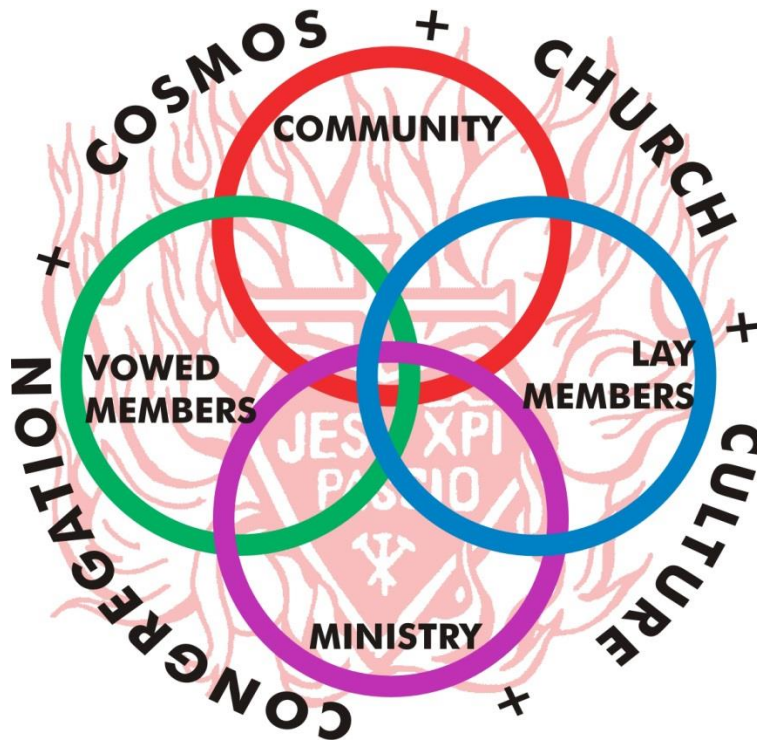


# The Spirit of Passionist Retreat Centers



“May the Passion of Jesus Christ  
Be Always in Our Hearts”

Holy Cross Province  
Province Retreat Center Board  
June 2003

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## Holy Cross Province Retreat Centers



**St. Paul of the Cross  
Retreat Center**  
23333 Schoolcraft  
Detroit, MI 48223-2499  
313-535-9563



**Holy Name  
Retreat Center**  
430 Bunker Hill Road  
Houston, TX 77024-6308  
713-464-0211



**Mater Dolorosa  
Retreat Center**  
700 N. Sunnyside Avenue  
Sierra Madre, CA 91024  
626-355-7188



**Christ the King  
Retreat Center**  
6520 Van Maren Lane  
Citrus Heights, CA 95621-4919  
916-725-4720

## I. Introduction

In May of 2000, the Province Retreat Center Board<sup>1</sup> began a major initiative to develop new structures of governance capable of carrying forward the mission of Holy Cross Province retreat centers. These new institutional developments would respond to the challenges posed by significant, long-term reductions in vowed Passionist personnel. To respond well, the new agencies would need a faithful possession of the Passionist spirit or charism<sup>2</sup> that is the driving force of retreat center ministry. It was in this awareness that the

### Mission and Charism

PRCB devoted great attention to questions of mission and charism. Knowing retreat centers are a familiar feature of the American ecclesial landscape, the Board kept pondering “What is distinctive about *Passionist* centers? What gives them the quality they have? Why do they look and feel as they do? Why is it that people have the sorts of experiences they do have at Passionist centers?” The pursuit of these questions led first to a polling of some Passionist center participants:

## Characteristics of Passionist Retreat Centers<sup>3</sup>

### Key Questions

- A. What is the message of the Passionist programs that say this is a Passionist retreat center?
- B. What qualities of the people you encounter ministering to you (retreatants, staff) are indicators that this is a Passionist retreat center?
- C. What are the elements of the place and its environment that are found in and identify it as a Passionist retreat center?

The responses to these questions were collated, synthesized and presented for PRCB reflection as:

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<sup>1</sup> The Province Retreat Center Board (PRCB) was founded in 1970. It is an official advisory forum through which Holy Cross Province retreat centers foster a common vision, develop plans and evaluate the development of retreat center ministry.

<sup>2</sup> The word “charism” is a technical theological term. Derived from the Greek word *charisma* (meaning *gift*) the term is mostly in the New Testament in reference to “spiritual gifts” or “gifts of the Spirit” (cf. 1 Cor.12-14) that are understood to be manifestations of the Spirit of Jesus. The term has been used throughout the history of the Church to refer to new, spontaneous expressions of Gospel life. In contemporary usage, the term refers especially to the unique spirit or genius of founders of religious communities; it denotes that new, creative manner of living and expressing the Gospel characteristic of the Passionists, Jesuits, Sisters of Mercy, Dominicans, etc. and which the Church has formally endorsed. A charism represents the work of the Holy Spirit, acting through a particular person to renew and revitalize the Church in a given time. And, a charism is the legacy of the religious founder or foundress to succeeding generations who are charged to find contemporary expressions of it that are faithful to the original impulse of the Spirit and in keeping with current needs.

<sup>3</sup> PRCB Minutes, Spring 2001; P.10, A.1

## A. Our Message

### **Key themes:**

- The Passion of Christ
- God's unconditional love
- Reconciliation
- Connecting our lives to the life and sufferings of Christ
- Finding hope and strength in the midst of suffering
- Our identity as the Body of Christ
- Passionists have a particular way of articulating the Gospel that relates to everyday life

## B. Passionist People

In the tradition of St. Paul of the Cross, and in connection with our corporate preaching tradition, we have internalized the Passion of Jesus in our own lives. Passionists are characterized by a willingness to show human weakness, an attitude of compassionate hospitality, a sense of humor, and sharing practical wisdom.



## C. Environment

Retreatants find our centers to be comfortable and nurturing places of safety. The environment is characterized by distinctive Passionist symbols, the presence of Passionist religious, Stations of the Cross, crucifixes, and art depicting Passionist themes. Opportunities for sharing individual stories create an atmosphere of camaraderie. Providing beautiful settings conducive to prayer and contemplation, retreatants can find the space to focus on God's presence. Attentive to God through Word, sacrament, and one another, retreatants feel challenged and supported in their spiritual growth.

PRCB members were pleased with the feedback but also saw the need for a more developed treatment of the identified themes. The effort to identify those characteristics which, working in concert together, leads to the unique reality that is a *Passionist* retreat, is an effort to describe a “culture.” As it is commonplace to speak of the distinctive ethos or culture of public institutions and corporations, in the same manner the task of identifying those distinctive values, attitudes and behaviors that are the supportive spiritual framework for Passionist retreats is the task of articulating *the culture of Passionist retreat centers*. Typically, to speak of a culture is to engage in the effort of raising to conscious awareness realities most often assumed! To identify and articulate those realities gives the culture new power. It increases awareness of the wondrous mix of myth and mirth, attitude and action, values and vision which constitute the raw ingredients of a culture. And increased awareness deepens appreciation, in this case of the genius of Passionist Founder, St. Paul of the Cross. Finally, a more conscious grasp of the ‘why’ that lies behind behavior grants a new, desired ability. The ability to communicate the beauty and richness of a culture to

**Delving deeper into  
the Spirit**



others is grasped. They may be invited to step into its circle and experience for themselves the transcendent grace that is its ultimate source.

The desire of the PRCB for amplification of the spirit of Passionist centers spurred the creation of this material. What follows is rooted in a desire to share the vistas of spirituality and charism that shape and inspire Passionist retreat center ministry. These materials are but introductory snapshots, invitations to deeper exploration of the profound spiritual foundations that ground retreat work. All who use these materials are encouraged to continue walking into the depths of the Passionist charism where the great mystery of Crucified Love is found. For it is there, at the foot of the Cross, that we encounter Him whose memory is the true and only source for the mission of Passionist life and retreat center ministry.

Sharing  
the spirit



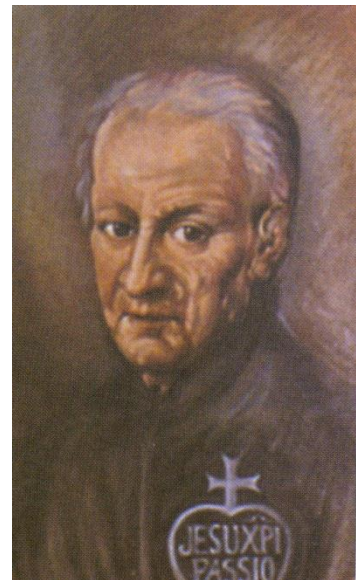
## II. St. Paul of the Cross

Paul Francis Daneo was born on January 3, 1694, in Ovada, Italy. During his teen years he felt inwardly inspired and captivated by the Cross of Christ. Paul discerned God's love for all people in the passion and death of Jesus Christ. Realizing all that Jesus had suffered in love for us, Paul wanted to love Jesus in return through prayer and preaching. When Paul was 21 years old, he joined a crusade against the Turks, thinking this was the way God wanted him to serve. But after experiencing the violence and ruthlessness of war, Paul abandoned this futile way of life. He had an inner conviction that God would fulfill the vision by a crusade of a much different nature.

Returning to his hometown, Paul assisted his family and dedicated himself to prayer and penance. In 1720 he asked the local bishop for permission to serve the Church as a hermit, a "holy man." The bishop allowed him to live in one of the town's churches. Paul,

### Laying the Foundations

wearing a long black robe as a sign of his commitment, took care of the church property and prepared the altar before the daily celebration of Mass. Many recognized in Paul the qualities of wisdom and holiness, and came to him for advice. At times he was given permission to preach. During this period Paul kept a diary and wrote a Rule which contained his vision of how he would live his life. The Rule contained directives about prayer, fasting, exercise, spiritual disciplines, penances, charity, and many other qualities and activities he felt important in living out a religious life. Eventually, he invited others to join him, and the men who followed would become known as Passionists because of their dedication to, and preaching of, the passion and death of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>



Paul, now living in Rome, was ordained a Priest in 1734. He channeled his time and energy into preaching throughout central Italy, realizing that many of his contemporaries had forgotten God's love for them, and had fallen asleep to the healing grace of Christ's Cross. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century life was not easy. The rich were rich; the poor, very poor. For the sick there was little comfort. For ordinary folk there was a constant fear of war, famine and disease. "The world lives unmindful of the sufferings of Jesus which are the miracle of miracles of the love of God. We must arouse the world from its slumber." And so Paul did arouse the world through thousands of letters he wrote and the sermons he preached. Traveling where he was invited to preach, Paul taught people how to pray and meditate upon the suffering and death of Jesus. Walking from town to town, church to church, for over 40 years, he preached the loving memory of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The sick and the abandoned poor were special recipients of Paul's concern and love.

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<sup>4</sup> This focus on the preaching of the mystery of the Passion and death of Jesus is considered to be the charism of the Passionists.

After many years of preaching and serving the Passionist community, as its founder and leader, Paul died in 1775. He was 81 years old. Paul Daneo, canonized a saint by the Church, is revered today as Saint Paul of the Cross.





### III. The Passionists: A Religious Congregation

**A**s the founder of a new religious community, St. Paul of the Cross is one of a select group of Christian figures. Benedict of Nursia (Benedictines), Francis of Assisi (Franciscans), Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross (Carmelites), Ignatius of Loyola (Jesuits) – these are but a few of the men and women called by God to serve as founders of new religious orders or communities in the Church. Present in every era of Christian history and rooted in the biblical period, religious life is an especially distinctive feature of Catholicism and Orthodoxy. The larger sweep of the human spiritual experience finds that such grouping or movements as identified by the presence of monasteries, convents, ashrams, etc., is a persistent feature of every great religious culture or tradition.

A New  
Religious Family

Contemporary religious and Passionist life finds its origin in the treasured oneness of evangelical life that characterized the first disciples' experience (Acts 3:42-47). During the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries Christian hermits living in the Syrian and Egyptian deserts came together in loose confederations. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century the first religious rule, authored by St. Augustine of Hippo, set out a pattern for communal religious living. The development of Benedictine life (5<sup>th</sup> century) created the dominant form of monastic living that became pervasive throughout the Christian world until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Then the new orders of Franciscans and Dominicans brought a fresh style of life and mission able to meet the changed civil and ecclesial

A Rapidly  
Changing World

circumstances of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The aftermath of the Protestant Reformation (16<sup>th</sup> century) and the dramatic changes to social and cultural life brought about by world exploration and technological development, were catalysts for new expressions of an ancient Christian way of life. Jesuits and the apostolic congregations of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (e.g. Redemptorists, Passionists, Vincentians, Ursulines) brought new vitality and vision for a Christian response to the modern world forming under the impact of rapid scientific and industrial development.

For Paul of the Cross, religious life bound together a select membership that shared an intense, consciously chosen form of Christian life, drawing its inspiration from the life of the disciples. The memory of the disciples living and ministering daily with Jesus roots the vision of Paul Daneo. Shaped by the religious vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience, this evangelical lifestyle fostered deep, personal devotion to the Lord and intense ministerial labor for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Paul's reputation as a dynamic, effective preacher and profound mystic speaks well of powerful authenticity claimed by his conception of religious life. The Church's approval of his foundational work confirms his unique contribution to Christian life.

A Gospel  
Lifestyle

Contemporary Passionists, members of a religious community international in scope, continue to draw inspiration from the founding vision of Paul Daneo. Passionists are proud to be part of the dynamic ecclesial tradition of religious life. They have embraced the renewal mandated by Vatican Council II and possess a sharply honed appreciation of religious life. Today's

To Serve All:  
The Church and the  
World

Passionists commit themselves to the tasks of spiritual renewal and institutional reform that are the hallmark contributions of religious life in every Christian era. Passionists understand themselves called to discover and meet the pressing unmet needs found in both church and human society. Passionists are motivated to respond forcefully for they believe that such needs often present the contemporary face of Jesus Crucified. Passionists willingly devote their lives and energies to living and announcing that Gospel of the Passion which so transformed the life of their beloved founder. It is their hope that they would bring to their church and time the holiness, clarity of purpose and dynamism for renewal that marked the life of Paul Daneo.



## IV. The Memory of the Passion

The special insignia of the Passionists is the “Sign,” the heart-shaped emblem surmounted by a cross that captures, in an image, the meaning of Passionist life. At its center are the words: “Jesu XPI Passio.” Written in Greek and Latin, the languages of the early Church, the words mean: “the Passion of Jesus Christ.” Three nails at the bottom complete the Passionist significance of this unique badge.

The Sign of Love

During a stunning religious experience in the summer of 1720 Paul of the Cross saw himself “clothed in a long black garment with a white cross on my breast, and below the cross the holy name of Jesus was written in white letters.”<sup>5</sup> In that moment the shape of Paul

The Passion  
of Jesus

Daneo’s vocation was clarified: he was called to found a new religious order. By year’s end he would enter into a long retreat to pray deeply about his calling and write the first version of the Passionist rule. In Rome the next September (1721) he sought entrance to the papal Quirinal Palace where, he trusted, Pope Innocent XIII would receive him and validate his vocation. Scorned as an unkempt vagabond and thrown out on the street, he was devastated as he saw his holy dream smashed to pieces. He wandered, shaken, in the adjacent piazza and gave half of his last loaf of bread to a beggar. He sought refuge in the adjacent basilica of St Mary Major. There, kneeling in prayer before a famous icon of the Blessed Virgin a quiet and deep conviction of eventual success replaced his despair. Sealing his commitment to proceed even where there appeared to be no way forward, he vowed that his community would promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus.



In vowing to “promote devotion to the Passion of Jesus,” Paul Daneo’s inaugural vision now achieved brilliant clarity. Through a tumultuous year of profound exaltation and crushing despair, the great treasure of his personal spirituality had been discerned, purified, lifted up and institutionalized. He would come to be known as Paul *of the Cross*. First called “The Poor of Jesus,” he and his companions would be named *Passionists*. Granting formal ecclesial approval in 1741, Pope Benedict XIV would comment, “This Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ should have been the first to be founded and it has arrived at last!”<sup>6</sup>

“I do vow and  
promise”

<sup>5</sup> Words of St. Paul of the Cross quoted in Spencer, *As A Seal Upon Your Heart*, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Spencer, *As A Seal Upon Your Heart*, p. 114.

Every Passionist takes a special vow<sup>7</sup> to spend his energies in promoting remembrance of the sufferings of Jesus. This vow defines the purpose of the Passionist community. Their Founder had declared the Passion of Jesus “the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love.”<sup>8</sup> His sons and daughters pledge to hold deep in their hearts the memory of the cross and to do all that is in their power to remind others of it.

Why promise to do something like this? The answer lies with the meaning of the cross and death of Jesus for the world.

First, the death of Jesus was no mere brutal execution of an extraordinary Jewish teacher and prophet long ago. His death was an event that changed human history. Jesus died so that others might live. God so loved the world that he allowed his only Son to give his very life for humankind. The cross becomes the symbol telling us that God’s love is stronger than death. Passionists want to tell the world about that love.

“No one takes  
my life from me...”

But there are other reasons for the Passionist vow. Jesus’ death on the cross was a death in the cause of justice. He was executed because he challenged accepted values. He sided with the poor and the outcasts. He condemned oppressive structures. Jesus was a prophet – and prophets meet strong opposition.

His cross is a reminder that Christians must listen to the cries of the poor. Passionists are in solidarity with those whom society may forget or exploit. The cross is a sign of justice. To remind the world about the cross is to challenge the world for its injustice and neglect. Passionists are pledged to that challenge.

“I hear the cry of the poor and  
the needy...”



Finally, remembering the cross means remembering those in the world who bear the cross today: the disabled, the sick, the dying, the grieving, those isolated and alone – all those who bear the burden of pain. Jesus identified himself with the “least.” He shared their burdens and brought them hope. He, too, bore the cross.

Through faith Christians find strength in the memory of the Passion. Jesus knew pain and death. He also tasted the victory of everlasting life. Death is not the final word for those who believe. This, too, is part of the paschal message Passionists proclaim to the world.

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<sup>7</sup> In the ceremony of religious profession Passionists “vow... to recall to mind with greater love the Passion of our Lord and to promote its memory by word and deed...(and also) chastity, poverty and obedience.” (Vow Formula, *Rule and Constitutions* #96). Passionists refer to this vow as the “1<sup>st</sup> Vow.”

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Rule and Constitutions* #1.



## V. What is a Retreat?

Christians have always found special significance in Jesus' forty days of desert prayer and fasting that preceded his years of public ministry.<sup>9</sup> As an echo and renewal of Israel's forty year desert sojourn – an epoch revered for its profound intimacy between Yahweh and his People – Jesus' wilderness experience illumines the depth of love between himself and the Father. In prayer, fasting and the deep pondering of his messianic vocation, the Lord prepares himself for his coming mission. His experiences of struggle, temptation and vocational confirmation represent the redemption of human decision-making first impaired by Adam and Eve. As did their Lord, so do his disciples yearn to share personally in the love relationship of Father and Son. Imitating his desert withdrawal, they seek a renewal that will consecrate their lives to his service and align their use of human freedom with the values and visions of the Gospel.

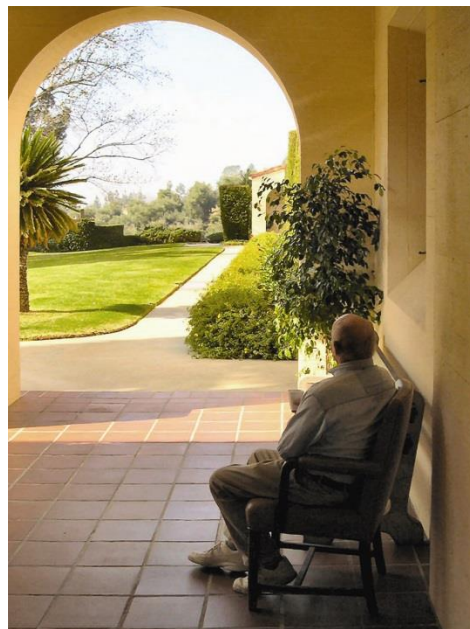
### Intimacy with God

Each generation of disciples has considered it important to withdraw from daily living in order to listen more deeply to the Lord and examine its adherence to the Gospel. Christians of each age have sought special opportunities to renew their relationship with Jesus and recommit themselves to evangelical life. For example, the Medieval practice of pilgrimage – to sacred places in Europe or to the revered sites of the Holy Land – had the same goal of deep personal conversion and renewal that characterizes modern retreats.

### Conversion and Renewal

The experience of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, has greatly influenced modern retreat development. A lengthy period of recuperation from battle wounds became the occasion for him to see himself in the light of Gospel truth. The power of that light illuminated his own inner emptiness, bathed him in God's loving and healing light, and set him on a new path. His famous work, *The Spiritual Exercises*, distilled what he learned in solitude and sought to make the same graces of radical conversion and vocational discernment available to others.

### Discernment



<sup>9</sup> Cf. Mt. 4:1-11, Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13

Passionists Founder, Paul of the Cross, traced his own vocation as a religious founder to a forty-day retreat made at the end of 1720. Dwelling in a small room attached to the Church of St. Charles in Castellazzo, Italy, Paul Daneo fasted, prayed, and was transformed by his encounter with God. His *Spiritual Diary* captures his daily experiences and summarizes the depths of intimacy with

**St. Paul's Charism: A Gift to  
be Shared**

God into which Paul was plunged. Empowered to found a new religious community, it was during this time that Paul of the Cross wrote the original Rule for what became the Congregation of the Passion. Concerned to pass on the tremendous value he had received in his time apart, this Rule noted that the residences of the new community were to be called "retreats." He left Castellazzo energized for the dynamic, fruitful and often difficult life of a new founder that now stretched before him. The power of the Spirit, so richly given at Castellazzo, carried him forward and matured into the personal holiness, institutional success and apostolic reputation that crowned his death in 1775.

In framing the ministerial trajectory of his new community, Paul of the Cross ultimately saw that the preaching of missions and the conducting of retreats held a special ability to pass on what he had

**Immersed in the Ocean of  
God's Love**

received. In retreats, deep self-knowledge and communion with God could be attained. Through the sustained prayer made possible during retreat, one could be immersed in the ocean of immense love flowing from the Crucified One. Guided by the ministry of religious with special expertise, retreatants could learn how to live a practical and deeply committed Gospel life through intelligent, loving preaching and wise instruction. These goods moved the Passionist Founder to engage in retreat ministry himself and to commit his new community to the same work. He directed that space be set aside in Passionist residences and hoped that larger, dedicated facilities could be developed. Retreat ministry was not, for Paul of the Cross, an accidental discovery. Rather, it was a consciously chosen apostolic method that he found appropriately suited to the mission given him by God's Spirit.

Contemporary Passionist retreat experiences are rooted in the Lord's desert days, take the best from Christian tradition and honor the memory of Paul Daneo at prayer in Castellazzo. Creating a space and time apart from daily demands and concerns, retreats help today's Christian answer the insistent spiritual urgings of the human heart, longings that can only be authentically fulfilled

**Creating a Space in  
the Presence of Love**

by God's loving presence. Tracing once more the footsteps of Jesus, of prior generations of Christian seekers and standing with Paul Daneo at the foot of the Cross, today's Passionist retreatants learn the loving mystery of the Cross, absorb its transformative energy, and return to daily life as committed disciples.

Church of San Carlo in Castellazzo, where St. Paul of the Cross made his retreat of forty days.



## VI. retreat Foundations: Conversion and Spiritual Growth

“**T**he Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” (Mk. 1:15) With these words Jesus initiated his mission. His call to repentance would remain central to his proclamation of the in-breaking of God’s Reign. Only those willing to let go of selfishness and bitterness, only those able to cast aside shame and fear and risk opening their hearts in trust to receive God’s love could be assured membership in the Kingdom of God. He likened this change of heart to a rebirth (cf. John 3) and underscored its vital necessity. Thus did Jesus define the fundamental starting point of authentic spiritual living.

“Repent and Believe in the Good News”

Christian discipleship is best understood as following in the footsteps of the Master. For the very first disciples, this was a literal experience as they journeyed with the Lord. Traversing the highways and byways of ancient Israel, they learned from his words, deeds and person – and struggled to comprehend. Little did they know that the first journey, with its climactic death-resurrection in Jerusalem, was but a preview of the lifetimes they would spend in carrying the Gospel across the world. His instruction, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk. 9:23), would guide and inspire their daily response. And, travel itself would become a metaphor for the inner, spiritual journey of conversion and growth required of each disciple.

“...take up the cross daily and follow me.”



Passionist retreats proclaim anew the Lord’s first announcement of God’s nearness and remind all who hear of the necessity for conversion of heart. Many men and women trace the beginnings of their adult faith to a retreat experience and a moment of profound conversion. For some it was simply a matter of choosing to live well as an adult what was first learned as a child. For others, conversion had a “voice from the heavens” quality to it. Lacking faith, lost, sometimes not knowing why they had even come, they found God breaking into their lives and claiming them in love. Yet others experienced conversion as a return to a faith once abandoned or ignored. Regardless of the unique story, the wondrous miracle of God’s compassionate appearance retains its original freshness, vitality and joyousness.

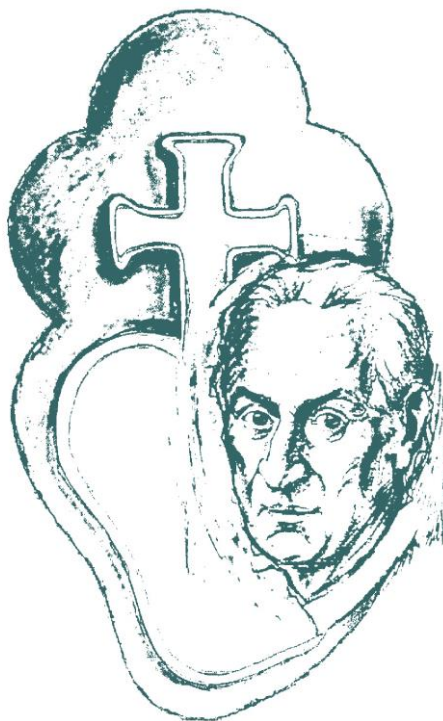
Conversion of Heart



Passionist retreats not only set disciples on the first leg of the spiritual path, but lend guidance and new zest for mature disciples seeking to continue moving forward. For many, a weekend retreat is a calendar non-negotiable. For others, a regular or periodic experience serves to clarify perspective, renew faith, provide reassurance and support, and strengthen the heartfelt desire to go the distance with Jesus. Retreats take daily discipleship seriously and affirm the believer's commitment to journey well with the Lord.

**Strength for the Journey**

The influence of St. Paul of the Cross shapes the spirit of Passionist retreats. An accomplished preacher, retreat director and spiritual guide, his lifelong proclamation of the message of the Cross mirrored the preaching of Jesus. Lifting up his mission cross, Paul reminded the great crowds who came to listen of God's love. His message echoed the lasting themes of Jesus' own preaching – the necessity of basic conversion, and the demand of faithful and daily devotion if one desired to take a place at God's banquet table. Passionist retreats invite contemporary men and women to incorporate the spiritual quest of Paul Daneo in their own lives and with him “to pursue the adventure of faith, the discovery of the mystery of God.”<sup>10</sup>



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<sup>10</sup> General Chapter Document 1977, etc....



## II. Retreat Foundations: Solitude

**S**olitude, that condition of physical and psychic withdrawal from the everyday, is a privileged space that readies the human heart for contact with God. Called by God's angel to Mount Horeb, the prophet Elijah heard in the wilderness that "tiny whispering sound" he knew to be the voice of God (1 Kgs 19). At prayer in the Temple, the prophet Isaiah encountered Yahweh and received his vocation (Is. 6). Christian tradition and iconography depict the Virgin Mary alone at prayer when Gabriel spoke the world-changing "Hail Mary" (Luke 1:26ff). Jesus, alone in the desert, wrestled with and accepted the meaning of his messianic vocation (Mt 4:1-11). To balance hectic days of ministry, he would "withdraw to deserted places to pray" (Luke 5:16) and invite his disciples to do likewise (Mk 6:31). In Gethsemane's dreadful solitude, Jesus drew strength from an anguished prayer that enabled him to walk through the maelstrom of his Passion and enter the solitude of death in prayerful surrender. (Lk.23:46).

### A Privileged Space

The long ages of Christian experience speak of the yearning to imitate Jesus. Disciples have lived as hermits in the desert, built monasteries and convents to separate themselves from their own world, lived in secluded compounds, cultivated an inner spirit of detachment from the everyday, developed retreat centers and houses of prayer, set aside 'prayer corners' in their own homes – and much more – desiring always to enter a holy aloneness within which they could radically open their hearts to the Lord.

### A place of openness

Paul of the Cross knew well solitude's great spiritual power.<sup>11</sup> As a young man of 26, a sudden yearning for solitude, which he later recognized as the movement of God's Spirit in his heart, brought greater focus to his own spiritual quest.<sup>12</sup> A reverence for solitude marked his entire life. The practice of solitude deepened and refreshed his keen spiritual sensitivity. The conviction of its great value stands as one of the pillars of his spiritual teaching.



The entryway to solitude is silence. Following the monastic wisdom of centuries (and the universal testimony of all great religious traditions), Paul of the Cross and the early Passionists maintained a strict silence within their residences. Except for brief periods when the community gathered for "recreation," silence was the customary and treasured atmosphere in which they lived. They did so for they knew that silence created a healthy distance from the "noise of the world" and nourished a rich sensitivity to things of the Spirit. For Paul of the Cross, a man of significant interpersonal abilities, silence was in the service of *the* relationship of his life, that with his beloved Crucified Lord.

### A Place of Silence

<sup>11</sup> Passionist *Rule and Constitutions*, #1, 54

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Spencer, *As A Seal Upon Your Heart*, p. 25

The world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century stands in great need of solitude. The demands, challenges and tensions of daily living are able to frazzle the stoutest of human spirits. The very wonder of contemporary life, that powerful cocoon of electronic communications technologies which envelops humankind, sometimes overwhelms human hearts and leads to inner fragmentation and alienation from self, others and God. Sensitivity to the subtle voice within is dulled and the ability to notice the gentle promptings of God's spirit lost.

Passionist retreats invite retreatants to enter an atmosphere of silence and quiet. This atmosphere is a vital element of the retreat experience. Silence creates an environment that is restful and provides a context within which retreatants can be relieved of the physical and emotional stresses that accumulate so easily. In silence, retreatants are enabled to pay attention to themselves; the noisy and deadening distractions of modern culture are removed. In silence, retreatants can encounter their own deeper selves and hear the voice of their own inner spirit. And, in quiet and silence, retreatants can become open, disposed, prepared to hear the Lord who desires always to speak the Word of Life and Love to human hearts.

**Silence: Making Room for  
the Word**

The privacy of a retreat is, itself, a precious gift. More, it is the supportive matrix for a healing and calming solitude. Moving beyond the anxiety that aloneness always surfaces, retreatants are drawn into the embrace of God's loving presence. Here, as have great saints and everyday seekers of all ages, they hear the "still, small voice" that speaks of life, of hope and of love.



## VIII. Retreat Foundations: The Gift of Prayer

Among the cherished memories of Jesus held by the Gospels is that of him at prayer. St. Luke recalls that “he would retire to deserted places to pray” (5:12). He is found often in public places of prayer – the Temple and the synagogues of his land. His public work begins with forty days of prayer and fasting in the desert. He spends “the night in prayer to God” (Lk. 5:16) before naming his Twelve Apostles. His Last Supper is a profound, extensive moment of prayer and instruction. His Passion begins, as the evangelists recall, with agonizing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. His disciples begged him, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Lk. 11:1). He responded with the beautiful prayer we now call the “Our Father” and taught his followers to enter the hallowed love relationship he and the Father shared. His program for prayer called for simplicity, sincerity of heart and trust.

“Lord, Teach us  
to Pray”

In St. Paul of the Cross, Passionists have a spiritual guide whose own prayer experience is a mirror image of Gospel teaching. Paul Daneo’s forty day Castellazzo retreat plunged him into the depths of the Father’s love. Students of religious experience recognize him as one of the great mystics of the Church, a person who experienced union with God in an exceptional manner. His conviction of the importance of prayer and his own experiences of it made him a capable and perceptive spiritual director or guide for many others. His correspondence is filled with concern for the quality of personal prayer and laden with directions and hints on how to pray more deeply and more effectively.

Prayer and Union with God



Paul of the Cross so valued prayer and its power that he made it a foundation stone of his new Passionist Congregation. The residences of the Congregation were to be “schools of prayer”<sup>13</sup> where the members would devote themselves to the spiritual quest. The very heart of Passionist prayer, Paul of the Cross taught his followers, was a continual remembrance of and reflection upon the mystery of Jesus’ Passion. This prayerful remembrance was a sure pathway to the discovery of the depth of God’s love and compassion.

Paul Daneo was on fire with love for Jesus Crucified and yearned to share that love with others. Prayer had led him into the depths of this great mystery. He wanted to teach others to pray about the Passion so that they, too, would encounter the great and good God. He often preached publicly about prayer and made the teaching of prayer, especially focused on the Passion, one of the principal objectives of his new Congregation.<sup>14</sup>

Prayer and the Passion of  
Jesus

<sup>13</sup> RC #37

<sup>14</sup> RC #4, 66



Passionist retreats keep alive the rich spiritual heritage of Paul of the Cross. In an atmosphere conducive to prayer, retreatants participate in various styles and kinds of prayer experiences. Formal retreat reflection offers guidance and encouragement in the practice of prayer and meditation. This reflection acknowledges the significant challenge daily life can pose in the search for a deep life of prayer. The very busyness of life, the multiplicity of demands faced by retreatants and the enormous distractive power of modern culture are real threats to authentic prayer. Retreats reinforce the critical belief that effective Christian life is not possible without a commitment to prayer for it is only in prayer that Christians can renew and deepen their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Retreat experiences teach modern disciples how to pray and how to persevere in prayer so that Jesus and his power may be personally real. In a special manner, Passionist retreats lift up the image of Jesus Crucified and testify to the hope and joy to be found in the depths of God's love.

**Strengthening the  
Commitment to Prayer**





## IX. Retreat Foundations: The Heart is Jesus Crucified

A distiNCtive crucifix hangs in the chapel of each Holy Cross Province retreat center. The reproduction of a crucifix first fashioned in Limpias, Spain, this representation of the crucified Jesus bears no chest wound for his is portrayed alive on the Cross. Eyes open and raised to the heavens, his neck arched in pain, his face etched in agony, longing, surrender and love – the artist has sought to capture Jesus at the very moment of redemption’s climax. Alive, he suffers and offers himself in love for all given him by the Father – and for each retreatant who kneels below and gazes into His open eyes.

Paul  
“of the Cross”

For St. Paul of the Cross, “the Passion of Christ is the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love.”<sup>15</sup> He bore the title “of the Cross” because the keystone of his personal spirituality was an unwavering gaze directed toward Jesus Crucified. He named his new religious community “The Congregation of the Passion” and focused its mission in the fulfillment of a fourth religious vow – the proclamation of the memory of the Passion of Christ. In the Passion

Revealing the Power of  
God

he discovered the inexhaustible richness of God’s incomprehensible love and compassion. Spending his own life drinking from this rich source, he never tired of encouraging others to trust in the power of the Lord’s Cross – regardless of the seemingly dire circumstances of their lives. For Paul, the Passion of Christ “reveals the power of God which penetrates the world, destroying the power of evil and building the Kingdom of God.”<sup>16</sup>



Passionist retreats continue to proclaim “the Word of the Cross.” Sermons formally address the suffering of Jesus in its historical and contemporary dimensions; allusions and references to the Lord’s humanity, weakness and vulnerability are sprinkled throughout other preaching; the mystery of God as the Holy, Compassionate One is the wellspring for preaching, prayer and personal interaction; retreatants seeking to distance themselves from the grip of evil are embraced with evangelical love and encouraged to walk in truth and grace; those bearing burdens of suffering and distress are met with tenderness and compassion. The gifts of the Passion help retreat staff and retreatants face the complex dilemmas and challenges of life – for the Passion teaches disciples to not run away from pain and discomfort. The disturbing and puzzling experiences of life are viewed in the clarifying lens of the Passion so that justice and injustice may be distinguished, that truth and sham may be revealed, and that holy, responsible and integral living might be fostered.

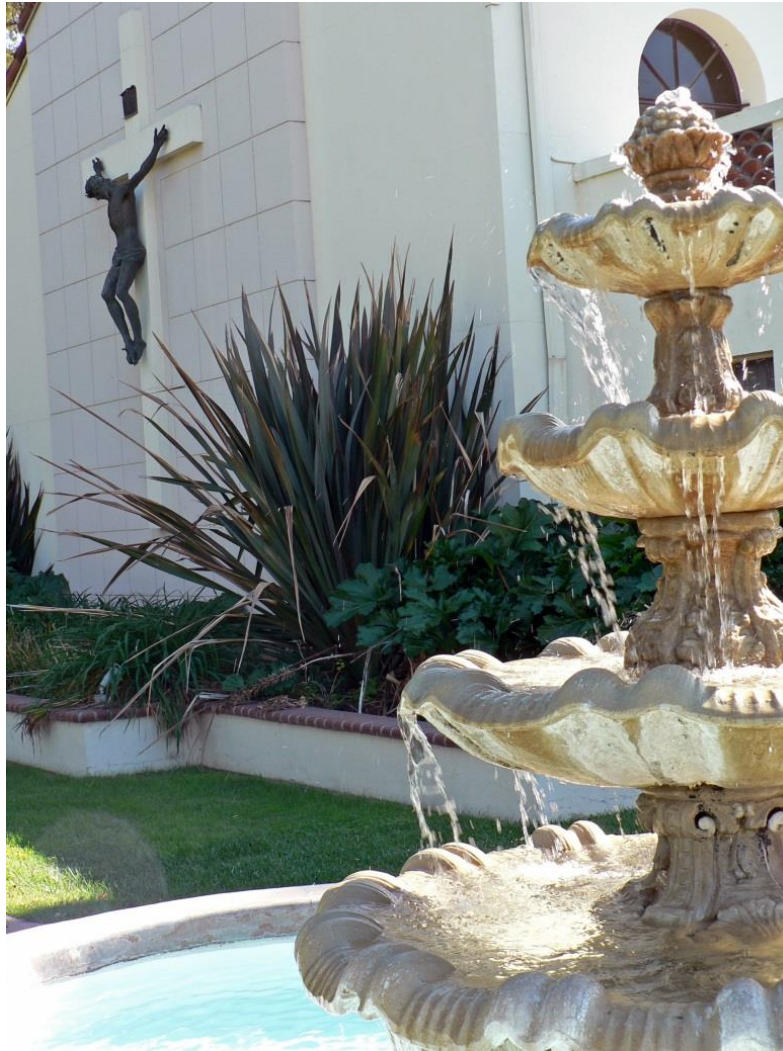
Proclaiming the  
Compassionate One

<sup>15</sup> Letters of St. Paul of the Cross. Cited in #1 of Rule and Constitutions.

<sup>16</sup> Rule and Constitutions, #5

Paul of the Cross sought only “to be on the Cross with Jesus.” In this he resounded the passion spirituality of the Apostle Paul who wanted only “to know him and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death” (Phil. 3:12). Passionists claim this courageous stance of faith as their own and strive to foster the same among their retreatants. They chart this course in the firm conviction that the Passion of Christ is the very source of the “power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor. 1:25).

“Conformed to his death”



## **X. Retreat Foundations:** **A Focus on Laity**

**P**aul of the Cross began his life's work in 1720 and he did so as a layperson. His foundational retreat in November of that year, his writing of the first Passionist rule, his deepest mystical experiences and the clarification of his focus upon the Passion of Jesus all occurred prior to his ordination as a priest in 1727. And while he would become familiar with the intricacies of Vatican offices, become the friend of bishops and serve as the personal confessor of Popes, Paul of the Cross never lost sight of his fundamental ministerial objective – service to the laity of the Church.

Paul's immediate worry was for the vast throngs of 18<sup>th</sup> century Italian Christians who, for many reasons, had little effective contact with or were alienated from their religion. His lifelong ministry sought to announce the wondrous message of Crucified Love to all those too often ignored, forgotten or poorly served by the Church of his time. Many of these were ill served because they were poor or lived in remote, unhealthy regions; he "saw the name of Jesus written on the foreheads" of these poor ones.<sup>17</sup> His religious community would never open schools or universities, hospitals or other care facilities. In the preaching of popular missions and by conducting spiritual exercises, Passionists would center their ministries on the faith needs of adult Christian laity.

### **Seeking Out the Lost**

Paul's desire to create retreat opportunities for laity, along with clergy and religious, may be somewhat unique for the hierarchically centered Church of his day.<sup>18</sup> This outreach was no accident – he specifically encouraged groups of laity to gather together for retreats, and he regularly served as director and retreat master for individual lay Christians seeking to deepen their spiritual lives. This original concern of the Founder was never abandoned though retreats were normally given for

### **The Ministry Takes Root and Grows**

very small groups or individuals only, and within the confines of the monastic residences. When new opportunities presented themselves, however, Paul Daneo's foresight would flourish as American Passionists assumed a leadership position in the development of the lay retreat ministry.



<sup>17</sup> *Rule and Constitutions*, #71.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Yuhaus, *Compelled*, p. 297ff.



Contemporary retreat participants are, by and large, lay persons who participate in weekends reserved for groupings of either men or women.<sup>19</sup> Retreat themes and experiences are directed to the needs and concerns of lay life; family, relationships, employment, personal matters, existence in a secular, pluralistic world, participation in church life and ministry are common themes. Retreats seek to help participants develop and maintain sensitivity to the presence and action of the Lord in the midst of the daily, lay world.

**Presenting the Gospel for  
Everyday Living**

The first beneficiaries of Passionist retreat ministry are adult Catholics, especially in the organized weekend retreat programs. Passionist centers seek to fashion an adult spiritual awareness congruent with the needs and desires of adult disciples. This approach respects the maturity and competency of adult believers, encourages continued understanding of faith, and stimulates ongoing enrichment of spirituality which meets the joys, challenges, responsibilities and heartaches of adult life. This focus is not an exclusive one, however. Holy Cross Province retreat centers also host a variety of youth retreats in which young men and women and their adult relatives are welcome to participate. Additionally, each center also engages in other ministries that support those who are taking early steps in discipleship.

**Fostering an Adult Spirituality**



<sup>19</sup> Sex-segregated retreats reflect historical beginnings; only after Vatican Council II was it possible for male religious communities to host women's retreats.



## **XI. Retreat Foundations: The Group Retreat**

**T**he very first ministry of Passionist founder, Paul of the Cross, was directed to the needs of groups. His work as a lay catechist gave him the opportunity to preach and counsel the groups of laity hungry for a better understanding of their faith. As Paul worked to establish his new congregation and tailor its ministerial expressions, he always appreciated the special dynamics of ministry to groups. While the residences of the new community were always open to individuals who sought solitude and direction in prayer, Paul's preference was for groups.<sup>20</sup> Ministry to a group created a better context for preaching, offered the gift of mutual support, and testified best to the communal nature of Christian discipleship.

### **A Preferred Context**

The realization of the Paulacrucian dream for group retreats found its first realization in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the lay retreat movement began, the active involvement of laity was crucial to the successful development of this new form of ministry. Lay promoters or "captains" accepted responsibility to organize retreat groups in the parish of a diocese or region; they

### **A New Organization for Ministry**



would accept this as an ongoing challenge, for it was always intended that the new groups should have as their goal the making of an annual retreat. As the retreat movement flourished, organization became formalized – some centers evolved regional clusters of parishes whose captains were overseen by a lay "vice-president" while the entire organization was headed by a lay Retreat League President. In similar fashion, lay retreat participants were called upon to assist in the work of raising funds to construct the new and substantial facilities needed to accommodate burgeoning crowds of retreatants. These structures of

ministry retain their vitality and necessity today. What is now named as peer ministry was, and remains, one of the keys to the success of the lay retreat movement.

The creation of retreat groups drawn from area parishes or Catholic fraternal societies points to a significant dimension of the retreat experience. Since most retreatants attend in the company of friends, family, neighbors, fellow parishioners or society members, their experience is, at least in part, a communal one. Most weekend retreats are filled with the members of one to several parishes or groups all sharing the same date and participating in the same program. The retreat exercises are conducted in common and a spirit of group cohesion grows. While silence and personal solitude are key to the retreat experience, there are also opportunities for the sharing and

### **A Communal Retreat Experience**

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Zoffolli, *History of the Passionists*, p. 435

relationship building which enhance the communal dimension. The communal experience is a powerful benefit; a retreat group returning to its home parish carries a deepened sense of solidarity and takes that spirit of united cooperation as a gift to the rest of the parish. And, the fostering of personal relationships among retreatants provides them with new sources of gospel fellowship that are available on a daily basis beyond the retreat weekend.

The regional or diocesan focus of retreat organization yields a further rich benefit. Because the local retreat movements or league are comprised of groups from many parishes, the full scope of retreat ministry represents an organized outreach by Passionists to the local church of a region or diocese. Bishops and pastors are appreciative of this ministry and are typically enthusiastic for the development of retreat ministry in their region or parish. Retreatants are highly motivated Christians willing to participate in parish activities and supportive of the development of church life. Metaphorically, the development and operation of a local retreat movement is akin to a preached retreat conducted for an entire regional church on an extended basis.



## XII. Retreat Foundations: The Preached Word

*"Let not any member... who has been chose to preach the Word of God, be allowed to make use in his sermons of so lofty and elegant a style as to become obscure and not easily understood by the common people..."<sup>21</sup>*

**P**aul Daneo's expressed concern with the excesses of Baroque era sermons points to his fundamental conviction that effective preaching should follow the simple, direct style of Jesus himself. In everyday language and with common metaphor, Jesus proclaimed the unconditional love of God and announced the conditions for membership in God's Reign. The Master's preaching drew upon the richness of the Jewish heritage and addressed itself to the great religious debates of his own time. No stranger to controversy, Jesus spoke with power, conviction and personal enthusiasm of God's promise and challenge within the context of the 1<sup>st</sup> century world of his Incarnation. Message for the ages that it was, his words were tailored to the conceptions, controversies, yearnings and cultural atmosphere of his own human contemporaries.

With Power, Conviction and  
Enthusiasm

Like Jesus who drew great crowds to hear his message, Paul of the Cross was a noted popular preacher able to hold large crowds spellbound as he broke open for them the mystery of

Informed, Intelligent, Dynamic

Divine compassion. Though popular, his preaching was not simplistic. Laced with Scriptural reference and rooted in an appreciation of the Gospels, Paul of the Cross was an informed, intelligent and thoughtful communicator. And he was dynamic. Personally immersed in the depths of the mystery of God, his preaching was energized by and bore witness to his profound love for Jesus Crucified.



Contemporary Passionists, too, carry an enviable reputation as gifted preachers. Known for their "common touch," the Passionist evangelist continues the effort of making God's Word come

Making God's Word  
Come Alive

alive for their contemporaries. Passionists willingly commit themselves to continued study, reflection and prayer in the conviction that effective and responsible preaching is nourished by continued intellectual, cultural and spiritual development. And Passionists seek to speak from their own depths, knowing that personal testimony and example have a unique power to make the message alive and attractive.

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<sup>21</sup> Rule of 1775, p. 58; R & C

The “common touch” reputation of Passionist preachers is a unique compliment, for it honors a particular ability to make the Gospel alive and real for contemporary listeners. Passionists are highly educated men who grasp well the sometimes subtle complexities of Scripture, theology and modern culture. The “genius” of Passionist preaching, however, is found in an ability to

Illustration, metaphor, humor, story,  
personal witness

interpret great truths in a manner comprehensible for ordinary Christian listeners. Adept at the use of illustration, metaphor, humor, story, personal witness and other homiletic skills, Passionist preachers enable the listener to relate those great truths to his or her lived situation. Passionist preaching combines faithfulness to the experiences of past generations with sensitivity to new challenges and opportunities. In their ministry, the rich and creative dynamism of God’s Word is set free to be an effective source of grace in the very heart of contemporary life.

As a religious community that has always held the preached Word in special esteem, contemporary Passionists share a unique ethos. Passionist preachers call upon the richness of their own “culture.” Stories abound of famous preachers, memories are retained of various oratorical styles, conversation about preaching laces daily life, debate about homiletic approaches stimulates continued development and refinement. Passionists look upon effective preaching as a great professional and personal responsibility, one they hold to be a sacred obligation.





### XIII. Retreat Foundations: Spiritual Guidance

#### Extensive Letters of spiritual direction

St. Paul of the Cross was an indefatigable letter writer. Living long before the era of cell phones and email, Paul Daneo maintained extensive correspondence with a broad range of persons. Some 2,500 of his letters are preserved and provide great insight into his own personality, his interests and concerns, and his approach to spiritual living. Often a letter carries specific guidance to men and women who had placed their own spiritual development in his care. Maintaining relationship with them by mail and an occasional visit, Paul of the Cross shared from the well of his own rich spiritual life. He was a wise, compassionate and hopeful guide for others who sought to deepen their own faith and love.

#### The long tradition of spiritual direction

In guiding others on their journeys of faith, Paul of the Cross practiced an ancient and revered Christian ministry. Spiritual direction, as a particular service, mirrors those private conversations between Jesus and the first disciples when he opened for them the deeper nature of life in the Kingdom.<sup>22</sup> The unfolding of Paul the Apostle's conversion points again to the need of disciples for help from more experienced followers.<sup>23</sup> The Fathers of the Desert, great spiritual figures of the early church, were revered for their wisdom and sought out by many for advice. In successive eras of Christian life, some men and women would always serve as guides for others in the spiritual quest.<sup>24</sup>

#### Placing All at the foot of the Cross

Paul of the Cross never elaborated a spiritual doctrine or system of thought. He never published a formula or program to achieve spiritual progress. He reflects the starkness and simplicity of the Gospel – “reform your life and believe in the Gospel.” And he raises up again the central Gospel theme of God's mysterious compassion and love. For Paul of the Cross, the only real answer is the Passion of Jesus. All problems find their solution in the love of God found through union with Jesus Crucified. His advice for growth in prayer is refreshing in its simplicity – abandon all to the mercy of God, throw all worries and preoccupations at the foot of the Cross, let all be consumed in the Abyss of Infinite Love.



<sup>22</sup> Cf. Mt. 13:36ff, for example.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Acts 9.

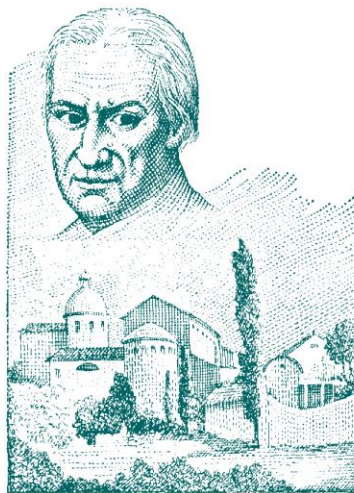
<sup>24</sup> St. Francis de Sales, St. Theresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, The Cure of Ars, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, etc...

Passionist retreats are occasions to continue the Paulacrucian ministry of spiritual guidance or direction. The personal visits with a staff member that many retreatants seek helps the individual match the invitation of God to his or her own unique circumstances. Discernment about a decision to be made, wrestling with a personal matter or family concern, seeking clarification about a doubt or hesitancy, learning new ways to pray – these only begin to describe the range of issues surfaced in spiritual direction. Sometimes the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation becomes the occasion for such conversation. Those occasions underline the most basic focus of all spiritual direction, that of continuing conversion and growing conformity to the person of Jesus.

Growing in the Likeness of Christ  
Jesus

Christians and other spiritual seekers look to Passionist retreat centers as places where spiritual guidance can be found. Center staff members often offer guidance beyond the brief visits possible during retreat programs and welcome those who drop in for a word of counsel or advice. Centers host and sponsor programs on spiritual development and prayer. Days of prayer, personal retreat days, directed retreat experiences conducted by staff members all further expand the Passionist ministry of spiritual guidance. In a restless, searching world, Passionist retreat facilities are a unique resource responding to the deep yearning of the human spirit for contact and union with the transcendent.

Touching the Transcendent



## **XIV. Retreat Foundations: Community – Based Ministry**

### **Christian Tradition**

Jesus called his contemporaries to join him as members of a group of disciples (Lk. 5:1-11), sent others ahead in pairs to announce his coming (Lk. 10:1), and prayed that they would be united with one another just as he and the Father were one (Jn. 17:11). The early Church valued this oneness (Acts 2:42ff) and practiced it in mission (Cf. Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas; Acts 16, Paul and Timothy). As for the Christians, so too was shared membership in the one Body of Christ and ministerial collaboration of critical importance for Paul of the Cross and his first companions. Living together as evangelical witnesses, the first Passionists themselves went forth in pairs to proclaim the Gospel of the Passion.

### **Early Collaboration**

Ministry which flows from the experience of a ministering community is an important dimension for Passionist retreat centers today. Initially, lay retreats were conducted within the very facilities of Passionist “monastic” residences. And, from the outset various forms of joint or teamed ministry set the tone for the conduct of retreat programs. Up to the time of Vatican Council II, Passionist centers were staffed by Passionist priests and brothers who shared the varied roles of retreat work. As the years of Church renewal unfolded, Passionist staff were augmented and enhanced by lay secretarial and maintenance staff. At several centers women religious became responsible for food service. In the same era the preached weekend retreats became the ministry of a “preaching” team rather than one priest assigned to conduct all retreat services.

### **Growing Collaboration**

The post-conciliar era witnessed a consistent and steady increase of lay pastoral and administrative involvement. From its very inception, laity had taken a critical role in building retreat ministry through their constant work of recruitment or promotion as retreat captains or coordinators. Now, with Vatican Council II’s powerful validation of lay Christian life, the creation of Lay Governing and Lay Advisory Boards and many other committees or groups, the hiring of lay business administrators and the addition of lay members to ministry teams intensified and expanded the earliest trends of lay collaboration. Today vowed Passionists minister as members of mixed teams side-by-side with permanent deacons, lay women and men and women religious. And Passionists oversee the administrative concerns of their centers in cooperation with largely lay staff. These persons are all understood to be important members of the retreat center “team” whose contributions are integral to the retreat experience. Importantly, *all* team members, whether Passionist or not, see themselves as members of a collaborative ministry and believe their shared service brings greater good to retreatants than any individual work.



This team of collaborative methodology points to the essential relational character of the Gospel and Christian life. Committed by baptism to experience and express the love that binds the Divine Trinity as one, Christians seek to serve one another in an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance. Disciples of the one Lord, Christians seek to value the rich diversity of skill and insight they possess as a corporate possession and hope to find ways of placing the gifts of each at the service of all. Christians believe that the Gospel of Peace is a cure for the divisiveness and violence that plagues modern life. Team ministry and administration witnesses to the unitive power of the Gospel.

**The Gifts of Each  
in the service of all**





## **XV. Retreat Foundations:** **Hospitality**

**“I**t’s good to be back home again!” “Thank you for making us feel so welcome!” “Your hospitality is outstanding!” Comments such as these, which reflect the feelings of retreatants, show an appreciation for Passionist concern to create an atmosphere of hospitality. This effort is important and consciously taken, for staff members know that a warm welcome creates a down-to-earth experience of God’s tender mercy. A kind word and warm smile help put an anxious, fearful retreatant at ease. Personal interest in small things encourages retreatants to trust and willingly open up the burdens of their hearts. For Passionist retreat center staff, exercising hospitality is an integral component of retreat center ministry.

Welcome!

Jesus’ reputation among his contemporaries was that of one who ate with tax collectors and sinners and those outside the law (Lk. 7:34). His practice of table fellowship with the abandoned and despised, a

...the practical face of  
compassion

profound symbol of acceptance in his culture, communicated the radical nature of the love he sought to unfold (Mt. 9:10). He spoke of God’s reign as a grand banquet feast, depicting the Father as the great host gladly welcoming all willing to open their hearts to this new love (Mt. 8:11). Time and again, the gospels place God’s compassion in new and startling ways. Near the end of his own life, while seated at the table with his disciples, Jesus would startle them once more by engaging in a slave’s work – washing the feet of his own disciples (Jn. 13ff). Hospitality, the practical face of compassion, is a key to grasping the nature of Jesus’ own mission.



The Passionist commitment to hospitality is also an expression of community living. In founding a new religious community, Paul of the Cross desired that his companions would live like the first apostles. He wanted Passionists to recall the loving and sacrificial service that Jesus

“By this will all  
know that you  
are my disciples...”

urged upon the first disciples. Paul Daneo’s last words<sup>25</sup>, spoken on his deathbed, invited his followers to remember the Lord’s word, “By this will all know that you are my disciples, that you love one another” (Jn. 13:35). It is the love of Christ himself that enables Passionists, of diverse and sometimes divergent personalities, to live like brothers. That same love impels them to extend gracious, accepting hospitality to those who turn to them for guidance.

Passionists want their retreat centers to be characterized by a sense of warm welcome and open-hearted acceptance for all who come. Many retreatants come to think of the centers as their

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Rule & Constitutions*, #25, 178.

“homes.” Gracious and warm hospitality conveys God’s love and images the Jesus who so often sat at table with friends and those in great need. A sense of welcome puts retreatants at ease and helps them to open their lives more deeply to the call and love of Christ.

Passionist retreat centers extend the hospitality of Jesus by opening their doors to groups in need of gathering space. Characteristically, Passionist centers host meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, and other spiritually-based recovery groups. Each center also makes its facilities available, as it is able, to the needs of the local church and the broader religious and civic community.

The wide diversity of groups that find a “home” at Passionist retreat centers testifies to the grace-laden power of hospitality. At its heart, Passionist hospitality is rooted in an appreciation of the Passion. Jesus died “to gather into one all the scattered children of God” (Jn. 11:52), and “tore down the wall of separation” (Eph. 2:14). In remembering the Passion of Christ, Passionists open their hearts and facilities to all as a practical expression of the all-embracing love that flows from the Crucified One. Following Him who gave his life for all commits Passionists to welcome all who seek them out that they might find membership in the one family of God.

“...have this mind in you  
which was also in  
Christ Jesus...”



## XVI. Retreat Foundations: Environment

“The houses for religious retreat shall be founded in retired places, in the most convenient and best manner possible.”<sup>26</sup> Written by Paul of the Cross, this directive of the 1775 Rule is a reminder that his mysticism was integral and holistic. For Paul Daneo, the world of the material and sensual was important and played a necessary role in spiritual development. His concern for the suitable location of community residences, for instance, underscored his conviction that solitude formed a vital framework for prayer and contemplation. His

“Out of zion, the perfection of beauty, god shines forth.”

house, the Retreat of the was placed on Monte a small island close by Adriatic coast. This traditional haunt of hermits, featured solitude, stunning vistas of land and sea, and proximity to the necessary resources of society.

Retreat of the Presentation on Monte Argentario, first Passionist foundation.



supportive very first Presentation, Argentario – Italy’s island, a wondrous sufficient developed

In the early versions of the Passionist *Rule* and in his vast correspondence, Paul of the Cross shows a concern for environment and the physical details of life that might help or hinder spiritual growth. The various *Rules* detail how community members are to spend their time, together and alone; what they are to eat (Paul is ever concerned for a diet sufficient to meet the demands of prayer and ministry, even when fasting!); how the houses are to be furnished; what the members should wear. He often expresses concern for health, urging those he directs to not become so “spiritual” that they neglect their basic physical and emotional needs. In these attitudes Paul shows a wise, wholesome approach to life and faith. Fundamentally, he expresses his deep belief in the mystery of the Incarnation; God’s coming in the flesh and person of Jesus Christ.

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

Paul Daneo’s concern for environment rests upon that bedrock of Christian faith – the mystery of the Incarnation. Jesus’ own personal, human existence and experience becomes the very bearer of God’s presence. Forming his disciples, the Lord demonstrated practical concern for their daily needs and the manner of their ministry in his name. Proclaiming the message of God’s coming Reign, he often used examples and metaphors for spiritual life drawn from the natural world surrounding him. His great deeds addressed themselves to the real physical needs of his contemporaries – for healing, for food, for help – as well as to their deep spiritual hunger. And, as the gospels so poignantly remind us, he was the recipient of physical care in life (Lk. 8:1-3) and in death (Lk. 23:50-56).

“Truly I did tell you, just as you did it to one of the least, ... you did it to me.”

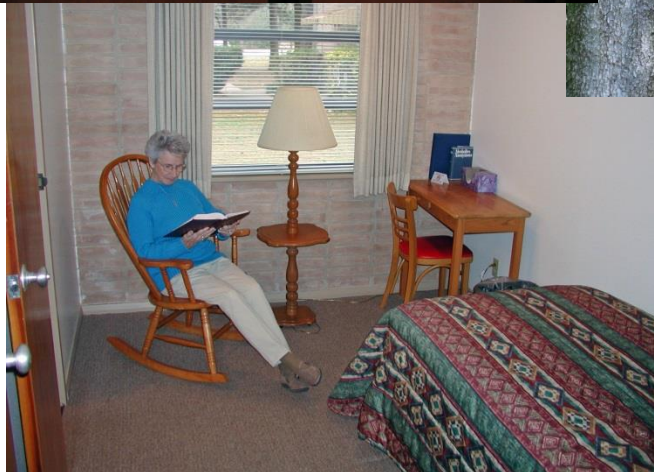
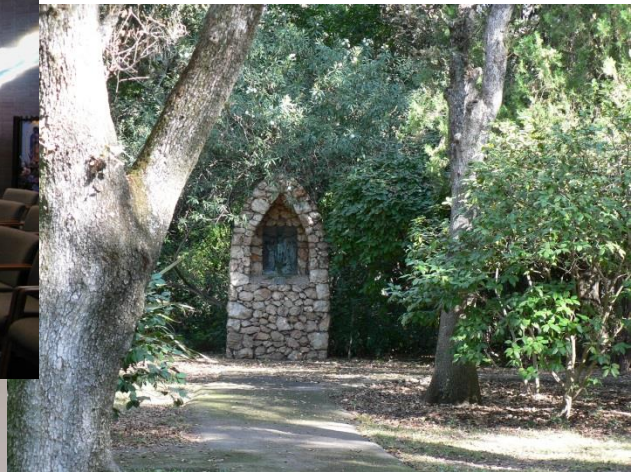
<sup>26</sup> *Rule of 1775, Ch. II; in R & C.*



Environment plays an important role in the mission of today's Passionist retreat centers. Each Holy Cross Province center is located in a natural setting supportive of a prayerful atmosphere. Care for grounds and physical facilities is a constant concern – so that retreatants may find

“...And the Author of beauty created them.”

themselves in surroundings “that deepen the awareness of God’s presence.” Attention to interior appointments and decorative elements seek to further surround retreatants in a physical atmosphere that constantly speaks of God and things of the spirit. The details of hospitality, housekeeping, diet and schedule make their important contributions to the creation of a spiritually focused and nourishing atmosphere.





## **XVII. Retreat Foundations: Responsive to Contemporary Needs**

**T**he Passion of Jesus was, for St. Paul of the Cross, the great mystery of God's love that continued to touch human life. In those who suffered he saw the contemporary face of the crucified Jesus. Apostolic labor was, for Paul Daneo, a practical manner of deepening communion with his beloved Jesus Crucified. In the poor villages in the malarial Maremma<sup>27</sup> region along Italy's central Adriatic coast, he exercised his first significant preaching ministry. Parish missions<sup>28</sup> here addressed the religious needs of Catholics who were poorly instructed and often neglected by church authorities. Though the outreach of his new Congregation would broaden greatly, Paul of the Cross ever held these crucified ones of his time in special regard. His ministerial vision was never confined to his own land; though not fulfilled in his lifetime, he hoped to send missionaries abroad and prayed fervently for that end.

Discerning the face of  
the suffering Jesus

The development of Passionist retreat ministry repeats Paul's concern for contemporary needs. In two great waves, after World War I and II, American Passionists responded to the needs of a rapidly changing American Catholic population. The experience of war and the great post-war economic expansions created a Catholic populace that was more educated and sophisticated, economically successful, less anchored to the original immigrant "ghettos," and less willing to "take Father's word for it." These Catholics were hungry for and in need of a spiritual formation that could match their rapidly expanding adult identities. In retreat experiences they would find a response and new spiritual resources to match the new challenges and complexities of life in modern society.

A changing, maturing faith and  
church

"Discerning the signs of the times," the great phrase of Pope John XXIII, expresses the Christian desire to focus the power of the Gospel on modern challenges in an effective and attractive manner. As one of the foundations of sensitive pastoral care, it reminds disciples that true compassion begins with an astute understanding of contemporary needs and yearnings. Pastoral alertness is a hallmark of Passionist retreat centers and retreat programming. Today, it is hard to imagine a

Discerning the signs of the  
times

conversation about retreat preaching, programming or institutional planning not informed by a highly educated cultural sensitivity. It is clearly represented in the openness Passionists show towards groups that address major social problems; for example, each Passionist center has important links with alcoholism/addiction recovery groups. The many efforts at Passionist centers to increase staff diversity respond to authentic yearnings for inclusivity and gender equality. Passionist centers seek to adapt their programs to the constantly changing nature of local ecclesial constituencies. And Passionist preaching, always rooted in the Gospel's announcement of hope, is clearly shaped by an understanding of the contexts that represent the world in which retreatants live.



<sup>27</sup> Maremma is translated as "marsh."

<sup>28</sup> The "missions" to these towns typically took place in the open air of the town's central square and embraced the many pastoral needs of the people.

## XVIII. Passionists and Retreat Center History

*“Our Readers will learn with pleasure that the Passionist Community has been most successful. They arrived in this country in 1852. They have now near this city [Pittsburgh] one of the neatest and most complete religious houses in the United States with a church attached which may be truly called a gem. They receive in their house laymen and clergymen who wish to retire to make retreats.”*<sup>29</sup>

This startling glimpse of early American Passionist retreat activity represents not a new apostolic innovation, but correspondence with the founding vision of St. Paul of the Cross. From the first, Paul hoped to provide special facilities in which Passionists could receive and guide clergy and laity who were seeking to enter into solitude to deepen their own faith through spiritual exercises and retreats. A letter of 1732 specifically mentions his dream for the construction of a retreat house!<sup>30</sup> While that dream’s full realization would wait more than a century, Passionist ministry always embraced retreat work as a central

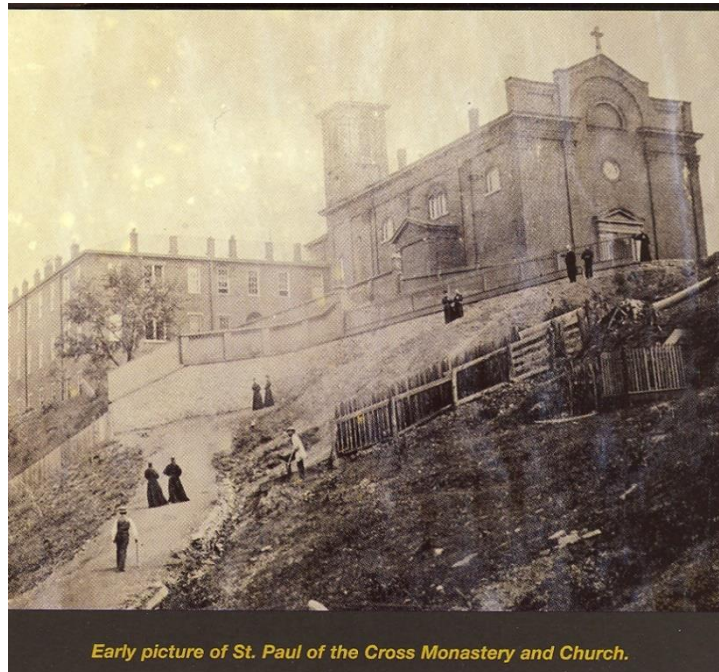
### Realizing the Dream

expression of the Passionist charism. And Passionist always set some rooms aside for the use of those seeking spiritual renewal. Paul Daneo’s desire to teach others to pray and, especially, to delve into the mystery of Crucified Love found constant expression, among other means, through retreat ministry.

Bishop Michael O’Connor, Pittsburgh Ordinary responsible for bringing Passionists to America in 1852, was eager that they conduct retreats as well as preach parish missions.<sup>31</sup> The first

### Building on the strong

Passionist retreats held in the United States were conducted in a new wing of the Pittsburgh Monastery in the spring of 1856. The retreatants were members of the Pittsburgh clergy; soon Passionists were conducting clergy retreats across the Midwest. The formal institutional development of retreat ministry would, however, be delayed until the following century as the early Passionists focused their energies and resources on the tasks of basic foundation and the training of American Passionists.



Early picture of St. Paul of the Cross Monastery and Church.

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retreats

<sup>29</sup> The Pittsburgh Catholic, V. 17, #10 (May 5, 1860); quoted in Yuhaus, *Compelled to Speak*, p. 297

<sup>30</sup> Giorgini, *History of the Passionists*, V. I, Rome: Edizioni ECO, p. 434

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Yuhaus, *Compelled to Speak*, p. 285-298, on the development of retreat ministry in America.

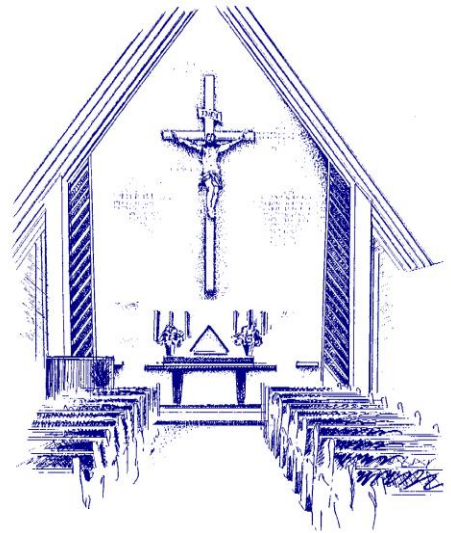
Passionist dedication to formally organized lay retreats in America dates from 1911 when the Brighton (Boston) community established a “retreat league.” Records maintained in the Province’s community residences during the prior half-century indicate that a steady stream of clergy and laity sought solitude and communion with God under Passionist guidance as guests in their houses. Confirming as it did the initial vision of Paul of the Cross, this experience also alerted American Passionists to a deeper spiritual need – and a new ministerial opportunity. The organization of formalized retreat leagues or movements entailed the commitment of institutional resources, an investment that would soon place Passionists in the forefront of the lay retreat movement set to flower across the United States.

#### An innovative response

The first pulse of this new ministry was felt beyond Passionist walls. Writing<sup>32</sup> in Living Stones: The History and Structure of the Catholic Spiritual Life in the United States, historian Joseph

#### Early Jesuit Initiative

Chinnici suggests that the success of the retreat movement was nourished by a variety of Catholic social and religious organizations, dioceses, and religious congregations who believed that the era of Catholic laity had arrived! In 1910 Father Terence Shealy, S.J., of Fordham University, New York, initiated an annual religious experience for men based on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises with the hope that this would serve as a leaven of renewal for the individual laymen and American culture. To fulfill his plan, in 1911 he began Manresa Retreat House on Staten Island, New York.



Immediately, the Passionist Congregation saw the possibilities. In late fall 1911 they began a similar Laymen’s Retreat Movement at St. Gabriel’s Monastery, Brighton, Massachusetts. The success of this venture led to the establishment of other Passionist retreat programs in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1920); West Springfield, Massachusetts (1925); Jamaica, New York (1924); West Hartford, Connecticut (1951); North Palm Beach, Florida (1961); Riverdale, New York (1965); Port Burwell, Canada (1965); Shrewsbury, Massachusetts (1965); and Baltimore, Maryland (1966). The ministry at Shelter Island, New York (1963) is unique in that the concentration has been to provide a retreat experience for teenagers and young adults in the greater New York City area. Programs in Scranton, Pennsylvania and Dunkirk, New York were short-lived. On the other hand, the efforts of St. Paul of the Cross Province to establish a spiritual center in the Philippines (1966) and a retreat center in Jamaica, West Indies (1973) have proved to be successful. Noteworthy, of course, has been the retreat ministry in the United States conducted by the Passionist Sisters and the Sisters of the Cross and Passion.

#### Passionist Retreat Centers in St. Paul of the Cross Province, U.S.A.

<sup>32</sup> The following paragraphs tracing the rise of retreat center ministry in St. Paul of the Cross Province are the work of Fr. Rob Carbonneau, C.P., Archivist of that Province.

## **XIX. Retreat Ministry in Holy Cross Province**

**T**he steady growth of the American Passionist presence from its 1852 beginning led to a moment of significant reorganization in 1906. In that year Holy Cross Province (the Western Province) was founded and made responsible for further growth in all regions west of Pittsburgh. This new province, located in the Midwestern cities of Cincinnati, Louisville, Chicago, Saint Louis, and Saint Paul, Kansas, devoted its early attention to vocation recruitment and formation. By 1923, it was in a position to create a California outpost in Sierra Madre and immediately began retreat ministry.

Further commitments to retreat ministry did not materialize as America and its Passionists struggled with the economic devastation of the 1930's and the grave challenge of World War II. By war's end the United States, victorious in war and economically transformed, entered an era of unprecedented development. The GI Bill of Rights, which made higher education broadly accessible for the first time in American history, transformed social life. Fueled by the postwar "Baby Boom" and great economic and intellectual achievement, American Catholicism entered a new era that culminated in the election of one of its own as U.S. President. This dramatic surge formed the context within which retreat ministry in Holy Cross Province exploded on the scene. When peace came in 1945, only Sierra Madre was conducting formal "closed" retreats; these were held within the spacious Spanish-style monastery nestled at the foot of Mount Wilson. But by 1960, full scale retreat movements were underway in Cincinnati, Detroit, Saint Louis, Houston and Sacramento. And, with the exception of the Cincinnati facility, each occupied buildings specifically designed for retreat ministry. Holy Cross Province was now fully engaged with a new generation of Catholics: fully American, upwardly mobile and educated. Through retreat ministry, Passionists would find themselves in touch with lay Catholics who became the leadership corps in their parishes, schools and fraternal organizations.

### **Sierra Madre, California ~ Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center**

Mater Dolorosa was established in southern California in 1924, when Passionists of Holy Cross Province moved into an abandoned ranch house located at the foot of Mount Wilson. Retreats at this time had to be held outside, under "The Rubber Tree." In 1932, a Passionist residence and retreat center was built and dedicated. The men of the Mater Dolorosa Retreat League finally had a retreat house. In 1949, a building strictly for retreats was built, and in 1985 additional space was added. Over the years, the Passionists have welcomed countless men and women to share in the rich spiritual environment that Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center offers.





## **Detroit, Michigan ~ Saint Paul of the Cross Retreat Center**

In 1930, one of the darkest moments of the Great Depression, the Passionists opened a large monastery in Detroit. From this residence they went forth to give parish missions and retreats across the Midwest. The Passionists also opened the doors of their residence to share their life and prayer with laity in the form of weekend retreats. This simple act of hospitality quickly grew into a retreat movement which was formally organized in 1948. Lay retreats responded well to a felt need among American Catholics for “something more” and soon a larger, separate facility was necessary. In 1960, the new Saint Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat Center opened its doors and expanded its ministry of service to lay men and women, priests and religious, educators and students. Other programs addressed the needs of parish and diocesan organizations for retreat days, planning sessions, and other activities. In 1996, Saint Paul of the Cross Retreat Center and Community initiated a major expansion program to accommodate growth in retreat center ministries and changed residential needs of its Passionist priests and brothers. In the summer of 2000, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America took possession of the former Saint Paul’s Monastery and adjacent property, with the exception of the Community Cemetery.



## **Houston, Texas ~ Holy Name Retreat Center**



Holy Name Retreat Center represents one of the Passionists’ several expansions in the years following the conclusion of World War II. Arriving in Houston in 1946, the Passionists were soon in temporary quarters at their current Bunker Hill property. Work immediately began to organize the laymen’s retreat movement. The founding retreat director, Father Conleth Overman, C.P., conducted days of recollection, sought out qualified lay leaders, made the work of the Passionists known to the Catholics of east Texas and began to plan for the construction of a permanent facility. That structure was dedicated in late fall, 1953. A further series of building programs, concluded in 1980, led to the current facilities.

The Passionists arrived in Houston shortly before major population changes led to dramatic increases in the Catholic population of the area. Immediately following Vatican Council II, as retreat centers reached out to new groups and experimented with new pastoral strategies, Holy Name began a special involvement with members of Alcoholics Anonymous. A small A.A. meeting group had met at the center for a number of years; a request by some of its members for a retreat experience began what has grown into today’s substantial ministerial involvement. Migrations from large eastern and Midwestern industrialized states during the 1970s and 1980s made Houston a great boom town. The opportunities for service and the need of the local church

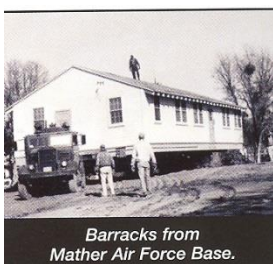
made the ministries of Holy Name very welcome; regional growth led to dramatic increases in the size of the lay retreat movement. And the vast Hispanic immigration of the 1980s further enlarged the size and composition of the local Catholic community.

## Citrus Heights, California ~ Christ the King Retreat Center

Christ the King's history includes an 1852 initiative, undertaken by Passionist Peter Magagnotto in nearby Virginia City, Nevada, during the Gold Rush era.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, a lasting presence in the Sacramento area had to wait until the following century. As Passionists grew and expanded throughout the east coast and Midwestern states, Archbishop Cantwell of Los Angeles requested that they expand west and establish a presence in southern California. It was 1923 when the Passionists founded a Monastery and retreat center in Sierra Madre, a small town near Pasadena, California. Numerous retreats given to laity, priests and religious gained the Passionist community a strong reputation up and down the Pacific Coast.



Back in Sacramento, a group of men from the Holy Name Union were discussing with their chaplain, Msgr. Kirby, the possibility of establishing a retreat center in north-central California. Msgr. Kirby remembered, "We have a commitment from the Passionists who used to be in this area years ago, that they would come again sometime." Mr. Roy Wilkins was encouraged by Msgr. Kirby to contact the Passionists in southern California. Within a short time a formal invitation was sent by Bishop Armstrong. Fr. Angelo Hamilton, C.P., brought the Passionist community back to Sacramento when he arrived in October 1945. He came with instructions to build a retreat center for northern California. Within a short time, several other Passionists joined him at their temporary residence at Immaculate Conception church. In the late summer of 1946, the community purchased 41 acres of land for \$27,500 from the Cross family estate in



Barracks from  
Mather Air Force Base.

Citrus Heights. By 1949, a small house had been built on the property and the Passionists took up residence on the last Sunday in November, the feast of Christ the King. On May 7, 1950, the present retreat center building was completed under the supervision of Fr. Neil Parsons, C.P. The facility was constructed to accommodate thirty retreatants, with a chapel, dining room, library and two offices. The first retreat was held for the men of Holy Name Union and the construction workers on the weekend of May 19-21, 1950. During 1951, a total of 848 men attended thirty-eight retreats. Additional priests and brothers increased the number of Passionists in residence. The community conducted parish missions, helped in parishes and served as chaplains throughout the Diocese of Sacramento, northern California and western Nevada. The retreat center facility was expanded in 1957 when military barracks from Mather Air Base were

<sup>33</sup> "A History of Finding Gold," Website of Christ the King Retreat Center, [www.passionist.org/](http://www.passionist.org/)

moved onto the property. The transported buildings were pieced together to make eighteen additional rooms for the growing number of retreatants. By this time, some of the first retreats in the state for men and women in Alcoholics Anonymous were being conducted at Christ the King. In November 1987, the facilities were expanded. The Holy Cross Building was constructed with forty retreatant rooms, three small conference rooms and a beautiful large assembly room. The enlarged facilities, able to house over one hundred retreatants, have allowed for the expansion of retreat programs.

## Cincinnati and Saint Louis

Holy Cross Province's significant commitment of institutional resources to retreat ministry in the early postwar years found further expression in the cities of Cincinnati and Saint Louis. Both were historic Midwestern ecclesiastical centers with large Catholic populations. Both were sites of a long Passionist presence that predated the founding of Holy Cross Province. A large monastic style building and two neighborhood parishes under Passionist care characterized the Cincinnati site. In Saint Louis, a high school seminary and monastery were the focal point for Passionist life.

The Province decided to convert a portion of the Cincinnati monastery to use for laymen's retreats and initiated that ministry in 1948. Work continued there until 1977 when, in response to several difficulties, the facility was closed as a retreat operation and Passionist residence.

In Saint Louis, the Province sought separate property and began conducting laymen's retreats at nearby Clayton in 1951. In 1956, the retreat movement occupied a lovely new facility adjacent to a modern preparatory seminary in Warrenton, Missouri. While the seminary operation ceased in 1968, the retreat center continued its ministry at the same location. The entire property was sold in 1977 and the retreat facilities relocated back to Saint Louis. There the retreat movement continued until 1995 when a Province Strategic Plan closed the retreat facility and ended the Passionist presence in Saint Louis.



## Beyond American Shores

The development of retreat ministry has not been confined to the American boundaries of Holy Cross Province. The history of the Province is distinguished in its consistent commitment to the growth of the international Church. First engaged with its parent Province of St. Paul of the Cross in a joint mission to China begun in 1923, Holy Cross Province has continued to maintain an Asian perspective through the founding of new congregational presences in Korea, Japan and India. As Province members labored to extend the Passionist presence in these regions, retreat ministry became a special gift of the Passionists to Asian believers. Retreat houses in Mefu and Munakata are important ministry centers in the Japanese Province; Korean Passionists serve their Church through retreat ministry in Seoul and Kwangju. And, the most recent Asian foundation, India, staffs a retreat house in Bangalore as part of its mission.

## **XX. Retreat Foundations:** **Guiding Values for Administration**

The spirit of Passionist retreat centers is that ethos which bears the inspiration and framework of the *Passionist* retreat experience. Passionist retreat a profoundly spiritual enterprise addressed to the roots of human personhood and meaning. Paradoxically, the success of this profoundly spiritual depends greatly upon such seemingly mundane planning, scheduling, financing and so forth! Yet, this to be of great surprise. Christianity is rooted in the Incarnation, in God's mysterious choice to fashion the the very bearer or instrument of eternal redemption. Gospel witness never strays from this radical truth and to remind disciples of the human necessities of the himself (cf. Luke 8:1ff). The Lord makes the quality behavior and interaction the very standard by which one's eternal status will be determined (Mt. 25:31 ff). And Jesus made practical human behavior the ultimate benchmark for the evaluation of leadership (cf. Mk. 10:35ff; Jn. 13). Such concern for the practical, itself a reflection of divine love directed to concrete beings, has much to contribute to that spirit or culture which characterizes Passionist retreat centers. Though not exhaustive, the following values and principles are considered of particular importance in the fuller expression of the Passionist retreat center spirit.



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### **Collegiality**

Collegiality describes the standing and responsibility of Passionist community members in decision-making. Each member bears the power to vote for leaders and in affairs that matter to all. Each is responsible for the good of all and must be willing to act out of a common vision. In the spirit of collegiality, Passionists value broad consultation at every level, encourage teamwork and broad collaboration. They give preference to methods for decision-making that emphasizes a consensual approach.

Accurate, reliable and effective communication is at the heart of a collegial approach to life, ministry, and administration. Passionists commit themselves to honest, open and sincere communication in their personal and institutional communication. As skilled preachers they recognize that communication skill is necessary, too, in group settings and in presenting the public face of retreat centers to their publics. As people who strive to listen well to the voice of their Lord, Passionists understand that authentic communication must include effective, wise and empathetic listening.

Recognizing a great gift in their experience of community living and its collegial style, Passionists are determined that this vision for relationships will also characterize those of their ministries and sponsored institutions.



## **Subsidiarity**

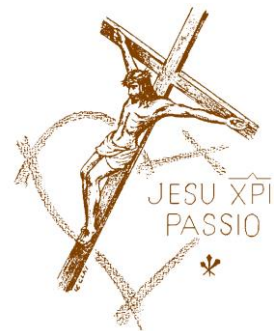
Subsidiarity honors the giftedness and competence present at each level of a multi-layered organization and among individual members of complex groups. It recognizes that different tasks are present within the organization and embodies a principle that expects action and responsibility to be taken at every level of the organization. (E.g. directors should not do what administrators can do; administrators should not undertake what department heads can accomplish, etc.). Subsidiarity pays effective homage to the Christian vision that views the church as a gifted community of persons that is at its best self only when all gifts are recognized, honored and used well. Contemporary efforts to “empower” individuals and groups apply the principle of subsidiarity in a proactive manner.

## **Person-Centered**

Person-centered reflects the vision of Jesus himself who gave greater importance to the needs of persons than to abstract formulations of principle, custom or law. As pastoral institutions whose very mission is the care of human persons, Passionist retreat centers will be characterized by profound sensitivity to the unique needs, skills and viewpoints of individuals. Employees can expect to be treated with kindness, decency and justice; retreatants and guests will receive prompt, courteous and generous consideration of their needs and concerns. This principle need not endanger what is good for a group or institution; rather, it seeks to remind that each person and each need has a validity and worthiness of its own.

## **Inclusivity**

Inclusivity confesses the meaning of the Cross by which Christ “tore down the wall of separation” and made all one in Himself (Eph. 2:14-16). This value seeks to view all through the eyes of God’s love and honors each man and woman in and of themselves irrespective of their social status or condition. “Inclusivity seeks to foster broader participation in those agencies and institutions that affect all.” Inclusivity believes that the work to harness diverse points of view to a common good or mission can only make that mission stronger and more effective. Passionists want their institutions to practice an inclusiveness that promotes fuller human respect, one that is willing to challenge society and Church, one that effectively values the great sacrifice of the Cross.



## **Justice**

Justice as understood in the Christian faith tradition seeks to protect the defenseless, restore the rights of those unjustly deprived, extend help to the needy and find adjustment for the great social and economic imbalances of life. Passionist retreat centers are expected to be, themselves, just institutions in which the fundamental rights of employees are respected and the challenging fullness of the Gospel is clearly heard. They should be places where poor individuals are welcomed for retreat experiences, where special consideration may

be offered to resource-poor groups, and where marginalized individuals and groups can find a spiritual haven. The custom of seeking retreat offerings rather than fixed stipends is cited as an example in this area. Likewise, preferential pricing; hospitality for groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous; complimentary days of prayer for volunteer workers in social service agencies; initiatives that respond to ecological and environmental concerns – these help illustrate the practical implementation of justice in retreat center ministry.

## **Responsible Stewardship**

Responsible Stewardship is concerned with the proper and careful uses of material resources; it expresses one dimension of the Passionist vow of poverty. Dependent upon the generous and kind support of others, Passionists want to use what they receive responsibly. Responsible stewardship manifests itself in many ways. Proper and proactive maintenance of physical facilities and grounds is stewardship. Efficient, accurate and transparent accountancy is also expressive of a steward's care. Genuine and grateful regard for benefactors further enhances this value. The hard work of identifying and developing new sources of support projects responsible stewardship into the future and protects the future viability of the institution's mission.

## **Professionalism**

Professionalism points to a specific administrative stance that welcomes the application of modern management theory and practice in the administration of Passionist retreat centers. Professionalism encourages objective analysis, open and rational evaluation of outcomes, efficient use of resources and long-range planning. This stance seeks to adapt the wisdom of the relevant secular professions for the sake of retreat center mission. This vision also leads retreat center personnel to view themselves as competent professionals in their own right. In this light they are challenged to make personal and professional growth an integral component of their own lives and ministry.

## **Mission-driven**

Mission-driven is a sentinel phrase serving as a reminder of a retreat center's fundamental reason for existence. As a service institution with a particular mission or objective, only a clear and dynamic focus on mission will provide a retreat center with the energy necessary to make it a life-giving, creative entity. Mission is the standard by which everything about the center ought to be judged. That which does not serve, support, carry forward or fulfill the center's mission must be reviewed and subjected to corrective action.



## Faith-centered

Faith-centered articulates the most basic assumption of Passionist retreat centers. They are religious institutions drawing their inspiration from the Christian Gospel and standing within the Roman Catholic tradition. Retreat centers exist to proclaim, encourage and support Christian faith. The experience of Christian faith, no stranger to practical concerns, should be brought to bear at every level of retreat center ministry and operation.

## familial

Familial refers to the tone, quality or spirit that characterizes relationships in Passionist retreat centers. Though members of many different human families, Passionists always choose the word “familial” to best describe their experience of community living. Those who know them best also perceive them in this light. And those who frequent Passionist retreat centers soon use the term “home” to describe their feelings for the facility and people present there. Personal warmth and openness, interest in others and their concerns, humor and sympathy, loyalty to staff and retreatants, honesty and reliability are descriptive of those human and spiritual values reflective of the familial. This attitude does not stand in opposition to a professional bearing or business-like approach. Rather, it denotes the manner in which professional competence and skill is to be exercised and points to the relational atmosphere most supportive of Passionist mission. This tone or quality is of essential importance for Passionists; after all, their Founder chose a heart-shaped symbol to signify his spirituality.

## Prophetic

Prophetic is expressive of a complex set of values close to the heart of the Passionist Charism. Formal theological reflection on the role of religious congregations in the Church acknowledges them as bearers of the prophetic voice. Historically, religious orders and congregations have arisen in response to new and urgent needs in both church and society. Paul of the Cross, for instance,



devoted great energy towards pastoral care of poor Italian peasants living on the margins of their society and church. Creativity, a courageous willingness to risk, openness to new needs, sensitivity to the unfamiliar stirrings of the Spirit, persistence and determination – these qualities are evident in the life of Paul of the Cross and are keys to his eventual success. And, they are descriptive of the prophetic dimension. In a world and Church of rapid change so often characterized by much social fragmentation, the prophetic voice is greatly needed. For it is the prophet who speaks of a new vision capable of overcoming the powers of disintegration. The Scriptures carry a stark warning, “without a vision the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). Passionist retreat centers bear a great responsibility to ever

claim the prophetic role of their Founder. A prophetic dimension is present when a center willingly opens itself to new ventures and programs, when preaching raises a holy challenge to injustice and blindness in society and Church, when new peoples and groups are welcomed to retreat constituencies, and when certain impatience with things as they are characterizes retreat center leadership.

## **XXI. Passionist Organization and Structure**

Passionist retreat centers, as institutional expressions of the Passionist charism, are part of a much larger Passionist “world.” In the time since Paul of the Cross emerged from his inaugural retreat and began to gather companions, the Congregation he founded has grown, flourished and assumed a complex form. The most basic organizational shape of the Congregation and its entities is shown here in outline form.

### The Congregation of the Passion

- An international Religious Congregation
- General headquarters are in Rome
- Some 3000 members serve in 52 countries
- Organized into 28 Provinces
- Subdivided into “continental” assistancies
- Comprised of two American Provinces
  - St. Paul of the Cross Province ~ (East Coast)
  - Holy Cross Province ~ (Midwest, Southwest and Western States)

### Leadership Structure: General Chapters

- General Chapters are the “supreme” authority of the Congregation
- They are held at 6-year intervals
- Members are the Provincials of the Congregation along with the General Superior and his Council
- The General Chapter elects the General Superior and Council (six members)
- The General Chapter reviews, and when necessary, modifies the *Rule & Constitutions*, engages in corporate reflection and planning for the entire Congregation

### Leadership Structure: The Generalate

- The Superior General is the “supreme” authority of the Congregation between General Chapters
- He and his 6-member Council serve terms of six years and are mandated to:
  - Guide the Congregation
  - Preside at Provincial Chapters and confirm their elections and actions
  - Convene the General Synod (gathering of Provincials with General and Council) every two years
  - Implement the work of the General Chapter
  - Promote cooperation and collaboration in the regional (continental) Assistancies and throughout the Congregation
  - Serve as liaison to Holy See (Vatican)
  - Begin initial preparation for the next General Chapter



#### Leadership Structure: The Province

- Regional organization of Passionists in a country (Japan) or area (five Italian provinces)
- Provincial Chapter meets every four years and is the highest authority of the Province
- All Province members participate and vote
- The Chapter elects the Provincial Superior and his Council
- The Chapter regulates local Passionist life and ministry, adapts Congregational initiatives to local culture, and engages in reflection and planning for the sake of the Province as a whole

#### Leadership Structure: Province Services

- The Provincial Superior and Council are highest authority of the Province between Chapters
- Are responsible for implementing the actions of the Provincial Chapter
- Serve as liaison to the larger Congregation
- Administer Province-level services
- Recruitment, formation and education of new members
- Centralized banking and financing systems
- Health care and retirement programs for members
- Supervision and support of overseas missions
- Financing of Province needs
- Enhancement and development of Province ministries

#### Leadership Structure: Local Community

- Consists of the Passionists assigned to a particular residence
- All are members of the Local Chapter
- The Chapter chooses the Local Superior
- The members determine the practical form of life; schedule, worship, ministry commitments, budget, etc., all in concert with Province policy and regulation
- Seek to implement Province concerns and initiatives locally
- The Community normally holds members engaged in several ministries

#### Passionist Structure: Finances

- The Generalate is supported by a tax on each Province, investments and donations.
- The Provinces are self-supporting: Provincial services are financed through assessment of members, by donations, fund-raising and income from investments
- Local Communities are, ideally, self-supporting through ministry income, donations, fund-raising activities and investment income; some do require Provincial assistance

## **XXII. Holy Cross Province: Members and Mission**

- Total Religious ~ 80 Median Age ~ 69
- Institutions
  - 4 parishes with schools in Chicago, Louisville and 2 in Birmingham
  - 1 High school in Birmingham
  - 4 Retreat centers in Detroit, Houston, Sierra Madre, Citrus Heights

### Overseas Mission

- Vicariate of India with 25 Indians and 2 Americans

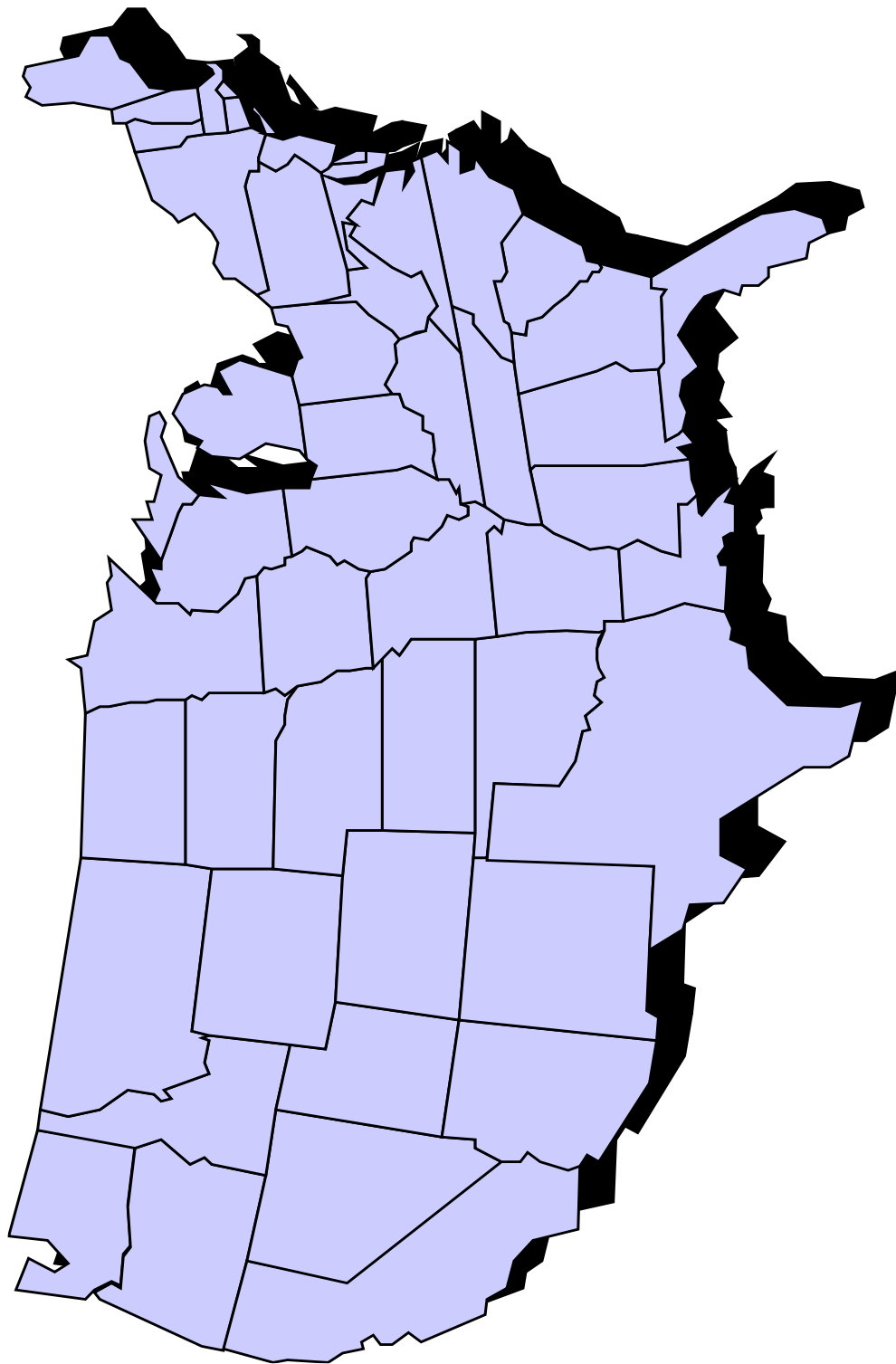
### Other Religious Overseas

- Japan ~ 5
- Korea ~ 3
- Rome ~ 2

### Major Personal Ministries

- Itinerant Preaching (parish missions and retreats)
- Hispanic Ministry
- Chaplaincies: hospitals and prisons
- Programs for at-risk young adults
- Weekend assistance to local parishes/pastors
- 4 parishes with schools in Chicago, Louisville and 2 in Birmingham
- 1 High school in Birmingham
- 4 Retreat centers in Detroit, Houston, Sierra Madre, Citrus Heights

### XXIII. Map of the Holy Cross Province



## XXIV. Sources and Resources

### Passionist Sources

The following print materials represent a first level of usable and dependable Paulacrucian and Passionist sources. In these are to be found a wealth of information on the life of Paul of the Cross and the history of the Passionists, his spirituality, his charism and the mission of Passionists today.

Daneo, Paul (of the Cross), *The Letters of St. Paul of the Cross*. Translated by Frederick Sucher and Roger Mercurio; edited by Laurence Finn and Donald Webber. Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 2000.

*Rule and Constitutions*, Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Rome, Italy, 1984.

Mercurio, Roger, *The Passionists*. Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1992.

Yuhaus, Cassian, *Compelled to Speak: The Passionists in America; - Origin and Apostolate*. Westminster, Maryland, Newman Press, 1967.

Spencer, Paul Francis, *As A Seal Upon Your Heart: The Life of St. Paul of the Cross, Founder of the Passionists*. Maynooth, Ireland: St. Paul's 1994.

Giorgini, Fabiano, *History of the Passionists, Vol. I*. Rome, Italy, Edizioni ECO. 1987.

Naselli, Carmelo A., *History of the Passionists, Vol. II*. Rome, Italy, Edizioni ECO. 1988.

Webber, Don, Editor: *Celebrating 150 Years of Passionist Ministry in North America and Beyond: 1852-2002*. Beauceville, Canada: Transcontinental Printing, 2002. This work presents vignettes of nearly all North American Passionist locations and associated agencies. It also has a good bibliography and a comprehensive listing of Passionist website addresses.

Carletti, Vincenzo, *The Challenge of the World: Atlas of the Passionist Missions*. Clusone, Italy: Tipolito FERRARI, 1988. An excellent introduction to the Passionists' international dimension.

### Videos

There are a number of helpful videos in circulation; some address the Founder and the Passionist charism while others are of more "local" interest. A partial listing includes:



*As A Seal Upon Your Heart: The Life and Mission of St. Paul of the Cross.* Narrated by Martin Sheen and produced by Paul Francis Spencer. This is an excellent biography shot on location in Italy.

*I Am A Passionist.* Produced for the American Sesquicentennial celebration.

*Our Passionist Family: A Faith Shared.* Produced by the Holy Cross Province Development Office, Chicago, Illinois.

*I Saw A Spark.* A Vocation Office production that continues to offer good, personal reflection on the meaning of Passionist life.

*Experience the Miracle.* By and about Holy Name Retreat Center, Houston, Texas.

*Citrus Heights.* By and about Christ the King Retreat Center, Citrus Heights, California

*Come, Spend Time with Me.* By and about St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center, Detroit, Michigan.

*A Conversation with Adam Cardinal Maida.* Produced by St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center in Detroit. Cardinal Maida reflects upon the value of retreats and shares his personal connections with the Passionists.

### **Other Resources**

Exploration of the Passionist charism, and of Passionist Founder Paul Daneo, invites and challenges one to a lifetime of study and prayer. Such an exploration must draw upon diverse traditions of learning – secular and ecclesial history, cultural studies, language, the many branches of theology and spirituality, etc. Where to begin so as not to be intimidated? The following works are recommended as reliable, thoughtful guides into the many fields that impinge upon comprehension of Paul of the Cross and his Passionists. These offer good treatments of many aspects of general theology and spirituality. And, they point the reader deeper with solid recommendations for further study.

Downey, Michael, ed. *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality.* The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1993.

Stuhlmüller, Carrol, ed. *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology.* The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1996.