

March 2021  
Volume 6  
Number 4

# Passionist News Notes

## St. Paul of the Cross Province



### St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Feast Day February 27

by Fr. Michael Higgins, C.P.



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The Church offers us a saint's feast day on February 27 to open a window of opportunity to celebrate one of our Passionists saints.

St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother was a Passionist seminarian who died only two years before his ordination. He is the patron of all Passionist seminarians, and of all Italian Youth. He died on this day in 1862 at the Passionist Monastery in the Abruzzi region of Italy.

Gabriel (the name he received when professing his vows as a Passionist), was born in Assisi and was baptized with the name of the great Italian saint, Francis, and in the same baptismal font where St. Francis and St. Clare had been baptized.

St. Gabriel is often compared with St. Therese of Lisieux, the "Little Flower," because both died at 24 years of age, and both sought perfection in doing the everyday things out of obedience to their religious way of life, and out of love for God.

Lent is a good time for us to look at the daily things that we have to do and make an effort to do them with a spirit of service to others, while we accept Jesus' invitation that we show love for one another.

If we take a "time out" from Lent to celebrate St. Gabriel, we can return to Lent with a renewed commitment to care for one another, and to do what we can imitate the saints by seeking God's will in all things.

# Letter from the Provincial about the upcoming Assembly



Office of the Provincial

## THE PASSIONISTS

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### **PROVINCE ASSEMBLY 2021 – *A Time of Crisis, a Time of Renewal***

February 17, 2021

Dear Brothers, Associates and Friends,

As we enter this holy season and as we gather for our Assembly, Feb. 24, 2021, it feels like, in some ways, we are coming out of the long, dark pandemic. Some of our communities have been vaccinated. Many individuals have as well. We glimpse again the excitement of coming together with others – of full retreat weekends, crowded churches and a more robust community and personal life. But even as we catch glimpses, we know we are a ways away! Not only will the process be slow, but we will all carry the scars of what has happened. Each of us will be changed emotionally, physically and spiritually. Too much has happened. The trauma of isolation, anxiety, sickness and death has settled into us as a people. We have also seen too much – the gaping economic disparities of the world, the still unaddressed seething racial wound, the tantrums of our suffering planet, and the absolute fragility of all human life.

Our community in Jamaica NY has borne the brunt of the COVID virus in the Province. Many of our men were in facilities for long stretches of time due to the illness. The community itself still practices very strict protocols including social distancing with limited visitors from the outside. I want to thank the leaders of the community who have been steadfast throughout – Tom Brislin, Michael Greene and the health care team. Dan Flynn provided constant support, information and direct assistance to our men. We patiently await the vaccine.

Other communities, associates and family members have been infected, as well, with the virus. We encourage one another to get vaccinated when possible. This is not only for our individual health, but it will aid in the eventual global control of this terrible pandemic.

Without doubt, the financial situation of our local communities and ministries, as well as the province as a whole, has been significantly affected. We will receive a more complete report from Greg Hampson regarding finances before and at the Assembly. *Thankfully, I can say that we are ending the year in a stable financial situation.* Much of this stability is owed to two factors – significant cuts to provincial government and the strong stock market. We anticipate another difficult year ahead, especially for our corporate ministries.

Without question this year has greatly taxed our corporate ministries. The levels of stress have been significant – both the anxiety of the virus and the direct effects on the ability for people to gather. Our local leaders have all manifested great endurance, creativity and faith in facing the challenges of the day. The 'virtual' ministries that have been developed by retreat centers, parishes and individuals have been truly extraordinary. So, despite the darkness, many new and exciting movements are occurring.

As Father Joachim, our General, has called us to, this 300<sup>th</sup> Jubilee is an intentional time for renewal – a two year period of re-imagining, re-thinking and re-positioning our personal and corporate selves for the next 300 years. Throughout the province, this renewal is happening.

In **Jamaica, NY** the former *Bishop Molloy Retreat House* is being re-born as *Thomas Berry Place*. In this newly renovated Passionist ministry, the integral ecology linking the 'Crucified of Today' to the 'Crucified Earth' will form the spirit within which a 50 room retreat ministry will manifest Paul of the Cross' desire that all would be led to encounter the Divine Mystery through contemplation.

In **Toronto**, building on the great story of the creation of St. Gabriel's Church, the province and local community are planning for a Synod. This synod will create 'circles of encounter' so that those at the margins, the crucified of today, might find their way into the discernment as to how we will structure future ministry and leadership.

In **Florida**, the community welcomed Paul Ruttle, who is beginning to reach out and build bridges to those who have not found their way to our Center, most particularly persons of color. This work will lead to further insight, discernment and action.

Along with these examples, conversations are beginning to take place at our other corporate ministries and with our leadership. These conversations are discerning the pathways to renewal and the next generation of Passionist charism, leadership and ministry.

One hallmark of renewal in this day and age, is the absolute necessity to see partnerships as crucial. The days of acting as 'silos' are over. Organizations that behave as silos easily fall when the world changes. If we want to see our corporate ministries continue into the future as vital and robust, they must be in partnerships. These partnerships may be in the same foundation, in the same city, or may exist globally. The mission we are called to is shared by so many mission-aligned entities and communities. We ignore working with others at our own peril.

As excitedly as we look to the future during this renewal, we are also attending to the wounds of the past. This past year has sadly continued to bring us into the presence of victims of sexual abuse by our members over the past 60 years. Each person who approaches the province, whether directly or more likely through an attorney or a diocesan compensation board, is a life story that has been forever and tragically altered by the actions of one of us. Victims form part of the 'Crucified of Today' and they are our constant companions calling us to repentance and greater integrity. *All those who have come forward this year were victims of already known perpetrators, so the information about our history of individual abusers remains the same.* I thank Dan Flynn for the constant attention to this most important ministry of our province. Dan also successfully engaged the rigorous *Præsidium* audit and review for compliance with best practices for child safety. We have been accredited for another five years.

This period of renewal is also a time to welcome new members to the vowed community. We are blessed with many young men who are in various stages of initial formation and who have shown great enthusiasm for this way of life. At the Assembly, we will have a chance to 'check in' with them and connect with them. The presence of youth challenges all of us to renew this province and to allow the emerging charism to carry another generation into the future. We will hear a report from our Vocations team at the Assembly, as well.

The presence of many of our Associates at this Assembly is a real blessing. As part of the renewal, we look to deepening our understanding of the power of the Associates' vocation and how better to understand our life and work together.

And so, brothers, associates and friends, we will enter this Assembly 2021 together. It might be a good preparation for each of us to consider where we find ourselves on our own journey as we enter this time of Jubilee and renewal. For example,

*Do I identify with Simeon in the Temple (Lk 2:22)? Do I feel I am coming to the end of my earthly pilgrimage and I am preparing to sing my 'nunc dimittis' with gratitude and anticipation?*

*Do I identify with one or other of the disciples? Have I been on the road for a bit of time. I have had my successes and I have had my struggles. But I am still going and am engaged with the mission.*

*Do I identify with Jesus in the synagogue (Lk 4:18) – just beginning his ministry and announcing that he will proclaim good news to the poor, liberty to prisoners and sight to the blind? Am I full of enthusiasm but not exactly sure where the future will lead?*

*Do I identify with one of the countless people that Jesus encountered along the way – one who had lost hope, one who felt excluded, one who was chronically sick, one who was grieving, one who was tormented by demons, one who was barely hanging on?*

Where ever we are – we are together, we are loved. We bring what we can and we commit to allow the emerging charism to move through us – despite our weakness and fears – that the 'Crucified of Today' might find real companions in the *Poor of Jesus* – and that we all might find our way to the Crucified One who sustains us with marvelously ingenious and ever-emerging Love.

Brothers, Associates and Friends - Welcome to Assembly 2021.

In JXP,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim O'Shea', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Fr. Jim O'Shea, CP  
Provincial



Office of the Provincial

# THE PASSIONISTS

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17 de febrero 2021

Queridos hermanos, asociados y amigos:

Al entrar en esta temporada santa y al reunirnos para nuestra Asamblea el 24 de febrero de 2021, parece que, de alguna manera, estamos saliendo de una pandemia larga y oscura. Algunas de nuestras comunidades tienen sido vacunado. Muchas personas también lo han hecho. Volvemos a vislumbrar la emoción de unirnos con otros: fines de semana de retiro completo, iglesias abarrotadas y una vida comunitaria y personal más sólida. Pero incluso cuando vislumbramos, ¡sabemos que estamos muy lejos! No solo el proceso será lento, sino que todos llevaremos las cicatrices de lo sucedido. Cada uno de nosotros cambiaremos emocional, física y espiritualmente. Han pasado demasiadas cosas. El trauma del aislamiento, la ansiedad, la enfermedad y la muerte se ha instalado en nosotros como pueblo. También hemos visto demasiado: las enormes disparidades económicas del mundo, la herida racial hirviente que aún no se ha resuelto, las raietas de nuestro planeta que sufre y la absoluta fragilidad de toda la vida humana.

Nuestra comunidad en Jamaica NY ha soportado la peor parte del virus COVID en la provincia. Muchos de nuestros hombres estuvieron en las instalaciones durante largos periodos de tiempo debido a la enfermedad. La propia comunidad todavía practica protocolos muy estrictos, incluido el distanciamiento social con visitantes limitados del exterior. Quiero agradecer a los líderes de la comunidad que se han mantenido firmes en todo momento: Tom Brislin, Michael Greene y el equipo de atención médica. Dan Flynn brindó apoyo constante, información y asistencia directa a nuestros hombres. Esperamos pacientemente la vacuna.

Otras comunidades, asociados y familiares también se han infectado con el virus. Nos animamos unos a otros a vacunarse cuando sea posible. Esto no es solo para nuestra salud individual, sino que ayudará en el eventual control global de esta terrible pandemia.

Sin duda, la situación financiera de nuestras comunidades y ministerios locales, así como de la provincia en su conjunto, se ha visto afectada significativamente. Recibiremos un informe más completo de Greg Hampson sobre las finanzas antes y en la Asamblea. Afortunadamente, puedo decir que estamos terminando el año en una situación financiera estable. Gran parte de esta estabilidad se debe a dos factores: recortes significativos al gobierno provincial y al fuerte mercado de valores. Anticipamos otro año difícil por delante, especialmente para nuestros ministerios corporativos.

Sin lugar a dudas, este año ha impuesto mucho a nuestros ministerios corporativos. Los niveles de estrés han sido significativos, tanto la ansiedad del virus como los efectos directos sobre la capacidad de las personas para reunirse. Todos nuestros líderes locales han manifestado una gran resistencia, creatividad y fe al enfrentar los desafíos del día. Los ministerios "virtuales" que han sido desarrollados por centros de retiro, parroquias e individuos han sido verdaderamente extraordinarios. Entonces, a pesar de la oscuridad, están ocurriendo muchos movimientos nuevos y emocionantes.

Como nos ha llamado el Padre Joachim, nuestro General, este 300º Jubileo es un tiempo intencional de renovación: un período de dos años para re-imaginar, repensar y reposicionar nuestro yo personal y corporativo para los próximos 300 años. En toda la provincia se está produciendo esta renovación.

En Jamaica, Nueva York, la ex Bishop Molloy Retreat House está renaciendo como Thomas Berry Place. En este ministerio pasionista recientemente renovado, la ecología integral que une al 'Crucificado de hoy' con la 'Tierra crucificada' formará el espíritu dentro del cual un ministerio de retiro de 50 habitaciones manifestará el deseo de Pablo de la Cruz de que todos sean llevados a encontrar el Misterio divino a través de la contemplación.

En Toronto, basándose en la gran historia de la creación de la Iglesia de San Gabriel, la provincia y la comunidad local están planificando un Sínodo. Este sínodo creará "círculos de encuentro" para que aquellos en los márgenes, los crucificados de hoy, puedan encontrar su camino hacia el discernimiento sobre cómo estructuraremos el ministerio y el liderazgo futuros.

En Florida, la comunidad le dio la bienvenida a Paul Ruttle, quien está comenzando a tender la mano y tender puentes hacia aquellos que no han encontrado el camino hacia nuestro Centro, en particular las personas de color. Este trabajo conducirá a una mayor comprensión, discernimiento y acción.

Junto con estos ejemplos, las conversaciones están comenzando a tener lugar en nuestros otros ministerios corporativos y con nuestro liderazgo. Estas conversaciones están discerniendo los caminos hacia la renovación y la próxima generación de carisma, liderazgo y ministerio Pasionista.

Un sello distintivo de la renovación en esta época es la absoluta necesidad de ver las asociaciones como algo crucial. Los días de actuar como "silos" han terminado. Las organizaciones que se comportan como silos caen fácilmente cuando el mundo cambia. Si queremos que nuestros ministerios corporativos continúen en el futuro como vitales y sólidos, deben formar asociaciones. Estas asociaciones pueden estar en la misma fundación, en la misma ciudad o pueden existir a nivel mundial. La misión a la que estamos llamados es compartida por muchas entidades y comunidades alineadas con la misión. Ignoramos trabajar con otros bajo nuestro propio riesgo.

Tan emocionados como miramos hacia el futuro durante esta renovación, también estamos atendiendo las heridas del pasado. El año pasado, lamentablemente, ha seguido llevándonos a la presencia de víctimas de abuso sexual por parte de nuestros miembros durante los últimos 60 años. Cada persona que se acerca a la provincia, ya sea directamente o más probablemente a través de un abogado o una junta de compensación diocesana, es una historia de vida que ha sido alterada para siempre y trágicamente por las acciones de uno de nosotros. Las víctimas forman parte del 'Crucificado de hoy' y son nuestros compañeros constantes que nos llaman al arrepentimiento y a una mayor integridad. Todos los que se han presentado este año fueron víctimas de perpetradores ya conocidos, por lo que la información sobre nuestra historia de abusadores individuales sigue siendo la misma. Agradezco a Dan Flynn por la atención constante a este ministerio tan importante de nuestra provincia. Dan también participó con éxito en la rigurosa auditoría y revisión de Praesidium para verificar el cumplimiento de las mejores prácticas para la seguridad infantil. Hemos sido acreditados por otros cinco años.

Este momento de renovación es también un momento para dar la bienvenida a nuevos miembros a la comunidad de votos. Tenemos la suerte de contar con muchos jóvenes que se encuentran en diversas etapas de formación inicial y que han mostrado un gran entusiasmo por esta forma de vida. En la Asamblea, tendremos la oportunidad de "registrarnos" con ellos y conectamos con ellos. La presencia de la juventud nos desafía a todos a renovar esta provincia y a permitir que el carisma emergente lleve a otra generación al futuro. También escucharemos un informe de nuestro equipo de vocaciones en la Asamblea.

La presencia de muchos de nuestros Asociados en esta Asamblea es una verdadera bendición. Como parte de la renovación, buscamos profundizar nuestra comprensión del poder de la vocación de Asociados y cómo comprender mejor nuestra vida y trabajar juntos.

Y así, hermanos, asociados y amigos, entraremos juntos a esta Asamblea 2021. Podría ser una buena preparación para cada uno de nosotros considerar dónde nos encontramos en nuestro propio viaje al entrar en este tiempo de Jubileo y renovación. Por ejemplo,

¿Me identifico con Simeón en el templo (Lc 2, 22)? ¿Siento que estoy llegando al final de mi peregrinaje terrenal y me estoy preparando para cantar mi nunc dimittis con gratitud y anticipación?

¿Me identifico con uno u otro de los discípulos? ¿He estado viajando por un tiempo? He tenido mis éxitos y he tenido mis luchas. Pero sigo yendo y estoy comprometido con la misión.

¿Me identifico con Jesús en la sinagoga (Lc 4, 18), recién comenzando su ministerio y anunciando que proclamará buenas nuevas a los pobres, libertad a los presos y vista a los ciegos? ¿Estoy lleno de entusiasmo pero no estoy seguro de adónde me llevará el futuro?

¿Me identifico con una de las innumerables personas que Jesús encontró en el camino: una que había perdido la esperanza, una que se sentía excluida, una que estaba crónicamente enferma, una que estaba afligida, una que estaba atormentada por demonios, una que apenas estaba colgando? ¿en?

Dondequiera que estemos, estamos juntos, somos amados. Aportamos lo que podemos y nos comprometemos a permitir que el carisma emergente se mueva a través de nosotros, a pesar de nuestras debilidades y miedos, para que el 'Crucificado de hoy' encuentre verdaderos compañeros en los Pobres de Jesús, y para que todos podamos encontrar nuestro camino. el Crucificado que nos sostiene con Amor maravillosamente ingenioso y siempre emergente.

Hermanos, asociados y amigos: bienvenidos a la Asamblea 2021.

En JXP,



P. Jim O'Shea, CP  
Provincial

# Introduction to the Jubilee Lenten program

By Fr. Joachim Rego, C.P. Superior General

## INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE FOR JUBILEE LENTEN PROGRAM



My dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends in the Passionist Family,

I send you fraternal greetings as we begin the journey of Lent – the goal of which is our ongoing and deeper response to the call of Jesus to CONVERSION: *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel” (Mk. 1:15).*

The call to ‘repent’ is a spiritual call to newness and renewal of mind and heart, shaped by the values of the Gospel. This time is an opportunity for us to deepen our call to discipleship, as the *Godspell* musical song says: *“To see thee more clearly; love thee more dearly; follow thee more nearly, day by day.”*

Because of our human frailty, we know that conversion and renewal of mind and heart is a daily constant need...and it is a grace from our patient and loving God freely available for anyone who genuinely seeks this “pearl of great price”. However, it does not come easily, without some effort on our part. The call to conversion and repentance is always in the context of our **relationship** with God: *invitation* and *response* – a two-way engagement.

As Passionist disciples, we have been *in the process* of a specific journey: the commemoration of the third centenary of the foundation of the Passionist Congregation. Recognizing this as a spiritual event, we saw the necessity to commemorate this occasion as a Jubilee Year: a ‘kairos’ moment and graced opportunity for renewal. The inspired and chosen theme resounding for us in this Year is: **Renewing our Mission – Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope.** However, we are also continually reminded that *the renewal of our mission presupposes the renewal of ourselves.* There can be no renewal of the mission without the renewal and transformation of the missionaries. It is presumed that the mission is Christ’s; and we are missionaries in Christ’s name. So, *“repent and believe in the gospel”.*



While there has been much preparation and many activities to mark the anniversary of the Congregation's foundation which opened on 22 November 2020, the General Council felt the need to encourage and keep alive the momentum of the Jubilee Year which concludes on 1 January 2022. As such, we believe that the liturgical season of Lent, with its goal of 'conversion', is an appropriate time to propose some animation for our Jubilee with its related goal of 'renewal', in light of the charismatic dream of our founder, St. Paul of the Cross.

Two members of the Council, Frs. Rafael Vivanco and Juan Ignacio Villar, were tasked with preparing a series of reflections for the weeks of Lent and Holy Week. These reflections follow the Gospel reading for each Sunday, relating it with a theme that connects with the spiritual experience of St. Paul of the Cross as recorded in his Spiritual Diary during his 40-days retreat in Castellazzo, and suggestions assisting us to reflect in light of our present times.

I am pleased to present this Lenten resource to the Passionist Family, and while I encourage you to engage personally with the rich material contained in this series, I strongly urge the dynamic of communal engagement as Passionist communities, and groups of religious and laity, by allowing time each week to make use of this spiritual resource as a Lenten and Jubilee hope for renewal and conversion.

With my best wishes for a fruitful Lent and a life-renewing Easter joy,



Fr. Joachim Rego, C.P.  
Superior General

Solemn Commemoration of the Passion  
12 February 2021  
Retreat of SS. Giovanni e Paolo  
Rome



# Jubilaem



Prayer Guide

## A call to conversion!

O

[TO TRANSFORM MY LIFE, TO RENEW THE MISSION]

17 February

## Ash Wednesday

Forty days to leave your comfort zone.

Pray with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience

## Gospel Text

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW (Mt. 6:1-6, 16-18)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples:

Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.

When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.

The gospel of the Lord.

Desert Castellazzo

# Lent 2021

What can you do for yourself?



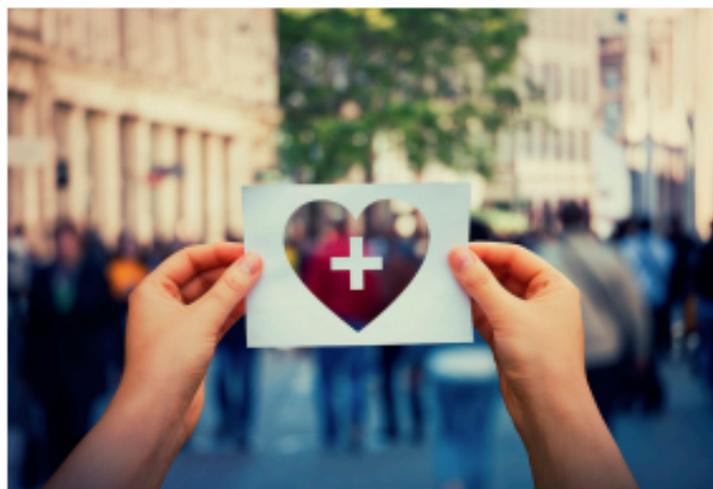
# Meditation and text of St. Paul of the Cross

(FROM HIS SPIRITUAL DIARY)

Once again we prepare to celebrate the liturgical time of Lent in which we are invited to be challenged by the Word of God in our lives in order to be renewed as we move toward Easter. Forty days of Lent, I walk the way to the cross. Fifty days of Easter, I walk in the fullness of the Spirit following in the footsteps of Christ.

Forty days of grace: like the forty days of Moses at the summit of Mount Sinai, preparing the Covenant; like the forty years of the pilgrimage of the Israelites through the desert, the way to the promised land; like Elijah's forty days, on the way to his encounter with Yahweh on Mount Horeb; like Jesus' forty days in the wilderness, before starting his messianic mission.

The greatest refrain of Lent is *"metanoia"*, that is, a change of mindset, so that the *"old self"* who still subsists in us with all that it entails of counter-gospel, counter-Easter, and sin, will give rise to the *"new self"*, that is born to full life according to the way of Jesus. Lent will call us to intensify our prayer, to listen more attentively to the Word of God, to renew our baptism and to celebrate our reconciliation with God, with our brothers and sisters, with ourselves and with creation.



Prayer Guide

Pray with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience



The Lenten journey begins with the sign of the imposition of ashes in which we hear one of these expressions: *"Repent and believe in the Gospel"* (Mk. 1:15) and *"Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return"* (Gen 3:19). A sign and words that express well our ephemeral nature, our need for conversion and acceptance of the Gospel, and the newness of life that Easter wants to impart to us. Something must be burned or destroyed in us - the old self - in order to give rise to the newness of Easter life in Christ. Lent ends at the Easter vigil with fire, light and water, symbols of the new existence of the resurrected.

In today's Gospel, Jesus highlights three areas or aspects that our lifestyle must assume during this Lent-- God (prayer), neighbor (alms) and ourselves (fasting). In each of these three areas we must internalize, not merely remain on the superficial level of routine and hypocrisy in order to gain prestige, power or privilege, but to place ourselves in intimate communion with the Father, who knows us in the depths of our being and allow ourselves to be challenged in our relationship with our brothers and sisters.

Therefore, concerning almsgiving: *"do not blow a trumpet before you"* so that others acknowledge you; rather *"do not let your left hand know that your right is doing"* and the Father will reward you. With regard to our neighbour, we must offer charity that is not ostentatious, but springs from true and selfless love.

In prayer: do not pray *"so that others may see [you]"*; rather, *"go to your inner room [...] and pray."* The Father will repay you. Face to face with God,

# Jubilaem

we must pray in a way that does not remain in external words and gestures, but that springs from the heart.

As for fasting: *“Do not look gloomy”* so that others may know that you are fasting, rather *“anoint your head”* and the Father will reward you. For us, fasting is self-knowledge, self-control, the ability to renounce secondary values in favor of the values of the Kingdom of God.

In the Passionist Family we are living this Lent as part of the Jubilee Year for the third Centenary of the founding of our Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ. We are inspired by the motto: *“Renew our mission: gratitude, prophecy and hope”*, from the memory of the Passion of Jesus. We do not celebrate our greatness and our successes, our self-sufficiency; rather we celebrate the blessings of God during these three centuries and the faithfulness of countless Passionists who, by their life and mission, and despite their human weakness and fragility, have maintained the grateful memory of *“the Passion of Christ, the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love”* (St Paul of the Cross).

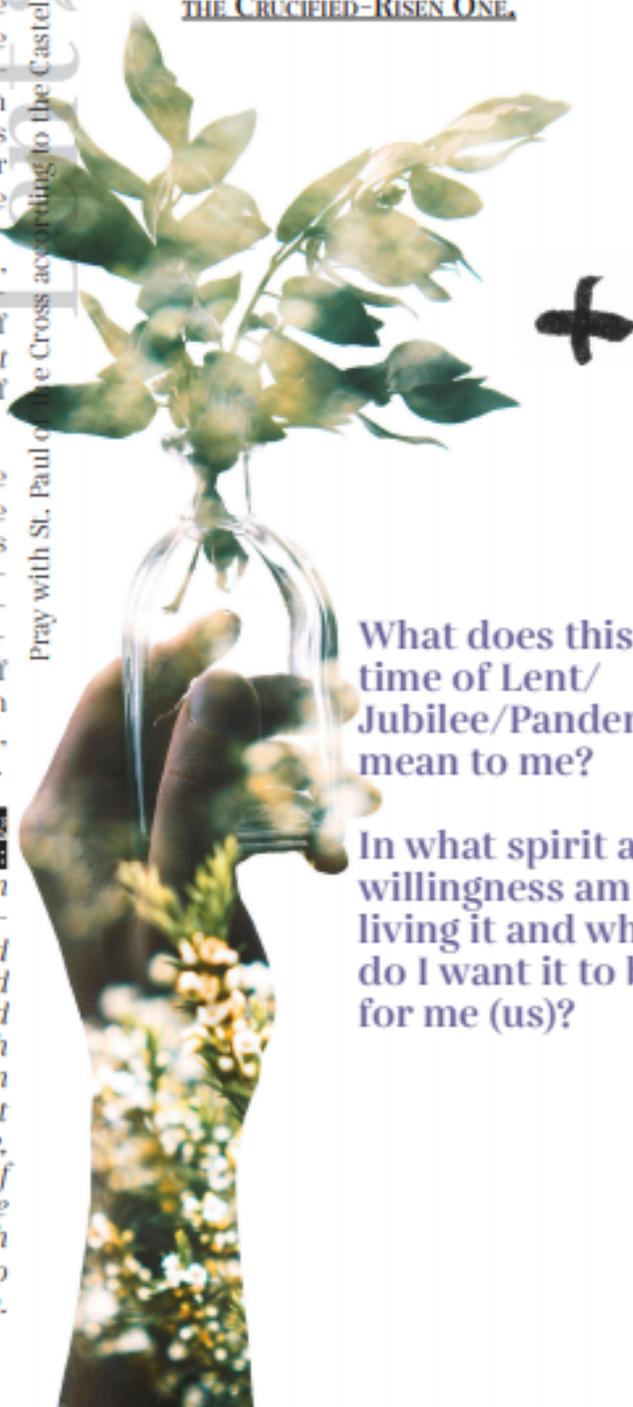
In fact, three hundred years ago Paul Danei (of the Cross) made forty days of retreat in the solitude and silence of the cell of the sacristy of San Carlos in Castellazzo, from 23 November 1720 to 1 January 1721, during which he wrote the Rule of the future Congregation (2-7 December). This desert retreat experience helped him to distance himself from reality, and to listen to what was going on in his own heart, and, from there, discover God, others, the world, and history in its true essence.

**In his Spiritual Journal that he wrote during those days, his entry on November 23, 1720 reads:** *“[This] was the first day of my retreat at San Carlo. Though unworthy, I went to Holy Communion. I was neither particularly recollected nor distracted. The rest of the day I was afflicted [...] it is a certain interior suffering in spirit and heart, mingled with hidden temptations which are hardly recognized as such. For this reason they afflict the soul very much. One does not know whether one is here or there, so to speak, the more so because there is no sensible sign of prayer at this time. I realize that God enables me to understand that they purify the soul. Through the mercy of God, I know that I do not desire to know anything else nor to taste any consolation. I desire only to be crucified with Jesus.”*

Prayer Guide

Pray with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience

THIS LENT AND THIS JUBILEE CONVERGE ON THE PATH WE ARE ALSO TRAVELING WITH ALL HUMANITY IN THIS PARTICULAR TIME OF THE PANDEMIC DUE TO COVID 19 WITH ITS AFTERMATH OF DISEASE, DEATH, UNCERTAINTY, AND ECONOMIC CRISIS. THE THREE REALITIES CALL US TO CONVERSION, TO RENEW OUR LIFE AND MISSION, TO PUT BEFORE OUR EYES WHAT IS FUNDAMENTAL, TO RETURN TO OURSELVES, TO OUR ROOTS AND IDENTITY, FROM OUR FOLLOWING OF THE CRUCIFIED-RISEN ONE.



What does this time of Lent/Jubilee/Pandemic mean to me?

In what spirit and willingness am I living it and what do I want it to be for me (us)?



## Gesture

[INTERIOR GAZE]

Prepare ashes or soil on the floor of the place where you are praying. When the time comes, the participants, one at a time, approach the ashes or earth and spread it out. They write with their finger the answer to this question, or another similar question that they may want to ask:

What DO YOU WANT to happen within you, during this Lent, with the aim of renewing your life and with it, the mission in keeping with the Jubilee?

Once the person has written it, and owned it personally, he erases it, leaving the material as it was so that the next individual may do the same.



# Lent

# Jubilaecum

Prayer Guide

## Prayer

### Ash Wednesday:

A time to make a bonfire of my selfishness and foolishness.

A time to level my absurd tower of Babel to ashes and get down to earth and start to offer a helping hand.

A time to quiet the noise within me and be still in order to be able to hear You.

### Ash Wednesday:

Like ashes, I must enter the furnace of your Spirit and be transformed into the object you want.

Although I am ashes, I know I can renew myself. And I want to do it with your help.

### Ash Wednesday:

Forty days to let me find you, and to realize you are waiting for me at my doorstep.

Forty days to ask forgiveness and to fast from so many things that are superfluous for me and which others need.

Forty days to listen more attentively to your Word, and let it be the Bread that satiates me and your forgiveness that restores me.

### Ash Wednesday:

A bit of ashes on my forehead can really get me on track: there is no way other than God.

Today I begin the journey back to your home.

Pray with St. Paul of the Cross according to the Castellazzo experience



# Letter from the Provincial—closing of Colegio la Piedad School in Puerto Rico



## Passionist Provincial Office

86-45 Edgerton Blvd., Jamaica, NY 11432

Phone: 929-419-7500 • Fax: 914-881-9002

Web: [www.thepassionists.org](http://www.thepassionists.org)

February 5, 2021

Dear Brothers, Associates and Friends,

Since the merger of the former vice province of Our Lady of Hope with St. Paul of the Cross Province, we, as a province, have the supervision of three Catholic academies in Puerto Rico – Colegio La Piedad, Colegio Santa Gema and Colegio San Sebastian. This past week, we announced that **Colegio la Piedad** will be closing at the end of this academic year.

For the past decade, the school has experienced significant decline. The enrollment of students has declined by 57% since 2014 leaving a current population of 214 students. The financial strain has also become increasingly unsustainable. Over the past three years, the operating deficit exceeded one million dollars. Obviously, these two pieces of information led us to the decision that was taken. We also commissioned a study of the school two years ago and we learned of the significant impact the economy and demographics of the surrounding area played in the school's decline.

Colegio La Piedad was founded by the Passionists and has been served by the community since its beginnings. Along with the school the community founded the parish of La Piedad. **We will continue to serve in the parish after the school is closed.**

Due to COVID travel and distancing restrictions, I, and the council, met via Zoom with the Principal and then with the faculty. The parents are being notified by the school and we will offer to host a virtual 'town hall' meeting with parents at some point. The only positive news we can share with parents and students is that Colegio Santa Gema, a short distance away, has significant space to welcome many of the students of Colegio La Piedad.

Without doubt, this is a painful and emotional time for the school community and for the Passionist community. We hope that, with time, anger and grief will give way to finding a new stability and peace for all.

Please pray for all involved.

In JXP,

Fr. Jim O'Shea, CP  
Provincial



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5 de febrero de 2021

Queridos hermanos, asociados y amigos:

Desde la fusión de la viceprovincia de Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza con la provincia de San Pablo de la Cruz, nosotros, como provincia, tenemos la supervisión de tres academias católicas en Puerto Rico: Colegio La Piedad, Colegio Santa Gema y Colegio San Sebastián. La semana pasada, anunciamos que el Colegio la Piedad cerrará al final de este año académico.

Durante la última década, la escuela ha experimentado un declive significativo. La matrícula de estudiantes ha disminuido en un 57% desde 2014, lo que deja una población actual de 214 estudiantes. La tensión financiera también se ha vuelto cada vez más insostenible. En los últimos tres años, el déficit operativo superó el millón de dólares. Evidentemente, estos dos datos nos llevaron a la decisión que se tomó. También encargamos un estudio de la escuela hace dos años y nos enteramos del impacto significativo que tuvo la economía y la demografía del área circundante en el declive de la escuela.

El Colegio La Piedad fue fundado por los Pasionistas y ha sido atendido por la comunidad desde sus inicios. Junto con la escuela la comunidad fundó la parroquia de La Piedad. Continuaremos sirviendo en la parroquia después de que la escuela esté cerrada.

Debido a las restricciones de distancia y viajes de COVID, yo y el consejo nos reunimos a través de Zoom con el director y luego con el cuerpo docente. La escuela está notificando a los padres y en algún momento ofreceremos organizar una reunión virtual con los padres. La única noticia positiva que podemos compartir con los padres y estudiantes es que el Colegio Santa Gema, a poca distancia, tiene un espacio significativo para recibir a muchos de los estudiantes del Colegio La Piedad.

Sin duda, este es un momento doloroso y emotivo para la comunidad escolar y para la comunidad Pasionista. Esperamos que, con el tiempo, la ira y el dolor den paso a la búsqueda de una nueva estabilidad y paz para todos.

Ore por todos los involucrados.

En JXP,

P. Jim O'Shea, CP  
Provincial