



22 NOVEMBER 2020

GREETING OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

on the occasion of

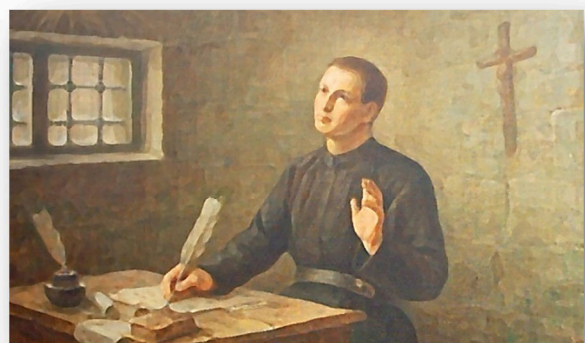
**THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FOUNDATION OF THE PASSIONIST CONGREGATION**

Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends,



On this very special day for us members of the Passionist Family and all those associated with the Passionist Congregation, I want to personally greet all of you from Rome as we commemorate and celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Passionist Congregation by St. Paul of the Cross.

It was on this day: 22 November 1720 that Bishop Arborio Gattinara of Alessandria in northern Italy dressed Paul Danei in a hermit's tunic, after which Paul retired to a small sacristy in the Church of St. Charles in Castellazzo. There he spent forty days in



retreat during which he recorded his physical and spiritual experiences in what we know as the ‘Spiritual Diary’. During this time, he also wrote the first Rule for the ‘*Poor of Jesus*’, which would later become the ‘*Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ*’ – commonly known as ‘*Passionists*’. This time in Castellazzo is considered to be the founding moment of the Passionist congregation and charism.

300 years later, on this day: 22 November 2020, the Passionist Congregation – now spread and present in over 60 nations – is marking this historical and spiritual event with the opening of a **Jubilee Year** – a grace accorded us by our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

Yes, the Jubilee Year is **a time of ‘grace’**: God’s free gift of His life and love. We want to recognize and accept this gift as **an opportunity** and **a call** to fulfill the Lord’s desire that “*all may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1Tim. 2:4) which, for St. Paul of the Cross, is realized in the Passion of Jesus. The commemoration of our Jubilee is primarily **a call to conversion** and **an opportunity for renewal and newness of life**. Let not this moment of grace pass us by; rather, let us seize the opportunity to accept God’s offer of the fullness of life.

The theme guiding the 300th anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation of the Passion is: **Renewing Our Mission – Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope** which implies and presupposes **the personal and communal renewal of ourselves**. However, let us remember that we cannot genuinely renew ourselves by our own efforts, without the power of God’s grace which is offered us in the Gospel **call to conversion**. This is the path forward. Conversion, the renewal of mind

and heart, turning to the Lord, is a response to the grace of God and an assurance of God's offer of life in its fullness.

Contemplating the Crucified, let us seek to listen prayerfully and to identify and reject all that is *self-serving* (inward looking) in our personal, communal and ministerial lives. Let us choose, rather, to cultivate 'seeds' of *self-emptying* (reaching out) which will produce core values for our life today: prayer (contemplation, meditation, solitude), community life, solidarity, inclusion, hospitality, dialogue, compassion, concern for the poor, hope and reconciliation.



The Jubilee Year also offers us the opportunity to probe once again the mind and motive of our Founder: St. Paul of the Cross, seeking to discover through his spirituality and

teachings the secret to true life and the way to God's compassionate and merciful heart which, he assures us, is found in the Passion of Jesus: *"the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love."* Our learnings can hopefully motivate and inspire us to be contemplative-apostolic missionaries with a renewed enthusiasm, attentive to the Spirit and responding to the signs of our times in obedience and service to God's salvific mission.

300 years on, standing on the shoulders of our Holy Founder and all those faithful Passionist men and women who have gone before us, let this Jubilee be an occasion to renew our

prophetic commitment and reignite our missionary mandate to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus as the life-giving power and wisdom of God. Like St. Paul of the Cross, we too are convinced that in *the Passion of Jesus* we can find meaning and see possibilities for a renewed future. In *the Passion of Jesus*, we find *hope* for visioning and seeing life differently!

May St. Paul of the Cross intercede for us.

May our Congregation continue to be blessed and flourish; and

*“may the Passion of Jesus Christ
be always in our hearts”.*



~ Fr. Joachim Rego, C.P.
Superior General

Given at SS. Giovanni e Paolo Retreat
Rome
22 November 2020