

## INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

Dear Mothers and Sisters,

As we approach the one year anniversary of our First General Chapter (January 21-February 1, 2019), let's all join together in deep contemplative prayer, and sing continually in our hearts a hymn of thanksgiving for the grace of the Holy Spirit that has bound us all more closely together in our Crucified and Risen Jesus. May the generous collaboration occurring more and more among our monasteries be a pleasing sacrifice to God, like fragrant incense rising before Him in adoration, gratitude, love and intercession for the male and female branches of the Passionist Congregation.

As I sit down to write this letter, so many things I have to recount seem like a litany of thanksgiving to God and to those who are making themselves available for helping us:

1) On St. Stephen's Day, December 26, 2019, we learned of a great Christmas gift Our Lord has given us: **the Italian Ministry of the Interior has granted our Monastic Congregation legal recognition!** I wish to thank Sr. Gertrude Poggio, cp and Fr. Piero Berti, cp for their ongoing work to obtain this recognition. This now permits us to open a bank account, and to start organizing the economy of the Congregation so that donations and contributions from monasteries and benefactors can also be received in order to meet the costs we incur.

2) Shortly before Christmas we received the **Holy See's approval of the affiliation of the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception in Ellisville, Missouri (USA) with the Monastery of Our Lady of Sorrows in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (USA)**. This too is a cause for great joy and hope, and I thank both the Pittsburgh and Ellisville communities for their willingness to embark together on this journey of mutual collaboration.

3) During Advent, **Fr. Antonio Munduate cp delivered to the Holy See the revised text of our Constitutions**. Father devoted much tedious work to prepare this document for the study and approbation of the Holy See, and therefore **we owe Father a special debt of gratitude**. Thanks also to all those who submitted suggestions and requests for clarification. In regard to the preparation of the revised Rule and Constitutions in English, I would like to thank both the **Whitesville community** for typing the 1979 Constitutions, and also the **Erlanger and Pittsburgh communities for financing the professional typing of the primitive rule, the index, the introduction and the other documents for the eventual English edition**.

4) In regard to the **Acts of our First General Chapter, Sr. Daniela of Brazil, and Fr. Arthur Carrillo cp (USA) have been working very hard to compile this important book for publication**. Copies must be presented to the Holy See and to Sr. Fernanda Barbiero, smsd, who as the Holy See's Delegate presided at our General Chapter. We hope eventually to make this book available in several languages for the monasteries. It has been a huge labor of love and I thank Sr. Daniela and Fr. Arthur.

5) There are two Italian monasteries who have made a **request for their own Passionist Assistant**. Although this does not require the permission of the Mother President, it does require the permission of the Provincial. However, it will be very helpful if **after receiving the permission of the Provincial, you would inform Sr. Daniela, the General Secretary**, regarding the name of your Passionist Assistant. (See n.4 §3 of our General Statutes.) However, choosing a Passionist assistant for your monastery is not obligatory, as you know.

6) I see a **growing desire among the Nuns in various nations to work together**, thanks be to God. This seems to be developing "organically" from our new awareness that we are truly a Congregation, we are sisters in Christ Crucified, and sharers of spiritual, formational, and material resources. This is happening in various places and the ones that have come to my attention are as follows: I thank **Sr. Daniela** for forwarding the news to us about the vocation and formation courses that can be viewed online thanks to the Italian Episcopal Conference. I thank **Sr. Mariangela of Loreto** for opening up to all the Italian monasteries the various formation courses given at the monastery of Loreto; also, I thank **Mother Renyarosari of Vignanello** for alerting the other Italian monasteries about the live streaming of the course given in Rome on Saturdays at the University "Regina Apostolorum". I know that the Nuns in Lucca are taking advantage of this opportunity for ongoing formation. And also, I thank **Mother Giuliana of Napoli** who is working with Fr. Fernando Taccone to provide some lectures or courses by means of Skype. In the United States, **the monasteries of Erlanger, Pittsburgh and Whitesville** sent Nuns to participate in a course on Spiritual Direction hosted by the Benedictine monks of St. Vincent's Archabbey in Pennsylvania; and plans are being made for their participation in part 2 of this course during the summer. This year, **the monastery of Ellisville** will also be sending a Nun to participate.

All of these endeavors are very much in keeping with Art. 3 §2 of the Regulations in Vultum Dei Quaerere: *"To ensure adequate lifelong learning, federations promote collaboration between monasteries through the exchange of training materials and through the use of digital media, always safeguarding the necessary discretion."* Similarly, our General Statutes in n. 39 establish that our Congregation will support "collaborative initiatives which will help monasteries to further develop their mission by improving their skills and their quality of life."

7) **Through the fraternal charity of Fr. Lawrence Rywalt, cp and his tech assistant Andrea**, a section for the Passionist Nuns has been created on the Passionist Congregation's website: ([www.passiochristi.org](http://www.passiochristi.org)). Please send information to Fr. Lawrence at: 'Ufficio Comunicazioni Digitali' [commcuria@passiochristi.org](mailto:commcuria@passiochristi.org)

- Such information includes news of the death of a Passionist Nun and her obituary and photo; and news of professions. The deaths and obituaries will continue to be posted on the general website, but professions will be noted in the "CP Nuns folder" on the menu bar found at the top of the passiochristi website.
- **All other news please send to Sr. Daniela for dissemination to all of our monasteries, because we cannot overwhelm the already very busy Office of Communications of our Passionist brethren!** And of course you can also continue to send Sr. Daniela news of deaths, obituaries, professions, anniversaries and photos. She will be able to forward the news quickly. At the same time, it is very important, in terms of our brothers and sisters in the Passionist Family throughout the world, to send the above-mentioned information to Fr. Lawrence. Thank you.
- In the meantime, Fr. Lawrence begs our prayers for his health. During the week of January 13, he will travel to New York for some minimally invasive heart surgery hopefully to correct a problem with arrhythmia. Please tuck this brother of ours into your prayers. He will be grateful.

8) **In regard to our own website, Sr. Daniela has been working on this** in between her many other duties. In a future update we will give you more information. Having our own website will be particularly important, useful and helpful as we approach 2021 – the **250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the foundation of the Passionist Nuns**.

9) Since some have asked for a clarification of the new law regarding the **renewals of profession during the time of temporary vows**, I asked Fr. Antonio to give us an explanation. Please read the attached document for a better understanding of this issue.

10) It is my pleasure to announce that during our visitations in Spain, the monastery of Bilbao held their capitular elections, and here are the results: Superior: Mother Cecilia de San Pablo de la Cruz (REBOREDO RODRIGUEZ); Vicar: Sr. Maria Aranzazu de Cristo Rey (ECEIZA ARANCEGUI); Councillor: Sr. Ines del Costado de Jesús (GAONA CILLERUELO). Please keep them in prayer!

11) There are several monasteries who have not yet submitted their **financial report for the year 2018. And now during this year, your 2019 financial report will also be due.** It will be such a help, dear Sisters, if you and your bursar could make a note reminding you to submit these in timely manner, according to n. 22 of our General Statutes.

**For the monasteries of Italy: Fr. Piero Berti, cp**, who lives at the Presentation monastery on Monte Argentario, is available to train our bursars in the simple accounting program used by the Province. His phone number is: [328 917 4520](tel:3289174520) and his email is: [pieroreginapace@gmail.com](mailto:pieroreginapace@gmail.com) Our goal is that all the Italian monasteries would adopt this single program, in order to facilitate the study of the reports that you submit. (If everyone has their own method of keeping financial books, it is very difficult if not impossible for the Congregational Bursar to compile her reports as mandated in n. 22 of our Statutes. )

12) **A great cause for joy and thanksgiving is the upcoming blessing of the new monastery in Kalimantan, Borneo on February 2, 2020.** Sr. Gertrude and I will be attending, and we also will visit the monasteries of Malang and Maumere. Mother Martina and the seven other founding Nuns arrived in Pontianak on January 7, where they were warmly welcomed by the Passionist Fathers. Then they went to Sanggau, the diocese of Most Rev. Giulio Mencuccini, cp. wherein the new monastery of Rian Macam is located. The founding Nuns are happy but are always asking for our prayers. And so I place this great endeavor in the prayer of your hearts, dear Sisters, in the spirit of our General Statutes and also Cor Orans, where we are encouraged to cooperate in whatever way is possible in making a new foundation. Prayer and loving sacrifice is foremost, and then later, we will let you know what material needs the new community needs. Definitely we need help in paying for the new altar bread equipment and its shipping to Kalimantan, but there will be other expenses as well. **Again, I take this opportunity to thank Bishop Mencuccini for making this foundation possible, and I ask everyone to support him and his diocese by the charity of your prayers.**

13) Sr. Gertrude and I will return from Indonesia on February 21, and then we will hold our **General Council meeting at Lucca from February 28 to March 1.**

14) **Capitular Elections and Canonical Visitations:** This year, many monasteries will be holding their **capitular elections**. Although we do not have all the dates confirmed, here is what the schedule looks like for 2020. I hope with the grace of God and your supportive prayers to do the following:

From April 20 until May 23, Sr. Gertrude and I will be in **Mexico, Colombia and Argentina** for canonical visitations. Mexico and Colombia will also hold their capitular elections. This summer **the monasteries of Vignanello, Ovada and Napoli** will have their canonical visitations and elections.

In mid-September to mid-October, **the monasteries of Brazil** will have their canonical visitations, and two monasteries will hold their elections. It is not possible at this time to plan a visitation to the **Philippines** whose canonical election is due on November 1st, but I will be in contact with them. Hopefully, in early 2021, I can visit them.

We are slowly learning how to organize and how to conduct visitations, and so I ask your prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all of this. There is much more involved than what one might at first think. Our Congregation previously had no tradition of regular canonical visitations and therefore we all have to learn of what these consist and how they are conducted, and what our obligations are. **I have**

**been told that each monastery must start a new “Book of Visitations” which contains the details of the visits: the visitor, the date, the observations the visitor left to the community, etc.**

Also it is good to keep in mind that much time is spent in **organizing our travel in the best and most economical way**. In regard to our travel, I would like to thank the mother of Whitesville’s Sr. Cecilia Maria, Mrs. Jane Wynn. We call her **our “Nun Travel Agent.”** She is very skilled in this and has been an immense help. Please keep her and her family in your kind prayers. **And I beg all of you to be our “prayer partners” as we travel to our other monasteries, that we may have safe travel.** Thank you.

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Dear Mothers and Sisters, in writing this kind of letter, one always risks omitting something or someone important, and so if there is anything I have overlooked, I beg your pardon. I think it is easy for you to see from the above *partial* list of our work, that we continually deal with many, many details in many parts of our Congregation. But things are slowly being set in order, and eventually the policies we are putting in place will allow for a more steady contemplative living of our normal monastic life by the Mother President and her Council Members. **I want to thank Mother Monica and the Lucca Nuns** for the exquisite spirit of charity, understanding, helpfulness and consideration they have shown to the “often absent” Mother President. **I also want to thank Mother Rosaria and her community** for their patience in the disappointing delay of my moving to Tarquinia. This is because of the pending lawsuit against the monastery of Lucca, which makes a move impossible for me right now. I beg everyone to please keep this important need in your prayers, that we may have just judges, and that the lawsuit will be resolved justly and speedily according to truth and to God’s will. Thank you very much.

In closing, may I remind you of n. 12 of our 1979 Constitutions: “Jesus came to give Himself ‘in ransom for the many’. ‘For though He was in the form of God... He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave ... and it was thus that He humbled Himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross’. **The Passionist Nuns vow to live in the light of this self-sacrificing love of Jesus.** As brides of the Crucified, their most profound longing is ‘to know Christ and the power flowing from His resurrection; likewise to know how to share in His sufferings, by being formed into the pattern of His death’”. (my emphasis added)

This obedience “unto death” of our Divine Bridegroom remains always the model for our lives, as we continue to offer our own lives as a living sacrifice for the Church, the world, and our Congregation, particularly in these times of change and diminishment. His self-sacrificing love even unto death on a cross is actually **“the light” in which we have vowed to live**. This light which comes from the unfathomable love of Jesus Crucified “lights up” the redemptive meaning of what each community and each individual Passionist Nun is going through. Jesus is continuing His sacrifice in us, His mystical body. **He wants to give us the joy that even the whole world cannot take from us**—the joy of striving to love as He loves, the joy of experiencing Him in His magnificent Paschal mystery and of giving ourselves with Him for the Church, the world, the Congregation. Let us continue to pray for each other, as together we follow the One who loved us and laid down His life for us.

With esteem, love and prayers to each and all, in JXP and His Holy Mother,

*Mother Catherine Marie Schulmann CP*

Mother Catherine Marie, C.P.

P.S. When we are in Indonesia, and even as we travel during our visitations in Central and South America, we may not always have access to WiFi. In case of emergency, contact Fr. Antonio Munduate or Sr. Daniela.

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They will know the best way to contact us.