come
Spirit
of love
and peace
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Veni Sancte Spiritus&quot; RENEWAL IN THE SPIRIT IN THE LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Joachim Rego</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DREAM OF GOD IN SAINT PAUL OF THE CROSS Founder, Missionary and Mystic</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Joachim Rego</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE JUBILEE: WHAT IS IT FOR ME? WHAT ARE MY EXPECTATIONS?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Joachim Rego</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERTWINING THE JUBILEE, THE ICON AND COVID-19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Ciro Benedettini</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE FIRST CENTENARY OF THE CANONIZATION OF SAINT GABRIEL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Cristiano Massimo Parisi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Tito Paolo Zecca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITH A SONG IN OUR PASSIONIST HEARTS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. David Cinquegrani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAUL AND THE COMMUNITY OF CORINTH A reflection during the time of the pandemic</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Tarcisio Gaitán</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE MANDATE OF PAUL MICHAEL BOYLE, PASSIONIST BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND THEOLOGY</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Graziano Leonardo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISHOP AMILTON MANOEL DA SILVA, C.P. The new bishop of Guarapuava, Brazil</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISHOP THOMAS STRUZZIERI - THE FIRST PASSIONIST BISHOP</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Alessandro Ciciliani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASSIONIST FAMILY MISSIONARY COMMUNITIES (COFAMI)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Sebastián Cruz Gómez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SERVANT OF GOD, ELIZABETH PROUT, C.P. The 200th anniversary of her birth</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sr. Elissa Rinere, C.P.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fr. Antonio Munduate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONS AND ORDINATIONS</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTITIAE OBITUSS</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PASSIONIST INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. 50 - New Series 2 - 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplement to L’Eco of Saint Gabriel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## EDITOR

General Curia of the Congregation of the Passion

## EDITING AND TRANSLATION OF TEXTS

Rafael Blasco, CP
Alessandro Foppoli, CP
Lawrence Rywalt, CP
Lorenzo Baldella, CP

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Javier Solís, CP
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

## GRAPHICS

Andrea Marzolla

## COVER

Foto: Nestor Carrillo (SCOR), student in San Salvador, El Salvador.

## PRINTING

Nova Cartotecna Roberto, S.r.l.s.
Via Alessandro Manzoni, snc
64023 Mosciano Sant’Angelo (TE)
Tel. 39.345.4009948
“Veni Sancte Spiritus”
RENEWAL IN THE SPIRIT IN THE LIGHT
OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
Circular Letter to The Passionist Family
- Fr. Joachim Rego (Superior General)

WAITING:
INSIGHT FROM OUR COVID-19 CENACLE EXPERIENCE

The world of the Apostles, including Mary the mother of Jesus and a few others, was turned upside down ever since the arrest and death of Jesus ... and it would not be the same again - as they knew it. All this was because of their relationship to and connection with Jesus of Nazareth who, as they had lived through to see, suffered in the pursuit of his mission, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead appearing alive in person to them, and ascended into heaven. However, before departing from their sight, Jesus asked them to wait in Jerusalem for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1: 4-5).

The time of waiting and the Father’s promise to send the Spirit (the Advocate & Consoler) was fulfilled on the day of the Pentecost feast as they were gathered together in the Upper Room (the Cénacle) in Jerusalem. This was a life-changing moment for the Apostles; it was a moment of conversion and transformation: from a lack of confidence, fear and insecurity to freedom, courage and risk, driving them out boldly to bear witness to Christ and carry out God’s mission of justice, love and peace to the whole world. [You can read the account as described in Acts 2: 1-11.]

In this year of 2020 - the year in which we Passionists are commemorating the 300th anniversary of our Congregation’s foundation – we, too, are experiencing our life and our world being turned upside down due to the effects and influence of the Covid-19 pandemic. So much has happened which has been quite surreal. As if in a horror movie, an unknown virus has taken control of the whole of humanity leaving us humans powerless and cautious, at least until a vaccine can be found. Yet, somehow, all is not bad; because in the midst of this crisis, there have been hidden new and creative opportunities to discover!

Like the small community in Jerusalem, we, too, have had a time of waiting (alone or with others) in our Cenacle. Despite everything, this has been a precious time which has allowed us to contemplate life, faith, vocation, ministries, work, relationships, values, even death. In doing so, each one of us has had to come face-to-face with oneself. Freed from the busyness of activity and without the stress of having to produce and perform to distract us, we were confronted with the reality of what are the truly important elements in life, such as: faith and prayer, right relationships, respect and tolerance, generosity, selfless giving, empathy, compassion with and justice for the poor, ecological connectedness, concern for the environment of our common home and for the common good, solidarity, peace, reconciliation, unity and communion.

Perhaps, we were also faced with some worrying and frightening prospects going forward, like the
possibility of having to live life in a
different way (less complex and more
simple?) from that which we have be-
come accustomed - especially with the
threat of job losses, unemployment, busi-
ness closures and financial stress which, in turn,
can put strain on and expose families, communities
and institutions to the risk of physical, social and
economic vulnerabilities.

**LOOKING BACK:**
RECOGNIZING THE POWER
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Let us take time to look back and sift through
the myriad of insights, thoughts and tugs that chal-
 lenged and enlightened us during the lockdown in
our ‘Upper Room’; and let us take the time to sit
prayerfully with our experience. In doing so, perhaps,
we will come to identify and recognize another al-
ternative influence which has been impinging upon
our lives, disturbing our thoughts and turning our
world upside down. I contend it is the influence of
the Holy Spirit descending upon us as ‘light’: en-
lightening us to see new possibilities for a different
and richer future; and as ‘wind’: the ‘breath’ of God
blowing away the ‘viruses’ which may have corrupted
our being and breathing the new life of hope into us,
enabling us to claim once again our createdness in
God’s image and likeness.

This is the **NEW PENTECOST** – the gift of
God’s Spirit blowing through the whole universe
and hovering around wherever the Covid-19 is
opening up paths of its influence. The Holy Spirit
will not steer away from these paths without also in-
fluencing and enlightening hearts and minds to read
the signs of the times. It is an opportunity which
we must discern and seize, and not allow to pass by.
This is a ‘kairos’ moment, an opportune moment of
grace: God’s invitation to personal and social conver-
sion and transformation, to renewal and change.

Hopefully, as we begin to emerge out of the lock-
down phase and find less restrictive measures in our
living, we will not quickly dismiss or put aside the
learnings gained from our enforced ‘contemplative’
life and ‘return’ to living life as we knew it before the
pandemic. Rather, may we appreciate the silence and
solitude during the waiting in our Cenacle and let
us hold on to the learnings and inspirations we were
gifted with in those insights which enlightened and
challenged (even disturbed) our personal attitudes
and social conscience to see more deeply a ‘renewed’
way of being and living.

While the Corona Virus certainly displayed it’s
power and influence in our lives bringing the world
to a standstill and claiming it’s victory, yet God has
not abandoned us in this hopeless quest. Rather,
God has sent the promised Holy Spirit – the Con-
soler - to sustain our hope by prodding us with his
presence and inspiring us to courageously review our
plans and projects in light of what is truly necessary
for a better future and in accomplishing the mission
of the kingdom of God.

‘Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth!’

**LOOKING FORWARD:**
WITNESSES ON THE JOURNEY
OF MISSION RENEWAL

We remember that the Pentecost event was a dy-
namic one. From a passive waiting, the community
in the Upper Room were gifted, enlightened and
sent out as renewed witnesses and missionaries “in
the power of the Spirit”. Just as Jesus began his min-
In Galilee “in the power of the Spirit” (Lk. 4:14), Jesus promised his disciples before his Ascension: “you will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to earth’s remotest end.” (Acts 1:8)

Inspired by the experience forced upon us by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, I hope that this memorable Pentecost will find us Passionists not waiting passively, but actively seeking the grace of renewal for ourselves and our mission. As a Congregation, we have been on a journey of Renewing Our Mission since the 47th General Chapter of 2018 – with the awareness that this necessarily implies renewing ourselves. The renewal of the mission is a natural consequence of the renewal of the witnesses and missionaries. In this context, I repeat what I said during the 47th General Chapter. For us Passionists:

…our mission is integrally connected with our life in community…Our life is our mission (by witness), and our mission is our life (by action). Together, they both shape us and give us our identity and authenticity as Passionists. Who we are and what we do are interconnected and interrelated.

The journey is in process, particularly as we commemorate in this year the 300th jubilee of the foundation of our Congregation and look to the future with gratitude, prophecy and hope.

Just as we must not lose, but find the opportunities and challenges hidden in the experience of Covid-19 life, so also, I hope that we will not forget the learnings arising from the 47th General Chapter. Yes, it is true that there were many limitations in the Chapter and, perhaps, not everyone’s expectations were fulfilled. But, nevertheless, it was a gathering of the capitulars representing the Congregation who were summoned together to listen and to share with one another about issues concerning our life and mission in the presence of the Holy Spirit who was invoked: “Veni Creator Spiritus”.

For me, one moment of the Chapter that was Spirit-inspired, which was applauded at the time, and which has since been relegated to nice memory, was when the capitulars were invited to share in an impromptu manner what was in their minds and hearts – their/our passion! As I did when I closed the General Chapter, I would like to recall for you some of the prophetic words and phrases that I remember from that session which I hope the Pentecost fire will rekindle in us once again so that our passion may be kept alive as we continue to discern the renewing of our mission in these present times. This can be most effectively discerned, decided, lived and witnessed in the local community level.

Following are some of the prophetic words/phrases expressed - with my commentary and questions for consideration:

“We want to be welcoming, hospitable communities, schools of prayer.”

How are you, with your community of brothers and sisters going to make this effective and real?

What does it mean for our communities to be ‘schools of prayer’?

Can we perhaps think of every community, every house being a ‘Shrine’ to the Passion of Jesus? A place where people feel welcome and hospitality, a space where they truly experience and encounter the presence of Love which comes from the Passion of Jesus?

“We want to go to the peripheries, to the margins, to the places where no one wants to go.”

How do you understand this desire? And how can we translate it into a practical reality?

What is the charism asking of us? The charism is the gift of the Spirit, the grace of God for the good of
the church community, for making God’s kingdom come. In his address during the audience, Pope Francis spoke prophetic words to us. He challenged us to “a creative fidelity to the charism.” The charism is not something which is limited and protected, contained in a box. It is the life-giving force of the Spirit and blows where it wills. We must not control it but listen to the Spirit.

“We need to listen to the signs of the times”.

This phrase was repeated so many times during the Chapter – including in Pope Francis’ address to us. Listening with the eyes of faith is a key element of prayerful discernment.

How do we listen to the signs of the times and discern a response with creative fidelity to our charism? Contemplation and ‘seeing deeper’ of what is happening in our world, in our church, in our history and attention to the ‘prodding’ of the Holy Spirit to reflect and act in light of the Gospel of the Passion. We need to have courage. We need to be bold. We need to take risks in faith and trust - even if it doesn’t work out.

O breathe on me, O breath of God,
Fill me with life anew
That I may love the things you love,
And do what you would do.

O breathe on me, O breath of God,
Until my heart is pure;
Until my will is one with yours,
To do and to endure.

O breathe on me, O breath of God,
My will to yours incline,
Until this earthly part of me
Glow with your fire divine.

O breathe on me, O breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with you the perfect life
Of your eternity.

Edwin Hatch (1835 – 1889)

As we celebrate this Pentecost in what has been quite unprecedented times in history due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and as we commemorate 300 years of the foundation of our Congregation by St. Paul of the Cross, let us take time to recall and appreciate with a great sense of gratitude in the past, and with hope now and in the future of God’s accompanying presence in the power of the Spirit.

This is another opportunity for us to stand ready to be renewed by the Pentecost flame so as to be prophetic witnesses and missionaries of Christ in our daily living. Our openness to the grace of ongoing conversion – a ‘returning’ to Christ and the Gospel way is key.

“Come, Holy Spirit! Enlighten us with the gift of prophecy for our times.”

Let us pray for courage and boldness to break out in mission and not be imprisoned and paralyzed by our fears which keeps us locked up and bound within safe limits. Prophecy demands that we can break out and be freed to speak and witness for God, and with God, and in God.
As I reflected on the subject, The Dream of God in Saint Paul of the Cross Founder, Missionary and Mystic, I was moved to delve into seeking some light in firstly understanding what is the dream of God - for the world, for humanity and for all creation. My inspiration came from the following text in John’s gospel:

“God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” (Jn. 3:16-17)

Thus, I believe one can rightly propose that the dream of God is to save all humanity. In fact, we can see this expressed clearly throughout the sacred Scriptures. It is there that we follow a course in salvation history; we come to understand God’s saving activity in relationship with and in the history of God’s people. Furthermore, in the covenant relationship of God with His people, we come to appreciate that God’s salvation is founded on, and is a consequence of, God’s love. This is no more clearly shown than in “the giving of his only-begotten Son”, Jesus, who is for us the human face of God. This is why a foundational text for Passionists is the Christological hymn in the Letter to the Philippians 2:6-11 wherein is contained a core aspect of Passionist spirituality, that of ‘kenosis’ (self-giving, self-emptying): “he (Jesus) emptied himself... even to accepting death on a cross” (Phil. 2:7,8). In his book Jesus & Salvation, Passionist Fr. Robin Ryan [PAUL] writes: “The saving act of Jesus is not accomplished over against God but is from God, the God who has made (and continues to make) the well-being of humanity God’s own deepest concern.”

In summary, we can say that the dream of God is to save humanity and creation because of God’s tremendous love which is shown in the self-gift of Jesus in his Passion and Death on the Cross. This dream of God always was in past times, is the same today, and will be forever. As such, it needs to be kept alive, remembered, and not forgotten. For this to happen, a mission of evangelization is required. Perhaps the following story will help us to understand better the mission arising from God’s dream: After Jesus returned to heaven, He and the Archangel Gabriel were talking. Even in heaven Jesus bore the marks of the crucifixion. Gabriel said, ‘Master, you must have suffered horribly! Do people know and appreciate how much you love them and what you did for them?’

Jesus replied, “Oh, no; not yet. Right now, only a few people in Palestine know.” Gabriel was perplexed: “Then what have you done to let everyone know about your love?” Jesus answered, “I have asked Peter, Andrew, James, John, and a few more friends to tell others about me. Those who are told will tell others about me, and yet others still others until the last man and the last woman in the farthest corner of the earth will have heard the story of how I gave my life for them because I love them so much.” Gabriel frowned and looked rather skeptical. “Yes, but what if Peter and the others grow weary? What if the people who come after them forget? Surely you have made other plans?” Jesus said, “Gabriel, I haven’t made any other plans. I’m counting on them.”

This story reminds us that we all have the responsibility of not only sharing and partaking in the eternal graces arising from God’s dream, but also of remembering and promoting the divine salvific action. The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that “long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son...” (Heb. 1:1-2) – most especially in the saving act of his Passion, Death and Resurrection.
Over the centuries, many notable people carried out this evangelizing mission. In the world of 18th century Europe, a young man from northern Italy: Paul Francis Danei (1694-1775) – later to be known as Paul of the Cross - was ‘raised up’ by God to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus as the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love – God’s saving act. This was the charismatic inspiration which led to Paul’s conversion and became his life-value which gave meaning, unity and thrust to everything he did and suffered. Speaking of the efficacy of the “memory” of the Passion of Jesus, Paul writes: “The most efficacious means for the conversion of sinners and for the sanctification of souls is the frequent remembrance of the Passion of Jesus Christ, from the forgetfulness of which proceed deplorable evils and disorders.” (1768 Account) A deep forgetfulness of a loving God had become ordinary during the times in which Paul of the Cross lived. Paul himself describes it thus for us in his 1747 Account:

“…at this pitiable and distressing time, we now see openly at work every kind of iniquity, with harm also to our holy faith which is keenly affected in many parts of Christianity. The world is sliding into a profound forgetfulness of the most bitter sufferings endured by Jesus Christ our true Good out of love, while the memory of His Most Holy Passion is practically extinct in the faithful.”

To help this world to recover and re-awaken the “memory”, the “remembrance” of the saving Passion of Jesus, Paul is inspired “to gather companions”, with the intention (to which he later refers) of founding a new Congregation whose sole purpose was to promote the life-giving memory of the Passion of Jesus in the people of God. In his Account of 1768, he writes about the charismatic origin of the Congregation:

“Therefore, our most merciful God in His infinite Goodness granted strong and gentle inspirations to establish this poor Congregation in Holy Church. Its purpose is to form zealous workers filled with the Spirit, that they might be fit instruments used by the Almighty Hand of God to sow virtue and root out vice in the people with the most potent weapon of the [ ] Passion, whose very loving attraction even the hardest heart cannot resist.”

This was the dream of God in St Paul of the Cross: that there would be a group of missionaries (Passionists) who would offer the church and the world an effective contribution, by a contemplative-apostolic way of life centred on the memory of the Passion of Jesus. Passionists vow “to recall to mind with greater love the Passion of our Lord and to promote its memory by word and deed.”

As this Congregation commemorates the 300th anniversary of its foundation this year (22 November 2020), we are grateful for the graces of God working through the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and challenges of countless Passionists who have in the past, and who continue today, to give their lives as instruments through which God’s saving love is made efficacious and God’s dream is fulfilled.

We must remember that in God’s dream, St Paul of the Cross was chosen not only to found a congregation of men whose mission is “to preach the Gospel of the Passion by [their] life and apostolate” (Const. 2), but he was also called to found a congregation of women (Passionist Contemplative Nuns) whose mission is to receive, ponder and keep the Word of the Cross in their hearts as Mary did.

With the theme of this Jubilee being Renewing Our Mission, may we pray for and make time to discern our personal and communal renewal (conversion) so that God’s saving love expressed in the mystery of the Passion may be the light and the lens through which we see all of reality.

In a world forgetful of God’s gracious love, let us pray and work gently to direct the tide in the path of hope found in the wounds of Christ. As St Paul of the Cross said: “Wisdom comes from the wounds of Jesus; the Passion contains everything.”
THE JUBILEE: WHAT IS IT FOR ME? WHAT ARE MY EXPECTATIONS?

- Fr. Joachim Rego (Superior General)

For me, the Jubilee is the commemoration of a significant anniversary: in this case, the 300th year of the foundation of the Passionist Congregation. Therefore, like all anniversaries in life, we remember, we appreciate, we look back and reflect on the past from the standpoint of the present with a critical view to the future, and, hopefully, we find good reasons to celebrate.

However, while we can justly feel a sense of pride in celebrating this auspicious event, for me, the Jubilee is not about glorifying ourselves by focusing solely on the Congregation’s growth and achievements (also failures) over these years, even though we, naturally, acknowledge and appreciate this history and story of our Congregation.

Rather, in a truly humble manner, the Jubilee, for me, is about giving glory to God whom we recognize as the Source of our Congregation’s life and mission, and by whose grace and power we continue (300 years after its founding) to respond by our evangelical witness to bring about God’s kingdom in accordance with the specific mission entrusted to us by the Church.

Therefore, my expectations from the Jubilee are:

**Celebrations in gratitude and joy:** recounting the blessings of the Lord – emphasized by liturgical actions in prayer and the Eucharist. We remember, however, that the blessings of God have been ‘incarnated’ in the real lives of people: our holy founder St Paul of the Cross, and the countless Passionists who have gone before us. Therefore, we wish to recognize their fidelity and repentance, appreciating with gratitude their witness and creative fidelity to the charism as we stand on their shoulders today, learning from their example and response, and looking to the future with hope.

**A continuing discovery:** by making the opportunity to return once again to the sources of our Congregation’s foundation – the person of St Paul of the Cross; his response to the Spirit and the signs of the times; his spirituality and teachings; the history of the Congregation’s mission and development. It is hoped that this will open us to new discoveries and will deepen and enrich our understanding of the charism and its promotion as we profess to do.

**Personal and communal renewal:** by seeking God’s grace and responding to God’s call to follow Christ more authentically within the vocation of the Passionist consecrated lifestyle. The motivation promoted by the Congregation during this Jubilee year is: “Renewing our Mission” by which is presupposed the renewal of ourselves. It is my hope that this time of Jubilee will give us a new impetus to reflect upon and seek the ongoing change of mind (metanoia) demanded by the Gospel. As part of our renewal, we seek to identify and cultivate the ‘seeds’ which will produce core values for our life today: prayer (contemplation, meditation, solitude), community life, solidarity, inclusion, hospitality, dialogue, compassion, option for the poor, hope and reconciliation.

**A renewed enthusiasm to be contemplative-apostolic missionaries:** the twin poles of standing at the foot of the Crucified contemplating the mystery and keeping memory of the Passion; and the consequent gaze and reaching out to the crucified world with compassion and hope arising from the power God’s love for the world exhibited in the Passion of Jesus. While this is the core mission of every Passionist, my hope is that this Jubilee can truly inspire us with a renewed missionary outlook and enthusiasm that responds to the signs of our times by letting go of our comforts in obedience and service to God’s salvific mission.

“The outgoing people of God is called to leave their comforts behind and take the step towards the other, trying to give a reason for hope, not with pre-fabricated answers, but with incarnated and contextualized answers, to make understandable and accessible the Truth that, as Christians, moves us and makes us happy.”

Pope Francis’ Message to the National Laity Conference, Madrid, 14-16 Feb. 2020
"Nothing will be the same as before" headlined the newspapers of half the world at the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, hoping that, after the devastating fury of the virus, a new world can be born. Even the Passionist Jubilee had to deal with the Coronavirus, which, however, did not squelch or even weaken its strength; indeed, increased its importance and value. In fact, a Jubilee is basically a source energy to fuel hope and sustain a new beginning. Therefore, it is an ideal tool for times of crisis, of passage, of change.

The crucial month was May. The virus slowly diminished its grip in some areas but increased its fury in others and it was difficult to get a clear perspective of what would happen in the following months. And the questions were being asked: postpone the Jubilee for 6 months or one year? Reduce it to an almost private event to be celebrated locally within our communities? Cancel it? The Jubilee Commission was asked for its opinion via the Internet and the General Council decided on the matter.

The General Council, reduced in ranks (two Consultors were confined in Spain and Poland) met to postpone the dates of some Chapters and Assemblies (as many as 4) and to readjust the dates of the Jubilee to avoid (as happened) that some had bought airline tickets well in advance in order to save money.

The topic of the Jubilee was studied on 13 May and the Council made the following decisions:

- The opening date, 22 November 2020, is untouchable. We will leave this date as is because this is date of our founding and we will celebrate it as best as possible in light of the circumstances.

- The 2020 events involving meetings with individuals will all be transferred to 2021, as follows:
  - The Formators’ meeting (scheduled for 1-22 November 2020) will be postponed by one year and will take place from 1 to 22 November 2021.
  - The meeting of Passionist bishops (scheduled from 19 to 24 November 2020) will be postponed until 18 - 22 October 2021 (during the Synod and on the feast of St. Paul of the Cross).
  - The meeting of young Passionist remains as scheduled: 9-18 August 2021.


Other decisions: In general, everything that has been planned and approved by the General Council regarding the Jubilee is suspended not canceled. The evolution of the situation will determine what can be achieved.

In particular:

- There were three exhibitions scheduled at the Generalate in Rome: "Who are the Passionists?" (right aisle of the Basilica); "Who is St Paul of the Cross?" (First-floor corridor); exhibition of modern sacred art (formerly the Stauros collection of the Shrine of St. Gabriel) in the hall below the refectory. For the moment only one exhibition will be prepared i.e. the one in the right aisle of the Basilica that guides visitors toward the chapel of the Founder.

- The restoration of the door of the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul (destined to be designated a “Holy Door”) and the gate of the portico will be done by the Fine Arts department of the Italian Government, the official owner of the Basilica (the only concern is the timing of the work).

- These decisions were reviewed by the Jubilee Commission at the meeting of 25-26 June 2020, that consisted of the 3 European members in Rome and the other 3 connected via Zoom in Congo, India and Brazil.
In the second half of 1800, two religious, who began Passionist life in the novitiate of Morrovalle, found themselves together and in positions of government within the Congregation—Father Bernard Silvestrelli, Superior General and Father Norberto Cassinelli, Provincial Superior of the PIET Province. In addition to the many problematic situations of that period, these two men of God, admirers of Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, found themselves also faced with some issues concerning the causes of beatification and canonization of our religious. Among the Servants of God that arose among the Passionists were two figures who, during their earthly pilgrimage, had left an impression—Vincent Mary Strambi and Dominic Barberi. However, these two eminent personalities, like others of the Congregation who died with a reputation for holiness, remained in the shadows.

Gratefully, a distinguished Roman prelate, Cardinal Lucido Maria Parocchi (+1903), an admirer of Passionist spirituality, proposed to the General Curia a project that included the resumption of some dormant causes for beatification and canonization. In addition to the aforementioned religious, the causes of Father Lorenzo Maria Salvi and Brother Giacomo Gianiel were also being studied. Meanwhile, Father Silvestrelli had resigned from the post of Superior General and was succeeded by Father Francesco Saverio Del Principe, who, on 30 July 1891, decided to initiate the causes of beatification and canonization not only of the four religious, but also that of Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows.

The contingencies that may have prompted the then Superior General to decide to promote the Cause of the young man of Gran Sasso are unknown. As was noted, Gabriel was greatly admired by some holy men—which was confirmed over time—like Fathers Silvestrelli and Cassinelli, currently and respectively, “Blessed” and “Venerable”. However, his earthly life had been so brief that he had not left any obvious examples of work done in the Lord’s vineyard. It is also true that, in early 1891, the centenary of the death of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, a Jesuit cleric who died at the age of 23, was honored and his cult was widely disseminated. The echo of the message of the young saint had certainly arrived even in the Passionist communities; however, what prompted Father Francesco Saverio Del Principe to initiate the Cause super virtutibus remains a secret in the depths of his heart.

However, time not only proved the Superior General correct, but the speed with which Gabriel was elevated to the honor of the altar helps us today to better understand the reasons for his sanctity. The process of his glorification was particularly swift: diocesan inquiries began in 1891; in 1892 there was the exhumation of his mortal remains, accompanied by a shower of amazing phenomena. In 1894 the Passionists returned to the retreat at Isola Gran Sasso summoned by that young student who did not want it to be known that he was no longer alive. On May 31, 1908, Gabriel was declared “Blessed”.

Two miracles had to be recognized for canonization. The first was in favor of Giovanni Battista Cerro, of Pontecorvo (Frosinone), who in 1909 had been cured of ankylosing spondylitis in his legs. He had gone to pray to Blessed Gabriel in the Church of the Passionists in Pontecorvo, pleading for his intercession. At the end of the prayer, he got up, picked up his crutch and walked home. The second miracle was granted to Luigi Parisi, of Gallipoli (Lecce), who, in 1912, after a Triduum in honour of the Blessed, was healed of a groin hernia that...
would eventually have led to his death. On May 13, 1920, Gabriel was proclaimed a “Saint” by Pope Benedict XV in a ceremony that was truly extraordinary for that time. In fact, there were about forty cardinals and over three hundred bishops present from various parts of the world as well as an immense throng of the faithful.

The special appeal that Gabriel immediately had for the people of the Abruzzo region of Italy is well known. They honor him as their faithful friend, who lovingly accompanies them everywhere. The devotion of emigrants to the Saint is extraordinary. Even today, on their return to Italy, before going home they stop at the Shrine to greet the young Saint as the most important member of their family. His fame and devotion was such that young people all over Italy were captivated by his holiness and, in 1926, Pius XI declared him Patron of the Italian Catholic Youth. There is continuous spiritual activity surrounding the Saint— from the establishment of the Pious Union to bring together all the devotees of the Saint to countless youth organizations that arose under his protection. The memory of this Saint, who died at the age of 24, is very much alive and the Shrine of the Isola Gran Sasso, which possesses his mortal remains, is a pilgrimage destination, first of all, for hundreds of thousands of young people every year. These young people see in Gabriel a particularly timely Saint, a help for their human and spiritual growth, someone to remember and imitate. A hundred years after his canonization, devotion to the Saint of young people knows no bounds. Feast days in his honor are celebrated every year in many Italian parishes and in various countries— from Australia (Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane) to Canada; from the United States to Venezuela and again in Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Belgium.

 Gabriel’s canonization includes pastoral and spiritual dimensions, since in him the holy and sanctifying character of the life and activity of the Church is high-
In his recent book entitled, “La vita quotidiana dei Passionisti, 1720-1970, Saggio storico” (The Everyday life of the Passionists, 1720-1970, An historical essay) Fr. Tito Paolo Zecca, CP describes retreat preaching ministry in the thought of the Founder and in the history of the Congregation. Following are excerpts from this text.

From the beginning of the Congregation of the Passion, the Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, felt that there was a profound interconnection between spiritual exercises [retreats] and popular missions, and that retreat ministry was one of the specific means apostolic expression of the new Institute. In the primitive plan for the construction of the first retreat on Monte Argentario there was provision for a retreat house, detached from the monastery of the religious community. From Monte Argentario, on 31 March 1732, Paul wrote to Bishop Francesco Maria Arborio di Gattinara, the bishop of Alessandria, who in 1720 had clothed him in the garb of a hermit: "God's mercy has provided - he wrote - that a penitential retreat be founded for us [he and his brother Ven. John Baptist] and our companions. Additionally, it will be a retreat house, not only for the clergy of the surrounding dioceses (almost all of which are without a seminary in these malaria infested swamps), but also for the laity who, at appropriate times, will retire here to make the holy exercises."

Writing in this way to Bishop Gattinara, St. Paul of the Cross was very clear about a project to welcome retreatants in his "retreats" [monasteries]-- a project that he would implement in all subsequent foundations. This project was also legally formulated. In the Rule of 1741 (Chapter II), this was referred to as "a house specifically prepared and intended for this use", that is, for the reception of retreatants. The norms concerning retreatants are also repeated in subsequent legislation in both the Rules of 1746 and 1769. However, it was not easy to put these rules into practice even if they were truly clear. Beginning with a dwelling detached from the rest of the monastery for the use of retreatants, instead as early as 1747, it was established that rooms were to be reserved for the use of retreatants in the monastery/retreat itself.

Receiving retreatants was the custom even before the first retreat dedicated to the Presentation of Mary in the Temple was founded, that is, in the rustic hermitage of St. Anthony, also on Monte Argentario. The situation of the retreat of Santa Maria of Corniano, near the city of Ceccano, which lasted several years, was very problematic. Therefore, despite the numerous requests, they were not always able to accommodate those who wished to go there on retreat. Fortunately, at the retreat of Sant'Angelo in Vetralla, the situation was not as precarious and therefore retreatants could easily be welcomed there.

The unsettled situation caused by the recent new foundations, was positively resolved with the Roman foundation of Sts. John and Paul. In the Generalate even non-roman retreatants who were presented by bishops or superiors of the other retreats of Tuscany and Lazio were welcomed. In 1778, when St. Vincent Maria Strambi was a general consultor, he drafted the first set of rules for those wanting to make a retreat here. The regulations were approved by the Superior General, Fr. John Baptist Gorresio, and made public in 1792. In the vast majority of Passionist monasteries there were always rooms reserved for retreatants.

The retreat house of Sts. John and Paul on the Celio hilltop in Rome, deserves special mention. From the time of St. Paul of the Cross, it was possible in the retreat to implement a project of hosting retreatants in a suitable environment using a program and organization that has endured through the centuries, even until today, although with inevitable adaptations.
During the presence of the Gesuati religious (founded by Blessed Giovanni Colombini) at the monastery of Sts. John and Paul (1440 – 1668), in March 1555, the Jesuit Father Luis Gonzalez de Cámara was called here to preach a retreat to Abbot Jerome Martinengo, who had been appointed apostolic nuncio. However, the monastery on the Celio would formally and consistently function as a retreat house only with the arrival of the Vincentians (Congregation of the Missions) in 1697. The retreats were reserved mainly for young religious men or some other retreatants who preferred the solitude of the Celio away from inevitable noise of the other retreat houses that the Vincentians conducted such as the Curia Innocenziana on Montecitorio in Rome.

With the arrival of the Passionists at Sts. John and Paul, on 9 December 1773, led by the Founder himself, the retreat on the Celio became the headquarters of the Institute. The ministries of the Congregation also took place here, in the city of Rome and in the Roman countryside. The rooms of an entire floor on the north side of the monastery were reserved for retreatants. St. Vincent Maria Strambi (+1824), then a General Consultor, drafted the first regulations for retreatants that was inspired by the style and content of the Ignatian exercises. The superiors always chose the best qualified directors and preachers for this important and sensitive ministry. With the restoration of the Congregation, carried out by Pius VII after the Napoleonic suppression (June 26, 1814), the ministry of spiritual exercises on the Celio experienced a period of great splendor. As early as 1815 there were 263 retreatants. During these years Giovanni Maria Mastai, the future Blessed Pius IX (+1878) assiduously frequented the house.

The abundant documentation that remains attests to the continuation of Passionist retreat activity here throughout the nineteenth century and into the following century, until the present day. In the mid nineteenth century, two blessed, Domenic Bárberi (+1849) and Lorenzo Maria Salvi (+1856), preached retreats here mainly during the periods of Advent and Lent-Easter. There were also courses for children preparing for First Communion, in whom there remained an indelible memory as numerous of them have attested. The participants in the retreats, especially in the nineteenth century, were of various social backgrounds. Both laity and clergy took part, from noble homes as well as from poor and humble origins. They shared a desire to hear the Word of God, especially meditating on the Eternal Maxims and the Passion of Jesus, under the guidance of expert Passionist preachers. Confession and sacramental Communion were the goals of the retreats. A large number of Saints, Blessed, and Servants of God frequented the retreat house on the Celio. Among them were St. Julian Eymard, St. Gaspare del Bufalo, St. Antonio Maria Giannelli, St. Vincent Pallotti, and Blessed Antonio Rosmini. Popes, like the aforementioned Pius IX, as well as Leo XIII, John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul I.

From the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century the retreats were gradually reserved for various categories—priests, religious, committed lay people. After the Second Vatican Council, the house was also open to nuns, lay women and numerous parish and church groups. Numerous seminarians of the various Roman Colleges went up to the Celio for retreat in preparation for their ordination. Among them the aforementioned Saint John XXIII, Angelo Roncalli, who transcribed his inspiring memories in the spiritual classic, The Journal of a Soul (1964).

[Editor’s Note] The current reality of Retreat ministry in the Passionist Congregation

Today in the Passionist Congregation there are over fifty official retreat houses where the Passionists minister to clergy, men and women Religious, laity, young adults, and children. In addition to Sts. John and Paul in Rome, there are three retreat houses in the CPA Configuration of Africa; four in the CCH Configuration of Northern Europe; 14 retreat houses in the Configuration of Jesus Crucified of North America, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina; 11 in the MAPRAES Configuration of Italy, France and Portugal; 14 in the PASPAC Configuration of the Asia-Pacific region of the Congregation; and 6 in the SCOR Configuration of Spain and Latin America.
What does it mean to meditate on and ultimately to preach the Passion of Jesus Christ? Is there a formula somewhere, devised by Saint Paul of the Cross, for this pursuit, one that can be followed in exacting detail for a successful outcome? And are there ways to preach the message of a Crucified Redeemer that have yet to be named or determined by us who call ourselves Passionists?

These questions arose in me early in my Passionist life. Wanting to follow the example of others who had been effective at preaching the Passion, there seemed to be a limited number of ways to that end. Donning a black habit with a white cross over the heart and extracting every passage from scripture that dealt with suffering seemed like a good beginning. But I soon discovered there is plenty of suffering in the world without having to highlight the agony with more sad words. And besides all that, most of the Passionists I knew were very joyful!

Our beloved Founder, Paul Daneo, understood, more than three hundred years ago, that the main aspect people needed to know about the Passion was that it conveyed God’s unfailing love for us. That was the heart of the matter. And how Passionists conveyed that message was up to each person and his individual gifts. Even Paul himself resisted the structures set forth for preaching by not initially seeking ordination in order to do so. But we are a culture that at once shuns and equally embraces structure, and so we Passionists conformed for many years to solid parameters within which we could, in fact, preach Christ Crucified.

This may be the reason that, over thirty years ago, my first formation director sat me down for a talk one day saying: “David, you are a musician joining an order that preaches. Do you realize you may never sit at an organ bench again? Is this what you want?” And then, a few weeks later, the same director asked me to take over the music for our Community liturgies. I now find the humor in this, but at the time, it was more of a subtle reassurance that I was in the right place and with the right gifts to preach the Passion to the world.

The discovery of a perfect formula to convey the love of God and the memory of the Passion takes each Passionist on a life-long journey. Mine led me to see how the singular investment of each Passionist in actualizing his own personal gifts could produce the most natural and sincere, if not incredibly effective, method of telling the story of God’s love.

As a music educator, liturgical musician, and composer, I uncovered the ability to respond to God’s call as a Passionist religious and as a priest precisely because I engaged with the skills that God had given me. I also realized that it was in the very work I was doing, in the music I was creating, that God was continually revealed. And often I would be reminded of the fact that one doesn’t need to go looking for the Crucified of today; they will be found wherever we Passionists are – waiting for us to love them. Music has been the key to this discovery on my sacred journey.

We know that the sound of music can inspire, it can comfort, and heal the human heart. Music is a medium through which the voice of God, the presence of the Divine, speaks to all of creation. It is a language unto itself but one that is understood by all. From the child in its mother’s womb to the dying patient in hospice care, music penetrates barriers and reaches the places of greatest need, of grief and suffering. It carries God’s love to the soul and places one directly into the heart of Christ, the dwelling place of the Creator’s love.

What permission do I have to make such bold statements? I rely on what has been verified by my life experience. I have seen how music can enfold a grieving family with a mantle of care at the funeral of a young person who succumbed to opioid addiction, or where it has held up the spouse who lost his young wife after battling cancer. People will say consistently that at the time of profound grief they heard nothing that was spoken, but what they remember was the comforting music, the only thing they could lean into when all else was collapsing.

Here, in moments of struggle such as these, I was able to see the love of God made manifest for the crucified of today. Fr. Roger Mercurio, C.P., writes this: “Another aspect of the ‘memory of the passion’ (Memoria Passionis) calls Passionists to contemplate Jesus crucified and also the many crucifieds of today, such as the poor, the suffering,
the sinner and the abandoned. We find them in our cities and villages, where they speak to us of the sufferings of Christ in today’s world.” (from “The Passionists” p. 168)

My Passionist heart was drawn into the need of these “crucified ones” and with young and old, music has been the conduit of God’s consoling love that has enabled me to reach them with the message of the Cross.

One day, while teaching my little second grade students to sing the great African American spiritual “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”, one student began to cry as we were singing. I asked her why she was crying. She said the music made her realize how much Jesus loved her. The words, “Oh, oh, oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble”, combined with the soaring musical line, created the right combination for this young child to grasp, deep in her soul, what was beyond human description or understanding. It was the music, in fact, that preached the message, and in that moment, I, too, began to weep, which caused the entire class to start crying! Tears flowed in abundance because in that moment we were literally caught up in the rapture of God’s love. And that moment will not soon be forgotten.

The experience of those children brings forth the familiar example of Saint Francis of Assisi who said to his monks: “Go into every town, city, and village and preach the Gospel at all times and in all places. If it is absolutely necessary, use words.” That says very clearly to me that there is more than one way to preach.

A joy in my Passionist experience has been to study the texts of our Founder’s letters to his spiritual directees and to set some of them to music. When I was invited to produce the first of six recordings of my music with my brother Passionists and some associates, I began by excising parts of the Founder’s letters and praying with them. Once set to music, I shared the songs with other Passionists. The surprising reaction was disbelief in the veracity of the content! One esteemed Passionist, upon hearing certain verses, uttered aloud: “These are not from Saint Paul of the Cross!” I had to produce the source and page number from the book “Words from the Heart.” This is a collection of personal letters of the Founder compiled by three Passionist historians: Edmund Burke, Roger Mercurio and Silvan Rouse. The music so enlivened the texts that they seemed different from anything most Passionists had ever heard coming from Saint Paul of the Cross. That was a delight for me – to recognize the power of music to highlight what might have been previously overlooked! And, for the record, I did forgive the doubter!

“Singing elevates the soul to listen to the Spirit.” These words were spoken by Pope Francis in a message to a choir visiting Rome in November 2018. He went on to say: “Singing is a language that leads to the communion of hearts. Crossing every boundary, through music, you spread a message of peace and solidarity.”

Following on this message, in the recent times both of COVID-19 and of the racial unrest that was spawned worldwide, I witnessed how music played a role in both soothing the weary and giving voice to the oppressed by expressing a clarion outcry of injustice in our broken world. While humanity sheltered away, musical renderings online helped to muster hope. While marchers took to the streets in protest, songs like “We Shall Overcome” invoked the spirit of true righteousness and peace. The power of music in this historical time cannot be overstated. It became a treasure of inestimable value for a universe wounded and in pain.

What does it mean to meditate and preach the Passion? It is to connect, indeed, with the overflowing grace that comes from the God of love. Therefore, may the sound of music fill us, encourage us, and awaken us to that indescribable love that for Saint Paul of the Cross brought forth a spiritual conversion and a deep, inner joy. And may we, Passionists, spread that joy far and wide with a song in our hearts. † Amen.

[David Cinquegrani, C.P., a member of Saint Paul of the Cross Province (PAUL) entered the Congregation in 1989. David has been a music educator and choir director for forty years and has taught on elementary, secondary and college levels. He is currently the Retreat Director at Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center in West Hartford and directs the music ministry of over 120 individuals while teaching K-8 music in the local Catholic grade school. He has produced six recordings of music which are available on the website: www.holyfamilyretreat.org]

Links:
(Beautiful Anthem with Full Choir)
Sing Forth His Glorious Name
https://vimeo.com/340716465

(2 “Virtual Songs” prepared during COVID)
YOUTH CHOIR: All That Is Good
- https://vimeo.com/421905810

ADULTS: We Are Many Parts
- https://vimeo.com/410704428
It is time to descend to the underground... Go down into the underground, and pass from the hyper-virtual, fleshless world to the suffering flesh of the poor. This is the conversion we must undergo. And if we do not start there, there will be no conversion.

(Pope Francis) [1]

Covid 19 arrived suddenly and in a single blow exposed all our economic, social, psychological, and political frailties. The pillars on which our society was built have become insufficient to protect the lives of those closest to our hearts. Priorities changed and uncertainty has begun to reign. Covid made us "descend to the underground" which is what is truly important and what has so far been ignored, assumed or undervalued. However, this is the place from which the tremendous capacity of solidarity, interdependence and goodness is best appreciated.

Therefore, a profound transformation of paradigms and ways of existence will be needed-- a precise understanding of political greed; overcome the scandalous concentration of wealth and to take measures to prevent ecological catastrophe. To what extent will these changes touch Religious Life and the Church? And above all, what will be the ultimate reason and at the same time the paradigm that causes change in the Church and in Religious Life?

Paul arrived there around the year 51 and began to work as a craftsman (Acts 18:1-3). This is when an assembly of believers in Christ began. The pastoral work was initially developed with the help of Aquila and Prisca, while Paul preached in the synagogue. Afterward he lived with Titus Justus and devoted himself to preaching to the Gentiles. According to the data from his letters, the community was both vivacious and difficult. In 1Cor 1:26-29 he suggests that most belonged to the lowest strata of the population. Tensions arose from the highly educated minority who determined the pace of the community, since they had "clear" (wise) conceptions and social practices that were fully immersed in the customs of the civil society.

The Paradox of The Cross
- A Key to Discernment

Beginning with the needs of the community, Paul makes broader theological reflections that illuminate the lives of believers of all times, the Church, and the experience of the Coronavirus. In 1Cor:17-25 he begins by presenting the core of his preaching-- the scandalous historical fact of the Cross, in which the strength and power of our God is paradoxically revealed. "The preaching of the cross is madness for those who are lost, but for those who are saved – for us – it is the power of God" (1Cor 1:18). The word of the Cross shows that a human being has two options for understanding the meaning of his/her life— to accept the plan of the Father incarnate in Christ crucified or to focus on himself and on the possibilities of his/her own thought and self-sufficient capacity. Where everything is weakness, helplessness and ignorance, God, through the Cross of his Son is revealed as strong and a savior.

The message of the Cross is the source of true Christian wisdom.[3] That message is centered in the Crucified. The culminating event of Jesus’ death reveals with all clarity the divine desire to save humanity. That is why the starting point of Paul's argument is the proclamation of the Christian kerigma. At the beginning of the Christian message there is no rational demonstration or ideology;
rather there is a person who suffers the scandal of a shameful death.[4]

Paul is convinced that the paradox of the Cross is not limited to Jesus but pervades the existence of every Christian— that is, the permanent presence of the Crucified in history is perpetuated in the lives of believers and the Church. The Christian is a witness to an offer made to all mankind. Therefore, Christian faith goes beyond the threshold of the private. The Father’s saving plan passes through the cross of rejection and offering. Therefore, for the community of believers, the word of the Cross becomes the key to discerning manifestations and levels of human pain.

In this crisis that humanity is experiencing, the paradox of the Cross helps the Church to understand and denounce the false images that have been created during these months. The Cross reveals to us that even in pandemics social differences prevail—differences that are undeniable. The experience of the Cross places us in the subsoil of history, a place from which it is possible to contemplate the splendor of solidarity and goodness.

We need to be in tune with the Pope: "To ‘see’ the poor means to restore their humanity. They are not things, not garbage; they are people. We cannot settle for a welfare policy such as we have for rescued animals. We often treat the poor like rescued animals. We can’t settle for a partial welfare policy.”

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITIES

“Consider your own calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, […] God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing.” (1Cor.1:26-31) Accepting the fact that for Paul, Jesus’ death on the cross was the event that revealed most clearly what God is like, showing his ability to save as a vilified person, as someone condemned to death by the powers of this world, consequently, for Paul this means assuming a new identity a framework within which it should organize its hierarchy of values according to this new principle expressed in a corporate way in the Church.[5]

The community of Corinth was composed mostly of people from the most vulnerable social strata, people not very affluent or highly educated. Among them there were few prestigious, wealthy, and cultured. What Paul presents to them in 1Cor.1:26-31 is that all the categories that segregate people because of their ethnicity, gender or social position should disappear in the Church: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal.3:28) It is not constituted as a hierarchical, patriarchal, exclusive, or elitist community; rather it is a sister to humanity, to the weak and vulnerable. The criteria for hierarchical organization should exclusively stem from the desire for fidelity to the criteria of God.

Of course, there must be an organization or hierarchy in the community. Some think that the simile of the body in 1Cor 12,12-30 responds to a situation of internal conflict among the members of the community. [6] Using the metaphor of the human body, Paul offers a hierarchical structure to members of the Church: “Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it…”

The pandemic crisis is a kairos moment that offers an opportunity to turn to the God of the Kingdom and assume his way of working as our own: effective solidarity cannot be exercised from positions of power. Men and women religious and priests who have been affected by their pastoral ministry will show the way to true service. The greatest imperative is for an outward-bound Church, affected and involved with wounded bodies and striving to alleviate human pain.

We are living during what is perhaps the best moment to take ministerial renewal seriously, the time to strengthen basic communities and small groups that continue to be nourished by the Word of God and by the prayers of the people. Might it also be that the Spirit is calling us to continue to talk about women’s ministries? [7]
"The word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly; even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7)

Affirmations of this caliber are the result of the author’s perception and have influenced the formation of the image of a victorious Church from the outset. However, this was not the reality Paul experienced. His experience as a persecuted preacher, with a number of problems that existed in the communities that he was founding, the dissention that aroused his authority and even the health problems that afflicted him, were harsh lessons that he used to illustrate the power of the message of the Cross.

This time Paul’s response applies to both the preacher’s life and that of the Church as a whole— "We hold this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us." (2Cor.4:7) The metaphor of the clay vessel makes it clear that the content of preaching is more important than the container, that is, the preacher. His own "crucified" experience exemplifies that the ministry of preaching cannot presume to be anything different for the preacher than what his Lord lived and suffered. [8] Like Jesus, the paradox of death and life, of defeat that becomes triumph, is experienced by the apostle in his own body— "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body." (2Cor.4:10)

Just as the humiliation of Jesus on the Cross was the way God manifested himself as the fulness of love, forgiveness and redemption, the fragility of the preacher is now the most eloquent sign that makes the Lord’s saving action visible. The cross in the apostle’s life is the clearest mark of his faithfulness. Because the God revealed on the cross does not act by imposing, forcing, or overwhelming. The man on the cross is broken in pieces, like the clay pot. However, it is the clearest epiphany of the strength of life that comes from the Father.

The argument also applies to the Church. A vulnerable Church that recognizes that it needs reconciliation, that is not afraid of being impotent and incapable; it is not afraid of being criticized because of its commitment to the poor; it is not ashamed because of the stigma that it may incur from touching the wounds of suffering humanity.

In order to recover the prophecy of fraternity and closeness to those who are suffering we must recall that all our religious orders, congregations and institutes were born of deep crises in society and in the Church. The crisis caused by the pandemic invites us to regenerate our communities and summon the best of our charisms that stem from our humility and insignificance.

**Conclusion**

The word that Religious Life offers to grieving humanity is derived from its configuration with the one who died on the cross. The message of the cross is constituted in the framework that configures its service to the victims. Joyfully living our own sense of fragility and vulnerability enables us to discover and make present the capacity of our God to make life flourish. Today, this may be the way of living out the prophecy of hope, the sign that is proper to Religious Life.

[This article was originally published in Revista CLAR, Edición especial 2020 “Claves hermenéuticas para enfrentar la pandemia en defensa de la vida, págs. 14-23.]

1) Interview with Pope Francis and various international media sources on 8 April 2020. It can be viewed at: https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/time-great-uncertainty

Spanish translation: https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/en/entrevista-con-papa-francisco


5) Carlos Gil Arbiol, Qué se sabe de… Pablo en el naciente cristianismo (Estella [Navarra]: Verbo Divino 2015) págs. 136-137.

6) Carlos Gil Arbiol, Qué se sabe de… Pablo en el naciente cristianismo, págs. 138-139.

7) It should be recalled that at the beginning of April 2020, Pope Francis instituted a new Commission to study the female diaconate; five of the members are women.

At the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, when the work of renewal began in religious Congregations based on the decree Perfectae Caritatis (1965) and the motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae (1966), it was not as entirely clear as one might think today, what the objective should be. At that time everything was about renewal, about something new toward which one had to be guided. For religious Congregations there was hope that the winds of Pentecost that moved the soul of the Council, could guide them toward a new way of seeing that same reality that in fact presented itself differently from one day to the next.

The swiftness of the changes that were taking place in the new technological age, led progressively and silently into individualism, relativism and the secularization of society, including attitudes that gradually settled with great ease within the walls of convents and monasteries, with the consequent disintegration of formally secure mentalities. Unlike the solidity of the past system, which had characterized religious life from the time of the Restoration (first half of the 1800s), to the 1950s, everything became mobile, fragile and vulnerable, causing a condition that is often called "crisis", but which in fact was intended to be a good opportunity for a new beginning. This was in fact the challenge offered and accepted simultaneously by Vatican II.

This fluctuation, which was increasingly becoming part of the common way of thinking, brought with it a great deal of novelty together with just as much fear. It was motivated by the unclear goal that it sought to attain-- Where are we going? Accompanied by the Council’s challenges, some wanted renewal, but what this meant was unknown. Consequently, this climate existed against the background of a continual feeling of uncertainty, which was paradoxically immersed in the vortex of constant activity. Therefore, along with this renewal it was necessary to arrive immediately at a new text of the [Passionist] Constitutions. In the face of the loss of control caused by the decrease in numbers of religious and the questioning of the classic institutional formulas, it was hoped that this would restore a certain stability and a sense of balance.

The first two decades of the post-Conciliar period was a period during which we could not even have imagined what we now understand as an issue about the reception of Vatican II. And if anyone had even tried to question this movement, such as Enrico Zoffoli, C.P. did at that time (Please-- a little clarity! Where are we going? Rome, 1980), he/she was immediately silenced. However, this was not done out of malice; it was merely because there was no time to waste pondering these kinds of questions-- we had to move on!

The pace was fast and between one General Synod and another, such as the time between the second Synod of a mandate and the successive General Chapter, there were only two years. Therefore, there was no time to lose!

It was at precisely this time that Paul VI, observing religious totally caught up in the spiral of a vortex that made them easily lose their sense of control and discernment between the old and the new, spoke of "impulsive escapes". This occurred because the logic of renewal seemed to say-- "only those who move toward the future, not the past, will survive".

During the fifty-five years that currently separate us from the promulgation of Conciliar documents, the Congregation of the Passion, like all religious congregations, has moved forward, sometimes even groped, while never getting discouraged, trying to satisfy the thirst for novelty and simultaneously the need to preserve intact, beyond the "impulsive leaps forward" denounced by Paul VI, its Congregational and charismatic identity. All of this occurred in the clear awareness of the "essential" reason why the Holy Spirit inspired the Congregation in the Church through Paul of the Cross.

The main work of Paul Michael Boyle, Superior General of the Passionists from 1976 to 1988, was situated in the context of research and continuity, beginning from the very identity of the Congregation. It was a mandate that set out along the path of renewal and conciliation with great creativity and spiritual fervor-- characteristic traits arising from his own personality. Those who knew him personally, can certainly testify to this.
The course laid out by Boyle, undoubtedly characterized by the urgency of achieving the text of the new Constitutions, can safely be defined as a passionate search for self-understanding of the Passionist Congregation, in fidelity to the Word of the Cross in the face of the challenges of history. In fact a Congregation that wanted to become more attentive to contemporary humanity, to the demands dictated by the historical present, had to have a theology that knew how to find the fundamental element of its preaching in the Word of the Cross (Verbum Crucis) starting from the sufferings of men and women of today. It is therefore epistemological awareness that distances Passionist research from the risk of reduction to the humanistic sphere alone in a very generic and easily equivocal sense. Therefore, I want to assert that Boyle, as we will see, was not only a canonist, his specialty, but also a born leader, although attentive to government and the good organization and management of general assemblies. Additionally, he proved to be a theologian of religious life and the Passionist charism, exacting and competent.

Through the sixteen circular letters (among others) that he left the Congregation, it is easy to see the mysterious line of continuity of the Passionist charism, its nature, and its mission. From this perspective, it is possible to understand the internal dynamism of Passionist living, between novelty and belonging, between sign and mystery. In this regard every Passionist was given the opportunity to make any creative and innovative contributions (sign) that could offer a new and audacious face to the Congregation, without betraying the cornerstones of its spirituality and charism, being conformed to Christ (mystery). The visibility of institutions and their strategic function, linked to works, should not betray, in his opinion, the relationship with the hidden mystery, which is Christ crucified, a reality that is represented and witnessed by the Passionists as a tangible sign.

Boyle’s work was a profound support for the renewal of the Passionist Congregation, a renewal that was first ecclesial, through the reformulation of the Rule, which evolved, as anticipated earlier, into the new Constitutions. The concern that theology should be in dialogue with life and current reality was part of the constant reworking of ideas and criteria that he offered, especially during the capitular and synod phases, in order to qualify the life and pastoral action of the Congregation. It took two General Chapters (1976 and 1982) and two General Synods (1978 and 1980) to produce the Chapter Document, a replacement document of the Rule, produced by the Special General Chapter of 1968-70, thus concluding the "trial period". It was a journey that led the Passionists to reread and to be incarnated in a new cultural situation. It was an interesting challenge, we can say, that led Boyle himself to give attention to two aspects of the Congregation which could no longer be neglected, namely internationality and the challenge of formation.

If the community is a concrete reality, it is mainly because it is a place of human relationships, of relational humanity. It is worth noting and merits praise that, at the beginning of his Generalate, Boyle wanted to devote the first two years of his mandate to visiting all the communities and to personal dialogue with all the religious of the Congregation (Cf Hopes and Aspirations, Rome 1977). Subsequently, he had the insight to give, in the wake of the renewal undertaken, a new face to the official Bulletin of the Congregation, directly assuming the role of editor. Thus, the Bulletin became "his voice", the voice of the father who reaches all his children, with the sole desire of placing all possibilities and experiences in dialog with each. It was the birth of the PIB (Passionist International Bulletin). Understanding one another could certainly be a place of communion in the midst of disagreement, solidarity and acceptance, not by eliminating differences, nor homogeneity; but realizing that a single text of the Constitutions had to be prepared and embodied in the local realities that enriched the Passionist family throughout the world.

In this process, Boyle saw all the benefits but also the work involved; the problems, but also the attraction of beauty and the richness that a diversity of life experiences encompasses. It was for this reason that, having reached the goal of the definitive formulation of the Constitutions at the General Chapter of 1982, he felt that it was necessary to focus on the urgency of a formation project that took into account all the aspects that would comprise the new face of the Congregation. It was a face that undeniably was not familiar. The new reality had to be not merely a reflection of the former as in a mirror, but a new face to be recognized and welcomed.

The General Programme for Formation (Rome 1986) is a text of extraordinary value and after more than thirty years since its promulgation, it is still challenging as an expression of the beauty of a genuinely vivacious and new
charism, the Passionist charism, capable of proclaiming the mystery of God’s crucified Love in the deepest fiber of the authentically human existence of a global citizen. The Passionist family is characterized by transcendence and openness to the mystery that underpins and envelops it. It knows how to discover in the gift of itself to others, the power of the love of a crucified God. For this reason, Boyle saw the educational experience as the power of transcendence; a force capable of renewing itself in the generative act of openness to life and its mystery.

Reading his Circular letters or his interventions in the PIB bulletin, one could say he was a Superior General who was a “dreamer”. However, he was unequivocally concrete, with his feet planted firmly on the ground because he knew the different problems of local realities, which frequently he described in his Circular letters, always starting from the actual human challenges of consecrated life. Additionally, all of this is amply seen in the PIB, where he does not dispense anyone from being reminded, sometimes even with rather strong words, about striving for goodness, right and truth. He knew well the challenges of walking together; but he was there, always ready to offer new opportunities to be faithful in the choice of the Passionist lifestyle.

In this context, it is important to understand the category of "Exodus" offered as a paradigm shift, with which Boyle wanted to indicate the transition from a static conception of community and the Passionist model, to a more dynamic conception indicated by new cultural spaces. Like the people of Israel, the Congregation, during the renewal phase, was led out, departed, but together, striving to overcome difficulties, strong in their search for unity that would be found in the text of the Constitutions. This process of course did not intend to mark a break with a historical and sound heritage as seen in the Rule left by Paul of the Cross; on the contrary, he wanted it to be known and loved. Nor did he intend to forget his roots; but he undoubtedly sought new institutional places that could help to embrace diversity that was not seen as a threat, but rather an asset.

I believe that it is precisely in this context that we need to discover the origin of the category of "incarnation" that will emerge more clearly during Capitular and Synod reflections of the general government of José Agustín Orbe gozo (1988-2000). Through this category, the Congregation had to enter into a new dynamism and re-establish a particular direct relationship with the reality of contemporary man, rich in his multifaceted history. However, it was the unique mystery of love identified in the Memoria Passionis that strengthened the relationship between reality and transcendence in the Passionist charism.

In keeping with the ideas proposed in his Circular Letters, as well as in BIP, it is easy to understand how Boyle's interest was to initiate reflection leading toward an adequate understanding of the Passion experience; not wandering in fantasies, but proceeding securely, remaining rooted in real life. The viewpoints he offered did not include any possible discontinuity with the doctrinal development that had characterized Passionist thought up to Vatican II. In fact, the themes chosen for the process of renewal coincide with a series of categories. They promote continuous evolution providing a means for understanding people of today and their needs in the light of their history and tradition. These themes promote and substantiate the guidelines for reflection that Boyle tried to direct toward the enhancement of subjectivity and uniqueness.

Finally, I think it is important to emphasize how Boyle's teaching, especially through the BIP, can be understood today as a reconstruction of Passionist history narrated through the diverse forms of communication of the Passionist family. Principally he called for self-formation by the individual and communication with those who enter into a relationship with him through study and the information he shares. According to him it was good to "talk about oneself"; it was good for the individual and his vocation; it renewed and freed him. It meant taking time to heal yourself by listening to one another in the Congregation. It was a concrete way to break down all kinds of divisions, physical and cultural, ideological and pragmatic.
On 06 May 2020, the Vatican Press Office announced that the Holy Father, Francis, had appointed Bishop Amilton Manoel da Silva, Passionist, as bishop of the diocese of Guarapuava, Brazil. Until this time, Bishop da Silva had been auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese of Curitiba.

In an interview with a Brazilian newspaper, Bishop Amilton shared his reactions upon learning of his nomination.

"I confess that I was surprised this morning by Pope Francis with my appointment as Diocesan Bishop of Guarapuava. I arrived as auxiliary bishop of Curitiba a short time ago, precisely two and a half years ago, but I understand that the harvest is still abundant and there are few laborers, so I replied: 'Here I am!'” He continued, speaking about his journey of faith— “I learned from Mary that doing God’s will, being available to the Lord, is the starting point for the building of the Kingdom. This does not eliminate fear; but it makes it possible to joyfully accept the will of God and the Church. It is the will of the Lord that from now on I am the pastor of the Diocese of Guarapuava, to sanctify, teach and govern in charity. However, I also want to be a brother, to listen, to learn, to walk together, building relationships that the Master left us as a commandment: ‘Love one another as I have loved you’ (Jn.13:34).”

In his letter of congratulations, Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, wrote— “I was delighted to hear today of your appointment by Pope Francis as Bishop of the Diocese of Guarapuava. While this appointment comes with a greater role of responsibility than you have been exercising over the past three years as Auxiliary Bishop in Curitiba, it also allows you to bring to the service of the Diocese a more personal vision to enrich the already existing vision and history in collaboration with the clergy, religious and laity.

Moreover, I am sure that you will receive a warm welcome from the people of the Diocese of Guarapuava since the Passionists have had a history of service there, and have imparted our spirituality to the people through a variety of ministries, including in the parish which I was privileged to visit some years ago.

May Jesus, the Good Shepherd guide you; may Our Lady Mother of Hope accompany you; and may St Paul of the Cross support you in this new journey for the life of the Church.”

Bishop Amilton was born on 2 March 1963 in Osvaldo Cruz, in the diocese of Marília, state of São Paulo. He studied philosophy at the Federal University of Paraná in Curitiba (1992-1995), and theology at the São Paulo-ITESP Institute of Theology (1997-2000). He professed Vows as a Passionist on 18 January 1997 and was ordained a priest on 17 December 2000.

As a Passionist, the bishop was a member of the former CALV Province of Brazil (currently the GETH Province). In the CALV Province he exercised the following ministries: director of postulants; master of novices; coordinator of the spirituality team of the CALV Province and the Passionist Family of Brazil; Provincial Consultor and Provincial Superior. In addition, he was counsellor of the Conference of Religious of Brazil (Regional of Paraná), parish vicar in Colombo-PR and Ponta Grossa-PR, and pastor of São Paulo da Cruz in the archdiocese of São Paulo. He was ordained bishop on 19 August 2017.
Thomas Struzzieri, the first Passionist bishop was consecrated a bishop on 23 December 1764 and was immediately assigned to highly delicate tasks as Apostolic Visitor in Corsica. Unfortunately, he is largely unknown [even by Passionists]. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to present this outstanding individual and to offer further historical-theological information concerning him. He was born in Senigallia (Ancona, Italy) on 30 March 1706. On 25 November 1719 he entered the Nazarene College in Rome directed by the religious of St. Joseph Calasanzio where he continued his studies in humanities and completed his philosophical studies. He also attended the “La Sapienza” University in Rome studying law, as well as dogmatic and moral theology. On 12 March 1729 he was ordained a priest by Pope Benedict XIII in the Vatican Basilica. Four months later, he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in utroque iure.

His meeting with St. Paul of the Cross was a turning point in his life. This took place in the Spring of 1743, in Rome, in the sacristy of the church of the Capuchin nuns (Santissima Concezione) almost directly facing the church of “La Madonna ai Monti”. They recognized each other, embraced one another, and experienced a great mutual affection that lasted their entire lives. St. Paul of the Cross invited him to enter his Institute, and Fr. Thomas began to pray to know God’s will. After some uncertainty and hesitation, he made a decision and in January 1745 he arrived at Monte Argentario. On 2 February he received the Passionist Habit from the Founder himself. So strong was the bond he had with St. Paul of the Cross that, during the year of his novitiate, every night, in a dream, Paul spoke to him about spiritual things, so much so that in the morning he was very recollected in spirit, prepared for the prayer and asceticism typical of Passionist life. Immediately after novitiate, Fr. Thomas of the Side of Jesus (Struzzieri) dedicated himself to apostolic ministry with excellent results, as well as to various tasks that the Founder himself assigned him both in the opening of new Retreats and in assignments within the Congregation itself. Even as a bishop he always maintained the spirit of a Passionist religious that he had acquired through a close relationship with the Founder, to the extent that he wanted to be present at Paul’s death.

His apostolic activity outside the Passionist Congregation began with his arrival in Corsica on 23 April 1760 in the service of the Apostolic Visitor, Bishop Cesare Crescenzio De Angelis (1705-1765). His role was that of an assistant and theologian. However, he did not limit himself only to that. In fact, he intervened in many difficult situations, did evaluation and discernment with individuals in distress, reconciled dissent groups and pacified minds. Due to the poor health of Bishop De Angelis, after a few months, his commitments had even increased.

When he was consecrated bishop in 1765, he continued the work of Bishop De Angelis as Apostolic Visitor in various dioceses of Corsica. Later he was assigned as a residential bishop to the diocese of Amelia in the Umbria region of Italy. He remained there for about five years from 1770 to 1775. Since it was not possible to access the diocesan archives of Amelia, we will provide some information about the period in which he was bishop of the diocese of Todi [Umbria, Italy]. We were able to access this archive, which unfortunately was heavily depleted, probably by the diocesan Postulator, in order to process the cause of Struzzieri’s Canonization.

With his appointment by Pope Clement XIV as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Todi on 18 March 1774, Bishop Struzzieri also "risked" the possibility of being named a cardinal. He even received early congratulations from several people, and Amelia’s faithful "bought a large amount of wax for the preparation of candles to be used in the fateful circumstance".

Even as a bishop he maintained a deep bond with the Passionist Congregation and its spirituality. For ex-
ample, when he arrived in the city of Todi as Apostolic Administrator on March 21, 1774, Palm Sunday, after two weeks, on "Domenica in Albis", he began preaching a course of spiritual exercises to the people. Two years later he also called his fellow Passionists to preach an extraordinary mission in the city.

As stated, he was present at the death of St. Paul of the Cross. In fact, as soon as he returned to Amelia from Todi, he received the news of the critical health situation of the Founder. He arrived at the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul shortly before noon on October 18, 1775, and immediately went to visit the Founder. Throughout his life he maintained a great esteem for St. Paul of the Cross, the esteem of a saint, as confirmed by his depositions during the canonical processes for the Founder’s Canonization.

He was a bishop who was devoted to his people, attentive to their needs such as during a poor olive harvest and the severe drought and the resulting oil and wheat famine that took place during the last months of his life. To remedy the first situation, Bishop Struzzieri helped to calm the tension between the clergy and the city authorities, while in the second case he located grain from other regions of Italy and made it available at a price that was accessible to the people. The people did not address him with ecclesiastical-hierarchical titles but with the familiar term "Father"; he was esteemed to be a saint. As he had learned during his Passionist formation, he was greatly concerned about liturgy. He was particularly attentive to the spiritual life of priests whom he encouraged to grow in holiness; he also admonished, both verbally and in writing, those who were unfaithful to their priestly duties.

Additionally, he worked on practical projects such as the restoration of the diocesan seminary building, which when he arrived, was in extremely poor condition. The structure was used until 1954.

In Todi’s diocesan archive, among the few documents present, there are two copies, one in Latin and the witness testified that he remembered. The altar boy suffered from "imbalance" (epilepsy), so his mother took the late bishop’s mantle and placed it on his chest, and from that moment he was no longer afflicted by that malady.

Another "miraculous" episode took place the bishop’s palace in Todi and is attested to in manuscript of a single sheet of paper. While Bishop Struzzieri was completing the liturgical Office of the Solemn Commemoration of the Passion of Jesus Christ, that included an octave of prayers, he was frustrated because he lacked inspiration. At that point, a man entered his room and said to him - "Your excellency, use the "improper" in place of the of the "Responses", and then he disappeared. The bishop came out of the room and asked the secretary who was sitting in the outer room about the identity of the man. The young secretary replied that he not seen anyone enter or exit the room. "He therefore concluded that this inspiration was totally divine."(2)

His ties with the Passionist Congregation also emerged during the last years of his life, when Pope Pius VI wanted him to be president of the 7th General Chapter of the Congregation in 1778.

He ended his earthly pilgrimage in Todi on Friday, 21 January 1780 at around 4:00 PM, at the age of 73 years and 9 months and 21 days and was buried in the Cathedral of Santa Maria Annunziata. The desire of Bishop Struzzieri to see his Passionist brothers in Todi came to fruition on 6 July 1816 when three Passionists, two priests and a religious brother, entered the convent of St. James to begin to live community life.

1) Cf. A.V.T., Archivio del Capitolo Cattedrale di Todi, Carteggio riguardante il vescovo Struzzieri (1774-1780), Depositio funeris, f. 4.
2) Ib., single sheet of paper.
**What is COFAMI?** COFAMI is a private association of Christian laity. The goal of this organization is to strive to live the Passionist charism in the context and circumstances of lay life, especially by promoting the values of marriage and the family.

“Community” is understood as the unity of persons in the likeness of Trinitarian communion. The family is composed of all its members: husbands and wives, children, and parents; without excluding the elderly, widowers and single mothers who shape the family home. They are missionaries because they wish to bring the message of the Good News to all the world, especially to those most in need. They are Passionists because of the specific charism of “living and gratefully remembering the love of God, as expressed in the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ”. COFAMI aims to promote human and Christian values in the family and in the community. To achieve this end, in their formation they consider the fundamental dimensions that constitute human life: spiritual, psychological-affective, biological, and social.

It was founded in Mexico by Fr. Pio Castagnoli C.P. (1930-2003) who was a tireless missionary, a man of God, in love with Our Mother of Holy Hope. He was interested in religious vocations, but he realized that before he invited young men to join the Passionists, it was necessary to strengthen the family, the cradle of vocations. After several missions with married couples, on 3 May 1975, before an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, in the retreat of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin in Cuernavaca (Morelos), the great COFAMI family was born, which, by the grace of God, celebrates its 45th anniversary in 2020.

**What is its ministry?** Its apostolate focuses on evangelization, first with spouses and later with families, through missions and spiritual gatherings: conjugal, fraternal, family, Marian and youth. These mainly take place in a parish environment.

**Who are its members?** Those who, after a married couples’ retreat, decide to be part of a “small community” of at least six married couples. Thus, they begin their formation and growth in their married life for the good of the Church and of society.

**How is it structured?** In the structure and organization of COFAMI, the family is represented by the spouses. Every couple belongs to a small community of life. The various communities of life form a Parish Center and they, within a diocese, form a Diocesan Center.

This type of organization helps the leaders to correctly guide COFAMI members. Each small community has an animator; at the parish level, a coordinating council is responsible for promoting, coordinating, and supporting small life communities. Whereas, at the diocesan level, a council is responsible for visiting the different parishes where the Institute is located, as well as sharing the charism with other parishes. The Diocesan Council is in constant dialogue with the bishop.

The Central Council is the supreme governing body. It consists of three married couples, elected in an ordinary national assembly, which is responsible for directing and guiding the life and mission of COFAMI. In addition, it tries to promote relationships, harmony and unity with the dioceses and parishes where it is present.

Each parish must have a spiritual advisor, who can be the pastor or a delegate (male or female religious or priest). In the diocese, the Diocesan Council formally requests the bishop to appoint a spiritual adviser to all the communities that compose it. The national spiritual advisor is the Provincial Superior of the REG province, who is responsible for appointing a religious, who must be ratified by the National Assembly of the Institute.

Currently, COFAMI totals just over 1200 married couples, present in 13 dioceses. They are trying to extend this great work to various other countries to face the challenges and threats that the family is experiencing throughout the world. They offer the wisdom emanating from the Cross and are guided by the loving hand of Our Mother of Holy Hope.

As a national spiritual advisor, I admire the work that this Institute’s married couples do for the good of the Church and society. I appreciate the love and commitment with which they convey the Passionist charism in their different realities. I believe that the future of our mission as a Congregation and Province is to know how to work with the laity, conscious that we must work together in such a way that, “the religious-clerical” dimension does not overwhelm that of the “laity”.

Meeting of the COFAMI organization in Monterey, Mexico.
On September 2, 2020 the Sisters of the Cross and Passion celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of their foundress, Elizabeth Prout (September 2, 1820 – January 11, 1864). Although she lived only to the age of 44, Elizabeth undertook extraordinary feats of virtue and courage in the lifetime given to her. Since her death in 1864, the Sisters of the Cross and Passion, her daughters, have treasured her memory and followed her example of service and dedication.

Elizabeth was born in Shrewsbury, England on September 2, 1820. She was an only child and was baptized and raised in the Anglican Church. In or around 1843, Elizabeth attended a lecture given by now Blessed Dominic Barberi, C.P. and her pathway into Catholicism began. Also begun at this time was her companionship with the Congregation of the Passion, and with the spirituality of St. Paul of the Cross.

Elizabeth had been received into the Catholic Church under the guidance of Father Dominic. Following his death in 1849, Father Gaudentius Rossi, C.P. was among those who assisted Elizabeth, both in her work as a teacher and in her efforts to establish a new religious order for women. Although the relationship between Father Gaudentius and Elizabeth was not always smooth, the new religious order was established on November 21, 1852 when Elizabeth and her early companions received the habit of the institute, the Sisters of the Holy Family. At that point, mostly due to political turmoil in Europe, the Rule of the new community had not yet received approval from Rome. The new religious institute, in distinction from others of the day, required no dowry from those women seeking to join. Thus, women who were poor or of lower social classes were welcomed into the community with no hesitation.

Following the transfer of Father Gaudentius to America, Father Ignatius Spencer, C.P. assisted with the rewriting of the Rule, and final approbation was received. But that is not the end of the story, merely another beginning.

Elizabeth Prout died on January 11, 1864. Her community was not strong in numbers, but was strong in dedication and generosity of spirit. In that same year, 1864, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Passion, Father Peter Cayro, C.P., traveled from Rome to England. He declared the Sisters of the Holy Family to be Passionist in spirit, and a process of aggregation into the Passionist family was begun. Despite many fits and starts, including delays caused by political unrest in Italy, the aggregation process concluded in 1887, with the approval of the Constitution of the Sister of the Cross and Passion.

Throughout her life as a religious, Elizabeth, or Mother Mary Joseph as she was known, focused in her ministry on education and the alleviation of the burden of poverty borne by so many in those early decades of England’s Industrial Revolution. She and her sisters staffed schools and established hostels, providing safe haven for women who worked in the factories of Manchester. When necessity required, the sisters themselves worked in the factories to provide for the needs of the community.

Although the fledgling community encountered some difficulties and even turmoil in those early years, their good works and service continued to move forward. Through the 19th century, then the 20th century, and now into the 21st century, the Sisters of the Cross and Passion have continued to serve those in need, faithful to the spirit and charism of Elizabeth Prout.

The Sisters of the Cross and Passion are now present in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Botswana, and Vietnam. Additionally, there have also been missions undertaken and brought to completion in Sweden, Bosnia, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Jamaica W.I. and Australia.

The guiding principle of all these undertakings is best stated in the opening paragraph of the Constitutions of the Institute: *We are dedicated to keeping alive the memory of Jesus Crucified, so that all may discover God’s love which reaches its greatest expression on the Cross.*
On 12 May 2020, the Holy See approved the amendments to the Rule and Constitutions of the Passionist Nuns. This year, 3 September will mark the 250th anniversary of the approval of the Rule of St. Paul of the Cross for the Passionist Nuns. After the approval of the Rule, a few months later, on 3 May 1771, Passionist monastic life began in the monastery of Corneto (today Tarquinia). In the midst of the celebration of the Third Centenary of the founding of the Passionist Congregation (2020-2021), we can also celebrate this important Jubilee of the contemplative Passionists—250 years of the approval of their Rule and the founding of their first monastery.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE PASSIONIST NUNS

The idea of founding a Congregation of religious women who lived the same charism as the male Passionists appears in Paul’s writings from 1734, shortly after having met Agnese Grazi and Sister Maria Querubina Bresciani. Expressions such as “companions in our devotion”, “women who will share this life” and others, are repeated. The expression “doves of Calvary” is the result of a vision of Lucia Burlini—a description that Paul especially liked.

The foundation was proposed, although it was deferred because it was linked to the approval of the male Passionist Congregation and encountered the same obstacles: litigation with the mendicants, financial difficulties and, above all, solemn vows. Without solemn vows one could not think of the foundation of a monastery with simple vows and without papal closure. Therefore, Paul had to overcome this great difficulty. Surmounting obstacles was possible with the election of Pope Clement XIV, in 1769, who was ready to help Paul in whatever way possible.

Meanwhile the construction of the first monastery was concluded thanks to the commitment of the Constantini family, the family to which the Venerable Maria Crocifissa belonged. After 38 years of life as a Benedictine nun she left her monastery to direct the new foundation which was initiated on 3 May 1771. Ten postulants, who Paul had guided and prepared through epistolary spiritual direction, joined her in the Vestition of the Habit. On 20 May 1772 they made profession in the hands of the local bishop and on 21 May, in a Chapter of Elections, they elected Mother Maria Crocifissa as President. Because of his health problems, Paul was unable to guide the nuns during this initial period. In fact, he was never able to even visit the monastery.

THE RULE OF 1770

In the Rule of the Nuns everything concerning the specific elements of their life, the characteristics of their spirituality, the way of living the vows, the specific Passionist vow to recall and promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ and other fundamental elements derive from the Rule of the Passionists. In the text of the Rule the expression “as is customary in the Congregation of the Passion” is constantly repeated. As regards the organization of the monastery, the internal life, work, etc., the elements are frequently taken, sometimes even verbatim, from the Constitutions of the Religious of the Visitation of St. Francis de Sales.

When Paul received the final approval of the Congregation with the Bull Supremi Apostolatus (23 November 1769), he became more confident in the eventual approbation of the Rule for the Nuns. He intensified his work editing the draft of their Rule and presented it to the Pope on 26 July 1770. Following the review by Fr. Francesco A. Pastrovich, OFM, Conv., it was approved on 3 September 1770. As in the preparation of the Rule of the Passionists, Paul yielded to some suggestions, but not to those that he
believed were fundamental—the way of living the enclosure (professed with a fourth vow and also included the absence of a parlor for receiving guests); the teaching of Christian doctrine and admitting in the enclosure women who wanted to share Passionist life for a period of time or for retreat, considering that these activities did not violate the enclosure and, in addition, allowed them to live the specific Passionist vow. One of those who had this experience of Passionist life was Magdalena Frescobaldi, foundress of the Passionist Sisters of St. Paul of the Cross.

Paul died leaving the Congregation of Nuns he founded an Institute of Pontifical Right and its Rule approved. It was under the jurisdiction of the bishop because they had no solemn vows. However, Paul ensured the formation and spirituality of Passionist nuns at the XVIII General Chapter—“the Superior General, with the approval of the local bishop, shall designate a religious from the aforementioned Congregation, among the most suitable, [to visit the monastery] three times a year, for a space of one month at a time...”

The nuns study the amendments to their Rule and Constitutions.

27 monasteries participated, the final work was completed. The Holy See mandated that the Rule of St. Paul of the Cross (Part I) remain as an inspirational text to illuminate the new Constitutions (Part II), which were adopted on April 28, 1979.

**THE RULE AND CONSTITUTIONS OF 2020**

Less than four years had passed since the 1979 approbation of the Rule and the new text was already outdated due to the publication of the new Code of Canon Law in 1983.

On the other hand, given the difficulties of many monasteries, the Holy See intervened and appointed a Delegate, who convened a General Assembly of the nuns’ monasteries. This Assembly made the decision to initiate a process of communion to overcome the isolation of monasteries and to apply what the Constitutions stated—“although we have autonomous monasteries we are constituted as a single family, united in Christ Crucified.” The “Monastic Congregation” was chosen as the structure of government and communion because it was the one that best responded to the original idea of Paul of the Cross. The Holy See approved the Monastic Congregation and its statutes on 29 June 2018.

Meanwhile, on 29 June 2016, Pope Francis promulgated the Apostolic Constitution *Vultum Dei Quaerere* concerning female contemplative life. Two years later the Dicastery emanated the document *Cor Orans* as an application and instruction concerning the document. Both documents established a new legal framework for women’s contemplative life.

Canon Law, the Statutes of the Congregation, and the guidelines of *Vultum Dei Quaerere* and *Cor Orans* were to be introduced in the text of the Constitutions. The work was carried out during the First General Chapter of the Nuns (2019). Last December (2019) together with the modifications and suggestions of the monasteries, the final text was presented to the Holy See and as indicated, on 12 May 2020 the Rule and Constitutions received their approval. It should be noted that the Dicastery made no objection or modification to the text presented.

[Historical references are taken from the History of the Congregation of the Passion, Fr. Fabio Giorgini, CP., vol. I.)]
PROFESSIONS AND ORDINATIONS

PROFESSIONS OF FIRST VOWS
During the period from 01 April 2020 to 31 July 2020, 20 Religious professed First Vows.

VULN Vice Province of Germany and Austria, 01 May: Antonius Maria Bringmann and Benedikt Maria Eble.


REPAC Province of Indonesia, 9 July: Saferinus Pa’o, Yohanes Mba Malo Sali, Teodorus Mudis, Deomedes Alex, Yosef Patrisius Yotri, Eduardus Vianney Loka, Agustinus Kowe, Selvius Suherli, Adus Pinus Dandi, Felix Lawa and Beno Valentino.

PROFESSIONS OF PERPETUAL VOWS
During the period from 01 April 2020 to 31 July 2020, 8 of our Religious professed Final Vows.

SCOR Province of Spain and Latin America, 2 May: Wilmer Geraldo Jaramillo.

CRUC Province of USA, 7 June: Nicholas Divine.

EXALT Province of Brazil, 10 July: Bruno Maciel da Silva Brito, Gilberto Felipe Corrêa dos Santos, Gabriel Luis de Assis Oliveira, Felipe Tubertino dos Santos and Leonardo Luiz da Cruz.


VULN Vice Province of Germany and Austria, 01 May: Antonius Maria Bringmann and Benedikt Maria Eble.


REPAC Province of Indonesia, 9 July: Saferinus Pa’o, Yohanes Mba Malo Sali, Teodorus Mudis, Deomedes Alex, Yosef Patrisius Yotri, Eduardus Vianney Loka, Agustinus Kowe, Selvius Suherli, Adus Pinus Dandi, Felix Lawa and Beno Valentino.

DIACONATE ORDINATIONS
During the period from 01 April 2020 to 31 July 2020, 5 Religious were ordained deacons.

EXALT Province of Brazil, 11 July: Bruno Maciel da Silva Brito, Gilberto Felipe Corrêa dos Santos, Gabriel Luis de Assis Oliveira, Felipe Tubertino dos Santos and Leonardo Luiz da Cruz.

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS
During the period from 01 April 2020 to 31 July 2020, 2 Religious were ordained to the priesthood.

EXALT Province of Brazil, 16 May: Edson Terra da Silva.

MAPRAES Province of Italy, Portugal and France, 11 July: Francesco Leonardi.
## Notitiae Obitus

12 Aprilis 2020 - 11 Iulius 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIE</th>
<th>OBDORMIVIT IN DOMINO</th>
<th>PROVINCIA</th>
<th>NATUS</th>
<th>VOTA NUNCAPAVERAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/04/2020</td>
<td>Sac. Stanislaw Mazur</td>
<td>ASSUM</td>
<td>12/10/1946</td>
<td>26/08/1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/04/2020</td>
<td>Sac. Fernando Carberry</td>
<td>PATR</td>
<td>12/06/1934</td>
<td>22/08/1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/04/2020</td>
<td>Sac. Marco Partenza</td>
<td>MAPRAES</td>
<td>05/03/1933</td>
<td>15/09/1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/05/2020</td>
<td>Sac. Casimiro Pérez Fernández</td>
<td>SCOR</td>
<td>05/01/1940</td>
<td>08/09/1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/05/2020</td>
<td>Sac. Ludwik Stefański</td>
<td>ASSUM</td>
<td>03/05/1941</td>
<td>08/09/1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/05/2020</td>
<td>Sac. Leon Goertz</td>
<td>SPE</td>
<td>04/01/1939</td>
<td>10/09/1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/06/2020</td>
<td>Sac. Silvio Di Leo</td>
<td>MAPRAES</td>
<td>17/09/1931</td>
<td>19/10/1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/06/2020</td>
<td>Sac. Francisco José Murray</td>
<td>GETH</td>
<td>26/12/1955</td>
<td>28/03/1976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Moniales et Sorores Defunctae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIE</th>
<th>OBDORMIVIT IN DOMINO</th>
<th>CONGREGATIO/INSTITUTUM</th>
<th>NATA</th>
<th>VOTA N.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/04/2020</td>
<td>Sr. Rosanna del SS. Crocifisso (Augusta) Cutolo</td>
<td>Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa)</td>
<td>09/04/1939</td>
<td>16/09/1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/05/2020</td>
<td>Sr. Maria Celeste de Nossa Senhora do Monte Serrate Fernandes Pacheco</td>
<td>Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa)</td>
<td>18/10/1928</td>
<td>15/08/1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/05/2020</td>
<td>Sr. Maria Rosa di Santa Gemma (Mª Teresa) Nicchetti</td>
<td>Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa)</td>
<td>06/09/1926</td>
<td>15/08/1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/05/2020</td>
<td>Sr. Veronica Wallace</td>
<td>Inst. Sororum SS. Crucis et Passionis D.N.I.C. (England)</td>
<td>04/05/1921</td>
<td>14/05/1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/05/2020</td>
<td>Sr. Maria Costantina di San Paolo della Croce (Angelina) Azzolin</td>
<td>Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa)</td>
<td>23/09/1932</td>
<td>02/05/1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/06/2020</td>
<td>Sr. Maria da Trinidade di S. Marcos (Laura) Bannach</td>
<td>Inst. Sororum Passionistarum a S. Paulo a Cruce (Signa)</td>
<td>26/10/1932</td>
<td>08/10/1955</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>