**II° Capitolo Generale delle Monache Passioniste**

Homily for the Opening Eucharistic Celebration May 3, 2025

Fr. Giuseppe Adobati, cp

Dear Mother President and Dearest Sisters, thank you for the invitation to preside over this opening celebration of your 2nd General Chapter, in which you will be called to live a spirit of listening and discernment in synodal style, guided by the Holy Spirit, to verify and plan your Vocation, Life and Mission.

This event is celebrated during the Jubilee Year, a time of special Grace for the Church, in which all the baptized are invited to return to the origin of Christian Hope, which is the Cross of Christ. We Passionists [men and women] “are already under the Cross,” because our Vocation is born and developed from there, with the commitment to make Memory of the Passion, for our own and our neighbor's conversion. But this charismatic identity of ours must be renewed with generosity and confidence as the title of your Chapter reminds us: “Remain rooted in my love.”

Today also marks the Feast of Apostles Philip and James, those who, as Paul recalls in the first reading, *“transmitted and proclaimed what they had received,”* namely the Gospel of Jesus Christ *“who died for our sins according to the Scriptures and was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures.”*

We too are called to live this “apostolic tradition,” receiving and giving the Faith as a free gift, rooted in salvation history. I think you have chosen the opening of your Chapter precisely today, 03 May 2025, to commemorate 03 May 1771, the day of the foundation of the first Passionist Monastery in Corneto di Tarquinia (VT). But, in turn that choice, commemorated the Feast of the Holy Cross, as Fr. Giovanni Maria Cioni reminds us: *“It was therefore elected for the sacred function on the 3rd day of May, dedicated to the Finding of the Holy Cross, which precisely fell on a Friday, so that those new brides of the Crucified would dress in mourning on the day of the Holy Cross and always remember that they had to continually make remembrance of the beloved pains of the sweet Jesus.”*

This “symbolic date” thus evokes your call to the Memoria Passionis, figuratively expressed in the logo of this General Chapter, which also alludes to the vision Lucia Burlini had, many years before the foundation of the Tarquinia Monastery. In her testimony, Lucia writes: “It seemed to me that I found myself on Calvary, in which I saw Love Crucified and at the foot of the Cross a multitude of souls, weeping like widowed Turtle Doves over their dead Spouse. Some were wiping the Blood from the wounds of Jesus, others were closing his open wounds, others were clinging to the Most Holy Cross and taking up the drops of Blood with which they embalmed their hearts. Still others, like innocent Doves, were building their nest in the holy Wounds of the Savior....”

Lucia Burlini's mystical vision which took place in 1751, greatly consoled St. Paul of the Cross in his desire to have a Passionist Monastery, but it did not save him from problems and delays in its realization, until he almost gave up altogether. But the Founder's faith and patience never failed. This is how he wrote in 1770 to Fr. Tommaso Sagneri, in reference to the difficulties of founding the Monastery: *“As the great works of God always encounter great difficulties and adversities, so it is fitting for me to struggle a little more, so that the greater glory of God may shine more brightly, and the great work may have a stable foundation.”*

The example and confidence of the Founder, found consonance in the first eleven Passionist Nuns who, despite the waiting and uncertainties, and even the extreme poverty of the beginnings, did not back down, did not go into crisis, but with impressive heroism initiated “the materialization” of the Charism of the Passion in the mode of a cloistered monastic life.

The example of these early Passionist religious is an invitation for you to believe in the Charism of the Passion and to be all in agreement in trying to carry it forward in our time, knowing that it is possible, and that this is what the Lord Jesus is asking of you. Certainly you also face problems and difficulties, but with God's Grace, good will and the cooperation of all, you will be able to live out your religious call, as your Constitutions attest:

No. 4 *“They are called, within the Church, to be signs of the love of Jesus Crucified toward the Father and toward men. They assiduously contemplate the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, “the greatest and most stupendous work of divine love”;*

N. 6 *“In a world in which many do not at all perceive or else explicitly reject the intimate and vital bond of man with God” (GS 19) the religious of the Passion, by the special grace of the Spirit, are called to witness to the absolute primacy of God (Cf. GS 21). And to those who feel ever more keenly a desire to seek and encounter God, the Nuns communicate the experience and fruit of their contemplation in a special way by teaching them how to keep the memory of Jesus' Passion, alive in their hearts. They do this within the limits and in the spirit of the Rule, according to various circumstances and in a style compatible with their contemplative life”* (CP Nuns' Rules and Constitutions, Part Two).

Your vocation is therefore strongly “apostolic,” for it aims not only at your sanctification, but at healing the men and women of our time afflicted by the modern “diseases” of superficiality and materialism, offering them a pathway for meditating on the Passion.

In this regard, I point out that, for several years now, I have seen growing in Rome (as I think in other cities as well) various proposals for “meditation,” usually of the Oriental, Buddhist, Zen, etc., presented as a source of well-being, reintegration, reconciliation. I don't know how many people follow these initiatives, but I think they are a clear symptom of the need of people today (who suffer from anxiety and dissatisfaction, and are increasingly “dehumanized,” violent, angry...) to rediscover their own identity, to discover that they are loved by God the Father, redeemed by Jesus Christ, and because of this, can live their lives with confidence and joy.

We Passionists have a clear and strong proposal to offer to our contemporaries, precisely through meditation on the Passion, which illuminates the present, giving calm, peace and motivation, but above all puts us in touch with the life of God, eternal life, conquered for us by His Son Jesus. *“Standing at the foot of the cross, keeping one's gaze fixed on the One who stands crucified for us, causes the person contemplating and mourning to experience an ineffable pentecost: one feels the Spirit of grace and consolation pouring out upon oneself, upon one's home or community (cf. Zech 12:10). And the Spirit ushers one into the world of the divine. Contemplative monastic life lived at this level is priceless, simply sublime.”* *[[1]](#footnote-1).*

May the Holy Spirit, therefore, enliven and guide these your days of listening, dialogue and discernment, so that you too may renew your adherence to the Vocation and be among those who experience Jesus' promise to his disciples, *“Verily I say unto you, he that believeth in me shall also do the works that I do, and shall do greater works than these, for I go unto the Father.”*

May Mary Mother of Sorrows and St. Paul of the Cross, our Founder, support your chapter work so that, rooted in the tree of Christ's Cross, you may always live and bear witness to Jesus' Passion which is *“the greatest and most stupendous work of Divine Love.”*

Amen.

1. Cf. Max Anselmi Passionista, *Camminerò in semplicità di cuore. Vita e storia della passionista lucchese Gemma Eufemia Giannini.* a cura delle Sorelle di S. Gemma, Lucca 2007, pp. 40-4 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)