

Message from the 47th General Chapter to the Laity in the Passionist Family

As we end our 47th General Chapter with its theme: ***“Renewing of our Mission: Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope”***, we greet the lay people who are part of our Passionist family and mission. You share our spirituality as sons and daughters of St. Paul of the Cross and we approach the future with you.

During our Chapter we looked at our mission with you – a mission “with” you. As a religious community we are incomplete without you.

“What’s your experience working with the laity?” That question yielded a rich response from groups of Chapter members from all parts of the world. The experience takes many different forms, for you bring gifts different than ours and a holiness that often challenges ours. We welcome the graces you bring.

For that reason, we sought a mechanism at this Chapter to gather your wisdom and find ways to work together with you.

During our Chapter, Father Amedeo Cencini offered a welcomed presentation on life-long formation. He called “docibilitas”, the willingness to be taught, the key to grow daily in life. Life in all its shapes and forms is how our loving God invites us to learn, day by day.

We see the need for docility in us all in the days ahead, as our community, our church and the world itself face an uncharted future. The present sexual abuse crisis, for one example, calls for docility. Church leaders and ministers, along with lay people, need to search humbly together for the wisdom and knowledge that bring healing and peace.

In the Consistory Hall in the Vatican where our Chapter members received the blessing of Pope Francis on October 22nd, there is a large painting of Jesus inviting his disciples, Peter, James and John and the others, to follow him to Jerusalem. Mark’s Gospel, read during Sundays of October, says the disciples did not understand fully what the invitation to take up their cross meant. Neither do we fully understand it, but as Passionists we commit ourselves, under the patronage of St. Paul of the Cross, to know and live the mystery of the Passion of Jesus.

Let us embrace this mystery together as we prepare to celebrate 300 years of our history as a Passionist family. As our Chapter ends let us pray for one another, asking the Holy Spirit to make us docile learners.

Come, Holy Spirit, bring healing and life to our Passionist family, our church and our world. Amen.