

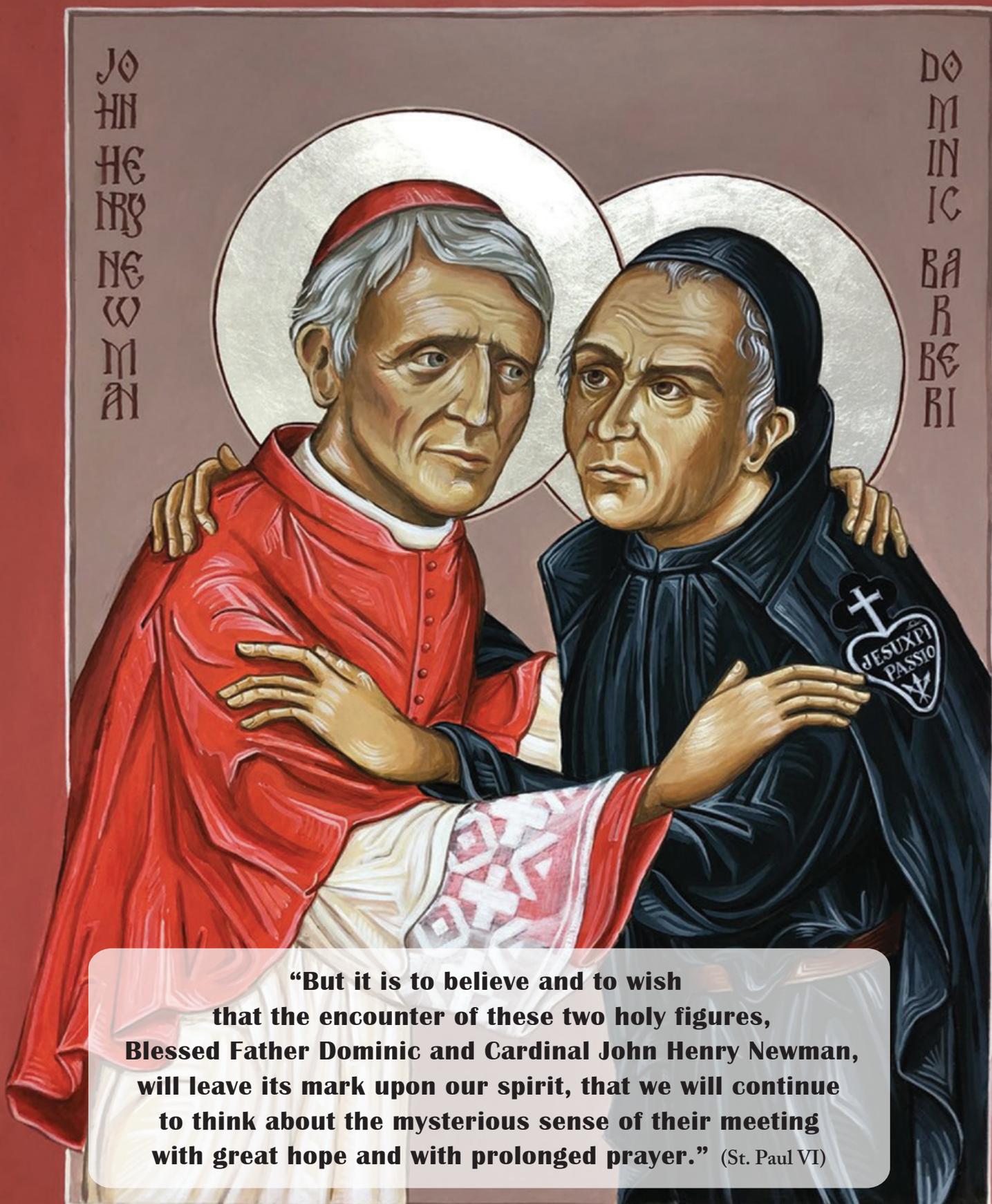


# PASSIONIST INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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**“But it is to believe and to wish that the encounter of these two holy figures, Blessed Father Dominic and Cardinal John Henry Newman, will leave its mark upon our spirit, that we will continue to think about the mysterious sense of their meeting with great hope and with prolonged prayer.” (St. Paul VI)**

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## PASSIONIST INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

N. 48 - New Series 3 - 2019

Supplement to L'Eco of Saint Gabriel

### Editor

General Curia  
of the Congregation of the Passion

### Editing and Translation of Texts

Rafael Blasco, CP  
Alessandro Foppoli, CP  
Lawrence Rywalt, CP  
Miguel Ángel Villanueva, CP

### Photography

Luke Bulley, CP  
Gwen Barde, CP  
Andrea Marzolla  
Greg Ng  
Lawrence Rywalt, CP

### Address

Ufficio Comunicazioni  
Curia Generalizia  
Piazza Ss. Giovanni e Paolo 13  
00184 Roma - Italy  
Tel. 06.77.27.11  
Fax. 06.700.84.54  
Web Page: <http://www.passiochristi.org>  
e-mail: [commcuria@passiochristi.org](mailto:commcuria@passiochristi.org)

### Graphics

Andrea Marzolla

### Cover

**Icon--** "St. John Henry Newman and Blessed Dominic Barberi"

**Iconographer** — Marcelo Lavallen  
Used with the kind permission of Fr. Paul Martin and the St. Barnabas Society, Oxford, England

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The journey of the Jubilee Icon in Latin America.

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Via Alessandro Manzoni, snc  
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## CIRCULAR LETTER

### *Reflection on the Missionary Spirit of Blessed Dominic Barberi*

– Fr. Joachim Rego (Superior General)

[Below are excerpts from the Superior General's Circular Letter on the occasion of the Canonization of John Henry Newman. To read the complete text please see the Congregation's Website, [www.passiochristi.org](http://www.passiochristi.org), the "Documents" category, Circular Letters, 2019.]

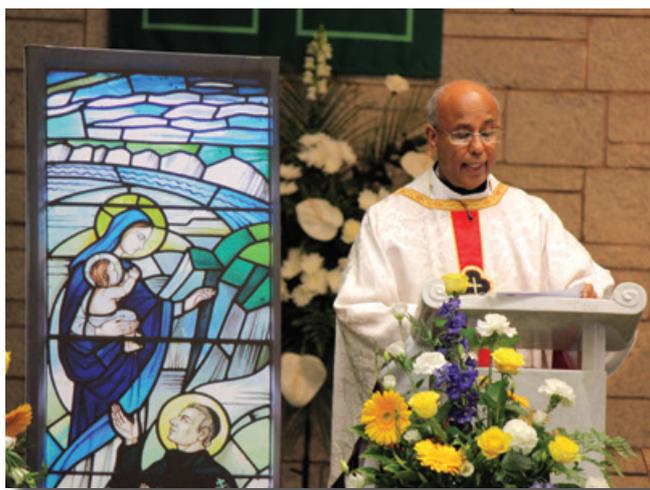
On 13 October 2019, Pope Francis canonized **Blessed Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890)** in St. Peter's Square, Rome. While this is an event in which the entire Church will rejoice, it is also an event with a special significance to our Congregation. This is so because Newman, while already a pastor and a well-known Anglican theologian and a professor at Oxford University, chose to be received into the Catholic Church in 1845 by our Passionist brother: **Blessed Dominic Barberi (1792-1849)**. Dominic, first Passionist apostle and missionary to England, had a great role to play in the conversion of Newman and countless others.

I would like to take the occasion of this special event of the canonization of John Henry Newman to share some reflections on the characteristics of the person of Blessed Dominic Barberi, his conviction and struggle in pursuing the mission to England, his relationship with and the role he played in Newman's conversion, and, above all, his witness of authentic holiness. Through these reflections, I hope we will appreciate some insights to inspire us in our call at this time of our Congregation's history in **"Renewing our Mission"**.

There is no doubt that God had a chosen mission for Dominic within the Congregation of the Passion. However, for Dominic to come to discern this plan of God, it was essential that he first **listen** to the 'voice of God' in his prayer life. We know that Dominic received an interior call which led him to believe that he was destined to preach the Gospel in far off

lands. Apparently, towards the end of 1813 (when he was only 21 years old), Dominic heard "the voice of God" tell him that he "was destined to bring stray sheep back to the way of salvation". But how and where would this prophecy be fulfilled? It was nearly a year later, while in prayer before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, that God communicated to Dominic again: **his mission was to be in England.** [...]

As we know, our Founder, St Paul of the Cross also had a great enthusiasm for the conversion of England for which he prayed each day. This had a strong impact on Dominic; he knew that St. Paul of the Cross had predicted that his sons would one day arrive in England. As Newman wrote in *Loss and Gain*: "...the thought of England came into his ordinary prayers; and in his last years, after a vision during Mass, as if he had been Augustine or Mellitus, he talked of his 'sons' in England."



Fr. Joachim Rego preaches in the Shrine of Blessed Dominic, Sutton, England.

This knowledge of the Founder's hope would have been further confirmation for Dominic that the 'stirring' and desire within him was genuine and from God. However, even though Dominic was so convinced that this is a call and mission from God, he did not have the authority to act on his own; he needed the permission of the Superior General to

send him (with others) in the name of the Congregation...and this required further communal discernment which, necessarily, takes time. It would mean establishing a Passionist presence and community with all the associated concerns surrounding such a project.

As it turned out, this became a long 28 years period of waiting, accompanied by many disappointments and setbacks which Dominic called his 'crosses'. But in hindsight, we can also appreciate that this was a time of preparation during which he was gaining experiences and discovering his potential and resources that would assist in sustaining him to meet



the challenges of so much adversity which he would experience later on in England. [...]

**Obedience** (as a **listening** to God and to his superiors), **dialogue, prayer, discernment, patience, persistence, conviction, trust** and **courage** to “*launch into the deep*” were marks which characterized this Passionist apostle and missionary, Dominic Barberi, who, like Jesus Crucified, was prepared to follow God’s will in his life and mission – no matter the cost.

We can only imagine what thoughts and emotions must have been swirling around in Dominic’s mind and heart when, eventually, he first set foot on English soil, especially as he was greeted with stares and suspicion – not only as a Catholic priest, but for his strange dress: the Passionist habit. It was now that he needed to draw on all his life experiences and resources. He was truly a stranger by his nationality, culture, language, religiosity and spirituality. Surely, he must have drawn his strength and courage from the Cross of Jesus in this moment and sought comfort and protection from his patroness, Mary the Mother of God. [...]

J. Brodrick S.J. in his work on the ‘Second Spring’ of Catholicism in England, says of Father Dominic’s arrival: “*The second spring did not begin when Newman was converted nor when the hierarchy was restored. It began on a bleak October day of 1841, when a little Italian priest in comical attire shuffled down a ship’s gangway at Folkstone.*” High praise indeed for a humble and holy Passionist!

After 28 years of patient waiting and persistent efforts, the Passionists were finally established at Aston Hall, Staffordshire in February 1842. It is worth noting that Dominic was 50 years old at this time. As he wrote at the time: “*After 28 years of desire, His Divine Majesty has vouchsafed to grant my prayers. I shall never be able sufficiently to thank the Divine Goodness for so great a favour. My duty is to do all I can; I will therefore seek to employ all my weak powers for the glory of God and for the salvation of my dear brethren in Jesus Christ.*”

While Dominic saw this as the work and sign of God’s Providence and sang God’s praises, the mission in England was far from being the arrival at a destination, but rather the beginning of a new journey with many obstacles yet to overcome. Once again, it asked for persevering faith in searching for the way of the Lord and following God’s paths which will eventually bear fruits of unity and community, but only after much sacrifice and a response of suffering-love and reconciliation – not revenge and violence. [...]

We can say that the difficulties and trials which Dominic and the Passionist missionaries experienced in England (and in Belgium) was a time of ‘pruning’ by which they were being renewed in their life and mission to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus Crucified and point others to look at the Cross and meditate on the Passion of Jesus where they too will be renewed in God’s love and mercy.

The ultimate characteristic and effectiveness of every ‘missionary of Christ’ is not their capabilities or achievements – but their **witness of authentic holiness**. We have already seen this clearly in the personal and pastoral life of Dominic Barberi. Despite being a highly intellectual and capable man, Dominic is reputed to have been a hum-

ble person, blessed with a sense of humour, kindness and simplicity (“*A child in the simplicity of his heart*” – Cardinal Wiseman). In the words of Newman: “*He was an intelligent and astute man, yet spontaneous and simple like a child; and he is especially kind in his dealings with the faithful of our communion. I wish that all people had as much charity as I know that there is in him.*”

The Anglican priest, theologian and poet, John Henry Newman (“...*the most learned ecclesiastic in England*” – Barberi), after years of prayer, fasting and study in his search for the truth came to see clearly that the Roman Catholic Church was the same as the Church of the Apostles and the early Christians. But having this intellectual insight was not sufficient for Newman to take the step of requesting full communion in the Catholic Church. While he could make sense of the Church being “one, catholic (uni-



Blessed Dominic Barberi



The canonization of St. John Henry Newman,  
St. Peter's Square, Rome.

missionary life will give us renewed enthusiasm in our living of Passionist Apostolic Community. Dominic has much more to inspire us (as he did Newman and others) than simply his reputation of receiving Newman into the Catholic Church – as significant as that event is for the whole Church in celebrating the canonization of John Henry Newman. Rather, I hope that Blessed Dominic's example and witness can be *"a source of inspiration to the entire Congregation and challenge each member to play his part zealously in the apostolic endeavours demanded by our times."* (Const. 62)

Dominic Barberi is little-known and appreciated, even within our Congregation. Yet, without his missionary zeal, his apostolic spirit and his persistent conviction, the Founder's vision and hopes for the Congregation may never have been realized. As the pioneering Passionist missionary outside of Italy (together with his companions), Dominic's efforts in Belgium and England became the initial steps in the planting and the spread of the Passionist charism in 63 countries and cultures of the world today.

In our times the missionary nature of the Church through its evangelizing activity in new forms, and in response to the "signs of the times", is being proposed to us as a focus and vision, especially in the pontificate of Pope Francis. Dominic Barberi was also attentive to the missionary dimension of the Congregation issuing from the vision of St Paul of the Cross, and which we also received from our most recent General Chapter. I believe that Dominic's 'missionary outlook' can assist us greatly as we engage in the 'Calls to Action' arising from the 47<sup>th</sup> General Chapter and in preparation for commemorating the Ter-centenary of the Congregation's foundation in 2020 with the theme: **Renewing our Mission – Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope.**

Dominic's 'missionary outlook' helps us to keep the right balance and perspective in our mission with regard to prayer, community life and apostolate. As I stated in my report to the General Chapter: *"...Renewing our Mission is primarily about renewing ourselves"* (personal conversion), through our call to a life in community - but always in the missionary dimension. *"Our Mission is integrally connected with our life in Community ... as two sides of the same coin. Our life is our Mission (by witness), our Mission is our life (by action)."*

While Dominic's call was to the mission of evangelization in foreign lands (with all the particular

versal) and apostolic" (as is proclaimed in the Creed), he could not see signs of how the Church was "holy". He needed to see and experience concrete acts of holiness and sanctity in the members of the Catholic Church. He found this lived witness of authentic holiness in the person of the Catholic priest, Fr. Dominic Barberi. Recognising Dominic's spiritual stature, Newman shares his sincere feelings: *"When his form (Dominic's) came in sight, I was moved to the depths in the strangest way. His very look had about it something holy."* [...]

It was because of this courageous missionary witness which he saw personally, that Newman chose Dominic as the Catholic priest to receive him into the Church. And so, it was in October 1845, when Dominic was traveling through Oxford on his way to Belgium, that Newman requested through one of his pupils that Dominic be invited to stop by his home in Littlemore as a guest. *"He does not know of my intentions," he wrote, "but I shall ask of him admission into the one true fold of the Redeemer."*

What transpired next was the act by which these two holy figures are best remembered. Dominic drying himself in front of the fire in Newman's home since he was soaking wet from the travel by stagecoach in heavy rain, and Newman entering the room, dropping to his knees before Dominic without hesitation and asking to be received into the Church after making a long general confession lasting several hours. What a culmination in the story of the Divine call to mission and the human adventure of struggle, cooperation and response in the realization of God's mysterious plan. [...]

My hope is that these reflections on Dominic Barberi's personal, religious, spiritual, apostolic and



Fr. Alessandro Foppoli and Fr. Joachim Rego concelebrate the Mass of canonization.

challenges this entails), each one of us is called to have a 'missionary outlook' in our apostolates wherever we are – in the same manner as Dominic, and also as Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio (prior to his election as Pope Francis) laid out as his vision for the future Church in an address to the cardinals gathered in Rome for the papal conclave in April 2013:

*“The church is called to come out of herself and to go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents and of all misery.”*

Dominic also reminds us clearly that the mission is God's initiative, not ours. As such, it calls for a deep listening which must be discerned (personally and communally) in prayer before giving our response. However, as we have seen in Dominic's life, prayerful discernment is a struggle and can take time because it involves other people in community, and so it requires perseverance and patience. Also, prayerful discernment must necessarily lead to action...and, sometimes, this involves taking risks because there is not always a clarity and certainty as we would like to have. Following God's call and living the Gospel is risky! But, as we see in Dominic's life, there is always the promise of God's presence: *“I will be with you”* (Ex.3:12) when we respond with trust and courage in obedience to God's will: *“Let what you have said be done to me.”* (Lk.1:38)

Of course, as we well know, it is much easier to stay with the 'soft option', i.e. to just keep going on and doing what we have always done without responding to the “signs of the times” and causing too much disturbance; or to hold on to our 'comforts' in the security and familiarity of what we know, e.g. the

people like us and support us, our long history in a place etc; or to allow our buildings and plants to dictate our mission and keep us trapped, rather than letting them go and freeing us to be at the service of our mission. This 'soft option' risks our becoming self-referential, sterile and safe, instead of reaching out, being creative in the Spirit and generating new life. Again, as expressed in Pope Francis' vision in *Evangelii Gaudium #49* so directly: *“I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.”*

Dominic's experience shows us that those in the service of God's mission cannot become complacent like “build tents” (Mt.17:4) and create 'comfort-zones'. Rather, they are to descend from the heights of power and possession and be free to “go to a place that God will show” (cf. Gen.12:1). “Leaving their boats behind” (Mt.4:22; Lk.5:11) they are called to risk in faith, trust in God, act with courage, and depend on Providence and the good will of others.



Fr. John Kearns, IOS Provincial.

*“But it is to believe and to wish that the combination of these two holy figures, the Blessed Father Dominic and the Cardinal John Henry Newman, will leave its mark upon our spirit, that We will continue to think of the mysterious sense of their meeting with great hope and with prolonged prayer.”* (Discourse of Pope Paul VI on Blessed Dominic of the Mother of God, Passionist, on the occasion of his solemn beatification - **27 October 1963**)

Fr. Joachim Rego, C.P.  
Superior General

Retreat of Sts. John and Paul, Rome  
Memorial of Blessed Dominic Barberi, 26 August 2019



# EXTENDED GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

- Fr. Thomas McDonough (SPIR) (President, PASPAC Configuration)

At least once each year, this advisory council to the Superior General meets in Rome. This year the meeting took place from 9-13 September 2019. Its members comprise our six General Consultors and our six Configuration Presidents and the Secretary General. One of the differences for this meeting, and those that will follow, is that our General Chapter 2018 decided that each General Consultor would be assigned as a liaison with their Configuration of origin.

Therefore, at this gathering the following religious were present: Fr Joachim Rego, Superior General; Fr. Ciro Benedettini (Fist Consultor) and Fr. Luigi Vaninetti (MAPRAES Provincial and Configuration President) represented the MAPRAES Configuration; Fr. Mirek Lesiecki (General Consultor) and Fr. Mark-Robin Hoogland (SPE Provincial and CCH President) represented the CCH Configuration; Fr. Aloysius John Nguma (General Consultor) and Fr. Vital Otshudialokoka (SALV Vice-Provincial and CPA Configuration President) represented the CPA Configuration; Fr. Juan Ignacio Villar (General Consultor) and Fr. José María Sáez (SCOR Provincial and Configuration President) representing the SCOR Configuration; Fr. Gwen Barde (General Consultor) and Fr. Thomas McDonough (SPIR Provincial and PASPAC Configuration President) representing the PASPAC Configuration; and Fr. Rafael Vivanco (General Consultor); Fr. Francisco Valadez (REG Provincial and CJC Configuration President) representing the CJC Configuration and the new Secretary General, Fr. Rafael Blasco (SCOR), also an ex-officio member of the Extended Council.

First, we really had to get to know each other and to understand our role. For more than half of us this was the first time we attended a meeting of an Extended Council. All the General Consultors (except Fr. Gwen Barde); Fr. Tom McDonough from PASPAC and Fr. Rafael Blasco, Secretary General, were new to this advisory body.

There were productive discussions concerning issues about which Fr General asked advice. Following is a summary of some of these topics.

- **The recent General Chapter** was reviewed, including its preparations, challenges and fruits. On the



The Aula Hall during the 2018 General Chapter.

positive side, there was a good fraternal and open atmosphere. However, for many capitulars it was a first ever experience at this level. This contributed to some timidity and hesitancy, thus limiting one's active participation in the general assembly to a few interventions.

The Council reflected on the capitular journey, as had been initially conceived of by the Preparatory Committee and how, in fact, it was put into execution. It seemed that some issues remained unresolved, while other issues, due to the constraint of time were not brought to a definitive conclusion. The Extended Council recommends more be given to a methodological organization of the next General Chapter.

There was also discussion about the implementation of two recommendations of the General Chapter, i.e. numbers 5 and 6. In response to Recommendation #5, the General Council has already contacted an expert in the field of social communications to initiate some effective working paths and strategies. In response to Recommendation #6, concerning the Passionist Family, the members of the Extended Council agreed to collect information regarding the lay groups that exist in each Configuration in order to have a more complete picture of our relationship with them and with other members of the Passionist Family around the world.

- **The "charismatic plan" of the Congregation.** The Extended Council devoted part of its time to clarifying what is meant by the term "charismatic plan", which for many of the participants in the General Chapter had been a source of confusion.

The origin of this expression was examined in the request contained in the document *"Economy in the service of charism and mission"*, published by the Vatican Dicastery for Religious, which asked General Chapters



for "establishing the fundamental economic and administrative guidelines and developing a charismatic Institute plan that offers guidance in this area."

The Extended Council is oriented to a "restrictive" interpretation of this recommendation, asking for the development of a document that serves above all in the economic sphere to discern the orientation and use of our goods while respecting the charismatic identity of our Congregation. Such a document already exists at the Provincial level for some of our entities.

In order not to lose, however, the possibility of carrying out ongoing reflection on our charism, the religious at large will be asked to respond to some specific questions.

**- Ways of effectively prioritizing Evangelisation & Mission, and JPIC as foundational to every aspect of our life and ministry.**

The General Council is considering analyzing the current structure of the various secretariats of the General Curia, in keeping with the desire to renew our mission and to restore greater centrality to evangelization and new evangelization.

The Extended Council was asked about the idea of creating a dedicated secretariat for new evangelization. This office would include the other areas of JPIC, communications, mission ad gentes, solidarity and lay people, could be reorganized.

With particular reference to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), the Extended Council was reminded how this area represents an important element for our spirituality and formation - both initial and ongoing. Giving more attention to JPIC in the structure of the Curia and linking it to evangelization can also help to implement what is recommended by the General Chapter regarding the theme of respect for creation (Recommendation #4).

This plan to reorganize the Curia is still in an early stage; however, the Council members were able to express their views for or against this type of venture.

**- The former GABR Province (Belgium).** The Superior General informed the Extended Council about the situation of the former Province of St Gabriel (Belgium). Having decreed the suppression of the Province GABR, the General Chapter stated that "the Superior General with his Council, and in dialogue with the interested parties, will decide the matter of the religious, the two houses and of the former Province". The entity of Belgium is now under the responsibility of the Superior General. As a result of this and pending further developments, the Superior General appointed Fr. Frans Damen as his delegate, to ensure the care of the religious of the former Province. He has also decided for all the religious cur-



Fr. Gwen Barde (General Consultor), Fr. Paolo Aureli (Secretary General for the Missions) and Fr. Paul Hata (MAIAP) at the new Passionist residence in Myanmar.

rently present in the house of Wezembeek (Brussels) to move to the house of Kortrijk by the end of December 2019. This is particularly so for the better management and care of the religious.

**- Finances and the use of the Solidarity Fund.** The Extended Council also listened to the report of the General Econome, Fr. Vincenzo Carletti. In particular, he spoke about the norms established by the XV General Synod (2015) regarding the use of the Solidarity Fund was presented to the members of the Council. He reiterated that all Provinces, Vice-provinces and Vicariates have a duty to contribute to this fund, with the annual income contribution of two percent. So too all the entities of the Congregation can ask for help from the Solidarity Fund, in accordance with the norms established at the General Synod. [For details, see the document News from the General Council, September 2019]

**- The Myanmar Mission.** The mission of Myanmar (formerly Burma) is entrusted to the PASPAC Configuration. However, from a strictly legal point of view, it is directly under the authority of the Superior General, who appointed Fr. Gwen Barde, General Consultor, as his delegate for the mission. At this meeting, Fr. Gwen updated the Council about the mission in the Diocese of Pathein (72,000 Catholics, 35 parishes and 85 diocesan priests). The agreement provided for a commitment of the Passionists for three years (expiring in September 2020), especially in the field of the formation, and the doctrinal and spiritual updating of the clergy. The Bishop has asked to extend our commitment for a further three years. At present our religious are also involved with assisting in the formation of seminarians at the Minor Seminary.

In addition to these agenda items, there were many informal but significant conversations. Additionally, there was the usual and wonderful camaraderie, friendship and laughter that are so much part of all our meetings.



## NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE GENERAL CURIA

### NEW SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION

Following the General Consulta of June 2019, Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General appointed Fr. Rafael Blasco Bordejé as Secretary General of the Congregation, replacing Fr. Fernando Ruiz.

Fr. Rafael is a member of the SCOR Province of Spain and Latin America. He was born in Zaragoza, Spain in 1963. Following his novitiate at Morrovalle (Italy) he professed First Vows in 1982. After finishing his studies, he was assigned to the school of the former FAM Province of Spain, "Colegio San Gabriel" in the city of Zuera as a teacher, where he was ordained a priest in 1989. He was then assigned to the former FAM Provincial community in Zaragoza. For the following two years while doing military service as military chaplain, he also assisted in the parish of Santa Gema and served as provincial secretary.

Fr. Rafael was then assigned to the FAM province's missions in Venezuela (1991-1997), first in the communities of Fátima (Caracas) and Maracay as parochial vicar and then in Puerto Cabello, as parochial vicar, parish priest and superior. From 1997 to 2015, he returned to the community of the Colegio San Gabriel in Zuera. There he served as a teacher, parish priest in the towns of Sierra de Luna and Las Pedrosas and, in recent years, director of the school and superior of the community. Prior to being assigned to Rome, he was parochial vicar in Zaragoza (2015-2019).

His email address remains that of the Secretary General - [segretariogen@passiochristi.org](mailto:segretariogen@passiochristi.org)



(L-R) Fr. Rafael Blasco, Fr. Alessandro Foppoli and Fr. Antonio Siciliano.

this role. Additionally, Fr. Alessandro will continue in his current role as personal secretary to the Superior General and translator for the General Curia.

Fr. Alessandro, a member of the MAPRAES Province (Italy, Portugal and France) was born in Como (CO), Italy in 1973. He professed Vows in 1995 and was

ordained in 1999. In addition to performing various ministries in the former CORM Province of Italy, including Provincial secretary, he has been personal secretary to the current Superior General since 2013.

### NEW GENERAL ECONOME FOR THE CONGREGATION

On 10 October 2019, with the Consensus of the General Council, the Superior General, Fr. Joachim Rego appointed Fr. Antonio Siciliano (MAPRAES) as the new General Econome of the Congregation. He replaces Fr. Vincenzo Carletti in this role who resigned due to health issues.

A religious of the MAPRAES Province, Fr. Antonio was born in 1954 in the Italian city of Mondragone (CE). He professed vows in 1976 and was ordained in 1983. Prior to his appointment as General Econome, P. Antonio was a local superior and pastor as well as a hospital chaplain. In the former DOL Province of Italy, he served as the Provincial Consultor for Finances in 2002-2003 and 2007-2011. Recently he was Regional Superior of the DOL region of the MAPRAES Province as well as the legal representative for that region, 2015-2019. His email address will continue to be that of the General Econome - [economcp@passiochristi.org](mailto:economcp@passiochristi.org)

### NEW PROCURATOR GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION

On 12 September 2019, with the Consensus of the General Council, the Superior General, Fr. Joachim Rego appointed Fr. Alessandro Foppoli (MAPRAES) as the new Procurator General of the Congregation. He replaces Fr. Antonio Munduate in

### ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENT AND RE-APPOINTMENTS TO THE GENERAL CURIA

In addition to the new appointments, the Superior General also announced the appointment of Fr. Javier Sollis (as of January 2020) to the General Office of Communications and the re-appointment for one



(L-R) Fr. Augusto Matrullo, Fr. Luis Alberto Cano and Fr. Erasmo Sebastiano.

year of Fr. Lawrence Rywalt (PIB Editor, Webmaster, translator); Fr. Martin Coffey (Executive Secretary for Formation); Dr. Eunice Dos Santos (General Archivist) and Fr. Leonello Leidi (MAPRAES) as Advisor to the General Council for matters concerning Canon Law.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE GENERALATE COMMUNITY OF STS. JOHN AND PAUL

### RECTOR, VICAR AND ECONOME

Subsequent to the General Consulta of June 2019, Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General appointed Fr. Luis Alberto Cano Seijo (SCOR) as the Rector of the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul, and Fr. Augusto Matrullo (MAPRAES) as the Vicar. Additionally, Fr. Joachim appointed Fr. Erasmo Sebastiano (MAPRAES) as the community Econome. These appointments are effective as of 01 September 2019 and are for three years.

**Fr. Luis Alberto Cano Seijo**, a member of the SCOR Province of Spain and Latin America, replaces Fr. Matteo Nonini in the role of Rector. He was born in 1947 in Valladolid (Spain). He professed Vows in 1968 and was ordained in 1974. Among his various ministries he served as Novice Master, Director of Students, Pastor, local Superior and General Consulor (2000-2012).

"I just celebrated 51 years of Profession (August 15, 2019) and in all these years I have consciously sought to live my Religious Consecration with joy and hope and be available to whatever the Congregation wished

of me. This has led me to live experiences of all kinds in the different ministries that have entrusted me both in Spain and Latin America (Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico) and during the years on the General Council that have helped me to love the Congregation with greater intensity. I was able to meet and come to know many religious, in so many circumstances and missions. As a result of these experiences, I hope to continue to live and minister in this spirit of generosity." He may be contacted via his email -

[rettorecp@passiochristi.org](mailto:rettorecp@passiochristi.org)

**Fr. Augusto Matrullo** has just completed 31 years as Rector of the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul, Rome. He was born in the city of Itri (Italy) in 1941. He entered the Passionist junior seminary and subsequently the novitiate, professing vows in 1959. He was ordained in 1967. Prior to this ministry at Sts. John and Paul, he taught for 13 years in a public secondary school in Naples. In 1978-82 he was Provincial Consulor for formation. He was also pastor in Naples at the parish of San Tarcisio. From 1987-88 he was local superior of the community of Naples.

**Fr. Erasmo Sebastiano** (MAPRAES) was appointed the Econome for the Generalate community of Sts. John and Paul. Prior to entering the Passionist Congregation, Fr. Erasmo, who was born in 1961, earned a degree in finances. He held various positions in this area in his former DOL Italian province. He professed Vows in 2000 and was ordained a priest in 2004.

Additionally, **Fr. Vito Patera** (MAPRAES) was reconfirmed as Director of the Retreat House of Sts. John and Paul, a ministry which he has done for the past thirteen years.

### RECTOR OF THE BASILICA OF STS. JOHN AND PAUL

Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, also announced his decision to appoint **Fr. Graziano Leonardo** (MAPRAES) as Rector of the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul, Rome. He was born in 1970 and professed Vows in 1992. He was ordained a priest in 1999 in the former Italian LAT Province of Italy. Prior to this appointment he performed various ministries including pastor, local Superior and retreat preacher. He recently successfully defended his doctoral thesis at the Lateran University in Rome, entitled "The effect of the Second Vatican Council on the internal magisterium of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ".



## NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PASSIONISTS INTERNATIONAL AND OUR NGO PRESENCE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

During the General Consulta of June 2019, Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, with the approval of the General Council, nominated Fr. John Kathoka Muthengi (CARLW) as the new Executive Director of Passionists International and our NGO (Non-governmental Organization) presence at the United Nations. This nomination was confirmed with our partners in Passionists International, Sister Eileen Fucito (Sisters of the Cross and Passion) and Sister María Aureliana Aguirre Rodríguez de Guzmán (Daughters of the Passion of Jesus Christ and the Our Lady of Sorrows), and in agreement with the members of the Board of Passionists International. Fr. John replaces the former Executive Director, Fr. Mirosław Lesiecki (ASSUM) who was elected General Consultor at the General Chapter of 2018. The appointment of Fr. John will be for three years beginning in September 2019.

Fr. John was born in 1966 in Makuyu, Kenya, and is the second of twelve children. He joined the Passionists in 1986 and professed Vows in 1991. He was ordained a priest in 1996. Father Muthengi was engaged in pastoral work in Homa Bay Catholic Diocese before joining the Passionist Retreat Ministry in Nairobi. While in Nairobi, Muthengi earned his STL in The Catholic University of Eastern Africa in 2001. In this spirit, Fr. John participated in a United Nations Climate Change Convention in Nairobi 2006 as a follow-up of integrity of creation meetings in Rome and the UK, where he became interested in ecological concerns. He served in the Passionist Leadership Team for eight years [2001-2009] before being assigned to the Passionist Provincial Office (the former CORM Province of Italy) (2009-2013) prior to his doctoral studies in Rome. He successfully defended his PhD on *Environmental Issues* in November 2017. He wrote his doctoral thesis on the Passionist, Fr. Thomas Berry and Wangari Maathai. Until this appointment, Fr. John served as associate pastor in a *green* Passionist Parish of the American PAUL Province in Toronto, Canada since August 2016.



Fr. John Kathoka Muthengi (CARLW)

Situated at the United Nations in New York, Passionists International strives to bring the work, the dreams and the hopes of the members of the Passionist Family around the world to bear on the decisions made by the 192 nations that make up the body of the UN. The initiative came from a decision of the Passionist General Chapter in Brazil in 2000. In 2001, Fr. Kevin Dance (SPIR) was appointed the first Passionist NGO representative, a position that he held until 2012. As the Chapter members reflected on the reality of globalization where the crises to be addressed throughout the world are so evident, they came to see how we are affected by the lifestyles and decisions of other countries. Therefore, they chose to become involved with the only truly multilateral body in the world – the UN. It is there that we strive to express the hope and healing that are at the heart of the Passionist charism.

A Passionists International Webpage ([www.passionistworld.org](http://www.passionistworld.org)) was launched to promote the flow of communication across the Passionist Family. It is trilingual – Spanish, Italian, English. The Webpage strives to share information on the UN's efforts to improve life throughout the world.



# MEETING OF THE PASSIONIST JUBILEE COMMISSION

- Fr. *Ciro Benedettini* (General Consultor)

The Jubilee Commission met in Rome on 16-18 September 2019. It is once again complete with the addition of a new member from the PASPAC Configuration, Fr. Einstein T. Felix, of the THOM Vice-Province (India), replacing the late Fr. John Pearce (SPIR). Fr. Juan Ignacio Villar (General Consultor) and Fr. *Ciro Benedettini* report on the decisions of the recent Extended Council meeting (9-11 September) concerning the Jubilee-- in particular the draft of a letter of the Superior General to the Holy See to officially request recognition of the Jubilee; approval of the Jubilee budget that was revised following the one presented at the 47th General Chapter; and finally the very positive feedback from the Presidents of the Configurations about the *pilgrimage* of the Jubilee Icon and the anticipation and preparation for the Jubilee.



(L-R) Fr. Einstein T. Felix (THOM), Fr. Juan Ignacio Villar (General Consultor), Fr. *Ciro Benedettini* (General Consultor), Fr. Vital Otshudialokoka (SALV), Fr. Anton Lässer (VULN) and Fr. Francisco das Chagas (GETH).

The Commission then proceeded to discuss the description of the work of the Secretary or coordinator of the Jubilee i.e. a full-time person in Rome throughout the Jubilee to assist the Commission, manage the reception, direct pilgrims, orient them to the Jubilee sites outside Rome, oversee the website, maintain communication with local contacts, etc..

Attention then turned to the "Guide to the Places of St. Paul of the Cross", whose preparation is now urgent. The work will be done by several individuals and designed especially for the WEB. Additionally, on the Web there will be the texts (prayers, small biographies of the saints) that should facilitate the reception and celebrations with the Jubilee icon.

The Commission also discussed the meeting of bishops (17-25 November 2020) that will be held during the opening of the Jubilee (22 November 2020). There was also a long and articulated the debate on the meeting of young Passionists. It was agreed that the meeting should coincide with the International Congress "The Wisdom

of the Cross in a Pluralistic World" (21-24 September 2021). In principle participation should include the largest number of participants possible because it is a unique opportunity to meet other young Passionists as well as to come to know the Congregation and shape a vision for its future. There is also the need, not entirely secondary, to show the youthful face of the Congregation. The members were divided concerning the criteria for participation-- if we accept the criterion of 10 years of pro-

fession at the present time, there would be close to 300 participants. If we choose the criterion of five years of profession this would halve the number of those participating; however, these numbers are fluid. In both cases the problem is that of accommodation-- during the Congress the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul will be full and young people would have to settle for a makeshift ac-

commodations, certainly not comfortable. Otherwise we would have to seek lodging at the present time elsewhere in Rome. In both cases there is a problem of management and costs that need to be studied by those in authority beyond the Commission.

There was also an animated discussion about the logo of the Jubilee (the door, the fountain) and what gadgets would be available for pilgrims who come to Rome. It is urgent to prepare a leaflet explaining the nature of the Passionist Jubilee.

During the last afternoon the Commission met with Juan Della Torre, the communications consultant and general manager of the firm "La Machi, communication for good causes" (Barcelona, Spain) to begin to talk about the communication plan of the Congregation and the Jubilee. Della Torre focused the discussion by posing a series of questions: Who are the Passionists? Who is Christ crucified for us? What do you want to communicate via the Jubilee? What means do you want to use? Who specifically do you want to address?



# THE PASSIONIST PRESENCE IN VENEZUELA AND THE CURRENT REALITY

- Fr. Juan Ignacio Villar (General Consultor)

[Editor's Note: In May 2019, Fr. Juan Ignacio Villar traveled to Venezuela to accompany, embrace and encourage our Passionist religious and the laity of the Passionist Family, in the context of the political situation they are experiencing in that country at this moment in its history. What follows are his reflections on this experience.]

This was an experience of contrasts. On the one hand, the happiness and joy of the Deaconate Ordination of one of our religious Carlos Bracho; and the feasts of Saint Gemma Galgani (at our school in Caracas) and of Our Lady of Fatima (in the parish in Caracas). These events occurred in the context of the inexplicable and comic-tragic political situation that exists in a country in chaos, due to the affairs and nonsense of its leaders.

Venezuela welcomed the first Passionists 92 years ago (1927-2019), placing its prosperity at their disposal. They immediately began the hard task of working together in a wonderful pastoral and apostolic spirit. They built seven churches with their respective retreats-communities and additionally, also 4 schools; we are still present in two of them. For many years it was identified as the Passionist Vicariate of Our Lady of Coromoto, and at one point, it consisted of 40 religious who, for the most part, went there with great enthusiasm and with missionary zeal.

In these lands, the missionary dreams of young Spanish Passionists became a reality. Many lived lives of loving service in this country and in the heart of its people. All of this moves and inspires me in a spirit of thanksgiving and appreciation for their presence and mission.

Today, the reality of the Passionists in Venezuela is different. There are four presences – the parishes of Our Lady of Fatima and Santa Eduwigis, in Ca-



Fr. Juan Ignacio Villar (General Consultor)

racas, and in the cities of Maracay and Barquisimeto, where 9 religious (7 priests, 1 deacon, 1 temporary professed) and 2 aspirants are present. They sustain and promote, with minimal resources and great fatigue, the pastoral care of these Christian communities.

I daresay that Venezuela as a country has collapsed; things that were once taken for granted no longer exist. Even staple foods are scarce, and many people are forced to look for remnants of food in the trash; and they even take turns searching for scraps to share.

There is no joy in the streets; fear has taken its place and insecurity has grown by leaps and bounds. The corruption of some politicians is abysmal, which causes disparity and alienation. Only those who have the resources to pay someone for a passport can dream of a different destination in Europe. Over-all, in recent years there are almost five million Venezuelans who have fled to neighboring countries.

Those who still find reasons to remain in Venezuela simply do not have the resources to leave, and live resigned to the reality of having water for a few days at a time, unstable electricity and internet (where it exists) and a diet that depends on what is available. To fill the gas tank of an automobile one waits in queue for hours. It is normal to receive news of a loved one who was murdered at the hands of a criminal (with or without uniform).

We are grateful to those Passionist religious who came to this country 92 years ago and who over the decades have worked building of the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, we thank and pray for the valiant religious who today remain in Venezuela and who confidently wait and hope against all hope.



# THE 21<sup>st</sup> PASPAC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## *Sustaining our Witness in Darkness*

- Fr. Gwen Barde (General Consultor)

Our Passionist Retreat in Uidong, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul is less than thirty kilometers away from the Korean demilitarized zone and North Korea. On the monastery terrace, one can stretch his or her sights into a dark side of humanity. Many of our brothers and sisters in South Korea, however, choose to see hope and smell peace across the border. This monastery, the site of the 21<sup>st</sup> PASPAC (Passionist Asia-Pacific Configuration) Assembly, has given everyone an impulse of sustained faith throughout decades of threats amid imminent conflict.

The Assembly took place from 8-11 October 2019 and used the Passionist Congregation's 300th Jubilee theme - *Renewing our Mission: Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope*. In attendance were twenty-one Passionists from four PASPAC entities: The SPIR-Holy Spirit Province (Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, and Vietnam), the MACOR-Korean Martyrs' Province (Korea and China), THOM-St. Thomas Vice-Province (India), and the MAIAP-Japanese Martyrs' Province (Japan). Our brothers from the REPAC Province (Indonesia) and PASS Province (Philippines) were very much missed. One of our first missionaries to Myanmar (Burma) also attended with a presentation on the Congregation's youngest mission.

The PASPAC President, Fr. Thomas McDonough (SPIR), guided the daily sessions with cutting-edge reflections on the Passionist Charism, which throbs with "a heart to suffer." Every Passionist is called to witness in the darkness. Jesus radically exemplified this in His descent into hell. This entailed emptying Himself to be one with those utterly disassociated from God's love and presence. A Passionist is to bring this presence, love and hope into humanity's abyss. Such reflections challenged the participants to reexamine the Passionist mission in every entity, culture, or country where he or she is present.

Reports and sharing from every entity unveiled the PASPAC Configuration's vibrancy and promise—more than four hundred professed religious, young vocations coming from new communities, rich interaction between various cultures, a wide range of ministries, and a strong resolve for solidarity. The Configuration also confronts many challenges—language, finances, ageing and demise, and the postmodern culture. These issues were tackled through four areas of collaboration – personnel,



Participants at the PASPAC General Assembly

formation, finance, and Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC). The Assembly was also inspired to include the laity in the Configuration's structure of collaboration.

The final proposals and decisions of the Assembly hope to widen and animate the path of solidarity despite the many challenges within PASPAC. They are to sustain our witness in the darkness: the reality of ageing and diminishment in Australia and Japan; the ministerial challenges in Korea; the repressive governments in China and Vietnam; the economic disparity in the Philippines and Indonesia; the growing fundamentalism in India's government; and the instability of Myanmar. At the close of the Assembly, the officers of the Executive Council were elected. Fr. Thomas McDonough was confirmed President. He will work with a very able Vice-President in Fr. Anthony Arakel of the THOM Vice-Province. The new executive secretary is Fr. Jiffin Sebastian, also of the THOM Vice-Province.

Saint Andrew Kim Taegon, the most well-known among the many Korean martyrs, said these last words before his death-- "*This is my last hour of life, listen to me attentively: if I have held communication with foreigners, it has been for my religion and for my God. It is for Him that I die. My immortal life is on the point of beginning.*" These are moving words for those who dare to look outside to experience and share God's love. This inspires every South Korean still hoping to reach out to their brothers and sisters beyond the demilitarized zone. This inspires all of us trying to go beyond our borders to collaborate with God in all His plans.



# "LOVE AND SUFFERING"

## *Exploring the Memory of the Passion*

- Fr. James Sweeney (PATR)

This was the third International Seminar on Passionist themes held at the Minsteracres Retreat Centre of St Joseph's Province, 16th to 20th September 2019. The seminars are sponsored by the Configuration of Charles Houben (North Europe) and held every two years. They gather participants from across the Passionist Family – the Congregation of the Passion, the Cross and Passion Sisters, the lay associates, and also with the Passionist nuns in their new monastery at Minsteracres.

The event this year explored the central theme in Passionist spirituality of Love and Suffering. It was attended by forty-five participants from Europe and further afield – England, Sweden, The Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Poland, Australia, Tanzania, Botswana, India.

On the opening day participants visited a specially mounted art exhibition on Love and Suffering in the garden complex of Minsteracres. This was put together by Lya Vollering and John Thornhill, lay associates of St Joseph's Province.

The next day, the speaker was Karen Kilby, a professor of theology at the nearby University of Durham and its enterprising Centre for Catholic Studies. Karen – from the USA, a mother of three, author of books on Rahner and Von Balthasar – has researched this theme extensively in collaboration with the Sisters of La Re traite. She brought the fruits of her research to the seminar with a careful exploration of how to think about suffering and love. Clearly there is a close link between them. But what exactly is the link? How do love and suffering come together? What are the helpful – and unhelpful – ways of thinking about this crucial link?



Participants at the International Seminar on Passionist themes, Minsteracres Retreat Centre, England.

Other speakers then developed particular aspects: Sister Therese O'Regan (Cross and Passion Sisters) on compassion; Fr Łukasz Andrzejewski (ASSUM) with a fascinating account of members of the Polish Province martyred in the Nazi concentration camps – a story largely untold until now; Fr Mark Robin Hoogland (SPE) on the possibilities and limits of language to speak of God; Fr Martin Newell (IOS) on the environment and the urgency of the ecological crisis; Fr Martin Coffey (PATR) on global perspectives and challenges of human suffering; Fr James Sweeney (PATR) on keeping the Memory of the Passion in terms of the crisis that the Church is experiencing today.

On the final day the group explored the kind of structured practices responding to suffering that keeping Memory of the Passion implies. Many inspiring examples from across the congregations were shared. The great value of these seminars was affirmed. They are a forum in which the whole Passionist Family and from the different provinces can gather – not for business matters or for organisation – but to pray, reflect, discuss, and share our common life. It was agreed to convene again in two years' time.

To see the Seminar visit: <https://vimeo.com/user102948547>



## HOW A “GREEN” CHURCH IN TORONTO TEACHES THEOLOGY THROUGH DESIGN

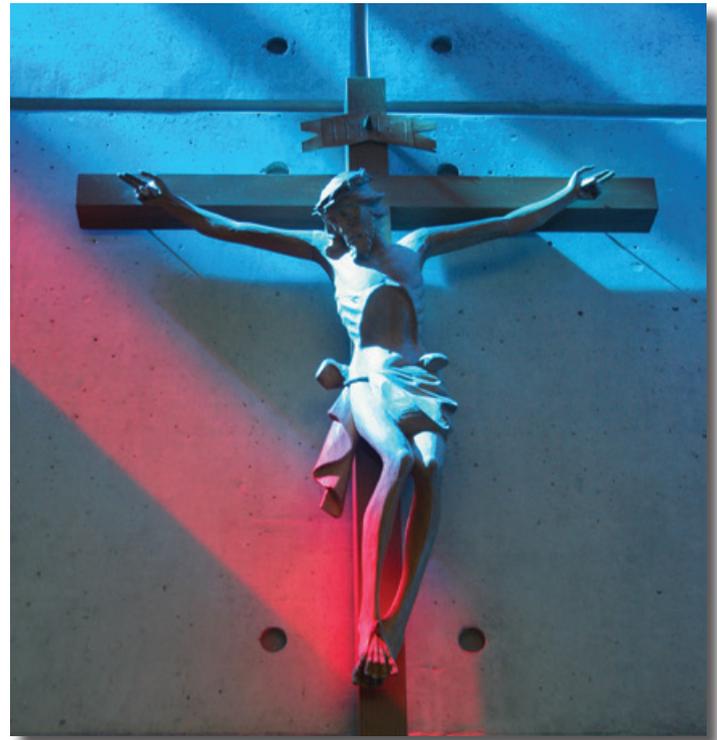
- Dean Dettloff (Correspondent “America” magazine)

“You’re just catching the tail end of the light show”, said the architect Roberto Chiotti a little after 1 p.m., showing off the sanctuary of St. Gabriel’s Passionist Parish in Toronto, the church he designed with Larkin Architect Ltd. in the early 2000s. Around noon, the sun cascades through colored-glass skylights, bathing otherwise blank concrete walls in a wash of dazzling hues as the congregation gathers for Mass. The colors creep up one wall, reach an apex, and then creep back down the other side, fading away until about 4 p.m., when the sun enters the church at an oblique angle to highlight a crucifix in bold reds and blues for the sacrament of reconciliation.

“*[At first] I was afraid it would be like a discotheque, with shooting lights and lasers,” Mr. Chiotti said of the design, which he tested using white boxes and pieces of glass in parks. “I hadn’t conceived that it would represent cosmic time, because the light moves at the rate of the earth turning on its axis.”*

St. Gabriel’s was the first church in Canada to be certified by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or L.E.E.D., rating system. From its floor plan to its building materials to its parishioner programs, St. Gabriel’s has embodied a Catholic vision of ecology since its consecration in 2006, nearly a decade before Pope Francis published “Laudato Si” in 2015. When their aging church in Toronto presented a host of financial and maintenance burdens at the turn of the millennium, the Passionists decided to start fresh. Passionists in Canada were interested in the teachings of the U.S. Passionist priest Thomas Berry, C.P., a towering figure in the development of eco-theology even after his death in 2009, and the prospect of designing a new building suggested a unique opportunity to express the cosmic vision of Father Berry beyond texts and lectures. Mr. Chiotti had studied the work of Father Berry at St. Michael’s College in Toronto under Father Stephen Dunn, C.P., a Passionist and long-time member of St. Gabriel’s parish, and he was keen to take on the project.

The Passionists’ mandate was to make Father Berry’s ideas tangible. “*When we asked Thomas Berry, How do we do that?*” said Mr. Chiotti, “*he responded with a question instead of an answer: ‘How will you address the sun?’ Because we’re solar beings.*”



“The passion of the earth is always the passion of Christ himself.”

The sun’s rays of color during the Mass is aesthetically moving, but Father Dunn said that for him, the primary purpose of the windows is catechesis. “It’s a long tradition in churches that the windows tell the story of salvation history. You get to know your saints, all that sort of thing.” Some of the stained-glass images of saints from the old church were salvaged and recycled in the new building, no longer high above churchgoers but now face-to-face with them.

The catechesis of the windows in the nave, however, speaks to transformation, illumination and salvation history on a cosmic scale. “The windows are blank until the sun changes them,” said Father Dunn. “That is the essential cosmological link. It’s something that you grow into. First you say, ‘Isn’t that beautiful on the wall?’ But the lesson is there. We keep inviting the sun into each of our liturgies one way or another.”

When the sun no longer shines through the colored filters above, it still washes the nave in light through the massive wall of windows that faces south,



giving the congregation full view of a garden maintained by parishioners. “It just so happens that the garden is the same size as the worship space, so the templum of the sacred space is projected out into creation,” said Mr. Chiotti.

The baptismal font also faces the windows “to remind us that when we’re baptized into the Christian community, we’re also accepted into the earth community,” said Mr. Chiotti. Along with the sun, water is a primary theme of the architecture. A constructed wetland near the garden, also visible from inside the church, is fed by rainwater collected on the roof that empties like a waterfall into a stony basin surrounded by lush foliage. When rain is scarce, however, the plant life dies off. “Not only is water a primary symbol in our initiation rite as Christians,” said Mr. Chiotti, “but it’s also absolutely essential to life. Christ spoke about living water, so [the wetland] puts us in touch with the preciousness of water, and how water is meant to bring new life. But if we pollute it or don’t respect it, or misuse it, it will bring death.”

Even the air that parishioners breathe is a reminder of human dependence on creation. A living wall made up of plants inside the building captures carbon released from clothing and shoes, and it returns clean air in its place. Plants dehumidify the air in the summer and humidify it in the winter. At every turn, St. Gabriel’s tries to encourage those who walk through it to see themselves as intimately tied into creation.

As a Passionist parish, St. Gabriel’s also testifies to the charism of the order that maintains it. Dating back to 1747, the Passionists devote their lives to the suffering of Jesus and the meaning of the cross in the world. “The passion of the earth is always the passion of Christ himself,” said Father Brando Recaña, C.P., pastor of St. Gabriel’s. “When we’re gone, the earth will still be here. Whatever we do to Mother Nature always comes back to us.” Although ecological problems are grave, Father Recaña says the youth of his parish give him hope as they learn a deeper relationship with God and creation through gardening and caring for justice. In the garden, as part of the

catechesis of St. Gabriel’s, there is a series of plaques that function as “stations of our cosmic earth,” telling the story of the universe, or what Thomas Berry called “cosmogogenesis,” with stations like “the flaring forth of the universe” and “the rise of the flowers.”

“As people of faith, we’re celebrating the transformative moments in the story of the universe,” said Mr. Chiotti, drawing from Father Berry. “If the universe story was written in 30 volumes, humans would appear on the last sentence of the last page, and Christ would appear in the period of the last sentence. So somehow, we’re missing a sense of the cosmic Christ, or the 30 volumes prior to the incarnation of Christ. He had to have been here all this time from the beginning, if we believe in God’s presence as part of our universal truth and reality.”

Mr. Chiotti continues to think ecologically as he designs and updates other sacred spaces. “My hope had been that every church I designed after this one would be like this,” he says. That has not happened, but since “Laudato Si” he has noticed a difference in how congregations think about construction. For example, a church he is currently working on in Milton, Ontario (Saint Benedict), will be net-zero in its energy consumption, built with sustainable materials available nearby and efficiently insulated.

“From up in the stars, the cosmos, you could look down and see we’re crucifying the earth. But there’s hope that resurrection, [and] a new understanding, will bring about a viable human future,” said Mr. Chiotti. If human beings can form better relationships with each other and the planet, perhaps, St. Gabriel’s Parish suggests, we might even become more than one sentence at the end of the universe story.

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Photos: Greg Ng



Light streams into St. Gabriel’s Passionist Parish in Toronto, Canada.



# THE LAITY OF THE PASSIONIST FAMILY OF HOLY CROSS PROVINCE (CRUC)

- Timothy J. O'Brien

[Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of PIB articles that feature the presence of the laity of the Passionist Family in the reality of a specific Province/Vice-Province of the Congregation. The following article describes the involvement of the laity in the preparation and celebration of the 2019 CRUC Provincial Chapter and in the future life of the Province. Currently the CRUC Province consists of 47 vowed religious.]

At the beginning of a journey, travelers cannot see the entire length of the path before them. They cannot forecast every bump or turn in the road. Likewise, the travelers cannot keep their heads down, eyes cast on only their next footstep. If so, surely they would wander aimlessly and lose their way. Rather, people on a journey need to cast their eyes toward the horizon: to see what can be seen and make the best choices for the road, according to the terrain.

Perhaps the biggest shortcoming pilgrim people can make is to think they are alone. Somehow, they fail to notice their fellow pilgrims traversing beside them along the same road. If travelers remember there are others with them, the load can be lighter and the path smoother. The Passionists of Holy Cross Province have been diligent in this regard. They have undertaken a process of visioning that has kept their eyes on the horizon. The Passionists paused and considered their future subsequent to their 2007 Chapter and the creation of their mission statement: *The Passionists, a family of priests, brothers and laity, reach out with compassion to the crucified of today. We keep alive the memory of Christ's Passion through our commitment to community, prayer, ministries of the Word, and service to those who suffer. We welcome all who seek renewed life through the power of the Cross and the hope of the Resurrection.*

In 2016, Holy Cross Provincial, Fr. Joe Moons, called together a visioning commission to lead the visioning process. The commission was formed with diversity in mind. In addition to four Holy Cross Province priests, including a St. Paul of the Cross



The celebration of the 2019 CRUC Provincial Chapter.

Province (PAUL) priest and canon lawyer, three laymen, and two lay women assembled for the task. Facilitator Anne Kemp, an expert facilitator, was engaged to help lead the process.

The Visioning Commission, comprised of people in the Passionist Family from a variety of geographic locations, met faithfully with a challenging task of bringing the Passionist charism into the future. But they chose not to do this in a vacuum; their intention was never to create a vision for the province, but to create a process for all the provincial Passionist Family to articulate a common vision.

In the summer of 2017, they held an assembly of those directly involved in Passionist ministries, regardless of their vocation. The Commission used the facilitation technique of "Appreciative Inquiry" and asked the participants to reflect on what do the Passionists do well, i.e. what is the good news that exists in the Province.

That Autumn, the Visioning Commission decided that they wanted to include even more people. They wanted to share information and keep everyone as informed as possible. They also wanted a vehicle to be able to hear everyone's opinion. A communications coordinator was hired in January 2018. Her job was to create a weekly e-newsletter that encapsulated what was happening in the visioning process. It was emailed



Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, meets with laity of the CRUC Province.

importantly, each of the Working Groups gave a report on their work and asked for feedback from the other attendees. The Working Groups listened to the comments and brought them back to the core of their meetings.

In the Spring of 2019, Passionist Family regional gatherings were again convened. This time they responded to two short videos and offered even more feedback to the Working Groups. The highlights of these local gatherings as well as the activity of the Pre-Chapter were all communicated to a broader group of people through the e-newsletter.

After three years of diligent work by the Visioning Commission, countless hours of discussion by the Working Groups, multiple invitations for the refinement of ideas, a plethora of pages of documentation, the participation of hundreds of people in the Passionist Family, and over 70 newsletters, the Chapter finally arrived in June 2019. [See PIB, No.47, 2019]

The Chapter reflected the entire visioning process. More than 90 Passionist religious and laity participated, and half of them were laity. Throughout the five days, people spoke and listened, prayed and reflected, gave reports and offered input. The laity were able to articulate how important the Passionist mission was to them; the vowed members could see the laity's earnest and sincere commitment. Each could see the other as partners in the charism.

Each of the five Working Groups presented what they discovered about their topic, engaged the participants through activities and discussion, and suggested Calls-to-Action regarding the vision. All the Calls-to-Action were passed with enthusiasm. The Passionist Family of the Holy Cross Province did not just establish a vision but became visionary people.

*Guided by the Holy Spirit and the signs of the times, we create and carry out ministry that reaches the suffering of today and form community that spiritually nourishes the Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province.*

As the Passionist Family moves toward vision fulfillment, two things are clear-- they will continue to listen to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and they will do this together, as a family. An old African proverb says, "If you want to go faster, go alone. If you want to go farther, go together." The Passionist Holy Cross Province certainly took this wisdom to heart as they took the long view in creating a vision that included the Passionist Family.

to vowed Passionist religious within and outside the province, Passionist nuns, alumni, and lay people with leadership positions in a variety of Passionist ministries. The newsletter also included a thoughtful question that readers could respond to. Those responses were then shared in the next newsletter.

That Spring the Visioning Commission asked local Passionist Superiors to gather representatives of the Passionist Family-- people on Boards and committees, employees, parishioners, and volunteers, i.e. those who invest their time, energy, and hearts in the Passionist mission and ministries. The ten local gatherings had the same agenda-- to dialogue about what they envisioned the future to be. The essence of each meeting was shared through the newsletter. In doing so, all could learn about the ideas, dreams, and inspirations of others.

In June 2018, the Passionist Family gathered again, this time to take everything that was previously shared through various means and organize the material for thematic work groups. Five Working Groups were formed to address the following topics as they pertain to visioning: Charism, Community, Collaboration, Outreach, and Preaching. Each of the Working Groups was asked to integrate these additional topics into its primary theme-- technology, vocations, interculturality, young people, and care of the earth.

A two-day Pre-Chapter was held in January 2019. To include more people, lessen expense, and reduce the impact of winter weather, nine groups in various parts of the province met through the same internet video conferencing that was utilized by the Working Groups. During the Pre-Chapter, Mark Clarke of Community Works, Inc., offered input on visioning and inspiration for the process. Perhaps even more



# PREACHING WITH PASSION ABOUT THE PASSIONISTS IN CHINA:

## *Understanding the Historical Relationship between Bishop Fulton J. Sheen and Bishop Cuthbert O’Gara, C.P.*

- Fr. Robert E. Carbonneau (PAUL) (Province Historian)

*[Biographical Notes:*

**Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.** On July 5, 2019 Pope Francis authorized a decree recognizing a miracle through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Fulton Sheen of the United States and thus preparing the way for beatification. The former Auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New York and Archbishop of Rochester, New York was born on May 8, 1895. He discovered his call to the priesthood at the age of 24 and was ordained a priest in 1919. A gifted teacher and speaker, Sheen’s homilies were greatly appreciated. He was consecrated a bishop on June 11, 1951 in the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul in Rome, the titular church of Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York. In 1930, he began participating in the Sunday radio program entitled “The Catholic Hour”, which reached an estimated four million listeners at the height of its popularity. In 1951, he began hosting a weekly television series, “Life is Worth Living”, on matters of faith that attracted some 30 million viewers. He died in New York at the age of 84, on December 9, 1979.

**Bishop Cuthbert O’Gara, C.P.** was born on April 1, 1886 in Ottawa, Canada. He professed Vows as a Passionist in the Province of St. Paul of the Cross (PAUL-USA) on October 18, 1914. He was ordained a priest on May 26, 1915. From 1917 to 1924 he taught theology, canon law, and sacred Scripture to Passionist seminarians. In 1924 he was assigned to the Passionist missions in Hunan, China. On October 28, 1934, he was consecrated as a missionary bishop of Yuanling, China. Until 1949 he coordinated the ministry of over sixty Passionist priests, and various Sisters in some fifteen mission stations, several schools, two hospitals, and thirteen refugee camps. In 1941 he was imprisoned by the Japanese in Hong Kong. On May 15, 1947 he was named bishop of the restructured Yuanling diocese. When the Communists gained control in 1949, he was labeled an "imperialist" and imprisoned from 1951 to 1953, when he was released. In 1953 Bishop Fulton J. Sheen proclaimed him as "a dry martyr"- one who suffered martyrdom without shedding blood. A strong voice for the American Catholic China Lobby which supported the Chinese Nationalists, he spoke out against Chinese Communists. He died on May 13, 1968.]



Bishop Fulton Sheen at the entrance to the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul on the day of his episcopal ordination.

The height of the Cold War was 1953-- America pitted against world-wide Communism. When Bishop O’Gara was released from prison on September 29, 1953, a Solemn Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving was held at St. Michael’s Passionist Monastery Church, Union City, New Jersey. Local press coverage was extensive. In an exclusive newspaper interview of September 28, 1953 emphasis was placed on how the Communists questioned him for possible connections with the United States government; how they perceived the Legion of Mary as a “reactionary military” rather than a religious devotional organization. O’Gara told how poor prison conditions made solitary confinement worse. In addition, he expressed concern for other missionaries in prison.

Given the link between the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the worldwide missions, a



perfect stage was set for Bishop Sheen to preach at the Mass. As editor of *Worldmission* magazine, for Sheen the China missions merited ongoing attention. His homily, “Wet Martyr, Dry Martyr” is compelling preaching. It is as if the listeners in the church that day were in the Chinese crowd or in the prison jail cell with O’Gara. Bishop Cuthbert was likened to the Apostle St. John “who although thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil by the will of shedding no blood, and survived to live to be 100 years old,” so “the Communists fear that the blood of the martyrs will fall on Red soil. Until our age, persecutors always wanted blood, but the Reds want no blood. As a result, many came back as Lazarus from the dead, and Bishop O’Gara comes to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving and with him his associates in prison in China.” Those in the Union City church pews were reminded how O’Gara in December 1941 had survived captivity and near death at the hands of the Japanese during their takeover of Hong Kong. Like Jesus, preached Sheen, “O’Gara was stripped of his garments. He kissed his pectoral Cross and gave it to the Communists and blessed himself as if beginning Mass.” Then he was marched through the streets to “common mocking”. According to my research, strong evidence exists that the Communists feared illness might hasten the death of O’Gara; thus, was set in motion his 1953 release.

“Wet Martyrs and Dry Martyrs,” was published in *Worldmission* magazine (Vol. 4 No. 3, Fall 1953) as a Sheen editorial. “What is new in the modern persecution are the dry martyrs who have not shed their blood, but who have had their brains washed and have undergone mental tortures for the faith. Certainly, any one of them would have found it a thousand times easier to shed their blood than have gone through the interminable night trials. But in the strict sense of the term they are not martyrs, for a martyr is one who sheds his blood and suffers death for the Faith. It remains,” Sheen concluded, “for the Church to decide whether the Mindszentys and the Stepinacs and the Berans and the Fords and other missionaries in China have not a special claim to veneration.” These were the dry martyrs: “They may not have shed their blood, but they have been wit-



Bishop Cuthbert Martin O’Gara, C.P., Vicar Apostolic of Shenchow, China and Bishop of Yuanling, China.

nesses to and confessors to the faith.”

After a prolonged illness Bishop O’Gara died on May 13, 1968. Archbishop Fulton Sheen of Rochester was asked to give the eulogy on May 17 at St. Michael’s Monastery Church, Union City. The importance of Sheen and O’Gara crossing paths once more can be seen. Laying O’Gara to rest, Sheen suggested three lessons to ponder. First the power of the demonic. “We are living today in an age when the devil has been given a very long rope with O’Gara.” The article recalled that Sheen had called Bishop O’Gara a dry martyr-- “those who die a thousand deaths and yet never die.” Sheen suggested the second lesson was for bishops. As successors of the apostles, Sheen reminded bishops “we will never have happy days, but only joyful days, that is having joy set before us, we endure the cross.” A final lesson is for priests-- O’Gara “never gave up. Today [1968],” Sheen continued, “there is much falling away from Christ in the priesthood, in religious life and faith. The shriek of a [bomb] shell, the bang of a gun, a voice, an article in a magazine, and some are ready to give up. How weak we seem in the face of this dry martyr.”

Indeed, Bishop Sheen was a brilliant preacher and personal presence. His participating twice in two life events connected with Bishop O’Gara helped shape and fuel the classic representation of how atheistic Communism was viewed by Catholics in the 1950s.

In conclusion, I ask now in 2019-- What questions on the meaning of the Passion and suffering would you ask each of these holy men as we reflect on our understanding of the historical relationship between Bishop Fulton Sheen and Bishop Cuthbert O’Gara, C.P.? I suggest that their lives remind us that anyone of us can walk onto the world stage of faith. We Passionists continue to live, learn and shape history in surprising ways. Like Bishop Fulton Sheen and Bishop Cuthbert O’Gara we cross paths with each other as we travel the road towards sanctity in life and in death. Furthermore, we are reminded, in Sheen’s own words, that “life is worth living.”



## THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE AMAZON

### "Amazonia: new paths for the Church and for an integral ecology"

– Fr. Lawrence Rywalt (PIB Editor) with Fr. Jesús María Aristín, CP (Apostolic Administrator)

On 15 October 2017, Pope Francis convened a Special Synod for the Pan-Amazon region which was celebrated at the Vatican from 6 to 27 October 2019. He indicated that the main goal of the Synod is to "find new ways for the evangelization of that portion of God's people, especially indigenous people who are often forgotten and without the prospect of a peaceful future, also because of the crisis of the Amazon rainforest, a lung of fundamental importance for our planet." The Pan-Amazon consists of nine countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Suriname, Guyana and French Guyana. It is a region, inhabited by 34 million people, which is an important source of oxygen for the entire planet. Twenty percent of unfrozen fresh water on the planet is found in this area.

Among the participants was the Passionist former Secretary General for the Missions, Fr. Jesús María Aristín, C.P. currently the Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis* of the Apostolic Vicariate of Yurimaguas (Peru). In 2013 the Passionist Congregation celebrated the centenary of the Passionist presence in the Amazon region of Peru beginning in the city of Tarapoto. As Fr. Jesús noted, "we are now about to celebrate the centenary (27 February 2021) of this first mission *Ad gentes* of the Congregation. The presence of the Passionists in the Amazon rainforest and the Yurimaguas Vicariate is one of the most illustrious and heroic pages of the Congregation. We have up to three Passionist missionaries who lost their lives by drowning in the Amazon. All that is a historical reality. Currently it is the Pan-Amazon Synod that occupies the first pages



The visit of the Jubilee Icon in the Passionist community of Tarapoto, Peru.

of newspapers all over the world: The reality of the burning jungles, rampant logging, pollution from oil spills, etc. In this area there is an urgent need for an integral ecology, which also includes the peoples living in the jungle that have to be evangelized."

In 2013, we published an article in the PIB (No. 32, November-December 2013) which presented some of the history of this mission. In 1913, twelve Passionists, six priests and six brothers of the former CORI Province of northern Spain, jour-

neyed into the Peruvian jungle. It was a destination that was totally new to all of them. All of them went into the unknown, bearing in their hearts the Good News to be shared with their brothers and sisters in this region. At that time the Peruvian jungle was not a place for ecological tourism and adventure. It was a harsh, inhospitable land with few or non-existent means of communication; however, the love of Christ crucified overcame the barriers.

As the Synod began, Fr. Jesús María was asked about the challenges that his Vicariate has to address and the objectives of the Synod. He noted that Pope Francis is asking that the Church in this region assume a new face, i.e. that of the indigenous people. "There's a very curious fact. The vicariate will soon be a hundred years ago and, in the first 60 years there was only one native priest from the area. However, in the last ten years eleven diocesan indigenous priests have been ordained. There's been a radical change. Formerly the missionaries, many of them true heroes who even gave their lives here, came with the mentality that they were going to save souls, to convert, but they did not understand that people here could be their co-workers. [Now] we are firmly



Fr. Jesús María Aristín (far right) and bishops of the Pan-Amazon region greet Pope Francis.

At the conclusion of the Synod, Fr. Jesús María was asked to offer his impressions of this gathering.

*Fr. Jesús María, in your opinion, what were the major topics that were discussed in the Synod?*

- First of all, the Synod issued a call to conversion and asked us for a change of life, that we make concrete changes in our attitudes and instead of being so consumeristic, that we learn to share, i.e. that instead of thinking only of ourselves that we learn to think of others.

- Another key theme was Integral Ecology-- Everything is interconnected and the misfortunes and injustices that are committed in the jungle have planetary dimensions. If forests continue to be cut down and the waters polluted, we will be increasing the environmental crisis and the lives of those who are living there. Seventeen percent of the total Amazon forest has already been cut down. Integral ecology is the only possible path. [...]

- "That the Church be committed to be an ally of the Amazonian peoples and to denounce the attacks on the lives of indigenous communities and their lands". We must be a Church that advocates for indigenous rights.

*Finally, regarding your particular situation of the Vicariate of Yurimaguas, including the Passionist presence in Tarapoto, what is the message you want to communicate to them?*

Now the most important and at the same time the most difficult part of the Synod begins, i.e. to set into motion everything that the Synod asks of us, above all to become and be more evangelizing and to be pastors of a Church that reaches out and is close to the people and be characterized by the "smell of the sheep". This the work of the "Post-Synod" and we have to insert high-grade batteries in order to be able to "chambear duro" (in the vernacular of the jungle this means to "work hard").

Above all I would offer a special invitation to all the young people of the Passionist Congregation to come with us for one or two years and to have a missionary experience. They won't regret it and it will be an experience that will change them forever. A Congregation that is not missionary, is sick or not Christian. Of course, it is also an invitation to all our religious to take heart and come with us, to "reach out". It is truly a challenge only for the brave!

convinced that we have, for a few years now, entered into a dialogue of respect, of understanding, of mutual appreciation, of knowing that can be indigenous priests here and they must be responsible for their own future. The big change that is taking place, not here but in Latin America as a whole, is the appreciation of the Amazon, that the indigenous peoples can and should be responsible for their own future, for their realization as a people."

Fr. Jesús was also asked to comment on the Synod theme of ecology, in particular the environmental threats that exist in his Vicariate. He noted that basically there are three threats. "On the one hand there is rampant deforestation, logging companies that take out everything they want even with the silent approval of the state. You go down the road and every day you see 10, 15 or 20 trucks loaded with wood that are leaving us with nothing. Another big problem is the issue of oil and river pollution [...] Then, the third threat to highlight are the monoculture projects of some multinationals.

He concluded, "There is no awareness that Mother Earth must be respected. As the Pope says, everything is interconnected, the damage we do to the earth we do to ourselves. That dirt you throw into the river, you're going to end up drinking and be contaminated. Conversely, all the good we do by protecting those trees and animals is going to allow you to drink water and live with greater dignity and well-being. We're all in the same boat here. Either we save the planet, or we all perish. All this message is going to be universally highlighted [at the Synod] but, of course, the jungle is the lung of the world and it is here that the ecological message should have its greatest impact. All of this obviously has political implications."



## AN AMBULANCE NAMED “ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS”

– Fr. Lawrence Rywalt (PIB Editor)

Shortly after the beginning of his pontificate, on 21 March 2015, Pope Francis made a pastoral visit to the cities of Pompeii and Naples (Italy). In the Basilica of “Gesù Nuovo” in Naples, the Holy Father met with a group of sick people. In his address he told them, “It is not easy to care for a sick person. [...] Sickness can only be grasped in a spirit of faith. We can only effectively approach a man, a woman, or a child that is sick, if we look to Him who took upon Himself all our illnesses; if we are accustomed to beholding Christ Crucified.”

Like Pope Francis, St. Paul of the Cross, the great ascetic and mystic of Jesus Crucified, was able to fathom the mystery of suffering in his writings and in his preaching through his meditation on the Passion of Jesus. Furthermore, he was able to concretize God's mercy for those who suffer through the practice of caring for the sick. His biographers unanimously describe St. Paul as a true father and even, as his brother Venerable Fr. Giovanni Battista called him “the mother of mercy”. In particular, he embraced Jesus Crucified in the sick whom he visited, assisted, and served with great humility. This was done both in Passionist communities, with his fellow religious, and when visiting the infirm and the sick during the many missions that he preached. During these missions the first thing he did was to visit all the sick in the area and encourage them with spiritual sentiments. Additionally, he offered them spiritual healing in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

In the Passionist communities he often said-- “It takes a mother or a saint to care for the sick.” He shared suffering of the sick because he had the heart of a mother and the charity of a saint. Paul visited the sick several times a day and did not allow them to wait for anything, especially for medicine, food or other forms of medical care.

On one occasion he left his retreat of Sant’Angelo in Vetralla to go to the nearby retreat of St. Eutizio in order to rebuke a superior for his lack of charity in caring for a sick religious. The Superior, wanting to justify himself, pointed out to Paul that the poverty and dire conditions of that Retreat community prohibited the purchase of additional medicines. However, St. Paul was not impressed and replied-- “in these cases, if necessary, let the silver chalice [in the chapel] be sold”. And he often stated-- “If there is no other way to sustain our poor sick religious, sell the chalices and the furnishings of the church.”



A 19th century votive offering to St. Paul of the Cross for the healing of a sick child.

Therefore, it would be logical to think that St. Paul of the Cross would be very pleased to know that there is a private ambulance company in Italy that bears his name, “St Paul of the Cross”. In the 1990s, the St. Paul of the Cross Private Ambulance Company was founded in the Italian city of Sora (FR), where there has been a Passionist monastery since 1842. The company was founded in response to a need for assistance in that region in an effort to reduce the geographical distances that existed between various individual ambulance units and to provide an “integrated service network”. We asked the President of the company, Lorenzo Marchione to offer some insights into the choice of “St. Paul of the Cross” as the title of their entity and how the Saint has inspired them in their endeavors.

*At the time of the founding of the corporation, why did you choose to name it “St Paul of the Cross”?*

My family has always been very close to the Passionist community of Sora. It was this link together with a sharing of the values of St. Paul of the Cross in assisting the sick that gave strength and motivation to our project that aims at giving concrete help, in the first place, to the sick of our local community through an organization that is based in this region. It is St. Paul of the Cross who has helped us in our desire for this project to take root in us. Bearing his name has been the source of our strength, dedication and perseverance in assisting the sick.

*Through your service you offer a service to many people who need concrete help through First Aid and emergen-*



*cy transportation. What have you received from them, in human and spiritual terms?*

The satisfaction of comforting the patients, their face expressing gratitude, their smile, their thanks in a thousand different ways, comfort for the family members, and even when unfortunately each of our interventions is in vain, the awareness that we have done everything possible for the person who needed our help, because not just in special cases, but in each one we meet the Crucified Christ.

*St. Paul of the Cross and its first religious served pastorally in two hospitals in Rome, San Gallicano (1724-1728) and San Giovanni-Addolorata (1767-1773). Recently, your Cooperative has been given the opportunity to integrate your ambulances into the fleet of those that are available in the city of Rome. It seems that you are working in the footsteps of St. Paul of the Cross in Rome...*

Certainly, as St. Paul of the Cross blessed our project, he likewise guided us in his footsteps, taking us to Rome, a stone's throw from home but far beyond. The Cooperative was actively present with its ambulances during the rescues that followed the devastating earthquakes that hit the communities of the Italian cities of L'Aquila in 2009 in Amatrice in 2016. It has also repeatedly sent representatives on a humanitarian mission to disadvantaged places such as Burkina Faso, Tanzania, and Cameroon, where in 2016 a St. Paul of the Cross ambulance was donated to that country.

*We know that you have made you one of the basic principles of your entity that of the World Health Organization, i.e. that health is not understood as mere absence of disease, but as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. How does the spirituality and example of St Paul of the Cross guide, inspire and sustain you in this aspect of your work?*

In every rescue, transport or assistance activity, our personnel operate with the utmost professionalism, without neglecting the human aspect, without neglecting a smile and courtesy, guided by the example of St. Paul of the Cross who welcomed and cared for his sick people with "the heart of a mother and the charity of a saint."

*Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?*

The Cooperative began its journey in 1994 with only one vehicle and a few staff. Today we work with more than 40 vehicles, 150 employees including nurses, drivers and rescuers and more than 50 doctors. However, our values have not changed. The same values that gave us strength and determination when we be-

gan, have enabled us to grow and certainly will accompany us in new ventures in the future.

## Conclusion

In his report to the 2018 General Chapter, Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General stated— "The charism is caught, not taught! There are many lay people, who through their engagement in various way with Passionists (friendship, employment, participation, belonging, partnership in ministries, identification with the spiritual gift) feel a connection to and desire a deeper identification with the Congregation and its spirituality. We can accept this as the movement of the Spirit in the Church and also as the fruit of living our First Vow: 'to recall to mind with greater love the Passion of our Lord and to promote its memory by word and deed...'

I have encountered many lay people in my visits to the various parts of the Congregation who proudly identify themselves as 'Passionists' and I have always found their enthusiasm enriching, and even inspiring. [...] Believing that the charism is a gift to be shared, I believe that we Passionist religious must be open to recognising those others in the Church who are 'gifted' and inspired by the Spirit with the same charism, accepting and including them with us in deepening our spirituality and exercising our mission 'to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus as an act of God's love'."

As the ambulances that bear the name "St. Paul of the Cross" travel through the streets of Rome and the Italian region of Frosinone, including parts of the world beyond Italy, may the medical personnel who staff them and the sick and distressed to whom they offer medical assistance experience the healing and saving power of the Passion of Christ—"the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love." (St. Paul of the Cross)



(L-R) Fr. Erasmo Sebastiano, Fr. Luis Alberto Cano, Fr. Augusto Matrullo, Mr. Francesco Marchione and ambulance staff.



# FIRST STEPS OF THE “INFANT” MONASTIC CONGREGATION OF THE PASSIONIST NUNS

[Note: On 29 June 2018, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life erected the “Congregation of the Nuns of the Passion of Jesus Christ”. From January 20 to February 4, 2019, the nuns celebrated the first General Chapter of their newly formed Congregation. Below are excerpts from recent Circular Letters of the President of the Congregation, Mother Catherine Marie Schuhmann, in which she communicates some recent decisions and updates about the Congregation.]



The founding community of Passionist Nuns in Borneo, Indonesia.

## Work in the United States

After presiding in early June at the elective chapter of the Whitesville monastery, I spent the rest of the month of June both preparing for and then doing follow-up work after the meeting of the General Council (June 16-21).

I visited the Ellisville, Missouri monastery during the first week of July and I had planned to visit the Clarks Summit monastery (Pennsylvania/USA) during the third week of July. However, after phone conversations with all the superiors of our US monasteries, I decided to convene a meeting of the superiors at Clarks Summit during the third week. After consulting my Council, I hired a professional facilitator to lead us through the dialog. Naturally, the meetings were difficult for all, but the inner hearts of the superiors were truly already given over to God’s will. Despite the agony we face when some monasteries have lost true autonomy as now defined in *Cor Orans*, the US superiors collaborated in drawing up [a document] entitled-- MEETING SUMMARY. [...] Perhaps this combined statement can be a working model for monasteries in other parts of the world. I am profoundly grateful to the US superiors for their good will as they agonized through this process which is far from over. I am now planning another meeting of the superiors in February 2020, God willing. I entrust this work to the fervent prayers and sacrifices of all the Passionist Nuns.

## Work in Italy

We are moving forward with the process to have our Monastic Congregation recognized as a civil entity so that we can initiate the Monastic Congregation Fund. Through the fraternal kindness of Fr. Luigi Vaninetti, MAPRAES provincial, Fr. Piero Berti (MAPRAES) has been appointed for two years as the legal representative of our Monastic Congregation.

After consulting my Council and engaging in much prayer and dialog, I have decided to establish the legal seat of the Congregation at our Tarquinia monastery [...] Sometime after the meetings that Sr. Gertrude and I have scheduled in September, I will be moving to Tarquinia with the assistance of Fr. Antonio Munduate (SCOR) the General Assistant.

## The monastery of São Luis des Montes Belos (Brazil)

The two religious who remained in the monastery of São Luis des Montes Belos in Brazil, a daughter-house of São Carlos, have been called back to their founding monastery, and thus São Luis has been closed. On behalf of the Monastic Congregation, I would like to thank all the Nuns who devoted much effort and sacrifice throughout many years in order to keep this foundation in existence, without, however, seeing the fruit of their labor and suffering. In a spirit of communion, let us all pray for them in a special way as they reintegrate into their home communities. (Please remove from your database the following address: [msantaesperanca2@yahoo.com.br](mailto:msantaesperanca2@yahoo.com.br)).

## The foundation of the Passionist Nuns in Borneo (Indonesia)

After much consultation with various communities, I and the General Council have chosen eight Passionist Nuns to form the founding community of



Kalimantan. I wish to thank the superiors who with magnanimity and selfless generosity have consented to allow one or more Nuns from their community to take part in the new foundation. I wish to thank also the various Nuns who made themselves available for this new venture. Each one who was chosen had already given her written consent.

It has been edifying and encouraging for the Council members and myself to witness a true spirit of collaboration in keeping with the spirit of Statute #12 which encourages all to be concerned with the common good and with all that pertains to the progress of the monastic life of the Congregation. This same Statute encourages the cooperation of all in executing [new foundations], both in terms of personnel and material goods.

The monastery in Malang, Indonesia, has offered to host the founding group for approximately two and a half months in their monastery, while the group prepares itself spiritually and forms the strong bonds of community. This will give them time to get to know each other and to live harmoniously under the guidance of and in obedience to the appointed superior.

Thanks to the kind understanding of Bishop Giulio Mencuccini, CP, we have set February 2, 2020 as the date for the blessing of the new monastery and the inauguration of Passionist contemplative life in Kalimantan. In the loving providence of God, our Borneo foundation will take place during the Congregation's year of celebration marking the 300th anniversary of the foundation of the Passionists by St. Paul of the Cross, our beloved Founder.

Much still remains to be done, as in any new foundation. Currently, we are negotiating the purchase and shipping of altar bread equipment which will be very, very expensive. Good sewing machines will also be needed. When I asked Bishop Mencuccini what sources of income he had in mind for the Nuns, he replied and I quote: *Regarding the source of income, I foresee the following possibilities: A bakery for hosts/altar breads; production of candles; sewing of vestments for the liturgy/church; a store for (rosaries, statues,*

*books, pictures...); manage the retreat house; and work in the garden.*

### **A Prayer of Consecration in the Basilica of St. Mary Major, Rome**

On September 15th of this year, three of us Passionists (Fr. Antonio Munduate, Sr. Gertrude Poggio and myself) were given a special sharing in Paul's profound Marian experience as a young man, that took place in the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome (1721). There, high above the altar in the Borghese chapel, is encased the icon "Salus Populi Romani." In that chapel, our holy Founder poured out his heart in prayer to the Mother of God. [...] It is possible to see that chapel as the "womb" of the Congregation. In a sense, we can all say-- "I was born from there." The graces given to our holy Founder

through the intercession of Mary were meant to be shared, preserved and developed by his spiritual family down through the centuries.

Together, side by side before the altar we prayed the Consecration prayer [...] Mary's presence and the sense of her maternal intercession was powerful, and to us this seemed a sign of her special love, care and concern for the Passionist family in these challenging times. [...]

Our infant Monastic Congregation has been consecrated to our Mother and Queen, and she is close to us all. May we all trust more completely in her intercession before God as we follow her Son in our personal and communal experience of the Paschal Mystery!

I close with this private devotional prayer that our holy Founder recited in the morning and evening before an image of Our Mother of Sorrows:



The icon of Our Lady "Salus Populi Romani", Rome.

*Immaculate Virgin, Queen of Martyrs,  
through the sorrows you endured  
at the death of your divine Son,  
give us your maternal blessing.*



# PROFESSIONS AND ORDINATIONS

## PROFESSION OF FIRST VOWS

During the period from 2 August 2019 to 31 October 2019, 6 Religious professed First Vows.

**ASSUM** Province of Poland, Czech Rep. and Ukraine, 14 September: Viacheslav Bazchanovskyi.

**MAPRAES** Province of Italy, Portugal and France, 7 September: Mirko Stefani, Andrea Pagotto, Giuseppe Antonicelli, Fabio Santoro and Gianluca Mirra.



Viacheslav Bazchanovskyi  
(ASSUM)



Javier Marín Martínez (SCOR)



John Bosco Tsuguaki Baba (MAIAP)

## PROFESSION OF PERPETUAL VOWS

During the period from 2 August 2019 to 31 October 2019, 4 of our Religious professed Final Vows.

**SCOR** Province of Spain and Latin America, 19 October: Javier Marín Martínez.

**MAIAP** Vice Province of Japan, 7 September: John Bosco Tsuguaki Baba.

**VULN** Vice Province of Germany and Austria, 15 September: Vinzenz Schlosser.

**PATR** Province of Ireland and Scotland, 8 September: Aidan O’Kane.



Aidan O’Kane (PATR)



Vinzenz Schlosser (VULN)



Mirko Stefani, Andrea Pagotto, Giuseppe Antonicelli, Fabio Santoro and Gianluca Mirra (MAPRAES)

## DIACONATE ORDINATIONS

During the period from 2 August 2019 to 31 October 2019, 3 Religious were ordained deacons.

**EXALT** Province of Brazil, 19 October: José Ronaldo Venâncio Dos Santos.

**REG** Province of Mexico and the Rep. Dominican Rep., 28 September: Sebastián Cruz Gómez.

**MACOR** Province of South Korea and China, 11 September: Paul Cunliang Li.



Athanase Mungenga and Donatien Mbaku (SALV)

## PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

During the period from 2 August 2019 to 31 October 2019, 11 Religious were ordained to the priesthood.

**SALV** Vice Province of Democratic Rep. of Congo, 26 October: Athanase Mungenga e Donatien Mbaku.

**SCOR** Province of Spain and Latin America, 19 October: Jonhatan Peña Gaviria.

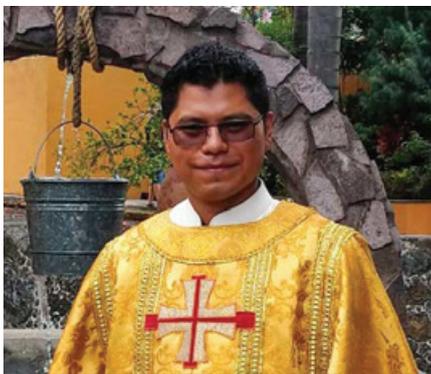
**GEMM** Vice Province of Tanzania, 27 June: Wilbard Raphael Sambot.

**REG** Province of Mexico and the Rep. Dominican Rep., 7 September: Juan Manuel Rodríguez Mejía.

**SPIR** Province of Australia, New Zeland, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam, 17 August: Paul Nguyễn Xuân Vượng.



Paul Cunliang Li (MACOR)



Sebastián Cruz Gómez (REG)



Paul Nguyễn Xuân Vượng (SPIR)



José Ronaldo Venâncio Dos Santos (EXALT)



Juan Manuel Rodríguez Mejía (REG)



Wilbard Raphael Sambot (GEMM)



Jonhatan Peña Gaviria (SCOR)



PROFESSION  
ORDINATION

# NEW PUBLICATIONS

**ALBERTI G. – GRECO VITTORIO**, *La nostra Marietta raccontata dalla viva voce della sua mamma Assunta Goretti e di Alessandro Serenelli, il suo uccisore*, Palumbi, Teramo 2019.

**ANSELMI MAX.**, *Bacio e croce: alla scoperta della meravigliosa opera di Dio nella giovinezza di san Paolo della Croce*, Castellazzese, Lucca 2019.

**ANSELMI MAX.**, *San Paolo della Croce: Diario spirituale. Testo integrale e commento*, Castellazzese, Lucca 2019.

**CEMPANARI M.**, *La passione di Cristo nella meditazione filosofico-esistenziale di Soeren Kierkegaard*, Viterbo 2019.

**CLEMENTI A.**, *Veronica Giuliani: il desiderio di Dio*, Todi, Tau 2019.

**CLEMENTI A.**, *Il Regno delle tenebre visitato da Veronica Giuliani, un messaggio per i giovani*, Firenze, Plasar 2019.

**COLLU MARIO F.**, *Teologia biblica dell'azione sociale*, (Collana Teoria e Storia dell'Educazione 253), Anicia, Roma 2019.

**CRUZ WASHINGTON**, *Creio no Espirito Santo*, Meditação sobre a vida no Espirito, Vol. I, 2019.

**DELION JEAN-CLAUDE**, *Chemin de Résurrection. Une lecture spirituelle du traité de saint Paul de la Croix Mort Mystique ou holocauste du pur esprit d'une âme religieuse*, 2019.

**DI GIOSIA D.**, *Vita di San Paolo della Croce*, (Collana Santi e beati), Shalom, Camerata Picena (AN) 2019.

**MIRRA PIERLUIGI**, *Storie di gente di paese*, PMP, 2018.

*Passionist Nuns in the Philippines*, diocese of Marbel 1969-2019. 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the presence of the Passionist contemplative nuns in the Philippines.

**PEREIRA JOSÈ CARLOS**, *Eis o mistério da fé! Para entender e participar melhor da Missa*, Scala, Goiania 2019.

**ROMANO CARLO MARIA**, *Il sacramento della penitenza in san Paolo della Croce*, Pontificia Facoltà teologica dell'Italia Meridionale, Napoli 2019.

**STAFFOLANI MARCO**, *Il principio di causalità nell'orizzonte della metafisica agapica rosminiana*, Tesi di dottorato in Sacra Teologia, Pontificia Università lateranense, Roma 2019.

**VALGIUSTI E.**, *San Paolo della Croce. Docu-fiction sulla vita e spiritualità di san Paolo della Croce*, Global catholic television network e la Congregazione dei passionisti, (inglese-italiano) 2019.

**ZECCA TITO PAOLO**, *La vita quotidiana dei passionisti 1720-1970*, Saggio Storico, Effatà, Cantalupa 2019.

# Notitiae Obitus

## 14 Augustus 2019 - 29 October 2019

DIE	OB DORMIVIT IN DOMINO	PROVINCIA	NATUS	VOTA NUNCUPAVERAT
14/08/2019	Sac. Timothy Cullen	IOS	15/11/1933	22/09/1951
18/08/2019	Sac. Felice Inglesi	MAPRAES	13/03/1923	21/09/1939
06/09/2019	Sac. Marcelino Gil Díez	SCOR	09/08/1931	14/09/1951
12/09/2019	Sac. Guy Tellier	MAPRAES	22/02/1940	21/09/1961
13/09/2019	Sac. Heraclio Merino Escudero	SCOR	11/03/1926	15/09/1943
13/09/2019	Sac. Andrea Adobati	MAPRAES	01/04/1934	08/09/1954
22/09/2019	Sac. Randal Joyce	CRUC	18/03/1922	09/07/1943
23/09/2019	Sac. Benvenuto Francisco Gusso	GETH	03/02/1936	30/07/1989
24/09/2019	Sac. John Corrigan	PATR	02/03/1930	30/09/1949
29/09/2019	Sac. Alfonso San Juan Martín	CRUC	02/09/1929	03/10/1950
14/10/2019	Sac. Willfred Mzee Kwayu	GEMM	25/02/1964	08/08/1994
23/10/2019	Sac. Angel Cruz León	SCOR	26/01/1924	29/09/1941
28/10/2019	Sac. Werner Vandermeulen	GABR	26/08/1934	23/08/1954
29/10/2019	Sac. Diego Di Odoardo	MAPRAES	16/12/1934	15/09/1953

## Moniales et Sorores Defunctae

DIE	OB DORMIVIT IN DOMINO	CONGREGATIO/INSTITUTUM	NATA	VOTA N.
15/08/2019	Sr. María Matilde de Jesús Crucificado Pagni	Congregatio Monialium Passionistarum (Merlo, Argentina)	28/09/1924	06/06/1949
27/08/2019	Sr. Kathleen Shelly	Inst. Sororum SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.I.C. (Northern Ireland)	05/05/1918	21/11/1940
28/08/2019	Sr. Paola del Cuore Immacolato di Maria (Lucia) Scalzone	Congregatio Monialium Passionistarum (Napoli, Italia)	01/10/1933	21/11/1961
20/09/2019	Sr. Martha Lydia de la Santa Cruz (Jiménez Méndez)	Hijas de la Pasión de Jesucristo y de María Dolorosa	20/02/1961	25/08/1988
27/09/2019	Sr. Maria Esperanza del Corazón de Jesús Telleria Iburguren	Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa) - Prov. della Immacolata (Spagna)	11/11/1935	03/10/1963
28/09/2019	Sr. Theresa Lencicki	Inst. Sororum SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.I.C. (Northern Ireland)	14/04/1931	29/08/1970
03/10/19	Ana Elena de la Inmaculada (Laura Gómez López)	Hijas de la Pasión de Jesucristo y de María Dolorosa	20/09/1941	02/02/1963
07/10/2019	Sr. Thereza da agonía de Jesus Gasparin	Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa) - Prov. Cuore Imm. di Maria, Brasile	28/03/1929	17/07/1955



# JUBILEUM 300

## Renewing our Mission - Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope

“...Renewing our Mission is primarily about renewing ourselves (personal conversion), through our call to a life in community – but always in the missionary dimension.

Our Mission is integrally connected with our life in Community... as two sides of the same coin.

Our life is our Mission (by witness), our Mission is our life (by action).”

*Fr. Joachim Rego*  
Superior General