



## Passionist Community Vocation Office

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### **Vocations Workshop at Mater Dolorosa Retreat House: Holy Cross Province & St. Paul of the Cross Province**

Sierra Madre, CA January 8-9, 2019

Dear Passionist Family,

I hope that you and your families have had a lovely and prosperous start to the New Year.

While in Buffalo for the NRVC Convocation last year, myself along with some members of the Holy Cross Province (HCP) and the St. Paul of the Cross Province (SPC) Vocation teams, got together for introductions and discussions of our future. We made plans to meet in the following year and begin our discussion surrounding teamwork. Both SPC and HCP have developed teams to work on the Vocation effort in recent years. The team from Holy Cross Province was set up in 2018 and consists of Fr. Ronan Newbold, Fr. Bruno D'Souza, Fr. Giltus Mathias, Fr. Nelson Alphonse, Fr. Febin Barose, and Monica Santillan. The Saint Paul of the Cross team consists of Fr. Lionel Pacheco, Fr. Rogie Castellano, Fr. Jim Price, Fr. Junesh Vakkapadath, and Ross Boyle. They have been working as a team for quite a bit longer than we have so we had much to learn and plenty of ideas to share.

As we began our first day of meetings, we all remarked at our excitement of having the opportunity for this meeting as there had never before been a meeting in which teams from two Provinces met to work together on Vocations. We began our discussion by stating our goals which were: 1) to reignite the excitement to be working in Vocations, 2) to get up to date on Vocation and culture trends, and 3) to find ways of working together in whatever manner possible. Our first discussion was in regards to the NRVC and the main messages that could benefit from further discussion. It was reiterated that we need to engage the generations through media, being that technology is constantly redefining the way we interact with other people. A common trend is that the youth are not being inclined to head towards religious life, so we must do our best to adapt to the changing culture. We also felt the importance of reminding ourselves that the most successful religious orders in Vocations are those whose communities work as one.

We held a conversation regarding the basic statistics of vocations in the U.S, the challenges we are facing, and brainstormed ideas on what we can do to improve these odds. One conclusion we came to, is that it is paramount to not only engage the people interested in joining, but their families as well. An idea came up of a retreat for the parents of young adults interested in Vocations as a result and we hope to produce a solid plan for this in upcoming months. Another trend is that the average transition time from kid to adult is taking longer than

in past decades. This delay in maturation is leading to a longer timeline for making major decisions, such as making a commitment to religious life. Recent studies show, that the average age of those who begin to consider a life in vocations is 19; meaning that the age of ascertainment is later than what has come to be expected. Ideas were thrown out on how to adjust accordingly. While on the topic of what draws people to the Passionist community, a question came up regarding employee preparedness to answer questions from vocation prospects. The determination was made that not every Passionist employee could adequately answer the questions of: Who are the Passionists and how do I become a Passionist? I encourage you all to ask yourselves if you know how to answer these as well.

Fr. Mike Higgins, CP, was gracious enough to share some of his wisdom and time during our meetings in Sierra Madre. One of the notable things he commented on was the cultural changes affecting us at present. In the time when Fr. Mike was discerning, people were essentially lining up to join religious communities, it was just a matter of which one. As we progress further into new generations, the percentage of Catholics has been declining and it is easy to recognize that the pool of candidates is getting smaller and smaller. A tip he shared was that there are certain aspects of today's culture that coincides with religious life, such as the need for volunteerism, desire for hospitality, and the drive for something greater; as promoters of vocations we should be highlighting these characteristics within our own communities.

Behind all of our conversations, was the desire for opportunities in which we could work together. We found that the some of the best ways were through advertising and social media. One of our main mediums to spread the word about the Passionists is going to be social media. The teams of HCP and SPC will be using the website [beapassionist.org](http://beapassionist.org) in addition to using the hashtag: #beapassionist on all social media posts. We ask that you also promote the use of this hashtag when posting about the Passionists, in order to reach a broader audience. As mentioned earlier, vocations ministry works best when communities as a whole rally around the mission. We look forward to implementing some of what we learned and shared. Hopefully we will see successful developments which we will make sure to keep everyone abreast of. If anyone has questions at any time, please contact the Vocation Office at 502-451-2330, extension 19, or via email at [cruc.vocation.office@gmail.com](mailto:cruc.vocation.office@gmail.com)

Sincerely in Christ Crucified,

Monica Santillan  
Vocational Coordinator



*Images above (from left): Members of the vocations teams sing together during evening mass along with Br. John Rockenbach from the Sierra Madre community. Fr. Ronan Newbold, Fr. Bruno D'Souza, Fr. Rogie Castellano, Monica Santillan, Fr. Giltus Mathias, Ross Boyle, Fr. Lionel Pacheco (HCP/SPC)*  
*Images below: The teams went out for dinner in conclusion to the meetings. Afterwards, everyone walked around Hollywood Blvd.)*



*“May the love that flows from the Cross transform our hearts,  
so that we can bring your Love and Compassion to those whose lives we touch...  
and may Saint Paul of the Cross be their guide”*  
*-Passionist Vocation Prayer*

## Prayer for Vocations

Jesus, you gave your life on the Cross  
so that we could share in God's own life  
and know His love for us.

May the love that flows from the Cross  
transform our hearts,  
so that we can bring your Love and Compassion  
to those whose lives we touch, especially those  
who are suffering.

Give the light of Your Holy Spirit  
to those young people who have received  
the grace of a Passionist Vocation.  
Inspire them to give their lives  
as Passionist priests, brothers, sisters or associates  
keeping the memory of your Passion alive  
in their own hearts and in the hearts of others.

May Mary, who stood by the Cross,  
be their example,  
and may Saint Paul of the Cross be their guide.

Amen.

We ask that as we all strive to further and improve our vocations ministry, you all keep us in your prayers and share this prayer for Vocations with your friends and family.

*Thank you*