

Passionist Formation Workbook:

Introduction:

What is Formation?

According to the Catherine of Siena Institute, Formation is defined as the “spiritual, intellectual, and personal preparation that the Church offers to those men and women who have been called by God to a specific mission.” In these days where the need for our Catholic ministries is on the rise and at the same time the clerical/priest model continues to decrease, there has been a pursuit by the Catholic Church and many of its religious communities to promote lay formation. This has been done with the intention of bringing professional lay people into the ministries that were once serviced by priest and vowed religious. This trend is fast becoming the ministerial reality of many of our Catholic ministries. This emerging trend is not so much being viewed as a crisis of priestly vocations; rather, it is considered to be an opportunity to integrate the laity into the ministries of the Church.

The Passionist Congregation has also engaged these emerging trends as an opportunity to share the Passionist charism, spirituality, and ministries. This opportunity was stated at the 1994 Passionist General Chapter:

“Our charism is a great gift. Our vocation to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus does not only belong to our Congregation or to our communities; it is open to all those human beings that are moved by the action of the Holy Spirit. We accept the call to live in communion with so many men and women who witness to its relevance and vitality.”

As the trend toward inclusion of laity develops, it is also apparent that these emerging lay ministers need to develop an awareness of the culture of Catholic ministries. This culture includes elements of spirituality, history, theology, ethics, and depending on the ministry may also include some practical and technical training. In the secular world people are aware of specific corporate cultures that exist within the companies that people work for. Organizational culture carries with it the specific history of the organization along with the values and codes of conduct which are transmitted to new members.

The purpose of inculturation is for members of the organization to be effective members of the organization who understand the ethos of the organization as well as its mission. Formation into specific Church cultures has the same objective. The Congregation of the Passion, as a specific organization of the Church, also has the same objective: to help form committed laity as representatives of the Passionist family.

The Passionists, like other religious communities, has corporate ministries or apostolates. We operate these apostolates in which we provide spiritual service to all God’s people.

One of the significant ministries of the Passionists is retreat centers. This ministry has been an important part of our mission from the original foundation of the congregation. The details and historical developments of the Passionists retreat centers are provided in “The Spirit of Passionist Retreat Centers,” known to us simply as the “Spirit” document.

With this in mind it has been the desire of the Passionists of Holy Cross Province to open up the structures of our ministries to lay people whose expertise and passion can contribute not only for the maintenance of our ministries but also for the vitality, growth and creative innovations they can offer our ministries.

As we have begun to undertake this process of redeveloping our ministries with structures that incorporate the laity, we have also begun developing forms of formation programs. The Passionist community does not have a monopoly on retreat centers. Other religious communities also have them. What makes a retreat center Passionist is that it flows from the specific spirituality and charism of our founder St. Paul of the Cross. It is a spirituality that flows from the central purpose or mission of the congregation; preaching a Crucified Christ that can relate to the suffering that continues to plague our world.

The men and women who join the vowed Passionist community go through a lengthy period of religious formation. They go through a process that is approximately 3 years from the time they seek candidacy till the time they begin their formal study. Then they typically study for about 3-4 years. After that they begin their ministry and for the rest of their lives they go through ongoing formation which is expressed in days of recollection and retreats.

Lay participants are certainly not expected to spend that much time and effort in formation. A new form of formation, appropriate for laity needs to be developed that provides an integration of the mission and culture of the congregation. The Congregation assumes that the laity comes with some training and background that enable them to engage in the mission and ministries of the congregation. That is the beginning point of the engagement as a board or staff member. What remains is for the province to provide resources that can be used in formation initiatives.

This then is what we are attempting to do with this resource and with this program.

How to Use the Workbook:

The purpose of this workbook and program is to offer a formation program to the Men and Women who join the Passionist Community as members of Board of Directors of our various Retreat Centers. We again refer to you the “Spirit” document for details to these ministries in the Passionist Community of Holy Cross Province.

Each Retreat Center Board has been asked to commission a standing committee on promoting formation for the board members. Some developing committee’s have named these bodies the “Charism Committee” but it is the prerogative of the local boards to create and name them. The purpose of these formation committees are to organize and facilitate a brief monthly formation process that is to be included in every board and committee meeting. It is also highly encouraged that each board of directors conducts an annual day of recollection whereby the Board goes through a deeper formation moment. The Province Office of Lay Formation has been charged to provide resources and support for these formation initiatives.

As the Retreat Center Board meetings have much business to take care of, the program is made brief so that it does not consume too much of the meeting time. Also for that reason these workbooks were developed so that all aspects of the formation process can be packaged in one simple and manageable form.

The workbook format provides the opportunity update the material and to add new material based on local needs. Basic introduction and instructions are offered as well as a definition of terms that you will encounter within the Passionist culture and throughout your formation process. The formation topics for the year follow. They are divided into modules that address each formation theme. These modules offer an article on each theme followed by a bibliography for further study on these themes. Reflective questions and journal space will follow each theme. These questions will guide you in reflecting on how these themes are meaningful to you and your own life experience. After the modules the workbook offers some helpful advice on promoting your own personal moments of theological reflections with some more journal space for your own use. Finally, as an appendix, this workbook offers some background reading information that will give you extra useful information for understanding the place of laity with Church ministries and the Passionist Community.

How this resource is to be used

Because only a small portion of the Retreat Board business meeting can be allotted for the purpose of formation it was thought that in order to truly make this formation process meaningful it would be best to split each theme within two business meetings. On the first day of each topic the Board is given input on the particular topic. While the modules offer a primary reading it is up to the formation committee to either use the reading or a portion of the reading. The formation committee could also present on this theme by

either providing a commentary on the reading, sharing an experience related to the theme or providing another source related to the theme. Either way it is expected that all members take some time to read the primary reading. After this the formation committee will read the reflective questions and they will remind all Board members to journal their reflections in order to share at the next meeting.

The second meeting day of every topic will be organized for open conversation and sharing on the topic. The formation committee can organize this into one large sharing, dyads, small groups or any combination. On that day folks will discuss on their reflection which could be based on their journal, thoughts or lived experience.

Another point is that it would be very appropriate to incorporate prayer during these formation moments perhaps as a closing. Each module concludes with two prayers that are related to the theme.



Formation Modules and Journal:

MODULE #1: CHARISM

When I came to a street corner to turn toward home, I was raised up in God in the deepest interior peace. At that moment I saw myself clothed in a long black garment with a white cross on my breast, and below the cross the Holy Name of Jesus was written in white letters. At that instant I heard these words spoken to me: "This signifies how pure and spotless that heart should be which must bear the Holy Name of Jesus graven upon it." On seeing and hearing this I began to weep, and then it stopped

St. Paul of the Cross

Downey (1993) describes charism as the root inspiration of founders of religious movements and communities. The word *charisma*, from the Greek, comes from the verb *charidzomai*, meaning to bestow a favor, "free gift or spiritual capacity resulting from God's grace" (Downey, 1993 p. 140). Charism as a Christian theological concept acknowledges that God bestows a particular gift, amid a vast diversity of gifts, to a person or institution whose ultimate aim is to benefit others.

Charisma (gift) and *chara* (joy) both have the same Greek root (Downey, 1993). Joy and God's freely-given gifts are intrinsically linked and are intended to characterize Christian communities who are urged to be joyful and live in gratitude for God's graces while sharing them. The work of salvation is accomplished through people whom God has gifted and who have accepted these gifts to use for the benefit of others. Christianity is therefore not simply a set of religious practices, but a way of life where God's gifts are utilized for the sake of others, joyfully and in justice. This way of life involves accepting and developing these gifts and freely sharing them.

Charism is also a description for the animating insight into the Christian faith where a particular element of the Gospel illuminates the life of founders of religious communities. Wittberg (1994) provides a sociological perspective on charism. "The term charism refers to the particular set of beliefs and practices that make a given institute distinct from its contemporaries and that articulates its reason for existing as a separate entity" (p. 107). This definition goes to the founding and continued existence of a given religious community.

The original inspiration of the Passionist community, its charism, focuses on the Passion of Jesus. The distinctive "sign" or emblem (Figure 2) that Passionist religious wear on their habit states in Latin and Greek, "The Passion of Jesus." This motto is encased in a heart with an embedded cross, symbolizing Jesus passion as an act of love. The Passionist motto, "May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts," is also represented by the sign.

Passionist Charism



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The vowed members of the community have a specific fourth vow which dedicates them to a lifestyle of serving this charism.

We express our participation in the Passion by a special vow, which is at once personal, communitarian, and apostolic. Through this vow we bind ourselves to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Christ. By word and deed we strive to foster awareness of its meaning and value for each person and for the life of the world. (Passionist Rule #6)

Remember that, as stated above, the charism of religious communities offer insight on a particular emphasis of the Gospel. The Passionist emphasis is on the Passion of Jesus, not solely as a brutal execution of a Jewish teacher and prophet, but in light of the understanding that His death was an event that changed human history. It is an integral part of the Catholic faith that Jesus died so that others might live. The cross becomes a symbol that God’s love is stronger than death (Province Retreat Center Board, 2003).

In serving this charism the Congregation participates with one of the earliest of Christian ministries which St. Paul the Apostle shares with us in his first epistle to the Corinthians:

But we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God... For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 1:23-25 & 2:2)

The charism of the Congregation of the Passion is also described on the Province website in terms of the Passionist vocation and the primacy of ministry:

Our vocation as Passionists promotes us to familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the passion of Christ, both in history and in the lives of people today. For the passion of Christ and the sufferings of his mystical body form one mystery of salvation. From this understanding, we may hope to guide the faithful to a deeper awareness and understanding of this mystery, and so bring them to a closer union with God, a greater knowledge of themselves, and more sensitive response to the needs of their neighbors. (Passionists, 2006)

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS AND JOURNAL

Question #1

St. Paul saw the Passion of Jesus as a Spiritual Gift (charism) of the Holy Spirit. How do you understand the suffering of Jesus as a meaningful message to the world?
To your local community? To yourself?

Question #2

The healing power of Christ's Passion can be communicated to the world in a variety of ways. These methods are considered personal spiritual gifts (sometimes we call these talents) that God gives us to use in the service of bringing about his Kingdom. Some Passionists preach, others offer spiritual counseling, yet others offer social services. What are your gifts? How do you use these gifts in the service of God's Kingdom?

Charism Prayers

Prayer #1

Reading: From the Australian Province.

The Passionist Charism is often expressed by using the words of the Apostle Paul: "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning." (1 Cor. 1:17). Thus the Passionist Charism calls us to proclaim Christ and Him Crucified!

Prayer

Dear Lord, Paul saw your Passion as a remedy for the world's evils. When people catch the message of love from the cross and respond to it, they will spread love and not hatred and violence. May I catch the message!

Prayer #2

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12: 4-7

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for granting us this powerful spiritual gift of remembering always Christ's Passion, a gift you gave to your servant St. Paul and which you entrusted to your beloved Passionist Community, we also ask that you bestow on us the wisdom to use this great gift always for your service and not for our own satisfaction.

MODULE #2: ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

This servant of the Lord was a man of the most sublime prayer and union with God, of the most lively zeal in the salvation of souls, and of the utmost tenderness, compassion, and love, in contemplating the bitter passion and most cruel death of our Divine Redeemer, into whom he was truly transformed by love.

St. Vincent Strambi

Paul Francis Daneo was born on January 3, 1694, in Ovada, Italy. During his teen years he felt inwardly inspired and captivated by the Cross of Christ. Paul discerned God's love for all people in the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Realizing all that Jesus had suffered in love for us, Paul wanted to love Jesus in return through prayer and preaching. When Paul was 21 years old, he joined a crusade against the Turks, thinking this was the way God wanted him to serve. But as the Crusade was slow in organizing and eventually disintegrated into a war between the Austrian and the Turks, Paul abandoned this futile way of life. He had an inner conviction that God would fulfill the vision by a crusade of a much different nature.

Returning to his hometown, Paul assisted his family and dedicated himself to prayer and penance. In 1720 he asked the local bishop for permission to serve the Church as a hermit, a "holy man." The bishop allowed him to live in one of the town's churches. Paul, wearing a long black robe as a sign of his commitment, took care of the church property and prepared the altar before the daily celebration of Mass. At this time he took a 40 day retreat during which time he wrote his spiritual diary and his first Rule.

This spiritual diary is one of the great written contributions by St. Paul of the Cross. In it he reveals the depth of his prayer life and his own mystical journey towards God through the vehicle of Christ Crucified. Consider this passage where he reflects on his own suffering in light of his faith.



I would like to make everyone understand the great grace that God, in his mercy, bestows when he sends his suffering, especially suffering devoid of consolation. Then, indeed, is the soul purified like gold in the furnace. Without knowing, it becomes radiant and is set free to take flight to its Good, that is, to the blessed transformation. It carries the cross with Jesus and knows it not. This arises from the number and variety of sufferings which makes it forget everything and no longer remember that it is suffering. (Spiritual Diary: Saturday, Dec. 21)

After the retreat Paul takes up residence in Castellazzo churches and begins a fruitful preaching ministry. Bishop Gattinara allowed Paul's brother, John Baptist, to join him in ministry. Companions would come and go but it was only after the Rule received tentative approval in 1741 that persevering members could join the brothers.

Many recognized in Paul the qualities of wisdom and holiness, and came to him for advice. At times he was given permission to preach. The Rule contained directives about prayer, fasting, exercise, spiritual disciplines, penances, charity, and many other qualities and activities he felt important in living out a religious life. Eventually, he invited others to join him, and the men who followed would become known as Passionists because of their dedication to, and preaching of, the passion and death of Jesus Christ.

In 1721 Paul brought the Rule to the Vatican in Rome for the Pope's approval. The guards, thinking him a beggar, turned him away. Paul, severely disappointed, went to the basilica of St. Mary Major and prayed in the chapel of the Madonna. There he rededicated himself to the vision God had given him and made his vow to promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus. Returning to north of Rome, Paul invited others to join him. Paul did not receive definitive approval for the Rule until 1769.

In 1727 Paul, now living in Rome, was ordained a Priest. The following year Paul, along with his brother John Baptist, took up residence on Mount Argentario and in 1730 they performed their first mission. Paul's early Missions were done in a place in central Italy known as the Maremma. This place was a marshland where the poorest lived including lepers and outcast and which received little to no attention from the Church. It was with these people that Paul focused his ministry and message.

In the mid 1730's Paul and his community found themselves in the middle of a war between Spanish and Austrian forces that were battling for the local garrison of Orbetello. During this conflict Paul and his community ministered to the needs of the wounded from both sides of the battlefield. This act of charity, along with his apparent holiness, earned him the trust of the Spanish General with whom Paul was able to help negotiate against the bombardment of the city. The residents of the city were very grateful and they helped Paul complete his first community Retreat house.

Throughout his life Paul channeled his time and energy into preaching throughout central Italy, realizing that many of his contemporaries had forgotten God's love for them, and had fallen asleep to the healing grace of Christ's Cross. In the 18th century life was not easy. The rich were rich; the poor, very poor. For the sick there was little comfort. For ordinary folk there was a constant fear of war, famine and disease. "The world lives unmindful of the sufferings of Jesus which are the miracle of miracles of the love of God. We must arouse the world from its slumber." And so Paul did arouse the world through thousands of letters he wrote and the sermons he preached. Traveling where he was invited to preach, Paul taught people how to pray and meditate upon the suffering and death of Jesus. Walking from town to town, church to church, for over 40 years, he preached the loving memory of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The sick and the abandoned poor always remained the special recipients of Paul's concern and love.

After many years of preaching and serving the Passionist community, as its founder and leader, Paul died in 1775. He was 81 years old. Paul Daneo, canonized a saint by the Church, is revered today as Saint Paul of the Cross.

References

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS AND JOURNAL

Question #1

In this brief telling of St. Paul of the Cross, what impresses you the most about his life? What challenges you about him? How do you see yourself and your spirituality develop from these challenges and inspirations?

Question #2

As a Board member of a Passionist Retreat Center you are part of a community that has followed the tradition and spirituality of St. Paul of the Cross,

How do you see yourself promoting the legacy of this great mystical Saint?

How do you see this Retreat Center as an ongoing expression of the founder's ministry?

St. Paul of the Cross Prayers

Prayer #1

Reading: From the Life of Blessed Paul of the Cross, by St. Vincent Strambi

Forsaking his country, parents, and father's house, he undertook long and disastrous journeys, he gave himself up to the most austere rule of penance, more admirable than imitable, and in the midst of the greatest difficulties, opposition, persecution, calumny, and contempt, he undertook, regardless of fatigue and toil, to execute the design of a new Congregation, inspired him by God. He knew no other rule of acting but the most holy will of God; he loved nothing, he desired and saw nothing in anything but God alone.

Prayer

O Good St. Paul of the Cross, you proclaimed God's wonders in the Passion of God's only son. By word and deed, you became a spiritual guide and preacher of the gospel to a world grown cold to the love of Jesus Christ. Help me to see God's love in the merciful cross of Jesus, and teach me to trust in the blessings God gives.
May the Passion of Jesus be in my heart, and bring life to all the world.
Amen.

Prayer #2

Reading: An excerpt from Pope Pius IX on the beatification of Paul of the Cross

There is nothing which is more suitable and fit to enkindle in souls the fire of divine love, and to bring men back to the way of justice, from which they have miserably strayed, than the constant meditation of those most bitter torments which Christ our Lord suffered for our salvation, having been made obedient for us unto death, even to the death of the cross.

Prayer

Blessed Redeemer, Saint Paul had a devotion to Your Passion since early childhood and grew up adoring the Blessed Sacrament. Before he was ordained, You set him to work forming a new religious community, the Passionists, with the mission of preaching the glory of Your cross. I ask him to pray for my home, my parish, ministry teams, and other communities to which I belong. O Jesus, may Your holy cross always remind us to make sacrifices for the sake of love. Bind us together in service and unity. Teach us to lead others to salvation and to reflect on Your Passion. Saint Paul, pray for us.
Amen.

MODULE #3: THE PASSION OF CHRIST

He was despised, the lowest of men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering, one from whom, as it were, we averted our gaze, despised, for whom we had no regard. Yet ours were the sufferings he was bearing, ours the sorrows he was carrying, while we thought of him as someone being punished and struck with affliction by God; whereas he was being wounded for our rebellions, crushed because of our guilt; the punishment reconciling us fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises.

Is. 53: 3-4

The Passion narrative:

With the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) the Passion story begins with the Passover meal where Jesus and his disciples celebrate their last communal meal before the Crucifixion and Jesus prepares his disciples for the emerging tragedy. This is followed with the Gethsemane or garden story which incidentally is where the Gospel of John begins its Passion narrative. At this point Jesus is in a state of anguish as he is spiritually and mentally preparing himself for the immanent cruelty that awaits him. Judas and the Temple Guards arrest Jesus at this location and as he is being arrested his disciples scuffle and flee. Jesus' first trial is with the Sanhedrin or the chief priest and the elders. At this time Peter, who attempts to stay close to Jesus, is identified three times and three times he denies Jesus and flees. Matthew and Acts also tell us that at this time Judas Iscariot, stricken with grief, kills himself.

This first trial is told to be a sham with false and inconsistent witness. It does end with Jesus either affirming or at least not denying his messianic role and thus he is guilty in the eyes of the Sanhedrin. Jesus is then taken to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate. The accounts are generous to Pilate who attempts to release Jesus but is faced with the administrative duty to appease the chief priest and their allies. Matthew and Luke even have Pilate involve Herod but even he seems equally ambivalent as to Jesus' guilt. According to Luke and John's account it is during this Roman trial that Jesus is scourged as one of Pilate's attempts to appease the crowd. Finally Pilate attempts to barter Barabbas for Jesus but this also backfires. In the end Pilate condemns Jesus to death.



Finally Jesus is sent to be crucified. The synoptic Gospels all have Simon a Cyrenian aid Jesus in carrying his cross. He is crucified at Golgotha in between two criminals. According to the synoptic Gospels he is alone and mocked until he dies with some women looking at a distance. John's account has a group of women and his beloved disciple at the foot of the cross. As Jesus is dying some natural events take place such as an earthquake, a mysterious darkness, and more importantly the temple veil is ripped exposing what is considered the Holy of Holies. According to Mark and Matthew Jesus dies after his famous cry

“Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani” “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” At this point Luke includes a centurion’s testimony to Jesus’ divinity.

The next day, after the soldiers are certain of Jesus’ death, we hear that a certain Joseph of Arimathea takes the body of Jesus and buries it in his family’s tomb. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary participate with Jesus’ burial. Pilate, at the behest of the Sanhedrin, places guards on the tomb. This ends a brief of the Passion narratives of the Gospels.

Reflection:

The following reflection is taken from the preface of the book “The Passion of Jesus Christ” written by Fr. Don Senior, CP.

“As past event, the passion of Jesus took place sometime around the year thirty A. D. in the turbulent world of first century Palestinian Judaism. Jesus, a compelling religious teacher and extraordinary healer, was arrested in Jerusalem and publicly executed by crucifixion, a Roman form of capital punishment. The gospels portray Jesus’ death as the culmination of his mission, the final act of selfless love and service that sealed a life totally committed to others. Jesus’ death was a prophetic witness in the cause of God’s justice. Despite opposition and hostility directed at him and his mission, Jesus remained faithful until the end and ultimately was vindicated by God’s love, a love stronger than death.

But for Christian faith, the passion of Jesus is not simply a heroic and poignant death confined to past history. The passion of Jesus lives on in the faith and experience of the Christian community. Through the mysterious communion of God with humanity, Jesus’ sufferings continue in the suffering of every child of God, down to the present moment. The anxious and lonely elderly resident of a nursing home who turns her face to the crucifix on the wall. The parent who has suffered the unspeakable loss of a child who sinks to his knees like Jesus in Gethsemane. The refugee who has lost home and family to insane and inexplicable violence and cries out with Jesus, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” The leader who under the threat of death tells the truth about a despotic regime while remembering that Jesus the prophet set his face for Jerusalem. The nurse who wipes sweat from the brow of an AIDS patient and sees there the face of the crucified Jesus.

The passion of Jesus is indeed a historical event that ultimately gave meaning and force to the entire mission of Jesus and it is a living memory, a powerful grace that gives meaning and hope to all human suffering. The gospels accounts of the passion embrace both dimensions, rooting their narratives in the historical traditions about Jesus’ last days but inviting the reader to find in the passion of Jesus the ultimate meaning of human existence and Christian commitment.”

References

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS AND JOURNAL

Question #1

St. Paul the Apostle tells us in his letters that there is great wisdom in the Cross of Christ.

Fr. Senior offers one such pearl of wisdom that emanates from Jesus' suffering. What wisdom do you receive in contemplating the Passion of Jesus? Consider your own experience of suffering; reflect on one such experience and how you grew as a result.

Question #2

The Retreat Center is a place that serves many functions. For some of your retreatants this will be the place to help find meaning in personal suffering and trials. How can the Retreat Center be sensitive to these moments? How can the Center more directly link the Passion of Jesus with the contemporary suffering of those you will be serving?

Passion of Jesus Prayers

Prayer #1

Reading: 1 Peter 2:23-24

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds, you have been healed.

Prayer

Lord, God, you appointed as the Redeemer of the world Your only Son, who was nailed to the cross. Keep safe within us the gifts of your mercy.
As we live in union with Jesus, the mystery of our salvation, may we share in the harvest of redemption. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

Prayer #2

Reading: Heb: 5:7-9

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Prayer

Lord our God, for love of us, your beloved Son accepted a crown of thorns and stood silent in the midst of insults.
Teach us to recognize the face of Christ in all who suffer in mind or body.
Give us strength to help them that we may grow daily in your love.

Amen

MODULE #4: THE PASSIONISTS

The term “Passionist” describes an international congregation of male religious, brothers and priests formally known as the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ. The Passionists were founded in Northern Italy in the 18th century by Paul Daneo, later known as St. Paul of the Cross. Most religious founders are driven to create new communities based on societal need as seen through the lens of the founder’s charism. In Paul’s case, he was inspired to found an apostolic congregation whose mission was and is to serve the underserved, telling them of God’s love through salvation as manifest in the Passion of Jesus. Paul’s vision was to found a community of men who would live a penitential lifestyle, following the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as well as a fourth vow to profess Christ crucified. They were to live together in community, praying, fasting, and observing silence and solitude. They were also to go out and preach and minister to others in a variety of ways. Although it took nearly 25 years, Paul’s Rule of life was approved by the Vatican in the year 1741 (Congregation of the Passion, 2002) and the Congregation of the Passion now exists in 60 countries world-wide.

As the founder of a new religious community, St. Paul of the Cross is one of a select group of Christian figures. Benedict of Nursia (Benedictines), Francis of Assisi (Franciscans), Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross (Carmelites), Ignatius of Loyola (Jesuits) – these are but a few of the men and women called by God to serve as founders of new religious orders or communities in the Church. Present in every era of Christian history and rooted in the biblical period, religious life is an especially distinctive feature of Catholicism and Orthodoxy. The larger sweep of the human spiritual experience finds that such grouping or movements as identified by the presence of monasteries, convents, ashrams, etc., is a persistent feature of every great religious culture or tradition.

Contemporary religious and Passionist life finds its origin in the treasured oneness of evangelical life that characterized the first disciples’ experience (Acts 3:42-47). During the 2nd and 3rd centuries Christian hermits living in the Syrian and Egyptian deserts came together in loose confederations. In the 4th century the first religious rule, authored by St. Augustine of Hippo, set out a pattern for communal religious living. The development of Benedictine life (5th century) created the dominant form of monastic living that became pervasive throughout the Christian world until the 13th century. Then the new orders of Franciscans and Dominicans brought a fresh style of life and mission able to meet the changed civil and ecclesial circumstances of the 13th century. The aftermath of the Protestant Reformation (16th century) and the dramatic changes to social and cultural life brought about by world exploration and technological development, were catalysts for new expressions of an ancient Christian way of life. Jesuits and the apostolic congregations of the 17th and 18th centuries (e.g. Redemptorists, Passionists, Vincentians, and Ursulines) brought new vitality and vision for a Christian response to the modern world forming under the impact of rapid scientific and industrial development.

For Paul of the Cross, religious life bound together a select membership that shared an intense, consciously chosen form of Christian life, drawing its inspiration from the life of the disciples. The memory of the disciples living and ministering daily with Jesus roots the vision of Paul Daneo. Shaped by the religious vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience, this evangelical lifestyle fostered deep, personal devotion to the Lord and intense ministerial labor for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Paul's reputation as a dynamic, effective preacher and profound mystic speaks well of powerful authenticity claimed by his conception of religious life. The Church's approval of his foundational work confirms his unique contribution to Christian life.



Contemporary Passionists, members of a religious community international in scope, continue to draw inspiration from the founding vision of Paul Daneo. Passionists are proud to be part of the dynamic ecclesial tradition of religious life. They have embraced the renewal mandated by Vatican Council II and possess a sharply honed appreciation of religious life. Today's Passionists commit themselves to the tasks of spiritual renewal and institutional reform that are the hallmark contributions of religious life in every Christian era. Passionists understand themselves called to discover and meet the pressing, unmet needs found in both church and human society. Passionists are motivated to respond forcefully for they believe that such needs often present the contemporary face of Jesus Crucified. Passionists willingly devote their lives and energies to living and announcing that Gospel of the Passion which so transformed the life of their beloved founder. It is their hope that they would bring to their church and time the holiness, clarity of purpose and dynamism for renewal that marked the life of Paul Daneo.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS AND JOURNAL

Question #1

The Passionist Congregation has invited laity to participate in the mission of the congregation. How do you see your engagement with the Congregation? What is the role of a lay Passionist?

Question #2

Passionists draw on the inspiration and example of St. Paul of the Cross and spend their energies on the mission of the Congregation. What is that mission and how do lay Passionists participate?

Passionist Prayers

Prayer #1

Reading: They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he would not take it. And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. (Mark 15)

Prayer

Lord Jesus, St. Paul of the Cross, inspired by your sacrifice on the Cross, gathered companions to proclaim your overwhelming act of love for us. Help us to remain true to his vision and recognize that the suffering of other is your suffering as well. Guide us in proclaiming your Passion.

Prayer #2

Reading: We are aware that the Passion of Christ continues in this world until He comes in glory; therefore, we share in the joys and sorrows of our contemporaries as we journey through life toward our Father. We wish to share in the distress of all, especially those who are poor and neglected; we seek to offer them comfort and to relieve the burden of their sorrow.

The power of the Cross, which is the wisdom of God, gives us strength to discern and remove the causes of human suffering.

For this reason, our mission aims at evangelizing others by means of the Word of the Cross. In this way, all may come to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, may share in His sufferings and, becoming like Him in His death, may be united with Him in glory. Each of us takes part in this apostolate according to his gifts, resources, and ministries. (Passionist Rule, 1)

Prayer

St. Paul of the Cross, you were inspired by the Holy Spirit to an understanding of the world changing event of Christ's Passion. You gathered companions who felt moved by your call to spend their energies in the great mission of the congregation. Help us to remain true to this call and your example.

MODULE #5 A Passionist Retreat

Christians have always found special significance in Jesus' forty days of desert prayer and fasting that preceded his years of public ministry.¹ As an echo and renewal of Israel's forty year desert sojourn – an epoch revered for its profound intimacy between Yahweh and his People – Jesus' wilderness experience illumines the depth of love between himself and the Father. In prayer, fasting and the deep pondering of his messianic vocation, the Lord prepares himself for his coming mission. His experiences of struggle, temptation and vocational confirmation represent the redemption of human decision-making first impaired by Adam and Eve. As did their Lord, so do his disciples yearn to share personally in the love relationship of Father and Son. Imitating his desert withdrawal, they seek a renewal that will consecrate their lives to his service and align their use of human freedom with the values and visions of the Gospel.

Each generation of disciples has considered it important to withdraw from daily living in order to listen more deeply to the Lord and examine its adherence to the Gospel. Christians of each age have sought special opportunities to renew their relationship with Jesus and recommit themselves to evangelical life. For example, the Medieval practice of pilgrimage – to sacred places in Europe or to the revered sites of the Holy Land – had the same goal of deep personal conversion and renewal that characterizes modern retreats.

The experience of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, has greatly influenced modern retreat development. A lengthy period of recuperation from battle wounds became the occasion for him to see himself in the light of Gospel truth. The power of that light illuminated his own inner emptiness, bathed him in God's loving and healing light, and set him on a new path. His famous work, *The Spiritual Exercises*, distilled what he learned in solitude and sought to make the same graces of radical conversion and vocational discernment available to others.

Passionists Founder, Paul of the Cross, traced his own vocation as a religious founder to a forty-day retreat made at the end of 1720. Dwelling in a small room attached to the Church of St. Charles in Castellazzo, Italy, Paul Daneo fasted, prayed, and was transformed by his encounter with God. His *Spiritual Diary* captures his daily experiences and summarizes the depths of intimacy with God into which Paul was plunged. Empowered to found a new religious community, it was during this time that Paul of the Cross wrote the original Rule for what became the Congregation of the Passion. Concerned to pass on the tremendous value he had received in his time apart, this Rule noted that the residences of the new community were to be called "retreats." He left Castellazzo energized for the dynamic, fruitful and often difficult life of a new founder that now stretched before him. The power of the Spirit, so richly given at Castellazzo, carried him forward and matured into the personal holiness, institutional success and apostolic reputation that crowned his death in 1775.

In framing the ministerial trajectory of his new community, Paul of the Cross ultimately saw that the preaching of missions and the conducting of retreats held a special ability to pass on what he had received. In retreats, deep self-knowledge and communion with God could be attained. Through the sustained prayer made possible during retreat, one could be immersed in the ocean of immense love flowing from the Crucified One. Guided by the ministry of religious with special expertise, retreatants could learn how to live a practical and deeply committed Gospel life through intelligent, loving preaching and wise instruction. These goods moved the Passionist Founder to engage in retreat ministry himself and to commit his new community to the same work. He directed that space be set aside in Passionist residences and hoped that larger, dedicated facilities could be developed. Retreat ministry was not, for Paul of the Cross, an accidental discovery. Rather, it was a consciously chosen apostolic method that he found appropriately suited to the mission given him by God's Spirit.

Contemporary Passionist retreat experiences are rooted in the Lord's desert days, take the best from Christian tradition and honor the memory of Paul Daneo at prayer in Castellazzo. Creating a space and time apart from daily demands and concerns, retreats help today's Christian answer the insistent spiritual urgings of the human heart, longings that can only be authentically fulfilled by God's loving presence. Tracing once more the footsteps of Jesus, of prior generations of Christian seekers and standing with Paul Daneo at the foot of the Cross, today's Passionist retreatants learn the loving mystery of the Cross, absorb its transformative energy, and return to daily life as committed disciples.



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REFLECTION QUESTIONS AND JOURNAL

Question #1

St. Paul of the Cross was inspired to create retreats, not only for the religious of his Congregation, but for laity as well. In your role as a board member for a Passionist Retreat Center, how do you work to maintain its particular Passionist character?

Question #2

In light of the long tradition of retreating from the world to pray, we follow in Jesus' footsteps. How do you participate in this tradition and this ministry?

Prayers for Passionist Retreats

Prayer #1

Reading: As a man of great prayer, Paul of the Cross inculcated its importance most forcefully by word and example.

He wished his followers to pray without ceasing and desired our communities to become real schools of prayer, leading to a deep experience of God.⁴⁷

From him we learn the value and practice of an inward and outward silence that gives depth to our lives. This silence fosters the inner peace and calm necessary for the spirit of prayer to grow; it frees us from harassing cares, and hushes the clamor of the demands made daily upon us. (Passionist Rule, 37)

Prayer

St. Paul of the Cross, you desired your companions to pray without ceasing. You taught us the value of inner silence and how to free ourselves from the demands of daily life. Continue to inspire us to develop our interior solitude and prayer and to lead others to do the same.

Prayer #2

Reading: They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." (Mark 14:32)

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You taught us how to pray. By your example we learn how to pray in silence. You taught us to pray when we are under adverse conditions, to pray in the interior solitude that St. Paul of the Cross understood. Help us to spend time in personal retreat into prayer and silence.

MODULE #6: LAY SPIRITUALITY

Laity is the term used to describe persons who are neither clerical (e.g., deacon, priest, bishop) nor vowed members of a religious congregation. The term is expansive, but in this particular context includes members of the Catholic community who are practicing the faith or are engaged in some way with the Church as a professional minister, associate, or volunteer. In the case of the Passionists, as in other areas of the Church, the role of laity is in a process of evolution and growth.

Vatican II

Vatican II is considered by many as the most important development in the history of the modern Church. Pope John XXIII convoked the council in order to position the Church to deal with the growing phenomenon of secularization. In the decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, the council's deliberations were based on the *universal call to holiness* and on a statement that Pope Pius XII had acknowledged as early as 1946 that the laity "are on the front lines of the Church's life" and that they "ought to have an ever clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church."

In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but oneness of mission. This idea reflects the meaning of Church as stated in 1 Corinthians:

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the members first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various tongues. (1 Cor 12:12-28)

Commenting on Vatican II articles on the laity, theologian Ferdinand Klostermann states:

A completely new "state" of Christians in the Church is developing, in which they can offer their own special type of service to the Church. We have already remarked that, strictly speaking, we are no longer concerned with Christians in the world but a new category of Christians.

These themes represent the key concepts that have led to the current situation where laity is taking part in increasing numbers in the mission of the Church. They represent the building blocks of a new culture. In contemporary times, many of the precepts of Vatican II have been integrated into the life of the Church while other aspects are still being determined.

The Passionists have planned for the future of Holy Cross Province incorporating laity into the life and ministry of the province. The Laity committee for the 2006 Province Strategic Plan created a mission statement for their work:

“Recognizing our mutual call to the Passionist Charism, we develop strategies in which lay and vowed members of Holy Cross Province may be recruited, discerned, formed and trained for ministry and mission.”

-----Holy Cross Province Strategic Plan

Lay Spirituality

Given the trends in the Church and Congregation regarding the laity, formation programs for Passionist laity are being developed based on several interrelated elements taken from the Passionist Rule and Constitutions. These elements, while originally intended for vowed religious are being provided with the idea that they can be interpreted for laity:

Elements:

1. Centrality of the Passion of Jesus

- Our vocation as Passionists prompts us to familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the Passion of Christ, both in history and in the lives of people today, for the Passion of Christ and the sufferings of His Mystical Body form one mystery of salvation. Then we may hope to guide the faithful to a deeper awareness and understanding of this mystery, and to bring them to a closer union with God, a greater knowledge of themselves, and a more sensitive response to the needs of their neighbors. **(Rule 4,65)**

2. Prayer

- Living a life of Prayer before God and among the people, each community shares the prayerful attitude of the Church...In union with Christ; we praise the wondrous works of God. We contemplate Christ's saving work for us... **(Rule, 3,38)**
- ... We should continually ask ourselves whether our prayer life effectively influences our personal life, our community life, and our apostolic service. **(Rule,3,40)**

3. Community

- ...in our daily dealings with others, each must be treated as brothers (and sisters) in Christ to whom thoughtful consideration is shown. Mutual esteem will encourage us to seek companionship of our brethren, so that true and lasting friendships will be fostered. **(Rule, 2,28)**

4. Poverty

- In a world where the unjust distribution of goods is a major source of division, hatred, and suffering, we want our poverty to witness to the true value and purpose of these goods. As far as possible we intend to share our life with others, and to use our possessions for the relief of suffering and for the increase of justice and peace in the world. **(Rule, 1, 13)**

5. Ministry

- We have inherited from our Founder the precious legacy of his teachings and personal example. This is a source of inspiration to the entire Congregation, and challenges each member to play his part zealously in the apostolic endeavors demanded by our times. (**Rule**, 4, 62)

Summary

Vatican II, with his call to universal holiness provides a new theological understand of laity, one based on baptism. In all areas of church life, laity is taking on increasing roles giving rise to the need for a deeper understanding of lay spirituality. In the case of the Passionist Congregation, this spirituality needs to be understood in terms of Passionist spirituality and the carrying forward “*Memoria Passionis*.” By understanding and interpreting Passionist spirituality for lay life, Passionist laity will enter into their ministry looking through the lens of the Cross for inspiration.



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REFLECTION QUESTIONS AND JOURNAL

Question #1

Vatican II has provided the laity with the challenge of serving the Church and the world, based on our baptism in Christ. What is your baptismal obligation? How do you live out that obligation? What tools do you need to help you?

Question #2

How do you see the future of lay ministry in the Church? What is your vision and how will you participate?

Prayers for Laity

Prayer #1

Reading: ... *the mission of the Church is not only to bring the message and grace of Christ to all people but also to penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel. In fulfilling the mission of the Church, the Christian laity exercises their apostolate both in the Church and in the world, in both the spiritual and temporal orders.* (Apostolate of the Laity, 2)

Prayer

Dear God, You inspired the council fathers to recognize the role that laity should play in bringing about your reign. Help us, form us, guide us as we work to write the next chapter in the Acts of the Apostles.

Prayer #2

Reading: *Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the members first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrator, speakers in various tongues.* (1 Cor 12:12-28)

Prayer

Good and Gracious God, The scriptures remind us that you have gifted us all differently and that in the gathering these gifts, in community and in your service that we fulfill these scriptures. Help us to understand and develop the gifts that you have given us, in service to humanity and to You.

Board Formation Retreat

This workbook encourages the Board members of the Passionist Retreat Centers to have an annual one day or if possible a weekend retreat that allows the Board members to have a deeper reflection, as a community, on the mission of the Passionist Retreat Centers and their corporate spirituality as the governing body of these centers. The Office of Lay Formation assumes that the local formation committee will be the primary organizers for this activity but we again offer our services and resources for organizing these activities. The following options are offered for themes on a Board Retreat:

The Ministry of Governance

For the first year retreat theme or for a kickoff retreat the Office of Lay Formation suggest that the Board engage in having a retreat on “The Ministry of Governance” This theme will address the subject of the functional mission of the Retreat Board within the context of Church ministry. It will engage the Board members through an integrating process whereby they come to an understanding of their role through the perspective of Church history and culture. It will also explore the scriptural and pastoral developments on the subject of governance.

The Office of Lay Formation would be happy to help organize the speakers and resources for this retreat. This office would work with the local formation committee who will organize the logistical details including establishing a time and place for this Retreat.

Local Retreat Center History

It may be that the local Board Community really would like to fully immerse themselves into the origin and history of the U.S. Passionist Community and their own Retreat Center. The Office of Lay Formation would work with the local community to organize the speakers and materiel on this subject. While this topic can be loaded with information we would help develop a process for internalizing the history with the purpose of reflecting on how the Retreat Board can see themselves as the ongoing expression of this Ministry.

Deeper Reflection on any one of the Aforementioned Modules

If it is the desire of the Community to engage in a deeper immersion of the six modules we offered for the Board meetings then the Office of Lay Formation would be happy to organize this day as well.

These are some suggestions for utilizing the annual Board retreat.

May the Passion of Jesus be always in our Hearts


Appendix

Overview




The material in this appendix is provided for further reflection by members of retreat center boards. It has been included as a supplement to the formation modules presented above.

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Definition of Terms

Page 73

Vatican II Documents on the Laity

1. *LUMEN GENTIUM*:

POPE PAUL VI, NOVEMBER 21, 1964

CHAPTER IV: THE LAITY

33. The laity are gathered together in the People of God and make up the Body of Christ under one head. Whoever they are they are called upon, as living members, to expend all their energy for the growth of the Church and its continuous sanctification, since this very energy is a gift of the Creator and a blessing of the Redeemer.

The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself "according to the measure of Christ's bestowal".

Besides this apostolate which certainly pertains to all Christians, the laity can also be called in various ways to a more direct form of cooperation in the apostolate of the Hierarchy. This was the way certain men and women assisted Paul the Apostle in the Gospel, laboring much in the Lord. Further, they have the capacity to assume from the Hierarchy certain ecclesiastical functions, which are to be performed for a spiritual purpose.

Upon all the laity, therefore, rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation to all men of each epoch and in every land. Consequently, may every opportunity be given them so that, according to their abilities and the needs of the times, they may zealously participate in the saving work of the Church.

34. The supreme and eternal Priest, Christ Jesus, since he wills to continue his witness and service also through the laity, vivifies them in this Spirit and increasingly urges them on to every good and perfect work.

For besides intimately linking them to His life and His mission, He also gives them a sharing in His priestly function of offering spiritual worship for the glory of God and the salvation of men. For this reason the laity, dedicated to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and wonderfully prepared so that ever more abundant fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if

patiently borne-all these become "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ". Together with the offering of the Lord's body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.

35. Christ, the great Prophet, who proclaimed the Kingdom of His Father both by the testimony of His life and the power of His words, continually fulfills His prophetic office until the complete manifestation of glory. He does this not only through the hierarchy who teach in His name and with His authority, but also through the laity whom He made His witnesses and to whom He gave understanding of the faith (*sensu fidei*) and an attractiveness in speech so that the power of the Gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life. They conduct themselves as children of the promise, and thus strong in faith and in hope they make the most of the present, and with patience await the glory that is to come. Let them not, then, hide this hope in the depths of their hearts, but even in the program of their secular life let them express it by a continual conversion and by wrestling "against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness.

Just as the sacraments of the New Law, by which the life and the apostolate of the faithful are nourished, prefigure a new heaven and a new earth, so too the laity go forth as powerful proclaimers of a faith in things to be hoped for, when they courageously join to their profession of faith a life springing from faith. This evangelization, that is, this announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word, takes on a specific quality and a special force in that it is carried out in the ordinary surroundings of the world.

In connection with the prophetic function, that state of life which is sanctified by a special sacrament obviously of great importance, namely, married and family life. For where Christianity pervades the entire mode of family life, it gradually transforms it; one will find there both the practice and an excellent school of the lay apostolate. In such a home husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children. The Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life to come. Thus by its example and its witness it accuses the world of sin and enlightens those who seek the truth.

Consequently, even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world. For even if some of them have to fulfill their religious duties on their own, when there are no sacred ministers or in times of persecution; and even if many of them devote all their energies to apostolic work; still it remains for each one of them to cooperate in the external spread and the dynamic growth of the Kingdom of Christ in the world. Therefore, let the laity devotedly strive to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth, and let them insistently beg of God the gift of wisdom.

36. Christ, becoming obedient even unto death and because of this exalted by the Father, entered into the glory of His kingdom. To Him all things are made subject until He subjects Himself and all created things to the Father that God may be all in all. Now Christ has communicated this royal power to His disciples that they might be constituted in royal freedom and that by true penance and a holy life they might conquer the reign of sin in themselves. Further, He has shared this power so that serving Christ in their fellow men they might by humility and patience lead their brethren to that King for whom to serve is to reign. But the Lord wishes to spread His kingdom also by means of the laity, namely, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace. In this kingdom creation itself will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God. Clearly then a great promise and a great trust is committed to the disciples: "All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

The faithful, therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and the value of all creation, as well as its role in the harmonious praise of God. They must assist each other to live holier lives even in their daily occupations. In this way the world may be permeated by the spirit of Christ and it may more effectively fulfill its purpose in justice, charity and peace. The laity have the principal role in the overall fulfillment of this duty. Therefore, by their competence in secular training and by their activity, elevated from within by the grace of Christ, let them vigorously contribute their effort, so that created goods may be perfected by human labor, technical skill and civic culture for the benefit of all men according to the design of the Creator and the light of His Word. May the goods of this world be more equitably distributed among all men, and may they in their own way be conducive to universal progress in human and Christian freedom. In this manner, through the members of the Church, will Christ progressively illumine the whole of human society with His saving light.

Moreover, let the laity also by their combined efforts remedy the customs and conditions of the world, if they are an inducement to sin, so that they all may be conformed to the norms of justice and may favor the practice of virtue rather than hinder it. By so doing they will imbue culture and human activity with genuine moral values; they will better prepare the field of the world for the seed of the Word of God; and at the same time they will open wider the doors of the Church by which the message of peace may enter the world.

Because of the very economy of salvation the faithful should learn how to distinguish carefully between those rights and duties which are theirs as members of the Church, and those which they have as members of human society. Let them strive to reconcile the two, remembering that in every temporal affair they must be guided by a Christian conscience, since even in secular business there is no human activity which can be withdrawn from God's dominion. In our own time, however, it is most urgent that this distinction and also this harmony should shine forth more clearly than ever in the lives of the faithful, so that the mission of the Church may correspond more fully to the special conditions of the world today. For it must be admitted that the temporal sphere is governed by its own principles, since it is rightly concerned with the interests of this

world. But that ominous doctrine which attempts to build a society with no regard whatever for religion, and which attacks and destroys the religious liberty of its citizens, is rightly to be rejected.

2. APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM: POPE PAUL VI, NOVEMBER 18, 1965

INTRODUCTION

1. To intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God, the most holy synod earnestly addresses itself to the laity, whose proper and indispensable role in the mission of the Church has already been dealt with in other documents. The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it. Sacred Scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful such activity was at the very beginning of the Church (cf. Acts 11:19-21; 18:26; Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 4:3).

Our own times require of the laity no less zeal: in fact, modern conditions demand that their apostolate be broadened and intensified. With a constantly increasing population, continual progress in science and technology, and closer interpersonal relationships, the areas for the lay apostolate have been immensely widened particularly in fields that have been for the most part open to the laity alone. These factors have also occasioned new problems which demand their expert attention and study. This apostolate becomes more imperative in view of the fact that many areas of human life have become increasingly autonomous. This is as it should be, but it sometimes involves a degree of departure from the ethical and religious order and a serious danger to Christian life. Besides, in many places where priests are very few or, in some instances, deprived of due freedom for priestly work, the Church could scarcely exist and function without the activity of the laity.

An indication of this manifold and pressing need is the unmistakable work being done today by the Holy Spirit in making the laity ever more conscious of their own responsibility and encouraging them to serve Christ and the Church in all circumstances.

In this decree the Council seeks to describe the nature, character, and diversity of the lay apostolate, to state its basic principles, and to give pastoral directives for its more effective exercise. All these should be regarded as norms when the canon law, as it pertains to the lay apostolate, is revised.

CHAPTER I

THE VOCATION OF THE LAITY TO THE APOSTOLATE

2. The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all men to share in His saving redemption, and that through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in the functions as well as life of the body: so, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church, "the whole body . . . in keeping with the proper activity of each part, derives its increase from its own internal development" (Eph. 4:16).

Indeed, the organic union in this body and the structure of the members are so compact that the member who fails to make his proper contribution to the development of the Church must be said to be useful neither to the Church nor to himself.

In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.

They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men. Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the spirit of Christ.

3. The laity derive the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head; incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself. They are consecrated for the royal priesthood and the holy people (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-10) not only that they may offer spiritual sacrifices in everything they do but also that they may witness to Christ throughout the world. The sacraments, however, especially the most holy Eucharist, communicate and nourish that charity which is the soul of the entire apostolate.

One engages in the apostolate through the faith, hope, and charity which the Holy Spirit diffuses in the hearts of all members of the Church. Indeed, by the precept of charity, which is the Lord's greatest commandment, all the faithful are impelled to promote the glory of God through the coming of His kingdom and to obtain eternal life for all men—that they may know the only true God and Him whom He sent, Jesus Christ (cf. John

17:3). On all Christians therefore is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world.

For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies the people of God through ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts also (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7), "allotting them to everyone according as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11) in order that individuals, administering grace to others just as they have received it, may also be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10), to build up the whole body in charity (cf. Eph. 4:16). From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who "breathes where He wills" (John 3:8). This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good (cf. 1 Thess. 5:12,19,21).

4. Since Christ, sent by the Father, is the source and origin of the whole apostolate of the Church, the success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity's living union with Christ, in keeping with the Lord's words, "He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is nourished by spiritual aids which are common to all the faithful, especially active participation in the sacred liturgy. These are to be used by the laity in such a way that while correctly fulfilling their secular duties in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate union with Christ from their life but rather performing their work according to God's will they grow in that union. In this way the laity must make progress in holiness in a happy and ready spirit, trying prudently and patiently to overcome difficulties. Neither family concerns nor other secular affairs should be irrelevant to their spiritual life, in keeping with the words of the Apostle, "What-ever you do in word or work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17).

Such a life requires a continual exercise of faith, hope, and charity. Only by the light of faith and by meditation on the word of God can one always and everywhere recognize God in Whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28), seek His will in every event, see Christ in everyone whether he be a relative or a stranger, and make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things both in themselves and in their relation to man's final goal.

They who have this faith live in the hope of the revelation of the sons of God and keep in mind the cross and resurrection of the Lord. In the pilgrimage of this life, hidden with Christ in God and free from enslavement to wealth, they aspire to those riches which remain forever and generously dedicate themselves wholly to the advancement of the kingdom of God and to the reform and improvement of the temporal order in a Christian spirit. Among the trials of this life they find strength in hope, convinced that "the

sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Impelled by divine charity, they do good to all men, especially to those of the household of the faith (cf. Gal. 6:10), laying aside "all malice and all deceit and pretense, and envy, and all slander" (1 Peter 2:1), and thereby they draw men to Christ. This charity of God, "which is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5), enables the laity really to express the spirit of the beatitudes in their lives. Following Jesus in His poverty, they are neither depressed by the lack of temporal goods nor inflated by their abundance; imitating Christ in His humility, they have no obsession for empty honors (cf. Gal. 5:26) but seek to please God rather than men, ever ready to leave all things for Christ's sake (cf. Luke 14:26) and to suffer persecution for justice sake (cf. Matt. 5:10), as they remember the words of the Lord, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). Promoting Christian friendship among themselves, they help one another in every need whatsoever.

This plan for the spiritual life of the laity should take its particular character from their married or family state or their single or widowed state, from their state of health, and from their professional and social activity. They should not cease to develop earnestly the qualities and talents bestowed on them in accord with these conditions of life, and they should make use of the gifts which they have received from the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, the laity who have followed their vocation and have become members of one of the associations or institutes approved by the Church try faithfully to adopt the special characteristics of the spiritual life which are proper to them as well. They should also hold in high esteem professional skill, family and civic spirit, and the virtues relating to social customs, namely, honesty, justice, sincerity, kindness, and courage, without which no true Christian life can exist.

The perfect example of this type of spiritual and apostolic life is the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, who while leading the life common to all here on earth, one filled with family concerns and labors, was always intimately united with her Son and in an entirely unique way cooperated in the work of the Savior. Having now been assumed into heaven, with her maternal charity she cares for these brothers of her Son who are still on their earthly pilgrimage and remain involved in dangers and difficulties until they are led into the happy fatherland. All should devoutly venerate her and commend their life and apostolate to her maternal care.

CHAPTER VI

FORMATION FOR THE APOSTOLATE

28. The apostolate can attain its maximum effectiveness only through a diversified and thorough formation. This is demanded not only by the continuous spiritual and doctrinal progress of the lay person himself but also by the accommodation of his activity to circumstances varying according to the affairs, persons, and duties involved. This

formation for the apostolate should rest upon those bases which have been stated and proclaimed by this most holy council in other documents. In addition to the formation which is common for all Christians, many forms of the apostolate demand also a specific and particular formation because of the variety of persons and circumstances.

29. Since the laity share in their own way in the mission of the Church, their apostolic formation is specially characterized by the distinctively secular and particular quality of the lay state and by its own form of the spiritual life.

The formation for the apostolate presupposes a certain human and well-rounded formation adapted to the natural abilities and conditions of each lay person. Well-informed about the modern world, the lay person should be a member of his own community and adjusted to its culture.

However, the lay person should learn especially how to perform the mission of Christ and the Church by basing his life on belief in the divine mystery of creation and redemption and by being sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God and who urges all to love God the Father as well as the world and men in Him. This formation should be deemed the basis and condition for every successful apostolate.

In addition to spiritual formation, a solid doctrinal instruction in theology, ethics, and philosophy adjusted to differences of age, status, and natural talents, is required. The importance of general culture along with practical and technical formation should also be kept in mind.

To cultivate good human relations, truly human values must be fostered, especially the art of living fraternally and cooperating with others and of striking up friendly conversation with them.

Since formation for the apostolate cannot consist in merely theoretical instruction, from the beginning of their formation the laity should gradually and prudently learn how to view, judge and do all things in the light of faith as well as to develop and improve themselves along with others through doing, thereby entering into active service to the Church.(2) This formation, always in need of improvement because of the increasing maturity of the human person and the proliferation of problems, requires an ever deeper knowledge and planned activity. In the fulfillment of all the demands of formation, the unity and integrity of the human person must be kept in mind at all times so that his harmony and balance may be safeguarded and enhanced.

In this way the lay person engages himself wholly and actively in the reality of the temporal order and effectively assumes his role in conducting the affairs of this order. At the same time, as a living member and witness of the Church, he renders the Church present and active in the midst of temporal affairs.

30. The training for the apostolate should start with the children's earliest education. In a special way, however, adolescents and young persons should be initiated into the

apostolate and imbued with its spirit. This formation must be perfected throughout their whole life in keeping with the demands of new responsibilities. It is evident, therefore, that those who have the obligation to provide a Christian education also have the duty of providing formation for the apostolate.

In the family parents have the task of training their children from childhood on to recognize God's love for all men. By example especially they should teach them little by little to be solicitous for the material and spiritual needs of their neighbor. The whole family in its common life, then, should be a sort of apprenticeship for the apostolate. Children must be educated, too, in such fashion that transcending the family circle, they may open their minds to both ecclesiastical and temporal communities. They should be so involved in the local community of the parish that they will acquire a consciousness of being living and active members of the people of God. Priests should focus their attention on the formation of the laity for the apostolate in their catechetics, their ministry of the word, their direction of souls, and in their other pastoral services.

Schools, colleges, and other Catholic educational institutions also have the duty to develop a Catholic sense and apostolic activity in young persons. If young people lack this formation either because they do not attend these schools or because of any other reason, all the more should parents, pastors of souls and apostolic organizations attend to it. Teachers and educators on the other hand, who carry on a distinguished form of the apostolate of the laity by their vocation and office, should be equipped with that learning and pedagogical skill that are needed for imparting such education effectively.

Likewise, lay groups and associations dedicated to the apostolate or other supernatural goals, should carefully and assiduously promote formation for the apostolate in keeping with their purpose and condition. Frequently these groups are the ordinary vehicle for harmonious formation for the apostolate inasmuch as they provide doctrinal, spiritual, and practical formation. Their members meet in small groups with their associates or friends, examine the methods and results of their apostolic activity, and compare their daily way of life with the Gospel.

Formation of this type must be so organized that it takes into account the whole lay apostolate, which must be carried on not only among the organized groups themselves but also in all circumstances throughout one's whole life, especially one's professional and social life. Indeed, everyone should diligently prepare himself for the apostolate, this preparation being the more urgent in adulthood. For the advance of age brings with it a more open mind, enabling each person to detect more readily the talents with which God has enriched his soul and to exercise more effectively those charisms which the Holy Spirit has bestowed on him for the good of his brethren.

31. Various types of the apostolate demand also a specially suitable formation.

a) In regard to the apostolate for evangelizing and sanctifying men, the laity must be specially formed to engage in conversation with others, believers, or non-believers, in order to manifest Christ's message to all men.

Since in our times, different forms of materialism are spread far and wide even among Catholics, the laity should not only learn doctrine more diligently, especially those main points which are the subjects of controversy, but should also exhibit the witness of an evangelical life in contrast to all forms of materialism.

b) In regard to the Christian renewal of the temporal order, the laity should be instructed in the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in relation to all the aims of the human person. They should be trained in the right use of things and the organization of institutions, attentive always to the common good in line with the principles of the moral and social teaching of the Church. Laymen should above all learn the principles and conclusions of the social doctrine so as to become capable of working for the development of this doctrine to the best of their ability and of rightly applying these same principles and conclusions to individual cases.

c) Since the works of charity and mercy express the most striking testimony of the Christian life, apostolic formation should lead also to the performance of these works so that the faithful may learn from childhood on to have compassion for their brethren and to be generous in helping those in need.

32. There are many aids for lay persons devoted to the apostolate, namely, study sessions, congresses, periods of recollection, spiritual exercises, frequent meetings, conferences, books, and periodicals directed toward the acquisition of a deeper knowledge of sacred Scripture and Catholic doctrine, the nourishment of spiritual life, the discernment of world conditions, and the discovery and development of suitable methods.

These aids in formation take into consideration the various types of the apostolate in the milieu where it is exercised.

For this purpose also centers or higher institutes have been erected, and they have already proved highly successful.

The most holy council rejoices over projects of this kind which are already flourishing in certain areas, and it desires that they may be promoted also in other areas where they may be needed. Furthermore, centers of documentation and study not only in theology but also in anthropology, psychology, sociology, and methodology should be established for all fields of the apostolate for the better development of the natural capacities of the laymen and women, young persons and adults.

EXHORTATION

33. The most holy council, then, earnestly entreats all the laity in the Lord to answer gladly, nobly, and promptly the more urgent invitation of Christ in this hour and the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Younger persons should feel that this call has been directed to them especially and they should respond to it eagerly and generously. Through this holy synod, the Lord renews His invitation to all the laity to come closer to Him every day, recognizing that what is His is also their own (Phil. 2:5), to associate themselves with

Him in His saving mission. Once again He sends them into every town and place where He will come (cf. Luke 10:1) so that they may show that they are co-workers in the various forms and modes of the one apostolate of the Church, which must be constantly adapted to the new needs of our times. Ever productive as they should be in the work of the Lord, they know that their labor in Him is not in vain (cf. 1 Cor. 15:58).

Passionist Documents on Charism and the Laity

***Presentation by Deacon Hilliard Lee, St. Paul of the Cross Parish, Atlanta, USA
For the 11th Synod, September 2002***

My Brothers in Christ:

God is good all the time—all the time God is good. This saying in the African American community is how we express our thanks to our good and gracious God for all the blessings he has bestowed on us. And so I say again to you, God is good all the time—you respond—all the time God is good! My brothers he woke us up this morning and now allows us to assemble here and he blesses me with the task of discussing Passionist formation and the laity.

In the document of Vatican II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People, it is written “In its desire to intensify the apostolic activity of the People of God, the Council now earnestly turns its thoughts to the Christian Laity. Mention has already been made in other documents of the laity’s special and indispensable role in the mission of the Church. Indeed the Church can never be without the lay apostolate; it is something that derives from the layman’s very vocation as a Christian. The lay life is one of witnessing to our faith in such a manner that it affirms the hints of divine salvation within culture while it makes the source of that redemption explicit and powerful in acts of evangelization.”

In the same way, the publication entitled “Passionist Evangelization in the World Today,” states:

“He (St. Paul of the Cross) was a man attracted to the wonders and love of the Passion of the Lord. His principal concern was directed to the suffering, to the oppressed and to those lacking faith and living in personal suffering and despair. In meditating on love crucified, he discovered his personal missionary vocation and that of his disciples. He had a desire to go to the end of the earth to work for the conversion of every individual. His work was so extensive and demanding that the founder himself felt the need to involve other individuals as well as other religious in his achievements. He also wished the collaboration of the laity to deal with the temporal and social activities of the congregation.”

St. Paul of the Cross, speaking of his own day, may have been looking toward the 21st century as well. However, he could not possibly have seen the eventual decrease in vocations, especially in the USA, but he did see how his mission and the mission of his brothers could be augmented by the laity.

All laypersons are called to live out of a centered relationship with Christ. We as collaborators with the Passionists are also called to share in the charism of the Passionists

as we live out this relationship with Christ. We live that Passion each day of our lives in dealing with the social injustices, prejudice, the hopeless, the downtrodden, the suffering, the poor, those with AIDS, those feeling powerless and so on. The Passion of Jesus has a face and we see it in the shelters, on the street corners, in the soup lines, in the hospitals, in the churches and on the faces of abused children and starving babies. Ministering side-by-side in retreat houses, parishes, missions and hospitals, we are sharing in a life with Christ and St. Paul of the Cross to live our lives in service to one another. The fact that many lay persons, or as I prefer to say, “non-vowed Passionists” effectively play significant roles attests to the openness of the Passionists to share their charism with us who are in association with the community. I also would like to expand the term “non-vowed” Passionists to include anyone—sisters, diocesan and religious clergy (like myself)—who work and minister with Passionists.

St. Paul the Apostle wrote to the Ephesians “Grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s Gift...to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:7, 12). He further states, “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same spirit; there are different forms of the service, but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in every one. (1Cor. 12:4).

Father Terence Kristofak, C.P., Provincial of St. Paul of the Cross Province, in his report in preparation for the 46th Provincial Chapter wrote: “As Provincial, I have experienced the growing diversity within our Province. No longer do just vowed men in black habits minister and work under the Passionist seal. We are today a spectrum of people of different relationships and professions. We are not just white men of European decent, but we are West Indian, Afro-American; Mexican and Puerto Rican. We are Irish and Italian. We are men and women. We are married and divorced. We are single and professed. In fact, if you were to total all the men and women who are employees, associates and collaborators, the numbers would be triple the 200 vowed members of the community.”

The “non-vowed” today offers to the Passionist community a wonderful resource that is dedicated and ever willing to work for the good of the Church. Through such programs in the eastern and western provinces in the United States as Passionist Partners, Mission Fulfillment, Confraternity of the Passion, Passionist Volunteers and Passionist Associates, the “non-vowed” are ministering to the needs of the poor, the disadvantaged, the elderly and the suffering. In the midst of all this, the “non-vowed” becomes more knowledgeable of the life of the Congregation and of the charism of St. Paul of the Cross. Through programs of study and retreats, through the Internet, television and print media, the faithful are being called more and more to recall and live in the Passion of Our Lord. One might ask if roles of “non-vowed” to the vowed can be increased? While my experience has been with St. Paul of the Cross Province, it is evident to me that similar relationships exist in other provinces of the Passionists. For those who have not completely involved the “non-vowed,” I say you are missing a wonderful opportunity to experience the strength of your total ministry. Part of the process of getting more

vocations, I believe, lies in the use of “non-vowed” more in Passionist ministry. We will be blessed with more vocations through the prayers and work of these men and women.

What is the vision of the future? Obviously no one knows for sure, but we do know that the vowed men in America are getting older, while in other countries more young men are entering religious life. To ensure that personnel resources are available, there has to be an increase in the use of “non-vowed” throughout the congregation. You owe it to yourselves to enhance your relationship with us. All vowed Passionists, especially you as leaders, are encouraged to fully utilize those among their faithful who are ready and willing to serve.

Some issues to consider, as the role of “non-vowed” and formation, are discussed:

- Selection--will there be criteria for selecting and preparing “non-vowed”?
- What type of education should be required or provided? How is education and training made available to those who lack certain basic education and training?
- Financial--who pays for training and education, especially if local community does not have, nor in some cases, cannot generate sufficient income? (Be sure funding is not an issue that stands in the way of preparing “non-vowed” for service to the community.) Also, is there a willingness to set up a fund, by province, to educate, pay for travel, for housing, etc., for Passionist functions or other functions deemed appropriate to those who minister with you? And, who and how is “appropriate” determined?
- Consider having a convocation of “non-vowed”, worldwide, to discuss issues of the “non-vowed” and our relationships. There is no common meeting, such as this synod for our views to be exchanged and heard; deliberations held; recommendations made. (Should be considered and do not let issues of finances or control influence your decision. Let the Spirit guide your deliberations.)
- Our young people are often overlooked when we consider ministry. Consideration should be given to holding “non-vowed” synod at the time of year when young people are free and able to attend.
- Consider establishing a committee, board or commission of vowed and non-vowed to plan, review, and recommend programs, activities, and educational opportunities to the leadership of the Passionists. The functions of this group should be on-going.

There are many other questions, which I am sure you are prepared to address, if not now, in the future.

There is an African-American gospel hymn entitled, “Lead Me, Guide Me.” Some of the words are, “Lead me, guide me along the way. For if you lead me I cannot stray. Lord let me walk each day with you, lead me, guide me along the way...we’ve come this far by faith leaning on the everlasting Lord...Lead me O’ Lord, Lead me.”

Also, Reverend Carlton Pearson, an African-American Pentecostal minister, in a gospel song he wrote, was asked by an elderly woman parishioner—“Son, ‘Ye yet holding on?’” Responding, “Yes, mother, I am.” And she responded, “Then keep on, keeping on!!!”

My brothers in Christ, that is our challenge: to keep on, keeping on; involving the “non-vowed” in your work as Passionists For “we are Passionists.” We’ve come this far by faith leaning on the everlasting Lord. In the compassion of Christ, the journey continues, for God is good all the time.

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PASSIONIST CHARISM:

A study document for the 45 General Chapter

1. The Mystery of the self-emptying of the Trinity – its ongoing contemporary living reality

Our Founder St Paul of the Cross held a deep sense of God’s Trinitarian love given to us freely and inexhaustibly. This insight motivated his early life and the development of his vocation, inspired him to found our Congregation and marked his personal witness, preaching and spiritual writings throughout his life as a Passionist.

The deepest mystery of God’s Trinitarian self-revelation is the obedience of the Son to the Father’s will to the extent of giving himself up to death, death on a cross.

This mystery is the heart of all Christian mysticism unfolding over 2000 years, including the mystical understanding of our Founder, St Paul of the Cross.

This mystery continues to be revealed in the contemporary world through the lives of all human beings. Every woman and man is called to live and comprehend life within this Trinitarian mystery.

Passionists are men and women who bind themselves to one another in a search to enter into and witness to this mystery and also to help others recognise its reality in every personal and world experience.

2. The Charism – a living reality

The Passion is the most wonderful reality of God’s love in the world.

Our Charism flows from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and is revealed most fully in Jesus. The more fully and openly we enter into relationship with Jesus, the more fully we will know the Charism.

At the same time the Charism is an energy that is mediated by the Spirit and experienced in relationship to others. Thus we can experience it in and through our relationship with Jesus in prayer, or through our religious community life, through our pastoral care of others, or in and through radical insertion amongst, presence to and identification with those who suffer.

The Passionist Charism is proclaimed in relationship to others. It is shared in and through the life we live and witness to; by what is said or taught; and through our pastoral contact with others. When we stand near those who suffer pain and loss, we enter into relationships that allow us to manifest the Charism and its central truth – that the sufferings of Jesus manifest God’s boundless love and that in this sense we can find hope even in suffering.

3. The Charism invites us into life.

The Charism is a life giving force in the world. It is like a fountain offering living water to all who long for the experience of God’s love in the midst of their suffering and who cry out like Jesus “I thirst”. As a gift of God the Passionist Charism exists in the world in its full force and whilst it is alive in people in all situations, it is most evident in the crucified of our world. The Charism ever invites men and women to embrace it, discover it and live it in the context of their own faith-filled response to God.

Each person must embrace the Charism as his or her own. An encounter with our Charism invites one to conversion and indeed, coming to understand that one can live one’s life through the energy of a ‘Charism’ is in itself a gift from God. Like all graces, it cannot be forced upon us. It is offered and invites the individual to embrace the responsibility of claiming, naming and celebrating the Charism as his or her own. Many people live a Passionist Charism in their daily lives, but may not have the ‘words’ or the ‘spirituality’ to describe the central reality of their lives. But they are witnesses no less.

4. The Living Memory of the Passion (Memoria Passionis)

The Passion – the most overwhelming sign of God’s love for us – takes its foundational moment in the love of the Father for humankind. This deep love was matched entirely and completely by the love of Jesus expressed in his wholehearted and selfless obedience to the will of the Father. The fusion of this great love was seen most radically in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Passionists take a vow not just to live, but to promote ‘the living memory’ of the Passion amongst people. We try to live daily life with the same openness to God’s will that Jesus lived in relationship to the Father.

This vow expresses the distinctive element of our Congregation. In St Paul’s words “*I have been crucified with Christ. Yet, I live no not I, but Christ lives in me*” (Gal 2:19-20) Jesus lived a life of self emptying (kenosis) and we are called to be a living witness to the gift of God’s love for us Jesus. Living this means abandoning ourselves to the loving hand of God. This means we seek to be open to do God’s will, not just to know God’s will.

The starting point for such abandonment to God is the overwhelming sense that God loves me. This knowledge can only be found in prayer – and thus St Paul of the Cross wanted us to be teachers of prayer.

Thus our Charism encourages a 'letting go' into the loving hands of God – even in suffering and tragic circumstances. This is the way to peace – believing and sharing with others St. Paul of the Cross' teaching that whatever happens comes from the loving hand of God. We can promote this in our personal and pastoral presence to others, in preaching, through writing and spiritual direction, in retreats and parochial life.

5. The witness of Passionist Apostolic Community

Each Passionist today lives a life based upon the Charism and in that sense witnesses to it and reveals it to others. Thus another essential characteristic of the Passionist Charism is that it is lived in the reality of each Passionist vocation. This vocation is a relational entity and one lives the Charism in relationship to God, to others, to self and to the World.

Our call as religious is to live the Charism in apostolic community and amongst professed Passionists. In our religious life poverty, prayer, penance and solitude help us to form the spirituality that surrounds the living of the Charism. Our preaching, pastoral outreach, spiritual guidance of others allows us to take the message of the cross beyond our community life to all in need. The deeper we identify our community life and mission with the lives of those who suffer, the deeper and more immediate will be our witness to and proclamation of the Charism.

Yet in our living of Passionist Apostolic Community the Passionist Charism is like a contemplative cloak that surrounds our lives and ministry and blends with our personal identity and focuses our energy on people, not institutions.

The living of the Charism requires that we withdraw from time to time into creative silence and prayerful reflection so that one might come to an awareness of God in self and others and thus contemplate the world as Jesus does. Nevertheless different social setting, cultural requirements, individual ministries and local contexts will all influence and shape the necessary 'tension' between ministry and solitude.

6. The witness in ministry

Our vocation is to live and promote the living memory of the Passion. God's Spirit is guiding this work; we are just the instruments. We can promote the living memory in and through our ministry, but it must be a ministry based in contemplation.

A deep foundational insight and teaching of our founder was to take time to stand with the Crucified One in prayer before going out to the crucified in the world. In this way the Spirit assists us in the challenge of 'naming' the Charism so that we can speak about it, reflect upon it and describe it to fellow seekers.

We have a message that "speaks" to the deeper, darker, more desperate side of human life and especially to situations of human suffering, loss and injustice. In this sense all ministries give visible expression to the Charism in action - that is, in its healing, forgiving, prophetic dimensions - but they are not the Charism. The Charism is a deeper life force that can flow to the surface and change the 'tone' 'quality' or 'impact' of

anything we do. When we act together then the Charism is not only amplified, but its relational quality is seen more completely. We share something that is intimate and healing with people.

Yet we have nothing to give except through Christ crucified and thus we must surrender our hearts to Jesus. Our message to people is to 'let go' and trust in God's love and mercy. We share with them the insight that suffering does not mean we must lose peace with God and that God dares to share our human experience without reserve or restraint.

7. The Lay Vocation and our Charism

St Paul of the Cross wanted a movement for laity to be part of the growth of our Charism in the world. He collaborated closely with laity, formed many friendships and associated them with his mission throughout his life. Numerous women have followed the Charism and witnessed to it in their religious lives. Our 2000 General Chapter expressed the insight that all those who wish to stand with us at the foot of the cross, to contemplate the love of God and then to proclaim its saving power to others could be called 'Passionists'. Thus many lay people live the Charism in the midst of marriage, family, single life and share the Charism with 'fellow travellers' (or the professed) when they chance upon a meeting.

8. Our Charism gives rise to our Spirituality

We need to distinguish between the Charism and the Spirituality that gives expression to and flows from it.

The Charism is the central truth of one's vocation – by the grace of God's call one is attracted to the Charism, embraces it, makes a home for it deep within and lives from its inspiration.

By contrast 'spirituality' encompasses all the ways one 'names' ones relationship to God that is based upon and built from that same Charism – through prayers, devotions, writings and acts of faith in action etc.

In this sense the Passionist Charism has been 'named', that is, identified, lived and proclaimed in and through various ways. Amongst these are:

- ✿ The experience and life of St Paul of the Cross.
- ✿ The traditions and Constitutions of the Congregation.
- ✿ The different and new interpretations of Passionist religious life that have emerged in various settings.
- ✿ The elements that mark the life of a Passionist Apostolic Community (e.g. common life, poverty, prayer, penance, solitude etc)
- ✿ The lives of the Passionist Saints.
- ✿ The new incarnations that the various lay movements and wider Passionist Family witness to across the globe
- ✿ The lived experience & history of our Provinces and of the men that we have encountered.

- The experience of men and women – laity – who are part of the Passionist Family.

The Passionist Charism it is a living, dynamic entity that is ever evolving. It is God's gift to the world and it cannot be confined or constrained. Each time we attempt a definition of 'the Passionist Charism' we discover that the reality is greater than our concepts – it cannot be contained in a theology, spirituality or a series of devotions or actions.

9. The Charism is complex in its richness and diversity.

Nevertheless in order describe the Charism we must adopt a 'starting point' – a certain perspective or approach. *There are numerous possible perspectives through which to describe the Charism. One's reflection on, and articulation of, the Charism may arise from:*

- A perspective of learning and study
- A perspective of prayer
- A perspective of pastoral outreach
- A perspective of social justice
- A perspective of the witness of scripture and tradition
- A perspective of those living close to the poor

However to do justice to a description of the richness of the Passionist Charism one would also need to consider all of the following:

- Scriptural and theological insights
- Historical factors, tradition and the evolution of our Congregation's witness to the Charism
- Liturgical and devotional aspects.
- Ecological concerns
- Social justice issues
- Our pastoral practices and lived compassion

In Summary:

Our reflection on the material presented to date has led us to a point where we present the following summary. It is an attempt to articulate the key characteristics that are central to the identity of a Passionist. Thus we offer the view that to be a Passionist one must possess:

1. An attitude of prayerful constant attention to, and contemplation of, this central Trinitarian mystery.
2. A willingness to share with fellow Passionists a lifelong commitment to this witness.
3. A readiness to search for the ongoing expression of this mystery's manifestation in contemporary reality and particularly to stand in solidarity with those who are placed in situations of alienation and oppression.

4. A keen appreciation of the richness of our spirituality that has developed throughout Passionist history.
 5. A humble recognition that God's loving presence in our world is manifested in the lives of every man and woman, sometimes recognised and acknowledged, other times hidden and unspoken.
 6. A readiness to allow the Cross to point us to go to those places where we can live our lives in service to this mystery.
 7. A willingness to serve and challenge the Church as a prophetic ecclesial movement of religious life in service of God's self revelation in the mystery of the death of Jesus.
 8. A readiness to travel lightly and remain open and flexible in reverencing the movements of the Spirit directing our resources to the changing contexts of where the Cross of Jesus is planted.
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45th GENERAL CHAPTER: Report and Decree on the Laity

1. 45th General Chapter: Report on the State of the Congregation

12.4 THE LAITY

In response to what was requested by the last General Chapter we can state that, during the past six years, in all the regions where the Congregation is present there has been an increase in the groups of laity who “make the Memoria Passionis the centre of their life and activity.” (CD 4.5).

As a result of all that we have already experienced in this area I wish to highlight several significant elements:

- A consolidation of the concept of “Passionist Family” in reference to the heritage bequeathed to us by St. Paul of the Cross;
- A more intense collaboration between men and women religious and the laity in different fields of evangelization and social action that are characterized by the Passionist spirit;
- The serious commitment of various groups and communities to deepening the charismatic, Passiological and apostolic dimensions of our spirituality. Almost all the groups have a basic schema for Passionist life and ministry;
- A strong sense of belonging that the Passionist laity express to degree that they grow deeper in appreciation of and living the memoria passionis as an evangelical value that gives them a specific identity in the Church and in the world.

- ✿ This reality that is very much alive, visible and expressive is a source of great hope for the vitality of Passionist spirituality and suggests several points for the future:
- ✿ To continue to study and to search for opportunities to acquire and elaborate a basic schema of fundamental and constitutional elements that characterize and give a common dimension to formation of Passionist laity;
- ✿ beginning with local experiences, to discern and formulate some point of orientation that makes it possible for Passionist laity to prepare themselves for a specific apostolate in collaboration with our missionary Religious;
- ✿ Establish criteria that give orientation with regard to the degree of belonging to the “Passionist Family”. Establish a definition of the various levels of belonging: lay oblates, lay associates, and lay movements in the widest sense of the term.

12.4.1 The Apostolate shared with the laity in areas of ministry and situations of social injustice.

The results:

We recognize and we acknowledge many positive experiences of collaboration with the laity in the areas of missionary and apostolic activity that has taken place in the Congregation in numerous and diverse fields: retreats, missionary activity, formation courses for specific groups (youth, married couples, professional groups, etc.), pastoral ministry to the marginalized (the sick, abandoned, those addicted to drugs, the excluded...) solidarity organizations and by other means.

The laity are enthusiastically involved in these areas with a spirit of *memoria passionis*. However in this area (that is not yet fully developed) there still a need to clarify criteria for common participation and co-responsibility.

Challenges:

How do we clearly distinguish the tasks of each? What are the criteria that should be established so that the laity are capable of exercising a particular apostolic activity? There is an ongoing challenge to identify the role and the eventual activity of the Passionist layperson who works with us in our apostolic ministries.

How do we avoid the risk of considering the layperson to be a mere collaborator, helper or our employee who undertakes tasks that are considered of minor importance or distasteful to us.

12.4.2 The organization of Lay Movements

The road traveled:

Our last General Chapter maintained that “it should not decide upon forms and structures relating to the life and ministry of the laity...” rather “it invites our members to collaborate with them, and to be open to the Spirit of God which inspires in all a creative fidelity to our Passionist charism.” (CD 5.6) Bearing in mind this recommendation of the Chapter we have noted the existence of numerous groups of Laity who are very well organized in various regions of the Congregation. These groups adopt forms of

organization in conformity with the characteristics that are proper to the respective regions or according to the type of apostolate that they exercise.

Prophetic witness as individuals and communities:

There are many of the laity who have discovered and are very energized by the memoria passionis because they were inspired by the witness of the religious who live out their own consecration with joy and dedication, even at times in very difficult situations. By means of these witnesses the laity discover the timeliness of our charism and they are drawn to share in it as a way of life. The journey with the laity is slow but it is very promising. We trust in the strength, the vitality and in the validity of our charism to continue to inspire the Laity to be, together with us, witnesses of the “Passion of Christ” within the “passion for life.”

2. 45th GENERAL CHAPTER DECREE

The Decree

The Chapter has discerned ten priorities that will serve to guide our process of Restructuring on all levels. The Chapter decrees that every Province, Vice-Province and Vicariate develop a plan for the future of its life and mission.

In the process of developing this plan, every Province, Vice-Province and Vicariate can work independently or in collaboration with others, either within or beyond its own Region.

These plans will be shared on a regional basis. They will also be shared with the entire Congregation with the goal of providing a foundation for the next General Synod and for the next phase of Restructuring.

The General Government will be responsible for the process of Restructuring with regard to promoting provincial, inter-provincial and inter-regional coordination in the hope of proceeding in the most effective way possible, in particular to insure that all of the parts of the Congregation interact with each other. The Chapter especially underlined the importance of creative dialog between the older, historical areas of the Congregation and those that are more recent.

Priority #6. Collaboration with the Laity

Since the time of St. Paul of the Cross our Congregation has been blessed by the presence and support of many laymen and women who have shared in our charism in a variety of ways. In recent years, as the Church has recognized the fundamental role of the laity in the mission of proclaiming the Gospel, our collaboration with the laity has increased significantly. The General Chapter wishes to endorse this collaboration and asks that those who are responsible for planning on all levels include this topic in their strategic planning. The Laity of the Passionist Family who collaborate with us should be involved in the planning process. They should be present when the Provinces, the Vice-Provinces

and the Vicariates develop their strategic plans and their input will be considered in regional dialog about strategic planning. The Provinces, Vice-Provinces and the Vicariates should study the ways in which the laity may become involved in our life and apostolate. Those in authority on Provincial, Vice-Provincial and Vicariate levels should also dialogue with the religious about the importance of collaboration with the laity.

The General and his Council will provide criteria for establishing various levels of participation for the laity who wish to share in our life.

A Spirituality for Collaborative Ministry

By Wilkie Au, S.].

Even a cursory glance at the organization of any large parish will reveal the fact that collaborative ministry is an idea whose time has come. The recent growth of collaborative efforts in ministry is due in large part to a realization of the rich contribution that the church can make to the faith and growth needs of people and to the consequent multiplication of "ministries" within the parish structure, e.g. directors of religious education, RCIA directors, eucharistic and extraordinary ministers of communion, and ministers who attend to needs of the bereaved, the separated and divorced, the ill and the dying, and new parishioners seeking hospitality.

Another factor that accounts for the contemporary upsurge in collaborative ministry is a renewed appreciation of the diverse nature of Christian ministry and a movement away from an elitist emphasis on "a few are chosen" to a more inclusive insistence that "many are called"-in fact, all are called to share in the mission of Jesus as a baptismal right (*Lumen Gentium*, 31). This has led to an increased interest among lay persons in participating in official, church-related ministries. Finally, the present decline of priests and religious, as well as realistic projections of an increasing shortage of priests and religious in the future, makes the practice of collaboration imperative for the on-going accomplishment of the mission of the church.

Collaboration: Attractive Ideal, Challenging Reality

While the idea of collaborative ministry is widely accepted both as a need and a desired goal many people have found-often through painful experience-that the actual implementation of plans for collaborating ("to labor together") in concrete settings has proven to be more complicated than originally anticipated. When women and men of diverse theologies and spiritualities, philosophies and world views, personalities and temperaments, personal struggles and needs attempt to collaborate, tensions and strains inevitably surface. For example, it is not uncommon to hear complaints about;

- priests who cannot share authority or work with women;
- permanent deacons who feel they are merely tolerated by pastors as a bothersome imposition;
- deacons who lord it over lay ministers with a kind of clerical arrogance;
- directors of religious education for the parish struggling with religion coordinators of the school for influence, funds, and space;
- music directors feuding with liturgical planners for control;
- religious education directors so wedded to their own programs and methods that they shun the suggestions of other staff members.

Working with and through these tensions in an on-going fashion is no easy task, but one that is essential for the success of collaborative ministry. Without this commitment to continuously "work at" the process and to grow in understanding the dynamics of cooperation, no effort at joint ministry can succeed. This chapter presents the faith assumptions that constitute elements of a spirituality of collaborative ministry. Such a spirituality must ground collaborative efforts, if Christians are to find the needed motivation and strength to persevere in the complex task of ministering together.

Ministry: A Baptismal Right

A key factor for the unprecedented growth of lay ministry in recent years is a fuller appreciation of baptism as a ministerial sacrament that confers a share "in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ" (*Lumen Gentium*, #31). As theologian Thomas O'Meara puts it, "The church is ministerial. Ministry is not a rare vocation or a privileged office but belongs to the nature of the new covenant... As with its universal source, baptism, ministry exists in the churches as an aspect of every Christian's life" (O'Meara, 1983, p. 209). Realizing that baptism confers on all Christians a rightful share in the ministry of Jesus, more and more people feel called to participate in the ministries of their home parish. However, their enthusiastic desire to collaborate in the ministerial outreach of the parish can be dampened by a cold welcome or obstructed by a stubborn prejudice, sometimes subtle, sometimes blatant, that ministry is the privileged preserve of the ordained or the exclusive right of a chosen few. Emphasizing "how much the laity contribute to the welfare of the entire church," Vatican II makes clear that pastors should remember that

they themselves were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of the church toward the world. On the contrary, they [should] understand that it is their noble duty to so shepherd the faithful and recognize their services and charismatic gifts that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one heart

(*Lumen Gentium*, #30).

Unfortunately, residues of clericalism, patriarchy, and elitism (voiced in the complaint that an exclusive "in crowd" of lay ministers seems to have ministry in the parish locked up) too often still block the doors to easy and equal access to the ministerial activities of the local church.

A spirituality of collaborative ministry must, therefore, recognize the common discipleship of all the baptized. The term "co-discipleship" was used by the American bishops to express and endorse this notion in their 1987 report to the Roman synod. As co-disciples, all Christians share responsibility for carrying out the mission of Christ. This important tenet of collaborative ministry can be succinctly stated:

... all disciples, ordained or not, are called to heal, to teach, to reconcile, to visit the sick, to feed the hungry, to visit those in prison, to shelter the homeless, to make peace. All these functions are part of the baptismal vocation to discipleship. All those who share in this vocation by that very fact are involved in shared ministry. Distribution of functions is a practical, pastoral decision at the level of the local church. It is more an organizational than a theological concern (Rademacher, 1991, p. 173).

Yet, even after the 1987 Synod on the Laity in Rome, controversy still stalks the question of ministry and arguments still abound. Should the term "ministry" be restricted to those with public and stable roles in the church's liturgical and governmental life? Or should it also refer to the wide variety of Christian action that continues Christ's presence in the world today? Some say an exclusive use of the term is divisive and perpetuates the split between the clergy and the laity. Others contend that loosely labeling every good deed a Christian does as "ministry" robs the term of precision and usefulness. In the midst of this on-going debate, it is important to bear in mind that

The context of ministry itself is grace, that multifaceted, active presence of God which Jesus calls God's "kingdom." In a time of rapid change, theology must be rooted in realities or it becomes absorbed in conflicts over past and present words. Grace brings a certain reality to ecclesial issues, for ultimately grace is the source and the goal, and the judge of all that the church is and does. Bursting forth and dying away, ecclesial forms come out of an encounter as the grace of the Spirit meets the patterns of human life (O'Meara, 1983, pp. 208-209).

All Are Collaborators of God

In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola presents a vision of reality that is suffused with God's presence. In the final consideration of the *Exercises*, called the "Contemplation for Obtaining Divine Love," Ignatius asks the retreatant "to consider how God *works and labors* for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth" (#236). Ignatius presents God as one whose pervasive presence in all reality is not inert, but dynamic. God is ever in our midst laboring for us. "In the heavens, the elements, the plants, the fruits, the cattle, etc., God gives being, conserves them, confers life and sensation, etc." God's present labor in the world constitutes the essence of ministry. Ministry, therefore, is primarily God's action in the world. Human ministers are called to join in covenant partnership with God by embodying God's life-giving and saving presence and activity for others in all aspects of life.

Another image of ministry from the Ignatian tradition is that of "being placed" by the Father next to Jesus carrying the cross. The picture of Jesus carrying the cross represents the redemptive presence of Christ in the world today. Being placed by God in intimate juxtaposition next to Jesus carrying the cross expresses the gift of sharing in Jesus' redemptive activity through ministry. This image of ministry stems from St. Ignatius' personal religious experience at a small chapel called La Storta, about ten miles outside of Rome. When he was making his way to Rome to consult with the pope as to how he and his newly formed group of Jesuits could best serve the universal church, Ignatius had a vision. In this vision, he experienced his petition to serve Jesus being granted as he heard the Father say to Jesus weighed down by his cross: "It is my will that you take this man [referring to Ignatius] for Your servant," and Jesus in turn saying to him, "It is My will that you serve Us" (de Guibert, 1964, pp. 38-39). Ignatius' experience of being chosen by God to be God's servant resembles St. Paul's understanding of himself as chosen to be a minister of God (2 Cor 6:3f) and minister of Christ (2 Cor 11:23).

The Ignatian image of ministry as God's present labor on behalf of all creation and the image of being placed next to Jesus carrying the cross highlight the essential nature of ministry: it is primarily God's work. Strictly speaking, then, all forms of ministry are collaborative, because in every ministerial activity, the human minister is laboring with God. Before ministers are collaborators with each other, they are first of all, in the words of St. Paul, "collaborators of Christ" (1 Cor 3:9). In a real sense, the term "collaborative ministry" is redundant. All ministry is "collaborative" because all of us are co-workers with God.

Ministry as a Gift

The gospel of John vividly illustrates how all who share Jesus' work of proclaiming and witnessing to the good news of God's saving love partake in a gift. A brief look at the overall structure of the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well makes clear the gospel writer's conviction that a share in the ministry of Jesus is indeed a gift from the Lord. This is because it is the Lord who supplies the labor, while others receive a gratuitous share in reaping the rewards. The scene opens with Jesus and his disciples arriving at the well of Jacob near Sychar. Jesus sits down beside the well because he is weary (*kekopiakos*) from the journey (4:6). The Greek word for weary contains a root, *kop*, which has two different meanings. Besides meaning "tired," it also

denotes "labor." The *kop* root, with its second meaning, reappears in v. 38 to form a semitic inclusion, a literary device serving like bookends that provides thematic unity to a passage. Here Jesus tells the apostles how blessed they are because "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored (*kekopiakasin*), and you have entered into their labor (*kopon*)." Because they will harvest what they themselves did not sow, the disciples' involvement in apostolic work is a gift that Jesus bestows on them. In this passage, the evangelist depicts Jesus as the one who is tired (*kekopiakos*) because he is the one who does all the work. Although they arrived with Jesus, the disciples immediately leave the scene and are noticeably absent for the whole time that Jesus dialogued vigorously with the Samaritan woman, bringing her to faith through painstaking and patient efforts.

When the Samaritan woman enters the scene, she is both without faith and without community. Raymond Brown (Anchor Bible Commentary) hints of her alienation and isolation from others in the community when he points out the unusual time of her coming to the well. Such a chore was usually done in the morning and evening, not at noon. The woman's choice of a time for coming to the well might well suggest that she structured her life style to avoid encounter with others. Living in an ambiguous and unacceptable moral situation, she might have feared the reproach of her fellow *villagers* and the *kind* of moral probing that could easily expose and embarrass her. Thus she schedules her daily routine in a way that avoids interpersonal encounter and confrontation. Yet, in her meeting with Jesus, God shatters the isolating and constricting structures which she imposes on her life. Through her personal contact with Jesus, dialogue brings to birth both belief and relationship. It is Jesus' respectful, patient, and non-judgmental manner of relating that breaks through the Samaritan woman's resistance to encounter: "What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?" (4:9); and her deviousness: "I have no husband" (4:17). Clearly, Jesus converted the woman only through tiring and persistent effort.

It is only after Jesus' successful work with the woman has been completed that the disciples, who were off buying supplies, reappear on the scene. Upon their return, Jesus points out to them that others have sown what they will have the benefit of reaping. If, therefore, ministry is principally God's work, important questions to be asked by those pursuing collaborative ministry are: What is God about in the world these days, and how can we cooperate with God's hopes and plans? How do we as Christians, lay and religious, join together to advance the purposes of God and abet the movements of grace at work in the world today? By prayerfully considering such questions and honestly sharing their insights with colleagues, ministers can create a sense of shared vision and common purpose, thereby unifying their efforts and reducing divisive competitiveness.

The recognition that all Christian ministers, ordained or not, partake gratuitously in the ministry of Jesus should discourage possessiveness and "turf warfare" among ministers. Possessiveness rears its ugly head when the ministry becomes "my parish," "my project," "my program." Such a possessive attitude severely cripples collaboration. Pastors and other church leaders are given the opportunity to imitate Jesus in gifting others with ministry that is, doing the sowing so that others can reap. The work of administrators, consumed with such things as scheduling, fundraising, filling out forms and grant applications, is often indirect, with little immediate gratification from direct pastoral contact with people in need. By their efforts, however, they set up the necessary conditions for others to use their talents directly in pastoral ministry. Effective administrators enable the ministry of others "by cutting red tape, by spotting talented people to share the ministry, and by backing them when they take risks" (Beirne, 1986, p. 13). Working with faculty and staff, for example, may not be as immediately satisfying as direct personal contact with students, but "when administrators encourage teachers to grow, and when they help them improve professionally, and when they reinforce the fine things teachers do so often in unsung ways, the multiplier effect can benefit the entire student body as a whole" (Beirne, p. 12). A willingness and ability to mediate the

individual gifts of others is a sign of calling to be a pastoral leader in collaborative ministry. In short, "the ministry of leadership in parish, team, diocese," states O'Meara, "exists to serve ministry as catalyst and coordinator" (p.209).

Collaboration challenges Christian ministers to be faithful stewards of God. Stewardship entails the responsible, yet non-possessive, care of what one does not own.

A steward is, by definition, not an owner. . . . The challenge is to be caring without controlling, to be decisive without becoming possessive. The temptation we experience [as stewards] is the one that accompanies any investment: when we care deeply for something we are inclined to try to control it, to possess it. . . . Involved in responsible choices and authoritative decisions in the community, stewards may forget they are servants. The community or parish or diocese comes to be seen as 'theirs.' An arrogant or defensive "I'm in charge here" replaces the more open and responsible posture of the steward (Whiteheads 1986, pp. 50, 56-57).

Thus, stewardship discourages the mentality that jealously guards one's area of responsibility as if it were one's own sovereign duchy or kingdom, not to be intruded upon by others.

Ministry as Continuing the Mission of Jesus

Ignatius of Loyola, in his contemplation of the incarnation, paints a vivid picture of the mission of Jesus (*Spiritual Exercises*, #103). He asks the person making the Spiritual Exercises to imagine how the Trinity hovers over the globe, seeing with sensitivity and care the wounds of the world. At the sight of people of all colors, creeds, ages, and backgrounds struggling and lost, like sheep without a shepherd, the persons of the Trinity are moved with compassion. They then decide that one of them should become human to enable people to experience God's empathic concern concretely. So, the Word becomes flesh or, as John's gospel puts it, "pitched his tent among us" (1:14). Thus, the Ignatian contemplation of the incarnation invites the retreatant to appreciate how God was not satisfied to love human beings from afar, but drew near in the person of Jesus.

Throughout his life, and especially during his public ministry, Jesus accomplished his mission of incarnating the compassion of God for suffering humanity by proclaiming the good news to the poor, giving sight to the blind, healing the broken-hearted, comforting the afflicted, and setting captives free. Before departing, he commissioned his disciples and the community he founded to continue his mission. The core of Christian ministry, therefore, whatever form it may take, is to continue the mission of Christ by embodying the ongoing compassionate response of God for all in need of healing love and saving mercy.

Community Makes the Ministry of Compassion Possible

Collaboration is the *sine qua non* basis for continuing the compassionate response of Christ for the wounds of suffering humanity. Only together in community can Christians hope to embody the compassion of Jesus for the world. Alone, individuals feel overwhelmed and helpless, even discouraged and depressed. McNeil, Morrison, and Nouwen (1981) suggest that community is the reality that makes it possible for Christians to see the suffering in the world and still be moved to compassion as Jesus was when he saw a large crowd of people without food (Mt 14:14).

The Christian community mediates between the suffering of the world and our individual responses to this suffering. Since the Christian community is the living presence of the mediating Christ, it enables us to be fully aware of the painful conditions of the human family without being

paralyzed by this awareness. In the Christian community, we can keep our eyes and ears open to all that happens without being numbed by technological over stimulation or angered by the experience of powerlessness. . . . In community, we are no longer a mass of helpless individuals, but are transformed into one people of God. . . . In community, our lives become compassionate lives because in the way we live and work together, God's compassion becomes present in the midst of a broken world (p. 57).

Community allows all the members of the one body of Christ to benefit from the diverse gifts and charisms possessed by different members. Collaboration in community enables Christians to reach out to others with the compassion of Christ. Without community, they can only experience the burden of the world as a crushing and overwhelming burden.

Taking Personal Responsibility for a Balanced Personal Spirituality

Working collaboratively does not exempt individuals from taking responsibility for fostering their own ongoing spiritual, emotional, and psychosexual growth and establishing a balanced, holistic spirituality. In fact, collaborative ministry makes more imperative the need to deal honestly with ongoing issues of developmental growth. Because personal growth issues directly affect one's ability to work effectively with others, minister's benefit greatly by reflecting on such questions as:

- What in me helps or hinders working collaboratively with others?
- Am I secure enough to contribute as an equal-respectful both of what I and others have to offer to a common venture? Is my self-esteem solid enough to allow me to affirm others and be content in playing my part or do I have to be in charge all the time?
- Is my self-worth so wrapped up in doing a "perfect" job that I can't let go and delegate things to others? Do my perfectionistic tendencies make me hard to work with-always imposing my own excessively high standards on others and criticizing them when they can't meet my norms?
- How do I deal with frustration, anger and conflict in group enterprises? Repress/suppress my feelings? Act out with aggression and hostility? Withdraw into isolation? Conform passively and swallow my feelings? Act out my anger with passive aggression by coming late to meetings, backbiting, spreading rumors, not meeting deadlines, etc.
- How do my own sexual feelings affect the way I work with others? Am I comfortable enough with my own sexual orientation and sexuality that I can work comfortably and closely with men and women, gays and straights-without anxiety and stress? Does my fear of intimacy inhibit my being a good team player or do my strong unmet intimacy needs interfere with my working relationship with the staff?

Fostering a Contemplative Attitude

To maintain a balanced spirituality, collaborative ministers must have a certain contemplative distance from their busy activities in order to maintain perspective and to process their experience of working together. Times for leisure and solitude must balance off-times for work and community. There must be a rhythmic alternation between engagement and disengagement, involvement and withdrawal. When the apostles returned from their first missionary journey, Jesus led them off to a deserted place to rest and be together, because they had been so busy that they had had little time for anything

but work (Mk 6:30-33). This kind of apostolic withdrawal is not an escape from the cries of those in need, but a necessary retreat to make ministers more sensitively attuned to the voices that cry out for their attention. Paradoxically, sometimes being too close to a situation can deafen one to what is really going on; standing apart can provide the contemplative distance that allows one to hear.

Contemplation for busy ministers provides the opportunity for staying in contact with God, others, and self. Active ministers are called to be, in the language of St. Ignatius of Loyola, "contemplatives even in action," people who have a facility for finding God in all things. Collaborative ministers are also called to be contemplative in the sense of regarding their co-workers with wonder and awe, gratitude and appreciation. Too often fellow ministers, like prophets, are not sufficiently appreciated at home, in their own parish setting. Collaborative ministry challenges ministers to move from competition to contemplation, from struggling against and with each other to appreciating the unique giftedness and contribution each member makes to the cooperative effort. Finally, contemplation is a way of connecting with one's inner life: the *Bow* of emotions, thoughts, sensations, desires, needs, wants, fantasies, urges that constitutes our subjectivity. The intimate knowledge of ourselves that contemplation makes possible deepens our awareness of God's indwelling presence in our hearts and makes us more Conscious and responsible in our interaction with colleagues and those to whom we minister.

Developing a Personal Life Apart from Ministry

Having a personal life apart from ministry, with ample time for friendship and leisure, is another important prerequisite for successful collaboration, because it prevents the unhelpful fusion of personal identity with one's official role. When ministers identify themselves with their jobs, many problems are likely to follow. Burnout is a real danger, especially because the nature of ministry is so open-ended; there is always more that needs to be done. If ministers do not cultivate a private life apart from their work, they are liable to be consumed in the process. Friendship and leisure can give ministers a healthy sense of self and a security that comes from knowing that they are loved for themselves, not for their achievements, performance, position, or power. Ministers never grow indifferent to personal success, but the less its importance, the more collaborative ministry thrives.

While genuine friendships may spring up spontaneously among colleagues, close friendships apart from co-workers prevent collaborative ministers from burdening team work with the added expectation of meeting one another's intimacy needs. Swain (1986) cites two dangers that result when the role of colleague or team member is not clearly distinguished from other roles, such as being a family member, a community member, or a friend. First, people may gravitate to team ministry "expecting an experience of, substitute for, or extension of family life, community life, or friendship" (p. 119). These are unrealistic expectations of collaboration and set up individuals for disappointment. Second, ministers otherwise attracted to team ministry may avoid it because, even though they are effective collaborators, they think that the team model requires that they invest in each other as friends, family, or community as a pre-condition for successful collaboration. Because this is more than they are prepared to give, they back away from team ministry. For these reasons, Swain concludes that those training for team ministry "should be formed in a role that does not need - and should not expect - to depend on colleagues becoming friends, family, or community" (p. 119).

Perfectionism Impedes Collaboration

Striving for perfection can also be an obstacle to effective ministry. The obsessive-compulsive aspect of perfectionism drives many ministers to overwork and a state of chronic fatigue. Ironically, ministers who strain to do everything perfectly jeopardize their performance in several ways. First, severe and continual pressure leads to

exhaustion and eventually to a distaste for their work, and thus to poor performance. To improve effectiveness, those who find themselves ministering compulsively are challenged not to care less passionately about their work, but to relax their efforts and to be gently accepting of themselves when they fall short. Second, because effective ministry today requires collaboration, perfectionists are handicapped by their inability to work with others. Already tired and cramped for time, perfectionistic ministers find that meetings, an essential component of collaboration, become a nuisance and collaborating with others undesirable. Third, perfectionists, fearing that things will not get done properly, are reluctant to delegate tasks. The inability to trust in colleagues and the compulsion for perfection isolate ministers in such a way that eventually they function as lone rangers rather than as collaborators.

Perfectionistic ministers have a negative impact on others when they, like the Pharisees, lay heavy burdens on the people with whom they serve. Karen Horney (1950) describes how the drive for perfection is externalized and imposed on others: "[This] person may primarily impose his standards upon others and make relentless demands as to their perfection. The more he feels himself the measure of all things, the more he insists - not upon general perfection but upon his particular norms being measured up to. The failure of others to do so arouses his contempt or anger" (p. 78). Horney's description can serve as a warning to ministers who tend to put excessive expectations on co-workers. If their colleagues are already perfection-prone and themselves given to overwork, what they need is not reinforcement of their compulsion, but help in understanding their limitations and accepting their humanness.

The Call of Weak and Sinful People

Scripture demonstrates that God has a history of calling weak and sinful people to minister and serve. When called, Moses complained to Yahweh, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" (Ex 3:11). "Never in my life have I been a man of eloquence, either before or since you have spoken to your servant. I am a slow speaker and not able to speak well. . . . If it please you, my Lord. . . send anyone you will!" (Ex 4:10-11,13). "I shall be with you" was the answer given by Yahweh (Ex 3:12).

In a similar way, the prophet Jeremiah protested when God called him to serve: "Ah, Lord Yahweh; look, I do not know how to speak: I am a child!" "Ah, Ah, Ah, Lord": the Hebrew text suggests a stuttering, stammering quality to Jeremiah's fearful response (Jer 1:6). But Yahweh replied, "Do not say, 'I am a child.' Go now to those to whom I send you and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to protect you-it is Yahweh who speaks!" (Jer 1:7-8).

Luke's gospel shows Peter, tired because he fished all night and caught nothing, also trying to back off from a call to ministry. After the miraculous catch of fish, he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, "Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man" - to which Jesus responded, "Do not be afraid; from now on it is people you will catch" (Lk 5:8-9,10-11). The biblical pattern that emerges from these texts seems to be this: First, God takes the initiative in inviting people to serve, to minister. Second, those called express a sense of personal weakness and inadequacy. Third, there is an experience of being touched. Fourth, there is the divine reassurance of God's strength and protection. This biblical pattern can help us understand better what our call to ministry entails today: to hear the invitation as Christians to embody the compassion of Jesus in the world, to admit that we are weak and wounded healers, to experience God's presence with us in ministry, and, finally, to rely on God's power at work always in all we do.

Weakness and Effective Ministry

When discouraged with making the complex task of collaboration work, ministers too, like Moses, Jeremiah, and Peter, can find reassurance in God's promise to be powerfully with them as they go forth to do God's work. Experience of weakness need not be an obstacle to ministry, but can be an important condition for effective ministry. First and foremost, our felt weakness, even though painful at times, keeps us always mindful of our need to rely more on God's power than on our own resources. Since ministry is God's saving activity in the world today, its success ultimately depends on God. After unsuccessfully begging God three times to have a troubling weakness, a "thorn of flesh," taken away, Paul was told by God, "My grace is enough for you; my power is at its best in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). This reassurance by God elicits a trusting response from Paul: "So I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me, and that is why I am quite content with my weakness, and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am weak that I am strong" (2 Cor 12:9-10).

Personal weakness disposes us to be open to being helped and supported. It shapes in us a sense of humility and poverty of spirit that welcomes collaboration. Conversely, awareness of our own need for help and support makes us more attuned to how our co-workers might also need assistance. This awareness strengthens collaboration by making us more empathic and sensitive to the needs of colleagues. Finally, personal struggles and weakness expand our capacity for compassion because we know what it means to be vulnerable. They form the experiential basis in our hearts for feeling for and with people. Our sufferings give us first-hand knowledge of the pain that others may be feeling. Paradoxically, weakness strengthens ministry if it reminds ministers that their effectiveness ultimately depends on God's grace and keeps them open to their need for collaborating with others in the community.

The inevitable struggles entailed in ministry, whether done individually or collaboratively, gain significance when they are viewed as the mystery of God's purifying action in our lives. While not every experience of unsought pain and darkness counts as a mystical "dark night" by which God brings about greater union with us, "many (perhaps most or all) negative experiences," claims Carmelite Steven Payne (1990), "have the potential to *become* elements in, or concrete incarnations of, the 'passive nights,' when confronted in faith, hope, and love" (p. 898). According to Payne, the purifying "passive nights" described by John of the Cross are experienced by most Christians today, not within the security of a traditional monastic cell, but more often in 'suffering for a cause,' or in the purification of one's ministerial commitments through failure and disillusionment, or even in 'the quiet martyrdom of everyday life' " (p. 897). Thus, the sufferings experienced in ministry can contribute to the spiritual growth of ministers. Like the branch that is pruned so that it can bear more abundant fruit, ministers may also discover in the frustrations and pain encountered in their work the purifying action of God in their lives.

Definition of Terms to be used in the workbook:

The purpose of this section is to provide a glossary of terms related to Catholicism and the religious congregations that are a part of the Catholic Church. As in any culture, there are terms and concepts that help shape the meaning of that culture. These terms are important for the lay community that is beginning to immerse themselves into a Passionist community or ministry.

This section provides a place that defines the terminologies you will encounter in this workbook. The Catholic Church is indeed an ancient culture of great complexity and the Passionist community is part of that family; it is our intention that these definitions will help the reader to understand that culture.

Apostolic Activity: This term refers to carrying on the work of the apostles, the earliest Christian “workers” who preached the Gospel and served people in need. Religious communities are considered apostolic if they have members who actively minister in parishes, retreat centers, missions, chaplaincies, and engage in other forms of Church service.

Apostolicam Actuositatem: or *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People* is a Vatican II document that affirms the participation of laity into the ministry of the church. This document offers a variety of suggestions and examples for lay apostolate and spells out some of the conditions for lay ministry such as education and formation.

Associate: A layperson who enters into the spiritual life and mission of a religious order. Associates undertake a formation process generally lasting one year, which includes orientation to the heritage of the congregation. Associates also enter into a commitment with the congregation for a specified period of time.

Chapters: are legislative assemblies of members of religious communities in which the canonical members (vowed religious) meet to discuss and vote on directional initiatives as well as to elect leaders. Provincial Chapters take place every four years, and the provincial superior and “consultors” are elected to a four-year term, renewable once. Directional initiatives voted on by the Chapter become the mandate for the Provincial and his Council.

Charism: is defined by Downey (1993) as “the root inspiration of founders of religious movements and communities. Charisms are considered to be free gifts or spiritual capacities resulting from God’s grace” (p. 140). The original inspiration of the Passionist community, its charism, focuses on the profession of the Passion of Jesus. “We seek the unity of our lives and our apostolate in the Passion of Jesus. His Passion reveals the power of God which penetrates the world, destroying the power of evil and building up the Kingdom of God” (General Curia of the Congregation of the Passion, 1984, p. 106).

The charism of the Congregation of the Passion is described on the Province website in terms of the Passionist vocation:

Our vocation as Passionists promotes us to familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the passion of Christ, both in history and in the lives of people today. For the passion of Christ and the sufferings of his mystical body form one mystery of salvation. From this understanding, we may hope to guide the faithful to a deeper awareness and understanding of this mystery, and so bring them to a closer union with God, a greater knowledge of themselves, and more sensitive response to the needs of their neighbors. (Passionists, 2005)

Community: The *Miriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* (Mish, 2003) describes community as a unified body of individuals. It is also described as “a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society” (p. 251). This is an important concept for several reasons. The religious order refers to themselves as the Passionist community. This denotes a very specific and traditional meaning whereby membership is defined by very specific criteria (i.e., taking vows and entering into the community as a way of life). The meaning of community is expanding as laity are being recognized as having some form of identity as a part of the Passionist community. There are also specific biblical and spiritual meanings to the term. For the purposes of this study, the broader meaning given above will be used unless qualified in the body of the text.

Congregation: A religious community following a common Rule.

Contemplative Communities There are generally two types of religious orders, contemplative and apostolic. The contemplative community is one whose main purpose is to pray within the context of an enclosure (monastery or convent) and who generally support themselves through labor within the confines of their enclosure. Examples are the Cistercians, and certain monasteries of Benedictines who pray the divine office several times each day as well as spend time each day in silence, meditative prayer, and reading.

Disciple, in the context of Christianity, is a follower of Christ.

Divine Office, or the Liturgy of the Hours, is a form of communal or individual prayer consisting of readings from scripture, usually from the book of Psalms, which are either recited or sung in community. Some religious communities meet several times each day for prayer, others meet two or three times per day. The prayers are contained in a book of Christian prayer also known as a breviary, which contains prayers for times of the day, days of the week, and seasons of the year. In the Congregation of the Passion, the divine office is recited as morning and evening prayer. In the Cistercians and some Benedictine communities, the divine office is recited up to seven times each day.

Formation is a process that includes study (intellectual formation), prayer (spiritual formation), and faith sharing (communal formation). Formation is a complex process where persons being “formed” enter into the religious and community life of a

congregation as well as into a deeper understanding of their own life and vocation as a member of that community. For vowed religious, there is an initial formation period consisting of a formal year of novitiate, which prepares the candidate for entrance into the religious community, and ongoing formation which is a life-long pursuit of spiritual development. Formation for laity is less defined, but is viewed as a necessary component of lay involvement in the Church. Lay formation consists of developing an understanding of the heritage of the congregation as well as instruction on prayer, scripture, and Church history (Downey, 1993).

General Chapter or legislative assembly of a religious community meets periodically to set directions for the congregation and elects leaders who are charged with implementing those directions. General Chapters for the Passionists occur every six years. General Superiors can be elected for a maximum of two terms. The electorates for the General Chapter are provincial superiors from each province and other designated delegates.

Laity is the term used to describe persons who are neither clerical (e.g., deacon, priest, bishop) nor vowed members of a religious congregation. The term is expansive, but in this particular study includes members of the Catholic community who are practicing the faith or are engaged in some way with the Church as a professional minister, associate, or volunteer.

Lectio Divina is the Latin term for spiritual reading, and represents a monastic technique of prayer which consists of reading scripture slowly and reflectively in order to achieve an understanding of God's word.

Liturgy is the term used to describe prescribed rituals of the Church performed in a public way. The main act of liturgy is the Mass or celebration of the Eucharist, which is celebrated each day and celebrated on Sundays as an act of public worship.

Lumen Gentium, or *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, is a document of Vatican II that provided an understanding of the rights and obligations of all Christians.

Mendicant Orders The *Miriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* (Mish, 2003) describes the word mendicant as "begging." Mendicant comes from the Latin *mendicare*: to beg, or ask for alms. Certain religious communities such as the Franciscans or Dominicans were founded based on a form of poverty where members and communities owned no properties and subsisted by receiving alms from the people that they served.

Mission The definition of mission in the context of the Church is defined by the *Miriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* (Mish, 2003) as "the act or instance of sending. In terms of religious congregations it is defined as the ministry commissioned by a religious organization to propagate its faith or carry on humanitarian work" (p. 775).

NACAR (North American Conference of Associates and Religious) is an organization whose mission is to connect religious communities that have associate programs.

NACAR provides a network for lay associate communities, conducts research on the lay associate movement, provides consulting services, and conducts a bi-annual conference.

Novitiate refers to a “canonical” year and a day of formation in which candidates undertake formation and training in the spirit and tradition of the community that they are entering. Activities during novitiate include daily prayer practices, individual spiritual direction, study of the congregational Rule and constitutions, as well as study of vows, religious life, and of the place of a religious in the life of the Church. Ministry might be a part as well, depending on the novice and the tradition of the congregation.

Passionist is the name given to a congregation of male religious, brothers, and priests as well as several communities of women religious. For the purposes of this study, Passionist refers to the men’s congregation. The formal name is “The Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ.” The Passionists are headquartered in Rome and have provinces and communities in over 60 countries world-wide.

PRCB (Province Retreat Center Board) is a group consisting of leaders in Holy Cross Province’s four retreat centers who meet twice a year to discuss common issues and directions.

Religious Family refers to the extended family of a religious congregation. This includes lay persons who are affiliated with the congregation in a variety of ways (e.g., staff, associates or partners, volunteers, and benefactors).

Religious Order refers to congregations of women or men who enter into formal vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and live as members of the congregation as members of a family. This has been the operative paradigm of religious life since the sixth century and the Rule of Benedict.

Religious Socialization is a process consisting of life-long formal and informal mechanism, through which persons sustain and transmit their faith (i.e., worldview, value system) and life-style. This is accomplished through participation in the life of a tradition-bearing community with its rites, rituals, myths, symbols, expressions of beliefs, attitudes and values, organizational patterns, and activities (Fox, 2002).

Stauros An organization sponsored by the Passionists whose mission is to explore meaning in suffering. Stauros is an independent exempt organization headquartered in Chicago.

Transcendence, from the Latin for “surpassing,” is a term that describes the otherness of God whose existence goes beyond our ordinary knowledge. It names a phenomenon where we reach beyond ourselves in prayer and in service to humanity.

Vatican II, or the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), is considered the most important event in the history of the modern Church. The theme of Vatican II is “The Universal Call to Holiness,” calling all members of the Church to lead a life of Christian holiness

and service. Vatican II identified baptism as the sacrament that empowers all people in Christian life and prayer. This signaled a shift in the basic understanding of Christian life, operative for 1,800 years, which stated that the perfection of Christian life comes through ordination to the clergy or profession of vows to a religious community.

Vows are commitments made upon entering into a religious community. Vows are made in public and are intended to provide witness to a particular form of Christian life. The common vows are poverty representing detachment from worldly things, chastity, and obedience, which place the Gospel above all other laws. The Passionists also have a fourth vow which is to keep the memory of the Passion.