

March 2024

Passionist News Notes

St. Paul of the Cross Province



Ordination to Priest of Deacon Cristian Joel Martinez Montalvo, CP - June 28



Dear Brothers, Associates and Colleagues,

We are pleased to announce the Ordination of Deacon Cristian Joel Martinez Montalvo, CP to the priesthood.

The ordination will take place at St. Gemma Parish in Carolina, P.R. on Friday, June 28, 2024 at 6:00pm. Cristian's Mass of Thanksgiving will be on Sunday, June 30th at 10:30am at Saint Sebastian Parish in Saint Sebastian, P.R.

Please keep Cristian in prayer as he enters this holy and joyous time.

In JXP,
Fr. Jim O'Shea, CP
Provincial



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A Lenten Message

By Fr. Victor Hoagland, CP



My dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends in the Passionist Family,

Greetings of peace and hope of God's closeness to you all!

Once again, we are confronted by the special season of **Lent**, during which we hear the call to ongoing conversion (metanoia), by which we are challenged to turn away from sin and choose to grow closer to God by loving Him and loving our neighbor as ourselves. The Gospel passage which is given at the beginning of Lent each year as a roadmap for our Lenten journey, places before our attention: **prayer, almsgiving, and fasting** as means by which we can love God and our neighbor as ourselves (cf. Mt. 6:1-6,16-18). This season is filled with the promise of new opportunities and new beginnings, powered by God's grace and presence. Let us seize this precious moment. As St. Paul urges: *"...we urge you not to let your acceptance of God's grace come to nothing. As God said, 'At the time of my favor, I have answered you; on the day of salvation, I have helped you'. Well, now is the real time of favor; now the day of salvation is here."* (2Cor. 6:1-2).

In this Lenten message, I would like to focus and share some reflections with you on the subject of **PRAYER**, particularly since Pope Francis has announced this year to be a **Year of Prayer**, in preparation for the Jubilee Year next year (2025).

Lent is an opportunity for our spiritual formation and discipline. To seize this opportunity, we need to be led and guided by the Spirit who facilitates our encounter with God. Like Jesus, we want to respond by accepting the call to go into the 'desert', driven by the Spirit (Mt. 4:1-13; Lk. 4:1-11). God is waiting for us, expecting us, offering us a time of restoration...a time of RETREAT...the chance for a fresh start in the spiritual life (cf. Hosea 2:16-17). The goal of this time is to seek and find the will of God over and beyond all the movements of our heart. St. Ignatius of Loyola says that two things are needed for this: i) **magnanimity**, i.e. a wide and open mind which is not confined to narrow horizons of small interests, and ii) **generosity**, i.e. the readiness to give without conditions and limits.

“Lent is an occasion, not so much for increased time given to prayer, as for a different prayer:

a prayer with that distinctive flavor which arises from a realization of who I am ‘in Christ’,

the unlimited potential in me for growth into Christ,

and the possibility of achieving it because of his power as risen Lord.”

~ Gregory Manly, CP/Anneliese Reinhard, MSC

Driven by the Spirit, God’s intention in the ‘desert’ is not to punish us but to purify us. In the desert, God will want to purify us of any excessive attachment we may have to consolation in prayer. If in prayer God blesses us with a lot of consolation (“spiritual highs”), there is a danger that we may seek and love *“the consolations of our God more than the God of our consolations”*, said St Teresa of Avila. In general, prayer in the desert will become less of us, and more of God.

The following are good indicators that our experience of ‘spiritual desert’ (dryness in prayer) is the purifying work of God:

- If during the time of dryness, we remain faithful to prayer.
- If our prayer is honest and flowing from the real stuff of our lives.
- If we are trying to integrate prayer and life.
- If we are trying to live a life of charity.
- If our prayer is helping us to be more loving.
- If we are genuinely trying to avoid sin and live our lives according to God’s Word.
- If we thirst, yearn, and have a desire for God as we walk in the desert.

As Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit (Mt. 4:1) to face the great issues of his life and mission before he entered into his ministry, so also, we too enter into this Lenten time to face the great issues of our life – God’s invitations and the evil attractions and allurements. In the **solitude** of the desert, we are meant to find the clarity and firmness which we shall need in the turmoil of actual life.

We read in all the gospels that Jesus would withdraw to deserted places and pray. While prayer was a common practice of his culture, Jesus nevertheless sought times of quiet, times of solitude. For any Christian who aspires toward union with God, SOLITUDE holds an extremely important place in life in that it is a pre-requisite for the communion one must keep both with God and with other people. Christian solitude is never a solitude *from* people, but a solitude *for* people.

“The desert does not mean the absence of people,

it means the presence of God.”

~ Carlo Carretto

The Trappist monk, Thomas Merton said: *“It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers...Solitude and silence teach me to love my brothers for what they are, not for what they say.”* ~ *The Sign of Jonas*

As Passionists, we know that one of the pillars upon which our Congregation is founded by St. Paul of the Cross, is **solitude**. For Paul, solitude was a cyclic journey *into his human heart (self), to the Divine Heart (God), to every human heart (others)*. It is linked to a call to community and evangelization. In a letter written to Canon Felice Pagliari in 1768, Paul of the Cross wrote:

“Our Congregation is established on this foundation...the vocation which God has given to her...our Rule obliges us after missions, retreats etc. to withdraw immediately into the Retreats of our solitude in order to recollect our spirit in prayer and fasting. Believe me, an evangelical worker who is a man of prayer, a friend of solitude and detached from all created things accomplishes more than a thousand others who are not such men...”

The Passion of the Earth: A Passionist Artist Calls Us to Ecological Consciousness

By Michael Nasello

.The Passion of the Earth is a painting by Michael Moran, CP, of the Passionist Province of St. Paul of the Cross (Eastern U.S.A.). He created it during the time he was living at the Passionist retreat house in Riverdale, NY, and had the opportunity to spend time in dialogue with Thomas Berry, CP. Those conversations, in part, inspired the creation of this powerful work. The painting portrays the environmental degradation created by the human community as an expression of the suffering of the Crucified One - the Crucified Earth. It poignantly portrays the interconnectedness of Creation and how every part of Creation affects all others. Michael invites us to interact with the painting as with any work of art, to let it speak to us, to let ourselves be moved at our depths, and to bring who and where we are to the painting as much as we bring the painting to whom and where we are. The painting was featured at the June 2023 Holy Cross Provincial Chapter in Sierra Madre, CA.

The painting is now available for display and reflection by request of ministry and community sites around both provinces. It is hoped that the painting will stimulate conversation about the ecological challenges of our time, will engage people in looking deeply at how these challenges pull not only at our intellectual and physical energies but our spiritual energy as well, and will prayerfully inspire people to a sense of awe at the power and intricacy of the universe.

May this powerful work of art inspire in us a new consciousness, a new creativity and a new energy to know we are as integral to Earth as Earth is to us. May we see and experience the Divine Presence in all Creation, and may our renewal bring Earth healing and peace.

For further information about Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, and the Passionist study guides that accompany it, please follow this link: www.passiochristi.org/laudato-si/.

The Passion of the Earth painting is on the next page



The Passion of the Earth painting by Michael Moran, CP

SPIRITUAL RETREAT

'You have to go deeper to go further'

**Holy Family
Retreat Center**

West Hartford, CT

[Website](#)

[Schedule](#)

**Our Lady of Florida
Spiritual Center**

North Palm Beach, FL

[Website](#)

[Schedule](#)

**St Pauls
Retreat Center**

Pittsburgh, PA

[Website](#)

[Schedule](#)

**Thomas Berry Place
Retreat House**

Jamaica, NY

[Website](#)

[Schedule](#)

The Passionist Retreat houses of St Paul of the Cross Province have recovered from the limiting effects of the the Covid Pandemic and are alive with retreatants who are experiencing the healing power of the spirit.

There are many different types of retreats and days of recollection available at these retreat houses.

Just click on the Retreat House near you to see what is available.

Fruits of the Passionist Synod in Toronto



For the past two years, the parish community of St. Gabriel, along with local Passionists and the Province, have engaged in a *Passionist Synod* exploring what it means to be a Passionist parish and what kind of leadership model would best serve the parish. The Synod called for more focus on the Passionist mission, as well as a more expansive leadership model that recognizes the gifts of all the baptized.

On January 21, 2024, the new team was enthusiastically blessed by the community. The team, practicing a collaborative spirit, will be centered in the spirituality of the Crucified and the call of the community to respond ever more boldly to the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor. The group is comprised of:

Rick Coles, co-mission director

Dennis Joseph, CP (THOM province)

Leanne Kloppenborg, co-mission director

Fatima Lee, Passionist Associate, Moderator of Mission Council

Nikki Malunas, youth minister

Paul Ruttle, CP, administrator

Maria Lucia Serrano, RSM, faith formation director

We congratulate this new team for their willingness to take a creative and courageous step forward at the service of the Charism and the Gospel.

Frutos del Sínodo Pasionista de Toronto



Durante los últimos dos años, la comunidad parroquial de San Gabiel, junto con los Pasionistas locales y la Provincia, han participado en un Sínodo Pasionista explorando lo que significa ser una parroquia Pasionista y qué tipo de modelo de liderazgo serviría mejor a la parroquia. El Sínodo pidió un mayor enfoque en la misión pasionista, así como un modelo de liderazgo más amplio que reconozca los dones de todos los bautizados.

El 21 de enero de 2024, el nuevo equipo fue bendecido con entusiasmo por la comunidad. El equipo, practicando un espíritu de colaboración, se centrará en la espiritualidad del Crucificado y en el llamado de la comunidad a responder cada vez más audazmente a los gritos de la tierra y a los gritos de los pobres. El grupo está compuesto por:

Rick Coles, codirector de misión

Dennis Joseph, CP (THOM province)

Leanne Kloppenborg, codirector de misión

Fatima Lee, Asociado Pasionista, Moderador del Consejo Misionero

Nikki Malunas, Ministra de juventud

Paul Ruttle, CP, administrador

Maria Lucia Serrano, RSM, Directora de formación de fe

Felicitemos a este nuevo equipo por su disposición a dar un paso creativo y valiente al servicio del Carisma y del Evangelio.

Passionist Family Formation e-Learning 2023-2024

Holy Cross and St. Paul of the Cross Provinces



MARCH PRESENTATION & REGISTRATION

Keeping Memory of the Passion of Jesus

March 14, 2024 Robin Ryan, C.P.



Holy Cross and St. Paul of the Cross Provinces offer the last of six presentations for our Passionist Family Formation e-Learning (PFFeL). Robin Ryan will help us reflect on the charism of the memory of the Passion -- what it meant for Paul of the Cross and what it might mean for us today. This will be an excellent opportunity to enhance our Lenten journey as we prepare for Holy Week.

Robin Ryan is a Passionist priest of St. Paul of the Cross Province and theologian who serves as Professor of Systematic Theology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and Director of the Master of Arts in Theology program. He earned a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts degrees at Catholic Theological Union and his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He is the author or editor of several books, including *God and the Mystery of Human Suffering*. Robin is a popular speaker at retreats, workshops and conferences throughout the country.

Session is on third Thursday of February and scheduled as follows:

7:30 -9:00 PM Eastern Time	5:30 -7:00 PM Mountain Time
6:30 -8:00 PM Central Time	4:30 -6:00 PM Pacific Time

REGISTRATION

Use this link to register for this series: <https://passionistshcp.wildapricot.org/event-5348404>

You will need to be registered (one time only) to receive a Zoom link for each live presentation.

Contact Fr. Don Webber, CP, at elearning@passionist.org if you have any questions.

May the Passion of Jesus Christ Be Always in Our Hearts