulations that had remained constant since the days of St. Paul of the Cross. Common prayer based on a horarium and devotional life continues to serve as our foundation.

They have remained unquestionable values as the Passionists expanded to prayer and ministry sites. From this, new provinces were born. Membership increased from the mid-1700s into the early 1900s. Community life throughout all the provinces was based on a norm which required permissions from local superiors. Clerics, students, and Brothers knew this all too well. For better or worse, this was the internal experience which Passionist religious lived behind the monastery walls.

⁹¹ Published as the *Passionist Bulletin* by Holy Cross Province (USA) from 1943-1946, it then changed its name to *The Passionist*. For this paper, I ended my research in 1956. What follows is a listing of the dates of issue of the *Passionist Bulletin*: May 5 (1943) 1; July 16 (1943) 2; September 14 (1943) 3; November 21, (1943) 4; February 2 (1944) 5; May 5 (1944) 6; July 9, (1944) 7; September 15 (1944) 8, November 21 (1944) 9; January 25 (1945) 10; March 25 (1945) 11; May 5 (1945) 12; July 9 (1945) 13; September 15 (1945) 14; October 28 (1945) 15; November 21 (1945) 16; January 25 (1946) 17.

Renamed *The Passionist* in 1946 the following were used for this study. Vol. 1 January 25 (1948) 1; Vol. 1 March 12 (1948) 2; Vol 1 May 21 (1948. Number 3; Vol. 1 July 9 (1948) 4; Vol. 1 September 15 (1948) 5; Vol. 1 November 21 (1948) 6; Vol. 2 January (1949) 1, Vol 2 March – April (1949) 2; Vol. 2 May – June (1949) 3, Vol. 2 July – September (1949) 4-5; Vol. 2 November (1949) 6; Vol. 3 January (1950) 1; Vol. 3 March (1950) 2; Vol. 3 May (1950) 3; Vol. 3 September (1950) 4; Vol. 3 December (1950) 1; Vol. 4 January (1951) 1; Vol. 4 June (1951) 2; Vol. 4 September (1951) 3; Vol. 4 December (1951) 4; Vol. 5 March (1952) 1; Vol. 5 June (1952) 2; Vol. 5 September (1952) 3; Vol. 5 December (1952) 4; Vol. 6 March 25 (1953) 1; Vol 6 May 14 (1953) 2; Vol. 6 July (1953) 3; Vol. 6 September (1953) 3b; Vol. 6 November (1953) Number 6; Vol. 7 January (1954) 1; Vol. 7 March (1954) 2; Vol. 7 May (1954) 3; Vol. 7 July (1954) 4; Vol. 7 September (1954) 5; Vol. 7 November (1954) 6; Vol. 8 January (1955) 1; Vol. 8 March – April 1955 Number 2; Vol. 8 May – June 1955 Number 3; Vol. 8 July – August (1955) 4; Vol. 8 September – October (1955) 5; Vol. 8 November – December (1955) 6.

The general public had a most definite impression of us as well. True Passionist life was rooted in prayer, penance and solitude. Community life was austere and sacrificial. The 1911 *Catholic Encyclopedia* published in the United States wrote the following: Passionists at that time were known for their desire in seeking «the sanctification of its members and the maintenance of the spirit of the in their community life» — by way of — «practising the austerities and mortifications proscribed by Rule and familiar only to themselves»⁹².

Alongside this, preaching advocated a distinct message which concentrated on a mission to promote greater understanding to the passion of Jesus Christ. Consensus was that this Passionist spiritual world would never change. But we all know this was incorrect. It did change. Between 1900 and 1955⁹³ the soul of world humanity was shaken by war. I dare say that this had an immediate impact on Passionist prayer community and ministry. I hope you will agree with me how interesting this is to reflect upon.

Passionist Military Chaplains: New Ministry in Response to Suffering

As a sign of patriotism and witness to suffering, ministry was reshaped when Passionists of different nationalities took leave of their monasteries to serve as military chaplains. Writing from undisclosed ministry site on September 20, 1943, Kenny Lynch (Holy Cross USA) wrote:

«The faith and devotion of the men were a real tonic to a priestly heart. There is always a big gathering for night-prayers and Morning Mass was well attended. This is a long call from Monastery life but once a man is into it he is satisfied nowhere else until the lights go on again all over the world. Meanwhile we keep trying to light the love of Christ in the hearts of men»⁹⁴.

⁹² A[rthur] Devine, C.P. “The Passionists” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911, 521-524. Quote on 523.

⁹³ World War I (1914-1918); World War II (1939-1945 in Europe; 1941-1945 in US) and the Anti-Japanese War in China (1937-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953).

⁹⁴ *Passionist Bulletin* November 21 (1943) 4.

In 1943, Passionist identities were strengthened as when a Passionist military chaplain visited confreres in Peru. Later he came across an image of St. Gabriel in Panama⁹⁵.

In 1944, St. Paul of Cross Province USA had forty-nine priests serving as military chaplains⁹⁶. Edwin Ronan (Holy Cross USA) deserves special mention.

During World War II, he was key in establishing the military chaplain program in the Philippines. Ministering as chaplains in the U.S., one Passionist met German prisoner of war priests who had known the Passionists in Munich, Germany⁹⁷.

Austrian Catholic parishioners who had been relocated as war prisoners to the U.S. were surprised to meet their former American Passionist who ministered to them as the local chaplain⁹⁸.

In 1944, Apostolic Delegate to India Passionist Leo Kierkels visited over one hundred interned Italian missionaries and prisoners of war in India⁹⁹.

⁹⁵ In Panama Father Bartholomew Nov 8, 1943 comes across a chapel with an image St. Gabriel and visited Passionists in Peru. *Passionist Bulletin* November 21, (1943) 4.

⁹⁶ *Passionist Bulletin* May 5 (1944) 6, 27.

⁹⁷ Father Fidelis Benedict, C.P. with German prisoners at Camp Hood, Texas among them were two German Catholic priests who knew CPs in Munich, *Passionist Bulletin* (1943) 4.

⁹⁸ Leonard Barthelemy, C.P. met two of his former Austrian parishioners as a military chaplain to German POWS at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. *The Passionist* May 5 (1944) 6, 39.

⁹⁹ Apostolic Delegate to India Leo Kierkels, C.P. as quoted in September 1, 1944 *Cincinnati Telegraph* visited over one hundred interned Italian missionaries and prisoners of war in India. *Passionist Bulletin* November 21 (1944) 9, 41.

Examples of Passionists who died while serving as military chaplains are Valerian Di Bernardini (Pieta) in 1940 in Albania¹⁰⁰ and Owen Monaghan (Holy Cross USA) in 1945 in the Philippines¹⁰¹. Passionists encouraged one another to preach the Gospel as war chaplains. They took great pride in the fact that founder Paul of the Cross is said to have saved Orbetello from Spanish bombardment in 1735¹⁰².

War redefines prayer, community and ministry

After the World War II, we might consider how many military chaplains returned to their monasteries suffering from post-traumatic stress of ministry. These men who had become self-asserted and independent in ministry had to renegotiate. Once again many were confined to a regimen of community life and the rituals of the Passionist horarium.

Now looking back, did their war experience make them more vulnerable to alcoholism and mental stress? Over the years, if this is true did these men teach us compassion or test our patience? Did some of us become numb to their stories? Did some of us gain greater wisdom and insight into the meaning of the Cross? What wisdom of Paul of the Cross must we learn from these men?

Of course, in Europe there had been practical consequences as a result of the war. Decisive juridical action was required for the survival of the Congregation.

¹⁰⁰ Fr. Valerian Di Bernardini, Province of Pieta died December 28, 1940 as a military chaplain in Albania *The Passionist* Vol 1 January 25 (1948) 1. 51-52.

¹⁰¹ Father Owen Monaghan of Holy Cross province was killed in the Philippines on April 7, 1945. <http://cprovince.org/archives/bios/4/4-7c.php>.

¹⁰² We reconciled this with our Passionist identity by calling to mind founder Paul of the Cross. Paul of Cross searching for wounded on plains of Presidii was held up as an example to American Catholic military chaplains, hospital chaplains. Overall the year of 1735 is a foundation of ministry identity. Austrians in control of Monte Argentario when Paul and John Baptist Daneo sought to take up residence there in 1733. In 1735 is said to have saved Orbetello from Spanish bombardment. Suggested that allegiance and experience of warring states at this time offers reason while military terms are prevalent in writings of Paul Daneo. "Veteran of 1735", *Passionist Bulletin*, May 5 (1944) 6, 2-9.

On December 14, 1943 the Passionist Superior General gave permission to postpone all provincial chapters due to war as decreed by Sacred Congregation of Religious¹⁰³.

Throughout Europe, Passionist monasteries were sometimes in the line of battle. In Holland, some five hundred German war prisoners resided on the Mook Monastery property¹⁰⁴. At the same time, Bertrand Damen worked with the underground resistance against the Germans. Thus, he was decorated by American Ambassador in Amsterdam with the Medal of Freedom¹⁰⁵.

At St. Joseph's Ave Hoche in Paris, still existent parish bulletins reveal how Passionists ministered to German Catholic officers during the occupation.

Outside Rome in 1940, «The retreating Germans mined and destroyed the Monastery at S. Arcangelo di Romagna»¹⁰⁶. During the war, Passionist Bishop John Baptist Peruzzo, turned his residence into «a hospital for the war stricken»¹⁰⁷.

The community of ninety at Sts. John and Paul increased by about thirty in the spring of 1944 when refugee Passionists arrived. Community life was then truly put to the test as all had to deal with the «food shortage in Rome»¹⁰⁸.

Diverse World War II prison narratives and the creation of a common alternative Passionist international community experience

More attention needs to be given to the way war reshaped the experience and identity of prayer, community and ministry among our Passionist religious who suffered in prison. First, we must be careful to distinguish between the different kinds of imprisonment experienced by Passionists. Studying in Peking, China, Passionists were sent by the Japanese into forced internment camp in Weih sien, Shandong province in 1943.

¹⁰³ *Passionist Bulletin*, May 5 (1944) 6, 25.

¹⁰⁴ *Passionist Bulletin* January 25 (1946) 17, 27; Other details in *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 May 21 (1948) 3, 268-270.

¹⁰⁵ *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 November 21 (1948) 6, 562.

¹⁰⁶ *The Passionist*, Vol. 4 June (1951) 2, 146-149.

¹⁰⁷ *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 September 15 (1948) 5, 439-441.

¹⁰⁸ *Passionist Bulletin* September 15 (1944) 8, 25.

Internment proved to be a kind of forced community life whereby a small number of Passionist conferees were detained with other Allied Catholic religious and Sisters and civilians. Ultimately, this proved to be a decisive event because it had the unexpected result of breaking down long-standing mutual biases between Protestants and Catholics.

This kind of internment was less severe than the European concentration camps. Passionist student Andre-Marie (France) was transported to the Buchenwald camp¹⁰⁹. I personally recall Stanislaus Breton (France) telling me how he suffered similar humiliations at a prison camp. When finally liberated, the only food Breton could first digest was cut grass. Unique as well was the experience of Viktor Koch (CRUC-USA) in Schwarzenfeld, Germany.

Rules of German citizenship allowed him to remain under house arrest in the monastery chapel throughout the war.

Local town people brought him food. Koch, an American himself, became a living witness of the cross when he stepped forward to save the town from American military who, in the fog, of war- planned to violently pacify the town civilians.

After the war the town square was named to honor Viktor Koch. This is truly a sign of Passionist ministry and inculturation¹¹⁰.

Nation/state imposed sufferings

The following examples are what I define as nation/state-imposed sufferings. Different from war, by necessity, Passionists in these situations were required to redefine their province wide expression of prayer, community and ministry. For example, (Pieta Province Italy) had been erected in 1851.

However due to “adverse times and the dispersion of all religious, the Province was practically extinct in 1860. Established in 1854, Passionists of (St. Michael the Archangel France) came to face “adverse political conditions.” As a result, the province was “completely obliterated” in 1881.

¹⁰⁹ *The Passionist*, Vol 1 May 21 (1948) 3, 253.

¹¹⁰ Independent scholar Katherine Koch has done excellent work on this history. <http://www.viktorkoch.com/>.

The General Curia restored it as a province in 1893. However, this did not bring about security. For example, when Father Columban (Ireland Province of St. Patrick) died in 1948, his obituary recalled his life of sufferings.

In 1902, he had been expelled from St. Joseph's Church at Ave Hoche in Paris as result of the French anti-clerical movement¹¹¹.

Admittedly, I have yet to appreciate fully how the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) impacted the life of Passionists especially since they were among the martyrs at Turon (1934) and Damiel (1936)¹¹².

With respect, I acknowledge these historic events are sensitive. Just as powerful is our recalling our Passionist legacy in Palestine.

In 1948 Father John Salah was killed by a sniper's bullet¹¹³. In 1951 Spanish Passionists in Mexico had to face important decisions.

«Some of them have orders from the government to leave the country, their crime being the exercise of their sacerdotal ministry. At this time things are still unsettled. Some of the Fathers who left Spain several months ago have not been able to enter Mexico, and are at present in Cuba, awaiting the day that will see them obtain the required and much desired permission»¹¹⁴.

Recall as well how our Passionist religious life was challenged after the overthrow of President Juan Perón in Argentina.

«Due to the religious persecution which began on November 10, 1954 our missionary work was seriously impaired. Both city and country missions were practically brought to a standstill. The attitude of provincial and local authorities changed so as to make any exterior religious manifestation almost impossible. Preaching in our churches became dangerous»¹¹⁵.

¹¹¹ *The Passionist*, Vol 1 March 12 (1948) 2, 146.

¹¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Turon;
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs_of_Damiel

¹¹³ Photo of Fr. John Salah, C.P. killed on May 18, 1948 by sniper bullet near Bethany. *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 May-June (1949) 3, 296; 1903 – St. Martha's Retreat – 1953 Palestine” *The Passionist*, Vol. 6 November (1953) 6, 436-444.

¹¹⁴ *The Passionist*, Vol. 4 January (1951) 1, 60.

¹¹⁵ *The Passionist*, Vol 8 November-December (1955) 8, 631-632.

So how do we wish to understand and interpret the post-war World War II Passionist re-emergence in the face of such suffering? What impact does this still have on our contemporary Passionist understanding of prayer, community and ministry? How might it have shaped our present international identity?

Passionist Survival After World War II

Beginning September 1945 publication of news from other provinces in the *Passionist Bulletin* accentuated our common international Passionist identity. The Belgian province survived the war “quite well”. Northern Italy (Pure Heart of Mary) «suffered no war casualties, neither were any of the Retreats in that section damaged»¹¹⁶.

Naples Province took some time to recover¹¹⁷. After his experience as a military chaplain Fabian Flynn (CRUC-USA) emerged as a representative of the international apostolate. He was a chaplain at the Nuremberg War Trials and a leader in post-war refugee work in Europe.¹¹⁸

Years later, an unrelated yet similar ministry came to life when Luis Dolan (Argentina) directed the Temple of Understanding as an early NGO at the United Nations. This new vision of ministry established the ground rules for our modern Passionist NGO presence. Passionist prayer, community and ministry under Communism faced special challenges.

After the war, early rumors were that there were no Passionists living in Poland and all property destroyed¹¹⁹. However, it was found that Sts James and Ana. Przasnysz, Poland was still functioning¹²⁰. Later it was sadly learned that eight Passionist religious were killed in concentration camp of Dzialdowo and another at Dachau.

¹¹⁶ *Passionist Bulletin*, September 15 (1945) 14, 38-40.

¹¹⁷ *The Passionist*, Vol 1 July 9, 1948. Number 4, 240-241.

¹¹⁸ Sean Brennan, “From Harvard to Nuremberg: Father Fabian Flynn’s Service as Catholic Chaplain to the 26th Infantry Regiment, 1942-1946,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 33 (2015) 1, 1-24.

¹¹⁹ *Passionist Bulletin*, September 15 (1945) 14, 38-40.

¹²⁰ *Passionist Bulletin*, January 25 (1946) 17, 28.

During the war, other Polish priests had «appeared as laborers or clerks in stores. Poland during the German occupation lived in the catacombs in great part»¹²¹.

In 1948, however, *The Passionist* published a group photo of Polish students. News was that potential seminary applicants had to be turned down because as it appeared that there was not enough room to develop a formation program¹²². Everyone rejoiced with the news of a profession ceremony in Poland in 1949¹²³. Surprisingly, under “Red domain,” Poland in 1950 and 1951 was able to “grow slowly, even though under the most adverse conditions” as it received thirteen novices¹²⁴. In 1948 Bulgaria, conditions under the Communists were deteriorating¹²⁵.

In 1949 Bishop Eugene Bossilkov met with Pius XII¹²⁶, yet the oppression continued¹²⁷ and Passionist missionaries were expelled¹²⁸. On October 5, 1952 Italian Catholic Action Men paid tribute to Bossilkov by publishing his photo on a poster. In 1953 it was not known if Bossilkov was dead or alive¹²⁹. He had been killed in 1952 – a witness to suffering¹³⁰.

After the Communists took control of China in 1949, Bishop Cuthbert O’Gara, Marcellus White and Justin Garvey (CRUC USA) endured solitary confinement. Even today they are powerful witnesses. Each survived this tragedy by taking great care to apply their learned principles of Passionist religious formation of prayer to survive these adverse circumstances. Solitude took on a new meaning. Forever in my mind is the following story told me by Marcellus White: “Always told that if I pray to God he would take care of me, in prison I became truly free because I made a decision to live that way. The result was that God did take care of me”.

¹²¹ *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 May 21 (1948) 3, 273-275.

¹²² *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 November 21 (1948) 6, 564-565.

¹²³ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 November (1949) 6, 511-512.

¹²⁴ *The Passionist*, Vol. 4 January (1951) 1, 64.

¹²⁵ *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 May 21 (1948) 3, 268-270; Vol 1 July 9 (1948) 4, 372-373.

¹²⁶ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 January (1949) 178.

¹²⁷ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 March – April (1949) 2, 185-186.

¹²⁸ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 July – September (1949) 4-5, 414.

¹²⁹ *The Passionist*, Vol. 6 March 25, (1953) 1, 13.

¹³⁰ Fr. Sophronius, C.P. Vol. 7 May (1954) 3, 238-243.

Each Passionist responds uniquely to personal suffering. Bishop O’Gara became a staunch anti-Communist, White and Garvey championed reconciliation with China. Grace provided them to discern the difference between a Chinese government of persecution was not equal to the life of the Chinese people they had come to love in Hunan. In my opinion, without the vision of White and Garvey, we Passionists would not be in China today¹³¹.

Under oppressive regimes, a new understanding of Passionist prayer, community and ministry arose. In retrospect we might say the above examples served as a foundation for our awareness to apply Gospel and Paulacrucian witness to seek justice and peace.

When we look back at this whole period, I suggest we rethink and reinterpret how the shaping of Passionist prayer, community and ministry can be applied to our contemporary world reality. International suffering is truly apparent and we will respond.

Passionists in Post-War Rome: Stewardship and International Formation

In the post-World War II era, Sts. John and Paul and the Generalate in Rome made a conscious decision to create an international house of formation for priests in graduate studies and spend money for architectural restoration. In 1949, central heating was installed in Sts. John and Paul and the Basilica was restored¹³².

Naming the members of the community photo taken on June 24, 1949 symbolizes that a post-war revival of our religious community was underway.

¹³¹ Details of Chinese oppression is in Robert E. Carbonneau, C.P. ‘The Velvet Glove Is Wearing Thinner and Thinner with the Mailed Fist Much in Evidence’. American Catholic Missionaries Witness Liberation in West Hunan, 1949 to 1950”. Ferdinand Verbiest Institute (ed.) *The History of the Catholic Church in China: From its beginning to the Scheut Fathers and 20th century. Unveiling some less known sources, sounds and pictures*, Leuven Chinese Studies XXIX, Leuven, Belgium, Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2015, 393-418.; O’Gara’s anti-Communism is in Robert E. Carbonneau, C.P. “It Can Happen Here’: Bishop Cuthbert O’Gara, CP and the Gospel of Anticommunism in Cold War America” *Mission Studies* XV 2 (1998) 2-30.

¹³² *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 March – April (1949) 2, 171-172.

We were stronger both as individuals and international representatives of our provinces¹³³. When we ride the Sts. John and Paul elevator, let us always take a moment and look at the historic plaque. It states that it was paid for by American benefactor Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York. I cite this because it represents the importance of stewardship. It also is a fact that modernizing a building did not go against the vow of poverty¹³⁴.

In 1950 the Sts. John and Paul community has 107 members. 39 Fathers, 33 University Students, 19 internal students and 16 Brothers¹³⁵.

Passionists in 1950 numbered 18 provinces and one Vice-Province of Poland. Priests 3360; Students 524; Brothers 510. Total in vows 3,394. Total number of novices was 198; Prep Students 1543.

Retreats numbered 176, Missions 1884, Public Exercises 4008 and Private Exercises were 1960. Names of Provinces Presentation (Italy); Sorrowful Mother (Italy); Pieta (Italy); St. Joseph (England); St. Paul of Cross (USA) St. Michael (France); Sacred Heart (Spain); Heart of Mary (Italy) Immaculate Conception (Argentina); Side of Christ (Italy); Holy Family (Spain); Holy Cross (USA); St. Gabriel (Belgium); Holy Spirit (Australia); Precious Blood (Spain) Holy Hope (Holland); Calvary (Brazil); Five Wounds (Germany)¹³⁶.

Overall published photos in the post-World War II era downplay the importance of the individual Passionist. Instead, attention turned toward showing group photos of religious communities. Almost every province shows them in full habit in front of monasteries.

¹³³ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 July – September (1949) 4-5, 382.

¹³⁴ *The Passionist*, Vol. 3 January (1950) 1, 52-54

¹³⁵ *The Passionist*, Vol. 3 March (1950) 2, 147; Statistics in 1952-1953 in *The Passionist*, Vol. 6 March 25 (1953) 1, 54-55. 1953-1954 statistics shows 32 students; *The Passionist*, Vol. 7 January (1954) 1, 49, 52; Statistics of January 1, 1955 show professed members 3, 620, an increase of 93 over 1954. See *The Passionist*, Vol. 8 November-December (1955) 8, 650-651; Students in 1952-1953 at John and Paul photo *The Passionist*, Vol. 6 September (1953) 4, 341.

¹³⁶ *The Passionist*, Vol. 4 December (1951) 4, 290-291; January 1 (1953) statistics are in *The Passionist*, Vol. 7 January (1954) 1, 90; 1954 statistics in *The Passionist*, Vol. 8 January (1955) 1, 31-32.

Such attention, when combined with statistics on membership, symbolize the strength of the Passionist tradition and recovery.

What we were proclaiming to each other was that fact that long-standing Paulacrucian appreciation of prayer, community and ministry had not been destroyed. On the contrary, at this time, our historic monastic structures had value.

In contrast to the sufferings of war we must admit the 1950s was an exciting time to be a Passionist. The ability of our predecessors to embrace and renew a common life of prayer community and ministry cannot be underestimated.

New Opportunities for Passionist Ministry and Expression of Charism

In 2016 we are still reaping the graces of this legacy as seen in the decision of many provinces to hold Missionary Congresses. Different than juridical provincial meetings, such gatherings called vowed members together to organize. Agendas stressed the spiritual life, religious formation and education and pastoral ministry.

Might this also reveal beginnings of a collaborative consensus model for how we were to take greater responsibility for our Passionist life? In 1945, The First Missionary Congress of Holy Cross Province (USA) was held. Debate centered on publicity and promotion of Passionist preaching parish missions and retreats.

Encouragement was given that young priests learn Spanish for ministry in southwest U.S. Another point of discussion was on proper liturgical attire¹³⁷.

In 1948, a lector's conference was held by South Italy (A Latere Christi Province). Because: «Changed conditions in consequence of the war and other problems made the idea of a Missionary Congress something very desirable to the minds of the missionaries»¹³⁸. Belgium held their meeting in 1949¹³⁹. Preachers of North Italy (Immaculate Heart Province) met in 1953. The Third Congress of Passionist Spirituality was convened in Pieta Province, Italy in 1955.

Topics were: Essentials and Accidentals of a Mission; The Passionist Spirit in our Apostolate; Intellectual Preparation of the Missionary; Outside Contacts of the Missionary; The Eternal Truths of the Passion; Catechetical Instruction in a Modern Mission; Mission in the City, Mission in the Country; Subsidiary Works in a Mission; The Confraternity of the Passion; Our Periodicals; Recruitment of Vocations; The Mission of Tanganyika¹⁴⁰.

¹³⁷ “Acts of the First Missionary Congress of Holy Cross Province. July 31, 1945 to August 2, 1945,” *Passionist Bulletin* October 28 (1945) 15, 2-25; Additional proceedings expressed concern that China was getting too much attention in ‘The Mexican Mission Work’ written by Written by Father Edwin Guido, C.P.: “We willingly and gladly spend good American cash to send our priests to China for the conversion of pagans, why do we not do as much for the preservation of the faith of the Mexicans? *Passionist Bulletin* October 28 (1945) 15, 27-29. In ‘Non-Catholic Missions’. Fr. Pascal, C.P. advocates ministry adaptation as needed but still upholding the value of Passionist related rituals. Use King James version of the Bible. ‘On Outdoor Preaching’ was written by Fr. Cornelius; “Our Negro Missions” was written by Fr. Michael; “Vocational Work” was written by Fr. Henry; “Youth Work,” was written by Fr. Howard; “Preaching the Sign” was written by Fr. Terence, C.P.; “Some chaplaincy activity in the Archdiocese of Detroit” was written by Fr. Fabian. All in *Passionist Bulletin* October 28 (1945) 15, 27-48.

¹³⁸ A Latere Christi (S. Italy) held August 17-22, 1948 *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 November 21 (1948) 6, 545-546; *The Passionist*, Vol. 3 January (1950) 1, 62.

¹³⁹ The province looked at preaching opportunities and regulations: *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 March – April (1949) 2, 180-181.

¹⁴⁰ Held June 16 to 20, 1953. In *The Passionist*, Vol. 6 November (1953) 6, 479. The Pieta Mission Congress was September 1955: *The Passionist*, Vol. 8 November –December (1955) 8, 631-632.

The end of the World War II necessitated the creation of the Secretariate of the Missions where, eventually, after being expelled from China in the 1950s, Caspar Caulfield (CRUC-US) became a fixture¹⁴¹. Overall, attention to the missions increased. Naples province sent men to Africa and Brazil¹⁴². Fr. Hermenegild was the first African member of Passionist Congregation was ordained on March 25, 1952¹⁴³. Northern Italy (Immaculate of Mary province) had interest in Mexico City, Mexico where they erected a preparatory seminary there¹⁴⁴. The same Italian province went to Tanganyika, Africa in 1933. In 1951 it was raised to Vicariate Apostolic¹⁴⁵.

In 1953 the first Chilean Passionist was ordained¹⁴⁶. Growth continued in Congo and Borneo¹⁴⁷. Access to airline travel facilitated a culture of hospitality to emerge. For example, in 1949, Spanish Fathers on their way to Central America, made a stopover at the Passionist monastery in Jamaica, New York City¹⁴⁸.

Passionists continued to explore radio ministry. In Ireland, in 1948, the Passionist editor of *The Cross* initiated regular retreats on radio for the sick for Easter and Christmas¹⁴⁹. This laid the groundwork for television ministry and social media of today.

Passionists have always had a special reverence for religious habit. Yet we might remember that when Dominic Barberi went on his first visit to England from Ere, Belgium to England in 1840, he opted instead to wear “strange secular clothes”.

¹⁴¹ Father Martin of the Holy Family was the first Secretary. *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 March 12 (1948) 2, 132-133.

¹⁴² *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 September 15 (1948) 5, 432.

¹⁴³ Confrater Hermenegild is first Negro Passionist professed at Penarada de Duero (Burgos) on Spanish Province of the Most Precious Blood, (photo) 1949. *The Passionist*, Vol 2 May – June (1949) 3, 296; *The Passionist*, Vol. 5 December (1952) 4, 349 [no photo though until Vol. 6 May 14 (1953) 2, 178.

¹⁴⁴ *The Passionist*, Vol. 3 January (1950) 1, 51.

¹⁴⁵ *The Passionist*, Vol. 4 September (1951) 3, 220.

¹⁴⁶ This was Fr. Mario. *The Passionist*, Vol. 7 May (1954) 3, 295-296.

¹⁴⁷ Congo: *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 January (1949) 1, 75; Borneo: *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 September 15 (1948) 5, 460.

¹⁴⁸ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 July – September (1949) 4-5, 396-398.

¹⁴⁹ This was Father Edmund. *The Passionist*, Vol. 3 January (1950) 1, 67.

Assigned there in 1841, there were times when his wearing the religious habit meant that stone and mud was thrown at him¹⁵⁰. Recall as well a major debate ensued among Passionists in China on wearing the religious habit in public. Religious garb was also an issue in Mexico. Understanding the Passionist religious habit is an important point to reference in any debate on inculturation.

Publication of Passionist prayer manuals and feast day propers attest to the unwavering Passionist attention and value given to personal and common prayer. This was also the era of Marian devotion among Passionists.

Widespread became numerous Marian customs. For example, a whole generation of Passionists used the word “Ave” when answering the knock at their monastery door¹⁵¹.

The post-war era also led to a revival of the Passionist intellectual apostolate. Increasingly, Passionists required credentials if they were assigned to teach in the internal monastic seminary system.

In the post-conciliar era, attention to the intellectual life continued to be redefined. Likewise, in these first decades of the twentieth century Passionist seminary publications such as *Gabriel* (Pieta Province), *Staurosophia* (Mother of Hope Province) and the *Apostolic Sign* (CRUC-USA) allowed theology seminarians to express their individual and collective voices¹⁵².

Ongoing attention was given as to how to fund seminary education. In 1949 the Superior General decreed “that any profit from aforementioned periodicals, after having subtracted the necessary and accessory expenses, may not be used for the benefit of the Retreat but must be entirely and exclusively be given to the Preparatory Seminary of the Province”.

¹⁵⁰ Barberi to Ireland: *Passionist Bulletin* May 5, 1945, 12, 4; Stoned: *Passionist Bulletin* July 9 (1945) 13, 3.

¹⁵¹ “Dedication of Our Congregation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary” *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 July 9 (1948) 4, 289-295.

¹⁵² *Gabriel* from students of Pieta Province and *Staurosophia* from theology students of Mother of Hope Province in. *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 January 25 (1948) 1, 88-89; *Apostolic Sign* published by eastern province seminarians. *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 July 9 (1948) 4, 379.

The Thirty-First General Chapter stated monies from religious articles be designated to seminary education¹⁵³. Monastic life of the 1950s nurtured the minds of Fabiano Giorgini, (Italy) and Barnabas Ahern (Holy Cross-USA)¹⁵⁴. In 2015, the philosophical thought of Stanislaus Breton (France) was presented at a 2015 Boston College USA symposium¹⁵⁵. While contemporaries debate iconoclastic thinker Thomas Berry (PAUL-USA) most haunting is his 1956 statement on prayer and intellectual life: «A first lesson for us to learn is that prayer for China is no substitute for study, as study is no substitute for prayer. Each should be joined together»¹⁵⁶.

Moving into the future what ministry and spiritual value might we continue to assign to the Passionist intellectual life?

Devotions Outside the Monastery

Confraternity of the Passion begun in 1898¹⁵⁷. It proved to be an essential feature of Argentine devotions in 1949¹⁵⁸ and also took root in Spain (Precious Blood Province)¹⁵⁹.

An offshoot of the Confraternity of the Passion was the Volunteers of the Cross in North Italy (Immaculate Heart Province)¹⁶⁰. Passionist pilgrimage sites are well known. In 1949, *L'Eco*, the official publication of the St. Gabriel Shrine of San Grasso, Italy described cures¹⁶¹.

¹⁵³ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 July – September (1949) 4-5, 380-381.

¹⁵⁴ CARBONNEAU R. E., “Father Barnabas Mary Ahern, C.P., Religious Life and Biblical Scholarship” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 22 (2004) 93-112.

¹⁵⁵ https://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/theology/events/2015/breton_symposium_2015.html

¹⁵⁶ BERRY T., “Our Need of Orientalists”, *Worldmission* 7 (1956) 3, 301-314, *passim*.

¹⁵⁷ *The Passionist*, Vol. 1 January 25 (1948) 1. “Santa Cruz Celebrates” [Golden Jubilee], 37-40.

¹⁵⁸ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 March-April (1949) 2, 179-180.

¹⁵⁹ *The Passionist*, Vol. 7 January (1954) 1, 82-85; Vol. 7 March (1954) 2, 191-193

¹⁶⁰ *The Passionist*, Vol. 7 January (1954) 1, 82-85; Vol. 7 March (1954) 2, 191-193.

¹⁶¹ *The Passionist*, Vol. 2 July – September (1949) 4-5, 383.

In the United States, Scranton, Pennsylvania continues to be home to the St. Ann Novena in July¹⁶². On Good Friday on Mt. Adams in Cincinnati, Ohio, Passionists were longtime promoters of devotion to the Passion of Jesus by welcoming those who climbed the steps to Immaculata Church. Devotees continue to be attracted to Passionist Saints such as Charles Houben of Mount Argus, Ireland¹⁶³.

Passionist Vocations

My research shows that we have always said the we have not had enough Passionist vocations¹⁶⁴. Due to lack of vocations in Argentina the “Vocation Movements” was organized in 1953¹⁶⁵. Every province distributed vocation pamphlets which stressed how Passionists throughout the world in any culture fulfilled their vows based on a common life seen in prayer, community and ministry¹⁶⁶.

Fortunately, in the 1950s, the long-standing prejudices that once existed between Passionist brothers and clerics began to disappear.

Nonetheless, two examples help us understand this history. Brother Anthony Chelstowska of the Annunciation (Vice Province of Poland) was born in 1910.

After hearing a Passionist retreat in 1928, he applied to the Passionists. He was refused to study for priesthood because of his older age and lack of studies. Eventually becoming a brother and assigned to the Preparatory Seminary at Przasnysz.

Sent to Rome in 1936 to be a tailor and infirmarian, the Roman climate did not agree with him. In 1939 he returned home to Poland and «was overtaken by the vicissitudes of the War and died sometime in July 1941»¹⁶⁷. The incidents pertaining to his vocation story remind us of the personal commitment of all of us.

¹⁶² CARBONNEAU R. E., «Coal Mines, St. Ann’s Novena and Passionist Spirituality in Scranton, Pennsylvania, 1902-2002» *American Catholic Studies* 115 (2004) 23-44.

¹⁶³ <http://www.haroldscross.org/tours-mount-argus/>

¹⁶⁴ «LetUsPrayforVocations,” <http://www.cprovince.org/archives/heritage/winter2002/winter02-2-3.php>.

¹⁶⁵ *The Passionist*, Vol. 6 March 25 (1953) 1, 79.

¹⁶⁶ *Passionist Bulletin* November 21 (1944) 9, 41-42.

¹⁶⁷ *The Passionist*, Vol. 3 January (1950) 1, 44-45.

Through his life and ministry, Brother Simon West (CRUC-USA) addressed the clericalism inherent in the religious culture of the time. His steadfast efforts resulted in better food preparation in U.S. monasteries¹⁶⁸.

Brother Damian Carroll (CRUC-USA) followed in his footsteps by taking a lead in creating National Association of Religious Brothers (NARB) which published the *Brothers Newsletter*. The diverse ministry provided by Passionist brothers deserves greater attention. Sadly, Passionists were not immune to prejudice or racism. It has been said to play a decision as to why Chinese seminarian Noah Peng opted not to be a Passionist in the late 1940s¹⁶⁹.

Given the history of Passionist vocations we might address our situation less about the needs we have.

Rather, let us encourage men we meet to proclaim how they will share with us the process of naming sufferings so as to proclaim the resurrection. Understanding expression of prayer, community and ministry in provinces and internationally will most certainly continue.

Part Two: Conclusion and application

Previous observations in Part One have been offered to deepen our respect for how we Passionists have kept before us and lived out prayer, community ministry.

I have tried to keep them balanced in order to promote good discussion and lead to practical ways to enhance our vowed life and mission and long-standing Passionist tradition.

¹⁶⁸ Br. Mary Simon [West] C.P., "Health and Our Holy Founder and the Passionist Diet" Vol. 3 December (1950) 5, 392-398; Vol. 4 January (1951) 1, 15-18, 67-69; Vol. 4 June (1951) 2, 116-121; Vol. 4 September (1951) 3, 169-173, 243-247. All in *The Passionist*. This raises larger question of diet in community life and overall nutrition and cultural implication of food as congregation grows. Economy of poverty and health and relationship of Passionist facilities with health codes in local cultures. West, even addressed health needs for Passionists who might be diabetics or have an ulcer.

¹⁶⁹ Noah Peng accepted as a Passionist novice after a year of theology at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, Maryland, USA. *Passionist Bulletin* July 9 (1944) 7. 36.

Let us now shift our attention. What does this past understanding offer us Passionists of today? Appreciation of our Passionist Rules and Regulations and Chapter Document has been essential since our founding. We cannot dismiss this. History teaches also teaches us we must be ready to face the new cultural and social realities which will continue to stretch and redefine us.

The longer our history, the more we have to accept our international character as Passionists. History shows that while we are proud and value our home provinces we are not limited by those provinces. It has been our embracing of this international character that we have been able to survive state-controlled challenges and a living expression of the Passion of Jesus expressed by global war. While this has not been easy. We also have to admit that there is truth to this.

Passionist life became trans-cultural in the twentieth century. Our sense of community and purpose of ministry with each other has only benefited from our ability to speak and learn more than our own native-born language. Moving into the future let us continue to take the full advantage of this situation. Let us insure our mental health and spiritual health. We have greater resources to address culture shock, diverse dietary needs and provide for adequate leisure and health care. To fulfill our life of prayer, community and ministry in the twentieth century, every province became more aware of responsible stewardship. Attention to this proved essential in our ability to survive the World Wide Depression of the 1930s and the 1940s terror of war.

I have presented evidence to show the heroic way our vowed members kept alive prayer, community and ministry in and beyond the monastery cloister over these past critical years. In times of trouble we came to value the physical space and safety of our monasteries.

Our decision and ability to rebuild, renovate and expand in the post-World War II era is a tangible reminder we did not see ourselves as refugees. At the same time, the intimacy of this monastic life based on common prayer and community probably also opened our eyes to see our common wounds. Let us continue to ask ourselves: what graces have we learned from those who have lived with us and suffered post-traumatic stress or life threatening illnesses?

Vowed Passionists of today have a longer life span than they did fifty years ago. As a result, we have come to know our burdens quite well. But do we view them as heavy or light? If needed, how do we envision healing? Furthermore, I suggest regular post-war publication of group photos of Passionist in our religious habits became a signal of hope. As much as possible every province recommitted to religious formation of candidates. Over time, we have also progressed to recognize that our common vowed identity as Passionists of prayer, community and ministry is sacred when we recognized the self-worth and talent inherent in each individual. Mirroring the past, some will live this out in both small and large religious communities and as individuals. A process of fair accountability and leadership must always exist. We can never underestimate the importance of local superiors, provincials and the General Curia in leadership together.

From another perspective, we must not underestimate drawing upon and developing our common intellectual life in the context of our common prayer life will allow us of service our Passionist traditions as well as church and society.

I would suggest that it is absolutely essential for us Passionists to continually develop resources to professionally preserve our history. Such documentation keeps us honest and inspires us. Scholars' ability to access, learn from and contribute to our critical historical understanding is a true testament to Passionist legacy and future.

Looking back, I suggest we have experienced a revolution in our expression of the Passionist ministry. Our tradition of preaching the message of the cross still makes sense to people in the church pews across many different cultures and languages. As we took risk to expand, attention shifted anew to Africa, the Spanish-speaking world of the Americas and Asia. Retreat houses were built.

We turned our attention to radio and print. To sustain our prayer life and common life we came to accept the access to cars, airplanes and public transport. Moreover, we began to admire and debate Passionists who represented us in the international arena and diverse religious traditions.

Critics of my reflection would be correct to note that there has been little mention of the laity. Standard Passionist narratives prior to the Vatican II era (1962-1965) were often silent on this topic. It serves as a blunt reminder of how we perceived ourselves.

The contribution of laity to Passionist life of prayer, community and ministry became more inclusive in the last decades of the twentieth century. While an interactive process between Passionists and laity across different cultures is not always easy, most of us know Passionist tradition makes more sense when we build spiritual bridges of such cooperation based on professionalism and accountability.

Allow me to offer some general reflection questions. 1) What aspect of the life and spirit of St. Paul of the Cross do you think is attractive to the people of the culture where you live and minister? 2) What is the legacy of prayer, community and ministry that you have learned from your province? 3) What is a concrete specific way that the international character of Passionist prayer, community and ministry enriches you 4) Who is a Passionist of history that inspires you and why? Perhaps it is best to end here. Perhaps in the future I will research this Passionist history beyond 1956.

Overall, I have tried to accomplish the following objective: As we encourage Catholics to pray and know stories of the Scripture and tenets of our faith and tradition, let us in this same spirit always think and teach historical examples from our past. Let us hold these and other stories with respect, if we forgot Passionists of the past.

Passionist of the future may very well forget us. All of us share the responsibility to prevent Passionist historical amnesia.

Finally, recall again the words of Superior General Bernard Silvestrelli in 1906: “We live in very threatening times, and I am convinced that worse are coming. What will happen to our congregation?”¹⁷⁰

If he or St. Paul of the Cross were here, I hope they would tell us how proud they have been that we Passionists did not let go of prayer, community and ministry during the twentieth century.

Instead, we adapted. Paulacrucian values remained central to our local and international heartbeat. Passionists of today continue faithfully to live lives of prayer, community and ministry.

Let us continue to gain honest wisdom from our history. I believe it can only assist as we work together to make decisions about our Passionist future.

¹⁷⁰ GIORGINI F., *Bernard Mary Silvestrelli, Passionist*. Translated by Patrick Rogers, C.P., Rome, Passionist CIPI, 1990, 116.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Cap. Gen., General Chapter.
cas., drawer.
cf., compares.
datt., typescript.
decr., decree.
cit., cited.
f., sheet.
ff., sheets.
Ib., Ibidem.
ms., manuscript.
n., number.
PA, Ordinary process of Alessandria.
PO, Ordinary process of Orbetello.
POC, Ordinary process of Corneto (Tarquinia)
POR, Ordinary process of Rome
POV, Ordinary process of Vetralla.
ss., following pages.
Vol., Volume.

Summary

PRESENTATION	3
THE HISTORY OF PASSIONIST FORMATION	4
The Apostolic School or Minor Seminary	7
Formation in the Novitiate	11
The continuation of spiritual formation in the early years following profession	21
Formation for the Religious Brothers.....	35
The Brothers’ acquisition of skills	37
Formation for Pastoral and Missionary Undertakings.....	40
Formation today	43
THE CONCEPT OF BEING PASSIONIST ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS	45
Introduction	45
Initial Fundamentals of the vocation to the “Passion of Christ”	46
Passionists are made, not born: history as a process	49
The personal experience of the Founder – the norm of life.....	52
The Passion of Christ: The Fundamental Element that gives birth to the Congregation	54
“Gather Companions” to recall the Passion	55
The writings of Paul of the Cross, Source of the Charism	58
Conclusion.....	60
PAUL OF THE CROSS AND THE PASSIONISTS 18TH CENTURY: THE TIMES AND PLACES; PERSONALITIES AND EVENTS	63
HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS ON PASSIONIST PRAYER, COMMUNITY AND MINISTRY.....	70
Part One: New Perspectives	70
Passionist Military Chaplains: New Ministry in Response to Suffering....	74
War redefines prayer, community and ministry	76
Diverse World War II prison narratives and the creation of a common alternative Passionist international community experience	77
Nation/state imposed sufferings	78
Passionist Survival After World War II	80
Passionists in Post-War Rome: Stewardship and International Formation	82
New Opportunities for Passionist Ministry and Expression of Charism ...	84
Devotions Outside the Monastery	88
Passionist Vocations.....	89
Part Two: Conclusion and application	90
Abbreviations and acronyms	94
Summary	95

