



The Passionists of Holy Cross Province

Exploratory Commission on Province Leadership

Sandra Arnould ♦ MaryLou Butler ♦ David Colhour ♦ Bob Hotz ♦ Tim O'Brien ♦
Faith Offman ♦ Phil Paxton ♦ Lissa Romell ♦ Elizabeth Velarde

Proposal

In February of 2021, as part of the fruits of the Visioning Process of Holy Cross Province, our Provincial, Joe Moons, charged the Exploratory Commission with examining “the current structures of Holy Cross Province and to make recommendations as to what is needed to carry us forward into the future.” In his explanation, he wrote to the members of the Commission: “We all recognize that a great deal has happened since the Visioning Process started over five years ago. New styles of leadership, a deepening collaboration between the vowed and laity and a larger sense of the identity of our Passionist Family has emerged resulting in us becoming visionaries. We now recognize that we need to examine the existing structures of the Province to determine if they address our emerging new reality.”

After twelve months of prayerful thought and discussions, we, the Exploratory Commission, proposed at the 2021 Province Assembly restructuring the Provincial Council to include lay and vowed members, women and men who equally and together give voice to the diverse Passionist Family across the Province, and who together discern how the charism¹ of St. Paul of the Cross manifests itself in and among members of the Passionist Family and the ministries of the Province, those established and those yet unknown.

Following the Assembly, the Provincial asked the Exploratory Commission to continue its service to the Province by exploring models of leadership and engaging the Passionist Family through a series of listening sessions. Those sessions concluded in March 2022. We now submit the fruit of our discernment in this proposal.

This expanded Provincial Council will clearly respect the leadership role of the Provincial and the reserved authority that governs the formation, community life, and ministry assignment of vowed Passionist brothers and priests. At the same time, it allows for an expansion of voices at the table of provincial leadership to include representation of ministries and local leadership, and thereby connecting the whole of the Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province.

This expanded Council will, in turn, provide a richer infrastructure for the fruits of the discernment by members of the Council to flow back to the lived experiences of our Passionist Family across the Province and across ministries.

This inclusive Provincial Council creates space that blends chaos and order to allow for innovation, creativity, and insights to emerge. This discernment allows the Holy Spirit to direct and guide the Passionist Family into its future.

We propose expanding the current Council with the addition of a minimum of three lay members. We understand that the first generation of lay members on the Council is critically important and, with an eye to balance and diversity, it is best they be appointed by the Provincial, with the consent of current Council members, from among those with extensive experience in the Province and with its various ministries. With a year's experience to draw on, this initial expanded Council will submit to the whole Province at the 2023 Chapter a mechanism for the election of all Council members consistent with the election of vowed members.

April 13, 2022

Notes

1. **We** Passionists, followers of St. Paul of the Cross, are men and women, vowed and laity, who:

Keep Alive the memory of the Passion and Death of Jesus in our hearts through prayer and contemplation;
Share this inclusive message of God's love for all, in response to the signs of our times, through our ministry of prayer, word, and action; and
Embrace each other in community at the foot of the cross, along with all those who are suffering, and all of creation.
2. Leadership is not about power, but about discerning...listening, synthesizing, assessing, directing, guiding...so that all members of the Passionist Family grow as individuals and in our ministries, formal or informal, institutional or personal.

Glossary of Terms

Charism...A special spirit and way of life inspired by God for the benefit and growth of the Church. The Passionist Charism flows from the life of our Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, and focuses on the Passion of Jesus as “the greatest and most overwhelming experience of God's Love.”

Congregation... Refers to the global order of Roman Catholic priests, brothers, nuns, sisters, and laity who proclaim God's love for the world revealed through the Passion of Christ.

Discernment... A decision-making process that honors the place of God's will in our lives by entering into a prayerful, interior process that seeks to understand the movement of the Spirit in our lives and communities and where God is calling us individually and collectively.

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

The Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province reaches 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.

Passionist Family... Includes all members of Holy Cross Province, vowed and lay, men and women, who are committed to keeping alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Province...An officially recognized regional group of local Passionist religious communities led by a Provincial Superior and Council. Holy Cross Province includes the area south from Ohio to Texas and west to the Pacific Ocean. There are some 20 provinces worldwide in the Passionist Congregation. Holy Cross Province contains seven communities, several parishes and four retreat centers as well as the Provincial

Office and Province Development Office. Holy Cross Province is one of two American Province the other being St. Paul of the Cross Province also called the Eastern Province.

Provincial Chapter...An every-four year gathering to celebrate the life of the community, to reflect on its history and discern the direction of the Province for the coming years. It also includes the election of a Provincial Superior and Council. The highest authority and guide within the Province is the Provincial Chapter (122, Rule).

Provincial Council...The leadership group consisting of a Provincial Superior and consultors elected by vowed religious at Provincial Chapters. Holy Cross Province has 4 consultors who each serve a 4-year term, renewable consecutively one time.

St. Paul of the Cross...Founder of the Passionists (1694-1775): Italian; Preacher, Spiritual Director, Mystic.

Visioning... Holy Cross Province set out on a quest to imagine the future, based on the signs of the times, the movement of the Spirit and what is and has been life-giving. We have gathered in conversation over a five-year timeframe to facilitate the conversations and conversion that we need as leaders and as the Passionist family Province-wide in order to become visionaries.

Vision Fulfillment... As a part of Visioning for the future of Holy Cross Province, we have moved into a second phase where members of the Passionist Family continue to listen to the signs of the times and the invitation of the Spirit as we implement and vision forward from the proposals developed during the Visioning Process and the 2019 Provincial Chapter.