THE PASSIONISTS

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The Passionists

by

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A Michael Glazier Book

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Dedicated to the memory
of our classmate
Fr. Carl Schmitz, C.P.
martyred

in the year of our Golden Jubilee as Passionists

The Class of 1938

Contents

Foreword

For almost two years I literally "lived" with Passionists whose stories are in this book. I have read the "life" of each one, the writings, the sermons, whatever information is available. I studied the historical background of these men and women, the social and religious conditions in which they lived.

Day and night, in many long solitary walks, in the quiet of my room or chapel, I have pondered over God's call. At times I felt I was conversing with each one, about his or her joys and sorrows, fears and hopes.

They in turn have opened their hearts to me to share with me their experiences of being a Passionist. For from them I have come to know what it has meant to be a Passionist, whether at the very beginning, or during the Napoleonic suppression, in the ups and downs of the nineteenth century, whether in Italy, Australia, England or in the Americas.

I have lived again with Passionist men and women whom I knew from their contemporaries or even personally in these more recent years, in the tensions of war and prosperity, amid conformity or renewal these past thirty years, in the midst of prison chambers and death in China, Spain, Bulgaria, or even as I wrote in the Mindinao mountains of the Philippines.

It is now my privilege to share with you, dear reader, the stories of these great and little Passionists, the veterans and the youthful, the mystics and apostles and martyrs.

From the stories of these Passionists may we learn the meaning of religious life in years gone by. May we face the challenges of our

present time with their courage. Inspired by their experiences, we are readied to step forward into the future, into the new century beyond the year 2000.

Finally, a word of thanks to the many Passionists and other friends, and especially our provincial, Fr. Sebastian MacDonald, and Mr. Michael Glazier, all of whom have encouraged me in this project. As a Passionist for fifty years, I offer this book as a work of love to thank Paul Francis Daneo for all that he did and suffered to found the Passionist Congregation.

September 14, 1990
Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross
Roger Mercurio, C.P.

Introduction

"It was the worst of times." So writes Charles Dickens of the period at the end of the eighteenth century in his immortal *Tale of Two Cities*. Indeed, for the Church the eighteenth century was "the worst of times," even though many call it the Age of Enlightenment.

Philosophers such as Voltaire, Hume, Rousseau, and others were attacking and ridiculing Catholicism and Christianity. Scientific discoveries in such areas as astronomy, chemistry, physics, geology, were shaking the faith of many believers.

The eighteenth century has also been called the age of absolutism. Kings were ruling without their parliaments. Take the example of Frederick the Great in Prussia or Catherine the Great in Russia. Even George III in England had complete control over a subservient parliament.

The absolute monarchs of Europe more and more excluded the Holy See from any role in diplomatic decision making. By the end of the century, in 1773, Pope Clement XIV bowed to the pressure of the Catholic kings of Spain, France, and Portugal and suppressed the Society of Jesus. A few years later, French clerics would swear allegiance to the new structures of the Revolution's "church." The Papal States would be overrun by Napoleon's armies.

Moreover, both in the Catholic Church and the Reform Churches, externalism, legalism, formalism, were stifling real religious experiences and loving piety in the hearts of believers. Jansenism and quietism continued strong and alive in many Catholic countries. Yes, it was in so many ways "the worst of times."

Fortunately, like Dickens, we too must add that "it was the best of times." For the eighteenth century had another side that many Catholics tend to overlook. Because of the anti-Catholic and even anti-Christian excesses of the Enlightenment and the resultant violence of the Revolution with its terror, Church historians have neglected the deeper roots of the seemingly radical movements of the century.

Serious thinkers were clarifying the sources for the rights and duties of individuals. In Poland and in the English colonies on the east coast of North America principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity were being seriously discussed and proposed as the basis for democratic constitutions. These principles had their roots in the Christian concept of the individual worth of each human person.

The historian Hubert Jedin has reminded us that in the light of recent studies and especially of the Second Vatican Council, we must modify the opinions of nineteenth-century Catholic historians in regard to the Age of Enlightenment. He adds that "the rationalism of Enlightenment is historically inconceivable without the philosophy of Scholasticism . . . the religious inwardness of Pietism . . . the Christian concept of the uniqueness and freedom of the individual person."

The rigorism of Jansenism and the formalism in the many Churches (Catholic and Protestant) were already giving way to a revival of gospel Christianity. Witness the impact of John Wesley's preaching in England, the parish mission work of Segneri, Leonard of Port Maurice, Alphonsus Liguori in Italy, and others in France, Spain, Germany, and elsewhere. Recall also the impact of Pietism in Lutheran Germany, the devotion to the Sacred Heart in Catholic France.

Seeds were thus being planted for the postrevolution Church. The mystical teachings of St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross (canonized in 1726), St. Francis de Sales, would take the place of the sterile asceticism of Jansenism, and the quietistic aberrations of Molinos. Vernacular translations of the Bible were more and more available for ordinary Catholics. Muratori and Vico influenced the writing of history, while interest in renewing the liturgy was growing.

The eighteenth century, the time for the "householder" to draw from his storeroom things both old and new, should be viewed as a pivotal century, witnessing to the demise of many evils in society

and in the Church while also giving promise to new life and hopes for the future. It is indeed a "period of transition."

This is especially true of the Catholic religious communities in Europe. Both men and women founders were looking for new structures for their religious communities. Earlier, St. Vincent de Paul, St. John Eudes, and others founded new religious institutes with stronger apostolic ministries. Now in the eighteenth century, St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Paul of the Cross, as well as others, were setting up new models of religious life. In each case we find the blending of the old with the new. Each founder sensed that the age demanded something new, while retaining many of the riches of the past.

Actually, what was taking place was the development of religious life, which eventually would find acceptance in new canonical forms, namely that of exempt clerical institutes or congregations. These would enjoy the privileges of the "great Orders" of old but without such obligations as those of the choral Office and solemn vows.

But more than new canonical forms were being developed. The founders were breathing new life and purpose into the very soul of religious life. In the blending of prayer and ministry, of community and apostolate, a new apostolic spirituality was emerging. The eighteenth century would thus prepare the way for new forms of religious life in the nineteenth century, which would lead to the call for spiritual renewal from the Second Vatican Council.

Thus seeds were being planted by the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the founders and their first followers. These were, to be sure, only seeds. It would take years, but there would be growth and plentiful harvesting.

* * *

In the following pages we will focus upon one religious community known as the Passionists. We will witness the workings of the Holy Spirit upon the labors of Paul Francis Daneo and Mother Mary Crucified Costantini in founding the Congregation of the Passion and the Institute of the Passionist Nuns.

In the ensuing chapters we will see the seed growing and developing before and after the French Revolution, as the Congregation spreads from the Papal States to all of Italy, into western Europe, North and South America, and Australia. Eventually, in the twen-

tieth century it will be established also in Asia and Africa. The Passionists will become a truly international religious institute in the truly international Church of the post-Vatican II era.

At the same time, the spread of the Congregation engenders the flowering of the charism of Paul Francis Daneo in various ways. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon chosen men and women, the Passionist charism will respond to the varying needs of different ages and varying cultures.

Finally, in the Epilogue we will look into the twenty-first century to project the results of the Pentecostal fires of the Second Vatican Council upon the Passionist community. What the Congregation will be at that future date will depend on the continuing action of the Spirit and the dedicated commitment of present and future Passionists to the ideals of the founder, St. Paul of the Cross.

Selected References

The documentation on the Congregation of the Passion and on St. Paul of the Cross is abundant; his Letters (5 vols.), the canonical processes for beatification and canonization (5 vols.), the study of the six versions of the rule, the history and decrees of the general chapters, and also various intra-Congregational periodicals: *Bollettino; Acta Congregationis; Passionist Information Bulletin; The Passionist; Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality.* (These are available in Italian, Spanish, and English brochures. Generalate, Rome. Henceforth, *Studies.*) Many of these sources can be found in the Generalate in Rome, also in various Passionist monasteries in this country, at the provincial archives in Union City and Chicago and the library at the Catholic Theological Union.

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JESU XPI
PASSIO

1

St. Paul of the Cross (1694–1775)

He was nineteen. His father wanted him to become a merchant like himself. His priest-uncle advised him to become a priest. A young lady from one of the "better" families in his hometown of Castellazzo in northern Italy would have been happy to marry him.

But Paul Francis felt life should hold out something more. At times he dreamed of becoming a soldier. He had even enlisted in the Venetian army to join the crusade against the Turks. Even though the Pope had called for volunteers, Paul soon found out that warfare was not for him. Praying before the Blessed Sacrament, Paul heard the voice of God calling him to peace.

Prayer was very meaningful to Paul. Even as a child he had the gift of prayer. He and his brother John Baptist found a spot in the attic that they made into "their chapel," and there they would pray. His prayer centered upon the sufferings of Jesus. Frequently the two brothers would perform various acts of penance, much to the concern of their parents.

One day he heard a moving sermon on the sufferings of Jesus. This was a powerful grace for Paul. He called it his "conversion."

Now began for Paul a long series of ponderings and divine invitations. He gave himself to intense meditation and prayer. He mortified his flesh with fasting and other penances. He kept a strict watch over his senses. In other words, he himself did what he would later ask in his Rule of one who wished to join his community: "Let him first examine whether he be called by God to this sort of life. This

he should do maturely by prayers, fasts and frequent reception of the sacraments. Withdrawing himself from worldly affairs, let him ask the advice of his confessor."

Paul did indeed seek counsel from among the priests and religious of Castellazzo. Frequently he thought of hiding himself away in some mountainside to live close to nature and with his God in solitary prayer.

He continued to spend long hours in prayer. At times his prayer would be filled with peace and interior joy. More often he endured hours of profound inner darkness and fierce temptations.

His prayer upon the Lord's passion opened new directions for him. It became for Paul an experience of the tremendous love God has for us. He also wanted others to know God's great love. He wrote, "Sometimes I had another inspiration to gather companions who would live together in unity to promote the fear of God in souls (this was my main wish)."

Paul realized that many of his contemporaries did not know of God's love. In eighteenth-century Italy, Paul's century and country, life was not easy. The rich were very rich; the poor, very poor. For the sick there was little healing; for laborers, few hours of rest; for ordinary folks, fear of war and bloodshed. In the marshlands of the Papal States the poor lived at the very margins of society.

Unfortunately, few people found spiritual strength in the ritualistic services of the Church, even the Holy Eucharist. Few even dared to approach Holy Communion every week or even every month. Preaching was rare and usually too lofty to be understood by the poor.

Perhaps he should become a priest? But there were so many in Italy at that time that one more would make little difference. Few priests could preach or provide for the people. Seminary training was only slowly improving.

Perhaps he should join one or another of the several religious Orders in his hometown? But monks seemed to live walled-in lives in their monasteries, afraid almost to minister to the people.

Maybe he should simply go away alone to live a life of meditation? Solitude continued a strong attraction for him. But then who would go to the poor, the sick, the neglected, in the small villages and towns? Should he go from village to village telling people about the meaning of their sufferings, so often like the sufferings of Jesus?

Paul struggled over this decision for a long time. This is how he described it twenty-five years later to a young man struggling with his own vocation:

> Oh, if you knew the conflicts I went through before entering upon this way of life I am now living. I was really frightened. I felt deep sorrow for my family whom I was leaving in great need as their hopes for a better life focused on me. There were hours of desolation, melancholy and fear. I felt I would not be able to bear this new way of life. The devil kept insisting I was deceived, that there were other ways in which I could serve God, that this was not the life for me, and so many other things. Besides all this, I lost any sense of devotion at prayer; I was dry, tempted in so many ways. I just shuddered when I heard the church bells. Everyone seemed happy but me.

During the summer of 1720 Paul experienced several very powerful calls from the Lord to found a new religious Order. He saw in vision the black habit of the Passion, and the white heart with the name of Jesus. On one occasion Paul saw in vision the Blessed Mother wearing the black habit. "You must be clothed in the same way and you are to found a congregation which will wear this same habit to mourn continuously for the Passion and Death of my dear Son."

Experiencing God's call, Paul asked himself what he should do. Paul knew his own weakness. He felt helpless. But he was inwardly convinced that God was calling him. As a man of his times and a man of the Church, he went to his bishop to tell him of his visions and dream. He sought his advice.

The bishop at first hesitated. Paul did seem to have an authentic call, but one must not be too hasty. The bishop decided that Paul could serve in the Church as a hermit, a "holy man."

On November 22, 1720, Bishop Gattinara of Alessandria clothed Paul in the long black robe that Passionists wear today. He authorized Paul to serve as a hermit in one of the Churches of Castellazzo. As sacristan and custodian, Paul would assist at the daily Masses and keep the church clean. During the day he would spend time in prayer and teach catechism to the children. He could advise those who came to him for counseling. He could even preach to the people.

But first, Paul was to spend forty days in prayer and retreat at

the Church of St. Charles. During that time he should write a rule of life for future companions. All this Paul did.

For forty days Paul prayed and fasted, keeping a daily journal, or diary, of his prayer and spiritual experiences. In it he gave expression to his hopes and dreams, his fears and doubts, the graces God poured into his soul.

Frequently he prayed for the Congregation he hoped to found. On Wednesday, November 27, he wrote:

> I know that I had a particular urge to go to Rome for this great and wonderful work of God. I also asked my Sovereign Good if it were his will that I should write the rule for the "Poor of Jesus." I felt a strong urge to do so, with great sweetness. I rejoiced that our great God should wish to make use of so great a sinner. On the other hand I did not know where to cast myself, knowing myself to be so wretched. Enough! I know that I tell my beloved Jesus that all creatures shall sing his mercies.

The following day he described a vision he received: "During thanks-giving and prayer, I was moved even to tears, especially as I prayed to the Sovereign Good for the happy issue of the holy inspiration which by his infinite goodness he has given me and continues to give me. I remember that I kept praying to the Blessed Virgin, and to all the angels and saints, especially the holy founders. Suddenly I seemed in spirit to see them prostrate before the most holy Majesty of God praying for this . . . and then it all disappeared."

Finally, on December 2 he began to write the Rule. He wrote rapidly and as one inspired from God. The words flowed from his heart. He was outlining a way of life for those who would, like him, walk the way of the cross with Jesus. He was expressing in words the dream God had shared with him.

When the retreat was over, he presented the Rule to the bishop for his approval. Paul was anxious to go to Rome at once to show the Rule to the Holy Father and get his religious Order started!

The bishop, however, advised Paul to proceed prudently. He knew the pope would not approve Paul's hoped-for Order without further testing. The bishop asked several theologians to read the Rule and offer suggestions and emendations. In the meantime, Paul was to continue his way of life as outlined in the Rule.

Finally, in September of that year, 1721, Paul was allowed to go to Rome. When he got there in his black habit and asked to see the pope, the guards, suspecting he was a vagabond, drove him away from the Quirinal, then the papal palace.

Stunned by this rebuff, Paul found his way to the nearby Church of St. Mary Major. In tear-filled prayer, he knelt before the famous painting of our Lady in the Borghese chapel of that basilica. Suddenly, he felt inspired to make a vow to spend his life in reminding people of all that Jesus has suffered for them. Somehow, with Mary's help and protection, he would start a new community to proclaim the memory of the passion. Peace flowed into his soul. He knew he could now fulfill his dream.

This heavenly inspired vow would one day become the very heart of Passionist spirituality, the center of Paul's special charism. For on that September day in Rome, in spite of the rebuff at the gate of the papal palace, Paul vowed to found the Congregation precisely to proclaim the memory of the passion. This was clearly now for Paul the main reason for the existence of the institute itself. In this sense, it is the seed from which our whole history has sprung.

The next ten years Paul and his brother John Baptist, who had joined Paul, lived as hermits in accordance with the Rule Paul had written. For some time they lived at Castellazzo. Then they retired to a beautiful mountainside overlooking the Mediterranean Sea north of Rome, Monte Argentaro.

They tried other places. Sometimes companions would come, try the life, stay a while, and then leave. Again and again this happened. Finally, they were offered a place in Rome as nurses for a new hospital for the sick poor. Paul's Rule said nothing about such a ministry, but in serving the sick and the poor, they would be serving the Lord, who had become poor for us. They joined the nursing-care staff, still wearing the black habit of the passion.

While in Rome Paul and his brother were ordained priests by Pope Benedict XIII, on June 7, 1727. Paul did not seek the priesthood, but when it was offered, he consented with readiness and conviction.

Shortly afterwards the two brothers returned to Monte Argentaro. Now as ordained priests they began to preach to the people on Sundays in the fishing villages at the foot of the mountain. Word got around that they were inspired preachers and kind confessors.

In a short time they were asked to give a mission at a town some miles along the coast. They were so successful that they were soon

giving missions in most of the towns of the area. Paul realized how much the people needed this mission preaching. Through missions they could call sinners back to Christian living. There were also opportunities for explaining the truths of faith to those who were poorly instructed. But above all, missions offered Paul and his brethren the chance to teach people how to pray, to remember the passion.

What also attracted Paul was that through this ministry he could serve the poor people of the marshlands. Later he would put in his Rule that "the preachers should prefer to go to the poorer and more needy places, to solitary places, the marshlands, and other such places which are usually neglected by apostolic workers." To serve the poor would become an important ministry of his Congregation.

Paul learned from the poor the meaning of the vow he had made at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome in 1721. In the oldest copy of the Rule (dated 1736) Paul included the "vow to promote among the faithful the devotion to the Passion and Death of Jesus." This would become for his community a vow to engage in the apostolate, perhaps similar to what St. Ignatius gave his society by his fourth vow. It was his mission preaching among the poor that taught Paul this special identity of his Congregation in the Church. While evangelizing the poor Paul himself was being evangelized.

Paul and John Baptist realized that they needed a larger building than the small structure in which they were living. Friends in the nearby town of Orbetello offered to help with financing and constructing a monastery. There were many delays. When a war broke out and the mountain became a battlefield, Paul stopped building and ministered to the soldiers in both armies.

Finally the building was finished. The senior priest of Orbetello and many friends from nearby came up the mountain for the solemn blessing and opening of the first Passionist "retreat," as Paul called it. It was the feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross, in the year 1737.

Four years later, in 1741, Pope Benedict XIV approved the Rule and Paul's way of life. The Congregation of the Passion was officially recognized by the Church. It was a new religious community in the Catholic Church with a penitential community life of prayer and an apostolate of preaching and teaching the passion to the poor.

The Rule he had written twenty years earlier expressed the inspiration he had received, his dream. Then he had been so enchanted

with his dream, so enthusiastic, that words had "flowed as from the heart." But during the long, difficult years of overcoming the problems he had met in fulfilling this dream, Paul had clarified a point here, an insight there. He became more specific. His words expressed not a farfetched dream but a goal that he and others could attain. Paul was also aware of the demands of the Roman consultors as he edited his Rule to present it to the Pope. It was now a document more specific and legalistic than the original Rule of 1720.

In this text Paul specified that his community would observe many of the traditional religious practices, such as abstinence from meat, perpetual Lenten fasting, going barefoot, wearing a rough habit, not using a hat. He also wanted the choral chanting of the Divine Office by day and by night. There would be hours of mental prayer, silence, and study together with community chores and recreation periods.

Paul saw this rigorous communal life as the way to achieve the dream of centering one's life on the cross of Jesus. Through such a way of life, his religious could become contemplative and mystical lovers of the God who loves us so much. His achievement was to write a Rule in which the structural elements are directly oriented to the mystical life. He molded a code of spirituality that prepares one through ascetical practices for the graces of loving mystical union with God.

But Paul also designed this observance as a preparation for an intense apostolate of preaching. His religious must truly become apostolic preachers of the passion of Jesus. He wrote in 1768 that the purpose of the Congregation is "to form zealous workers filled with the Spirit, that they might become fit instruments used by the almighty hand of God to sow virtue and to root out vice among the people with the powerful weapon of the Sacred Passion." In the solitude of his retreats, his religious missionaries were also to spend hours each day in studying theology, in reading the Scriptures, in preparing sermons. Paul's dream always included this vision of "men totally God-centered, totally apostolic."

In the final Rule Paul stated his ideal in this way: "The religious . . . ought, in the first place, to provide for their own eternal salvation, in the manner prescribed by these constitutions. Then they should devote themselves with diligence to offices of charity towards their neighbor, doing with prudence and assiduity whatever, accord-

ing to the circumstances of time and place, may be available for the promotion of God's glory, and their own spiritual advancement."

This ideal had developed in Paul's heart over the years. Even after the first papal approval in 1741, Paul continued to make further revisions and adjustments. He heeded the recommendations of others, testing them by his own experiences and with the continuing inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Future Passionists would long debate the precise interrelationship between the contemplative (Paul never used the word "monastic") aspects of his community and the works of the active apostolate for one's neighbor. For Paul there was no problem. The community exercises prepared one for the apostolate, while the apostolate demanded of each an ever deeper spirit of prayer and charity.

Again and again he returned to Rome to seek further and evermore solemn approval of his Rule and community. Paul had wanted his community to be approved as a religious Order in the Church with solemn vows (like the Benedictines, the Franciscans, the Dominicans and Jesuits). He never obtained this. Instead, Clement XIV gave Paul's community the new canonical form of an exempt Congregation with simple vows (including the passion vow), but with many of the privileges of the great Orders. A final approval was given by Pope Pius VI in 1775.

* * *

Once the first retreat was established on Monte Argentaro and the Rule was approved, Paul soon found that much more remained to be done. In the following years he opened eleven retreats, or monasteries. The final one was a gift from Pope Clement XIV, the magnificent Roman basilica, monastery, and garden of Sts. John and Paul on the Coelian Hill across from the Coliseum. Even today the successor of St. Paul of the Cross resides there as the general superior of the entire Congregation.

Paul always found time to return to his beloved apostolate of preaching the passion to the poor. Before he died he had preached missions in more than eight hundred churches of Italy.

His final mission was at the Church of St. Mary in Trastevere, the poorest part of the Rome of his day. The Church was crowded with cardinals, nobles, wealthy women—all mingling with the ordi-

nary and poor people of the neighborhood. It seemed that just everyone wanted to hear the famous missionary, Father Paul of the Cross, one of the greatest preachers of the eighteenth century.

Through preaching missions, Paul accomplished a renewal of Christian life among the people of central Italy. He would convert hardened sinners, would inspire mediocre Catholics to strive for more dedicated Christian living. His discourses on the passion could stir the coldest heart. Enemies would be reconciled, worldly people would give up their vain life.

Paul's secret was simply this: He was more than a preacher. He was especially a teacher. His teaching was not in a school or classroom but on the mission platform, for he wanted to teach people how to pray, to meditate upon the passion, to be ever mindful of the sufferings of the God who loves us. He very clearly stated in the opening chapter of the first Rule that the purpose of the Congregation is "not only *to devote ourselves to prayer* that we may be united with God by charity, *but also to lead others to do the same.*"

Paul taught a method of prayer that would inspire one to strive for a deeper following of Christ, a walking after him along the way of the cross. He would challenge his hearers to die with Christ in order to rise with him, to die the mystical death so as to some day rise up with Christ to a life of faith and love. His teaching on prayer could lead to highest union with God in a mystical life.

Even in an age when so many confused authentic mysticism with quietism and forms of passivism, Paul insisted that God does call Christians to mystical death and rebirth. For Paul Daneo was a man of suffering, of mystical prayer. He shared deeply in the sufferings of Christ. This was another side of Paul, hidden even from those close to him.

On the first day of his retreat (after his clothing in the habit) he had written in his journal: "There is only one thing I desire: to be on the Cross with Jesus." This desire grew through all the remaining years of his life.

"Being on the Cross with Jesus" meant being driven away from the papal palace in Rome, having companions come and go, not knowing where to begin his Congregation nor what ministry to undertake, seeing Roman prelates mitigate his Rule. These are some of the things that kept Paul on the cross.

"Being on the Cross with Jesus" also meant for Paul the labors of mission work: long hours in the confessional, the struggle to win the people to conversion, the weariness of daily preaching day after day. He knew moments of success but he also experienced failure, being misunderstood, made fun of and mocked. Paul knew that "dark night" and "mystical death" that accompany the dedicated missionary.

"Being on the Cross with Jesus" meant even more for Paul. He would remain on his knees for long hours in prayer. Prayer became the essential action of each day. But his prayer consisted of long periods of aridity and even interior desolation. For Paul to be at prayer meant remaining with Jesus in Gethsemani. Paul experienced something of the very abandonment by the Father that Jesus felt on the cross. With the Lord he would cry out, "Why have you abandoned me?" He felt absorbed in the sufferings and wounds of Christ. He would say that he approached prayer "clothed in the very sufferings of Christ."

Paul Daneo was indeed the saint of the passion, one mystically crucified with Christ, sharing in his sufferings. He lived his life "on the Cross with Jesus."

Paul, the apostle and mystic of the passion, was called to found the Congregation to keep the memory of the passion alive in the hearts of all. As a recent writer puts it, "Saint Paul of the Cross saw as the root of all evil in Catholicism the failure to remember the Passion." In his reform program, St. Paul of the Cross went back to the last and explicit will and testament of Jesus: remember him, celebrate his memory and the memory of his death. This is the reason why the Congregation was founded. This devotion to the passion, this continual remembrance, this memorial of the passion, is the special grace and charism of his Congregation. It is truly the Congregation of the *Passion.*

Death came to Paul at the age of eighty-one, on the feast of St. Luke, at the monastery of Sts. John and Paul in Rome. It was 1775—the year of Lexington and Bunker Hill. The Revolutions were not far away!

At a time when the Church was under attack on so many sides, when formalism and legalism and Jansenism stifled the love for Jesus in the hearts of so many of the faithful, God raised up this man to be a founder, a preacher, a mystic. For certainly, Paul of the Cross

is God's gift to the Church in the century of Enlightenment. And the Church has been well served by this man and his religious Congregation. Yes, the Church did well to give to St. Paul of the Cross "the welcome and approval of her authority" (Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, no. 1). For Paul's Congregation is "a divine gift which the Church has received from her Lord" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 43).

* * *

We close this chapter by briefly summing up the path Paul followed in receiving his charism.

First of all, we notice that the elements of the charism did not emerge all at once and in full stature. Over a period of time as an earnest layman, hermit, nurse, priest, missionary, superior, founder, he experienced the call to solitude, to poverty, to a variety of ways of serving his neighbor, by the unifying force of the memory of the Lord's passion.

Secondly, he and his companions had to live out each element of the charism. They had to learn by experience the reality of solitude, penance, prayer, and ministry. Only by being on the cross with Jesus could Paul and his fellow religious know the meaning of mystical dying with Christ.

Finally, there was the burdensome task of putting this dream into words, into a document, a Rule, and then to submit it to the highest authority in the Church for papal approval. How often Paul reedited his Rule seeking the accurate expression, the precise emendation. He could not at one moment formulate in words his vision, his dream. Guided by the Spirit, responding to the demands of authority, learning from his experiences and those of his companions, accepting the needs of the people of his time and country—only in this way could he finalize his Rule. We must confess that the final formulation, while authentic, lost something of the enthusiasm, the enchantment, of the dream.

What Paul and his companions had to do must be done again and again by succeeding generations of Passionists. They, too, have to dream the dream, live it out, even shape the charism to the times in which they live. This is what *The Passionists* attempts to do.

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2

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini

In eighteenth-century Italy there was in every city and town one or more convents of religious women, called "nuns." Ever since the Council of Trent such convents were strictly bound by cloister, which meant that no one could enter the convent, nor could the nuns leave the enclosed area. The nuns devoted themselves to prayer and penance within the convent walls. They were supported by the charity of benefactors and by the dowry they brought with them when they entered.

There were also communities of sisters who engaged in ministries to young girls and women. They took religious vows but they were not as strictly cloistered as were the nuns. Usually their communities were under the complete control of the local bishops, and frequently their rule had not been approved by the Holy See.

From the very first years as a hermit Paul Daneo began the ministry of spiritual direction. Shortly after his forty-days retreat he requested permission to give spiritual conferences to the Augustinian nuns of Castellazzo. Later he wrote several letters of spiritual direction to one of the nuns.

Paul was aware of the holiness of many nuns, but he also realized some of the problems they experienced. After his ordination and on his return to Monte Argentaro, he would gladly give retreats to nuns while he was conducting a mission at the nearby churches.

In 1739 Father Paul was asked to give the retreat to the Benedictine nuns at the convent of St. Lucy in Corneto (now called Tarquinia). He came in the black habit and barefoot. As in other

convents, he spoke about the nun's call to the interior life of prayer, solitude, and penance. Of course, he also urged the nuns to meditate upon the sufferings of Jesus. His presence and preaching stirred the nuns to renewed efforts in striving for religious perfection.

In the course of this retreat one of the nuns, known then as Sr. Mary Candida of the Crucified, opened her heart to him to tell him the story of her life and the interior graces God was giving her. Paul recognized in this young nun one whom God was calling. He told her of his own dream of one day founding a convent of Passionist nuns who would spend their life in prayer and penance in memory of the passion of Jesus.

Paul had in fact for many years realized that women as well as men were called to live his spirituality of the passion. One of his first converts had been a young woman of the Grazi family of Orbetello, Agnes by name. Under Paul's direction Agnes advanced in prayer to mystical union with the crucified Christ. Paul felt that perhaps one day she would join his convent for Passionist nuns. When she died at an early age Paul accepted God's will, but the dream remained.

Later he began the direction of a Poor Clare Nun of Piombino, Sr. Cherubina Bresciani. Again, he mentioned to her the possibility of a community of women dedicated to the passion. Another holy woman whom Paul was directing received a vision of doves mourning over the wounded Christ on the cross. Paul saw this as a vision of his future daughters. But nothing eventuated, although Paul continued to hope.

As she listened to Father Paul, Sister Mary Candida realized that it was he of whom the Lord had spoken to her. With tears in her heart she told him of her dream, of how God had been working in her life.

In 1713, the very year Paul Daneo had experienced his conversion, a daughter was born to the Costantini family of Corneto. She was baptized Faustina. When she was fourteen, she too felt the call to a life of prayer and penance. But she had to help her father raise the family after the early death of her mother. Later, when she wanted to enter an austere convent, her father told her that the only convent she could enter was the Benedictine convent of St. Lucy in Corneto. This she did, even though she felt the Lord really wanted her in a stricter convent.

Sister Candida made profession of her vows on November 22, 1734 (the fourteenth anniversary of Paul's reception of the Passionist habit). As she handed the signed document of her vows to the mother prioress, she whispered to Jesus, "In virtue of your most holy passion, accept me as a victim of your holy love."

She prayed to Jesus to share in his passion. "I often repeated to him, 'You are a spouse of blood; I want to be your true follower.' " When tempted with fierce temptations she heard the invitation to "enter into the Sacred Heart" with the moving words of the Song of Songs: "Come, my love, hide in the cleft of the rock."

All this she told Father Paul. Years later she remembered that wonderful day: "A few years after my profession I got to know the Venerable Paul of the Cross on the occasion when he came to give the spiritual exercises to the religious of the convent of St. Lucy. . . .

After Paul gave the retreat, especially the first one, one could see the great reform of life in the convent. All the religious began to treat one another with greater charity, to perform more frequent acts of humility, to stay away from the parlor-window and to observe greater silence."

She added: "The first time the Servant of God came to give the spiritual exercises at the convent of St. Lucy he was wearing a very poor rough tunic, with a mantle, but barefoot and without a hat or berretino. Just to see him moved one to compassion and devotion."

From that date onward Mother Mary Crucified, as she was now called, began a frequent and long correspondence with Father Paul. Only thirty-two letters have been preserved and recently published in an English translation. Unfortunately, most have been lost. Mother Mary Crucified testified that she even burned some, lest others read about God's gifts to her.

Paul continued to direct her as one very special. Years later, Paul recalled their first meeting. In his Christmas letter of 1764 he wrote of it: "I hope to see you clothed in the same habit of the Most Holy Passion of Jesus Christ which I wear. God entrusted your soul to me many years ago."

Later he wrote again: "If God will give me life and strength to see the foundation through, it is most certain that you shall be the first to be clothed in the habit of the most holy Passion. I hope to give it to you with my own hands for the glory of Jesus Christ and Holy Mary. However, keep this as a secret in your heart" (June 3, 1766).

Paul saw the convent of the nuns as belonging to the Institute of the Passion. He wanted the Passionist nuns to be the "Second Order" of his institute, as the Poor Clares are with the Franciscans and the Carmelite nuns among the Carmelites. This meant that the first convent could not be built until the male branch was firmly established as a religious Order with solemn vows, clerical jurisdiction, and exemption, subject only to the Holy See. Until solemn vows were granted Paul did not take steps to found the Passionist convent for his many spiritual daughters.

But God had other plans. When Mother Mary Crucified was sick in the infirmary in 1741, Jesus appeared to her and said: "Rise up now. I will restore your health, but on the condition that in due time

you found a monastery of nuns who will have as their purpose the honoring of my sorrowful Passion. *You yourself* will have to enter it, and *you* must cooperate in its foundation."

Paul continued to wait for solemn vows. When a Portuguese priest, Don Joseph Carboni, invited Mother Mary Crucified to establish a community devoted to the passion in a convent he was building in Rome, she thought it was time to move. Paul warned against such an action. Eventually Don Carboni's request fell through.

At this time, her younger brother was killed by robbers in the family home. Her two brothers, Dominic and Canon Nicholas, decided to build a convent in memory of their slain brother. But when the family became involved in the writing of the rule for "their" convent, Paul washed his hands of the whole affair.

Solemn vows were denied Paul in 1760 by Pope Clement XIII. Paul's community would never become an Order with a female branch. If the convent of nuns devoted to the passion was to be founded, Mother Mary Crucified felt that she herself should go to Rome to present her case to the pope. Paul wrote back that this is not how one proceeds. Had he forgotten his own insistence on going to Rome in 1721, or had he learned from that experience?

Mother Mary Crucified did not go to the Pope. In fact she did not have to go, for at the death of Pope Clement XIII (Feb. 28, 1769), the new pope (Clement XIV) would be most kind to Father Paul.

Pope Clement invited Paul to visit him. Paul told him of his many trials all these years in attempting to found a convent for the Passionist nuns. The pope listened with fatherly concern.

In a short time, Clement XIV issued a papal bull giving Paul's Congregation all the rights and privileges of a religious Order, even jurisdiction and papal exemption. He arranged that the Monastery of Sts. John and Paul be given to the Passionists. Finally he approved the Rule Paul had written for the Passionist nuns and decreed the opening of the convent at Corneto. Mother Mary Crucified was allowed to transfer from the convent of St. Lucy to this new convent, together with the other women whom Paul had been directing.

The great day finally came, May 3, 1771. The ten women, together with Mother Mary Crucified, were given the Passionist habit and entered the new Convent of the Presentation. The bishop and the entire town of Corneto celebrated. Fr. John Mary Cioni, Paul's confessor, preached the homily.

Some miles away in Rome, Paul lay on his sick bed in the hospice of the Crucified. He never got to Corneto to see Mother Mary Crucified and the first Passionists. He himself did not give her the habit. Four years later he would be dead.

From his sick bed he assisted her with letters and with his prayers and sufferings. Two years after the solemn opening he wrote: *"May you be the model for the Daughters of the Passion.* They should mourn perpetually for the love of the Crucified Lord, not only by the habit they wear, but even more so in their hearts, their minds and their actions. In this way they shall heal his holy wounds by the continual practice of the virtues, since this is the purpose for the foundation of their Institute" (May 12, 1773).

In the founding of the Passionist nuns' community, Paul's role is clear. The "charism" was originally the Holy Spirit's gift to Paul. His was the task of arranging for the canonical foundation, by reason of his friendship with Pope Clement XIV. And he had written the Rule, which the Pope "welcomed" as God's gift to the Church.

Mother Mary Crucified had her own role to fulfill as the first novice mistress and superior. It was left to her to explain the spirit of the Rule to the first nuns. And it was her role to serve as model and example of the Passionist way of life for her small originating community and for all Passionist nuns in the centuries to follow. She was interpreter and model of the Passionist charism, as shared and lived by these cloistered religious women.

And cloistered the Passionist nuns were. St. Paul insisted on this. For according to the canon law of the time (since the Council of Trent), only cloistered women were truly "religious." Cloister was very important for Paul. He knew the abuses in so many convents of his time. He knew the requirements of canon law. To assure that the female branch of his institute would be recognized as "real" religious and would perdure in the Church, he even inserted into the Rule legislation for the vow of enclosure.

For Paul, however, the enclosure was more than a necessary legality. For he wanted the nuns to be truly contemplative, "Brides of Christ" he calls them, "Daughters of the Sacred Passion," "Doves mourning over the wounds of Christ." The cloister would enable them to devote themselves to contemplative prayer.

Paul also realized the needs of his time. The nuns were to take "the vow to promote devotion to the Passion of Christ" as did the

fathers and brothers. Of course, they could not fulfill this vow by preaching. Paul wanted them to fulfill it by their life of contemplative prayer and penance. Their prayer would continue throughout the day and into the middle of the night. Their penance consisted in perpetual fasting and abstinence, in going barefoot, and in other austerities.

The Second Vatican Council almost seems to be speaking of Mother Mary Crucified's fervent community when it states: "Let no one think that by their consecration religious have become *strangers* to their fellow men and women or *useless citizens* of this earthly city. . . . In a more profound sense these same religious are *united with them in the heart of Christ* and cooperate with them spiritually" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 46).

Zealous man that he was, Paul also discovered other ways for the nuns to fulfill the Passion vow. He left norms for one of the sisters to teach Christian doctrine to "young girls seven years of age or older," to prepare young girls for the reception of their First Communion, then normally received at the age of twelve. He provided, however, that those to be thus instructed would remain "outside the cloister."

Paul's zeal led him further. He knew that women as well as men need the helps of the spiritual exercises. He had already provided for rooms to be set aside in his monasteries for men to make a retreat from time to time. He put this same provision in the nuns' rule, even allowing such women to enter "within the enclosure" with the permission of the bishop.

The time might come when it could prove difficult to fulfill these suggestions of St. Paul of the Cross. Perhaps he meant these apostolic services merely as possibilities? Perhaps he had in his vision the more active communities of Passionist sisters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?

All this St. Paul of the Cross did to establish the Passionist nuns in the Church. Paul is indeed the "founder." Mother Mary Crucified, as the superior and guide of the first convent, has earned the title of foundress of the first convent. Through this role and precisely because of her profound sharing in Paul's charism, she is also called co-foundress, with St. Paul, of the Passionist religious family.

In 1982 Pope John Paul II approved the document declaring that she had practiced heroic virtue and should be called "Venerable." Passionists everywhere await the day of her beatification.

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3

St. Vincent Mary Strambi

Passionist priests, brothers, and nuns awoke on October 19, 1775, to the realization that the future of the Congregation was in their hands. Father Paul was no longer with them. He had died the day before.

The founder had worked hard during those final months to leave the Congregation "well-founded and established in the church." During the recent general chapter, he and the chapter members had gone through the constitutions paragraph by paragraph. At his request the new Pope, Pius VI, solemnly approved the revised *Rules and Constitutions.* Even as he received viaticum on August 30, Paul announced his final legacy to all the religious, those present and all future Passionists.

Yes, he felt that he had left everything in good order. Now the Congregation could endure until the end of time. His followers needed only to follow the path he had set before them, to preserve the records of those founding years. The modern Passionist historian Fr. Carmelo Amadeo Naselli has pointed out that the historians of that earlier period did exactly that, for they spent more time in preserving and reworking the records of the Congregation during Paul's life than in writing about the events of their own time!

Actually, St. Paul of the Cross did not leave the Congregation without problems. Serious matters about the health of the religious, especially the younger men, had to be solved. The norms for the

intellectual formation of the students were not completely satisfactory. Father Paul had not clarified the proper balance between the homelife of prayer and study and the apostolate of preaching and serving the faithful. The nuns also felt the need for further counsel and inspiration from Father Paul. The Congregation would confront these problems for many years to come.

Moreover, neither Father Paul nor his first religious realized what lay ahead in the immediate future. Father Paul died even as the first shots had been fired in Lexington and Concord. The following year, colonists in North America would dare to write a Declaration of Independence. The Revolution would strike France within fourteen years, and when it would be over two Popes would have been exiled and all the houses of the Congregation closed, even the Corneto convent!

We must not demand that the first Passionists foresee the future. Our purpose is to see how they followed the Passionist calling in the times in which they were living. What immediately awaited the first Passionists was to recapture the dream of the founder, to redream his dream. But in that hour of loss, these first Passionists sought to be faithful to the charism of the founder by enacting more regulations. Each succeeding chapter passed further and more detailed legislation. The Passionist charism would be preserved by laws!

The second general superior after St. Paul of the Cross, his own spiritual director, Fr. John Mary Cioni (1784–1790), did seek and obtain from the Holy See a rescript that allowed the religious to eat meat and to shorten the time of the midnight prayer. This dispensation was felt to be necessary for the health of the religious, in order to provide sufficient nourishment and rest. Of course, not all agreed.

Moreover, out of respect for the founder, this rescript was not inserted into the constitutions. No one wished to insert changes in the final Rule of St.Paul of the Cross. Interestingly, Father John Mary was not reelected general in 1790. His more conservative and rigid predecessor, Fr. John Baptist Gorassio, also became his successor.

Many of these problems became academic as the impact of the French Revolution reached into Italy and even to the Papal States. During this difficult period, the Congregation was blessed to have among its membership a saintly man of prayer, a zealous preacher, a learned theologian, the priest and bishop Fr. Vincent Mary Strambi.

His story shows how he dreamed the dream of St. Paul of the Cross in those troubled times, even as he supported his brethren and the Church amid the problems of the Revolution.

Vincent Strambi was born in Civitavecchia, the port city of Rome, on January 1, 1745. Father Paul had already opened three monasteries and received the first papal approval. Vincent was an only child, the joy of his parents. As a lad he had been educated by the Franciscans. When he was fifteen he begged his parents to allow him to enter the clerical state. His father granted this permission. Vincent received clerical tonsure and entered the seminary at nearby Montefiascone (November 1762).

Two years later he decided to continue his studies, not in the seminary, but in Rome. There he attended lectures on sacred eloquence, or preaching. The following year he went to the Dominican house of studies in Viterbo to study theology. While in Viterbo, he lived first with the parish priest and then was hired to teach the two sons of the Ctaci family, who provided a room for him in their home.

Ordained a subdeacon in 1766, he became prefect of the seminary at Montefiascone while continuing his own studies under two learned priests. He was ordained a deacon in March of 1767 and became rector of the seminary at Bagnorea. That December he made his ordination retreat at the Passionist monastery in nearby Vetralla, where he met St. Paul of the Cross. He was ordained on December 19, 1767, and celebrated Christmas with his family as a priest.

During Lent of 1768 Vincent preached the great Lenten sermons at the parish of Viteriolo, and then he returned to Rome to study at the Dominican house of studies on the Aventine. But he finally decided to join Father Paul's community. He went to the novitiate on Monte Argentaro in September of 1768 and took his vows a year later.

Father Vincent had just six years to absorb the spirit of the Congregation from Father Paul. He was sent to Vetralla for two further years of Scripture study and sermon writing. He then gave his first mission with the man who would succeed Paul as general, Fr. John Baptist Gorassio.

In 1773, Father Paul wanted this zealous new Passionist close to himself at the newly acquired monastery of Sts. John and Paul in Rome. There Paul put the former seminary prefect and rector in charge of the training of the young students for future missionary

preaching. Eventually Father Vincent would write a manual, *Sacred Eloquence.*

In this way Father Vincent was able to be with Paul during the final years of his life. Paul saw in this young man the apostolic spirit of holiness he was bequeathing to his Congregation. We are told that as he was dying, Father Paul one day turned to Father Vincent Mary and told him he was entrusting the Congregation to his care.

Vincent, like the others, missed the founder very much as he continued to prepare young Passionists for the missionary apostolate. He also went forth to preach missions as often as possible. In 1780 he became rector of the Community of Sts. John and Paul, and in 1781 he was elected provincial. He also served as provincial and general consultor. During this time he published a biography of the founder. Father Vincent used the testimonies of eyewitnesses as given in the canonization processes. It is said that he wrote the life of St. Paul of the Cross on his knees, out of reverence for the founder.

His *Life* of Father Paul became a classic and was greeted with enthusiasm by many. It has become a life of a saint by a saint. Incidentally, the English translation was published in London with a preface by Blessed Dominic Barberi. If Dominic is one day canonized, then we would have a life of a saint by a saint, with a preface by a saint!

Pope Pius VI had encouraged the superiors to gather testimony about Father Paul from those who knew him. Testimony was taken in Rome, Alessandria, Orbetello, Gaeta, and Viterbo, beginning in 1777. When this work was concluded the cause of the founder could be presented in Rome. Father Vincent was asked to promote the cause as the postulator, which he did quite successfully. Later on, after the turmoil of the French Revolution, Pope Pius VII would issue the decree stating the heroic virtues of Venerable Paul of the Cross.

In the meantime, the French Revolution broke out in Paris with the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789. Pope Pius VI, on March 10, 1791, condemned the Civil Constitution of the Church and the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Louis XVIII was executed as the Republic was established. The Reign of Terror soon followed.

All Europe became involved. The Directory sent General Bonaparte to Italy and into the Papal States. Rome was occupied by the French as the Roman republic was proclaimed. Pius VI fled. Several times Father Vincent was called upon to give a public mis-

sion to help the people face this oppression from the French. Outstanding were his missions at the Piazza del Populo in Rome and at the Piazza di Colonna. Most of the Passionist houses were closed for a year or more at this time. Pius VI was taken into exile at Valence, France, where he died on August 29, 1799. Early the next year, he was succeeded by Pope Pius VII. Napoleon Bonaparte became First Consul and signed a concordat with the new pope in 1801.

Shortly after his election, the new pope, Pius VII, appointed Father Vincent as bishop of Macerata and Tolentino. Vincent was consecrated on June 26, 1801, and took possession of his two sees within a few months. He began his episcopal ministry with Passionist missions at both see cities, he himself doing some of the preaching. He insisted on the reform of the clergy, promoted studies among them, frequently met with pastors, visited the religious, tried to improve seminary education. He was a post-Tridentine bishop who strove to live up to the council's ideals and the example of St. Charles Boromeo. Even though he lived in the Papal States over which the pope was the only temporal authority, Vincent saw his role entirely as bishop. He never infringed upon the authority of the civil government regulated by the Holy See.

In spite of the earlier concordat with the pope, Napoleon invaded the Papal States. Pius VII was taken into exile to Fontainebleau in France, in May of 1812. Napoleon demanded of the bishops in the now-occupied Papal States that they, too, take the oath of allegiance to himself. Vincent refused, because his allegiance was to the pope as the temporal lord of the Papal States. In fact, he and the other bishops presented a common front by refusing to acknowledge the emperor as the legitimate ruler of the papal domains.

Napoleon now required more. He decreed the suppression of religious Orders. On June 2, 1810, he had the imperial decree published in Rome on the stately columns of the Campidoglio. All religious Orders not engaged in hospital care or teaching were to be suppressed. The religious must leave their monasteries and return to their native towns. There they would be expected to take the oath.

Of the 243 in the Congregation in 1810, 9 took the oath, 27 died, 65 left the Congregation, and 151 returned. Several were put in prison or exiled to the dungeons of Corsica. Among the nuns there were 29 religious in the convent when it was closed. Of these 4 died during the suppression, one left and was not heard of again, and one other was dispensed.

During these years, Bishop Strambi was exiled from his dioceses and confined to religious houses in Milan and Novara. There he proved a support to his fellow bishops and a source of strength to his people. He assisted his Passionist brethren as best he could.

But the end was to come quickly. The Revolution, begun in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity, brought forth the horrors of the Reign of Terror and burst into the glory of a brief imperial victory, only to perish in the icy snows of Russia and the flames of Moscow. The events worthy of the magnificent musical composition of the *1812 Overture* reached into the lives of men and women all over Europe.

But now it was over. Defeated at last, Napoleon abdicated on April 20, 1814. Pope Pius VII returned to Rome on May 20. At this news, religious prepared to return to their monasteries and convents. A number of exiled Passionists returned to Rome and to Sts. John and Paul on June 27. They were the first religious to be reestablished. Shortly after the community gathered at Sts. John and Paul on the Coelian Hill, Fr. Joachim (of the Holy Spirit) Petrelli exhorted the brethren in the words of 1 Maccabees: "Let us now go up to cleanse and renew the Holy Place" (1 Macc 45:36). Explaining this text he stated: "We have a great need of reform, but not in our rules, nor in our regulations, nor in the authority of the superiors (as is suggested by some who have lost their vocations); but our great need for reform is in our own conduct!" Passionists contributed to the restoration by giving missions in Rome from August 14 to 23, and elsewhere in the Papal States. With fervor they exhorted the people to conversion, repentance, and reform.

Fifteen Passionist nuns returned to their convent at Corneto (Tarquinia) on December 23, 1815. They found that the convent had been used for orphans and sick women. The nuns had to find a place for these poor people. Then they began once again their life of prayer and penance for the Church and the Holy Father.

By the Treaty of Vienna the Papal States were restored to the Holy See. Almost all Catholics felt that the pope had a divine right to this territory in central Italy. Without it he would not be free to guide the Church and to communicate with his bishops. To safeguard this right, the popes became deeply involved in the restoration of the old order.

After all the horrors that had taken place in France and in the rest of Europe, including two popes driven by force out of Rome,

priests and nuns executed in Paris, it is no wonder that many in the Church looked to the "legitimate monarchs" and the possession of the Papal States for safety and security. The popes were content to follow a policy of concordats with the rulers, whether Catholic or not.

There is no doubt that the possibilities of a new dawn based upon liberty, fraternity, and equality could have emerged from the storm and thunder of the French Revolution. But few could see such an effect coming from the horrors of a revolution which appeared more as an unleashing of passions than the birth of values that were basically Christian.

Bishop Vincent returned to his episcopal sees and began the necessary reform and renewal. The pope had him come to Rome to give the retreat to the cardinals, and then, in 1820, to the Roman clergy. When Pius VII died and was succeeded by Leo XII, Vincent resigned his two sees. The pope insisted that he live with him in the Quirinal. There he offered his life for the ailing pope and on January 1, 1824, he died.

Yes, at that very critical moment for the Church and for the new Congregation of the Passion, God had raised up a saintly man, priest and bishop, honored by the Church in 1950 as a saint.

As the Vatican Council has reminded us, God calls Christians from both the lay and clerical states to the religious life. Father Vincent came to the Passionists as a priest who had been formed and educated in a small Tridentine seminary of that period but who had also experienced university life in Rome and Viterbo. Even more, he had shown the talent for teaching and training other young men for the priesthood. He brought these talents and experiences to the Congregation at this critical period following the death of the founder and throughout the Revolutionary suppressions and during the Restoration.

As a Passionist, Vincent was a man of prayer and community observance. He was also a zealous and effective missionary preacher. He helped to develop the methodology for Passionist missionary preaching, and he also exercised roles of authority and leadership in the Congregation. As biographer of the founder, he did much to preserve the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross for future generations.

As a bishop, Strambi was loyal to the Pope and Holy See. He was a true pastor of souls, not involved in political matters unless

forced by circumstances of the times. He brought to the episcopacy a spirituality of prayer, prudence, and pastoral dedication.

In the history of the Passionists we will meet other men called to the order of the episcopacy. They will be bishops in the Church of God, serving God's people. Some, like St. Vincent Mary Strambi, will undergo imprisonment and persecution for the cause of Christ. For again and again a pope has called Passionist priests to join him in the collegial service of the people of God, even as Pope John Paul II did in 1991 when he appointed the former Passionist general, Paul Boyle, to serve as bishop in Mandeville, Jamaica.

Finally, the story of St. Vincent Mary Strambi shows us the breadth and length and height and depth of the Passionist charism. For it is not something possessed by St. Paul of the Cross alone, nor by him in its entirety. It cannot be preserved simply by laws and regulations. In the generations after the death of the founder this charism will manifest itself in various ways: in prayer and teaching, in preaching and writing, in administration and pastoring, in exile and even martyrdom. It will be shared by priests and brothers, nuns and sisters, laymen and laywomen, even by bishops.

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4

The Bulgarian Missions (1781–1849)

Several times the Holy See suggested that perhaps the Passionists could send missionaries to an area along the Danube River, then part of the Ottoman Empire of the Turks. The Christians in the area were chiefly of ancient Eastern Rites under the authority of the Greek patriarch of Constantinople. But there was a small group, perhaps not four thousand, of the ancient Manichean sect called Bogomils, who were converted to the Latin Rite by Franciscan missionaries in the sixteenth century. They were also known as the Paulitians. St. Paul of the Cross was unable to follow up on this invitation, even though he would have been so pleased to do so.

Some time after Paul's death, Cardinal Antonelli of the Propagation of the Faith once again asked the Passionists to minister to these people. This time the general was able to accept the mission, and two religious departed in 1781. They served the Catholics of several villages with their center at Trancevitsa near the city of Nicopolis. A second expedition went in 1790, and from then on missionaries continued to go to Bulgaria and later to Romania throughout the nineteenth century and down to the end of the Second World War.

At the death in 1805 of Bishop Paul Dovanlia of Nicopolis in Bulgaria, Fr. Francis Ferreri of the first Passionist band was appointed

bishop. He was consecrated at Sts. John and Paul on September 22, 1805, and returned to Bulgaria in January 1806.

Bishop Ferreri had only three or four missionaries to assist him. The people were poor, suffering from drought and famine, and ravaged by bandits called Kargeli. Many of the Catholics moved to Hungary or Romania. In 1812 Bishop Ferreri followed his refugees into Romania to a village on the outskirts of Bucharest, where he died of the plague in the following year.

Back in Italy, a young man professed his vows as a Passionist in 1805. In 1810, when the Napoleonic edict ordered all religious to leave their monasteries, he was a member of the San Angelo community at Vetralla. His name was Fr. Joseph Mary Molajoni.

Father Joseph's family had an estate nearby at Merlano. There he and Frs. Paul Aloysius Pighi and Joachim Petrelli and Br. George Pariggiani sought refuge. It was to this group that eighteen-year-old Dominic Barberi would go to for spiritual advice.

However, these secularized Passionists were not allowed to remain at Merlano very long. Most of the clergy of Viterbo had taken the forbidden oath to Napoleon. They asked the Passionists to leave, lest their presence stir up the ire of the French occupation forces. For a while longer Father Joseph was allowed to remain, and he became pastor of a country parish. He still refused to take the oath or to pray for the usurper Napoleon.

Finally, he was forced to give up the parish and was sent to Civitavecchia, where he remained under house arrest. On December 3, 1813, he and several others were arrested and put in prison, and on December 17 they were forced to board a ship, *The Torch*. They sailed along the coast to Monte Argentaro, then on to Elba, and slowly across the sea to Corsica.

In Corsica, on Christmas Eve, 1813, they were placed in the Donjon of the Fortress of Bastia. Father Joseph was kept in the Donjon until the end of February, when he was put in the hospital because of his weakened condition. On April 11 the hospital was invaded by townspeople who cried out: "The French have been overthrown! You are free! You may leave!"

Eventually Father Joseph found his way to Rome and joined others at Sts. John and Paul. In April of 1815 he was made rector of the retreat of St. Sosio (Falvaterra). Later that same year he resigned to go to Bulgaria, where he ministered to the people in various vil-

lages and also served as vicar general (1821–1825) to the second Passionist bishop, Fortunato Ercolani.

When Bishop Ercolani was assigned to an Italian diocese, Father Joseph was appointed bishop of Nicopolis. He was consecrated at Sts. John and Paul on September 25, 1825.

Bishop Molajoni found the first five years quite difficult, for Turkey and Russia were at war. The people were poor and still suffering from plague and drought. The Turkish authorities also made it difficult to open schools, to build churches, to minister to the people.

After 1830 the situation improved. Molajoni was able to build churches at Trancevitsa, Belene, and Orescia. Missionaries continued to come from Italy and also to return. One of these missionaries was Joseph Snell, later to go to Australia.

The bishop of Nicopolis also was responsible for the Latin Rite Catholics in Bucharest. There on Easter Day, April 4, 1847, a terrible fire swept through the city. About two-thirds of the city was ravaged, including the one Latin church in the suburb of Baratia, the bishop's residence, and the residence of the Franciscans.

Bishop Joseph found this last disaster just too much. The years of imprisonment under Napoleon, the extreme poverty of his people, the constant obstacles raised by Turkish bureaucracy, and now this fire—all these took their toll on his health. He was allowed to return to Italy, where he spent his final years at St. Joseph's novitiate on Monte Argentaro, like a fervent novice. While there he ordained Bernard Mary Silvestrelli, future general and now beatified. Bishop Joseph Molajoni died in 1859.

Passionists continued to go to Bulgaria. Altogether thirteen were made bishops in that country and in Romania. There they served the people, chiefly as parish priests, and they conducted schools with the help of various communities, including the Passionist sisters of England. At Resciuk they built a large residence, which would later become a novitiate for recruits from among the young men of their parishes. Over the years young Bulgarians joined the Passionist community.

In many ways the Passionist mission or ministry in Bulgaria and Romania is a hidden story. Even most Passionists are only faintly aware of fellow missionaries in Bulgaria. What is even more disturbing is that their experiences have had little impact on Passionist thinking and decision making. Of course, the persecution of the last forty

years and the death of Bishop Eugene Bossilkov have made them a real part of the "silent church," but they continue to be the "silent province" of the Congregation!

This "silent province" teaches all Passionists how to respond to the needs of a local Church, even one as small and persecuted as the local Latin Church of northern Bulgaria and Romania. Other Passionists, without realizing it, would be following their example. Even in more recent times, for example, there have been Passionists who worked among the blacks in the United States in pre-civil rights days, among Italian migrants in western Europe, among East German refugees of the "diaspora" in West Germany after the Second World War, among the few Catholics of Sweden today. When such people need assistance, Passionists have responded to the call of the local Church or the Propagation of the Faith.

The example of the Bulgarian missionaries also shows the problems and difficulties that Passionists face when working in nontraditional Passionist ministries. We will frequently see these problems in other places and times.

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5

Fr. Anthony (of St. James) Testa

The first century of Passionist history is called the "peninsular period," for the Congregation was confined to the peninsula of Italy, except for the few who went to Bulgaria. The confinement of the Congregation to Italy was not precisely the choice of the founder nor of his first followers. Just when expansion might have been possible, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire stood in the way.

After a century in Italy, one man above many others stands out as the leader who brought the Passionists into new lands. His story begins at the end of the Napoleonic suppression.

A number of exiled Passionists hastened to Rome. They returned to Sts. John and Paul to take up once again the regular observance of prayer and penance and the ministry of mission preaching. Among those who returned was a young priest of twenty-eight years. He was a native of Elba, born there on October 18, 1787. In 1803 he joined the Congregation. His name was Fr. Anthony of St. James (Testa).

He had been hastily ordained in 1810, just as the edict was going forth to close all religious houses and for all priests to take the oath in favor of Napoleon. He found his way to Naples, where he taught the children of a noble family.

After Father Anthony returned to the community he was sent to Paliano as vice-master to a small class of novices, among whom was Dominic Barberi, the future apostle to England. Later, for four years, Anthony Testa was in charge of the students at Sts. John and

Paul in Rome, and he was elected rector of that monastery. Then, for four three-year terms, he served as provincial.

By 1840 there was a period of relative calm in Europe. Concordats with many countries brought a degree of stability to the Church. The hierarchies in many countries looked to the papacy for support rather than to the restored kings. New religious communities were being organized by saintly men and women, and vocations were once again increasing. Gregory XVI called upon religious to enter into the mission fields.

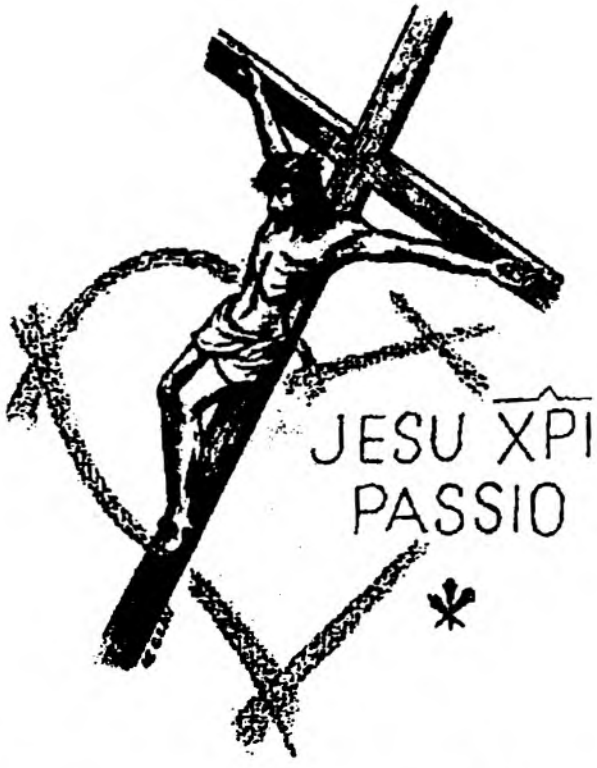
As the Passionists met in general chapter in 1839, they experienced the challenge of the times. In spite of problems and difficulties, this was the hour for decision. Unanimously, the members of the chapter looked to Fr. Anthony for the leadership the Congregation needed.

Looking back more than a century later, the first American general superior, Fr. Malcolm Lavelle, wrote of that moment: "Promising as this situation was, it needed someone to unite these disparate elements into a homogeneous group, and then to rekindle in them the spirit of the holy founder. In the unanimous choice of Father Anthony of St. James the providential man for the task was found."

His was not a simple task. Within a few years world conditions would be in turmoil once again. The revolutions of 1848 and 1849 tore up the 1815 Treaty of Vienna. On his return from exile, Pope Pius IX would find himself unable to work with the contemporary movements. The new general superior faced critical choices. He acted at once.

In Italy Father Anthony guided the Congregation through the tumultuous years that witnessed the emergence of Italian national unity at the price of independence for the Papal States. Houses were closed. Properties were secularized. Through it all Father Anthony was able to establish new houses and even a new province in Italy. At the same time he inspired many Italian Passionists to go to new countries with diverse cultures.

Father Anthony sent Dominic Barberi to Belgium and England in 1840, missionaries to Australia in 1842, and Anthony Calandri to the United States in 1852. Each foundation required patient guidance from the general superior in Rome. His guidance was firm but clear. For while he made every effort to establish the Congregation in other countries, he ensured that these "foreign" Passionists remained true Passionists in the spirit of the founder.



Father Anthony knew the teachings and spirit of the founder. He was able to keep the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross alive in the hearts of the religious. As director of students, as rector, as provincial, he had promoted the spirit of the founder among Italian Passionists, and he continued this work among those he sent into the new regions. During his generalate Father Anthony saw Paul Daneo beatified and began to prepare for his canonization.

Even though he was a superior almost all his life, Father Anthony was also a powerful preacher and ardent missionary. Throughout his long life he found time to preach missions and retreats. He continued this ministry as provincial. Later, as general superior, he wrote out the sermons and discourses that he would give the brethren during visitations and on other occasions. More than twelve volumes of his sermons and discourses have been preserved. In many ways

he encouraged the ministry of preaching as the apostolate of the Congregation.

During the critical years of the first expansion of the Congregation, outside of Italy, Father Anthony proved to be the leader the Passionists needed. In expanding the Congregation he also renewed it. We can even say that he refounded it. Malcolm Lavelle hailed him as "The Second Founder of the Congregation."

In many ways Father Anthony's efforts at renewing the Congregation anticipated the guidelines set forth by the Second Vatican Council. The renewal of a religious community requires "a continuous return to the sources of Christian life and to the original inspiration behind a given community, and to the adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times" (Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, no. 2). As we follow Father Anthony in his task we have the opportunity of seeing the principles of the council at work more than one century earlier.

Father Malcolm summarized Anthony Testa with these words:

> Unlike many whose reign is extended, he never became an anachronism. Not only did he keep up with the times; he was considerably ahead of them, and not merely as a theorist, but by effective action. He had the courage to dare, though never rashly. When his advisers showed a disposition to hesitate, to turn their backs upon new horizons, to confine the Congregation to a manageable few in a comparatively restricted area, because growth and expansion would involve risks and new problems, and because success in foreign countries was not assured, Father Anthony's persuasions prevailed.

Father Anthony Testa can rightly be called the second founder, for he expanded the Congregation outside of Italy into northern Europe, Australia, and the United States.

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6

Blessed Dominic Barberi

As Napoleon prepared for his great campaign into Russia he needed more and more young men to serve in his Grand Army. A young Italian shepherd of the hills outside of Viterbo waited anxiously, for posted on the door of the city hall amid the names of hundreds of others was the name Dominic Barberi. At twenty-one he would be drafted if his number came up. The last thing Dominic wanted was to fight in Napoleon's army, for that evil tyrant had occupied the Papal States, exiled many bishops, closed all the monasteries, and even imprisoned the Holy Father.

Dominic had been born to a poor family of farmers in 1792, just as the Revolution had begun. Both his parents were dead by the time he was a youngster of eight. An uncle and aunt raised him in the town of Merlano. They sent him out into the pastureland to tend sheep. Since schooling was not necessary to become a shepherd, young Dominic did not attend school.

Life went on day after day. Dominic soon found time to pray as he tended the sheep. He also taught himself to read and write. When Napoleon closed all the religious houses, Dominic became acquainted with several Passionists living in exile at Merlano. Among them was Fr. Joseph Mary Molajoni. Father Joseph invited Dominic to pray in the family chapel on his family's estate. In that chapel (now a shrine) he experienced mystical attractions to join the Passionists and one day to go to faraway England.

He had promised God that if he were not drafted he would become a Passionist. But when he escaped the draft at the public lottery he forgot his promise. Dominic's uncle and aunt had planned

a marriage for him, and Dominic tells us that he found the girl quite attractive. Just being near her drove away all thought of the religious life. Dominic could not tell the young woman about God's call and his own plans. In fact he never did really face up to her; he just slipped away one day and entered the nearby Passionist monastery at Vetralla.

A few days after Dominic entered the Vetralla monastery he was kneeling in prayer before the altar of the Blessed Virgin. All at once he received an interior communication that assured him that one day he would be a priest and go to England.

He entered the novitiate, took his vows, and began his studies. Dominic studied eagerly, for he had a brilliant mind. Philosophy and theology came quite easily for him. During these years he had as his director Fr. Anthony Testa. Over the years both men influenced each other very much. Dominic was ordained in Rome on March 1, 1821. For the next nineteen years he shared the life and ministries of the Passionists in Italy, but his heart was in England.

The Congregation was quickly recovering from the suppression under Napoleon. Other young men like Dominic were joining the Passionists. The observance was being faithfully kept at home while the preachers were busy in conducting missions and retreats throughout the Papal States. This was a time of restoration and growth.

Once ordained, Dominic became involved in the renewal of the Congregation. He was assigned the task of teaching philosophy and theology to the young students. He was a good teacher, for he also remained a diligent student who read widely and intelligently. The superiors asked him to write a manual of philosophy for use in the schools of the Congregation.

Dominic felt that the students should be formed into thinkers and philosophers, that they should be acquainted with the errors of the day and not simply those of the medieval period. He insisted that philosophy should take into account modern scientific advances. These were the goals he wanted to achieve in his manual.

The censors read his book and condemned it for not following St. Thomas closely enough and for departing from the traditional methods used in the seminaries. Today Dominic's book is seen as preparing for the Thomistic revival of Leo XIII.

During the restoration in France the abbé Felicite de Lammenais won much acclaim by arguing that the world could find an answer

to the Revolution in Christianity and in the papacy. Lammenais came to Rome to be hailed as a hero. Dominic had read Lammenais' writings; he wrote an article criticizing the philosophical basis of Lammenais' thesis. He was silenced by the superiors.

Later, when Lammenais endorsed liberalism and democracy, Pope Gregory XVI condemned him. Dominic was vindicated! But as a recent scholar has pointed out, "Gregory XVI condemned the liberalism of Lammenais, but truly, it was not the liberal teachings of Lammenais that Barberi had attacked; it was his theory of tradition as the basis for certitude."

During all these years Dominic was ever aware of the earlier call to work for the return of England to the Church. Wherever he went he would encourage people to pray for the conversion of that country. He began to study the English language.

The Passionist Monastery and Church of Sts. John and Paul on the Coelian Hill had been the Roman church of the English cardinal, Nicholas Breakspear, later Adrian IV. Just about a block down the hill is the Church of St. Gregory, from which St. Augustine had gone forth on the mission to the "Angli" to become the first archbishop of Canterbury. Both churches attracted English visitors to Rome.

While teaching in Rome, Father Dominic would be called to the parlor to meet these visitors. He spoke to them of his prayers for their country. They in turn would tell him about the religious situation in England and the possibilities of its conversion to Rome. Dominic developed several close friendships with English Catholics in Rome. He waited for the day when he could fulfill his mission in England.

In 1833 Dominic was a delegate to the general chapter. He requested the chapter to send missionaries to England. The request was not granted, but the idea had been planted. Even when Dominic was made rector of the new monastery at Lucca and then provincial, he and others kept in close contact with the "new" Catholics in England.

In 1836 a new pope was elected, Gregory XVI. He had been the prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. Now, as Pope, he promoted missionary work throughout the world. He looked to religious Orders to advance this missionary apostolate in non-Christian areas.

By the time of the 1839 general chapter the congregation was ready to move. There had been an increase of vocations during the past twenty-five years. Some of the capitulars, especially Anthony Testa, remembered Dominic's suggestion at the previous chapter. The chapter recommended that the new general send several religious to England.

The new general superior was the energetic, charismatic Father Anthony. He had been Dominic's vice-master and student director. He knew Dominic well, but he hesitated at first to send him to England because of his health.

By April of 1840 Father Anthony decided that Dominic should go. He sent him with three companions to Belgium to make a foundation in that country with the hope that from Belgium the mission to England could be realized. The three companions were Fr. Peter Magagnotto, Fr. Seraphim Giammaria, and Br. Crispin Cotta.

The four missionaries had hardly arrived in Belgium when Brother Crispin died. Dominic wrote to the general: "Before he died, he assured me that in heaven he would intercede earnestly for the congregation and in particular for this foundation. . . . He was scarcely dead when we began to experience marked effects of the loving providence of God."

Dominic established the first Passionist monastery outside of Italy in 1840 at Ere in Belgium. In November of that year he made a brief visit to England to survey the situation. He wrote on November 26: "Here I am on the eve of my first visit to England, if God should allow me to get there. A few moments ago I saw for the first time the coast of the island from the top of a lofty church. If I die now, it will be the death of Moses—but no! I shall not die but live to narrate the works of the Lord. Amen. I am dressed in secular clothes. If you saw me you would laugh! Still I'm sure that God recognizes me easily enough even in this get-up!"

Dominic's visit to England was brief. He still had work to do in Belgium before he could return to England for good. One of the first problems confronting him was the type of formation to provide for candidates from northern Europe. Dominic insisted that the conditions in northern Europe called for adaptations. The novice master, Fr. Seraphim Giammaria, wanted to form them by means of the Italian practices he and Dominic and all Passionists had been formed by. Thus, almost from the very first year, the question of

adapting Passionist life outside of Italy was raised and demanded an answer.

The response of the general, Father Anthony, deserves our attention if we are to understand a problem that would vex the Passionists for more than a century.

> He (Paul of the Cross) intended that there should be French Passionists, English Passionists, Flemish Passionists, Russian and even Laplander. . . . Those who intend to keep the Order inside Italy are opposed to the mind of the founder and do not have the Spirit of God. . . . Intending that there be Passionists in every country in the world, did he intend that in each nation they adopt Italian ways and customs? That they eat Italian foods? Think like Italians? Speak Italian? Act like Italians? Certainly not! . . . You will fail if you intend to make only Italian Passionists. You will never make them Passionists at all!

Finally, the time came to establish the first Passionist residence in England. Father Dominic and a companion went over to England and obtained a house at Aston Hall in Staffordshire. One of his first ministries was the celebration of the 1842 Holy Week services.

As soon as possible Dominic began giving parish missions in England. He was assisted by Fr. Gaudentius Rossi, who quickly acquired a fluent use of English. Many of the Catholics they preached to were the newly arrived Irish immigrants, who were working long hours in hard labor. Father Gaudentius realized that the method of giving missions should be adapted to the needs of the Catholics in England, whether they were "old" Catholics, Irish immigrants, or recent converts. The methods used in Italy were not always suitable. Dominic feared that the Passionist method would be lost if too many changes were made. Eventually, necessary adaptations were made.

Another problem arose in England in regard to undertaking parish ministry. St. Paul of the Cross, aware of the abundance of priests in the Italy of his times, had not made parish work one of the major apostolates of his new community. In mid-nineteenth-century England, however, the situation was entirely different. There were few priests, and the ever-growing number of Irish immigrants to England made parish work more and more necessary. Bishops expected the Passionists to accept parishes, especially when a new foundation was being made. Dominic himself accepted parishes, even though as he

wrote in the introduction to the *Life of St. Paul of the Cross,* "It would be to be wished that they should not have the care and responsibility of any particular congregation (parish), so that they might be free at all times to go wherever they are called; but in the present circumstances of this country it may easily be understood that it would not be possible for them to decline this charge" of caring for a parish. This would be a serious problem for many years in the English province and elsewhere in the Congregation.

While still in Belgium Dominic read in the Paris newspaper *L'universe* an article by a scholar of Oxford on the relationship of the Church of England with the Church of Rome. Dominic was deeply moved, for the Oxford Movement seemed almost ready to bear fruit in a reunion of the two Churches. He sat down and wrote a long letter to "the Gentlemen of Oxford." He responded to their questions, discussed their positions, clarified the teachings of the Church.

But he did more. He opened his heart to them, told of his years of prayer for his English brothers. Above all, he treated them with respect. He dealt with them as sincere men. He showed them he loved them. While many Anglicans were condemning these men of Oxford for being disloyal to their mother Church, and many of the "old" Catholics cast doubt about their sincerity, this poor Italian monk treated them with respect and love.

When the sensitive John Henry Newman became aware of this letter, he at once felt attracted to this foreigner. Newman had left Oxford and was living a community life of prayer, penance, and study at Littlemore. What he was looking for now was some appreciation of the predicament he was in as a sincere Anglican. He also wanted to see sanctity in the Roman Church. He had written: "If they want to convert England, let them go barefoot into our manufacturing towns, let them preach to the people like St. Francis Xavier—let them be pelted and trampled on, and I will own that they do what we cannot. . . . Let them use the proper arms of the Church and they will prove they are the Church." Dominic's letter and example solved Newman's last hesitations.

The author of the Oxford letter was John Dalgairns, who soon joined Newman at Littlemore. When in June of 1844 Dominic was near Littlemore he called on Dalgairns and met Newman. He spent about a half hour with Newman. Neither man ever forgot this first visit. In July Dominic wrote to the general: "I was received with

every token of cordiality and sincere regards by Dr. Newman and by his disciples. We talked of various matters of religion. I left them several of my polemical tracts." Newman mentioned this brief visit to his friends when he later wrote of his reception by Father Dominic.

John Dalgairns continued to keep in touch with Dominic and in mid-September of the following year wrote to Dominic that he wanted to be received at Aston Hall. Afterwards, Dalgairns invited Dominic to stop at Littlemore on his way to Belgium. When Newman heard that Father Dominic would be stopping at Littlemore, he felt that this was the external sign he was looking for. He would ask Father Dominic to receive him into the Church.

Dominic arrived late at night, dripping wet, for he had been sitting on the top of the coach exposed to the continual rain. On entering the house he went at once to the fireplace to dry himself. The door opened quietly and Newman entered. In a moment he was at Dominic's feet, praying for admission into the Catholic and Roman Church! That very night he began his confession.

"What a spectacle it was for me to see Newman at my feet! All that I have suffered since I left Italy has been well compensated by this event. I hope the effects of such a conversion may be great." Thus did the humble, joyous Dominic write to Father Anthony in Rome.

On the following Sunday Newman and four companions went to the Catholic chapel of St. Clement at Oxford for Mass. All England soon knew that they were now Roman Catholics. The news of this great conversion echoed throughout the world. Masses of thanksgiving were offered, and *te Deums* sung in the Churches of Rome, France, Germany, and Belgium. Pope Gregory XVI sent the papal blessing. It was the beginning of "the second spring"!

From Rome the father general, Anthony Testa, shared his joy and own feelings with Dominic: "First of all, I thank the Lord for the conversion of Newman and his companions, and that of the other Oxford men. . . . These are all works of God, and to Him let us give the glory. I pray that these may be the first fruits of an abundant harvest. For our part we must be very humble if we do not want to place an obstacle in the path of divine mercy, and if we are to be used as His instruments in the gathering in of the harvest."

Father Anthony also reminded Dominic that if they were to fulfill their mission in England they needed, not Italians, but English

vocations: "I am more and more convinced that success requires nationals, who have a command of the language. Foreigners will be able to do something, if they have a good reputation; but they cannot gain or win the people by their speech. This reason, together with the fact that it would not be easy to send many Italian subjects, makes it desirable that God should send us English vocations."

For a while Dominic had been asking the general to send Fr. Lawrence Salvi to England. Lawrence was a good superior and a zealous missionary. He had a special devotion to the Child Jesus and promoted this devotion on his missions. Dominic had lived with him and wanted him in England, but Anthony refused. Lawrence was beatified in 1989.

The problem of English vocations continued for many years. Father Anthony for a long time felt that the wearing of sandals was a deterrent to vocations. For years Father Anthony and Father Dominic exchanged their views on the question of whether the religious should wear sandals in Belgium and England. In this case the general was willing to allow the use of shoes, especially during the winter months. Dominic wanted to retain the use of sandals. Perhaps we should remember that in England religious did not wear the habit (and sandals) in public. So Passionists in England would be going out in the cold in secular attire (including shoes). In Belgium as in Italy, religious wore the habit in public. This would mean that even in the damp Belgian winter they would be wearing sandals outside.

Dominic feared that a relaxation in this matter would lead to other mitigations and that the English Passionists would not image the sanctity and austerity the English were looking for from the Roman Church. He remembered what Newman had written earlier at Littlemore. Many Englishmen, as had Newman, were looking for this penitential austerity from religious of the Church of Rome.

English vocations were few, but Dominic was deeply consoled by the arrival of Fr. George Spencer, who received the habit on January 5, 1847. Spencer was a convert of some years and already ordained when Dominic came to England in 1841. Now as a fellow Passionist, known as Ignatius Spencer, he proved a great comfort to Dominic and the Passionists. Interesting also is the fact that he is a member of the Spencer family as is the present Princess of Wales, Diana.

In 1847 a plague struck England, due to a great extent to the vast

throngs of starving Irish poor from potato-famine-stricken Ireland. Living conditions were dreadful in the industrial towns of England, and cholera spread rapidly. The Passionists assisted the sick and dying, supplying for the secular priests who were overworked and falling victim to the plague. At one point a report went forth that Father Ignatius had been stricken. Fortunately, this was not the case. Later, at Father Dominic's death, Ignatius was put in charge of the English vicariate until the chapter of 1851.

In the final years Dominic was able to begin a foundation in London at Poplar House. Ultimately the London foundation would be at Highgate near the cemetery in which Karl Marx is buried. It is interesting to reflect that both men were in London at the same time, one to bring the English into full communion with the Catholic Church of Rome, the other to lay the foundation for atheistic Communism! Like Dickens, both saw the plight of the poor in the factory towns of England.

In August 1849 Dominic was returning to Aston Hall from London, accompanied by his cousin, Fr. Louis Pesciaroli, who had just returned from the disastrous Australian venture. About five miles from Reading, Dominic got desperately sick. He was taken off the train to be attended by a doctor. There was not a room for him at the small station of Pangbourne, so Father Louis put him back on the train for Reading. There he expired from violent heart spasms at 3:00 P.M., August 27, 1849.

Dominic had dreamed a dream. Only part of it was fulfilled, for he did come to England. But even the conversion of Newman did not bring about the reunion of Canterbury with Rome. The reunion of Christians would require a long, painful journey on the part of many. Dominic had paid the price of the first steps.

Dominic had dreamed of working with the English, but he soon found himself engaged in ministering to the Irish immigrants. Many of his followers would come from these Irish families. Their deep faith and piety would shape the spirit of the Passionists for years to come. Perhaps Dominic's mission in Dublin at St. Audeon's, High Street, was a sign of what the future would hold for Passionists in the British Isles. This mission from April 29 to May 20, 1849, was Dominic's last mission. For years the Passionists would look to Ireland for young men to join in the work to be done in England among both the English and the Irish immigrants there.

From England, Dominic's sons would spread to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. English Passionists would establish the order in Australia. Gaudentius Rossi, the parish missionary in England, would cross the Atlantic to the United States to begin Passionist parish missions in that country. After the Second World War English Passionists would go to Sweden. Irish Passionists would be in Africa. And, of course, Dominic had founded the Passionists in Belgium. From Belgium they spread to the Netherlands, France, and eventually to Zaire, Brazil, Israel, Bulgaria, and Indonesia.

In the tradition of Blessed Dominic (he was beatified by Pope Paul VI), Passionists would be aware that ecumenism is an essential part of their heritage. At the time of the Second Vatican Council, Passionists would accept with joy the call to engage in ecumenical ministries. The renewal of the Congregation in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council would challenge the modern Passionist to this ecumenical mission.

Blessed Dominic Barberi, perhaps together with Cardinal John Henry Newman, must have looked with favor upon the Passionist scholar among those participating in the Vatican-Anglican dialogue. For in 1981, Queen Elizabeth II of England, Defender of the Faith, at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury, bestowed the Order of St. Augustine of Canterbury upon the American Passionist Fr. Barnabas Mary Ahern for his outstanding work in the dialogue.

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7

The Australian Venture of 1842

The four Passionist missionaries stood on the beach of Stradbroke Island watching the steamer as it took Archbishop Polding across Moreton Bay to Brisbane. As it sailed out of the sight, the four finally turned their gaze away from the sea to the ruins of the two wooden buildings, all that remained of Dunwick, the convicts' settlement. Slowly they walked back to the two dilapidated shelters. Some distance away, intently watching all that was taking place, were a few of the more adventurous aborigines whom the missionaries had come to serve.

Thus began the first Passionist mission among non-Christian natives. The place is Australia. The year is 1843. Their story begins in faraway Rome.

Shortly after Fr. Anthony Testa had sent the first Passionists to England, Bishop John Bede Polding, the Benedictine missionary bishop of Sydney, visited Sts. John and Paul in Rome. He asked for missionaries to work among the aborigines in his vast territory of Australia. Father Anthony consulted with the Propagation of the Faith. He was strongly encouraged to accede to the request of Bishop Polding. It was well known that Pope Gregory XVI was very interested in foreign mission work.

In fact Pope Gregory was so interested that at the recommendation of the Propagation of the Faith and without consulting the bishop or the general superior, he established an apostolic prefecture of the mission among the aborigines and appointed Passionist Fr. Raymond Vaccari as the apostolic prefect.

Father Anthony was not sure that Raymond Vaccari was the man for this mission. Born in 1801, Vaccari joined the Passionists in 1823 and was at this time living at Sts. John and Paul. He had just concluded three years as rector of the monastery at Vetralla, perhaps without much success. Apparently he was quite difficult to live with, and even more so to have as one's superior! But Father Raymond had friends in high places, and even Father Anthony could not prevent his assignment as superior on this mission.

Three other missionaries went with Father Raymond: Frs. Joseph Snell, Louis Pesciaroli, and Maurice Lincione. Father Anthony was pleased with these three.

Born in Lyons, Joseph Snell had become a Catholic at the age of 23. He joined the Passionists and was sent to the mission in Bulgaria for eight years. Father Anthony judged him ready for the even more strenuous mission work among the aborigines in Australia.

Fr. Louis Pesciaroli joined the Passionists after ordination. In a spirit of sacrifice he volunteered to join the new mission in Australia. Like the others, he was not prepared for mission work. When the mission failed he was able to get passage to London. There he met his cousin, Dominic Barberi.

Fr. Maurice Lincione was the fourth missionary, a native of Lucca and a religious well suited for mission work, except for an inability to learn any language except his own.

These four missionaries accompanied Bishop Polding from London to Sydney, where they arrived in March 1843. By the end of May they were ready for their first mission.

Bishop Polding selected the Dunwick site on Stradbroke Island as the place to begin. Stradbroke is one of the three large islands forming Moreton Bay with Brisbane on the mainland. At least at Dunwick the missionaries could learn the customs and practices of the aborigines. In the meantime, the bishop would supply all their needs. After two years he planned to evaluate the situation in order to decide on a permanent location.

When it became obvious that the mission would not succeed, an effort was made for the four Passionists to establish a similar mission in western Australia in the new diocese of Perth. Of course, this would not be in the jurisdiction of Bishop Polding. Three of the Passionists thought they might succeed better without Polding's interference. Father Raymond, however, was unwilling to go west.

He stayed alone at Dunwick for another year before returning to Sydney in July of 1847.

The other missionaries had left Dunwick in June 1846, intending to set out for Perth. These three, Fathers Joseph, Maurice, and Louis, attempted the journey but got only as far as Adelaide. While there, they became involved in local ministries because of the dire need of priests. They had also received conflicting instructions from Rome as to what they should do. Nor did they have money to return to Europe.

In the meantime the general tried to salvage the situation by sending Fr. Peter Magagnotto from Belgium. Father Peter was one of the three Passionists who had accompanied Father Dominic to Belgium in 1840. He had remained there as superior at Ere when Dominic went to England in 1841. This gave him the experience of Passionist life outside of Italy. He was a native of Ala in Trentino.

Father Peter arrived in Sydney on February 6, 1848. The mission was closed. Three of the missionaries were on their way, as they thought, to Perth. Raymond Vaccari had gotten passage to Europe.

Later it was learned that Raymond had suffered shipwreck but had reached Lima, where he attached himself to the Franciscans. When it was found out that he was a Passionist priest, he received permission to remain at Lima, not as priest, but as a Franciscan brother. There he died.

In the meantime, Louis Pesciarole had managed to get a ship to London. He arrived in time to accompany his cousin, Father Dominic, on his last fateful train trip to Reading. Eventually, Father Louis returned to Italy, where he died in 1874.

Joseph Snell and Maurice Lenicone remained in Adelaide. Father Joseph became the pastor at Morphett Vale, not too far from Adelaide. In 1861 he suffered a heart attack while staying with a priest friend at Carisbrook. He died there on July 31, 1861. Later Passionists were unable to identify his grave.

Father Maurice lived in Adelaide at the bishop's house, assisting the bishop in administration and teaching theology to several candidates for the priesthood. In 1864 he received enough money from friends to pay for passage to Europe. On April 6, just before leaving, he got pneumonia and died. The Passionists at Glen Osmond near Adelaide brought his body home in 1948 to be among his brother Passionists.

Before we follow Father Peter into new fields, we must pause to ask why this mission failed? Usually Passionist writers seem embarrassed by this attempt at missionary work among the aborigines. Fr. Osmund Thorpe has studied this episode in Passionist history most seriously. He concluded that the failure can be attributed to "the unpreparedness of the missionaries and also to the unfortunate choice of Father Raymond as prefect-apostolic and superior of the mission." But he adds that "the second cause of the Mission's failure was Archbishop Polding's lack of administrative ability, his failure to set clear goals and methods to be taken in evangelizing the natives."

Nevertheless, Father Osmund points out other problems, such as the difficulties all missionaries have experienced in evangelizing the aborigines. The Passionists, after one year at Stradbroke Island, came to know the natives quite well. They felt that all their efforts should be centered on the children. Accordingly, they refused to baptize just anyone. Finally, they realized that when the government would open Stradbroke Island to white settlers, problems would arise for both the natives and the missionaries.

One should read the letters the missionaries wrote to the general and others in Europe, especially Father Louis' long letter of November 2, 1848. The three Passionists will be seen as zealous men, conscious of their hopeless task but strong in character and commitment. Their story deserves to be studied as an example of the nineteenth century's "new missionaries," trying to bring the gospel into new areas.

Peter Magagnotto remained in Sydney for some time, living at the bishop's house, which Archbishop Polding was turning into a Benedictine monastery. There he engaged in various ministries. He taught several students who became priests. He won converts and strengthened the Catholic faith of many by retreats and missions.

Unable to join Fathers Joseph and Maurice in Adelaide, he soon decided that the Australian venture was bankrupt. He was able to take passage to San Francisco, where he arrived in the summer of 1852. He had been given the title of apostolic missionary and was accepted into the diocese by Bishop Allemany, O.P.

These were literally the golden years of northern California, where gold had just been discovered in the American River. California had become a state in 1850 and was growing rapidly. Father Peter soon

found himself busy building St. Patrick's Church in San Francisco and later a church at Marysville, California. He is also credited with building the Church of St. Francis in San Francisco. Bishop Allemany made him vicar-apostolic.

Father Peter saw the needs of the people. He realized the possibilities of a Passionist foundation in this rapidly expanding region. With the blessings of the bishop, he left for Rome to consult the new general after the death of Father Anthony. Peter took part in the general chapter of 1863. This chapter heard his request and approved a foundation in northern California and another in Equador.

A foundation was attempted at Virginia City, Nevada. When this failed most of the religious were sent to Mexico to begin a community there. Peter Magagnotto returned to Italy, where he died at Castel Porziano on November 17, 1868.

Later Passionists would preach parish missions in northern California. A first foundation would be established in Sierra Madre in the Los Angeles diocese by Holy Cross province. In 1950 a retreat house at Citrus Heights near Sacramento was opened. A retreat house was also planned in San Francisco in the 1960s but was never realized.

Passionists from the Anglo-Irish province would establish the Congregation in Australia in 1887. Today there is a flourishing Australian province with houses at Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, and several other places. The venture of 1842 becomes the story of the triumph of failure.

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8

St. Gabriel Possenti

Young Francis arose to speak to the distinguished audience. This was the final academic program of the school year. Francis was chosen to give the principal address of the evening. The archbishop of Spoleto was in attendance, as also gentlemen and ladies of the "better" families as well as monsignors and canons. Francis was at his eloquent best. As he concluded everyone rose in prolonged applause.

The archbishop leaned over to the Grand Assessor, Signor Sante Possenti, who was sitting next to him. He heartily congratulated him on the brilliant address of his son. The elderly Possenti graciously thanked the archbishop, but he could hardly restrain his tears. For his son, his Francis, would be taking the early morning coach for the Passionist novitiate at Morrovalle.

Sante Possenti had worked so hard all his life for such a day as this. His long career in the civil service of the Papal States had made this possible. A brilliant future was before his son Francis—in government, in business, yes, even in the Church, perhaps as bishop or cardinal. All that Sante Possenti had hoped, Francis was giving up. Sante never could or would understand the choice his son was making.

Francis Possenti's story becomes part of the story of the Passionists in Italy and throughout the world. The hero of that evening in Spoleto would become known as St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother. A few words about Sante will give the background of St. Gabriel's life as well as that of the Passionists in Italy during the final years of the Papal States.

Shortly after the return of Pope Pius VII to Rome, the Secretary of State, Cardinal Consalvi, through astute diplomacy, secured for the Holy See all of its occupied territories except Parma and Piacenza in Italy and Avignon in France. Consalvi also strove to improve the civil government of the Papal States by abolishing some feudal privileges and reorganizing the delegations, or administrative districts. He also sought to increase the role of laymen in civil governmental offices. Pope Pius VII on July 8, 1816, approved of these improvements by papal decree.

Three months later a young doctoral graduate from the University of Rome, Sante Passenti, was appointed "governor" of the city of Camerano in the "delegation" of Ancona. Possenti fulfilled his duties (none of which were very major) with dedication and commitment for twenty-five years. His health was not good, and he frequently asked to be moved to another town or district with a better climate and also with an increase in salary.

A higher position in government with a better salary became even more necessary after 1823 when he married Agnes Frisciotti, a much younger woman. During the eighteen years of their married life Agnes bore him thirteen children. As the children grew older and needed an education, Sante needed a much better salary to meet these expenses.

By the year 1838 the Possenti family was living in Assisi. There on March 1 his eleventh child was born, a son, who was named Francis. Agnes was unable to nurse this baby. So Francis spent his first year away from his family with a nursing woman. When he returned his mother was occupied with another baby, Vincent, and a year later with yet another, a baby girl, Rose. Francis hardly knew his dear mother.

By this time, a deep depression settled in upon Sante. Life was becoming just too much for him. His family had grown so large. He could find neither sufficient support from the papal government nor a better paying position. His own health was poor. He decided that he needed a complete rest. He went alone to his hometown of Terni.

Finally, in November of 1841 Possenti was offered the office of civil assessor, or magistrate, to the papal legate of Spoleto. Actually, this was not as important a position as governor of a city, but it did give him a certain stability. It did not give him a larger salary.

Possenti brought his family together to Spoleto, only to experience further tragedies.

Through all these years Agnes' health was failing. She had grieved to see young Francis away from the family. Then the last child, Rose, who was born weak and ill, had to be put with a nurse in another town, where she died six months later, on December 8, 1841. On January 26 nine-year-old Adele died after a short sickness. Agnes could endure no more. Nine days later she died. Francis, not yet four years old, had lost his mother.

Tragedy continued to strike the family. In 1846 an older son named Paul joined the Piedmontese army in the first war for Italian independence against the Austrians. He died at a military hospital in Venice. Another son, Lawrence, had entered the seminary, but left to study at Rome. Somehow he became involved with the Masons, and he mysteriously committed suicide in February 1853.

To return to Francis. Fortunately for him the family remained in Spoleto during his formative years. He attended the school of the Christian brothers and then the Jesuit college. He did well in his studies. He was an attractive young man with a lively disposition. But he took the family tragedies to heart as he pondered the deeper meanings of life. Deep in his heart he felt a call to serve the Lord.

In 1854 at the age of sixteen he experienced a serious illness and was in danger of death. He prayed to the newly beatified Jesuit martyr, Andrew Bobola, promising to become a religious. He was cured but soon forgot his promise. Father Bompiani, a Jesuit, was his director at college. He later testified: "Francis felt that he was called to the religious state, but for some time he hid any signs of a vocation. At first he was inclining to our Society, but then grew cold. Then taken by the thought of doing penance, he turned his heart and thoughts to the Congregation of the Passionists."

While he was pondering this new attraction, his twenty-six-year-old sister, Teresa, got cholera and died on June 7, 1855. Teresa was like a second mother to him, and her death stirred Francis profoundly. His father noticed at once that Teresa's death had changed Francis. He spoke of this to his son. To his great amazement he learned that Francis wanted to enter the Passionist community!

This was too much. Sante had dreamed of Francis being his comfort and support in his own declining years. Besides, the lad was not cut out for the life of a monk! This thought was just a passing

whim. It was his duty as a father to drive this futile idea out of his son's mind. He decided upon a course of action that many fathers have followed—he would make Francis feel the attractions and pleasures of social life. Michael, who became a doctor and lived to see Francis beatified, testified, "Our father deliberately took him out frequently to the theater and other respectable gatherings."

Henry, another brother, adds:

> When our father learned that he wished to become a religious, he wanted his son first to know the life of the world as a proof or not of his tenacity of purpose in this matter. . . . In 1855 he seemed to love parties even more, but it was his father who asked him to attend . . . and this sort of thing went on until the eve of his departure. He then explained to his father that the year granted to him as a trial was over; he was of the same opinion, and he wanted to leave the world, so he asked his permission and blessing.

On August 22, 1856, the sacred icon of our Lady was carried in procession through the streets of Spoleto. When the statue passed Francis he heard the voice of Mary calling to him: "Francis, the world is not for you. The religious life is waiting for you."

A few days later the final *academia* of the school year was held. It was a night of glory for Francis, but also a night of painful family farewells. The next morning he left for the Passionist novitiate. Sante Possenti, however, did not give up easily. He had arranged for his Dominican son, Louis, to accompany Francis. On the way they would visit two uncles, one, the vicar-general of Loreto, the other, a Capuchin at Morrovalle. Both tested Francis. But as Henry concluded, "He came forth victorious over all the difficulties set before him."

Francis entered the novitiate on September 10, 1856, in the little town of Morrovalle in the Marches. He received the Passionist habit on September 21, 1856, which in that year was the feast of the Sorrowful Mother. He was given the name Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother. A year later he took his vows.

Under the leadership of the general, Fr. Anthony Testa, the Congregation was growing in Italy. The general chapter of 1851 decided to form a new Italian province made up of the communities along the eastern coast. It was this new province of the Pieta that Gabriel joined as he became a Passionist.

These were difficult years for Italy. The election of Pope Pius IX in 1846 had at first stirred hopes in many people for reform in the Papal States and perhaps even a united Italy. Many were disappointed when Pius IX refused to "bless" the war against Austria early in 1848. Even Sante Possenti had accepted the republic of Rome in 1848 when the Pope had fled to Gaeta.

By 1859 conditions were worsening. The revolutionary and republican leader, Garibaldi, was defeating the Neapolitan forces of the Bourbon king. Garibaldi was about to claim the eastern provinces of the Papal States as part of a new republican government at Naples. Cavour, the prime minister of Victor Emmanuel, decided to send troops into the Marches and Abruzzi to assure that the territory would be annexed, not to Garibaldi's revolutionaries but to the new kingdom of Italy.

The new Italian government soon issued decrees closing religious Orders in these two newly annexed provinces of the Papal States. The new Passionist province of the Pieta, to which Gabriel belonged, was in the midst of this turmoil, for three of its houses were in the former provinces of the Papal States, two others in the kingdom of Naples. Travel and communication between the communities were quite difficult. There was always danger that a house might be closed by the anticlerical government of the new kingdom of Italy.

The Pieta province when Gabriel joined was a small, fervent, and apostolic community. Young men were entering as novices. Each community was engaged in apostolic missions, which usually lasted two weeks or more and frequently were given to an entire small town. In 1852 five missionaries gave the mission in Perugia at the request of the bishop, Cardinal Joachim Pecci (later Pope Leo XIII). 1854 was the "boom" year, when thirteen missions and ten public spiritual exercises and twenty-eight private retreats (to clergy or religious) were conducted. This is a goodly number, considering that there were very few religious free to engage in mission work. But all apostolic work had to stop by the year 1860. The times were too difficult. Such was the environment in which Gabriel lived his Passionist life.

Gabriel was sent to the monastery at Isola in territory belonging to the kingdom of Naples. His superiors had arranged for him to receive minor orders, but fear of bandits or government troops made travel to a safer place for ordination impossible.

Divine Providence settled matters in another way. For some time Gabriel's health had been poor. The austerity of the Passionist life and Gabriel's own insistence on the strictest observance of the rule were having their toll. It became clear that he had tuberculosis. That Christmas he assisted at the solemn liturgy from a window, since he was not able to go down into the church. From February 16 onward he was confined to his bed, and on February 25 he received the last sacraments. He died at 6:30 A.M. on February 27, 1862. Four years later the monastery at Isola was closed.

Such was the life of Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother. We might ask what was unique about his life? Obviously Gabriel Possenti did not become the general superior of the Congregation as two of his companions did. He did not become a missionary, a teacher, an author. He did not even become a priest. Nor had Gabriel made his novitiate in the hallowed monastery on Monte Argentaro where St. Paul of the Cross had started the Congregation. Most likely he never visited Rome. It is certain that he never lived in the Roman retreat of Sts. John and Paul. His experience of Passionist life was not colored by these traditional Passionist communities.

We must also admit that few people knew him, that he had not attracted attention to himself. True, when he left Spoleto early in the morning of September 6, 1856, a few wondered how long he would stay in a religious congregation such as the Passionists. And it took six months for the notice of his death in isolated Isola to reach the generalate in Rome! No one seemed to be perturbed that news about the death of an insignificant student was delayed so long.

But some remembered. His vice-master and spiritual director as a student, Fr. Norbert Cassenelii, remembered, perhaps at first because it was his duty to be in contact with Gabriel's father. But from the beginning, Norbert was aware that Gabriel was a very special person. We are told that in the years ahead he would retell the story of this young man in his mission and retreat preaching.

Surprisingly, those who best remembered Gabriel were the people of Isola. When the Passionists tried to close the house at Isola and to remove the bodies of those buried there, the people kept watch and would not let "their Gabriel" be taken from them. They remembered him because his life had a message for the people, and especially for the people of the latter part of the nineteenth century in Italy. He was an ordinary person like themselves. They could iden-

tify with him. Yes, in an age of holy and mighty popes and bishops, of illustrious kings and rulers, of learned theologians, philosophers, and scientists, many Catholics felt closer to a Therese of the Child Jesus, a Dominic Savio, a Pio Campidelli, a Gabriel Possenti.

Gabriel had expressed throughout his life the vitality and warmth of a heart devoted to the Blessed Mother. At Isola people remembered how "their Gabriel" had taught them to pray to their Madonna. They felt close to a saint who loved Mary as they also did.

St. Gabriel's life reveals that a deep love for the Mother of Sorrows is of the very essence of the Passionist charism. For it was Mary who appeared to young Paul Francis Daneo wearing the Passionist habit and calling him for the Congregation. Paul had a tremendous love for Mary. He named his first retreat and convent as well as the first two provinces in her honor.

In his earliest Rule he wrote: "Let the brethren have a most tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and in particular to her sorrows." He added that in the apostolate, "let them take care faithfully to promote the devotion to the sorrows of Mary." In that same early Rule we also read, "Each should have a tender devotion to the Immaculate Conception of Mary Most Holy, who as the Mother of Mercy will pray that we may live a pure life, if we are humble and obedient which may God in his goodness grant to us all. Amen." These were the words of the founder, which Passionists read and endeavored to fulfill in their spiritual life and ministry. Devotion to Mary was dear to so many of the religious down through the centuries. We think of Blessed Dominic Barberi of the Mother of God and so many others. But greater than all the others was Gabriel's devotedness to Mary.

His love for Mary is truly unique in all of Christian hagiography. She was truly for him the mother whom he faintly remembered, the sister-become-mother who died when he was in his mid-teens. He was truly the beloved disciple, the loving son of the Sorrowing Mother. Gabriel loved Mary as his Sorrowing Mother, the woman who saw her own Son die on the cross. Gabriel stood next to her beside the cross, to be a son to her in Jesus' place. He stood by her to show the many others how they, too, must become her sons and daughters.

The story of Gabriel spread throughout Italy and beyond at the very time Catholics were drawing new strength from Lourdes and

La Salette and from the solemn proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. His devotion served as an example for the growing Marian spirituality of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gabriel's love for Mary would respond to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on Mary and the role that the council describes to be hers in the Church.

Above all, Gabriel had become, in the few years of his religious life, a "sign" of the holiness and dedication that each Christian is called to become. Through his struggle as a youth to commit himself to the cross—and in so many other ways—he has become the "sign," which the Second Vatican Council expects of every religious!

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9

Passionists Come to the United States (1852–1870)

It was the summer of 1852. Fr. Peter Magagnotti was arriving in San Francisco after the debacle of the mission attempt among the Australian aborigines. At the same time, Bishop Michael O'Connor of Pittsburgh was calling upon the Passionist general, requesting a foundation of Passionists in his diocese. Undaunted by the failures in Australia, Fr. Anthony Testa listened cautiously but favorably to Bishop O'Connor's request.

Father Anthony had learned from the English and Australian experiences. He now insisted on a precise contract with Bishop O'Connor. This foundation must begin solidly and wisely. The unrest in the country was enormous as the slavery question still awaited a solution. The number of immigrants was stirring up nativist movements all over the country. Many newly arriving immigrants were Catholics, so that the Church was becoming "foreign" (Irish and German), much to the dismay of the "original" Catholics and even more so to the nativists.

There were great possibilities for the Passionists in the United States. The country already possessed its full continental territories, thanks to the Louisiana Purchase and the Mexican War. There were thirty-one states with a population of twenty-three million. Several decades of Irish and German immigration meant a growing Catholic population. There would be work for Passionists in America. The opportunity for a foundation there might not come again.

Bishop O'Connor and Father Anthony soon came to an agreement satisfactory to both. At once Father Anthony chose the four religious to make the foundation in Pittsburgh. The youngest was Br. Lawrence of St. James, just twenty-six years old. Fr. Stanislaus Parczyk was a Pole, who spoke fluent German and had joined the Congregation in Italy. Fr. Albinus Magno was thirty-six, ordained for nine years. He learned English quickly so that he was able to begin preaching in a short time.

The superior was Fr. Anthony Calandri, just over thirty-five. He came from a distinguished family in Sardinia, was well educated and had joined the Passionists at nineteen. After ordination he became a missionary. Anthony Calandri once remarked that his first mission was in Italy in 1841 and his last one in America in 1877.

The four Passionists left Sts. John and Paul in Rome on Sunday, October 10, 1852. Accompanied by Bishop O'Connor, they traveled across Europe, arriving in London on the 24th to be met by Fr. Ignatius Spencer, the vice-provincial. Sailing from Liverpool, they reached Philadelphia on November 15. They were welcomed by (now St.) John Nepomucene Neumann, C.SS.R., archbishop of Philadelphia. After a brief visit to Baltimore to greet Archbishop Kenrick, they reached Pittsburgh on November 20, the eve of the feast of our Lady's Presentation.

Calandri wanted to establish the Congregation quickly in Pittsburgh in order to begin the special ministry of preaching missions and retreats. Unfortunately, finding appropriate property and the financial help necessary to build a monastery took longer than he had anticipated. Problems arose with the bishop, even though he had the greatest respect for Father Anthony, his confessor. Difficulties also arose between Albinus and the founder. Much goodwill of the clergy was lost when Calandri insisted that Brother Lawrence begin begging from door to door as was the practice in Italy.

Father Anthony was a gentle soul, timid but at times perhaps too slow in adapting to American ways. He did succeed in choosing property on the south side of Pittsburgh on a hill overlooking the Monongahela River. There he built the first Passionist monastery in the United States, built in the architectural style of Italian Passionist houses.

On June 4, 1854, Bishop O'Connor blessed the monastery named in honor of Blessed Paul of the Cross (beatified in 1853). This was

a day of tremendous joy for Father Anthony, for the first part of his role as founder was completed: He had built the first monastery.

On July 22 of that same year a new superior arrived from Italy, Fr. John Dominick Tarlattini. John Dominick and Anthony had been novices together at Lucca. After his ordination he was assigned to Sts. John and Paul in Rome and then appointed as rector of the monastery at Pievetorina. Anthony Testa recognized that John Dominick's strength lay in administration, and he sent him to America to be the prudent superior. This talent was most needed if the beginnings were to reach fruition.

Father John Dominick studied the situation thoroughly and made frequent reports to the general in Rome. Anthony Testa began taking a more direct part in the foundation in America. He wrote long and precise letters to Father John Dominick, for he realized that "the success or the failure of our Congregation in that country depends upon this first attempt."

Bishop O'Connor was pleased with the new superior. He wrote to the general a very encouraging letter: "An important future is opening for the Church in this country, a future that is not without its dangers and reasons to fear, but still one in which there is much to be gained for God. . . . Your zealous community, I am sure, will have a great part in the accomplishment of this important work."

With the administration in the hands of the capable Father John Dominick, the general saw that the training of the young candidates was now of utmost importance. He wrote to the bishop, "As the Lord will send young candidates of good will and as the Passionists have now two more religious [two arrived with Father John Dominick] to carry out the work, the novitiate can be organized and the good to be done for others will in time be achieved and its fruits remain for the welfare of your diocese and that of others."

The task to establish the novitiate and to adapt the formation of the novices to American needs fell to Anthony Calandri. He remained novice master for nine years. The first novice was vested on June 25, 1854. Within seven years, fifty-three others followed his example. Twenty-four pronounced their religious vows.

With the observance being kept in the monastery at Pittsburgh where the novitiate was functioning successfully, the small community was ready to begin the work of preaching. Bishop O'Connor again and again requested the general to send an English-speaking

Passionist from England. The general was finally able to free Fr. Gaudentius Rossi. With his arrival in America on December 8, 1855, the Passionists could begin their primary work of preaching missions.

Father Gaudentius began the preaching ministry at the Pittsburgh cathedral on Passion Sunday, March 1856. Rossi was accompanied by Albinus Magno, Anthony Calandri, and later John Baptist Baudinelli. For the next twenty years the burden of the Passionist missionary apostolate rested on their shoulders. Calandri's first mission was at St. Peter's Church in Allegheny, from November 13 to 30, 1856.

And it was a glorious "burden," with missions throughout the diocese of Pittsburgh during 1856 and 1857. At the end of November 1857, Rossi and Calandri conducted "the most successful mission hitherto given by the Passionist Fathers in America" at St. Joseph's Church on Pacific and Dean Streets in Brooklyn. Brother Lawrence, while questing in Brooklyn, had met Fr. Patrick O'Neil at St. Joseph's. The pastor had asked Brother Lawrence to arrange for a mission in his parish.

During the second week word got out that healings were taking place. Newspapers all over the country printed the story. It was picked up in *L'universe* in Paris and brought to the attention of Cardinal Barnabo in Rome. Crowds of more than fifteen hundred filled the church morning and evening. Newly arrived Fr. Luke Baudinelli came from Pittsburgh to assist the missionaries, even though his English was so poor that all he could do was to hear confessions.

In a short time the Passionists preached at the largest cathedrals in the East and Midwest: St. Louis, Hartford, Buffalo, Cleveland, Wheeling, Newark, Alton. Other great missions occurred, for example, at St. Joseph's in Boston, St. Patrick's in St. Louis, St. John's in Baltimore, St. Ann's and Immaculate Conception in Brooklyn, St. Columba's in New York City.

With such success and numbers growing, the time was now ready to expand to another location. The second foundation in the United States was at Dunkirk on Lake Erie. The small building ("more a home than a monastery," Fr. Rob Carbonneau says) was solemnly blessed on July 20, 1862. A group of students arrived from Italy, where monasteries were being closed by the anticlerical government of the newly proclaimed kingdom of Italy. These Italians, together

with the American students, formed the first theologate of the Congregation in the United States.

John Dominick Tarlattini was now ready to open a third monastery. The general in Rome cautioned not to expand too quickly, but at once added: "You are no longer newcomers there. Now that you know the country and its ways and customs you should be able to make a much better establishment and prevent those difficulties which perhaps simply could not have been avoided in the beginning."

Father John Dominick prepared to build his monastery on the banks of the Hudson across from mid-Manhattan. This foundation was opened at West Hoboken (later Union City) on Sunday, April 21, 1861. By that summer a temporary facility was soon available so that "regular" life began that summer. One of the better architects of the period was engaged to construct the monastery and church. The building was finished by September 1866.

With three communities in the United States now established, and forty professed religious, it was time to form this group into a province. Anthony Testa had died. His successor, Fr. Pius Cayro, called Anthony Calandri and John Dominick Tarlattini to Rome for the general chapter. It was decided that the time had come to establish the canonical province of Blessed Paul of the Cross in America. John Dominick Tarlattini was chosen the first provincial, and Gaudentius Rossi and Anthony Calandri consultors.

On their return to Pittsburgh, Father John Dominick called the first provincial chapter of the new province. It was composed of all priests professed for ten years. This group elected the local superiors of the three communities and the novice master. Several practical regulations were passed, and the chapter also proposed norms for conducting parish missions adapted to the needs of this country as the missionaries saw them. Later, the general curia declined to give approval to these new norms. No longer was a man of Testa's character in authority at the generalate in Rome.

Thus the Congregation was established in America, even amid the Civil War. Requests came from many parts of the country for parish missions. Young men were attracted by the life and apostolate of the first Passionists and asked to join. The future was bright.

Anthony Calandri became provincial in 1866, and as such attended the second Baltimore council in October of that year. A year later he returned to Rome to attend the canonization of the founder on

June 29, 1867. He took with him newly ordained Fr. Charles Lang, who years later would become the first provincial of the second province in the United States. Father Anthony served as superior, missionary, and novice master, winning the hearts of the young men and of the people. His dedication to the American foundation was such that he became an American citizen in 1859. His last position of authority was as rector of the Pittsburgh monastery, which he had built. He retired as superior in 1872. Six years later he fell sick at St. Mary's Monastery at Dunkirk on April 25, 1878. Father John Dominick, then rector at Pittsburgh, went to his bedside. Father Anthony died on the evening of April 27th, and is buried at the Pittsburgh monastery. The inscription on his tomb calls him "Founder."

Father John Dominick had gone to California earlier to decide what should be done about the foundation at Virginia City. In 1866 he was sent to make a foundation of the Congregation in Mexico. Later he returned to the American province as novice master, rector, and once again provincial. In 1878 he was elected general consultor under Fr. Bernard Mary Silvestrelli. He continued his love for the province he had cofounded. As general consultor he was able to share his understanding of the American Passionists with the other members of the general council. In March of 1886, while on an official visit to the Passionists of Mexico, he died. There he is buried.

Brother Lawrence of St. James helped in the foundation at Pittsburgh. He spent several years raising money for the first monastery. In the early 1860s he was sent to California to assist in the foundation at Virginia City. When this venture proved a failure, he journeyed back to New York by boat to Nicaragua. Shipwrecked in Panama, where he caught malaria, he finally arrived at West Hoboken a dying man. His death occurred on June 27, 1865.

Father Albinus continued in parish work and preaching missions. It was Albinus who obtained permission to build the second monastery at Dunkirk. He was rector and consultor and, for one term, provincial, from 1869 to 1872. He died at West Hoboken in 1887.

For many years, Father Stanislaus worked among German-speaking immigrants in various cities, including Pittsburgh, New York, and Cincinnati. He began a parish in the Covington Diocese where the Passionist nuns would come in 1947. He died in Pittsburgh on May 2, 1892.

The foundation by Anthony Testa of the Passionists in the United States was one of his greatest achievements. From Pittsburgh the Congregation would spread throughout the United States and would send religious to Mexico and Argentina to the south. In the twentieth century, missionaries would go to China only to be driven out after the Second World War. But the Passionists today in the Philippines, Korea, Japan, Canada, Germany, and Jamaica owe their foundation to the American provinces.

Yes, the coming of the Passionists to Pittsburgh's south side would be one of the glories of Anthony Testa's long generalate.

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10

The Mid-century Crisis

Fr. Anthony Testa of St. James died on August 2, 1862. He was seventy-four years old, in the final year of his fourth term as general. His immediate successor, Fr. Pius Cayro of the Heart of Mary, wrote of "the sorrowful loss of our great General Superior." It was a sad day for the Congregation, which "he had governed with ease, whose boundaries he had extended, which he had caused to grow, to which he had brought honor and glory."

Yes, the Congregation was now in England, Belgium, France, and the United States. Testa had developed the Bulgarian mission and started a new mission in Australia. In Italy the Congregation continued to grow, even though it was once again in danger of being suppressed by the hostile government of the new kingdom of Italy.

Without the steadying hand of an Anthony Testa, this dramatic growth and development could have led the Congregation into dangerous paths. Earlier, after the death of Dominic Barberi, the English province had experienced serious problems. Fr. Ignatius Spencer, the acting superior, moved too quickly with new foundations and ministries. At a visitation in 1854 the general consultor attempted to solve the problem with the appointment of an Italian superior. If all this had happened while Father Anthony had his firm hand on the helm, what would happen now that he was dead?

In order that the general might have greater control over the new foundations and avoid the problems of England, some at the general chapter of 1857 had suggested that the general needed the help of four (instead of two) consultors to keep in contact with the Passionists in non-Italian countries. This suggestion met great opposi-

tion from the conservatives (a term used even at that time), who dreaded seeing any change made in the letter of the Rule written by St. Paul of the Cross. The chapter of 1857 finally approved an increase of the council to four consultors, but the next chapter, that of 1863, returned to just two consultors.

From 1862 until the chapter of 1878 the Congregation would be in a state of extreme crisis. This situation arose, first of all, because of the differing views on adapting to the cultures and religious needs of the new countries that Passionists were entering. Dominic had experienced this in England and Belgium. Anthony Calandri and John Dominick Tarlattini encountered it in the United States. Peter Magagnotti faced it in Belgium and later in Australia and California. The missionaries in Bulgaria were aware of it in their missions.

This was not a crisis restricted to Passionists. It should be seen in the light of problems in society, in Italy and Europe, in the Church.

The French Revolution had shaken the foundations of European society. The efforts to maintain the "old regime" proved futile in the wake of the revolutions of 1848–1849. By mid-century the intellectual ferment, the impact of industrialization, the awakening to liberty, fraternity, and equality could no longer be held in check.

In Italy the popes of the century would struggle to hold on to the Papal States as necessary for the Holy See's communion with local Churches throughout the world. During the 1860s Pius IX issued his Syllabus of Errors condemning in the eyes of many the very progressive gains of the nineteenth century. At the First Vatican Council of 1869–1870, he secured the definition of papal infallibility.

A contemporary Passionist wrote from the United States:

> This year 1870 was famous for the siege of Paris and its capture by the Prussians, which capture was followed by the revolt of the Communists which thing are a matter of history. Worse still, this year witnessed the siege and capture of Rome, the Eternal City by Victor Emmanuel's robber band. Our present Provincial Albinus (Magno) and Father John Philip (Baudinelli), superior of West Hoboken, were in Rome during the siege. The year was also famous for many other scourges of God on sinful man in the shape of hurricanes, volcanos, etc., etc., for which see the history of the day. The whole world seemed to be convulsed. Almighty God was very angry, and His Hand was heavily felt by the Nations and by

> Individuals. The end however is not yet (*Pittsburgh Chronicles,* vol. I, 65 typed).

Like many others, Passionists could see only evil in the tragedies of those years. How else to explain the government's suppression of religious houses? The entire province of the Pieta in eastern Italy (Gabriel Possenti's) was closed. In the 1870s the entire Congregation in Italy was in danger of being suppressed by the very government that was offering the Holy See a "Law of Guarantees."

Fr. Dominic of the Name of Mary (the second general after Anthony Testa) felt the need for divine help to prepare for the closing of more monasteries. He ordered the entire Congregation to be consecrated to the Sacred Heart on November 21, 1872.

Living with all these tragic events, many religious once again sought refuge in the old ways. It is no wonder that many Passionists, even superiors, could see only further devastations from the innovations suggested by Passionists in "foreign" lands. In 1878 the general, Fr. Bernard Prelini, reported to the general chapter all the "evils" he had discovered in the provinces of England, France, Belgium, and Bulgaria. He asked the chapter to bring the Congregation back to the pristine fervor of the days of St. Paul of the Cross.

During this time the Passionist nuns at Tarquinia had problems of their own. Shortly had they returned to their convent after the suppression when a severe earthquake destroyed much of the building. The nuns did not have the money to restore it until after 1825, when they began work on it, and it was not until mid-century that the convent was restored and enlarged.

For some years the nuns had received young girls into the convent, presumably as postulants or candidates, but frequently they were from families who wanted their daughters to have a convent upbringing. This afforded some support to the nuns but caused many problems. Their rules also spoke of teaching catechism to young girls and of providing rooms within the cloister for women to make the spiritual exercises from time to time. For many years this was impossible. Finally, in 1858 with a clarifying rescript from Rome, the nuns were able to provide rooms for retreatants and to give classes to girls in preparation for Holy Communion.

At this very time a wealthy French woman, Therese Margaret, entered Tarquinia. She intended to use her large inheritance for the

founding of a convent in France. After her profession and training in Italy she left in 1872 with Ann Mary of St. Joseph and Veronica of the Immaculata for the second convent at Mamers in France.

Pius IX died in 1878. He was a Pope of much suffering. To many of his contemporaries he was the beloved "Pio Nono." The Passionists had been faithful to Pius IX. Pope Paul VI said of him in 1978, "As a sovereign ruler until September 20, 1870, . . . he was estranged from contemporary ideas as well as from the political currents of his day." Paul VI went on to speak of him "as a pope reborn," with "revived consciousness of his proper mission as being religious and not political, much less military." But now there was a new Pope, Leo XIII, who would assist the Passionists at their forthcoming general chapter.

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11

Blessed Bernard Mary Silvestrelli

The new Pope, Leo XIII, quickly inspired new hope among Catholics. A church historian has written: "Pope Leo XIII led the Catholic Church into a world which had risen from revolution. With an attitude that can only adequately be termed 'optimistic,' he attempted to reconcile an uncompromised tradition with the modern spirit." Pope Leo brought a new spirit to the Church. He acted quickly in a spirit of vigor. He won the respect and love of many almost at once.

The problems of the Passionists were brought to his attention. He ordered Cardinal Lawrence Nina to preside at their forthcoming general chapter. The chapter was held from May 3 to May 23, 1878, the longest in Passionist history until that time.

This chapter did two things. It elected all new superiors to the general council, including Fr. John Dominick Tarlattini from the United States and an English Passionist, Fr. Denis Edgerton. The new general was the vice-provincial of the Italian Presentation province, Fr. Bernard Mary Silvestrelli. In this way, even as the Church was meeting the new world of the late nineteenth century with new leadership, so also the Passionist Congregation with a new general and new council.

The other important action of the chapter was to define anew the community life and apostolate of the Congregation. Passionist life would remain true to the regular observance, but greater emphasis would have to be given to study and the formation of the young men. The apostolate would be primarily the preaching of missions and retreats, but allowance could be made for provincial adapta-

tions. This apostolate should be more severely limited by the regular observance. For this chapter insisted that the choir and regular observances must be maintained, even at the expense of the apostolate.

For St. Paul of the Cross, this observance also prepared the religious for an ever-more zealous ministry. Now it was seen as an end in itself, so that unless one kept the regular observance one was not striving for personal perfection. Accordingly, this obligation to the homelife set limits on the time spent in ministry and the types of ministry proper to Passionists.

Actually this chapter was not content simply to issue decrees. The capitulars were aware that laws can state obligations, but superiors are the ones who apply these laws to individual and concrete cases. The future of the Congregation lay not in the words of a law book but in the hands of a holy, prudent general superior, Bernard Mary Silvestrelli (of Jesus).

Born in Rome on November 7, 1831, he was named Caesar Silvestrelli. He was educated at the Collegio Romano of the Jesuits and continued his studies privately until, at the age of twenty-two, he entered the Passionist novitiate on Monte Argentaro. Forced to leave because of poor health, he remained at the other monastery on Monte Argentaro to study theology. On December 22, 1852, he was ordained by retired Bishop Joseph Molajone of Bulgaria.

The following April Caesar was allowed to enter the novitiate again, but this time at Morrovalle. He was now given the name of Bernard Mary of Jesus. Shortly afterwards Francis Possenti entered the same novitiate.

After his profession in 1857, Father Bernard Mary pursued studies for preaching and then was assigned to the office of director and novice master. In 1869 he was chosen rector of the new Roman monastery of the Passionists of the Scala Santa, next to the Lateran.

There on September 19, 1870, while the Italian army was encamped at the city walls, Pope Pius IX visited the holy places of Rome for the last time. He stopped to climb the Sacred Steps once more, even as Jesus had done nineteen hundred years earlier. Supporting the pope by the arm and weeping with him step by step was the newly elected rector, Bernard Mary. The next day the Italians bombarded the gates of the Rome. The Pope remained the prisoner of the Vatican.

After six years at the Scala Santa, Bernard Mary was elected first provincial consultor by his province of the Presentation. A year later the provincial resigned and Bernard Mary became vice-provincial. In that capacity he participated in the 1878 chapter, only to be elected general superior.

To solve the problems the Congregation was facing, Bernard Mary with his new council sought to reconcile the contending factions, to strengthen the spirit of prayer, penance, and solitude, and to make the apostolates more fruitful. To accomplish this he took several initiatives. He found new positions away from Rome for those religious who were agitating for new directions for the Congregation. Also he updated the regulations to include the decrees of the recent chapter. A new ritual for Passionist community services was prepared.

The "lives" of the first companions of the founder were published. Above all, Bernard revered the Rule of St. Paul of the Cross with intense devotion. He exemplified the Rule in his daily life, constantly encouraging others by his example and word. Long before the Second Vatican Council he realized that "appropriate renewal of religious life involves . . . a continuous return . . . to the original inspiration behind a given community" (Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, no. 2).

Father Bernard Mary prepared candidates for the novitiate by establishing preparatory schools for future candidates. He also sent three religious to Spain to found the Congregation in that country and to expand the Congregation into Mexico and Latin America. In addition, he furthered the Bulgarian mission and established a novitiate there.

The eastern Italian province of the Pieta was closed in 1866, shortly after the death of St. Gabriel. In 1882 Father Bernard Mary had the joy of reestablishing this province, which in many ways was his own. In doing this, he provided a monastery for one who would be beatified before he was. For one of the first to be admitted to the novitiate was Gigino Campidello, who was given the name of Pius. He made his profession in 1884, continued his studies, and received minor orders. Never very strong, he began to shows signs of consumption during the summer of 1889, and on November 2 of that year, he died. Pope John Paul II beatified him on November 17, 1985.

Father Bernard was so successful that he was readily reelected at the chapter of 1884. He resigned in 1889 to be succeeded at the chapter of 1890 by Fr. Francis Xavier Del Principe, a classmate of St. Gabriel. He was a kind, holy man but with very poor health. He initiated the cause of Dominic Barberi and Gabriel Possenti, and furthered that of Bishop Vincent Mary Strambi. In order to improve studies in the Congregation he began a student house at an estate on the hills beyond Rome, La Rocca Di Papa.

Many felt this was a mistake and criticized the new general. Poor Francis suffered from this criticism even as his health worsened. He began to think about resigning. At this moment his personal secretary was a newly ordained American, Fr. Matthew Miller. Years later, Matthew recalled those years he had spent in Rome with "dear Father Francis Xavier." He and others urged the gentle general not to resign, for his successor would be the austere Fr. John Testi.

Eventually Francis Xavier did resign. John Testi supplied for him only until the new general chapter, to be held in 1893. He was indeed a "strict" superior. After his brief time as vice-general, he held the office of procurator for many years. John Testi's real strength lay in his ability to preach. He has been called "Segneri Returned to Life." Like the great Jesuit missionary, Segneri, John preached throughout the length and breadth of Italy. Over five thousand manuscript pages of his sermons have been preserved.

At the chapter of 1893 the capitulars once again elected Bernard Mary Silvestrelli. It is said that Gabriel Possenti appeared to him to insist that he attend the chapter and accept the decision of the capitulars. This Bernard Mary did in 1893, 1899, and again in 1905.

During his years as general he visited all the provinces of the Congregation. Especially noteworthy for American Passionists was his visit to the United States in 1896. Here he warned: "While to labor for the welfare of our neighbor is a necessary duty, it must be regulated so as to conform to the spirit which our Holy Founder bequeathed to us in the holy rules." On his return to Rome he assured Cardinal Satolli "that the rule was kept as well in America as in the retreat of Sts. John and Paul in Rome."

Father Bernard Mary also established the international house of studies at Sts. John and Paul. Again and again, religious from outside Italy would send students there to be formed in the Roman atmosphere and in the spirit of the founder.

Finally, elected a fifth time in 1905, he resigned again in 1907 and was granted the title of honorary general until his death on December 9, 1911. Father Bernard Mary was hailed as "another St. Paul of the Cross" by his contemporaries. He served the Congregation well during the difficult final decades of the nineteenth century.

We might ask, however, whether he realized the need for the Second Vatican Council's second principle of appropriate renewal, "an adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times"? He traveled to north Europe, Spain, and to the United States to acquaint himself with the difficulties of Passionist life and ministry in countries outside of Italy. Did he understand what he saw?

Father Bernard was a Roman by birth. He lived in Rome for many years as both local and general superior. He was right in the midst of the anticlericalism of the new Italian kingdom. He could not help seeing the Church, the Congregation, and the world from an Italian and Roman viewpoint. Perhaps this kept him at times from having the breadth of view needed to meet the problems in many of the other countries of the Congregation.

Perhaps he tended to restrict the observance of the Rule to the keeping of the monastic observances, and so did not see the apostolate as an observance of the Rule? Thus he would have limited apostolates to those that made possible the maintenance of the homelife in its entirety.

If he lacked this broader perspective, his prudence and charity surely compensated for this. During the trying years at the end of the nineteenth century the Congregation fared well under his prudent government. This great Passionist was admired for his holiness and gentleness. It is with joy that his beatification was celebrated on October 17, 1988, by Passionists everywhere.

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12

Passionists in Spain and Fr. Amadeo Garibaldi

Even though the Passionists had made foundations in Belgium, England, France, Ireland, and the United States, no one had made an attempt to establish the Congregation in Spain. In fact, when a young man from Seville wanted to become a Passionist, he joined the religious in England. His name was Ferdinand Borja Saavedra y Caro.

When the English province was in debt paying for several new churches and monasteries (and to make matters worse there was a recession in England), the superiors decided to send Fr. Ferdinand to Spain. He and his companion, Father Bernard O'Laughlin, had the unpleasant task of seeking financial aid in Spain. The bishop of Santander welcomed them, even inviting them to make a foundation in his diocese. At once they wrote of this offer to the general. This was in the critical year of 1878.

Some years earlier, in 1866, Italian Passionists had gone to Spanish-speaking Mexico to serve the people there. The first efforts in that Latin American country were futile when the Napoleonic Empire of Emperor Maximilian was overthrown by the revolutionary Juarez in 1867. But the short-lived venture into Mexico in 1866 prepared a missionary, Fr. Amadeo Garibaldi, for the task of organizing the Passionists in Spain. His story is forever connected with the Passionists in Spain.

Born in Genoa in 1831, Father Amadeo joined the Passionists at Lucca, taking his vows there in 1852. After ordination he spent a few years as a professor at Sts. John and Paul in Rome. In 1863

the general chapter recommended that a group of religious accompany Fr. Peter Magagnotto to California and to Guayquil in Ecuador. Young Father Amadeo was one of this group.

The band went first to California and then settled at Virginia City in Nevada. But the venture encountered many problems. The provincial of the new province of St. Paul of the Cross in Pittsburgh, Fr. John Dominick Tarlattini, went out to Virginia City. He decided that this project had to be abandoned and sent the missionaries to Union City to await further assignments. He himself with Father Amadeo traveled to Mexico to visit several bishops, requesting permission to make a foundation there. They were favorably received.

In 1866 Father John Dominick and several religious, including Father Amadeo, returned to Tacubaya, near Mexico City. There they began a new monastery. But like California, this venture in Mexico lasted only a year or so.

Father Amadeo returned to the north, to be chosen novice master in 1875 at Pittsburgh. One of his novices was Fidelis Kent Stone, whom we shall meet in a later chapter. At the end of the term as novice master, Father Amadeo accompanied Father John Dominick to Rome, where the latter was attending the critical chapter of 1878.

At that general chapter the invitation to found in Spain was discussed, and it was decided that a foundation should be made there. It was this chapter that elected Bernard Mary Silvestrelli as general and John Dominick Tarlattini as a consultor. Most likely, Father John Dominick suggested Father Amadeo for the Spanish foundation. After his years in California, Mexico, and the United States, Father Amadeo was the perfect choice.

This was a critical moment in Spanish history. Following the forced abdication of Isabella II in 1868 and the subsequent revolution, the short-lived republic gave way to the Bourbon restoration under Alfonso XII in 1875. A solid Catholic resurgence under the conservative restoration of Alfonso was taking place. Schools were opened once again, seminaries were set up, new religious Orders were established. There was a need for renewed evangelization. The Passionists would have work to do in Spain.

Father Amadeo had experienced the problems that occur when a new foundation is being made, for he had been in Nevada in 1864 under Peter Magagnotto. Also he was aware that in a country with a large Catholic population and a shortage of priests, bishops would

insist that the newly arrived Passionists take parishes, as had happened in Mexico. He also had witnessed in the United States the problems the Church was encountering during a period of rapid growth after the Civil War.

So now, as superior of the new foundation in Spain, Father Amadeo moved cautiously, faithful to the recent general chapter as interpreted by Father Bernard Mary. The Spanish foundation was born in a more conservative climate, as befitted the Spain of Alfonso XII and the Italian model offered at Rome.

Father Amadeo and his companions landed at Santander in Old Castille on October 19, 1878. Bernard O'Laughlin met them, hoping that everything was prepared. The bishop, Vincent Calvo, was most favorable, but he had earlier advised them that his own funds were meager. The place they were offered was an old church and rectory, unsuitable for their purposes. Fortunately, they were invited by a lady to receive her property in Bilbao.

Bilbao was the capital city of Vizcaya, in the very heart of the Basque Country. The Passionists would begin in Spain among a people loyal to the Church, filled with the zeal of Ignatius and Francis Xavier, fearless in defending their traditional rights and culture. There they succeeded in building a retreat and a church. On February 12, 1880, Father Amadeo blessed the first house of the Passionists in Spain at Duesto in Bilbao. Later, on the feast of St. Paul of the Cross, the public blessing was held. Students came from Italy, and soon there was a fervent community keeping the observance.

Amadeo's companion, Maurice Panelli, now began preaching missions in the parishes of Spain. He followed the practices of the religious in Italy, adapting to the conditions in Spain. Thus, within a short time Passionist life was organized in Spain. Young men were attracted by the missionaries and began to join the Congregation. Evangelization through preaching missions continued to be an important apostolate for the Passionists in Spain.

Father Amadeo built other houses: Penafiel in Old Castille in 1882, Angosta in the province of Alava and Mondonedo in Galicia in 1885, and Panaranda in 1887. Within a short time vocations were abundant. While Italians were in the offices of authority, the majority of the religious were from Spain. With young men joining the new community, Father Bernard Mary officially established the province of the Sacred Heart. Father Amadeo was appointed provincial.

This rapid growth was approved by Father Bernard Mary because he was fearful that the new government of Italy might exclaustrate all religious. He wanted a safe place to send Italian Passionists if such anticlerical laws were enacted in Italy.

Several times the general sent Amadeo to Latin America to visit the Passionists in Argentina and Chile, who had come from Ireland and the United States. He also went to Mexico, where American and Italian Passionists had returned in 1877 to build a house at Tolucca. In 1892 Amadeo established a house at Santa Clara in Cuba. In 1893 the houses in Mexico and Cuba were assigned to the Spanish province, while Argentina was kept under the American province of St. Paul of the Cross. The new Spanish province was now responsible for the religious in Latin America. Eventually, a delegate of the provincial was established in Mexico.

In 1899 the general chapter elected Father Amadeo as the first consultor to Father Bernard Mary. After these many years Father Amadeo was able to return to his native Italy for six years.

Back in Spain by 1905, Father Amadeo was again elected provincial for another six years. At the age of eighty he was allowed to resign, but at the chapter of 1911 the capitulars expressed their gratitude to their founder by voting him the title of honorary provincial for life.

This great Passionist died in 1921 at the age of ninety-three. He was a dedicated Passionist, a man of prayer, a spiritual father to many Passionists throughout the world. A hard worker, he was constantly organizing, planning, working. Interiorly, he was a man of prayer who found little time for intellectual or cultural pursuits. His was an austere and traditional way of life.

As a result of his labors, there were enough religious and monasteries in Spain for a division into two provinces in 1905 and a third province in 1923. Eventually the Spanish provinces would have foundations in almost all of the Latin American countries. Argentina and Brazil are exceptions, for they were founded by religious from other provinces.

Vocations remained scarce in many parts of Latin America because of frequent revolutions, persecution from hostile governments, poor education, and the lower social status of many peoples. Because of this lack of local vocations, the Spanish provinces continued to send missionaries. Thus they were able to claim exemption from

military service for their young religious who were being educated for the missions.

For a long time the Spanish Passionists had seen the needs of the native peoples in Latin America. In the early years of the new century, missionaries from the Basque province of the Sacred Heart went among the Indians in the Upper Amazon area in northeastern Peru at Yurimaguas in 1913 and at Moyobamba in 1914. Both regions have had Passionist bishops for many years. These two missions are the beginning of the successful work of Passionists in mission territories in other Latin America countries and throughout the world.

Father Amadeo was a pioneer Passionist, ready to go wherever he was sent. Eager to see the Congregation grow and reach new countries, he gave himself to his work unstintingly. What he accomplished in the United States, in Spain and in Latin America is truly amazing. He worked hard and well for his Congregation.

His life shows the blessings an exempt religious institute can bring to the universal Church and also to the local Churches. Such an institute can make available to various countries the special talents of gifted religious. We are reminded of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. "Any institute of perfection and its individual members can be removed from the jurisdiction of the local Ordinaries by the Supreme Pontiff and subjected to himself alone. This is possible by virtue of his primacy over the entire Church. He does so in order to provide more adequately for the necessities of the entire flock of the Lord and in consideration of the common good" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 45).

Father Amadeo's apostolate illustrates the wisdom of this policy in the Church. Because of his many labors in establishing the Congregation in so many dioceses, the peoples of many countries have benefited from the presence and ministries of the Passionists even to the present time. His talent for organizing and ministering, whether in his native Italy, in the United States in Nevada or Pittsburgh, in Mexico or Spain, in Chile or Cuba, has strengthened the Christian life of many nations.

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13

Blessed Charles Houban of Mount Argus

The Passionist Basilica of Sts. John and Paul was filled to overflowing for the evening Mass on Monday, October 17, 1988. The celebrant was the archbishop of Dublin, Desmond Connell. With a broad smile upon his face he announced the reason for this unique celebration: "Blessed Charles of Mount Argus, Dublin! Doesn't that sound wonderful? After all these years a Saint from Dublin!" The day before Pope John Paul II had solemnly declared Fr. Charles of St. Andrew (Houben) worthy of the honors of the altar as "Blessed."

The Eucharist at Sts. John and Paul was the first of the thanksgiving triduum in his honor. Gathered for this celebration besides Passionists from all over the world, including the capitulars of the forty-second general chapter, were pilgrims from the Netherlands, England, and Ireland. They had come to honor the Passionist religious who had spent so many years of his life in the humble service "of consoling, reconciling, and healing" God's people.

It was right that there should be a great crowd of people in the church that evening. A hundred years earlier great crowds often filled the Passionist Church of Mount Argus in Dublin to pray with Father Charles, to be blessed by him, to be forgiven in the sacrament of penance! Great crowds had come to the church for four days, until his burial on January 9, 1893. Yes, it was right that great crowds, especially from Ireland, England, and the Netherlands, should be at Sts. John and Paul on that evening in 1988 to greet Blessed Charles of Mount Argus.

Father Charles' story begins with the coming of Fr. Dominic Barberi to northern Europe in 1840. The first foundation was at Ere

in Belgium. One day a young Dutchman knocked at the door of the Belgian monastery. The superior, Fr. Peter Magagnotto, greeted him. The young Dutchman was John Andrew Houban of Munster-Geleen, from the province of Limburg, the Netherlands. One of ten children, John was born on December 11, 1821, to Peter and Jane Houban.

John Andrew received his first Holy Communion at the age of thirteen. He had continued his studies at nearby Sittard. For a short time he was called to military training, but his parents were soon able to pay for a substitute. So he returned home to continue his studies.

At school he heard about the Passionists at Ere from one of his teachers. He felt this was where the Lord wanted him, and so in 1845 he made the journey to Belgium. Father Dominic had arrived several weeks earlier from England to give the community the news of John Henry Newman's conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. This was indeed an exciting time to join the small group of Italian Passionists in the north!

John Andrew was vested on December 1, 1845. We know little about his novitiate, but it proved to be an important year for him. Charles of St. Andrew, as he was now called, took his perpetual vows December 10, 1846, at the hands of Peter Magagnotto.

Under the guidance of Fr. Seraphim Giammaria, Charles now entered upon his seminary studies. Seraphim saw the goodness of this young Dutchman and directed him into the ways of prayer, penance, and recollection. Charles responded fully to this guidance and was ordained on December 21, 1850. A year later he was sent to England. Dominic had died. Fr. Ignatius Spencer was leading the province as vice-provincial. Charles was assigned to Aston Hall, where he met Irish immigrants for the first time. They won his heart at once.

Father Dominic had preached the first Passionist mission in Ireland in 1849. Again and again missionaries were requested to conduct other missions, but no foundation had been made. Finally, in August 1855, land at Harold's Cross, Mount Argus, Dublin, was offered to the Passionists. All necessary business arrangements were made, and the Passionists entered their new home on August 15, 1857. The first superior was the Honorable Captain Charles Reginald Pakenham, known as Father Paul Mary, Passionist!

Charles Pakenham was the nephew of the Duke of Wellington.

He was born in 1821 in Dublin. He entered the military academy at Sandhurst and was commissioned in 1839. Interested in the Tractarian movement, he finally was convinced that he must become a Catholic. Cardinal Wiseman received him August 15, 1850.

Now the convert considered the religious life and asked to be received into the Passionist Congregation. Fr. Vincent Grotti clothed him in the habit on May 22, 1851. Paul Mary was ordained September 29, 1855. After a short stay in Rome he was called to be the founder of the first monastery in Dublin. The dedication took place on August 15, 1857. Shortly afterwards, Father Paul Mary was stricken with a severe illness and died that same year.

That was the year Father Charles came to Dublin. He had reached "home" at last. There he remained, except for a few years when he was assigned to work in England. He returned to Dublin for good in 1874.

Ireland in the late 1850s was an integral part of the kingdom of Great Britain. At this date a Catholic could at long last be a member of the British House of Commons, due to the election of Daniel O'Donnell in 1828. He demanded his seat in Parliament without taking the anti-Catholic oath. Under Archbishop Murray and later Archbishop Paul Cullen many Catholics were trying to find a compromise with the British, but a persistent minority continued to fight for Irish Home Rule, at times willing to use violence to achieve their goal. Cullen succeeded in getting Rome to condemn the Finians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

During these years the Catholic Church was being renewed in England, Ireland, and Scotland. The penal laws were repealed. Catholics in Ireland could again practice the faith, while others in England and Scotland were returning to the Church. There was work for Passionists to do in the British Isles.

The provincial headquarters were established at Highgate in London in 1858. On October 21, 1861, the solemn dedication of the church there was joyously celebrated. Cardinal Manning preached. Forty priests attended. The choir sang Mozart's Twelfth. It was a glorious occasion for Catholics in England!

In 1865 the Passionists took a parish at Stanhope Street, Glasgow. Four years later a new and larger church was built at Parson Street, dedicated to Saint Mungo. In 1869 after a successful mission in Belfast, the Passionists were offered Holy Cross Church there.

The new monasteries and churches in the important cities of Dublin, London, Glasgow, and Belfast were not only special for Passionists. Catholics throughout the British Isles rejoiced at each new church in their midst. Their old churches and abbeys were in the hands of the government. For three centuries they had not been free to worship God openly. A new church was truly a "resurrection" after the years on Golgotha. Newman called it a "second spring. . . . The Church in England has died, and the Church lives again!"

In Rome, the Passionist general superior, Bernard Prelini, lamented the expenses—the debts incurred for these new buildings, the external pomp accompanying the dedications, the distances religious traveled to participate in the festivities, and the like. He failed to understand the excitement that Catholics of England, Ireland, and Scotland experienced in once again being able to build a new church! The Church that was dead was risen again. Perhaps there were at times excesses, but only the "older brother" was critical of the feasting and merrymaking when the "prodigal" son returned!

During these years Father Charles lived a simple life of prayer and service to the ordinary people of Dublin. He prayed for them and with them. He spent hours in the confessional. Again and again he imparted blessings upon the sick and weary, and many were cured by his prayers and blessings. People responded to his services, for they recognized in him a holy person, a man of God, one who loved them even as the Lord did.

Father Charles found this ministry taxing. Little time remained for himself, but he was a man of prayer. We are told that he remained faithful to the regular observances of the community's schedule. If others could not maintain fidelity to observances because of the demands of the ministries, this did not disturb his own inner peace. There were, however, others who were disturbed by the lack of some religious observance. This included superiors in Rome also.

Father General Prelini reported on "abuses" in England, as he perceived Passionist life there. The chapter of 1878 was unable to settle the problem completely. In fact the new general, Fr. Bernard Mary Silvestrelli, visited England and Ireland in 1879. He wrote, "While on the one hand we do not accept all as true, and we do not believe the reports that have been spread abroad regarding the religious of the province, on the other hand we cannot deny the evident fact that there are grounds for many things said."

For Father Charles it was not an insoluble issue. His solution was sincere personal fidelity, both to community exercises and to the needs of his people. He had a tremendous thirst for prayer and a burning zeal for people. In his simple way, he strove to satisfy both needs. He was at peace.

Faithful to the end, worn out from work, he died on January 5, 1893, at Mount Argus. The evening papers announced the news that Father Charles of Mount Argus was dead. People gathered early to have one last look at their friend, one last prayer at his side, and perhaps a relic of some sort to remember him by. They came from all parts of Dublin and distant areas of Ireland. They came by the thousands to pay their last respects. For four days they came.

The final *Requiem* and *Libera* were sung. The crowds were immense. Police kept the faithful in order as the body of Father Charles was borne to its final resting place in the monastery cemetery.

But down through the years the people have kept coming. Why this demonstration of love and affection by the vast multitudes of Irish at his funeral? Why his beatification by Pope John Paul on October 16, 1988?

His popularity did not rest on his dignity as the superior nor on his eloquence as a preacher. He lived as a simple religious, faithful to Passionist prayer, in love with the people.

The secret of his life was that he gave himself to the service of people, whether in hearing their confessions, in ministering the Holy Eucharist to them, in praying or offering the Holy Sacrifice with them and for them. Father Charles day after day was there to serve in the Church of St. Paul of the Cross, on Mount Argus, Dublin.

Pope John Paul II recognized this in Blessed Charles: "The priestly ministry of Blessed Charles was carried out in the continual service to others. His life is characterized by that humble exemplary dedication to service which determines the true greatness of a disciple" (beatification homily).

The crowds who came to his funeral, the number who kept returning month after month to his simple grave at the side of the Mount Argus church, the devout who committed their problems to his prayers, and yes, the many who came to Rome for the beatification —all these testify to the holiness, dedication, zeal, of this Passionist priest. He had been their friend and spiritual guide on earth. He would now continue to intercede for them in heaven.

Because of Father Charles, Mount Argus would continue to be a center for spiritual renewal and help for many years to come. When St. Paul of the Cross built his first church on the hillside of Monte Argentaro, he wanted it to be open to the poor and needy. He even pleaded with Cardinal Altieri to bless his church as a public oratory. His ideal was that those seeking counsel and support could find it readily in every Passionist church.

The great Passionist church in Dublin has ever remained true to this ideal of the founder. Throughout the world there are other such Passionist churches available to God's "little ones" seeking peace and quiet prayer, an opportunity for reconciliation. The beatification of Father Charles of Mount Argus testifies to the authenticity of this service by Passionists to the spiritually poor and needy of the local Churches.

One final question. It is understandable why great crowds came a hundred years ago in Dublin to honor and pray to this religious. They came because they had experienced his love. But why did they come in 1988 to his beatification in Rome, these great crowds from Ireland, England, and the Netherlands?

They came because they, too, know Blessed Charles is a holy man, able to help them in their effort to come close to God. They find in Charles a sign of God's presence, an example to be followed, a witness to the truth of Christ's gospel.

"At a time like our own, characterized by a kind of allergy to belief in words not sustained by deeds, the witness of life remains the most important sign of credibility, because it accredits the sincerity of the apostle and the presence of the divine force working in him." With these words of Pope John Paul II, Fr. Paul Francis Spencer concludes his recent life of Blessed Charles. He most certainly found the best words to sum up Charles' life.

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14

Fr. Fidelis Kent Stone (of the Cross)

Pope Pius IX convoked the First Vatican Council on June 29, 1868, by calling all the bishops to assemble in Rome. In September of the same year he invited non-Catholics to consider the claims of the Roman Catholic Church. In far-off America at Hobart College in Geneva, New York, a young Episcopal priest, the widowed president of the college, heeded this invitation, only to find his world shaken. He resigned his office, and on December 8, 1869, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, was received into the Church. His name was James Kent Stone. His life remained closely intertwined with Passionist history for more than four decades.

James Kent Stone was born on Tremont Place, Boston, November 10, 1840, son of Dr. John Seely Stone, an Episcopal priest, and Mary Kent, daughter of the jurist James Kent. He entered Harvard in 1856 and graduated in the class of 1861 with Oliver Wendell Holmes. For a year he served in the Union army, fighting at Antietam in 1862.

On resigning from the army he married Cornelia Fay, received orders, and became president of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. He was later appointed president of Hobart College in Geneva. Three daughters were born, but shortly after the birth of the third child in 1868, his wife, Cornelia, died.

Shaken by the papal invitation, Stone restudied the position of the Episcopal Church and the claims of the Roman Church. He included his reflections in a book he published, *The Invitation Heeded.*

To prepare for his reception into the Church he made a retreat at St. Michael's Monastery in Union City. He was at once attracted to the life and work of the Passionists. He resolved, even before the retreat was over, to become a Passionist as soon as he was freed from family obligations.

In 1869 the Passionists had been in the United States for seventeen years. They were established in Pittsburgh, West Hoboken (New Jersey), Dunkirk (New York), Baltimore, and were preparing to go to Cincinnati. In each city there was also a parish served by Passionists.

Vocations came rather easily, partly because the Passionists quickly adapted to the customs and practices of the growing Catholic Church in America. In 1852, when the founders came from Italy, there were few Italian immigrants to this country. Most of the immigrants were coming from Ireland and Germany. These were the people who needed the services of the Passionists. From their families came the first vocations. The Italian founders quickly adapted to the American way of life as lived by the Irish and German immigrants.

In a short time the young Americans joining the community felt quite welcomed and at home. As early as 1875 Fr. Charles Lang was elected to the provincial council. In 1887 Fr. Benedict Murname was chosen as the first non-Italian provincial. At his untimely death he was succeeded by Fr. Thomas O'Connor, who became the first American on the general council in Rome.

It was this Congregation Stone wanted to join. But what about his children! He visited the saintly American foundress of the Mercy Sisters, Mother Frances Warde, at Mount St. Mary's Academy, Manchester, New Hampshire. Mother Frances recognized the greatness of the young convert and father, and she agreed to care for his children. This did not free him sufficiently to become a Passionist, but he was accepted by Fr. Isaac Hecker for admission into the new Paulist community. He was ordained as a Paulist on December 21, 1872.

At this time, almost providentially, he met the Michael O'Connors. This couple agreed to adopt his two children (one child had died) and to take them to San Francisco where they were moving. There was, however, one stipulation: Father Stone must surrender all parental rights. He agreed. One night he took all the mementos of his wife and children, even the wedding rings, and dropped them

into the Hudson River at the foot of Fifty-ninth Street. Now he was free to board the train for the Passionist novitiate in Pittsburgh.

He was vested as a Passionist on August 10, 1876, and took his vows one year later. His novice master was Fr. Amadeo Garibaldi, one of the band who went with Fr. Peter Magagnotto to Virginia City. Later Father Amadeo went to Spain, where he founded the Congregation. Fidelis Kent Stone once described Amadeo as "a real master in Israel, the most thoroughgoing old thirteenth-century religious I ever knew!"

After his profession he prepared for missionary work as a Passionist. He was very successful in this ministry, and he soon became a much sought-after preacher. He was asked to deliver the sermon at the solemn requiem Mass for Pope Pius IX at Baltimore on February 16, 1878. Later he preached at the inauguration of the Catholic university in Washington.

In 1894 Father Fidelis took a prominent part in the first Passionist missionary congress held at Pittsburgh from January 25 to February 6. Thirty-two missionaries assembled, together with the provincial, Fr. John Baptist Baudinelli. Father Fidelis gave a moving lecture on the role of the Passionist preacher. "The Passion and Death of our Savior are God's most impressive motive for conquering human hearts. . . . Accepting the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's guiding presence in the Church, can we doubt that the approval of our congregation and of its specific work, means that we are to go about the world to force men to realize . . . that because God so loves them, they should love Him, serve and obey Him?"

Father Fidelis was called to serve in Rome and elsewhere. He accepted these calls in a spirit of humble obedience. While he was in Rome a convert friend, Henry S. Richards, had written to him about "the great work that lies before you and my desire to hear the trumpet sounding *in our midst again.*" Fidelis answered: "Bless you, it was only a penny whistle at best & it's cracked now (!) . . . I know the fields are white in America, but others must be the reapers, the great reapers. . . . How little desire I have to 'sound the trumpet' in the center of Puritanism."

In 1880 he volunteered to serve in South America, where a problem was developing. Several Irish Passionists had gone to Argentina to beg money for the English province. One of them, Fr. Martin Byrne, saw the needs of the settlers and began to raise money for

them. His plans included building and conducting schools, hospitals, and orphanages. He wrote to his provincial in London and then to the general superior, Fr. Bernard Mary Silvestrelli.

The general was concerned about Martin's activities. The problem was complex. Irish settlers in the Argentine wanted their money to be used for their children, not for ministries to non-Irish Argentineans. The Irish Passionists feared that the Order in Argentina would become Italianized. Obviously Father Martin had gone beyond his mandate to collect monies for the English province when he began accepting gifts from the Irish settlers for their purposes. Bernard insisted that an Argentine foundation conform to the Rule. Conducting schools, hospitals, and orphanages were not permitted in the Rule.

Eventually he ordered Father Martin to return to London. In his place, in 1881, he sent several Americans and Italians to Argentina, among them Father Fidelis. Martin returned to London, wanting to present his proposal in person to the general and his consultors. Bernard Mary would not allow this. Martin became quite upset, even abusive. He wrote to the Pope.

Finally, the general chapter of 1884, which reelected Bernard Mary, expelled Martin from the Congregation. He appealed to the Holy See and was readmitted into the Congregation. This proved to be a heartbreak for Bernard, who resigned in 1889. Father Bernard was elected again in 1893. Martin remained in the Congregation until his death in 1918. For both men this was a heavy cross for the rest of their lives.

Father Fidelis went to Argentina, knowing the conditions laid down by the general superior but also open to the needs of the Irish in this Spanish-speaking republic. By preaching missions to the settlers out on their ranches, Fidelis was able to win the Irish to support the Passionists in building a beautiful church and monastery in Buenos Aires. Thus, he succeeded in serving the Irish while preserving the traditions of the Congregation. Eventually Argentineans would join the community, especially those of Irish descent.

There were also years when he returned to the United States. He participated at the provincial chapter of 1896. In the Acts of this chapter we read: "Never before has the chapter assembled under better auspices and midst more sanguine expectations than in the present instance. The past three years have been remarkable for the

peace of the communities; the prosperity of the different retreats; the number and extent of our ministerial labors; the acquisition of many and promising subjects, and the addition of a new retreat."

Three years later the chapter secretary would note that there was "a gradual moral and religious retrogression in our age." Of course, what had happened was the publication of *Testem Benevolentiae* earlier that year, with its condemnation of "Americanism."

Interestingly, Fidelis was living in Rome as general consultor during the years of the so-called Americanist crisis. Fr. Felix Ward writes: "When the honor of the Church in America was attacked under the specious charge of 'Americanism' he did fine work in dispelling misconceptions. This led Cardinal Gibbons to say: 'Father Fidelis owes it to himself and the truth to be on the right side, and I take him into my heart for it.'"

From 1902 to 1905 Father Fidelis was novice master at Pittsburgh. As a former general consultor he was selected by the general to preside at the provincial chapter of 1905. Father Fidelis took advantage of his position to propose quite strongly that the time had come to form two provinces of the Passionists in the United States. The newer province would consist of the monasteries in Ohio and westward, with headquarters in St. Louis. Not all the religious agreed that this was the opportune time to divide the province. Father Fidelis insisted and finally the chapter not only approved the division of the province but also elected him as provincial.

The superiors of the old and the province-to-be assembled in the new Sacred Heart retreat in Louisville, for what Felix Ward nostalgically called the "last assemblage of east and west as one province." On Monday morning, July 30, 1906, Father Fidelis read the decree of Rome creating the new province of Holy Cross. One can almost hear the sonorous Latin of the papal document flowing from the eloquent tongue of the Harvard graduate.

For Charles Lang, the provincial of the new province, the solemnity of the occasion was more readily expressed by the words of the 1908 provincial chapter: "This new province has felt the 'Touch of the Cross.' If this province is to live out its name, the Cross must follow its progress."

In 1911 Father Fidelis was chosen to become the provincial of the new Argentine province. He also became involved in establishing the Congregation in Chile and eventually in Brazil. He loved the years that he spent in South America.

Before leaving Argentina he wrote to a friend:

> Had I the time and the strength . . . I would desire to say something for the sake of my fellow countrymen in the North—something positive and plain, *concerning the true state of Catholicity in the beautiful but little known Southern continent of America.* The years which I have been here have left me edified and humbled. There are scandals, of course there are, if we look for them. But there have been saints and martyrs here of whom the world knows nothing. . . . The history of the Catholic Church in South America has never been written, may never be written, but it would be a great work; a story of devotion, of abnegation, of faith, both fascinating and true.

He left his heart in Argentina as he finally sailed north for the last time in 1915.

As an old man of seventy-six years, unable to enter Mexico, he stopped at Corpus Christi, Texas, to preach the Lenten course for Bishop Paul Nussbaum. Father Paul had been chosen to become the first bishop of Corpus Christi. Quite a few Passionists were working in this new mission diocese among the blacks, the Hispanics, and the whites. For thirteen years Bishop Paul struggled to lay the foundations for the Church in southeast Texas. He resigned in 1920, to become three years later the bishop of Marquette, Michigan. Bishop Paul Nussbaum was the first American Passionist to become a bishop.

Father Fidelis saw the needs in Texas and felt an interior call to join Fr. Mark Moeslein, C.P., at Holy Cross Church among the blacks. He remained there for two years and helped build the church and school. This was his final active ministry: the president of Hobart College teaching simple catechism to children in Corpus Christi!

During these years of intense ministry and administration in South America, in the United States, and in Rome, there was for Father Fidelis another "life"—the suffering caused by his sacrifice. He had given up all parental rights over his children, but he had never dreamed that this would mean a wall of complete separation from them.

But that is what the O'Connors demanded. His letters to his daughters were returned unopened. On one occasion he was turned away at the door. He happened to be in California when Mr. O'Connor

died but felt he could not go to the funeral. This time, however, Mrs. O'Connor invited him to the church and home. For a brief moment he could offer his condolences to his two daughters for their sorrow at losing their "papa."

The pangs of his sacrifice remained strong in his heart. It seems that he found some surcease from friendships with young children. One such child was Helen Grace Smith, the younger sister of Fr. Maurice Smith, C.P., a dear friend of Father Fidelis. Fidelis kept up a lifelong correspondence with Grace. She even wrote to him that she was seeking to contact his daughters. He encouraged her in this effort. Later she published a lengthy work on the life of Fidelis.

Years ago the present writer met Honore and Mary Denise Murphy, daughters of the architect of the Louisville monastery. They shared their fond memories of the affection Father Fidelis showed them whenever he visited their home. Evidently, he found in their love some respite for the ache in his own heart.

The story of his sacrifice ended in the final months of his life. He was living in the infirmary at the Chicago monastery when he received a letter from Frances, his youngest daughter. She had finally learned of his sufferings and wanted to visit him. She came to Chicago, and the provincial, Fr. Eugene Creegan, gladly gave him permission to return with his daughter to California. He stayed with her for some weeks. Then he took ill. Both daughters were with him on October 14, 1921, when he died. At long last, this great man was at peace.

We may wonder about the sacrifice James Kent Stone made in becoming a Catholic, a priest, and a Passionist. Was he properly counseled in giving up his children? A recent author of the life of Mother Frances Warde writes: "The life of Kent Stone was both a tragedy and a spiritual triumph. . . . Viewing his life from the vantage point of one hundred years, one feels a sense of *tragic waste as well as spiritual fulfillment.*"

Perhaps this sacrifice was the price Father Fidelis paid to become the powerful preacher, zealous missionary, and spiritual leader that he was. The Second Vatican Council states of religious: "The more ardently they unite themselves to Christ *through a self-surrender involving their entire lives,* the more vigorous becomes the life of the Church and more abundant her apostolate bears fruit" (Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, no. 1).

Perhaps without the intensity of his own suffering and sacrifice, Father Fidelis would not have strengthened the Passionist community in the United States nor founded it in South America. Through Fidelis of the Cross, the apostolate of the Passionists remains fruitful in many countries even today. We Passionists are indebted to Fidelis, and also to his two daughters, who only too late came to know their great father.

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15

St. Gemma Galgani

Pope Leo XIII had proclaimed a Holy Year for the opening of the new century, to begin on Christmas Eve 1899 and continue until Christmas Eve 1900. Catholics responded with joy. To prepare for the Holy Year, missions were held throughout Italy. In the city of Lucca several Passionists preached the mission at the Cathedral of St. Martin, from June 25 to July 9.

One of the devout women of the city wanted to make the jubilee mission, but she did not want to miss the June services at the Church of the Visitation in honor of the Sacred Heart. Finally, when these devotions closed at the end of June, she did go to the cathedral for the mission. To her surprise, she saw the missionaries wearing the same religious habit the Passionist youth Gabriel Possenti was wearing when he appeared to her. From that day on she did not miss one mission service. Finally she got up enough courage to talk to one of the missionaries, Father Cajetan. This was the first time she had spoken to a Passionist. This young woman was Gemma Galgani, the mystic of the passion. Hers is an important part of the Passionist story. It begins near Lucca some twenty years before the Holy Year mission.

On March 12, 1878, a girl, Gemma, was born to Henry and Aurelia Galgani in Camigliano, near Lucca. Gemma was eight when her mother died. The following year she received her first Holy Communion. Gino, her seminarian brother, died in 1894. Three years later her father died from throat cancer, in dire financial straits. Gemma was left an orphan and without support.

She experienced a prolonged, serious illness all through the winter of 1898–1899. The family moved to Lucca. Doctors were called. There was no hope of recovery. A sister who attended to her needs knew of Gabriel Possenti, the young Passionist, through the Gianinis, a prominent family in Lucca. This sister gave Gemma a novena card and the life of Gabriel. Gemma began to pray to him.

One day Gabriel appeared to her, called her his sister, and told her she would wear the same habit he did. He informed her that she would be cured, and that a special grace was being prepared for her. On March 2 she experienced her cure, and from March 10 onward she could once again go to church for Mass and Communion.

Then on June 8, 1899, the evening before the feast of the Sacred Heart, while she was praying the holy hour with Jesus in his sufferings, she experienced the deepest love for him. Her own words can describe what took place.

> All of a sudden I felt a piercing sorrow for my sins . . . grief, love, fear, hope, encouragement. . . . I found myself in the presence of my dear heavenly Mother. . . . She opened her mantle and covered me with it. At that moment Jesus appeared with all his wounds open; but from those wounds there no longer came forth blood but flames of fire. In an instant those flames came to touch my hands, my feet and my heart. . . . Then I found myself kneeling; but I still felt great pain in my hands, feet and heart. I rose to go to bed and became aware that blood was flowing from those parts where I felt pain. . . . Those pains did not leave me until three o'clock on Friday—the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

It was in these circumstances that Gemma made the Holy Year mission at the cathedral and spoke to Father Cajetan. He listened to her story and allowed her to take private vows. He also arranged for her to live with the Gianini family, benefactors of the Passionists. Cecilia Gianini took Gemma to church even when the stigmata were present (usually from Thursday evening to Friday at three). Through Father Cajetan she met the provincial, Fr. Peter Paul Moreschini (later a bishop), and finally Fr. Germano Ruoppolo.

Father Germano was at this time forty-nine years old. He had been professed in 1866 at Monte Argentaro, but because of the conditions in Italy, had studied at Ere in Belgium. After his ordination in 1872 he returned to Italy. At the time of his meeting Gemma,

he was the postulator general working on the cause for the beatification of St. Gabriel. He was also known as a careful archeological excavator, having worked on the catacombs at the retreat of St. Eutizio near Soriano and then on the Roman ruins under the Church of Sts. John and Paul. More importantly, he was well acquainted with mystical theology and spiritual writers. Later, he wrote the biography of Gemma, which has been recognized everywhere as a masterful presentation of mysticism and mystical experiences.

Gemma had been going to Bishop Volpi for confession and direction. When Gemma received the stigmata the bishop was not too

sure how to counsel her. Father Germano was able to assure him and Gemma of the authenticity of her graces, even the extraordinary ones. At times the bishop and Germano differed, even rather seriously, on Gemma's direction. When discussing matters with the bishop, Germano would insist on the correctness of his own judgments; but when counseling Gemma, he would advise her to obey the bishop.

In February 1902 Germano told Gemma to pray to be freed of the external signs of the stigmata. Gemma did so and she no longer bore the external markings.

Gabriel continued to tell her that she would become a Passionist nun. In February of 1902 Cecilia Gianini was invited to make a retreat with the nuns, but she was explicitly told not to bring Gemma! Mother Victoria was adamant. Gemma not only did not become a Passionist, she was not allowed even to visit the convent at Traquinia.

In return, the Lord told Gemma that the nuns would come to Lucca and that she should tell Father Germano to work for the foundation of a convent in Lucca. The nuns did in fact arrive in Lucca in 1905. By that time Gemma had died, on Holy Saturday, April 11, 1903.

After her death Father Germano remembered the new convent at Lucca. On October 3, 1905, he obtained a letter from Pope Pius X authorizing the foundation of the convent. This was the permission to found; now he needed the financial means to realize it!

When all was finally settled, two nuns, Mothers Josepha Armellini and Gabriel Cozzi, left Tarquinia in 1905 to found the convent at Lucca. A year later in 1906 Euphemia Gianini entered, taking the name Gemma Magdalena. Others soon entered and the community began to grow. Sr. Gemma Magdalena Gianini later left the convent to form a new community called the Sisters of St. Gemma.

St. Gemma was canonized in 1939 by Pius XII. She and her spiritual father, Germano Ruoppolo, are buried in the chapel of the new convent at Lucca.

Gemma Galgani was a spiritual daughter of St. Paul of the Cross. She has a message for every Passionist. Her life reveals the most fundamental reality of the Passionist charism, being "on the Cross with Jesus." For each Passionist is called "to suffer many things, to be mocked, despised, and to bear willingly afflictions and vexations" (Original Rule, no. 11).

Yes, Paul of the Cross left the Passionists with a profound mystical spirituality of the passion. He himself lived this passion mysticism throughout his life. He asked those who would follow him, both men and women, to "desire only to be on the Cross with Jesus."

To be called to be a Passionist is a calling "to suffer many things," like the Suffering Servant of Isaiah; like Paul of the Cross, who endured a dark night for over forty years; like Jesus himself, who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for the people.

God gave to the Passionist family an outstanding model of this passion mysticism in the person of Gemma Galgani. She is an extraordinary and almost unique model, one marked with the very wounds of Christ in her body. Her life repeats the frequent advice of St. Paul of the Cross: "put on the Wounds of Christ."

What is more amazing is that this young woman of twenty-five years was not a Passionist—at least in the canonical sense. She was not allowed even to visit the convent at Tarquinia or to make a retreat there. During the final years of the nineteenth century, many Passionists were concerned about external fidelity to the written rule of the founder. God raised up this young woman who was not a canonical Passionist to show that the charism of St. Paul of the Cross demands an inner conformity to the passion.

Wounded as Jesus was, Gemma also reminds Passionists of how they are called to keep the "memory of the Passion, *Memoria Passionis,*" before the people of God. In word and preaching but also in example and suffering, the Passionist must proclaim the memory of the passion. For as the original Rule states, Passionists are called "to suffer many things," not only for the glory of God and for their own salvation but also "for the salvation of others." These "many things" also include the sufferings missionaries experience in their apostolic ministries, even martyrdom. The present Constitutions, formulated at the renewal chapter of 1968 and 1970 after the Second Vatican Council, states succinctly this mission of the Passionist: "We seek the unity of our lives and our apostolate in the Passion of Jesus."

Finally, we must remember that Gemma remained a layperson "in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 32). Even though she wanted to enter the convent, she was not a religious. In this condition as a layperson she was called to the fullness of Christian holiness. "Under the

influence of the Holy Spirit" to use the words of the council, she undertook to practice the evangelical counsels "privately . . . to produce in the world a shining witness and model of holiness" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 39).

St. Gemma Galgani is needed in our times to be this witness and model. For "it is evident to everyone that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity" (no. 40).

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16

Communities of Passionist Sisters

St. Paul of the Cross formed a community of priests and brothers whom he originally called "The Poor of Jesus." He dreamed also of a community of cloistered nuns. With Mother Mary Crucified he founded the first convent, or monastery, for the Passionist nuns at Tarquinia.

At his death his dream—his charism—was shared by priests, brothers, and cloistered sisters. But he had also shared it with other priests, brothers, sisters, laymen, and laywomen. His "desire to be on the Cross with Jesus" was burning in the hearts of these many people.

In the nineteenth century other women dreamed his dream and burned with his desire. At some point in their life, they had met Passionists. Some were directed by Passionists. Others were captivated by the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross. In this way there is a variety of Passionist sisters and religious.

Passionist sisters are not canonically members of the Congregation of the Passion but are joined or "aggregated" to the Congregation by the action of the general superior. They are thus part of the Passionist family, and their history is part of the story of the Passionists.

* * *

The story of the Passionist sisters of Bolton begins with Blessed Dominic Barberi. A tradition states that Elizabeth Prout was baptized into the Catholic Church by Dominic. Whether this is true or

not, she did meet the early Passionists in her native England. For several years she was directed by Fr. Gaudentius Rossi.

Father Gaudentius had seen the plight of many young girls and women in the industrial cities and towns of England. He knew several women wanted to assist the poor in England's towns. They would like to become sisters, but they did not have a dowry nor were they called to an enclosed community. He spoke to several priests about their situation. Then he suggested to Elizabeth that she begin a new community for such young women. She accepted his suggestion and started a convent at St. Chad's in Manchester in 1852.

At this point Rossi was sent to the United States to begin parish mission work there. Elizabeth had to carry on by herself the dream of working with the poor girls of the manufacturing towns of England. Assisted by Frs. Ignatius Spencer, Bernard O'Laughlin, and others, she eventually formed the Sisters of the Cross and Passion. She is known as Sr. Mary Joseph Prout.

Her community was joined to the Passionist Congregation in 1874. In 1875 they received papal approval. The generalate is at Bolton in Lancashire. They are called the Passionist Sisters of Bolton, and they wear the Passionist habit with its distinctive "sign."

Several sisters went to Bulgaria at the request of Bishop Paoli, C.P., formerly provincial in England, where they opened a school and worked with the people. Others went into Ireland and Scotland where they built convents, schools, and homes.

* * *

After the fall of Napoleon, a noble lady, the marchessa Mary Magdalen Frescobaldi (1771–1843) formed a community of sisters at Florence, the Handmaids of Florence. Mother Mary Magdalen was inspired by the teaching of St. Paul of the Cross and wanted her convent (called a "Ritiro") to follow his rule, so she actually spent some time at the Passionist nuns' convent in Tarquinia to observe the customs and to imbibe the spirit of the Passionist community. The general superior, Fr. Thomas Alberano, affiliated their convent to the Passionist Congregation.

After the death of Mother Mary Magdalen, the community fell into dire times. Most of the sisters left; a few joined the Passionist nuns in Tarquinia. But Srs. Crucified Tognoni and Pia Frosali went to Signa near Pisa to continue the dream of the marchessa.

The parish priest of nearby St. Mary's in Castel of Signa was Fr. Joseph Fiammetti, a holy man, deeply devoted to the passion of Jesus. On September 14, 1872, the two heroic sisters under the direction of Father Joseph revived the Caponi retreat at Signa.

Father Joseph confirmed them in their dedication to St. Paul of the Cross and directed them in the way of the Passionists. He studied the rule of the Passionist sisters of Bolton in order to modify the rules the sisters had brought from Florence. In 1879, Joseph Fiametti went to Rome to "return" them to St. Paul of the Cross at his tomb.

In 1904 the Passionist general, Fr. Bernard Mary Silvestrelli, joined the small community of Joseph Fiametti to the Congregation of the Passion. A year later, on August 3, Fr. Joseph died. In 1931, the sisters received final papal approval and are known as Passionist Sisters of St. Paul of the Cross.

* * *

Passionists from the newly formed American province, both Italians and Americans, had gone into Mexico in the 1860s. Driven out, they returned in 1877 and eventually reestablished the house at Tacubaya.

Fr. Diego Alberici, an Italian missionary, was one of the religious working in Mexico. He was directing a young woman named Lolita Medina Zepada. She and a few companions were seeking a more stable form of community life as religious. Father Diego wrote a rule of life for the small group in accord with the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross.

The archbishop of Mexico City approved the rule and established the new community on April 3, 1892. Lolita, now Mother Dolores, became the superior. The community was called the Congregation of the Daughters of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Sorrows of Mary. They are commonly known as Mexican Passionist sisters.

In 1901 Father Bernard Mary joined them to the Congregation. The sisters wear the Passionist habit and emblem, and take the fourth vow to promote devotion to the passion.

The community had barely been formed when the Passionists in Mexico were removed from the jurisdiction of the American province and put into the Spanish province of the Sacred Heart. The

American and some of the Italian Passionists left Mexico to make room for the Spanish Passionists. Father Diego returned to Italy in 1902. Tradition has it that this was a heartrending separation for himself and Mother Dolores. They never met again. Diego died in 1904 in Italy.

The community is also present in El Salvador, the United States, Spain, San Domingo, Guatemala, and Rome. They conduct schools, a retreat house, and service several seminaries and retreat houses.

* * *

These three large congregations begun in the nineteenth century were soon followed by further institutes in the twentieth century. These include the Brothers of the Passion in Zaire, formed in 1944, and a secular institute, Missionaries of the Passion, approved in 1980 at Catania in Sicily.

These institutes of women and men show us the richness of the charism of St. Paul of the Cross. It embraces men and women, priests and brothers, religious and members of secular institutes, and members of the laity through the Confraternity of the Passion. It can flourish in a variety of structures: strict canonical institutes and less organized communities. It can include cloistered nuns in solitary monasteries and active preachers, teachers, and social workers.

But amid all these varieties of forms and apostolic ministries there remains always the central core of the charism: the profound, personal, and communal commitment to the passion of the Lord and to the sufferings of the crucifieds of each age.

St. Paul of the Cross, the saint of the passion, has given to the Church not just one or two institutes but an entire family of Passionists, all dedicated to Christ crucified and his suffering members today.

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17

Passionists in the New Century

The new century opened in a spirit of eager promise. It was welcomed as a century of unlimited progress. Cardinal Dominic Ferrara spoke of fears and hopes in an address he gave in Rome entitled "The Catholic Church in the Present Century, Its Fears and Hopes for the Next Century." He remarked: "According to some, the next century will be the century of democracy. There will be no discord between the church and democracy, if the latter properly interprets the great principles of *equality, fraternity and liberty* on which it is based. Indeed, these principles are beautiful and glorious conquests of our Redeemer and His church over the ancient world." His address was published in the *American Ecclesiastical Review* of 1899.

There were many promises of hope for the Church as the new century opened. When compared with the situations in 1800, the new century augured well for the Church. The eighteenth century began without a pope, for Pius VI had died in exile the previous August. Now Leo XIII had proclaimed a jubilee year to begin the new century.

Pope Leo lived into the new century, to be succeeded by Joseph Sarto, as Pius X. The new pope revived Eucharistic devotion with his decrees on early and frequent Communion. He began the liturgical renewal by insisting on chant and the laity's participation in the Eucharistic celebration. He encouraged homiletics and catechetics.

Pius X took a firm position against Modernist theologians. He allowed the integralists to dampen the incipient Scholastic and bib-

lical revival in Catholic seminaries. As a pope he was less involved in world politics and in Italian factions. He strove to develop the spiritual lives of Catholics by "restoring all things in Christ." He had been called a "reforming conservative."

Passionists too felt these hopes and fears. On the very eve of the new century, in 1899, the Passionists held a general chapter in Rome. The chapter almost unanimously voted to retain Fr. Bernard Mary Silvestrelli as general for the fifth time. The capitulars felt safer entering the new century under a well-proven leader. They would reelect him a final time in 1905.

But when it came time to elect his council they cast many, many ballots for each consultor. Nor could they agree on how to face the future. For example, many felt, including the general superior, that perhaps the young men should take temporary vows at the end of the novitiate, delaying the time for final profession. The chapter was content to give some guidelines for the superior to follow in requesting a solution from the Holy See. Temporary vows would become the norm after the chapter of 1914.

When Bernard Mary Silvestrelli resigned in 1907 a new chapter was called. For over thirty years the Congregation had been ruled by Father Bernard Mary. At this special chapter in 1908 the capitulars had to select a new superior to guide the Congregation in the new century. It was not an easy task. It took twenty-four ballots to elect Jeremiah Angelucci of north Italy as general.

The next chapter, in 1914, was prepared by suggestions sent from the provinces. The American superiors who attended the chapter questioned the practice of rising for midnight prayer. Fifty-one priests of the Eastern American province asked that delegates be elected for provincial chapters at which the superiors of the local communities were elected. Other proposals dealt with such problems as studies, training of the professors, and the health of the students. In other words, there were those who had begun to question the rigorism of the regular observance.

The chapter did not accept all these suggestions, but some mitigations were allowed in regard to food and choir observances. New decrees were made to improve studies and the health of the young religious. One result of all this was that the novice master in Louisville got permission to build a swimming pool on the monastery grounds for the health of his novices.

This chapter elected an Italian, Fr. Silvio Di Vezzi, the first general who had lived most of his life outside of Italy. However, the capitulars had barely reached home when the First World War broke out. The Congregation was not able to implement the decisions of this chapter. In fact the world was never to be the same again.

"Nothing seemed simple any more. Nothing was black and white. Nothing was 'right' and 'wrong' the way Theodore Roosevelt used to describe things . . . so the old life slipped away, never to return again and wise men sensed it almost at once. . . . Something was lost, a touch of optimism, confidence, exuberance and hope. . . . And in those, brief, buoyant years, it was a spark that somehow gave promise to life."

The Passionists experienced the hopes and the sufferings of the "good years" and of the war. The Congregation continued to grow. Argentina became an independent province in 1901. The first Passionists went into Brazil in 1912 to establish the Congregation there.

In the United States the Passionists were divided into two provinces, as we have seen. While the separation caused some hurts, on the whole it made developments easier in both areas of the country. The new monastery at Boston began closed weekend retreats for laymen in 1914. This began an important new apostolate for American Passionists and eventually for Passionists around the world.

Another apostolic development was the conducting of what was then called "non-Catholic Missions" by Fr. Xavier Sutton and others in 1899. During these decades Passionists were fully occupied in parish missions throughout the East and Midwest. These were the years when immigration was at its highest. And as a new parish was formed or older parishes changed with new immigrants, Passionists were there to strengthen the faith of the people and to help them find their place in a growing American Catholic Church.

American Passionists, especially in the Midwest, became a source of strength for the persecuted Passionists in Mexico. An entire group of Spanish students who were studying in Mexico City were expelled from the country and found refuge at the Chicago monastery for two years. After their ordination in Chicago they returned to Spain. Two of them were martyred by the Reds in the Spanish civil war of 1936.

A great honor for the Passionists in America was the ordination of Fr. Paul Nussbaum as the first bishop of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Paul Nussbaum had studied and worked in Argentina. On his return to this country, he was a provincial consultor when he was chosen bishop of the mission diocese of Corpus Christi.

The Passionist nuns, after the death of St. Gemma, finally built a convent at Lucca in 1908. After a century of being confined to Italy, except for one convent in France, the nuns now began looking to the countries where male Passionists were working. In 1910 a group left Tarquinia to establish the first convent of Passionist nuns in the United States at Pittsburgh, as the fathers and brothers had done in 1852.

Another group of six nuns went to Mexico under the leadership of Mother Mary Gertrude Vittori, but by 1916 they were forced to leave. Several found refuge in Spain and established the first Spanish convent of Passionist nuns at Lexama, near Bilbao, in 1918.

Once war had been declared, the Passionist way of life was severely challenged, first in Europe and then in the Americas. Pope Benedict XV pleaded for peace and offered a peace plan to the European powers. But it was all to no avail.

In Louisville the new draft laws caused eight religious to appear before the board on June 5, 1917. The chronicler of the monastery wrote: "So the dread War has reached even within the peaceful cloisters of America, disturbing the even tenor of life. The future is dark, and no one knows what is in store for the Church and Religious Orders in this country."

In some countries Passionists had to serve in the army as soldiers. Others served as military chaplains for their country's armed forces. Belgium was occupied during most of the war. Many fled to uninvolved Holland, while others got to France to serve as chaplains or to minister in abandoned parishes. Communications broke down and necessities for daily living became scarce.

In many ways Passionists, like all followers of Christ during these opening decades of the twentieth century, experienced "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 1). Like other religious, they were being shown that "the appropriate renewal of religious life involves . . . an adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times" (Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, no. 2).

As the new century went forward Passionists began to sense their place in "the circumstances of the modern world" (no. 2). To a great extent the adjustment to changed conditions of the times becomes for Passionists their story in this new century.

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18

Passionists in Northern Europe and Blessed Isidore De Loor

At the beginning of the new century the Passionists in northern Europe were in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The monasteries in these three countries had been formed into the province of St. Michael as early as 1854. For some years the vocations came from France, while few came from Holland and even fewer from Belgium. Several classes of Italian students came north to be secure from the closing of their own monasteries in the turbulent 1860s and 1870s.

In 1882 John Charles de Richard de la Tour, a prominent attorney and judge at Bordeaux, joined the Congregation at Bilbao in Spain. As Father John Charles, he served as a general consultor from 1893 to 1905. Later he succeeded in securing a foundation in Bethany, Palestine, to be annexed to St. Michael's province. Bethany became a refuge for French students driven out of the country in 1903.

New foundations had been established in Belgium and also in Holland. In 1905 the Dutch and Belgian communities were separated from the French, and in 1910 they were raised to the status of province. The Bulgarian mission was annexed to this new Belgian-Dutch province. Bishop Henry Doulcet of Nicopolis had pleaded for such an annexation at the 1899 general chapter.

It was during this period that a twenty-six-year-old Flemish man arrived at the old monastery at Ere in Belgium. Isidore de Loor was asking to enter the novitiate as a brother.

Isidore was born on Easter Monday, April 18, 1881, in a small hamlet in East Flanders, the first of three children. At the age of eleven he received his first Communion. At this time he began to

go to daily Mass but received Communion just on Sundays. Even that often was a concession, since frequent Communion was not the normal way for "good Catholics."

As a lad Isidore went to school and to church. The rest of the day he spent working with his father on their small farm. He gave no thought to marriage. More and more the Church occupied his time. He even was involved in teaching catechism. Finally, in 1907 he made up his mind. He would become a religious. A Redemptorist missionary suggested he become a Passionist. He took the missionary's advice, and so on April 7, 1907, he journeyed to Ere. He would soon become Br. Isidore de Loor.

The province of Blessed Gabriel that Isidore joined was young. Of the ninety-three religious, one was seventy, one sixty-seven, six in their fifties, all the rest younger. Most priests had been in the preparatory school, the "apostolic school," as it was called. They had little contact with the world during their entire training. By joining the congregation they had reached a higher social level than would have been theirs if they had remained in lay life.

The brothers in the community usually had come at an older age, as had Isidore. They had experienced something of the hard side of life outside. As a result, they seemed more mature than the priests of their own age. Between the clerics and the brothers there was in principle an equality of life, but in reality it never worked out that way. The priests could hold positions of leadership; the brothers could not. The priests were expected to engage in apostolic works; the brothers were responsible for the material well being of the monastery.

The traditions of the community, moreover, insisted on detailed fidelity to the letter of the Rule. The regular observance was to be maintained at all costs. The superior, as God's representative, was to be obeyed in all things. The lifestyle was penitential and poor.

As a brother, Isidore was responsible for the garden, then for the cooking, and finally he was put in charge of the entrance parlor as receptionist, or porter. The community was growing in the years Brother Isidore was in it. His strong arms were needed to take care of the maintenance of the preparatory school for younger candidates. For a long time he had to cook for a large community of hungry lads.

Brother Isidore was in the community only four years when he lost his right eye. The diagnosis was cancer. The physician in Brus-

sels feared that the cancer might return somewhere else within four or five years. Brother Isidore lived with this knowledge for the next five years.

The second great crisis for him was the outbreak of the First World War and the invasion of Belgium by the German army. The monastery at Kortrijk, which had been the prep school, was now a German military hospital. The young boys were sent home. Many of the priests escaped to France to serve in abandoned parishes there. Professed students found refuge in noninvolved Holland. Only five priests and three brothers remained—one of whom was Brother Isidore.

This small community found it impossible to live the normal religious life under the war conditions. Besides, Isidore's health was worsening. His duties consisted in being porter at the main entrance. But at the door he met those who would come to beg or to ask for prayers or to offer the religious some of their own few provisions. In this way many got to know this strong but sick brother. His smile was so encouraging, his words so helpful.

In the summer of 1916 the cancer returned and was pronounced terminal. His brother Frank got a military pass from the Germans to visit him. The visit was brief but so consoling for the dying Isidore. A few day later, on Friday, October 6, 1916, the Lord called the faithful Isidore home. His parents were not able to come for the funeral. He was buried beside the Passionist church.

When the war was over the refugee Passionists returned. Not too many noticed the grave of Brother Isidore. But neighbors remembered the friendly brother porter. They began to visit his grave. Some would stay to pray. Word went out that prayers were answered—a cure received. More came. At last the Passionists responded to the people's faith. Brother Isidore's memory was preserved. The official processes were begun in 1950. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1984.

We can find many reasons why this brother was beatified and, it is hoped, one day will be canonized. He was a faithful religious, a man of prayer and deep faith. But to appreciate his special virtue and the power of his example we must recall the times in which he lived.

The final years of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the new century were for many Catholics and many religious a time for preserving the older way of doing things. The Church should

be safeguarded from the evils of the age by an external rigorism. France was enduring an anticlerical government that was exiling religious. Socialists were threatening the Catholic party in Belgium. Pius X was condemning the errors of Modernism. The young Passionist province in Belgium shared the fears and hesitations of their neighbors. It was in this milieu that Brother Isidore lived out the special calling of a Passionist brother.

The special gift of Brother Isidore was to be able to rise above all this. He achieved a degree of interiorization that is exceptional. Yes, in spite of everything, he truly loved his God, with all the powers at his command, unswervingly. While faithful to many external practices, he observed them freely and only as a way to God. In this his life is truly inspirational.

As a brother, he too lived out the ideal of St. Paul of the Cross. He did not allow the class distinctions of the day and the humbling tasks of service that were his to lessen the sense of his own worth. The maturity he had achieved, the degree of interiorization he had attained, the years he had lived with the knowledge of possible death from cancer, all helped him to become more and more conformed to the likeness of Christ crucified. This was Isidore's way of living out his Passionist vocation.

His life shows us the hidden and deeper side of religious life. His example calls us to grow in maturity, to rise above external practices without being enslaved by them. Blessed Brother Isidore teaches us to achieve the freedom of the children of God, even when confronted with the horrors of deadly illness as well as the fears and limitations of one's times.

His example should especially remind those who are also priests that as religious they form part of that dimension of the Church which the council called "charismatic" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, nos. 43–44). The priesthood must not limit them to institutional service in the Church, but in the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross they should exercise it "in numerous other ways" (Holy Rule, no. 132) for "the glory of God and the advantage of their neighbor" (Holy Rule, no. 217). The religious priest, as well as the religious brother, should enjoy the freedom to be a witness and sign to the contemporary Church.

Blessed Brother Isidore calls us to work for that happy day when in religious communities and in the Church all religious will be equal,

without any distinction between priest and brother, except those flowing from holy orders and the unique gifts and graces of each religious.

Finally, Blessed Brother Isidore's life holds out before the Congregation the ideal of a fraternal community of priests and brothers living together in peace and charity. This is a dream that St. Paul of the Cross had visioned long before the French Revolution or the Second Vatican Council. This is a witnessing that the Church of today needs as she struggles with the diversities of cultures and even spiritualities.

In many ways Blessed Brother Isidore shows us the deeper meaning of liberty, equality, and fraternity, so highly prized by the French revolutionaries in theory, so difficult to achieve in practice!

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19

Passionists Between the World Wars

The war ended on November 11, 1918. The peace of Versailles in the following year, instead of making the world "safe for democracy," planted the seeds of a more terrible war twenty years later.

But the first years after the war were a time of hope. With hostilities ended and peace restored, peoples and nations strove to make up for the years of war as quickly as possible. This was the time for a new beginning.

Like many others, the Passionist Congregation picked up the pieces with renewed energy and enthusiasm. In 1920 Gabriel Possenti was canonized as the second saint of the Congregation. The general chapter of 1920 reelected Fr. Silvius De Vezzo as general superior. It renewed the progressive decrees of the previous chapter of 1914. Passionists also celebrated the two-hundredth anniversary of St. Paul's writing of the Rule in the Church of San Carlo in Castellazzo.

Throughout the Congregation there was a spirit of hope. Passionists went into new countries: Poland, Germany, Austria, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Portugal. New provinces were organized in Holland, Australia, Ireland, Brazil, and one in Italy and also Spain. The Passionist nuns entered Brazil and Holland, and new convents were established in Italy, France, Spain, and the United States. Foreign missions loomed large in the vision of the future. In response to the wishes of the Holy See and the decrees of the general chapter, the eastern American province sent missionaries to China, the north Italian province began a mission in Tanganyika (now Tanzania), and

Belgian Passionists went to the Congo (now Zaire). Enthusiastic reports came back to the home provinces and were related to the entire Congregation in the first intra-Congregational periodical, called the *Bollettino.*

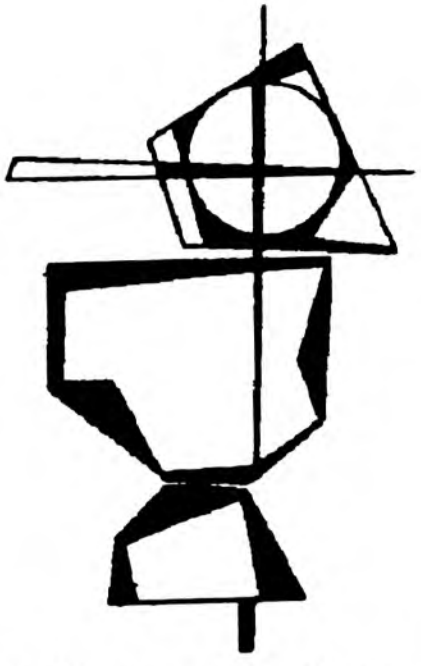
Through these hope-filled yet difficult years, the Congregation turned to a non-Italian for guidance and leadership. Born in Holland, Fr. Leo Kierkels joined the Passionists in 1899. He had studied in Jerusalem and Rome and had served on the general council.

Elected in 1925 as general superior, he brought hope and enthusiasm to Passionists throughout the world. He was especially interested in the development of formation programs for the young men joining the Congregation. He was concerned with deepening our commitment to the passion of the Lord, both through the study of the history and spirituality of the passion and through a better-organized apostolate of preaching this mystery. He wrote profound circular letters on studies, the spirit of the Congregation, the two-hundredth anniversary of the ordination of St. Paul of the Cross. Of especial importance was his letter "The Study of the Sacred Passion," in which he outlined an in-depth program for studying all aspects of the Sacred Passion.

In 1931 Pope Pius XI appointed Father Leo apostolic delegate to India to succeed Archbishop Edward Mooney (later bishop of Detroit and a cardinal). Father Leo was consecrated an archbishop at Rome. He remained in the very sensitive position of apostolic delegate to India during the war years and afterwards, when India's independence was achieved. In 1948 he retired, and he spent his final years at Sts. John and Paul until his death in 1957.

In a more hidden way, an Italian Passionist of this period deeply influenced the Congregation for many years into the future. Fr. Amadeo Casseti was born in Turin in 1888. Having first tried to join the Capuchins, he entered the Passionist Congregation in 1907. After ordination he was called to military service in the Italian army. At the end of the war he was appointed formation director of young Passionists.

Amadeo had early shown a deep interest in the history of the Congregation by publishing several "lives" of Passionist religious. In 1922 Fr. Silvio de Vezza called him to Rome to edit the new journal, *Bollettino della Congregazione.* He soon used this journal to publish historical documents pertaining to Passionists.



His greatest achievement was the publication in 1924 of the letters of St. Paul of the Cross in four volumes. For the first time Passionists and other scholars had at hand the personal writings, reflections, and spiritual counsels of the founder as contained in his 1,884 extant letters. Through this publication, the scientific study of the life, history, and spiritual teaching of St. Paul of the Cross was possible.

At once scholars within and without the Congregation saw what a rich mine of spirituality was contained in these four volumes. Sixty years later no one can study St. Paul of the Cross without recourse to this work of Father Amadeo. We are indebted to this dedicated student who literally began "Paulacruciana"—the study of *Paulus a Cruce* spirituality and history.

By the 1930s world conditions worsened: the economic depression, the rise of dictatorships to the left and right, the Spanish civil war, Japanese militarism in China, the Stalin era in Russia. The Church and the Passionist Congregation faced new problems and issues. At this time an American Passionist, Bonaventure Oberst,

served the Congregation in many positions and in many countries. Born in Owensboro, Kentucky, he was in the first ordination class in the new western province of Holy Cross.

After serving in several positions of authority in his province, in 1926 he volunteered for assignment to the new foundation in Germany. He was working hard in establishing the Congregation in that country when, in 1931, he was elected first general consultor. Six years later he was elected second general consultor and continued in that office during the years of the Second World War. In 1946 he was appointed superior of the Passionist house at Bethany in the Holy Land. With the establishment of Israel as an independent nation followed by war between the new nation and the Arab states, Bonaventure returned to his province. He died in Cincinnati on November 15, 1948.

In the strategic years between the wars he was in Germany as Hitler rose to power, in Rome during Italy's break with the League of Nations over the Ethiopian war, in Europe as the Second World War began, and in Palestine at the inauguration of Israel.

As general consultor he visited many provinces of the Congregation throughout the world. He saw the struggle of the Passionists in the years after the First World War, both in the United States and in Germany and Italy. He lived to see the first efforts toward the renewal of the Church in the postwar world.

Bonaventure was not of a radical-liberal frame of mind. Some would consider him too conservative. Others might assess him as too juridic or even rigid. But he won the respect of many, for he was a hard worker, unmindful of his own comforts, faithful to tradition, and he had a sense of fairness and charity. He served the Congregation well during the critical twenties, thirties, and forties. He may not have prepared the only way into the future, but the next generation did not have to undo what he had done.

Just as the period between the wars was beginning, several Passionist nuns were opening the first canonical convent in Spain at Duesto, the same city in which Fr. Amadeo Garibaldi had opened the first Passionist monastery in 1879. The Nuns' convent in Spain is the result of a holy, venturesome Passionist from Italy, Maria Magdalena of the Blessed Sacrament.

Born in Lucca in Italy, on April 24, 1888, the third daughter of Casmir and Sara Marcucci, she was baptized Mary Josephine Teresa.

As a young girl she heard about Gemma Galgani, for she had Bishop Volpi and Father Germano Ruoppolo as confessors, and she knew the Gianini family. She took her vows as a Passionist in the new convent at Lucca on June 27, 1908.

Five years later she was in the band of five nuns who left Lucca to found a convent in Mexico. On the journey to Mexico the nuns stopped in New York City and met the newly named bishop of Corpus Christi, Paul Nussbaum. They did not have time to visit the nuns at Pittsburgh.

Their stay in Mexico was short lived due to the revolutionary conditions there. In 1916 Sister Maria Magdalena and two other nuns left Mexico for Spain. On September 29, 1918, they entered their new convent at Duesto.

It was a few years later, in February 1922, that the learned and holy Dominican theologian John G. Arintero visited the Duesto convent. From that date until his death in 1928 he was the spiritual director and friend of Sister Maria Magdalena. In fact, he urged her to write articles for the periodical he had started in 1921 *(La via sobrenatural),* which she did under the pen name J. Pastor. Father Arintero also had her write the story of her life.

In 1935 the nuns at Lucca were divided in choosing a new superior and in building an appropriate shrine to Blessed Gemma. They obtained from the Holy See permission for Sister Maria Magdalena to return to Lucca to become their superior. During the next five years as superior she built the shrine and new convent.

During the last year at Lucca, Magdalena suffered her "dark night." New problems had arisen in the convent. The archbishop was upset with her for refusing to deed some of the convent lands for a parish. Other misunderstandings occurred. On April 1, 1940 —just one month before the canonization of Saint Gemma— Magdalena was removed from office and given a menial task in the convent. Finally, in August, she was allowed to return to Spain.

The cross followed her there, for the nuns at Duesto did not want her to return. Magdalena was accused of living outside of the cloister, of disobedience, and so forth. Finally, she succeeded in obtaining permission to found a convent in the capital, Madrid. This entailed many new hardships and misunderstandings. Finally the convent was dedicated in March 1960, but Magdalena had died a month earlier, February 10, 1960.

Magdalena's life covers more than the first half of the twentieth century. It is interesting to note how she moved from one place to another just prior to important national or world events. For example, she left Italy and Europe just a year before the First World War began. She left Mexico just as the persecution against the Church was getting greater. A year before Spain entered upon the terrible civil war she was called to Lucca. A year before Italy was invaded by the Allies leading to the end of Mussolini, she left the country. She died two years before the opening of the Second Vatican Council.

Her life gives us a picture of the joys and trials of the Passionist nuns during those many years at Lucca, Mexico, Spain. We see how these dedicated women shared in the sufferings of the Lord as they walked in the path laid out by St. Paul of the Cross.

Magdalena, in her autobiography, tells us what this taught her. She notes that some people have called her a *"trouble-maker!"* She accepts this title. She admits:

> I was always devising new things not conforming with the present. . . . I am always looking for ways of improving the situation of those around me and to take them to God. . . . We are all called to produce for eternal life. . . . It is not time to set up tents. We are pilgrims, we are passing. Each one has to find the way to show the road to heaven to others, to find new horizons. . . . I want to be a "trouble-maker" not only while I live, but even after my death and in a very special way. If Jesus hears my desires, if the longings He himself has put in my heart are good, I would like to stir up the whole world. . . . I would like to enkindle that fire in many people, in all your ministers, because in distant mission zones and in our own lands, souls are needed who stir things up, who are themselves on fire and who set others on fire.

Sister Maria Magdalena anticipates the words of the council: "The more ardently religious unite themselves to Christ through a self-surrender involving their entire lives, the more vigorous becomes the life of the Church and the more abundantly her apostolate bears fruit. A life consecrated by a profession of the counsels is of surpassing value. Such a life has a necessary role to play in the circumstances of the present age" (Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, no. 1).

Leo Kierkels, Amadeo Casseti, Bonaventure Oberst, Maria Magdalena Marcucci, are four Passionists from the first half of this century. There were many others who, through generous apostolates and daily fidelity, cherished the ideals of the founder and served the people of God in various ways.

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20

The American Experience (1920–1939)

It was the feast of the Holy Cross, September 14, 1921. Fr. Silvius Di Vezza, the superior general, had just concluded an official visitation of both American provinces. He was sailing back to Europe, "whilst the ocean is growing wider and wider between us," so he began a paternal letter to both provinces. He was pleased with what he saw: "Splendid communities, good, earnest religious, faithful to the regular observances, zealous for the salvation of souls."

At the same time he felt impelled to send a warning. "Perhaps in no other country is there more danger of sacrificing our principles to prevailing conditions and surroundings . . . the difficulty of maintaining in America the logical primacy of contemplative life over active, which our spirit requires. . . . "

He concluded: "Yes, you are the hope of our Congregation. . . . We know what the future ought to be in God's design. . . . The future will be what the religious and especially their leaders make it."

Americans were entering upon an unheard period of prosperity, the Roaring Twenties. This national era of good feeling affected the Passionists in the United States, and especially the eastern province. There the Passionists were about to experience almost twenty years of growth and expansion. Never before had there been such a dramatic development in the Congregation. Whenever there are opportunities of growth, there are also possibilities of decline.

There was at that moment an increasing number of young men joining the province. The superiors decided to open a new preparatory seminary just outside of the city of Dunkirk, New York. This

was a high school and junior-college seminary for young men considering a commitment to the Passionist life and ministry. The building was a large, modern establishment on the shores of Lake Erie. It fulfilled a real need.

At the same time, the provincial chapter courageously decided to begin a foreign mission in China. The first band of six Passionists left Seattle on Christmas Eve 1921. Other groups of missionaries followed, at times with men from the western province. By 1929 there were twenty-five priests in the Passionist territory in the northwest province of Hunan. By 1934 the Holy See erected the mission into a vicariate apostolic with Bishop Cuthbert O'Gara as the first bishop.

1921 also saw the beginning of *The Sign* magazine, under the brilliant editorship of Fr. Harold Purcell. While its profits helped fund the Chinese missions, *The Sign* from the very beginning was a high-grade Catholic monthly journal. It soon took its place among the best magazines in the growing apostolate of the Catholic press. With the publication of *The Sign,* Passionists used the printed word as a means for promoting the devotion of the passion.

In 1922 American Passionists went to Austria and Germany to establish the Congregation in those two countries. By 1930 there were three houses, one in Munich, one in Vienna, and a third near Regensburg. There were forty-three professed Passionists in Germany and Austria at the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

Bishop Paul Nussbaum, who had resigned as bishop of Corpus Christi, was in 1922 reassigned to Marquette, Michigan. Once again Passionists from both provinces assisted him until his death in 1935. In the meantime, in 1928 Passionists began in North Carolina their first apostolate among black Americans. There they engaged in street preaching with the help of "chapel cars." Eventually three parishes were formed.

The retreat movement spread rapidly from Boston to Pittsburgh, where the first separate retreat house for laymen was built in 1920. Monasteries were built with adjoining retreat houses in West Springfield and Jamaica, Long Island. The Passionists played an important role in the organization of the National Laymen's Retreat League. In many ways the American Passionists pioneered the modern retreat movement for the other provinces of the Congregation.

Novenas were a very popular form of devotion for many people. The Passionists at their monastery churches held novena services in

honor of St. Paul of the Cross, St. Gabriel Possenti, St. Anne (at Scranton), and others. Because of the spiritual impact of these novenas and with publicity in *The Sign,* the Confraternity of the Passion (a spiritual sodality-type association) was organized in most monasteries. Usually novenas were held on Mondays, and the preachers and confessors were kept quite busy the entire day at five to eight services.

To prepare teachers for the province's seminaries, young priests began to attend the universities in Rome, Jerusalem, and eventually at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. A house of studies was opened outside the District of Columbia in 1932 as a residence for students at The Catholic University of America.

In 1933 the Passionists sent men to Toronto to found the Congregation in Canada. Young Canadians joined the community, to return to work in their own country.

During this time the number of parish missions and retreats grew each year. There were also many demands for "Sunday work," namely, helping out on weekends at the new parishes being built in the growing suburbs of many large cities.

A new prep school, Chinese mission, *The Sign,* Austria and Germany, parishes in Marquette, retreat houses in Boston, Pittsburgh, West Springfield and Jamaica, novena services, parish missions, Sunday work, university education, a house near The Catholic University of America, foundations in Canada, black missions in North Carolina, and so forth—all this activity and growth had never been seen before, and it now put a never-before-experienced strain upon the province.

It soon became evident that many of these ministries were so demanding that the religious could no longer observe the fullness of the regular observance. Moreover, with so many religious needed to accomplish these works fruitfully, the burden of the regular observance was shouldered by fewer religious, at times by the young and the more elderly religious. With the rapidity of the development, the suddenness of changing apostolates seemed to be calling for a new way of living the Passionist spirit.

Secondly, the many new forms of apostolic service limited in some ways the number of priests who were totally devoted to the apostolate of parish missions. So many were absorbed in the newer ministries that there were not enough men available for parish missions.

Besides, Catholics were caught up in the changing world of the twenties, and some adjustments had to be made in the style of preaching missions.

Again and again the issue of the regular observance at home, together with the maintenance of the traditional ministries of parish missions and retreats, was discussed at chapters and by the religious. Many recognized there was a problem, but few dared to seek a solution that departed from the guidelines of the 1878 chapter, a solution that gave unswerving priority to the demands of the regular observances and of the traditional parish mission preaching.

* * *

Perhaps the story of Father Harold and *The Sign* best illustrates the problems and conflicts the American province of St. Paul of the Cross was experiencing in this period of expansion.

Father Harold was born in Raven Run, Pennsylvania, in 1881. After his father's death he was raised in Philadelphia. There young Tom Purcell attended a Passionist mission at his home parish of St. Columba. Attracted by the missionaries, he entered the Passionist prep school at Dunkirk. A year later he entered the novitiate year at historic St. Paul's Monastery in Pittsburgh. He was given the name Harold at his profession of vows in 1898. In 1904 he was ordained.

Two years later he began his ministry as a parish missionary. For five years he was assigned to help the western province by conducting missions there. He then returned to the East, where he continued his full schedule of parish missions.

These years of preaching in almost every part of the country showed him the strengths and weaknesses of the Church in the United States. As early as November 1911, while giving a mission at St. Mary's Church in Huntington, Indiana, he met the young pastor, Fr. John F. Noll. Father Noll (later bishop) had just begun a parish newspaper to help his parishioners find answers for their faith. This parish paper soon became the national paper *Our Sunday Visitor.*

At once Father Harold saw the possibilities of the apostolate of the press for his own Passionist community. When he was asked in 1919 to speak at St. Michael's Church in Union City on the establishment of the Confraternity of the Passion there, he took the occasion to describe the need for a Catholic magazine to support the

membership of the new Confraternity. The religious began to discuss whether this was an appropriate apostolate for Passionists.

In the following year he got a classmate who was a member of the forthcoming provincial chapter to present a resolution to the chapter concerning the publishing of a religious magazine. The chapter passed the resolution.

In March of 1921 the provincial asked Father Harold to begin such a magazine. The first copy was published in July 1921. It was called *The Sign,* and under Father Harold's direction it became an instant success. Father Harold did not make it just a pious journal for the Confraternity. Nor was it planned to be just a "mission magazine," although it did support the new mission in China and did inform its readers of the activities of the Passionists in China. From the beginning, it was a magazine on Catholic life and social teaching.

The production of a professional magazine such as *The Sign* demanded of the staff and editor time and work. Furthermore, as Father Harold wrote or published articles on social issues, he became convinced that the most important issue in the United States was the racial question. He was in contact with Dorothy Day, Fr. John Lefarge, S.J., and other activists of the depression years. Father Harold began to dream of establishing in the South "a center for the religious, charitable, educational, and industrial advancement of the Negro people." He called it the "City of St. Jude."

In March 1934 Bishop Thomas J. Toolen of Mobile, Alabama, met Father Harold and his friends. He invited Harold to build his "city" at Montgomery in the Mobile Diocese. Harold at once wrote to the provincial, Fr. Benjamin Wirtz, asking permission to go to Alabama. After some time the answer came: "No!" For several months Harold pondered what to do. Finally he requested a dispensation from his vows, which was granted on July 28, 1934. He left the community and became a diocesan priest of the Diocese of Mobile.

The Passionist superiors had decided that such a project as the City of St. Jude was not in conformity with the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross. We are reminded of the dream of Fr. Martin Byrne in Argentina in 1879. He was expelled from the congregation and then readmitted by the Holy See. Harold sought a dispensation to fulfill his dream, but in many ways he remained a Passionist in spirit.

Father Harold's story highlights the problems that were facing the Congregation in the United States at this time. It is important to reflect that Passionists had entered upon some of these ministries and programs not at the initiative of an individual but with the blessings and even decisions of the superiors and chapters.

Superiors sensed the problem, as the letters of Fr. Stanislaus Grennan, provincial, indicated. For example, Father Stanislaus wrote a letter on September 29, 1928, on the regular observance. In it he spoke of the possibility of a modification of the rules by the Church. He mentioned also the right of the superiors to dispense from points of rule according to the power granted them. He calls these "lawful dispensations." However, he warned of the dangers threatening regular observances from vacations, visits to relatives and friends, and excessive works and ministries, even if sanctioned by superiors. His fundamental solution was to exhort the religious and superiors to greater fidelity. This is an important letter on a very important subject for Passionists of this period.

Superiors did realize the need for some adjustment. For example, Father Stanislaus wrote in this letter: "We admit that times have changed and that our hard and constant work for souls in this country is making inroads on the nerves and health of many of us. An occasional rest seems to be needed for body and soul."

Father Stanislaus also recognized that some religious, because of their work—parish priests, retreat house personnel, workers at *The Sign* office, confessors at novena services in the churches—needed a "modified observance." However, he added that the danger consists not in granting such dispensations, but that even "this modified observance is not kept, and few or no spiritual exercises are practiced." Even in far China there were problems about having some form of regular observances.

A British Passionist of that era treated of this subject when he wrote of

> the elasticity of the Passionist Rule which enables it to be stretched legitimately without being broken, and to accommodate itself to all times, all places, all sorts and conditions of men. . . . Houses of modified observance must exist, where the law of nature itself is an exempting factor, and by the wise dispensation of Superiors, all is arranged to suit the requirements, necessities and peculiarities of the localities in which Providence has called us. The reli-

> gious who live in these houses are doing the work dear to the heart of the founder.

These words of Father Herbert are worthy of reflection.

The superiors did not stop the development of these new ministries. They saw the good that was being done. They realized the needs of people for differing kinds of services. They were also mindful of the words of St. Paul of the Cross in the Rule of 1746: "Circumstances will open numerous other ways of promoting so great a work [the memory of the passion] and of accomplishing their pious desire and purpose, to the great advancement of their own souls and of those of others. For the love of God is very ingenious and is proved, not so much by words, as by the deeds and examples of the lovers."

There were limits, of course. Father Harold's case is a point at hand. Efforts at solving the dilemma would continue after the Second World War and again during the renewal period following the Second Vatican Council.

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21

Passionists in the Postwar Era

On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped the first atomic bomb upon Hiroshima. Within two weeks the Second World War was ended. It was the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Once again, in the twentieth century, the nations had to pick up the pieces and try to put the world together again. The united nations (officially the "United Nations") soon were divided into two camps by a curtain of iron. The "hot war" was followed by a "cold war." The First World and Second World were soon joined by the Third World, as colonialism gave way to innumerable new nations.

Pope Pius XII set the tone in his wartime Christmas messages, in which he outlined guidelines for a just and lasting peace and challenged the nations to follow Christian democratic principles in setting up new forms of government. Many countries in the West looked to political parties inspired by such Christian principles.

The first years after the war were indeed a time for growth and expansion by Passionists throughout the world. At the same time, there was a growing felt need for renewal and adaptation.

Like all Christians and all religious, Passionists were caught up in the hopes and trials of the postwar years. There was a renewed expansion of the Congregation, new ministries, more profound efforts at living the spirituality of St. Paul of the Cross. What had happened in the American eastern province was now being repeated in one country after another.

Many European Passionists had suffered personally from the war—in military service, from bombings, in prisons and concentration camps, in occupied territories. Now back in their monasteries, they took up the daily regime of community observances and reached out to people with missions and retreats.

A recent author described another experience shared by many American Catholics: "This was the age of Catholic Romanticism—a time when Bishop Fulton J. Sheen's television program was a nationwide success; when Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain,* an account of his spiritual search and the Trappist life was a best-seller; when people crowded into church for weekday devotions and packed the pews each Sunday; when Catholics—no longer struggling immigrants—were secure in their belief and proud of their unswerving faith." "Profiles" (Fr. Joseph Greer), *The New Yorker* (June 13, 1988), p. 53.

Passionists, as other American religious, were searching for a deeper spiritual life. Many who had read *Seven Storey Mountain* and *Seeds of Contemplation* by Thomas Merton (Father Louis of Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky) were discovering their contemplative and monastic roots. Some even looked fondly at nearby Trappist abbeys for more security in serving the Lord. These were indeed the "early" Merton years.

This was a period that found Passionists seeking a better liturgical praxis in their community life. The generalate had published in 1936 a new choral Gregorian manual, *Promptuarium.* This book made possible the more solemn celebration of the Mass and Office, especially on the major feast days of the year. The reform of the Holy Week liturgies was welcomed as a fresh way to participate in the paschal mystery, although some missed the *Tre Ore* and other services.

There was great interest in Paulacrucian and Passionist history and spirituality. The pioneering studies of Peré Gaetan of Belgium were translated into other languages. The recently published letters of the founder became a source of fruitful study. The Italian provinces began to sponsor annual conferences on Passionist spirituality. The intraprovincial periodical, *The Passionist,* of Holy Cross province, soon reached far beyond its provincial boundaries. Scholars in various provinces began to do serious work on Passionist spirituality, history, law, and biography.

Immediately after the war an educational commission was formed to prepare a study program for the entire Congregation. The members were called to Rome to await the guidelines, which were expected from the Sacred Congregation of Religious. The waiting continued until the publication of *Sedes Sapientiae* in 1956. Only then and perhaps too late did the Passionist study program appear. In the meantime, individual provinces were improving their educational facilities and their programs. The religious formation and intellectual education for the Passionist religious were of a high caliber by the time the council opened, even though there was need for improvement.

Yes, in spite of the political and social problems and perhaps because of a growing pressure for renewal, the Passionists of this postwar period had ample opportunity to appreciate and live the spirit of the founder, the mystical passion spirituality.

All this spiritual ferment flowed over into a greater effort to reach people through preaching missions. Newer methods were tried. Within a few years after the war, Passionists in Italy, Spain and elsewhere, alone or with other religious missionaries, conducted great spiritual rallies to bring the message of Christ to as many as possible. Such was the citywide mission at Barcelona in Spain in 1953 when 480 missionaries participated. Evening attendance at various churches was estimated at 450,000! A year later at Bilbao another huge mission was held, with Pope Pius XII broadcasting the closing radio message.

In Italy at Cerignola in 1952 twenty Passionist missionaries held a citywide mission in eight parishes "with much opposition from the Communists." Two years later at Piacenza, forty-five Passionists conducted missions at eighteen parishes; in 1955 fifty-five missionaries in eighteen parishes in Cremona; in 1956 sixty missionaries at Ferrara. Perhaps the biggest of all was the mission in Milan in 1957 with eight hundred missionaries, twenty-two bishops and two cardinals. *Time Magazine* wrote this story in its November 25, 1957, edition.

In the United States and elsewhere the ministry in Passionist retreat houses challenged ordinary Catholics to become active apostles. By the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Passionists in the United States had added ten retreat houses to the earlier five. All were kept busy with weekend retreats for men and midweek retreats for priests, religious, and high school students.

In Italy and in other countries many of the monasteries became spiritual centers where the faithful would flock for confession, direction, devotional services, daily Mass. The shrine of St. Gabriel at Isola became one of the greatest places of pilgrimage in Italy. Mount Argus in Ireland, Santa Gema in Madrid, Scala Santa in Rome, all flourished as shrine centers. Many of these centers began publishing newsletters to carry the message to many more of the faithful.

Others engaged in more direct ministries among the poor, the young, the suffering. In the United States, for example, Passionists continued their ministries to blacks in the southern states of North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. Frs. Henry Vetter, Edward Viti, Warren Womack, and Cyprian Towey were reaching out to Hispanics in Mexico and California. Italian Passionists were serving Italian workers in Switzerland. Dutch Passionists began ministry to East Germans on the west side of the Iron Curtain—the "Church of the Diaspora."

There was a renewed expansion of foreign missions. Not only did missionaries return to the already established missions but the provinces opened new mission fields. The list is impressive. The Dutch went into Indonesia in 1946, the Irish to Botswana in 1952. The western United States province began in Japan in 1953. Driven out of China, the eastern United States province sent missionaries to Jamaica, the West Indies in 1955, and the Philippines in 1958. The Australian province began a mission in New Guinea in 1955. The Dutch opened a second mission, this time in Gois in Brazil in 1958.

Amid these developments in spiritual living and with the apostolic activities that were going on, there was an undercurrent calling for renewal and adaptation. The next chapter treats of this.

22

Renewal and the Second Vatican Council

The Second World War had a demoralizing effect upon many religious and religious institutes. Membership was down. Buildings had been destroyed or altered for military purposes. The advance of communism as well as the inroads of secularism were eroding the very interior spirit of many communities.

The first general chapter after the war was very important but also very difficult for many religious communities. The Passionists experienced this at the general chapter of 1946. To the surprise of the assembled capitulars, word was received that the Pope had assigned Abbot Matthew Quatember of Clervaux to preside at the sessions. This chapter then almost unanimously elected Fr. Albert Deane of Argentina as general superior and Fr. Malcolm Lavelle of Holy Cross Province of Chicago as first consultor. For the first time the Congregation looked to non-Europeans for leadership, as many other religious institutes were doing.

The war left many scars, especially on the young. Many young Passionists could not forget their wartime experiences. Father Austin Smith, apostle of the inner city of Liverpool, wrote of the pain expressed by a Dutch Passionist at the renewal chapter of 1968: "You see, you have never seen your fellow countrymen, men, women and children from your own town, put up against a wall and shot after being betrayed by their own countrymen." Father Austin added: "After the era of the concentration camps only one thing mattered, a new faith in humanity had to be discovered. It was not a denial

of God, it was a search for God. It was not a rebellion against the Church, it was an effort at purification."

Another example of this unrest is the story of Fr. Gerard Sciarretta. Born in 1914, he joined the Congregation in the eastern province of Italy. After the war he was living in Rome as a university student and professor. He died there as a man of fifty-two in 1970, shortly after the closing of the renewal chapter.

Several years ago the French Passionist philosopher Fr. Stanislaus Breton wrote of the fear and oppression his friend Gerard Sciarretta frequently experienced.

> When there was a question of laws and "observances," as these were then interpreted and actually followed, his sense of oppression became more acute. At such a moment he would feel with an exceptional intensity the message of gospel freedom. One could say, that during a great part of his religious life, he lived with this almost deadly conflict, caught between the craving for gospel freedom and this oppression, both spiritual and psychic; between the necessity he so strongly felt to remain in the congregation with the love that attracted him to her, and at the same time the feeling of aversion which was driving him to distance himself from her as a juridical organization. Only the "opening up" which took place at the second session of the general chapter of renewal, at which he was a delegate, lessened his tensions shortly before his death. It lessened his tensions, but did not take them away. He said in one of the pages of his Diary: "I felt indeed more soothed, but I felt too that it could all blow up again in a moment."

Religious all over the world, but especially in Europe, were feeling such tensions as Gerard Sciarretta experienced. It was an added reason why many were talking of adaptation. Pius XII offered leadership by assembling in 1950 an "International Congress on the Renewal of Religious Life." Passionists participated in this and further congresses, as, for example, the national congress at Notre Dame in 1952. This American congress inspired religious women in the United States to organize the Sisters Formation Program.

Another general chapter was held in Rome in 1952. This chapter elected Malcolm Lavelle general superior, the first general from the United States. The capitulars also asked the unheard of question: What is truly essential to Passionist life? or what is accidental and

able to be changed? For seven years a commission worked to answer this question. The response was in the form of a new text of the Rule. While this text, approved by John XXIII in 1959, followed the language and format of the Rule of St. Paul of the Cross, at the same time it emphasized several new points.

The rule of 1959 altered the daily observances in the hope that all religious could participate in them. To achieve this purpose the Night Office was restricted to just one night a week. The Advent and Lenten fasts and abstinences were mitigated. To assure greater fidelity to this new rule, the authority of the general superior was enhanced. At the same time, more religious became involved in decision making by the election of delegates for both provincial and general chapters. Local communities were to hold monthly meetings.

The general superior, Father Malcolm, introduced this revision with a letter to the entire Congregation, dated October 18, 1959: "We in the religious state are no more immune to changing with the times than are our fellow-Catholics in the lay state or our fellow-men in general. Though our holy rule is sacred in its origin, and as passed on to us is revered, yet it is not static. . . . We must re-dedicate

ourselves to the ever unfinished task of intensifying our Passionist spirit through wholehearted acceptance and observance of what is now our authentic rule of life."

The experience of living under this revised rule was soon overshadowed and eventually replaced by the Second Vatican Council. For in 1959 Pope John XXIII announced that he was summoning all the bishops of the world to a general or ecumenical council. His aim was to update the Church, to ready her for a "second Pentecost" so that she could better offer a "wounded" world moral guidance and "servant-leadership."

The council opened on October 11, 1962, amid uncertain expectations. Those who had witnessed the traditionalism of the Roman synod, the letter on the restoration of the study of Latin for the western Church, and especially the texts of the documents being submitted to the council were not at all certain what would emerge during the conciliar sessions. Passionists also felt this uneasiness as they experienced the rather widespread failure of the revised Rule of 1959 to achieve its goals of greater participation in community life.

Quite a few Passionists took part in the council, both as bishops and as experts. The general superior was a voting member of the council. One of the most influential of the *periti* was the American Scripture scholar, Fr. Barnabas Mary Ahern. His interventions with the American bishops proved quite decisive on several key issues.

A general chapter, held in the spring of 1964 in the midst of the council, was profoundly influenced by it. The capitulars met in an aura of enthusiasm and excitement. For the first time a delegate was present from each province. During the previous fall Dominic Barberi had been beatified, as a witness to the growing ecumenical movement. The chapter embraced the liturgical and ecumenical reforms of the council and readied itself for the renewal being outlined for religious institutes. Another American, Fr. Theodore Foley, was elected general superior.

The Second Vatican Council had called for a general reevaluation to be made by each religious institute: "The manner of living, praying, and working should be suitably adapted to the physical and psychological conditions of today's religious. . . . The ways in which communities are governed should be re-examined . . . constitutions, directories, custom books, books of prayers and ceremonies . . . are to be suitably revised" (Decree on the Up-to-Date

Renewal of Religious Life, no. 3). The council had indeed put this evaluation in the hands of superiors, and especially the extraordinary renewal chapter (see no. 4). At the same time "interior renewal must always be accorded the leading role" (no. 2).

Passionists, like all religious, now faced the task of reviewing all their laws, rules, practices, constitutions. This was to be done through community dialogues and in an extraordinary general chapter. The new general superior, Theodore Foley, informed the religious of this task. His words are telling, even today. "Our responsibility at the moment is to move with the Church and, in fact, to move the Church forward on her pilgrimage toward God. . . . It is well to note that structures and practices which may have served well in another day, but do so no longer, may be changed. However, no amount of change will channel the forces of aggiornamento, bestowed by the Spirit on the Church, into our own Congregation unless there is a profound personal and interior renewal on the part of each individual person." Moreover, Father Theodore reminded the religious that spiritual renewal must precede and accompany the external and legal adaptations that the general chapter would effect.

By the late 1960s few were willing to wait. In the United States things were moving so quickly, with the civil-rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement, the trauma of assassinations of great leaders, the rising pop-culture, the birth-control debates before and after the papal encyclical. Throughout the world Passionists, as all other religious and Christians, were deeply affected.

The renewal chapter for the Passionists began in Rome in September of 1968. No other chapter had been prepared for so thoroughly: through community dialogues, position papers and studies, an opinion survey of the entire Congregation, special provincial chapters. The chapter took two long sessions, ending in 1970. This special general chapter certainly marked a historic turning point in the life of the Congregation, in a way analogous to what happened for the entire Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council.

What Fr. John Francis Kobler has written about the bishops at the council is applicable to what confronted the capitulars of this renewal chapter.

> What the bishops are really faced with is essentially the same challenge which confronted the apostles after Pentecost. At that time these men had to sort out their memories of Christ in order to pres-

> ent them in a way that would meet the human and religious needs of their first-century world. So too the bishops were being called upon to sort out the Church's historical consciousness of Christ in order to adapt his truths and values to the needs of a twentieth-century world at a turning point in history. Before the bishops could even hope to achieve such an enormous project, they themselves *as a corporate group* would have to achieve their own "doctrinal penetration and formation of consciousness."

Just as Rahner has written that at the council the Church finally is a "Church-becoming-a-world-Church," so at the renewal chapters what we are witnessing in the story of the Passionists is a "religious-Order-becoming-a-world-religious-Order" in a "Church-becoming-a world-Church."

The great renewal chapter of 1968–1970 was indeed worldwide, with religious from throughout the world, brothers as well as priests, ordinary religious as well as superiors, delegates and *periti*. For, from a small institute remaining for a century within the Papal States, the Passionists were becoming a worldwide Order and, in the past years, even inculturated into new nations and peoples.

Ninety-five religious participated in the chapter. They had varying opinions, fears, convictions. It took all the charity, patience, understanding, and firmness of Father Theodore to guide the chapter in composing new constitutions, called the "chapter document." Fr. Victor Hoagland has summed up Theodore's role at the chapter: "Like the pope at Vatican II, he chose to remain in the background, but at the same time he emerged as a symbol of unity for his brethren. He was a bridge-person whose respect for all, whose quiet, sure presence, whose nonpartisan, uncontrolling manner helped them to produce their new chapter document."

One religious who supported Father Theodore in bringing groups together was Fr. James Patrick White, former provincial of Holy Cross Province of Chicago. Fr. Flavian Doughtery, provincial of the eastern American province, testified of him: "James' beneficence changed the atmosphere of the chapter from a battle-zone to a family gathering. If there were strays in the sheepfold, he would go out personally in one way or another to bring them in subtly or overtly." After James Patrick's death in 1989, Austin Smith of England wrote of James Patrick's impact upon the chapter: "No one did more to make of the Passionist extraordinary general chapter a final success

than JP. . . . He battled for unity. Disunity brought him pain. And, I believe, he did so much to achieve unity. He was a moment, indeed, an ongoing moment, of grace at that chapter. He was a builder of bridges of love."

The achievement of the chapter was the composition of a new constitution, written in pastoral language in the spirit of the Vatican II documents. It was called the "chapter document" and was the law, or Rule, of the Congregation for twelve years.

In presenting the chapter document to the Congregation in 1970 Father Theodore wrote: "With the help of the Holy Spirit and the good will of so many men sincerely dedicated to the congregation, the chapter gradually achieved mutual knowledge and understanding and basic agreement on the essentials of Passionist life. After much travail of heart and mind, of constant hope and intermittent apprehension, the chapter finally came to speak with one voice."

The thrust of the chapter document is manifold. There is a strong emphasis upon the local community, wherein the Passionist life is actually lived. The document stated: "The vitality of the congregation depends on the basic cell of the institute, namely the local community" (no. 126).

Secondly, the chapter document emphasized the international brotherhood within the Congregation. "The role of the general government is to maintain unity without demanding uniformity, and to develop solidarity" (no. 136). To assist in this task, the chapter document called for a meeting of the general synod every two years, the division of the Congregation into language groups called "assistancies," and the holding of interprovincial conferences.

Finally and fundamentally the chapter document placed the passion of our Lord at the very heart of the Congregation. This was summed up in the now oft-repeated phrase: "We seek the unity of our lives and apostolate in the Passion of Jesus Christ." The earlier fourth vow to promote devotion to the passion was now set in the very first place. By placing the passion vow at the very heart of our charism, the chapter found an authentic unity for Passionists within the ever-increasing cultural and operative pluralism of the present day.

A recent Passionist scholar has written that the deepest intuition of the special chapter of 1968–1970 was *the placing of the vow to promote the memory of the passion as the specific determinant fac-*

tor in our physiognomy, the very purpose of the Congregation. Moreover, the radical root elements of the Passionist charism consist in community, prayer, and apostolate. Each element is clarified in three important chapters: "Community Relationships," "The Community at Prayer," and "Apostolic Activity."

This chapter document, the fruit of the renewal chapter of 1968–1970, was lived and experienced for twelve years. Then, in the chapter of 1982, it was revised in order to be presented to the Holy See for official ratification by the highest authority in the Church.

The Passionist scholar Stanislaus Breton suggests that we compare the chapter document to the primitive Rule that St. Paul of the Cross wrote during his retreat at Castellazzo. That rule was the first attempt at expressing in writing Paul's dream, which flooded his heart with exhilaration, enchantment, and enthusiasm.

So the chapter document is a rich, exhilarating document, which expressed the dream of Passionists at that new Pentecost of the Second Vatican Council. That was the moment when they dreamed of being a community of brothers in fraternal dialogue with one another, praying together, living together; a community committed to an apostolate of preaching and bringing the passion to the crucifieds of today. But all under the sign of the cross, all in memory of the passion, where we find "the unity of our lives and apostolate."

And this dream continues in the sections of the chapter document on government, on the local community as the cell of Passionist life, on superiors and subjects living in dialogue, on a group of local communities making up a province-brotherhood and serving a regional or national Church of the people of God. Finally, the entire group of provinces are brought together into an international family of brothers through the leadership of the generalate and attentiveness to the manifestations of the Spirit.

The Passionist nuns have also searched for ways to fulfill the mandate of the council, to recapture the dream of St. Paul of the Cross in this present period. There were problems facing the nuns. One was the advisability of conducting women's retreats within the confines of a cloistered convent; the other, the problem of how strict must the observance of the cloister be for their contemplative life. To add to these problems was the fact that there was no canonical structure to bring each convent together for a general meeting on a revision of the constitutions. Actually, each convent is subject to

the local bishop of the diocese in which it is located, but the constitutions, having been approved by the Holy See, can only be amended by the Holy See.

The Holy See in 1966 asked the Passionist general superior, Father Theodore, to assist the nuns in updating their constitutions. In due time, after meetings in each convent, the next superior general, Fr. Paul Boyle, arranged for each convent to send delegates to a general meeting held at the convent in Lucca from May 27 to July 4, 1978. There the nuns formulated a new text, which was approved by the Holy See on April 28, 1979. This new constitution, written in the pastoral style of the council, expresses for the nuns the dream of St. Paul of the Cross in this postconciliar era.

A magnificent dream—now restated in the constitutions of the Passionist priests and brothers and nuns. We Passionist men and women now have the task to recover the dream of our founder, to find the enchantment and enthusiasm he experienced as he dreamed of founding the Passionist institute. Our new constitutions, even though specific and legalistic at times, offer us the opportunity of redreaming Paul's dream, even as we prepare for the new century.

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23

Experiencing the Renewal

The years since the Second Vatican Council have been a difficult time for many religious. Pope Paul VI, as early as 1971, spoke of "the anxiety, uncertainty and instability shown by some . . . the boldness of certain arbitrary transformations . . . a mentality excessively preoccupied with hastily conforming to the profound changes which disturb our times." To assist religious "in this dynamic process" of renewal, he encouraged them to proceed "with greater sureness and with more joyful confidence" (Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life, nos. 2 and 6).

Guided by the chapter document, Passionists throughout the world continued this process of reevaluation in every aspect of Passionist life, such as horarium, personal relationships, ministry, appreciation of the passion vow, and government and international presence. This is the story of renewal in the Congregation of the Passion.

Community Life

We have seen how throughout the two centuries of Passionist life there was a tension between the homelife of prayer and fraternal charity and the apostolate of preaching and serving the people of God. It is true that the founder did not use the word "monastic" to describe Passionist homelife. This term began to be applied to the regular observance in the middle decades of this century. St. Paul of the Cross also called the houses of the Congregation "retreats,"

not "monasteries." The early American Passionists did use the word "monasteries" for their houses. The chapter document does not use the words "monastic," "monastery," "rector," "regular observance," or "choir observance," terms that had been used frequently in the past. Rather, it uses the word "community" throughout, for example, "a community of prayer," "an apostolic community." In this subtle way, the chapter document offers a solution to this century-old tension and provides the basis for our Passionist identity. Community is viewed as a brotherhood, a relationship whereby through dialogue, prayer, and communal living the religious fulfill their mission of helping the Church remember the redemptive sufferings of the Lord.

In order to assist the religious in adjusting to the changes of renewal, most provinces have conducted workshops on renewal programs for updating studies and apostolic techniques and community dialogue. Religious have been provided with sabbaticals (a year or less) for studies in Rome, the Holy Lands, at universities in the various countries. Many religious in both American provinces have spent a term at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago for theological updating or "forty days and forty nights" at the Bedford Prayer House. At the generalate in Rome there have been international renewal workshops on Passionist history and spirituality since 1978. From the beginning, Passionists took community dialogue and meetings very seriously.

While there have been difficulties in achieving dialogue, efforts continue to be made. These efforts consist in review of life, community goal-setting, community covenants, the continuing task of planning.

The daily prayer experience of Passionists has been deeply affected by the council and the chapter document. Most provinces began the use of the vernacular for the Eucharistic Liturgy and the Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours) as soon as this was permitted in the various countries. Daily Eucharist with or without concelebration became a normal community experience. With the publication of the Office Book in accordance with the Liturgy of the Hours, communities followed this much-shortened observance. In fact, many communities observed in common only the Hours of Morning and Evening Prayer. At times the Hours were recited in the public church or chapel with the faithful, as for example at St. Joseph's Church in London.

Mental prayer (one hour a day for each religious) is the norm, but in many houses it was no longer fulfilled in common. Many of the previous devotional communal prayer-forms were no long practiced. In their place various other methods of personal and communal prayer were tried, such as dialogue or shared prayer, centering prayer, charismatic prayer.

Houses of prayer or houses of solitude were established. The house of solitude at Bedford, Pennsylvania, has served American Passionists as a renewal center these many years, thanks to the two pioneers, Frs. Silvan Rouse and Malachy McGill. The monastery at Lucca, Italy, has become a house of prayer and solitude for Italian and other European Passionists. The house in Bethany offers the opportunity of living in the very place Jesus lived and suffered.

The general chapter of 1988 has approved a new form of spiritual experience, called "Castellazzo." It is modeled on the forty-day retreat of St. Paul of the Cross at Castellazzo. In October 1989 twelve Passionists met in Rome to evaluate the Castellazzo retreats held these past seven years in Latin American countries. They have published an explanation of and guide for the Castellazzo retreat.

Finally, throughout the Congregation there was experimentation in both larger and smaller communities. Smaller residences were turned into houses of novitiate and formation. At times this has led to the closing of older and venerable monasteries, such as in the eastern American province, when St. Michael's Monastery and Church in Union City was closed.

Passionists are continuing to search for practical ways of becoming a community of brothers living together in prayer and fraternal charity and shared apostolates, as in the founder's dream.

The Apostolate

During these recent years, renewal has affected the apostolate of the Congregation. Passionists have continued the ministry of preaching the word through various forms of parish missions. At times this took the form of dialogue missions in the homes of parishioners, such as a very successful "Christ in the Home" mission at Immaculate Conception parish in Chicago in 1967. An Italian experiment has been to conduct a month-long mission in a high-rise apartment

building. The effort is made to involve all the residents. Small prayer groups are organized and sometimes endure for several years.

In the 1970s several American Passionists initiated a form of parish mission preaching that has been called "evangelistic." It is modeled on Protestant preaching, with the emphasis on the call to renewal in response to the word of Christ.

Italian parish missions frequently take to the air through radio and television. Sometimes the entire liturgical services and the preaching are televised. Broadcast time is sometimes available in the early hours of the night, called "The Hour of Nicodemus," for those who, like Nicodemus, want to hear about Jesus in the darkness of night. Mobile radio transmitters are used to reach out to those who do not attend the mission in person. In the parish of Our Lady of Victory in the city of Brescia television was set up for the mission in 1983 and continues today to reach the people. Radio and television are used to hold conferences with the people and to carry on discussion with listeners by telephone, as with talk shows.

In the retreat-house movement the most important development has been the opening of our laymen's retreat houses to women. To improve the quality of the retreat, team ministry became common among the Passionists, with religious, deacons, and laymen and laywomen participating. Retreat centers have also developed programs for encounter groups, those with drug abuse and alcoholic problems, and the like.

Passionists have also been engaged in the educational ministry, especially at schools of ministry and formation. Outstanding has been the initiative of the Passionists in the formation and growth of the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago. Passionists of Holy Cross province were in 1968 one of the founding members of the Union, together with Franciscans and Servites. Today, thirty religious communities and societies of men are sending students to this outstanding school of ministry. Two Passionists have served as presidents, Fr. Paul Bechtold from 1968 to 1975, and Fr. Donald Senior since 1988. At least twelve Passionists have been members of the faculty. Other Passionists hold positions on the faculties of universities and institutes in various countries.

Individual Passionists have conducted institutes, workshops, summer school courses, lectures, and the like for priests, religious, and laity. The most successful international congress was the one held

in Rome in 1975 to honor the bicentennial of the death of St. Paul of the Cross, entitled "The Wisdom of the Cross Today." This congress heard eighteen long conferences and two hundred shorter communications. These papers have been published in three volumes covering two thousand printed pages. Speakers included such prominent scholars as Passionists Breton, Ahern, Brovetto, Monsegu, Senior, Nesti, Bialas, Mead, and among others, Rahner, Barth, Metz, Duquoc, Feuillet, Moltmann.

There have also been writers and authors. Fr. Thomas Berry in 1970 set up the Center for Religious Research at Riverdale, New York. He has written frequently and today is recognized as an authority in creation spirituality. Fr. John Francis Kobler has concentrated on the Second Vatican Council and has recently published articles and a major work entitled *Vatican II and Phenomenology.* Fr. Carroll Stuhlmueller and Donald Senior of the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago have written almost a library of commentaries and studies on Sacred Scriptures. Fr. Stanislaus Breton of L'Institute Catholique of Paris has written extensively in philosophy. His first published work was *"Le passion du Christ et les philosophies."* Many others could be added from around the world.

Social Justice Ministry

During these years of renewal, Passionists have been engaged in social justice projects for the very poor. Fr. Austin Smith, in the inner city of Liverpool among the poor blacks and whites, brings to them and also learns from them the meaning of the passion. "Day by day, my other Passionist brothers in the Inner City, Liverpool and London, by their understanding of our lives in the light of the Memoria Passionis, ease away the stone from the tomb of urban despair and release the hope of the Risen Jesus."

In the streets of Ardoyne in Belfast, the parish priest, Fr. Myles Kavanaugh, has seen the unemployed, the "degraded ones," and felt anger at their condition. Finally, in 1976 with the help of three businessmen, he was able to set up the Flax Trust to fund the establishment of a mill—the Brookfield Project—to give employment to people. Jobs have been created, businesses have been attracted to employ others, a youth training workshop set up, and so on. Father Myles modestly calls it "the first baby steps."

For fifteen years a Redemptorist priest, a Dominican sister, and Passionist Alex Steinmiller have been working in the inner city of Detroit. They began by spending day after day in the halls and lunchrooms of Detroit's high schools—just to come to know and be known by the youth of the city. The three have set up programs to help the young "Focus: Life" on their own inner worth. They lead the young to "Life Search" for others, becoming "a gift for others." This project is now incorporated as "Life Directions." Father Alex, after fourteen years on Detroit streets writes: "The charism of Saint Paul of the Cross continues to intrigue, challenge and inspire me. It remains original and new."

In France, Fr. Guy Sionneau has worked as a nurse in public hospitals. In the spirit of the Worker Priests movement in France he sees his ministry as "being with" those who are the sick and afflicted poor, without privilege or special consideration. "We no longer want to be content with 'saying' a Word from the Cross, but to live a life of the Cross amid unbelief, indifference, in the daily face to face encounter with suffering."

The general synod in 1972 recommended the formation of an international organization to promote the study of and to work with the problem of suffering on every level. As a result, Fr. Harry Gielen, the Belgian provincial, organized Stauros International in the following year, with headquarters in Louvain, Belgium. Father Harry was chosen general secretary with the provincial of the eastern American province, Fr. Flavian Doughtery, as the first president. International congresses on suffering have been held at South Bend in 1979, and in Houston, Chicago, and Pittsburgh.

In 1978 Father Flavian became the first director of Stauros: USA. He moved the national office to the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago. He organized a workshop at the United Nations in 1980 on the disabled. This truly changed Stauros: USA and Flavian. He became "a voice for the voiceless, an empowering force for the powerless." In his final years Flavian was preoccupied with the problem of suffering and concerned about the unjust structures that cause unnecessary suffering in the lives of others. Stauros and the Catholic Theological Union have sponsored several tours to the Holy Land (Israel). The tour of 1989 proved to be the last for Father Flavian. In December he was hospitalized for a brain tumor, and he died on February 12, 1990.

Other apostolates have developed in these recent years. Volunteer programs to work among the poor and underprivileged in Baja California, Appalachia, Mississippi, and Alabama have become at times continuing programs in the United States. In Latin America and in the Philippines and elsewhere Passionists have been involved in "base communities" to provide guidance and inspiration for the thousands of people in large city parishes. At retreat houses, on missions, and from our monasteries, Passionists are working with alcoholics, the divorced, fallen away, victims of AIDS, and drug addicts, among others.

Passionists have added several new mission areas, for example, India on an international basis through the generalate, and Honduras by the eastern American province at South River. Several mission vicariates have been raised to the status of vice-provinces. Vice-provinces were established in Mexico in 1980, in the Philippines in 1983, in Korea and Colombia in 1988. In the more recent theology and in canon law, missions are not to be seen as "colonies" or permanent dependencies of European or western religious orders but should be allowed to develop as responsible communities in the truly international institute.

International Awareness

Another very important part of the renewal for Passionists is the deepening awareness of the international character of the Congregation. Even before the council, the revised Rule of 1959 legislated for the presence of delegates to the general chapter. This first chapter with delegates was in 1964. Six years later, the special renewal chapter of 1968–1970 had experts and observers as well as delegates. In this way, more and more "ordinary" religious who participated in the general chapters were meeting religious from other countries and continents. The result is a growing appreciation of our worldwide Congregation.

Since 1972 there have been general synods every two years. These are meetings of all the provincial superiors together with the members of the general curia. Fr. Paul Boyle has held several of these synods outside of Rome, in 1980 at Corella in Spain, in 1984 in Africa, and in the Philippines in 1990. In 1977 Father Boyle called a special meeting of the provincials at Lima, Peru. These synods and

meetings outside of Rome have served as an occasion for many of the superiors and religious from the nearby provinces to meet with the provincials and general curia. Again, the worldwide character of the Congregation becomes a reality for many more.

After the unfortunate death of Fr. Theodore Foley in 1974, Fr. Sebastian Camera became vice-general. In 1975 he presided at a Far East conference of Passionists held in Mindinao, the Philippines. This was the first such interregional conference of Passionists, which had been legislated for in the chapter document (no. 171). Since then other such conferences in the Far East, in Latin America, and Africa have been held. Missionaries meet fellow missionaries with different backgrounds and problems. All such meetings are bringing Passionists closer to one another.

In North America, Italy, Spain, and northern Europe, provincial councils have been meeting together for several decades to discuss cooperative activities and to seek solutions to regional problems. There have also been meetings in several countries together with Passionist nuns and sisters of that area.

Another way in which the religious have worked together has been the foundation in India. From the beginning this mission has been directly under the general superior. Volunteers were recruited from five different provinces. Because of problems with the Indian government, the missionaries have been limited in the length of their stay in India. Presently, the novitiate and studies are made by Indian Passionists in Africa with the Italian missionaries there.

Finally, during the past twelve years, Paul Boyle as superior general has visited not only every province but also every house or mission of the Congregation throughout the world. These visits have been deeply appreciated by the religious, especially those in areas where a superior general had not ventured before. In this way Father Paul has assured the religious of the interest and concern of the entire Congregation in their lives and ministries. The religious feel truly a part of a worldwide brotherhood.

The renewal of the Congregation has been greatly aided by the last two general chapters, in 1982 and 1984. The first chapter had the responsibility of adapting the chapter document into two books, the *Constitutions* and the *Regulations*. The *Constitutions* were then approved by the Holy See in 1984. The *Regulations* are norms of a more specific nature for the entire Congregation.

Both chapters were devoted to the important work of planning, or programming, as it is called. The 1982 chapter initiated a general plan with its call for a deeper study of the new *Constitutions,* and "the contemplation of the Crucified and crucifieds of today."

The chapter of 1988 took as its theme "The Challenges to Passionist Life and Work from Today's World." The capitulars reflected on the "signs of the times" to focus on the challenges of injustice and atheistic materialism. To deal with these two issues, they then stated a general overarching objective and two specific objectives on our way of life and our apostolic work. These are the goals for the planning of the present years, on both the international and provincial level, but especially on the local level. This chapter elected as superior general Fr. Jose Agustin Orbegozo, provincial of the Basque province in northern Spain.

"The Memory of the Passion"

St. Paul of the Cross from his youth was inspired by the sufferings of the Savior. On the first day of his retreat after receiving the habit as a hermit, he wrote that his "only desire is to be on the Cross with Jesus." Within a year he took a vow to remember the passion of Christ. When Benedict XIV approved Paul's Rule for the first time, Paul had inserted a chapter on the vow to promote the memory of or devotion to the passion of Jesus.

Through the years Passionists have cherished this vow as the very heart of Paul's charism. Finally, the renewal chapter of 1968–1970 placed this vow in the first place among the vows a Passionist professes.

In the first years after the promulgation of the chapter document, Passionists continued to call the passion vow "the fourth vow." But soon the religious began to appreciate its primary place as they repeated the phrase, "We find the unity of our lives and apostolate in the Passion of Christ."

At workshops on Passionist spirituality and in written articles many began to clarify the distinction between "devotion" to the passion and the "memory" of the passion, or *Memoria Passionis* as it is frequently called. When St. Paul of the Cross used the word "devotion," he most likely had in mind St. Francis de Sales' concept of devotion as loving commitment to the Lord, not just a pious

practice. The word "memory" holds for us the biblical connotation of liturgical and mystical "remembrance." "Do this in memory of me." It speaks of the past event made present in memory, ritual, vital living. Passionists take a vow, not to promote another pious practice among Catholics but to lead all peoples to a loving commitment to the crucified Christ and to become living witnesses of the Christ who died and rose again.

Another aspect of the "memory of the passion" calls Passionists to contemplate Jesus crucified and also the many crucifieds of today, such as the poor, the suffering, the sinner, and the abandoned. We find them in our cities and villages, where they speak to us of the sufferings of Christ in today's world, in the First, Second, and Third Worlds. This twofold contemplation was presented to Passionists at the 1982 general chapter as the necessary foundation for the renewal of the Congregation. It is presently enriching Passionists in many ways.

Stanislaus Breton has reminded us of the two "sensitivities" we can bring to this contemplation. We might find today's crucifieds suffering "a spiritual poverty," "a lack of meaning." Or we might focus on "their physical destitution" and their call to us "to find new ways to change the situations." The first response prompts Passionists in their ministry of preaching parish missions and in retreat houses. The second inspires those who are working in the inner cities, among the sick and dying, in directing "base communities" in Latin America, and similar ministries, to find in such ministries the ways of effecting change in institutional structures.

* * *

As "this dynamic process" of renewal (to use the phrase of Paul VI) continues, Passionists are finding in the leadership of our new general superior, Jose Agustin Orbegozo, inspiration and affirmation. He and his consultors have visited almost every province and vicariate in the Congregation during their first years in office. These pastoral visits inform the general council of the actual situations among the membership. The religious everywhere get the feeling of belonging to a worldwide community.

The general superior relates that he has found "optimism and hope. The 1988 general chapter with its 'programming' was a moment of grace for the Institute. Significant results flow from this

general climate, for example: a conviction of the viability of our mission; a feeling of belonging to the Institute; the search for new forms of Passionist life; a clearer awareness that the Passion of Christ and of the crucified form one unique mystery of salvation."

He also commented on the three most urgent problems facing the Congregation. The first "is to keep alive the spirit of the 1988 general chapter. This chapter was a serious effort to situate ourselves before today's world and to question ourselves on its challenges." The second urgent problem is "to consolidate our specific identity with the memory of the Crucified and the crucifieds. . . . Finally our life must be credible signs of the kingdom of the Crucified: crucified communities disposed to celebrate the Lord's Passover in the suffering of humanity."

In introducing the new publication, *The Passionist International Annuario,* Father Orbegozo wrote: "The Congregation of the Passion with all its humanity has entered the last decade of the twentieth century and is prepared to serve the people of the twenty-first century as it has in the past: proclaiming the mystery of Christ Crucified."

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24

Passionist Martyrs

While this book was being written we received word that Fr. Carl Schmitz had been killed in the mountains of southern Mindinao in the Philippines. This was a personal tragedy for me, since Carl and I were classmates. We had taken our vows together and been ordained together. Now he was dead. So many memories came rushing back upon me. And then I realized that Carl was a martyr.

A martyr! There have been other Passionists who had died for Christ. Their stories are also a part of this book. Martyrdom in some form or other has been for certain Passionists their special sharing in the charism of St. Paul of the Cross. This is an ever-present possibility for Passionists of today. The story of the Passionists must have a chapter on our martyrs. It must begin with Carl.

Fr. Carl Schmitz

Father Carl Schmitz was born in Chicago October 10, 1917. Learning of the Passionists in grade school, he entered our minor seminary in St. Louis in 1931. A city lad, he had experienced rugged farm life on his grandfather's farm in Wisconsin. At the seminary his manual job was usually in the garden. He liked this, for he felt it was preparing him in some ways for the rigors of foreign missionary life. This was his goal in joining the Passionists.

In 1937 he entered the Passionist novitiate in St. Paul, Kansas. He profited by the opportunities of seminary life and novitiate for-

mation to become a man of faith and prayer. We can never understand Carl and the great mission of his life if we overlook the spiritual, even mystical, element in his soul.

On the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in 1937 he received the Passionist habit. A cross was laid on his shoulders: "Receive, dear brother, the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; deny thyself that thou mayest have part with Him unto eternal life." And a year and a day later he took his vows, including the vow of the passion proper to every Passionist.

This mysticism of the passion remained with him to the very end. In his final letter dated March 1, 1988, he writes of "doggedly plugging on in this marathon of a life lived by 'Faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave up His Life for love of me.' "

April 26, 1944, six of us together with Carl were kneeling in the Louisville cathedral. We were caught up into the sacrificial priesthood of Jesus so that we too could be offered "with Him and through Him and in Him to the glory of God the Father."

The summer of 1948 Carl was on his way to China as part of the second group of missionaries to go to China after the Second World War. He began his studies at Peking, only to be rushed out of the country before the armies of Mao took all of mainland China. He was in China long enough to experience the sufferings of refugee peoples.

A year later he was working among the blacks in Alabama. There he would learn the needs of the poor and segregated. But three years later he was sent to Japan with Fr. Matthew Vetter to found the Congregation in that country among the disillusioned and defeated.

In 1974 he asked to join other Passionists in the Philippines. He was pastor in a large parish on the island of Mindinao for several years. Then he was sent to work among the B'laans, a people who had been driven out of their homelands, stranded in the hills, refugees for whom there is no room in the inn of Philippine society.

Driven by the Spirit, on fire for justice, consumed with love for the Lord Jesus, Father Carl lived the life of the B'laans in his center in the mountains. He taught them the faith. He felt the injustices they experienced in being driven from their homelands. He defended their rights to their lands and way of life. It is no wonder that there were those who wanted to see him silenced, removed, murdered.

At long last the previous seventy years had readied Carl for his

life's mission—his final testimony to the Lord who died and rose again, his final witness to Christ crucified and risen.

It came abruptly on the Thursday evening of Easter Week. The doors were closed. One whom Carl knew and had trained, a B'laan traitor, stood there with a gun at the foot of the steps. It is a repeat of the morning gospel. For once again Jesus was standing there too, as if saying now: "Peace to you, Carl. This is our hour. Take this cup and drink of it. . . . Do not be afraid; it is I; see my hands and feet." "My Lord and my God! I am ready to go unto the altar of the Lord. . . . Behold I come to do your will. . . . Father, forgive him for he knows not what he is doing." A gun is fired. "Come, Lord Jesus. The Mass is ended. Alleluia! Alleluia!"

St. Maria Goretti

Father Carl is not the only Passionist martyred. Others preceded him. In fact, the first "martyr" in the Passionist family was not a Passionist. She was a young girl of twelve, St. Maria Goretti.

Maria Goretti was a peasant girl of the marshlands south of Rome. Her family was poor and worked the fields for support. Passionists were in charge of the nearby shrine-church of Our Lady of Grace at Nettuno. On weekends they sometimes assisted at Campo Morte and Ferriere and even at Conca, the parish church of the area. In this way the Goretti family met the Passionists.

At the age of twelve Maria prepared for her first Communion at the Passionist church in Nettuno. From the Passionists she learned her catechism and the story of the sufferings of Christ. Passionist Father Jerome (deceased in 1946) celebrated her first Communion Mass, probably on the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1902.

Not too long after her Communion, when alone in her home, she was attacked and stabbed repeatedly by a lustful young man, Alessandro Serenelli. She accepted death rather than sin with him. Bleeding profusely she was taken to the hospital in Nettuno, where she died the next day, on July 6, 1902. Maria Goretti was buried in the public cemetery at Nettuno. Her burial was a grand demonstration by the ordinary people of the area. They saw in this young girl of twelve a saint, a martyr.

Later the Passionists at Nettuno asked her mother, Assunta, for the privilege of having Maria's body in their shrine-church. There

she was buried in a marble tomb in 1929. A few years later her cause for canonization was introduced. The Passionists were asked to promote her cause before the Roman tribunals.

Pope Pius XII beatified her in 1947. Three years later, on June 25 in the Holy Year of 1950, the same Pope canonized this peasant girl before a throng of 500,000 people in the piazza of St. Peter's. Assunta Goretti, surrounded by two daughters and one son and grandchildren, witnessed this triumph of her daughter.

Maria Goretti was not a Passionist. There is no evidence that she even thought of becoming a religious, much less a cloistered Passionist nun. Nevertheless, St. Maria Goretti is a "Passionist," for from Passionists she had heard the story of the sufferings of Christ. She had learned that one must be willing even to die with Jesus rather than commit a sin. In a simple quiet way she had learned the message of St. Paul of the Cross, and she gave witness to his teaching even by death.

Maria Goretti was served by Passionists in the ordinary ministries of Sunday Mass, of the sacrament of penance, of simple catechism and preaching. A Passionist priest each Sunday walked out to the malaria-infested Pontine marshes of that area to minister to the poor. In God's eyes he was preparing a young girl of twelve to become one of the most popular and needed saints of the twentieth century.

St. Maria Goretti, entrusted to the Passionist Congregation in a special way, reminds Passionists first of all that they are called to minister to God's little ones, his poor. She also challenges Passionists to proclaim to God's people in this time of indulgence the good news of Christian chastity. At the time of her beatification she was called after Gemma "our second little sister."

Walter Coveyou, Godfrey Holbein, Clement Seybold

Twenty-seven years later in far-off China three young Passionist missionaries from the American provinces were murdered, "martyred" by bandits. This is a contemporary account of their tragic deaths.

Fr. Walter Coveyou, Fr. Godfrey Holbein, and Fr. Clement Seybold were slain by bandits on April 24, 1929. The priests had finished their retreat on April 17 and were returning through the mountains to their assigned mission stations.

They spent a night at a lodging in a small village. The woman in charge was entertaining another guest. Early in the morning the three took off for an eight-mile journey to a larger town where there would be military guards. They had gone less than one mile when they were surrounded by a gang of bandits, numbering sixteen or seventeen. One of them was the guest at the lodging. The bandits forced the three priests to follow a path up into the high mountains.

At a cove on the mountainside the bandits asked for their money. When Father Walter told them that he did not understand them, he was without further warning shot in the head. Father Clement was also shot in the head. Father Godfrey began to give absolution once again when he was shot twice.

Their bodies were then thrown into a pit, where they were found a few days later by the police and several Passionists who went in search of them. Saturday, May 4, 1929, the three missionaries were buried in the cemetery at the mission headquarters in Shenchow.

That is the story as told in *The Sign* in 1930. Sixty years later we ask, Who were these three Passionists? Why were they killed?

Walter Coveyou was born at Petoskey, Ohio, in 1894 and was ordained in 1920. He was from Holy Cross province of Chicago. Godfrey Holbein was born in Baltimore in 1899 and ordained in 1923. Clement Seybold was born at Dunkirk in 1896 and ordained in 1923. Both were members of the eastern province of Union City.

Why were they murdered? Father Godfrey stated that he had volunteered to go to China "because I love Christ. I want to make him known and loved by those poor pagans." Writing from China to a cloistered nun who had become his "spiritual sister" he said: "Please pray that the will of God be done, that I may receive the great desire of my life and heart—to die the death of an Apostle—Holy Martyrdom. . . . Keep this, my desire, secret, please."

At the time of their deaths they were immediately hailed as martyrs by Catholics in the United States. Fr. Francis Flaherty wrote an article in *The Sign* insisting that since they were "in China for Christ," they willingly gave their life to bring Christ to China. Their cause for beatification has not been introduced at Rome.

Blessed Innocent Arnau, Blessed Nicephoros, and the Daimiel Martyrs

Twenty-seven Passionists were martyred in Spain. This is their story. In April 1931 King Alfonso XIII gave up his throne. The republic was declared. The establishment of the republic was an opportunity for extreme anticlericals to attack the Church.There was an uprising in Asturias in October of 1934. It lasted only a few days, but it was long enough for thirty-four clerics to be murdered. Among those killed were three Passionists at the monastery of Mieres in Asturias: one priest and two students. Fr. Innocent Canoura Arnau was one of those martyred with eight Christian brothers on October 9, 1934. They were beatified by Pope John Paul II in November 1989.

The summer of 1936 new elections were held, giving a slight victory to the Popular front (liberals). Jose Calvo Sotelo, the leader of the National (conservative) party spoke out in the Parliament on conditions throughout the country. On July 13, 1936, he was murdered. Five days later, Franco called for the rebellion of the armed forces to restore order to the nation. The civil war had begun.

During the years of the Spanish civil war between the rebels under Franco and the loyalists to the government (or between Fascists and Communists, as they were also called), people in Spain disagreed on how to assess the situation.There were believing Catholics on both sides, for neither side had a monopoly on righteousness.

That summer the provincial, Father Nicephoros of Holy Family province of Zaragosa, returned to Spain from Latin America. He was aware of the dangers that could lie ahead, for he had been a young student in Mexico in 1914 when religious were driven out of their houses and given two weeks to leave the country. He had been welcomed by the Chicago community and ordained a priest in Chicago on June 17, 1916, just twenty years earlier. Now in 1936 he felt it his duty to visit each community to be with the religious.

On July 21, he was a Daimiel in the province of Ciudad Real. The monastery there was the student house of the province. There were thirty-one religious in the community. It was 11:30 P.M. on July 21 when two hundred armed men surrounded the monastery and ordered the religious to get out of the house in one-half hour. Father Nicephoros gathered the community in the chapel, distributed Holy Communion to each, and exhorted them to suffer death for Christ and the Church.

When they got outside they were forced to walk two by two in file to the cemetery, where they thought they would be shot or perhaps buried alive. The leader, however, ordered them to go down the road. The Passionists decided to separate into two groups. The most experienced went with the least experienced. Madrid was the goal.

Nine of them took the morning train to Ciudad Real. There they were put in jail, accused of being religious who were killing people. Tied to each other with a rope around their necks, they were marched down the street to be mocked and stoned by the crowds. They reached Madrid that evening at 9:00 P.M. and were shot to death against a wall by the militia. They were buried in a common grave with the cause of their death on their wrists: "For being Passionist Religious from Daimiel."

Twelve boarded a train for Madrid. At Manzanares they were forced off the train and arrested. The next morning the station manager gave them tickets to Madrid. The Red leader threatened to kill the station manager for having done this, but Father Nicephoros begged for the man's life. All of them were taken to an open field and fired upon. Five died immediately, and the seven others were put in a hospital. Six survived and even helped out in the hospital until they too were taken out and killed on October 23.

The other ten tried to get to Madrid by train or by walking. Three who were walking were caught by military men and put on the train for Madrid. They were taken off at the Urda station and shot on the morning of July 25.

Two others managed to walk to Carrion de Calatrava in Ciudad Real where they remained hidden for some two months, until September 25. They were shot as they were kissing their crucifixes and shouting Viva Cristo Re! One was Fr. John Peter Aranguren, who had also been ordained in Chicago with Father Nicephoros. The other was an elderly brother, Paul Mary Potillo.

These priests, brothers, and students were killed for simply being religious. They found they could fulfill their commitment to the memory of the passion only by willingly dying for Christ. They were beatified in 1988.

Five other Passionists, four priests and one brother, were killed in Barcelona in July of 1936. The cause of these five and two from Mieres has not been introduced at Rome.

Fr. John Salah

John Salah was born of Arab parents in Jerusalem in 1914. He was educated by the sisters of St. Joseph and the Christian brothers in Jerusalem and at the Patriarchal Latin School at Ramallah.

John made his novitiate at Monte Argentaro and was professed November 4, 1938. He was ordained in Rome in 1943. After the war he joined the newly reorganized community at St. Martha's in Bethany in July 1946. He began a preaching ministry in Arabic. But soon the country was involved in the Arab war against the newly proclaimed country of Israel. All foreigners left Bethany on January 12, 1948, including the superior, Fr. Bonaventure Oberst, and Barnabas M. Ahern. John and his brother Albert remained. Some relatives joined them in occupying the building.

Father Albert sent the tragic news of his brother's death to Father Bonaventure, then in Chicago. His letter is a contemporary account of Father John's death:

> Father John was shot by a Jewish sniper in the early afternoon of May 19th and died in consequence a day later. . . . Father John had not unduly exposed himself to danger but was in Bethany and had barely left our property and entered the grounds of the Sisters of Charity (probably for some ministerial work) when an enemy bullet fired from Mt. Sion hit Father John through the "Sign" and entered his body in the region of the heart. He fell prostrate to the ground and was carried to the first-aid station in Bethany. Doctors declared him to be in a serious condition so it was considered advisable to call the Franciscan Superior at Bethphage, who then heard his confession. This happened in the early afternoon of May 19th. Towards evening Father rallied somewhat and on the following morning was taken to the International Red Cross Hospital in Jerusalem. At six o'clock that evening after a sudden change for the worst Father John died, strengthened with the last Sacraments. He was buried in our little cemetery at Bethany. The Funeral Mass was sung May 22nd for the repose of his soul.

So ends the letter. Further details of his death are not available. May his sacrifice bring peace to his country and reconciliation between Jew and Arab.

Bishop Eugene Bossilkov

Eugene Bossilkov was born on November 16, 1900, at Belene on the Danube in Bulgaria. He was studying at the Passionist seminary in Russe when the First World War broke out. He found refuge in Holland, where he took his vows as a Passionist April 28, 1920.

Ordained in 1926 by Bishop Damian Teelen, C.P., he went to Rome to study at the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Ecclesiastical Studies. He received the doctorate in 1931, defending the thesis "The Bulgarian Union with the Roman Church in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century."

He returned to Bulgaria and served as pastor at the parish of Bardanski Geran. In 1947 he was named Bishop of Nicopolis and was consecrated on October 7, 1947, by one Latin bishop and two Oriental Bulgarian bishops. Soviet troops had occupied Bulgaria, which at the end of the war became a people's republic under Soviet domination.

On becoming a bishop, Bossilkov held popular missions throughout his diocese, and he himself took part in these. In 1948 he was allowed to go to Rome and had an audience with Pius XII, and he also visited his home province of Holland.

On returning to Bulgaria, he found the Communist government continuing the persecution with ever-greater intensity. Catholic schools were closed in the latter part of 1948. The offices of the Catholic delegation were closed in 1949. Laws in regard to religious churches went into effect in February of 1949. On April 24, 1949, Bishop Bossilkov and two other bishops were forced to broadcast in French to the United Nations that the Church was well in Bulgaria.

He was arrested in July 16, 1952, charged with being a traitor to the country, an alcoholic, and an American spy. He was condemned to death on October 3, 1952, and executed by a firing squad on October 5, 1952, at 12:30 A.M.

For twenty-three years the Holy See was uncertain about the fate of Bishop Bossilkov. It was only after Pope Paul VI was certain that he had died that he appointed a new bishop in Nicopolis, in July of 1975. The cause for his beatification and canonization was begun in 1985.

Bishop Cuthbert O'Gara and the Dry Martyrs of China

China was one of the victorious nations at the end of the Second World War. Within a short time the question was asked, Which China? Nationalist China of Chiang Kai-shek or Red China of Mao Tse-tung?

Many Passionists returned to China at the close of the war. New missionaries were sent, including Carl Schmitz. Bishop Cuthbert O'Gara was once again back in his diocese of Yuanling. Bishop Cuthbert was a native of Canada who had joined the Passionists in Pittsburgh and was ordained in 1915. In 1924 he was sent to China as a missionary. Ten years later he was consecrated a bishop as vicar apostolic. During the Japanese occupation of Hunan, Bishop Cuthbert was imprisoned at Hong Kong for some time. In 1946, at the end of the war when Pope Pius XII established the national hierarchy in China, Bishop Cuthbert became the first bishop of Yuanling. In 1949 the Communists had control of the entire mainland. All foreign missionaries were now in trouble.

Finally, in 1951, Bishop Cuthbert was put under house arrest. When the people's court convicted him of treason he was led into his cathedral in full episcopal robes. There before his people, he was stripped of all his vestments, crosier, ring, and crucifix and led in his undergarments down the street to solitary confinement.

For months he remained in prison. Finally, when it was feared that his physical condition was weakening and that he might die, he was taken out of prison. Fr. Paul Ubinger and Fr. William Westhoven were released from prison to escort the bishop out of China. As he was ready to step upon the bridge into freedom at Hong Kong, he was handed his episcopal ring and crucifix! It was April 26, 1953.

Fulton Sheen hailed him in New York as a "dry martyr"—one whom the enemies of the Church would attempt to crush almost to the point of death, but not to death, not to real martyrdom! Pope Pius XII greeted him in Rome. He was honored by his own people in Montreal.

After he was thus feted and honored, Bishop Cuthbert was left to face the problems of daily living for the next thirteen years. As the 1950s cold war became the 1960s detente, Bishop Cuthbert at times felt misunderstood. A new loneliness set in even between him-

self and younger American Passionists. Dry martyrdom has its own price! Perhaps we might say it has its own "crown of glory." Years went by, and who can understand the sense of abandonment, even betrayal, this great bishop must have felt from time to time. He died at peace on the cross of his crucified Master on May 13, 1968.

Bishop Cuthbert was not alone in this inner crucifixion. Other Passionist missionaries in China went through this "mystical dying" with him—some in solitary confinement, such as Frs. Justin Garvey, William Westhoven, Marcellus White, Harold Travers. Others were under continuous house arrest until exiled from their adopted China, such as Linus Lombard, Ernest Holtz, Lawrence Mullins, John Baptist May, Jerome Does. William Westhoven died in 1990 at the age of ninety-four in Chicago. Marcellus White, a missionary in the Phillipines, has returned several times to China as late as 1989. Justin Garvey is a hospital chaplain in Oregon.

The story of the Passionists in China, from Godfrey Holbein to Justin Garvey, has been a glorious one for American Passionists. The charism of St. Paul of the Cross was alive and flourishing.

* * *

St. Maria Goretti at the beginning of the century; Walter Coveyou, Godfrey Holbein, Clement Seybold, in the 1920s in China; Father Nicephoros and his twenty-five companions, the others killed at Mieres and Barcelona in Spain during the 1930s; John Salah in the 1940s in Bethany; in the 1950s Bishop Eugene Bossilkov in Bulgaria and Bishop Cuthbert and the dry martyrs in China; and now Carl Schmitz in the Philippines in the 1980s—each reveals a deeper and fuller experience of the Passionist spirit. With their example before us we are ready to carry the cross into a new century, a third millennium!

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Epilogue: Into the Twenty-first Century

In a few years we will be entering into the twenty-first century, into the third millennium. Pope John Paul II had dedicated his entire pontificate to preparing the Church for this important event.

As I bring *The Passionists* to a close, I must confess that I feel less apprehensive about this venture into the future. In fact, I am quite hopeful. Let me tell you why.

First of all, in writing this book I have met many Passionists in the more than two and a half centuries of Passionist life. I have discovered from their stories what the memory of a crucified Christ meant for each one of them. I have seen how they adjusted the demands of this Passionist charism to the needs of their particular times.

The stories of these great and little Passionists, the veterans and the youthful, the mystics and apostles and martyrs—their human but so inspiring stories are our history, our patrimony.

Taught by their examples, encouraged by their experiences, the Passionists of today are readied to take that step into the future, into the new century beyond the year 2000!

What does this mean? It means that by remembering the past we come to know the present and are prepared for the future. The past, present, and future are intimately interrelated.

A recent author has written: "There is never just a past; it is always a *remembered* past, in which memory concretely shapes what we are calling the past. There is never just a future; it is always an *anticipated* future in which anticipation concretely shapes what we

are calling the future." Yes, both the past and the future are deeply colored by the present one actually lives in.

This was true for St. Paul of the Cross as he founded the Congregation. The present in which he was living colored how he saw religious life in earlier centuries. So it also colored how he saw the future, how he anticipated the future for which he prepared by rewriting his rules again and again. For example, he saw the religious life of the past as lived in religious Orders solemnly approved by the Holy See. This is why he worked so hard to have his institute solemnly approved as a religious Order with solemn vows. Perhaps anticipating that his community would one day become an Order, he wished his religious to be prepared to fulfill the obligation of choral Office incumbent on all religious Orders.

Our past is always a "remembered" past. We must never forget this, for the very times in which we live color our perspective of the past. There are those special people, those particular experiences of the past that somehow speak to our present and so are viewed by us as so very special and important to us. Perhaps this explains why some Passionists tended to uphold the model Anthony Testa portrayed while others tended to imitate Bernard Mary Silvestrelli.

This reflection brings us to a very key event in this present moment of the Church, namely the Second Vatican Council. For us who are religious (and in my case Passionists), the present is the Second Vatican Council as applied to our communities in our renewal chapters. The council, together with the religious renewal chapters, provides the perspective for our remembering the past.

A word of caution is in order. When I mention the Second Vatican Council and our renewal chapters, I do not suggest that we concentrate only on the actual events or years when the council and the chapters were in session. Rather, I suggest that our present includes the council and the renewal chapters as they impact on our experiences and choices in this present time. This present colors our memory of the past.

The present is also influencing our anticipation of the future. That future is already being shaped by the present. This is why Passionists, as all religious, await and anticipate a future deeply colored by the Second Vatican Council, our present.

But even as we anticipate this future, we must recall that our present is also being colored by our "remembered" past. In other words,

the past we remember effects the future we anticipate, for both are tied together by the experiences, the actions, the decisions, of the now, the present! Our looking into the past to see foreshadowings of our present (the council) affects the future we await.

Of course the past is not just the building of monasteries, the perfecting of law or rules. The past we remember is that of the great and little men and women whom the Holy Spirit imbued with the charism of the founders, in our case St. Paul of the Cross. Our past is the richness of many men and women experiencing a mystic love for the Crucified, evangelizing and being evangelized by the crucified peoples of their age.

We remember this past in the light of today's experiences of the Second Vatican Council's enthusiasms and sufferings, of our own experiences of hopes and disappointments. St. Paul of the Cross, his followers, great and small, become more real for us today, for we remember them in the light of our present experiences.

The future is the extension of these experiences in the lives of those to come, as they too will be anointed by the Spirit with the charism of St. Paul of the Cross in new ways for new times. We normally anticipate that the future may be, for those coming after us, so much like our own, for we see the future in the light of our present. But if we ourselves live into that future, we must be ready and prepared for "that" present, which will be modified by God's gifts to those who are following us.

We are thus approaching the future, the third millennium, the new century, not naked, not out of nothingness but enriched and possessing the insights, the mysticism, the experiences, and the decisions of those who have gone before us, and also our own experiences and decisions of today. We are not called to create out of nothing a new world, for the Spirit will be at work in those who are to come as he has been in the past and is now in our own present. Our role is always to be the bridge (the present is just a bridge) from the past across the present (which may at times seem a chaos) into the future.

Here I would like to quote a beautiful statement from Fr. Rob Carbonneau's unpublished manuscript:

> You enter a Congregation with a rich history. Adaptation and change have been a consistent part of the history. Various foundations have opened and closed. Religious lifestyle has gone through stages and

> Passionist ministries have been diverse. . . . One must see the past as a story to be learned and understood. However, the reverse is also true. One must see the future as a personal creation of faith, experience, risk and change. The ability to learn from history does not give answers for the future. Instead historical awareness gives a grounding, a point of reference, from which to view one's own life and those with whom we associate on a day to day basis. . . . For none of us goes into the future without our personal past. Neither does a religious congregation.

Above all else, what we must find in the past, what we come to remember more and more, is the presence, the action of God upon these men and women of the past. Each one of them has experienced the Divine in his or her life. All have witnessed to God's grace in their hearts.

In each one's life there has been the hand of the loving Father, the memory of the crucified Son, the gentle breathing of the Blessed Spirit. Each of the Passionists we have come to know and love in this Passionist history was a special child of the heavenly Father, a son or daughter to him in adoption with our crucified brother, a loving partner of the Spirit of love.

From our awareness of God in their lives we begin to detect the Divine in this present time in which we live. The Heavenly Father abides with us as he gives us our daily bread and frees us from the evils that threaten us. Daily we are offered the opportunities of being formed ever more deeply into the likeness of the divine Son who is our Savior, our brother, our friend. We find in our hearts and in the Church the gentle but firm guidance of the divine Spirit. Like the gentle breeze, he inspires us with love as he helps us cry out: Abba, Father.

Aware of the presence of our God with us today, we are more and more assured that he will be with us in the venture into tomorrow. As in the past and as in this present, God will be with us into the future. Yes, for each community there is the memory of the past and the hope of the future. Each religious group will seek to meet the future with the memory of the past and the experiences of today.

The charism that the Spirit poured out upon Paul Daneo and upon many other founders will continue to be shared with men and women into the next century, into the third millennium, even as it has been

shared with us. The Spirit can inspire tomorrow's people of God and each religious community as they, yes as we, become the Church in the world of tomorrow.

As we walk along that path into the future, though at times we might stumble and fall, we are on the way the Savior walked. Like Jesus, we are at times "driven" by the Spirit. In fidelity to the council as reinforced by each succeeding pope together with our bishops, as lived out by the crucifieds of today, we Passionists will find the way to the bright morning of the resurrection.

And for Passionists there will be for each of us in the future the memory of the passion, of a God who was crucified for us, of an older brother who hung on the cross to welcome back wayward younger brothers and sisters. It will be this remembering of the passion that will bring us Passionists together in the unity of our common vocation "to desire only to be on the Cross with Jesus." The memory of the passion will unite us with past, present, and future Passionists in our common apostolate of "preaching Christ and him Crucified."

The dream of St. Paul is living and real—into the new century!

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(The * indicates that the individual is a Passionist).