



**THE PASSIONISTS OF
HOLY CROSS PROVINCE**

The Passionist Way

We are the Passionist family of Holy Cross Province. We each have our own story as to how the seeds of *Memoria Passionis* came to be planted in our hearts, yet the guiding light for each of us in the Passionist family is that the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is “the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love” (1, Constitutions, 1984).

We in the Passionist family of Holy Cross Province are deeply aware that the Passion of Christ continues in this world. We seek to nurture the seeds that have been planted in our hearts within community and by a way of life that helps us live more deeply into what “keeping alive the memory of the Passion” means for each of us and for all of us together as the Passionist family. We choose to walk the path that Paul of the Cross did, with companions, prayerfully reflecting on how the Rule that Paul wrote in 1721, and the Constitutions appended in 1984, can guide and shape our lives as we come to understand more deeply what it means to be a Passionist today.

First and foremost, members of the Passionist family commit to keeping alive the memory of the Passion of Christ. This vow is personal, communal and apostolic. We commit to sharing in the joys and sorrows of our contemporaries. We understand that Christ’s Passion and death are “no mere historical events. They are ever-present realities to people in the world of today, ‘crucified’ as they are by injustice, by the lack of a deep respect for human life, and by a hungry yearning for peace, truth, and the fullness of human existence” (65, Constitutions). We take part in this apostolate, each of us, according to our gifts, resources and ministries. What follows is what we have found to be essential elements for walking as companions of St. Paul of the Cross and as members of our Holy Cross Province Passionist family.

Mission Statement **The Passionists of Holy Cross Province**

We Passionists proclaim God’s love for the world revealed through the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The Passionists, a global family of priests and brothers, nuns and sisters, and lay men and women, reach out with compassion to the crucified of today. We keep alive the memory of Christ’s Passion through our commitment to community, prayer, ministries of the Word, and service to those who suffer. We welcome all who seek renewed life through the power of the Cross and the hope of the Resurrection.

Essential Elements of The Passionist Way

Compassion

A deepening awareness of the spirituality of Paul of the Cross leads us to a greater sense of compassion. This compassion begins with solidarity with a suffering world. Passionists aim to respond to those who suffer and bring the love of Jesus Crucified to them. Passionists develop this capacity through Eucharist, prayer, and meditation on the Passion of Christ, and through ministry.

We who live the Passionist Way also realize that we must take up the Cross as it exists in our own lives. Paul of the Cross spent much time in prayerful reflection on the crucial place of suffering in our own lives. He shared the fruit of this prayerful reflection in guiding and directing others, often through the countless letters he wrote over the years. Compassion includes our own personal journey with the Cross and invites us to reflect prayerfully on our own suffering, opening us to receive the compassion needed to turn from our own sin and grow in grace.

Hospitality

Passionist hospitality is rooted in, and strives to faithfully imitate, the entire life and ministry of Jesus, particularly his Passion. The Passionist charism provides a focus for members of the Passionist Family to understand that Jesus “tore down the walls of separation” (Ephesians 2:14). Jesus was reputed to eat with tax collectors, sinners and those outside the law (Luke 7:34). Our retreat houses are based on a profound sense of hospitality, and that sense of welcome that willingly “shares in the joys and sorrows of our contemporaries” (3, Constitutions), whoever they might be, is foundational for all Passionist ministries.

The Eucharist

When we celebrate the Eucharist, the Father gathers us around His Son. Sending His Spirit into our hearts, Christ unites our personal sacrifice and that of all people with His own supreme Sacrifice of Redemption.

Coming to the table of the Lord, we listen to the Word of God with attentive minds and responsive hearts.

Renewing the Sacrifice of Christ and sharing His Body and Blood, we announce His death, and proclaim His resurrection; He forgives our sins, renews our strength, and pledges us a share in His risen life.

~42, Constitutions

For Passionists, the Eucharist is the “summit and supreme expression of our worship,” and “central to the life of each community” As such, we strive “to prepare for the celebration of this mystery in prayerful recollection and purity of heart.” For every community, and for each member of the Passionist family, “the Eucharist is a divine reality that transforms their lives. In

celebrating it with Joy, we respond whole-heartedly to the proclamation of the death of the Lord until He comes.

Eucharist touches, colors, and transforms every aspect of our lives as Passionists, compelling and sustaining “a free, conscious offering of self to God and to the service of others” (77, Constitutions).

This practice creates an ever-increasing world of grace, with the Cosmic Christ delivering and re-delivering it through all of us who are the Body of Christ. We are called to participate. In this way, “The Passion of Jesus Christ remains always in our hearts.”

Prayer and Silence

Prayer is accessible to us in every moment of every day. It is our immediate connection with a God who is both transcendent and immanent. Prayer can be verbal, meditative, or contemplative. We can pray with our whole body through movement, ritual actions or by serving others. ~Passionist.org

*I wish you to abandon yourself more and more in that immense sea of love. I want you to live of the life and in the divine life of Jesus Christ.
~St. Paul of the Cross to Sister Maria Cherubina Bresciani, May 31, 1740*

Passionists focus their daily prayer on the Passion of Jesus as a constant reminder of God's love. We also recognize that we are in union with Passionists around the world through this practice.

Paul of the Cross “wished his followers to pray without ceasing” and “desired his communities to become schools of prayer” leading to a deep experience of God. This prayer leads to an inward and outward silence that gives depth to our lives. This silence fosters the inner peace and calm necessary for the spirit of prayer to grow; it frees us from harassing cares and hushes the clamor of demands made daily upon us, helping us keep our lives centered on God. (37, Constitutions).

“Our life of prayer, communal and individual, draws us to live in communion with the Most Holy Trinity. In prayer, we surrender and respond to the loving initiative of the Father. Led by the Holy Spirit, we unite ourselves with the Person of Christ, especially in the Paschal Mystery of His suffering, death, and resurrection. In this way our whole lives are united in prayer with Christ as together we journey towards our Father” (39, Constitutions).

“A life of prayer demands that we compare our manner of living with what is required by the Gospel. We should continually ask ourselves whether our prayer life effectively influences our personal life, our community life, and our apostolic service” (40, Constitutions).

Silence invites us to explore and deepen our relationship with God, with others and with all creation. All Passionist Family members are encouraged to spend at least twenty minutes in sacred silence every day.

Solitude

“Christ often chose solitude for Himself, and counselled his disciples to do likewise” (54, Constitutions). Solitude is an important element of Passionist life. It provides the space in which

to reflect and pray. Aspiring to be men and women of prayer, we must exert ourselves to develop a practice of solitude in our lives. Withdrawing to some degree from the world, we can draw closer to God, understand God's saving plan and what it might ask of us, and appraise more objectively secular trends and standards (54, Constitutions).

Poverty

We strive, both as individuals and as families and communities, to characterize our lifestyle by an attitude of genuine detachment from, and just stewardship of, temporal goods. We seek to place "ourselves, our talents, our work, and our achievements" in divine service (11, Constitutions). This may lead to insecurity and at times lack, yet we strive to place our full confidence in God and God's supporting grace. "In a world where the unjust distribution of goods is a major source of division, hatred, and suffering, we want our poverty to witness to the true value and purpose of these goods. As far as possible we intend to share our life with others, and to use our possessions for the relief of suffering and for the increase of justice and peace in the world" (13 Constitutions).

Family

Family is an integral part of human life. All of us who live the Passionist Way include and embrace our family members, both vowed and lay, with love, intimacy and affection. These family members include relatives, friends, children, spouses, partners, brothers, sisters, those living in vowed Passionist communities, those who live alone, and those who do not have the benefit of living in a community grounded in the Passionist Way. Some people live in unique situations, such as those who are incarcerated, homeless, ill, or in transition due to violence, war, injustice and poverty. We include, love and embrace all our family members.

We share the Passionist Way with all of our family members by engaging in caring, intentional dialogue about our personal commitment to the Passionist Way while asking for support and prayers. We also realize that some will reject our personal commitment. Whatever their response, our intimate support for our family members is of primary importance as we live the Passionist Way. All of our family members are invited to share our commitment on any level of involvement. Communication with all members of our family, both distant and close, is an essential part of our family obligation to love and include all. We especially acknowledge our familial obligations of love to those with whom we live every day at home.

Community

St. Paul of the Cross writes that "the Christian community is founded on the love of Christ, who by His Cross, 'tore down the wall of separation' and made all one people."

Since we are united in Christ, each one of us in the Passionist family of Holy Cross Province "acknowledges with respect the dignity and equality of every other member, whom we accept as a unique individual." We make a conscious commitment to help each member of the Passionist family, whether vowed or lay, develop his or her individual personality and talents (26, Constitutions).

As members of the Passionist family, we commit to the ongoing co-creation of community, to coming together on a regular basis “to help, encourage, and forgive each other” so that relationships can be fostered and flourish. We strive to co-create community that is “characterized by joy and peace” and “mutual esteem” (28, Constitutions).

Some methods to immerse ourselves in this spirit of a loving community include:

- *Cultivating goodwill toward one another and actively seeking one another’s good;*
- *Readiness to spend ourselves in apostolic labors, in service to those who are suffering and marginalized as well as to the Congregation;*
- *Generous sharing in tasks and responsibilities inherent in common life;*
- *Patience with ourselves and others;*
- *Commitment to sharing of our resources and gifts in our community and beyond;*
- *A willingness to dialog and reconcile with individuals in our lives with whom we disagree.*

Those of us who are lay members of the Passionist family recognize that we are not trying to create a replica of vowed community life in our own homes by living the Passionist Way. Life continues with all its ongoing demands and obligations. Many of us are integral members of other social organizations, faith communities, businesses and civic institutions. Living the Passionist Way nurtures and sustains us as we are sent forth to share and build the Kingdom of God among those with whom we interact in our daily lives. We embrace this “Apostolic Spirituality” in our lives along with the new ways of living every day which inform and fuel it.

Guided by the Spirit and in response to the signs of our times, we who are in the Passionist Family acknowledge and welcome new forms and models of how the Passionist Way can be lived in community among both vowed and lay. The response to the Spirit may call us to transcend boundaries we have become accustomed to over time. Visioning and co-creating new forms of living the Passionist Way together as the Passionist family are welcomed with good stewardship, dialogue, and commitment to our shared Passionist Charism.

Formation and Education

As the Passionist family of Holy Cross Province, we understand ourselves to be companions of St. Paul of the Cross, walking together the path that he blazed. As such, we believe mentoring and walking together with other members of the Passionist family to be essential to each of us as we grow in our understanding and depth of experience of our charism, and live into the fullness of who we are called to be as Passionists.

We therefore recommend that each member of the Passionist family engage in regular spiritual direction. We also recommend that new companions of Paul of the Cross be paired with a mentor member of the Passionist family who will accompany them on their journey. We believe that relationship is primary on the Passionist journey, the relationship of persons whose hearts are imprinted with the *Memoria Passionis*, coming to know each other deeply as together they grow in love of God and neighbor.

In addition to these foundational relational ways of deepening our understanding of who we are as Passionists, individually and collectively, formation opportunities are offered through the

Office of Mission Effectiveness (OME) and through the Holy Cross Province website as well as through academic institutions like Catholic Theological Union.

A commitment to ongoing formation is essential for members of the Passionist Family.

Grace and the Movement of the Spirit

To be a member of the Passionist family is to engage in ongoing discernment of the signs of the times and the movement of the Spirit. In the spirit of faith, hope and love, “we seek to discern the signs of the times, following the example of St. Paul of the Cross, who saw ‘the name of Jesus written on the foreheads of the poor.’”

Guided by the teachings of the Church and our own commitment to keeping alive the memory of the Passion of Christ, “we strive to make our lives and apostolate an authentic and credible witness on behalf of justice and human dignity. Accordingly, our lifestyle must stand out as a prophetic condemnation of the injustices among which we live” (72, Constitutions).

Living the Passionist Way



Steeping our hearts in the Passion of Christ daily by living the Passionist Way fills each of us with a love that overflows in action. We find a way to express this love in our varied ministries and service to all and to creation.

The intersection of our hearts and the Cross as symbolized in our Passionist Sign is a dynamic and intimate event which compels us to preach God’s love for us all. We do this by providing hospitable schools of prayer in our retreat house ministries, itinerant preaching in parishes and media, service to the poor, the ministry of prayer, various other ministries, and work in our daily lives as people full of love flowing from the Passion of Christ.

Living the Passionist Way is not easy. The nails on our Passionist Sign proclaim this reality. Yet, we embrace this reality, accept this invitation to live the Passionist Way, and boldly stand together in our world.