

Passionist Nuns

Pittsburgh



*“In a generous spirit,
I will keep Him company
on the Cross.”*

*-St. Paul of the Cross,
Founder of the Passionists*

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CHARISM – MEMORY OF THE PASSION



CHARISM

The Congregation of Passionist Nuns was founded in Italy by Saint Paul of the Cross in 1771. The special charism of the Founder is expressed in these words:

“I desire only to be crucified with Jesus”

What does this mean? This means that a Passionist is called to become *a living memorial of Jesus Crucified – Memoria Passionis – Memory of the Passion*. A Passionist Nun keeps alive the memory of Christ’s Passion in her heart, mind, and most of all, in her life.

The Passionist Nun surrenders her life to Jesus Crucified, that He may live His Passion in her. In this way, He transforms her into the image of His Holy Love.

The Passion of Jesus Christ is the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love. St. Paul of the Cross realized that the Death and Resurrection of Christ is an inseparable unity. He always wanted his Nuns to participate in the Passion in the festive light of the triumph of the Cross.



Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul of the Cross gathered together Mother Mary Crucified and her first ten companions that they might proclaim the love of Jesus Crucified by their hidden lives of solitude, prayer, poverty, and penance.

ROLE IN THE CHURCH

Jesus Christ is the great Contemplative of the Father. In His Paschal Mind and Heart, He adores and contemplates His Father. From this loving



contemplation, there springs forth His burning desire to serve the redemptive needs of the world. The same contemplative openness to the Father and attentiveness to the redemptive needs of the world continues in Christ’s Body the Church. For the whole Church of God is called to share in the contemplative life of Jesus. However, by a special grace of the Spirit, some persons are called to give a more intense expression to this contemplative character of the

Church. They withdraw into solitude in order to give themselves to God alone through constant prayer and ready penance. Such is the role of the Passionist Nuns in the contemporary Church.

LOVE

In imitation of Mary, the Queen of Apostles, the Passionist Nun’s life is an apostolate of love. She is primarily a sign of that perfect charity to which the whole Church is called. Love of God by the mere fact of its presence is a power to purify and redeem the world. By her life, she witnesses to the reality of God’s love and silently draws men to Christ. St. Paul of the Cross wrote to Mother Mary Crucified, the first Passionist Nuns’ Superior: “Above every other thing, let holy charity shine forth among you.”

SOLITUDE

The Passionist Nun separates herself from the world not for reasons of alienation but in order to be more deeply united with the world. In seeking God alone, she finds all others in the Heart of Christ. Her solitude is a sharing in the solitude of



Christ Who withdrew into the desert and Who often went to the mountain to pray alone to the Father.

However, it is especially the solitude of Christ’s Passion in which the Passionist Nun shares. This Passion-solitude is really a communion because Christ’s agonizing solitude in His Passion created anew the communion between His Father and sinful mankind. St. Paul of the Cross envisioned the enclosure as intimately connected with this spirit of solitude. Religious cloister was, for St. Paul of the Cross, a religious sacrifice – an act of worship.

PRAYER



The Passionist Nun seeks God through constant prayer which is her participation in the Paschal prayer of Christ. The heart of her life is the Eucharist, which contains all the fruits of the Passion. Called to speak unendingly with the Lord, the Passionist Nun, like Mary, spends her life listening to the Word of God, pondering that Word in her heart and responding to that Word with unconditional obedience.



In the 1700's St. Paul of the Cross beheld the Sorrowful Mother in a black robe with this SIGN over her heart.

The white heart surmounted by a cross signifies the purity of heart that should characterize those who are devoted to the Passion of Christ.

The cross indicates that hearts dedicated to Christ Crucified must be at the foot of the Cross and intimately united to it.

The three words within the heart are written in the languages common at the time of Jesus: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Jesu, would have been pronounced "Yeshu" in Hebrew. The second word is a Greek contraction of the word Christ. Passio is the word Passion in Latin.

The three nails represent the sufferings of Christ and all who are one with Him on Calvary.

The black background is a reminder of our mourning for the death of Jesus and all that made it necessary.

The SIGN represents the motto of the Passionists:

May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.



MAY THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST BE ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS!



POVERTY

In her solitude, she shares in the poverty of the Paschal Christ – that deepest poverty which in Jesus is the self-emptying poverty for the sake of love. The Passionist Nun enriches God's people on earth with His grace.



PENANCE

The Passionist Nun lives a life of conversion, cultivating a sense of sin in the presence of Christ Crucified, changing her mind, heart, and will to be in harmony with Christ. Her life, united intensely as it is with Jesus Crucified, has a satisfactory value for the world. She helps to fill up those things which are wanting to the sufferings of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church. She bears about in her body and spirit



the dying state of Jesus in order that she might manifest the risen life of Christ. By her vocation, she mourns for the sufferings of Christ today because God is dead in the consciences of so many people.

INTERCESSION

The Passionist Nuns' Community is a center of intercession for humanity. They pray for the whole world, which is, as St. John Chrysostom says, "the supreme form of friendship."



The Passionist Nun is no stranger to the world: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts." (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, No. 1).

The Passionist Nun sustains the missionary activity of the Church. For the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, No. 40 reminds us that "Religious communities of the contemplative . . . life have so far played and still do play, a very great role in the evangelization of the world. By their prayers, works

of penance and sufferings, contemplative communities have a very great importance in the conversion of souls. For it is God who sends workers into His harvest when He is asked to do so (cf. Mt 9:38), who opens the minds of non-Christians to hear the Gospel (cf. Acts 16:14), and who makes the word of salvation fruitful in their hearts." (cf. 1 Cor 3:7).

WITNESS

By her contemplative life and love with Mary at the foot of the Cross, she "gives clear witness to the desire for a heavenly home and keeps that desire green among the human family." (Pastoral Constitution on the Church



in the Modern World, No. 38). In a world which is so engrossed in technology, she preserves a sense of wonder and awe in the face of the mystery of God's existence and presence. As such, she is a sign to those who suffer temptations against faith, hope, and love.

Finally, the Passionist Nun is a sign who proclaims the **Death of the Lord until He comes.** Her whole life is

nothing other than a journey to the Heavenly Jerusalem as she learns to know Jesus in the fellowship of His sufferings and in the power of His Resurrection. Daily she proclaims to all the People of God the reality of the Kingdom to come!

VOWS

The Passion of Jesus is the light in which and through which the Passionist Nun lives her evangelical life. In addition to the usual religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, she professes a vow of perpetual enclosure and a vow to promote devotion to the Sacred Passion. By this vow, she binds herself to ponder the Passion of Jesus in order to enter into it more deeply and to become a more vital witness of God's redeeming love in the world.



The Passionist Nuns "live their vows in the **atmosphere of Christ's sacrificial love** and offer themselves with Him to the Father for the salvation of their brothers and sisters." -Constitutions No. 10

DAILY LIFE

Eucharist | Divine Office | Prayer | Work
Spiritual Reading | Recreation