



catechesis



A LOOK AT THE ICON
OF THE PASSIONIST JUBILEE



III CENTENARY OF THE
CONGREGATION'S FOUNDATION

I The Passion

01 THE PASSION OF THE SON

In the bosom of the Trinity, being born and expressing the Passion of the Father's love for his creation and his creatures and the communion of Love that God is, giving himself in the Spirit. The halo of glory and light that envelops and sanctifies everything. Angels surround and sustain the glory of God that opens up to humanity. And, close to the Crucified Lord, they show the holy divinity in his crucified humanity.

02 THE CRUCIFIED SON

He embraces time and pours out his life from the cross, making God's holy love visible. With his head inclined, his body surrendered, his hands nailed, welcoming and protecting, which give God's life together with his, in abundance, to humanity. With his right arm he welcomes his mother; his extended left arm is open to St. Paul of the Cross, to his companions—sons and to all humanity.

03 THE CROSS THAT BEARS HIM

implanted in the earth, it profoundly pierces the depths of the mysterium iniquitatis which is imprisoned and, despite its mysterious seductive power, is conquered and annihilated.

II The Mother and the Disciple

04 THE NEW CALVARY

the Mother turns her eyes and inclines her head toward the Son from whom the gift of the Spirit comes. With her right hand she demonstrates compassion, and she wishes to console her Son with her handkerchief, like a new Veronica, aiding and caressing the bloody face of the Beloved. With her left hand she points to her Son and embraces Him, the source and origin of new life, as He takes his final breath.

05 ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

As a new Beloved Disciple, with his recollected gaze, he welcomes the

gift of the Son, with the attitude of a mother. Dressed in the garb of the Passion, deep mourning and living memory, with his right hand he touches his heart, that has become a memorial to the Crucified Lord. He begs-- engrave in me, oh tender Mother, the wounds of your beloved Son, crucified for love of me. With his left hand he summons new companions who together with him are clothed and sent to be a living memorial of his Crucified Love. Together with him they are summoned, transformed, gathered as brothers, sent and consecrated to his Passion and through his Passion.

At the foot of both the new garden grows beneath the new sky and in the new earth. It's the fruit of wheat that germinates with a new vegetation, a new paradise of fraternity, the primordial presence of the Kingdom of God.

III The Instruments of the Passion

06 AT THE TOP OF THE TWO WINDOWS THE INSTRUMENTS OF THE PASSION

The column of the flagellation, the spear that pierced his side, the nails that pierced his hands and feet, the cross on which the Lord died. The vessel of gall and vinegar. All the instruments of death and destruction are now instruments of new life; the devices that caused the wounds have healed us; the heritage and sacrament of the battered body and the blood that was shed with which we are fed and saved. It is the angels who announce the final victory achieved in the Lord's Passion, the triumph of good and love, the Easter of Creation and the History of Humanity.

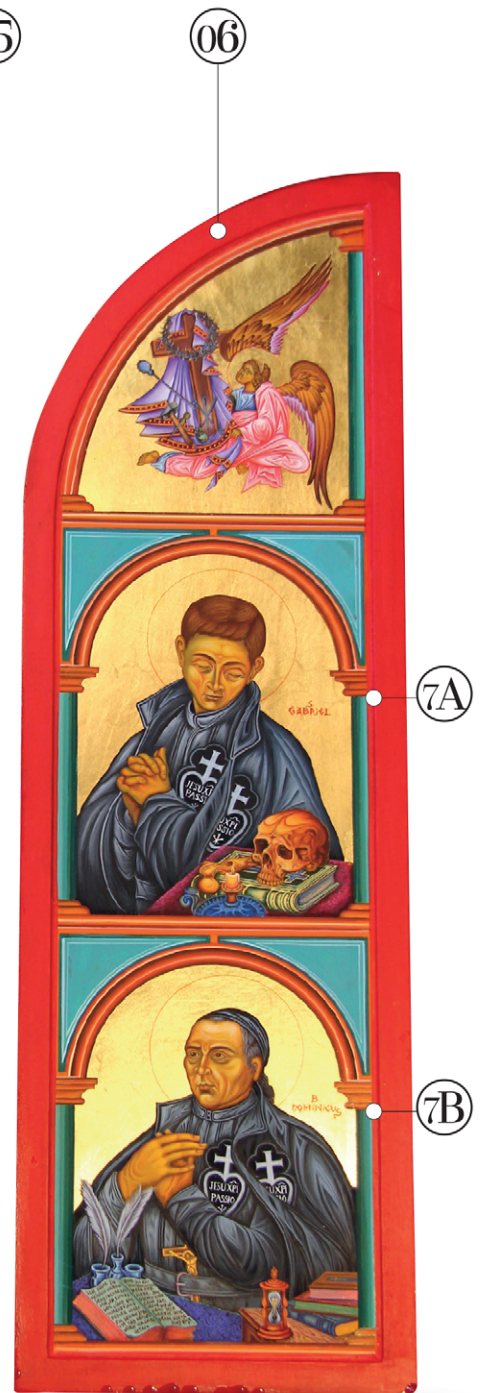
IV New witnesses of the love of God Crucified

07 THEY SURROUND AND SUSTAIN THE PASSION IN OUR HEART

The charism, that is born from "the passion" being in our "heart",



new sons and daughters contemplate and welcome the charism of our Father, Paul of the Cross, the Mystery of God's love, expressed in the wonderful work of the Passion. 7A Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin, sustained by the Mother at the foot of the Cross, allows himself to be shaped into a glowing sign in his youth by the work of God's love, bridging and arousing an insatiable desire for completeness, happiness and gratitude. 7B Blessed Dominic of the Mother of God, seduced by her maternal affec-



tion and eager to make all Christians attain, beyond confessional limits, the universal language of God's love, the source of unity that stems from the Cross, in order to break down all walls, and invite everyone to the one faith in God revealed in Jesus Christ, which makes the Church "a universal sacrament of salvation".
7C Saint Gemma Galgani, a lay Passionist, the fruit of Christ's Passion, "the flower-fruit of his wounds", seduced by her Crucified Lord and eager to participate in his Passion of love and salva-

tion for the world. Together with Him, she offers herself to God the Father, a sympathetic lover of those most in need. **7D Blessed Isidore De Loor**, the Passionist Brother of the "will of God", who made his life a silent and loving offering to God and humanity, suffusing the everyday events of his life and that of his brothers, with the fragrance of deferential love that finds its joy in giving life, in the image of the Lord from whom he received life.

In the name
of the Father
and of the Son
and of the
Holy Spirit

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The process of “writing” (depicting) an icon is a mystical process. The iconographer, with prayer and fasting, embarks on an inner journey toward Christ and the saints. The Holy Spirit, so to speak, leads him by the hand and reveals how the saints and God must be represented in the icon. In this way, those who contemplate the icon allow themselves to be guided by a spiritual dynamic that helps them to penetrate areas that are hidden to the simple eye. Even the Greek iconographer, Loukas Seroglou, who was entrusted with the execution of the icon of the Jubilee of the 300th Anniversary of the Passionist Congregation, allowed himself to be inspired by this dynamic.

The icon was designed in the shape of a triptych, a form traditionally reserved for sacred art, and which contains an image of the mystery of the divine Trinity.

In the center, in the main space, the last station of the Passion of Christ is presented—Jesus’ death on the cross. At the foot of the Cross is Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and St. Paul of the Cross. Mary stands with her arms raised, arms that want to embrace her son, but that do not seem to reach Him. She is there until the very end. Mary allows herself to be led without resistance by God’s will and plan. Her hands reveal an indescribable pain. In one hand he has the cloth ready to clean the face of her dead Son at the moment of his deposition from the Cross. In place of John, the beloved disciple, is the Founder of the Passionists, St. Paul of the Cross. His pose expresses sadness, helplessness and a great devotion to God’s will. The icon

is dedicated to him. He places his right hand on his heart, the place where the Passionist Habit bears the symbol of crucified love.

Above, there are two images under the cross, under the extended arms of Christ-- two angels. They lament and weep before the Passion of the Son of God. Christ’s head is inclined toward one side and his arms extend unequally. It seems that, even at the moment of death, there is an inner dialogue with his Mother, as if He wanted to console her.

The trunk of the cross penetrates into the ground, into the underworld, where Satan, the ancient serpent, awaits the moment of his defeat.

Above the cross is the symbol of the Passionists, surrounded by the hand of God, which blesses, and the symbols of creation and recreation-- the sun and the moon, the angel of final judgment and water as the current of the life of the Holy Spirit, represented in the form of a dove.

The two saints and Blesseds lo-

cated in the doors are under the shadow of the angels who bear the instruments of the Passion of Christ-- the reed of hyssop and the spear, symbols of Christ’s thirst for the soul of man and the opening of his pierced heart, which thus becomes the origin of the sacraments of the Church.

On the left is Saint Gemma, the great mystique of the love of the Cross, who represents the entire female component of the Passionist Congregation, and Blessed Isidore, with a heart wounded by love. On the right, St. Gabriel Possenti, with the skull, symbol of the mortality of a human life without God and the lighted candle, symbolizing the relativity of every human dispute. Beneath him is Blessed Dominic Barberi with an open book and two pens. God speaks through the heart and through the intellect. The greater Christ’s love, the deeper the penetration and understanding of the Scriptures. On one side of the table is the hourglass, as an appeal to constant vigilance: “Watch therefore, because you know neither the day nor the time when the Son of Man will come.”

