

## **Charism Committee for the Visioning Process**

**October 31, 2018-10-31**

**In looking at the Charism of the Passion we also consider elements of our history and tradition:**

Memoria Passionis (The living memory of the Passion)

The Passion of Christ and it's Power

The Passionist 4<sup>th</sup> Vow

Elements of Passionist Spirituality

The Crucified of Today

Lived Experience of Community

Rule and Constitutions

The Wisdom of the Cross

These were the themes I pulled from the Passionist History and Spirituality Series. See my first document: [Charism01.pdf](#). From this I distilled quotes and themes I saw as most important and tried to list them below. For me they fit nicely into particular categories. Others may group them differently or even need to add something which I missed. (David, c.p.)

### **The Mind and Understanding of St. Paul of the Cross**

A Passionist in Paul's mind is someone who is a person of prayer and a teacher of prayer (16).

What Paul is talking about is contemplating and bringing others to that same experience of contemplation, or, to put it more simply, a Passionist in Paul's mind is someone who is a person of prayer and a teacher of prayer (16).

Paul was totally convinced of the transforming power of meditation on the Passion; this was what he felt he had to offer people.

“May the Passion of Christ be always in our hearts” – not may the Passion of Christ be in our head, but may the Passion of Christ be always in our heart. That tells us something about the kind of memory of the Passion Paul of the Cross was concerned with.

For Paul, the Memory of the Passion is the loving and sorrowful contemplation of what Jesus, our God-made-man, has done and suffered for us. This understanding of the Memory of the Passion gives rise to what he sees as our characteristic apostolate: the promotion of the Memory of the Passion.

The Memory of the Passion is a perpetual and strong theme, requiring an active memory not a mere recollection. It should be in one's prayer, ministry and daily activities. ---Summation by David.

### **Congregation:**

Perhaps it would be clearer to say that the characteristic form of ministry in the Congregation is the promotion of the memory of the Passion: bringing others to a mystical participation in the Passion of Christ, to an affective sharing in the sufferings of Jesus.

“By virtue of the specific mission that the church entrusted to us, we make our own the words of Saint Paul: ‘We preach Christ Crucified.’”

The promotion of the memory of the Passion is made possible by the form of life which he establishes. (Speaking of the structure of Community and the essential components of prayer, penance and solitude.)

The ability or need to bring people into the journey of contemplation on the mystery of the Passion. To be teachers of praying with the Passion of Jesus always before us.

“We seek the unity of our lives and our apostolate in the Passion of Jesus” (Const. 5).

“Whether clerics or brothers, all of us share the same Passionist vocation, and are called to live in community as equal sons of the same Father. Together we strive to keep alive in our minds and hearts the memory of the Passion, each according to his particular role of service in the Church and in the Congregation. In our continual efforts to follow Jesus Crucified, we are supported and guided by our Constitutions” (Const. 100).

### **Developments on the Charism:**

The spirit which we call Passionist is not static. It grows and develops; it responds to new situations, to new needs, to new cultures. This is what we see, for example, in the life of Elizabeth Prout (Mother Mary Joseph): the ability to bring that Memory of the Passion into the situation of the poor, into the lives of those who are suffering, and to see Christ in them.

The Passionist spirit is not being remembered today as something which is long-since past. We remember the past and see ourselves as part of that living tradition, and together we seek the way to live that spirit today.

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

It should be emphasized that for the first time in the history of the Congregation, our peculiar vow is formulated from the Memory of the Passion. The vow has a two-fold objective: that of continuously remembering (personal dimension), and that of promoting the memory (apostolic dimension).

### **Truths about the Passion:**

To conclude, I would therefore say that the power of the Cross takes various forms which express its influence. - A Power of attraction “When I am lifted up, I will draw all things to myself” (cf. what was said above).

- A Power of example

Cf. Phil. 2,1:..”Have in you that mind which was in Christ Jesus.”

- A Norm of action

“Whatever you did to the least of these my brothers, you did to me.”

- An Insight into the misfortunes of mankind, which makes us see in these least ones, the hidden “I” who dwells in them.

- A Force which inspires an activity which transforms, sustaining its dynamism and giving it a more than human motivation.

- but also A Force for detachment, for critical judgement, which invites us to a forgetfulness of self (“do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing”), and to distancing ourselves from the work of our own hands.

5. As can be seen, this power is clearly of value to each one of us, in that it is able to draw our life

together around a center which prevents us from being pulled apart. As was noted above, each one relates to the Cross in his or her own way:

Finally, that which determines (or specifies) us, insofar as we are Passionists, is the capacity for enthusiasm and, consequently, the degree of ought-to-be and ought-to-do that the Passion of Christ frees in us. If the same fire that consumed St. Paul of the Cross is not in us, hope is useless.

When people come to a retreat house, you don't make them feel anything, but you set up the environment which promotes a certain experience, the experience which you are hoping they will be able to enter into during the time they are there. In that sense, you cannot give the memory of the Passion to someone else; all you can do is set up an environment which will help you to promote this experience of the memory of the Passion of Christ.

“If the message of the Cross has not first penetrated our own lives, we ought not presume to proclaim it to others” (Const. 9).

**Theology:**

There is a tremendous amount here which would only lengthen this document.

**Scripture:**

Passion Narratives as well as the Suffering Servant.

**Spirituality:**

We can say, then, that Passionist Spirituality is a spirituality rooted in the experience of St. Paul of the Cross, which teaches a particular way of relating to the Passion of Christ, and in which community life is not subordinate to apostolic availability; that's my working definition.

The Scandal of the Cross  
The Contradiction of the Cross  
The Paschal Meaning of the Cross

**What Next?**

Given all this.... I think at this point we are being asked to write a new chapter. And that is the chapter of what the Passionist Charism is for the dedicated lay people.