

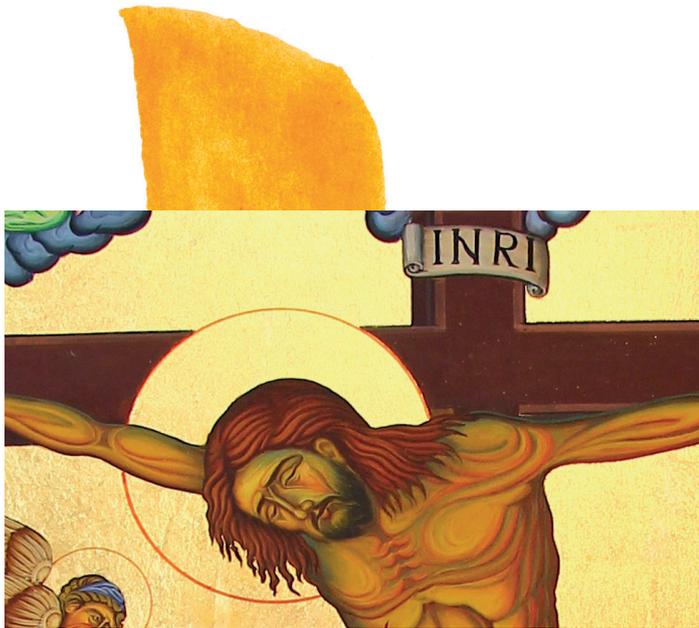
praying

BEFORE THE ICON FOR THE  
PASSIONIST JUBILEE  
(1720-2020)



with a trusting gaze

In the name of the  
Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.



On the occasion of the Third Centenary of the Foundation of the Passionist Congregation, together with Mary, our Sorrowful Mother, and with Saint Paul of the Cross, we gaze on the Crucified, toward the cross, at the Passion, at death, to the life that is surrendered, to abandonment, to fear, to trust ... We consider the depths of the human being, capable of the extremes of good and evil; and to the tenderness of God, the expression of a love that empties itself in order to be filled with the object of its love. In the Passion are also our sufferings and our hopes, our loneliness, those who accompany us and those whom we accompany ... Our fidelity and our discouragement, the strengths and weaknesses which are woven into each human being. Our sense of abandonment and our encounter with another.

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Gazed upon by God,  
and gazed upon with  
the compassion of God.

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## a unforgiving gaze

*He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; He had no majestic bearing to catch our eye, no beauty to draw us to him (Is 53:2).*

**In the Passion, the superfluous disappears. There is nothing artificial.** Noise is muted and one's attention is focused on what is essential: service as a duty; love as the only motive; hatred as the cause of evil; forgiveness as one's response; the solitariness of the just person, not always attractive; the courage and fear of those following. **What distracts our gaze gives way to our concentration on the heart of the gospel: a God who is madly in love with us; yes, in love with you and me, just as we are. And He shows us there is only one path in life—to live by giving up all. All.**

### ACTIVITY

Consider Jesus' Cross. What do you feel? **Compassion\* Grief\* Love\* Boredom\*Admiration\* Hope\*Resignation\*Preoccupation\*Trust\* Hate\* Astonishment\*Anger\*Sympathy\*Nuisance\*Infatuation\*Joy\*Shame\*Desperation\*Commitment\*Service\*Revenge\*More?**



## a gaze from up-close

*The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue,  
That I might know how to answer the weary; a  
word that will waken them (Is 50:4).*

There is nothing more deceptive than seeing things from a distance, from far above, remotely. But **Jesus Crucified** enters into the “infernals” of this world. He has to bend over to get down here, where those who do not have anyone to help them up live. Jesus learns to see through the sad eyes of those who are innocent yet assaulted; with the imploring eyes of someone abandoned; through the quiet eyes of the righteous who do their jobs; Jesus sees with tired eyes someone who risks all; with the tearful eyes of the one who cries the cries of this world. This gaze from up close transforms you from being a spectator into an agent of an eternal history: the history of those who dedicate their lives to building the Kingdom.

A woman -the **Virgin Mary**, and a man- **Paul of the Cross**, have approached the Sorrow of the Cross. She, to receive her dead Son, and he, to contemplate this infinite love... look, interiorize, pray.

### SHARED PRAYER

*Lord, when I feel hunger, send me someone who needs to be fed. When I feel thirst, send me someone who can use a drink of water. When I am cold, send me someone who needs to be clothed. If I have a falling out, send me someone to console. If my cross becomes too heavy, give me someone else's cross to share. When I feel impoverished, lead me to someone who is truly needy. When I've no time, give me someone to help for a few minutes. When I feel humiliated, give me someone to praise. When I am discouraged, send me someone who needs encouragement. When I feel the need to be understood by others, send me someone who needs my understanding. When I feel like I should be served, send me someone to serve. Whenever I think only of myself, draw my attention toward someone else. Make us worthy, Lord Jesus, to serve our brothers and sisters who, throughout the world, live and die both poor and hungry.*

**Think about the things, the lives, the persons, that you see close up. Do they have many crosses in their lives? And yourself—do you carry some “useless cross” (styles/fashion, appearance, what will others say)? To gaze from up close means to become involved, to complicate your life, to mix some of your own history with others' histories; maybe with all of history in order to work for the healing of all hurts. Whose lives do you share?**

## a joyous gaze

*Sing out, heavens, and rejoice, earth, break forth  
into song, you mountains, For the LORD comforts  
his people and shows mercy to his afflicted (Is 49:13).*

**Joyous, yes! The last word is of life and hope.** The shadows will disappear and the glory of God will shine forth—the celebration of the human person. May we yet see a healed world, although at times it does not seem so. The definitive word of God is a love song. God's caress heals hurts. Evil is not victorious. The end-time is a joyous event because the one who has fallen will have the strength to rise up from the depths. The song of death will be hushed, death's spokesperson will be at a loss to understand, but may find conversion. There will be joy because God and neighbor fill up one's solitude, give one's life meaning, and make music of what was meaningless silence.

Look confidently on the Crucified One, and then gaze on each one of our brothers and sisters in the faith.

This is the example of **Gemma**, a laywoman with a Passionist soul, a searcher who discovers the joy revealed in the “Love” of Jesus Crucified. So also **Gabriel**, a young Passionist with a convivial spirit, who will live under the enchantment “of Love” for the One to whom he has handed over his life. Thus, **Isidore**, a Passionist Brother who will work “Lovingly” with his heart aflame. Such is **Dominic**, a Passionist priest who will expend the greatest efforts on behalf of the “Unity” of Christ's Churches.

### COMMITMENT

**Undertake a small commitment: draw near to someone who needs your welcoming gesture, your friendly word, and your joyful glance. Name someone.**



*Author's note: Each location should try to have an enthronement service with the icon, and/or a relic of St. Paul of the Cross. Appropriate songs and incense may enrich the service.*



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