

Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality - 34

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**PASSIONISTS AND LAY CATHOLICS IN THE UNITED
STATES
ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS PROVINCE
AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE HISTORY 1852-1970s**

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Introduction

This alternative narrative history of St. Paul of the Cross province in the United States summarizes selected events from 1852 to the immediate post-Conciliar era of the early 1970s¹. Passionists in other provinces and others associated with Passionist ministry are invited to reflect on a storyline that offers a diverse historical echo of the past from which we might be familiar. Appreciation and critique of these historical events are most welcome by all who might read this, I hope you will agree with me that it provides contemporary Passionists of the early twenty-first century an analytical tool of inquiry that contributes insight to how our contemporary international Passionist identity has taken root. Every effort has been made to go beyond some established monographs and rediscover Passionist identity using archival sources and official province documents². While this narrative is very much centered on the contribution of Americans from St. Paul of the Cross (eastern province), I invite you to read and reflect about how these issues might reflect your own Passionist culture or language group. In other words, what might be a parallel incident that comes to mind? How might you enter into debate with these sources so as to contribute and expand on content of this essay? What scenarios surprise you? As we Passionists live in present and plan for the future, might we take the opportunity to keep before us a serious appreciation of our history so as enliven our charism.

¹ Content is combined from two unpublished essays by the author: *1998 Provincial Chapter History* (April 1998) and *Lay Passionist Involvement: An Historical Reflection*. The latter was presented at the Passionist Associates Weekend, Jamaica, NY June 12, 2004. All names in this history are Passionists unless otherwise indicated. Also see Passionist Historical Archives website: www.cpprovince.org/archives

² Essential sources were written by Passionists Felix Ward, *The Passionists* (1923) and Cassian Yuhaus' *Compelled To Speak* (1967). These dual seminal U.S. Passionist histories, however, place limited emphasis on the twentieth century. Concentrating on institutional history and identifying important personalities, Ward's strength is his closeness to the period of the founding in 1852 while Yuhaus is more analytical, verifying or criticizing Ward and developing a narrative based on analysis of relevant archival sources. Roger Mercurio's *The Passionists* (1992) is a readable and balanced synoptic view of the Passionist Congregation from its founding in Italy till the 1980s.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

On September 28, 1852, Bishop Michael O'Connor of Pittsburgh and Passionist General Anthony Testa agreed to send to America Passionist Fathers Anthony Calandri, Albinus Magno, Stanislaus Parczyk and Brother Lawrence di Giacomo.

None were proficient in English. Parczyk, fluent in German, was added at the last minute so as to serve the German immigrants of Pittsburgh.

The Pittsburgh foundation did not begin smoothly. Parczyk for a time worked in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area while the others went with Bishop O'Connor to Pittsburgh. Passionist historian Father Cassian Yuhaus indicates that Lawrenceville, north of Pittsburgh, rather than Birmingham, on the Southside was where the Passionists almost built their first foundation. However, Calandri, the Passionist superior, felt that the land at Lawrenceville had too high a debt and chose the more isolated Birmingham site. This had the added benefit providing Parczyk to serve the German speaking population of St. Michael's parish.

While the monastery was being built, Passionists stayed at the Bishop's residence, or at out missions and local parishes throughout the area. At this early juncture, O'Connor was responsible for the financial care of the Passionists. Because of the inability of Passionists to speak English it took some time to commence preaching to this population. The pastoral decision of these early Passionists to learn English requires greater appreciation. Had this not been advocated, Passionists would have followed a pattern preaching to limited rather than to diversified American audiences.

Historian Henry A. Szarnicki built on Yuhaus and concluded that overall relations between O'Connor and the Passionists were good but four problems existed. In addition to the aforementioned question of where to build the monastery, O'Connor and his parish priests were not favorable to the Italian custom of seeking money by going out the public by questing since they drew away needed income from the diocese. In time, Passionists discontinued reliance on this means of livelihood, as they came to realize that Americans equated the Gospel value of begging with laziness. Thus, Passionists began to accept a stipend when preaching. Third, the new Passionist superior Father Dominic Tarlattini arrived July 22, 1854. The first solemn Mass in the Passionist chapel was celebrated on April 30, 1854. Yuhaus credits Tarlattini as the real founder of the Province because he was more decisive than Calandri. Szarnicki also argued that O'Connor and Tarlattini had conflict over allowing the Passionists to abandon the Southside foundation due to financial problems and the rise of the Anti-Catholic Know Nothing party.

If the Passionists did as O'Connor said, then the Bishop would get the land. So, the Passionists did not abandon it. Seeking to interpret the Passionist affiliation strictly, O'Connor favored the Passionists stay in the Pittsburgh area so as to work only in his diocese. Eventually the Passionists did move beyond the diocese³.

Yet even as the Passionists opted to expand they gained local experience that is worthwhile to appreciate. A profound multi-layered impact was made by these Italian-based missionaries that left a lasting mark on nineteenth century South-side Pittsburgh.

Passionist Father Philip Birk's 1886 German language history of St. Michael's German parish in Pittsburgh confirms a four-tiered Passionist-lay involvement. Essential from the start was *financial solvency*. On October 16, 1858, a parish Building Society was formed - with lay members - so as to collect monthly dues for the purpose of completing the building project. Once the church was completed the organization served as the Debt-Reduction Society. Records ceased to exist in 1867 so the Building Society appears to have died a natural death⁴.

Laity were important in sustaining *effective management*. During the 1860s Passionist Fathers Jacob Hoffzugottt and Vincent Nagler were assigned to the St. Michael's. Ever busy, they hired a Mr. Roth "to handle business affairs. He was a "fitting man for the position". and received an income of \$700.00⁵. Crucial was the numerous *Benevolent Societies*. One was made up of "men of the parish for the purpose of mutual assistance in case of sickness or death". Birk states that the priest himself had to request to join the society and be admitted by a committee. He then paid the required dues. Membership, in this case, did not come with his clerical state in life.

³ Henry A. Szarnicki's *The Episcopate of Michael O'Connor First Bishop of Pittsburgh, 1843-1860*. Ph.D. dissertation. The Catholic University of America. 1971.

⁴ The *Birk History* was translated from the German by Passionist Father Christopher Berlo. The document is in the Passionist Historical Archives. Hereafter PHA. (The largest deposit of the Passionist Historical Archives is now at Special Collections. Weinberg Memorial Library, The University of Scranton, Scranton, Pennsylvania) Members of the Building Society were President: Magnus Segner; Treasurer: Joseph Riehling; Secretary: Henry Rummel. In Father Philip *Birk History*, 77.

⁵ *Birk History*, pages 85-86 states that the parish could have employed three full-time priests. Since the two priests could not take care of "daily temporal needs of the parish" they appointed a man to handle "ordinary parish business affairs. He was the secretary of the church council. He had his office in the rectory, where he daily spent from 6 to 7 hours. He was the book-keeper for the parish and for the priests. He rented the church pews and collected the rents for the same. The people went to him if they had business with the rectory, if they wanted a Mass read or sung, or to apply for a wedding or a funeral, or send a child to school, or to ask for a priest for the sick, or if they wanted to deposit money or withdraw a deposit. He kept the death, marriage and baptismal records of the parish". Each week, writes Birk, the man made a ledger report on stipends and stole-fees and once a month provided a report to the parish council. PHA.

In fact, some society members voted against the priest. As one might expect, such an approach meant that the organization did not have a long life.

Nonetheless, diversity of service and life span characterized these various organizations. St. Michael's Roman Catholic Benevolent Society had been founded prior to the arrival of the Passionists on May 24, 1849 it had dissolved in 1886. The St. Boniface Charitable Institution began on June 7, 1854 and was dying out by the 1880s.

Notable was the St. Roche Society began on February 4, 1866. Twenty years later it had 176 members and \$4558.

Its future looked promising. Devotions associated with St. Roche became etched in the soul of South-side Pittsburghers⁶. A Roman Catholic Confraternity was established on November 27, 1870 by 37 men of St. Michael's Parish for the purpose of mutual assistance in case of sickness, and assisting the needy, as well as widows, and orphans of deceased members. Financially one of the "best benevolent" organizations, it had been able to respond to various needs without assessing the members.

In the 1880s the Society had about 170 members. The St. Aloysius Benevolent Society was founded June 30, 1872 and incorporated November 16, 1872. Its purpose was "mutual encouragement in the fulfilment of the religious duties of a Christian; mutual assistance in case of sickness; the assisting of needy members and of the widows and orphans of deceased members". A Library Society was initiated in 1872 and organized eight years later in order to develop a circulating library for the parish. In 1886, cost had been \$120 and volumes in circulation were 1000 with volumes added each year. The library was run by 40 young men from the Holy Family Conference. A priest was the spiritual director. Available was a reading room. There were regular monthly meetings. Finally, there was also a St. Vincent de Paul Society which had begun in 1876⁷.

⁶ From *Birk History*, page 124 is the following summary: Also, St. Roche was a holy day "celebrated nowhere perhaps in the United States except in St. Michael's Parish. It is called feast of St. Roche on August 16, the so-called Cholera-Holyday". Parish records show "This Holyday was instituted by the church council with the approval of the entire parish in memory of the cholera disease which raged here in 1849 and claimed so many victims. It is to be celebrated each year during the Octave of the Feast of the Assumption of the Bl. Virgin Mary. On this feast day the following must be done: 1. Only holy Mass is to be celebrated for the members of the parish who died of the cholera; 2. One holy Mass is to be celebrated in honor of St. Roche; 3. One Solemn High Mass is to be celebrated in honor of the Mother of God, with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and at the end, the Te Deum is to be sung; 4. A sermon suitable to the occasion is to be preached; 5. Solemn Vespers and Benediction is to be held". Approved by Bishop O'Connor on April 3, 1854, Birk goes on to write "When parish decided to celebrate day the epidemic ceased in the parish although it continued in city and surroundings. In 1853 when it broke out again St. Michael's parish "was entirely immune from the disease".

⁷ The *Birk History* goes on to offer additional information on many benevolent societies. PHA.

Devotional and spiritual lay organizations were a fourth dimension. Among them were the Archconfraternity of the Holy Family begun in 1853. In January 1886, it had 1888 members. Begun in 1860 was the Archconfraternity in honor of the Assumption of Mary for the consolation of the poor souls in purgatory. In 1886 it numbered 618 members. 1870 saw the establishment of the Society of the Living Rosary. St. Michael's Parish was incorporated into the Apostolate of Prayer on November 20, 1876.

On October 25, 1877, the Associate-Confraternity of Our Lady of Victory was incorporated into the Archconfraternity of the holy and immaculate heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners⁸.

Passionist Superior General Testa in Rome and Tarlattini in the U.S. moved slowly and deliberately to bring about the Passionist vision. The building of the Pittsburgh monastery took on a European flavor. It consisted of thirteen bedrooms, eight used as such, and a chapel. Not until June 25, 1854 did the novitiate commence. And there was only one novice. Testa and novice master Anthony Calandri had to face the problem of being a Passionist in North America. Of great importance was how to adapt the Passionist Rules and Regulations without sacrificing their religious identity⁹.

Obviously, success required Passionist religious and bishops' reliance upon each other. It was fine when this went smoothly, but at times could manifest itself in a power struggle as to how the Passionist ministry would take root in a diocese. One manifestation of this is expressed in the desire of the Passionists to build a monastery that would maintain respect for their solitude and common religious observance of prayer. Cultural adaptation to an American diet was another factor. Passionists often substituted meat for fish in penitential seasons and beer for wine because of financial reasons. The Passionist Congregation grew slowly during this first decade. Overall once decisions were made to promote consistency in lifestyle, ministry and leadership the Passionists were able to expand by 1861.

⁸ *Birk History*, 124 PHA.

⁹ Yuhaus, *Compelled to Speak*, writes that being a Passionist depended upon "observance of the Rule and adaptation to the nation. It was not a literal observance of the Rule that mattered but rather the comprehension of its spirit and importance of instilling this into the minds and hearts of the young. But this had to be done without destroying national character or temperament". 90. Furthermore, in a letter to Tarlattini January 24, 1862, Testa wrote: You must select as Master of Novices one who knows how to communicate the spirit of the Congregation, making adaptation as far as possible to the genius of the nation, not offending or harming the national character but blending it with the Passionist spirit, 92.

Upstate New York

In 1860, a major impetus behind their accepting a second foundation in Dunkirk, New York seems to have been because Passionist Albinus Magno had a personal and positive relationship with then Bishop John Timon, C.M. of Buffalo, New York. Timon can be said to be a collector of religious congregations. As Bishop, he had already attained the service of the Franciscans, Marists, Jesuits, Oblates, and his own Vincentians by the time the Passionists came in 1861.

Invited to minister were seven orders of religious women. He even was the founder of a congregation of religious brothers. Upon their arrival at St. Mary's in Dunkirk, the Passionists found themselves involved in a bitter dispute with Buffalo diocesan priest Peter Colgan. Colgan had not been informed that the Passionists were coming.

Though it was resolved over time, it is another example of bishop-diocesan priest-religious tension. When the Passionists arrived, their residence was local home. A short time later monastery was built adjacent to St. Mary's Church.

During the later nineteenth century understanding the dynamics between Passionists and local lay Catholics became more prevalent. St. Mary's Lyceum offers us a means to appreciate the close association. On Sunday, December 20, 1891, Passionist "Father Mark [Moeslein] strolled out for an afternoon's walk and visit. He called at the residence of Mr. R. Mulholland, on W. Fifth Street, [Dunkirk, New York] where he was told, that the master of the house was just about getting ready to go down to the Monastery to have a talk with Father Mark who had there and then just [arrived] in a very tangible bodily appearance. The conversation from that time on till the close of the visit, was the organizing of a literary and debating society".

As one might expect, both men agreed that such a literary society required the consent of St. Mary's Passionist pastor Father John Baudinelli. Furthermore, Moeslein also told Mulholland of one condition. "That a society be organized whose vitality would be from within the membership of the laymen composing it; that he would have nothing to do with a society whose vitality would be primarily the active interest of the clergy. It must be a lay society of Catholic men".

This Literary Association, as it became to be known, developed a constitution and by-laws. Discussions with Baudinelli led to the conclusion that most desirable would be that the Association "purchase a lot, and erect its own building". Membership levels were established: those opting for life long inclusion would pay fifty dollars "under certain conditions. This membership to have control of the property of the association through the Board of Directors who must all be life time members".

Active-members were a second group “made up of Catholic men of good habits who would pay the initiation fee of ten dollars, who should have a right to vote on all questions”. Honorary-members composed the final cohort. Their contribution was one hundred dollars but they were not entitled to vote or hold office. At first, it was thought to admit non-Catholics. Subsequently it was agreed that only Catholics should be eligible to membership.

Ultimately the decision was made that only parishioners from St. Mary’s Church, Dunkirk, could join. They could be admitted as either Life-members or Active Members. This plan was enacted with the belief that it would facilitate harmony better than a more varied membership. Of course, once the Lyceum was a success - which everyone assumed would be the case - then a quest for wider membership would take place¹⁰.

This 1891 meeting between Moeslein and Mulholland speaks of a working relationship between clergy and lay men. In this scenario, lay leadership was a priority right from the start. Legal incorporation and land ownership were important while membership was based upon economics and parish affiliation limited to lay Catholics. More research is required to ascertain the decision to exclude non-Catholics.

Northern New Jersey

The mission to West Hoboken, New Jersey began on August 9, 1863. Implementation of this effort was slightly behind schedule due to a communication lag between the Passionist Generalate in Rome and Tarlattini in the United States. All parties concerned were pleased with the site. Located across the Hudson River from New York City, West Hoboken heights was considered to be the countryside as well as a potential economic matrix with a large immigrant population.

The monastery at West Hoboken was built in similar fashion as the Pittsburgh foundation. The Passionists made an important public statement that they were invested in the American experience when they selected one of the most able architects of the period, Patrick C. Keely. He completed the building of St. Michael’s Monastery in 1864¹¹.

¹⁰ All the information on this lay association comes from St. Mary’s Lyceum Scrapbook. 208.02 Box 4 St. Mary’s, Dunkirk, NY. Passionist Historical Archives. Hereafter PHA.

¹¹ In 1925 West Hoboken combined with Union Hill to be known as Union City. For a complete history of the Passionist foundation in New Jersey see Robert E. Carbonneau, C.P., ““On the rocky eminence rising from the west bank of the Hudson river, in plain view of New York City’. The Passionists at St. Michael’s Monastery, Union City New Jersey 1861 to 2016: From Historical Prominence to The Legacy of a Diverse Past”, Editor Carl Ganz, Jr. *Essays On New Jersey Catholic History: In*

At the same time, less attention has been given to the Passionist expansion undertaken on the California west coast. Earlier, Passionist Peter Magagnotto, having been part of the failed attempt to establish the Passionists in Australia made his way to California in 1852 where he proved to be of tremendous service as vicar-apostolic to Archbishop Joseph Alemany, O.P. of San Francisco.

Likewise, seeking to establish a link with workers seeking money from the newly discovered silver mines of the Comstock Lode, from 1863 to 1864 east coast Passionists tried, unsuccessfully, to establish a viable monastic foundation in Virginia City, Nevada.

Passionist Monastic Life

During these early years, Passionists to Nevada and those sent to other locations to throughout the United States was how to integrate an Italian-based expression of Paul of the Cross in a new multi-cultural and economically diverse society. Complicating the effort was surviving and thriving in the midst of an American Civil War (1861-1865).

John Tettermer's controversial autobiography *I Was A Monk* describes Passionist lifestyle of the late nineteenth century. Published in 1951 it was controversial because Tettermer was an American who became a Passionist priest, served as a General Consultor in Rome and later left the Congregation. Writing about his experience was a bold move. What makes this a great read is his forthright recollection of the austere Passionist horarium as a novice in St. Paul. Kansas. He wrote about how he communicated at the meal table by using hand signals known as The Monk's Alphabet. How he was awakened to make his way to common prayer remains offers a classic appreciation of what it meant to be a Passionist

“After the four or five hours’ of sleep, which seemed like five minutes...we were aroused by the loud sounding of the “rattle”, an oblong piece of hardwood, about a foot in length and with a wooden flapper on each side, well calculated to wake the dead for he chanting of Matins and Lauds...Matins came at midnight and Lauds at break of day, with Prime, Terce, Sext and None at the first, third, sixth, and ninth hour of the artificial Roman day; that is at six nine, twelve, and three o’clock. Vespers, still held as a public service, was sung at six o’clock, and Compline, the last prayer at the close of the day, at nine o’clock...

Commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of the founding of the New Jersey Colony. New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission. 2016, 184-209. Search title: available from Amazon.com.

If we add to this the hour of mental prayer morning and evening, and the half hour given to celebrating Mass, it will be seen that the monk engages in direct spiritual exercises for practically one quarter of the twenty-four hours....”

Tettemer, known after ordination as Passionist Father Ildefonso, described the tradition of taking the discipline- a mild form of pious self-flagellation.

“Three nights a week the lights were put out after the singing of the office, the shutters were closed, and the monks scourged themselves for about ten minutes, while the long psalm of the “Misere” and other prayers were...The “discipline” or scourge is generally made of knotted cords and can be laid on lightly or heavily as fervor dictates”¹².

While Tettemer only offered the public a basic summary, there was a much more unique religious life and culture that took place behind the monastery cloister was. “If You Keep the Rule and the Rule Will Keep You”.

Well into the post-conciliar era of Vatican II (1962-1965) Passionists from most any culture or language group were familiar with some variation of this saying.

In fact, as the years have passed, Passionist priests, brothers and seminarians and the general public familiar with the history of the Congregation were informed how Passionists were known for leading an austere life that centered on prayer, penance and solitude.

Since this horarium of common life came to be lived in a more defined synchronized manner that was true in most monasteries worldwide it worthwhile to describe in some detail how this dominant uniform culture operated in these monasteries – although a novitiate house followed with some variations.

Typically, absolute authority in the monastery was vested in the rector, or religious superior. He could not be removed from a canonical office unless it was for a “grievous or moral” reason. Well into the early 1960s, those who lived in Passionist monasteries such as Union City, New Jersey, for example, followed customs that hearkened back to life as experienced in eighteenth and nineteenth century Italy. Since no bells were used during the grand silence from 9:00 PM to 6:00 AM a seminary student - in keeping with dean order of vowed profession - was assigned to walk the corridor with the “clapper” or rattle so as to arouse the community for matins and lauds. This process would start fifteen minutes before matins; the person walked from one end of the corridor, proceeding on to walk and clap the rattle throughout each corridor: the first rattle.

¹² John Tettemer. *I Was A Monk: The Autobiography of John Tettemer (Fr. Ildefonso)* n.p.: Ruth Tettemer, 1951; Wheaton, IL: Re-Quest Books, 1974. Quotes on pages 64 and 66.

Then he would repeat the same procedure a second time. This concluded directly outside the monastic choir door. By this time all Passionists were expected to be in their assigned choir stall by the end of the second walk through¹³.

In this era before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), it is important to remember that the celebration of community Mass was secondary to the mental prayer that should be taking place during the celebration. Recall that the Mass was in Latin and no participation was expected from those Passionists who were in attendance. The priest said his prayers; the server did the required responses.

The priest offered no homily. In addition, nothing was thought of the custom whereby those did attend a Mass got up and prior to the consecration walked out of chapel. Quickly they retrieved the shoulder mantels of their Passionist habits, put it on and immediately returned back to receive Communion¹⁴.

After Masses were over, breakfast consisted of community members gathering in the coffee room where they ate bread and butter and drank coffee. Not until the early sixties was jelly and jam allowed¹⁵. After coffee, members had about fifteen to twenty minutes to freshen up. This was the norm because personal hygiene was functional at best¹⁶. St. Michael's Monastery would have developed a schedule which saw seminary students commence class at 9:00 AM.

¹³ (Much of the material in this section on Passionist monastic life and culture was provided to me upon request from Passionist Brother Leo Di Fiore, C.P. in March 2016 and is included in the previously cited essay of mine on Union City and New Jersey Catholic history). Even into the late 1950's and early 1960's the discipline was still taken in the monastery choir. After matins and lauds on Wednesdays and Fridays, all community members came out of their choir stalls. The shade would be closed on the choir windows so no light could come in to choir area. The lights would be turned off and the assigned prayers would be said while the Community took the discipline. Each took the soft whip-like tether (called the discipline) to strike themselves as a sign of unity in Christ's passion. Once this short devotional exercise was completed, lights were turned back on. Members returned to bed until 6:00 AM. For more see Father Columkille Regan, C.P. "The Discipline" 13 *The Passionist Heritage Newsletter* (Summer 2006).

¹⁴ A second Mass would then follow, again there was no homily. It would be during this mass that the seminary students and brothers would leave the monastery choir to serve or sing the private Masses in the side chapels or side altars the monastery church or parish church if a parish was as attached to that Monastery. If a school was part of the parish complex you would have altar boys who would serve the parish Masses. This hour of approximately from 6:30 AM to 7:30 AM was also considered mental prayer time. So, if you were not one of the seminarians assigned to serve or sing you were expected to be in the choir at prayer while the masses were going on.

¹⁵ If needed, older professed members were allotted more substantial items for breakfast.

¹⁶ Since Passionists until the early 1960s customarily slept in their religious, little time was needed for personal care. Cleric seminary students were only permitted to shower on Thursdays and Saturdays because they did not do that much manual labor. On the other hand, due to their work responsibilities the Brothers were permitted to shower each day. On Saturday, Passionists were allotted a change of underwear.

Brothers reported to their duties at that time while the ordained were to be on their way to work in the parish, teach, prepare sermons, or take on other responsibilities.

At around 11:00 AM the students would be engaged in “public offices” which included cleaning down stairwells, attending to the sacristy or making up the guest rooms. By 11:30 AM community members headed back to the monastery choir to pray sext and none. As in Europe, lunch was always the larger of the two meals served each day. At the same time, Passionists maintained fast and abstinence on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday during ordinary time of church year.

During Lent and Advent, the fast and abstinence were kept throughout that time. Lunch at 12:00 noon was observed in silence while to cleric students read aloud¹⁷. This silence led to a culture of hand signals if one needed butter, salt, or pepper¹⁸.

Vesper rest followed at 2:00 PM. Similar to a monastery rector, the director of seminary students was known for his ability to fully implement or adapt the Passionist rules and regulations. Some for instance, insisted that a student go to their room for an afternoon rest in their bed – no matter if you could sleep or not. Other directors did not care as long as you stayed in your cell and kept quiet. After vesper rest, cleric seminarians had class and brothers returned to work.

At 4:30PM there was time for a solitary walk in the monastery garden or property whereby the key was to be silent and make preparation for the mental prayer. Also known as meditation, this found the members of the religious community back in the monastery choir from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

However, those assigned as Brother cooks had been expected to make their hour of meditation in the afternoon right after vespers. Supper was at 6:00 PM followed by a half hour of recreation.

¹⁷ In monastic houses of study, communal reading at both lunch and dinner was typically done by two students for each meal- again following dean order of vowed profession. If a mistake was made in pronunciation, that student would be corrected by the director of students. If he was not present, the rector would do the correction. In those houses where no students were present, the younger priests would do the common reading at meals. In student life when in theology the students got their biretta, they were required to wear them at meals. When hearing the name of Jesus, they were required to tip to their biretta three times. If the name of Paul of the Cross was heard during the reading the biretta had to be tipped three times.

¹⁸ Common penance was also a norm. In a student house like Union City, on Wednesdays students would leave the dining refectory after the noon meal and process to a common floor corridor. There they would lay prostrate on the floor, head to toe, one right after the other, face down, arms folded under one's face. While a ritual prayer was recited the senior members of the community passed by. On Friday, the senior members did the same as the student body passed by.

After evening recreation, the student body would go to the common social community room so the whole Community would be assembled for a short prayerful encouragement given by the rector. The rector then blessed those present before night prayers. In some monasteries, compline was at 7:30 PM; some houses or retreats followed with recitation of the Rosary 8:00 PM. After night prayers community members returned to their monastic cell to study - philosophy students were permitted to study till 10 PM. However, all followed grand silence beginning at 9:00 PM¹⁹.

A perspective on Lay-Passionist Interaction in the Context of the Nineteenth Century Passionist Parish Mission in the United States

Several decades after their 1852 arrival, Passionists were known throughout the United States as successful preachers of the parish mission. Indeed, balancing a life dedicated to common monastic prayer while crisscrossing the nation was a challenge. Given the prior examples of lay Catholics and Passionist interaction I began to wonder what insight the famed nineteenth century Passionist preachers might offer on how they valued lay organizations?

Based upon an analysis of the January 25-27, 1894 First Passionist Missionary Congress²⁰, it appears that Passionists were more tolerant of lay organizations that were linked to their own local ministries. However, they appear not to have stress this component as a key point of their evangelical message which they preached to the public. The First Passionist Missionary Congress was attended by thirty-two Passionists. Then Provincial John B. Baudinelli offered an opening and closing talk. During the time of the Congress, six Passionists presented formal talks; informal discussion and business followed each talk. The Committee of Resolutions made its report and the acts of the Congress were read.

Notable in the title of the six talks is the strong emphasis on the internal workings and operations of the preaching apostolate:

¹⁹ This American Passionist culture is revealed in the text and pictures found in *The Passionist Centenary in America 1852-1952*. (Paperback edition). [Union City, NJ: Passionists, 1952] 18-19.

²⁰ *First Passionist Missionary Congress*, PHA All quotes can be found in this document.

Passionist Father Joseph Amrhein, “The Nature and Responsibility of Mission Work”, Passionist Father Robert McNamara, “The Qualifications of the Passionist Missionary”, Passionist Father Alphonsus Rossiter, “The Dangers and Safeguards of Passionist Missionary Life”, Passionist Father Charles Lang, “The Spirit of Prayer and the Missionary Vocation”, Passionist Father Fidelis Kent Stone, “The Necessity and Manner of Preaching the Passion of Jesus Christ in our Missions”, Passionist Father Mark Moeslein, “The Need and Character of the Study of a Missionary”.

A preached parish mission, Amrhein reported at the meeting, “is addressed to the entire congregation; its object is to reform the wayward, to spur the negligent, and to conform the virtuous. It is not a course of lectures on some particular subject, nor a course of sermons on various subjects; not is it intended for a particular class of persons.

It is neither a Lenten course, nor a retreat”. Given the spiritual content of a mission McNamara cautions preachers not to begin a mission on moral questions of marriage or drunkenness.

Furthermore, he concentrates on the spiritual and social character of the preacher arguing that a “manliness” presence is preferred rather than an “effeminate” approach.

Rossiter offered another view: Passionists are not the same in character as diocesan priests. Father Lang elaborated on the prayer life of the missionary preacher. While Stone, a famous convert to Catholicism and former Paulist priest, reminded all: “We are professionally promoters of devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ”.

However, in the end it was Father Moeslein who exhibited a strong sense of dialogue with the United States culture. Recall that he had been instrumental in beginning the Lyceum in 1891- three years before the 1894 Congress.

Yet, Moeslein cares about the intellectual life of the preacher because he was of the opinion that a sound intellect and knowledge of the secular and non-Catholic ways will only help bring the preaching of Christ’s passion and the Gospel to the forefront and reach the people in the pews.

Of the ten “Whereas” 1894 Congress statements only one has any outright relationship to the Catholic laity. “It is our highest ambition to be all things, loyal Americans, consistent Passionists, and uncompromising Catholics”. In total, fourteen Congress resolutions were passed.

One showed a desire of Passionist preachers to stress the spiritual and keep a clear distance from politics of parish life.

It read: “That on Missions we rigorously confine ourselves to the doing of our work as Missionaries honestly and zealously, without in any manner encroaching on the rights and duties that specially pertain to the diocesan clergy”²¹.

At the same time, Provincial Baudinelli in his closing talk indicated there was a middle ground which Passionist preachers were to occupy:

“That the Superior of the Mission endeavor to have a meeting of young men of the parish called, during every Mission. He spoke of the good which is done by such special assemblies of the different classes. He would not discourage the efforts made heretofore in favor of young ladies’ sodalities; this too is good work; but the young men are more in need of spiritual help, on account of greater dangers to which they are exposed, and the more numerous incentives to religious indifference, which are apt to exert an unholy influence upon them: — The Missionaries might rest assured that their interest in this kind of work would be amply rewarded”²².

Based upon the above summary of *Congress Proceedings* we can conclude that Passionist-Catholic lay involvement was deemed a valued part of parish life.

At the same time, the tone of the *Congress* papers exhibits a remarkable absence of discussion about the Catholic laity and their lives. All indications are that Passionists spent a great deal more energy on their own common life of prayer and community. Public spiritual nourishment was the ultimate value of the preached Passionist mission preached in parishes.

Lacking in the *Congress Proceedings* is documentation that shows a transference of parish models of lay involvement into the preaching apostolate. The only exception may be Father Moeslein. His approach seemed to correspond more to the relationship between the intellect and Passionist preaching which stressed catechetical principles. In contrast, attention to ministry in parishes was secondary concern.

Overall and at first glance, the above information from the *Congress Proceedings* suggests that stories and content of Passionist preaching at that time did not relish attention on ways to engage and promote active Passionist-Catholic lay involvement that would filter into the life of a parish at that time.

²¹ *First Passionist Missionary Congress*, 82. PHA

²² *First Passionist Missionary Congress*, 83. PHA

Continued American Expansion

Between 1867 and 1905 expansion continued along existing river and railway transportation routes²³. In 1906 two provinces were created in the United States Americans. St. Paul of the Cross (Eastern Province) consisted of Pittsburgh, West Hoboken, Dunkirk, Baltimore and later established foundations at Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1902 and Brighton, Massachusetts in 1907 and Shelter Island, New York in 1911. Generally following the contours of the Ohio River, Holy Cross (Western Province) was now based at the provincial house in Chicago, Illinois which had been founded in 1904. Vibrant communities existed in Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, and St. Paul, Kansas. In 1914, another effort was undertaken in Des Moines, Iowa²⁴.

Provincial Chapter Decrees and Passionist-Catholic Lay Involvement: St. Paul of the Cross Province (1911-1962)

In general, when one does an overview of the Passionist Chapter Decrees of the eastern province, there is a limited discussion of any consistent Catholic lay involvement. While there is no direct mention of the laity in 1911 Chapter, at the 1914 Chapter two decrees do have a direct relationship to the faith of the laity. One is as an expression of the fourth vow which was taken by Passionists.

This commitment was instrumental by the Passionists to promote devotion to the passion establish an “Archconfraternity of the Passion, the public weekly devotion of the Stations of the Cross, and the devotion of the Three Hours Agony on Good Friday”²⁵.

²³ Baltimore followed in 1867. The Passionists remained in Catonsville, Maryland (a suburb of Baltimore) after completing a series of parish missions at the request of Archbishop Martin J. Spaulding. In 1871 the Passionists were invited to Mt. Adams in Cincinnati, Ohio. This site overlooked the whole city. It was opened in 1873. By 1901 there was a thriving monastery and two parish churches. Typical of the era one was for English-speaking and the other was for German speaking. Sacred Heart monastery in Louisville, Kentucky and Our Lady of Good Counsel

Monastery in Normandy, Missouri (outside St. Louis) were founded in 1880. In 1894 the Passionists took charge of what was probably their most isolated foundation St. Paul, Kansas. Immaculate Conception monastery in Chicago, Illinois was founded in 1905.

²⁴ The best single source to understand the emergence of Passionist (male and female) ministry foundations in North America is *Celebrating 150 Years of Passionist Ministry in North America 1852-2002*. (St. Paul of the Cross Province and Holy Cross Province: Park Ridge, Illinois, 2002). Since 2000 many of these historic foundations have been closed while new opportunities emerged. Unfortunately, an historical summary which chronicles how closing of many of these historic foundations and the opening of new ones and options for ministry still must be written and made available to the public.

²⁵ 1914 Chapter, Decree 8.

A second decision was to “sanction” a Laymen’s Retreat at Brighton, Massachusetts²⁶. The latter promulgation is noteworthy in that the parameters of Catholic lay-Passionist association were formalized via the structure of the closed preached retreat, i.e. conducted within the confines of the monastery as compared to a preached retreat mission conducted in a parish. St. Gabriel’s Laymen’s Retreat League operated from 1911 to 1978.

In order to serve the lay devotional life of the people and buttress the financial security of their vowed members at the same time, Passionists at the 1917 Chapter decreed a Benefactor’s Society “be established in all our Retreats, each branch participating in the daily Mass offered at West Hoboken. The Society shall be under the supervision of Very Rev. Father Provincial and subject to his regulations”. By codifying this model of stewardship Passionist and laity on a province wide level, the vowed Passionist members were acknowledging the many decades of relationship with the Catholic laity. It was a practical acknowledgment of how spiritual and economic relationships were part and parcel of the foundation that had come to insure the viability of the regional Passionist monastic foundations on the east coast²⁷. Furthermore, the 1917 delegates recommended that “all Houses of the Province, especially St. Ann’s Retreat at Scranton, Pennsylvania, take up the work of the Laymen’s retreats as far as possible”²⁸. However, this lay retreat movement was short-lived in Scranton.

The 1920 Chapter was marked by discussion as to how Passionist religious were to balance monastic life with demands for ministry in the Passionist parishes that were attached these monasteries. This was because the priests lived in the monastery and worked in the parish. The question of sustaining suitable monastery-parish relations has a history as long as the Passionists have been present in the United States. Indeed, the efforts undertaken by the aforementioned Literary Society of St. Mary’s Dunkirk and St. Michael’s German parish in Pittsburgh were most certainly Yet, that did not prevent the Passionist rectors at the 1920 Chapter to decree that “parishes, societies or the like” could contribute to the new Passionist Prep School Holy Cross in Dunkirk, New York²⁹.

²⁶ “and urges that wherever these retreats are undertaken, Fr. Provincial appoint a Father who shall look after the proper management and execution of a work that is a most fruitful exercise of apostolic zeal”. 1914 Chapter, Decree 20.

²⁷ 1917 Chapter, Sixth Session, Decree 1

²⁸ 1917 Chapter, Seventh Session, Decree 2

²⁹ 1920 Chapter, Decree 5

By urging that local Catholics allocate financial resources to the training program of potential candidates to the Passionist religious life, it suggests the increased attention surrounding the fostering of vocations.

In these first decades of the twentieth century, Passionists and laity were becoming more enmeshed in this seminary culture. Laity residing around a respective monastery frequently found themselves influenced by the monastic culture of prayer. It was not uncommon for them to hear the common chant of seminarians and vowed members during liturgical feasts or nighttime prayer. Similarly, I would suggest the decision of Passionist leadership to have one Preparatory High School primarily based at Dunkirk, a novitiate long associated with Pittsburgh and diverse houses of seminary studies linked to monasteries, have a profound impact on the Passionist seminarians assigned to each site.

I suggest these potential future Passionists were provided with a rudimentary pastoral training by the fact they had the opportunity to live in different east coast monasteries. It became quite obvious that not all east coast Catholics were the same.

This insight is to conclude that the connection between lay Catholics in the Passionist orbit who supported seminary education was rooted in real human interaction. Unfortunately, this opportunity for a diverse lived experience in these monasteries and public culture diminished in the post-Conciliar era. Passionist foundations closed and fewer men were entering the Passionist seminary training program.

The decision to promote the Sacred Passion through the Archconfraternity of the Passion was a decision of the 1920 Chapter that was to have a long-lasting impact. To activate this devotion “a central communication between the branches” in each house was established.

Specifically, that bureau was to “fulfill its purpose principally through the issuing of leaflets, folders, pamphlets, and by an official organ in the form of a magazine”³⁰.

This was instrumental in giving birth to *The Sign Magazine*. I will say more about this magazine later. Also, 1920 was the third successive Chapter to laud the Laymen’s Retreat effort — in Pittsburgh and Brighton where success was obvious³¹.

Later, 1923 Chapter delegates voted for “better organization” of the Archconfraternity which was quickly taking root.

³⁰ 1920 Chapter, Decree 11, points 1 and 2.

³¹ 1920 Chapter, Decree 17. It read as follows: “Observing here in Pittsburgh the lay retreat building ample in its proportions and complete in its accommodations, ready for use, the Fathers of the Chapter, gratified at the success attending the erection of this material structure and at the popularity and immense spiritual benefits derived from the lay retreats at our Boston Monastery, heartily commend the efforts of the Fathers who thus so energetically responded to the recommendations of the previous Chapter regarding this work”.

In response, Passionist leaders in Rome as well as in the United States suggested a plan to offer “degrees of membership, promoters, and monthly leaflets, similar to what exists in the League of the Sacred Heart, the Archconfraternity of the Rosary, and other Archconfraternities”³².

As subscribers increased, *The Sign* was praised as a means to promote devotion to the Sacred Passion as well as China missions in Hunan. In 1921 the first contingent of Passionist missionaries who arrived there knew they had the support of Lay Mission circles. Supporters gathered to offer prayer and collect monies. Members’ success was frequently mentioned in *The Sign*³³. Given the ongoing success of the laymen retreat league in Brighton, Pittsburgh and Scranton it was decided to associate that effort in the new Passionist monasteries in West Springfield, Massachusetts in 1922 and Jamaica, Queens, New York founded in 1924³⁴.

No references to the laity population occurred in the 1926 Chapter. However, by the 1929 Chapter, along with the praise for the evolving monastery-based Passionist lay retreat movement, discussions make known that administrative tensions were emerging. They had striking parallels to those that had been familiar in Passionist parishes that were operated attached with monasteries. Some examples of those parishes would be those in Pittsburgh, Dunkirk, Union City and Baltimore.

The Chapter noted that in houses of regular observance “these Retreats be held not oftener than twice a month without special permission of the Provincial”. In other words, Passionists still believed a life of monastic prayer had greater value than adapting that common life to accentuate the spirituality of laymen³⁵. Passionists had to adapt to the economic and social Depression in the United States during the 1930s. There is no specific mention of the Passionist-Catholic lay involvement in the Chapters of 1932, 1935, 1938 and 1941. One suspects that the reason for this was that Passionists mirrored society in that they were occupied with their sense of internal survival. Given the social conditions of the period, more extensive legislated Passionist outreach with laity was probably considered to be a luxury. The simple fact was that everyone trying to survive. For example, it has long been known that Passionist social outreach has facilitated feeding of the poor at the Pittsburgh monastery.

Indications are that this effort remains largely un-documented either by way of written records or by means of audio or visual media.

³² 1923 Chapter, Decree 2

³³ 1923 Chapter, Decree 4, point d.

³⁴ 1923 Chapter, Decree 7

³⁵ 1929 Chapter, Decree 11

Historical Interlude: Undocumented Catholic laity and the Passionists

During The Depression Era of the 1930s both Passionists and laity suffered. Years of study, have prompted me to consider the vibrant interaction between these two groups. In doing so, who might be defined as the “poor” of this turbulent period?

Indeed, a wide array of undocumented would be among this group. Among them might be, for example, a transitory person who came to a monastery seeking food or a blessing. Because of the sheer number of those involved, it appears to have been quite challenging to record or track the process of spiritual or economic interaction that was taking place at the time.

Who were these poor or transient were undocumented?

Adding complexity to this is the possibility that there was a complimentary population: those *devoted laity that reached out to support the Passionists and their monasteries in their time of need*. These, I suggest are those whose experience is at the heart of an alternative narrative that might very well be a story close to the heart of the Passionists that needs yet to be told.

Archival records of Passionist Retreat Houses through the 1970s might explore the makeup of participants in the retreat house ministries. They would probably show the comparable number of working, middle, and upper class retreatants. After all, this was the population who, for example, had the time and opportunity to make the laymen’s retreat weekend.

By and large these were retreats for professionals, those who had the time and money, or those who were willing to sacrifice money to spend for spiritual enrichment. Over time, institutionalization of retreat centers promoted or “marketed” weekends to parishes and spiritual associations.

As this developed, the poor or down and out had less and less ability to pay for a retreat room on a weekend. That did not stop, however, tangible and spiritual needs to expand and attempt to reach this segment of society. While it can be generally affirmed that those of less means have always been welcome at Passionist retreat houses, it became increasingly apparent that population shifts were underway. Interesting might be to cull archives of the Passionist retreat movement to learn more about the social makeup, ethnicity, race, gender and income of all the Passionist retreatants.

To buttress this insight from another point of view, let us consider the Novena to St. Ann in Scranton.

After writing a synoptic historical summary of this Passionist-sponsored Novena which dates back to 1924³⁶, I was struck by the overall scarcity of documentation on the Novena promoter Passionist Father John Joseph Endler.

In retrospect, increased interest might be sought whereby surrounding documentation might be found that would explain the diverse healings which have taken place as part of the Novena experience. While one valid argument might be that religious experience should not be relegated to a sociological and monitored experience, a counter argument could also be posed:

Understanding the components of religious inculturation are assisted when the pastoral practice pertaining to preaching content is understood with alongside questions of stewardship. Certainly, Passionists and laity aware of the Novena to St. Ann can attest to the graces of this devotion which still draws pilgrims in 2016.

A parallel existed for those who participated in the Good Friday devotion to “make the steps” at the former Passionist sponsored Immaculata parish located atop Mt. Adams, Cincinnati, Ohio. For years pilgrims have continued to use these hillside steps on the banks of the Ohio River as a kind of living Good Friday way of the cross³⁷.

Another component is how diverse lay groups have taken initiative to influence and reshape Passionist institutional identity.

For example, in Brighton, Massachusetts during the 1920s author of *Campaigners for Christ* (1938), Jewish convert to Catholicism and lay preacher David Goldstein made frequent visits to the Passionist Boston property. Unknown were the many nameless people who were present to listen to Goldstein or Passionists on a given day.

Likewise, Passionist Father Tom Berry and a generation of Passionists were encouraged to attend meetings sponsored by the Catholic Worker Movement in New York. Mingling with the voiceless people in society provided many future Passionists to hear and gain compassion for the poor. Another example are the stories handed down verbally.

Within the Pittsburgh monastery, I have heard local Passionists promote the idea that there was an early relationship of the St. Paul’s Monastery on the South Side with Pittsburgh’s seminal relationship to the Charismatic movement of Pittsburgh before it took root at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. This remains undocumented.

³⁶ Robert E. Carbonneau, C.P., “Coal Mines, St. Ann’s Novena, and Passionist Spirituality in Scranton, Pennsylvania 1902-2002”. Vol. 115 *American Catholic Studies*. (Summer 2004), 23-44.

³⁷ One source on Cincinnati is Father Conleth Overman, C.P. *Stories of Mt. Adams Passionists*, (Holy Cross Province, 1996). Also search Passionists and Praying the Steps, Mt. Adams.

Lastly, during mid-1970s the Passionist sponsored Holy Family Monastery, founded in 1951, hosted meetings of the conservative Catholics United For the Faith. Other Passionist spiritual facilities have been welcoming to Catholic organization Dignity which offered one of the many voices to homosexual Catholics³⁸.

So many of these nameless laity have been associated with activities at these above-mentioned Passionist sites. Might there be a creative way to identify them among those who are linked to contemporary documented laity? Perhaps if we are patient enough to listen and research we may find that there has been an umbilical cord of faith between these undocumented of the past and the documented people who buy Mass cards, send in checks, or make weekend retreats.

We Passionists, and all in union with us, might be surprised with by the historical network of faith that has served as a foundation for the Passionist charism. All in all, these examples suggest how the Passionists have encouraged the laity and how the laity have encouraged the Passionists.

While these are rudimentary historical insights, I emphasize this to call to mind the nameless or undocumented dynamics that are continually operative. For a charism to mature over the span of time understanding the impact of what we might identify as an alternative historical narrative time cannot be underestimated.

Chapter Decrees of St. Paul of the Cross Province, continued

Having made the case for including the undocumented or unidentified laity as essential participants in the Passionist historical narrative, I want to continue with more analysis of the Chapter Decrees. In synoptic fashion, the 1944 Chapter updated and printed all operative Chapter Decrees — 33 in all that had been passed in the legislation from past Chapters. Two of that number addressed the issue of monies received from lay benefactors³⁹.

³⁸ These sources are based on experience of and discussions conducted by the author.

³⁹ 1944 Chapter, Decree 15 states: “An exact record of ‘Benefactores Insignes’ must be kept in each Retreat. This record must include the name and addresses of the Benefactor, the nature of the gifts, and any other item of importance in connection with the Benefaction. Said record must be submitted for inspection at the time of Canonical Visitation”. Chapter Decree 16 states: Branches of the ‘Benefactors Society’ shall be established in all our Retreats. The Society shall be under the supervision of the Provincial and shall be subject to his regulation. Holy Mass shall be offered daily for the members of the Society, in St. Michael’s Retreat, Union City, N.J. A uniform Certificate approved by the Provincial shall be used and a careful record of membership shall be kept on file in each Retreat”. 65 deal with Benefactors.

Also of particular interest was the following decision: “Our Religious may not join Fraternal Organizations without the approval of the Provincial”⁴⁰. Perhaps one way to understand the promulgation of this decree was that there might be *too much* (my emphasis) Passionist-lay involvement. Leadership might have been concerned that involvement by Passionist religious in such groups might have started to become a distraction to the sensibilities of prayer and solitude.

Let us remember that World War II (1941-1945) reconfigured social relationships across religions, economics, race and gender. Social mobility was rampant. It was also a high point of the theology of the Catholic priesthood. Consensus seemed to be that a meeting of any group was made even more special by the presence of a priest to say a prayer.

Could it be that this ministerial demand of the public seeking out a priest was becoming a threat to the highly structured horarium of Passionist life and solitude?

Was there fear, perhaps, that Passionist identity was eroding or becoming too secular? In other words, was there a notion that Passionists were being stretched too much if they opted to become members of either religious and secular fraternal societies? Why such a caution was issued was probably addresses a combination all these factors.

Concern for the laity was not addressed in the 1947 Chapter. A 1950 Chapter recommendation, (different from a decree), shows that the lay retreat movement had reached a threshold point.

What was the relation of Passionist life and solitude in the monastery which did support a retreat movement In 1950 it was decided to keep the “administration of Retreat House under the supervision of the local superior”⁴¹. Moreover, the devotional life of Catholic laity were to be directly impacted by the recommendation that Passionist preachers take care to promote the Stations of the Cross during missions and promote, overall, the Confraternity of the Passion⁴². Overall, Passionists identified strongly with the devotional culture of the 1950s and the Catholics in the pews praised and appreciated their effort.

The 1953 Chapter offered a succinct affirmation that paid tribute to those preachers conducting “spiritual exercises for clergy, religious, and the laity”. In addition, *The Sign* staff was praised for its “ever-increasing recognition of the preeminence of this superior publication”.

⁴⁰ 1944 Chapter, Decree 32.

⁴¹ 1950 Chapter, Recommendation 6.

⁴² 1950 Chapter, Recommendations 7 and 9, respectively.

Given the religious and clerical mentality of the 1950s one wonders if the Chapter delegates even had the hired employees on their radar when making this commendation.

The Laymen's Retreat Movement again received kudos for the growth of their ministry. In comparison, the recognition made apparent that efforts undertaken by Passionist parish priests' work among the laity in the parish was clearly not held on equal level to the preachers or for that matter Passionist in the overseas mission fields. The statement read: "Although the work of Parish Priests is not the essential work of our Congregation, our priests have been engaged in this form of the ministry from the earliest days of our Province....".

The Chapter "wishes to acknowledge the valuable contribution to Christian living among the laity made by those priests assigned to this important work through obedience". One may ask, how would one describe and define the impact of the Passionist's "Christian living among the laity". Finally, Directors of the Confraternity of the Passion were thanked for "their efforts to promote devotion to Christ Crucified"⁴³.

More and more the lay involvement with the Confraternity merited moving beyond events at local monasteries. The 1956 Chapter praised the results of the 1955 National Confraternity of the Passion and the 1956 Preaching Congress — I will summarize these meetings later in this essay. The fact that the one 1956 Chapter recommendation urged harmony between retreat directors and rectors sent a signal that defining boundaries of leadership between those who held these posts was still in transition. Clearly it was the opinion of the Chapter that the retreat director was "subject" to the Rector.

There was even concern that "he Director should not be employed in Sunday work, or any work that would take him away from his retreatants"⁴⁴.

Another 1956 recommendation praised the establishment of Vocation Clubs in parishes. As an aside it is noteworthy to state that the ministry of Father Andrew Ansbro, C.P. and his Catholic Career Conference has been an understudied paradigm of Passionist-lay involvement⁴⁵.

Finally an additional 1956 recommendation was issued so as to look into a pension plan for "workmen" in Passionist monasteries⁴⁶. This might indicate awareness of that the Passionists were hiring more salaried workers and were making efforts to provide fair working conditions and wages.

⁴³ 1953 Chapter, p. 15-16, points a, b, g, h, j.

⁴⁴ 1956 Chapter, Recommendation 2

⁴⁵ 1956 Chapter, Recommendation 5

⁴⁶ 1956 Chapter, Recommendation 7. Likewise, Recommendation 8 asked for a study of hospitalization insurance for Passionists.

As in 1953, the 1956 Chapter decrees reaffirmed Passionist preaching to laity, the Laymen's Retreat apostolate, and Confraternity. Notable was Decree 4. It stated in part: "While paying due tribute to the indispensable contribution of laymen in the promotion of laymen's retreats, this Venerable Chapter decrees that complete control of the Laymen's Retreat Movement should be held by the Rector and the Retreat Director". The conclusion seems quite clear.

When it came to Passionist control or lay control of retreat houses, at least in 1956, Passionists wanted the control. But this begs a deeper question. Was this decision for Passionist control a reassertion of an overall Passionist obligation or a response to an ever-increasing development of voices in the national laymen's retreat apostolate? While it might be too strong to suggest Passionists feared losing their position of respect in overall ministry, restating their position offers us an understanding that Passionists operated within the boundaries of a hierarchical model accepted at that time⁴⁷.

In many respects the Passionist 1959 Chapter echoes the mood of the world-wide Catholic Church at the time. There is no mention of the laity. Yet by the end of the year to the surprise of all an ecumenical council will be called that will redefine the concept of the church and laity alike. Discussion of the Catholic laity would explode on to the scene in the 1960s. Overall Passionist Chapter Decrees from 1911-1959 do show an appreciation of the laity. The term appreciation corresponds more appropriately to my survey because a close read of the above decrees does indicate a real ongoing attention about the pulse of Passionist monastery life and spirituality.

In other words, internal goings on by Passionists as they lived their cloistered and prayerful lives mattered a great deal. Within this framework Passionists seemed to have considered themselves first and foremost to be preachers of parish missions. Parish ministry is acceptable but secondary. Surprising still, but beyond the scope of this inquiry is the stature of foreign missions. While after the 1920s the China mission did capture suitable attention in the Chapters, a close read leaves one struck by the lack of attention given to nineteenth century effort of St. Paul of the Cross province in Mexico and Argentina. Resuscitating this narrative such as this the historical memory of a province is another dimension addressing the creative development of the Passionist charism.

⁴⁷ 1956 Chapter, Decree 6a mentions preachers work with laity. Decree 6g praises the Retreat ministry. Decree 6i praises the Confraternity in connection with the radio apostolate. Decree 4 reads: "While paying due tribute to the indispensable contribution of laymen in the promotion of laymen's retreats, this Venerable Chapter decrees that complete control of the Laymen's Retreat Movement should be held by the Rector and the Retreat Director. All ordinary and extraordinary income shall be controlled by Father Rector. All special funds of whatever kind or purpose require the approval of Father Provincial and must be in a joint bank account, requiring the signatures of the local Rector and Retreat Director".

Additional areas of for reflection

Chapter decrees by their nature do not spell out the nuts and bolts as to the pastoral interaction of people and Passionist. Consequently, I have selected to end this alternative narrative by selecting several summary relationships that remind us how the rich interaction of the past lay the foundation for the present day.

Baltimore: Passionist-lay involvement in Baltimore has taken on a variety of faces. On February 9, 1915 St. Joseph's Institute of Irvington was incorporated in Maryland for "the improvement of the spiritual, physical, mental, moral, and social condition of men and women, and especially the parishioners of St. Joseph's Monastery Church, by the support of lectures, educational classes, dramatic entertainments, gymnasia, bowling alleys and other means to create such improvement". The corporation had "no capital stock" and was managed by ten directors and one priest—Passionist Father Victor Koch. In 1922 he went on to the German/Austria foundation⁴⁸.

Veronica's Veil: The defined purpose of above Baltimore Corporation has similar parallel to production of *Veronica's Veil*. Awaiting greater study is the dynamics of lay involvement in this successful literary, devotional, dramatic, and social production which had a home at Passionist sites in Pittsburgh, West Hoboken/Union City, New Jersey and Baltimore. Why did it succeed? What caused its decline?⁴⁹.

Education and Devotion: During World War II Baltimore laity made wide use of a lending library at St. Joseph's Monastery Parish. Pious organizations such as the Nocturnal Adoration or Holy Name Society were part of a larger diocesan matrix.

At Immaculate Conception Monastery in Jamaica, New York another instance, one long-time lay organization has been the Candlelight Devotion in honor of Our Lady of Fatima or the First Saturday Devotion.

⁴⁸ Information on the Lay Corporation in Baltimore is as follows: St. Joseph's Institute of Irvington, Incorporated. This was received on February 9 1915 and recorded in the Domestic Corporation Record. No 3 Folio 3900 State of Maryland, Secretary of State's Office. Subscribers: John Bannon, Thomas P. Quinn, and Alfred J. O'Ferrell who all resided in the City of Baltimore. The purpose of the corporation was "the improvement of the spiritual, physical, mental, moral, and social condition of men and women, and especially the parishioners of St. Joseph's Monastery Church, by the support of lectures, educational classes, dramatic entertainments, gymnasia, bowling alleys and other means to create such improvement." The document went on to state that the corporation "has no capital stock". At the same time, it was stipulated that the Corporation was to be managed by ten directors [the number seemed arbitrary] They were Victor Koch, John Bannon, Ernest F. Homberg, Thomas P. Quinn, Adam S. Heinmuller, Joseph A. Stoll, Alfred J. O'Ferrall, Walter D. Spurrier, William A. Hummel, George J. Finster. Signed January 28, 1915. PHA

⁴⁹ Search online for Passionists and Veronica's Veil.

Begun in 1950, it was inspired by a visit to the monastery in 1947 to 1948 of the Pilgrim Virgin⁵⁰.

First National Congress of the Confraternity of the Passion 1955: Laymen and women participated as panel leaders. Specifically, Albert Rochon spoke on “Passionist Retreats and Devotion to the Passion”, Hon. Martin J. Mostyn discussed “Legal Aspects of the Passion” and Dr. Richard Lenehan offered thoughts on “Medical Aspects of the Passion”. Mary J. McInnis shared her perspective as a “Confraternity Member”⁵¹.

Second Passionist Missionary Congress 1956. This was both a time of thanksgiving for the past success of the preaching apostolate and a moment of entrenchment/experimentation of Passionist preaching. In his opening address, Provincial Ernest Welch stated that the “purpose of this Congress is to increase the efficiency of our missions by making whatever adaptations may be necessary to meet modern problems. It is not a legislative body.

On the other hand, St. Thomas [Aquinas] teaches, all law is an ordination of reason. It presupposes accurate knowledge. For the Chapter to legislate in matters pertaining to missions, it must have accurate knowledge of the needs and problems. No one can supply this knowledge of the needs and problems more effectively than you, the missionaries of the Province”. Later, in the talk he said: Missionaries are “visitors in his parish. We must never interfere with matters that are strictly the pastor’s business”.

Overall the role of the laity received marginal attention during the Congress. Passionist Father Cletus Mulloy made mention of the laity in relationship to social justice issues and Passionist Father Clement Buckley discussed the laity in conjunction with the media: television and radio⁵².

⁵⁰ Third Annual in 1952, Begun in 1950. First Communion Saturday Group that meets at the monastery. Laymen Annual Candlelight Devotion took place on October 17, 1952 In event programs in Box 210.02 Box Jamaica, NY Parish. December 31, 1947 till January 18, 1948 the Pilgrim Virgin Statue was enshrined at the Passionist Jamaica monastery through the Catholic War Veterans. Took place for rededication to Mary took place on October 10. 1948 at the Monastery in Jamaica by the then superior. A second 1949 rededication took place. First Saturday devotion originated in 1950. In *Devotion to Our Lady of Fatima* [pamphlet] Tells the story of the devotion from 1947-1973. Box 210.02 Box 2 Jamaica, NY Parish Folder 17. PHA

⁵¹ *First National Congress of the Confraternity of the Passion 1955*

⁵² Provincial Welch’s opening address stated: the “purpose of this Congress is to increase the efficiency of our missions by making whatever adaptations may be necessary to meet modern problems. It is not a legislative body. On the other hand, St. Thomas teaches, all law is an ordination of reason. It presupposes accurate knowledge. For the Chapter to legislate in matters pertaining to missions, it must have accurate knowledge of the needs and problems. No one can supply this knowledge of the needs and problems more effectively than you, the missionaries of the Province”. *Second Passionist Missionary Congress*, 12. Missionaries are “visitors in his parish. We must never interfere with matters that are strictly the pastor’s

In the end the Archconfraternity of the Passion has the trappings of a semi-public if not private lay organization. The 1956 Congress approved a recommendation that the Confraternity of the Passion “should not be directly associated with mission preaching”⁵³. Similar to 1894, preaching to the laity was a priority but association and involvement with them had operative limits.

Missions: The impact and influence of lay support for the missions has often been absent from established Passionist narratives. Throughout the twentieth century to the present day numerous boardroom, armchair, kitchen table or church pew missionaries - the distinction might be an identification of economic class – offered prayer and money to the missions.

Often, terminology defined and reflected the theology of the day. Generosity was expressed for the “pagans” in China, the “colored” in North Carolina and Passionist missions in the Philippines or Jamaica, West Indies.

As may be the case today, in so many situations lay participants were attracted as much to the charisma and personality of the individual Passionist missionary as much as, if not even more than the culture or missiology. Laity who have served in the missions have a rather long history.

For example, in the 1960s lay missionaries Pat Mansmann, Maria Brochs Schmidt and Carol and Ann Marie Donnellan worked in Jamaica, West Indies. Similarly, the parents of Passionist Father Michael Brennan, served as lay ministers in the Philippines⁵⁴.

The Sign Magazine: Published by the Passionists from 1921 until 1981, it was started as an outgrowth of the Archconfraternity of the Passion.

business”. 16. Following in the footsteps of early Passionists “to keep free from the entanglements of parochial and other activities”. [25] heard complaints of early founders being “forced into parish work” [25] Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Newark, we took charge of parishes and turned them over to diocese. “In the United States, we are best known and *esteemed*, [sic] not as educators, scientists, literateurs, authors, outstanding parish priests, or administrators, but chiefly as zealous and successful *missionaries*”. [italics in the original] 25; Passionist Cletus Mulloy “stated his conviction that more instruction should be given and that modern problems be integrated in our talks, such as capital, labor, the encyclicals, etc.” 38; Confraternity of the Passion seemed not appropriate on a mission, 93-94. Confraternity should not be directly related to preaching of missions was approved, 131. PHA

⁵³ “saving the prescription of #207 of our Regulations”. 1956 *Second Missionary Congress*, 131. It appears that this resolution was passed by the Congress based on the agreed opinion earlier during a discussion session that the Passionist devotional organization could not be applied from the preaching missionary into the parish life. PHA.

⁵⁴ PHA

Often purged from our memory is that this was a new and emerging media of communication specifically seeking to promote Catholic culture during the 1920s when anti-Catholicism was strong. Coincidentally, the magazine also became known for its chronicle of the Passionist missions to China. This led to a debate on distribution of *Sign* revenues.

Did they belong first and foremost to the magazine or the missions? Even as that debate went on Katherine Burton's column "Woman to Woman", published from 1933-1969 etched its way into the Catholic consciousness as the longest continuing running monthly column about women or written by a woman in any Catholic periodical in the United States. The value of identifying her contribution to the *Sign* as a Passionist ministry mirrors the continuing past and contemporary contribution of woman as participants in Passionist ministry⁵⁵.

Retreat Ministry Lay involvement in the closed retreat house apostolate has been a vibrant ministry. On the one hand, Catholic laymen have had a long-standing prominence in the National Catholic Laymen's Retreat League. For example, the 1958 convention found Mr. Raymond Roncari quite visible.

During the span of his life, the Passionist foundation in West Hartford, was fortunate to have him as benefactor. At the same time his seminal Passionist experience empowered his long-standing voice that helped define the national identity of the American Catholic retreat movement in the late 1950s.

Might his experience act as a stimulus to ask ourselves how the development of Passionist lay associations find their ongoing national voice in respective national organizations⁵⁶.

Stotts Report: Published by St. Paul of the Cross Province in 1974 and 1975 to assist in guidelines for future planning of Passionist ministries, a rereading of the *Stotts Report* can serve as an invaluable educational guide to understand Passionist-lay involvement.

Most helpful would be the opportunity to see the inherent and spirit-filled tensions surrounding Passionist social systems and Passionist public ministries⁵⁷. Since lay advisory boards were just gaining popularity the *Stotts Report* offered some observations.

⁵⁵ Robert E. Carbonneau, C.P. "The Sign" in *The Encyclopedia of American Catholic History*. eds., Michael Glazier and Thomas J. Shelley. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997: 1297-1298.

⁵⁶ *Seventh National Catholic Laymen's Retreat Conference*, 1958 PHA

⁵⁷ I have explored the nature of the *Stotts Report* in *The Passionist Heritage Newsletter* Spring 2003, Vol. 10, Issue 2.

“Lay advisory boards tend to operate in a most creative and interesting way when effective”. Also “lay advisory function prepares Catholic laymen for a role in the Church they have not had before”.

Finally, “Another effect of lay advisory experience is the provision of an opportunity to participate in mission projects so that theology and spiritual experience can be actualized”⁵⁸.

Final Thoughts

Reading this alternative Passionist historical narrative might conjure up a wide range of reactions. Undoubtedly, others may have different and valid interpretations of the Passionist charism. In reading and reflecting on this essay I would hope others be motivated to continue to cull through the vast amount of Passionist documentation still available.

The Passionist identity is simultaneously expressed in its vowed members and interaction with the public. It has come to life in the past. It continues to be a living symbol monasteries, parishes, retreat centers, preaching ministries, overseas missions or designated apostolates.

Each of these identities have continually embraced an effort to manifest a proper Passionist expression.

I urge us to keep before us that idea that history is not always equated with spirituality. History is also humbling. Many aspects of history are boring.

Some are exciting. Some are embarrassing. Some are sad. Yet history is about all of us. While we might not be able to change this alternative history of the past, we might be motivated to seek and find new and deeper insights. Credible as well is the way this essay might make us aware of the diverse ways which all of us are historical participants.

⁵⁸ *Stotts Report*. Volume 2: Social Systems, 139. Auxiliary Staff is discussed on, 140.

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