

PASSIO

NEWSLETTER OF THE PASSIONIST FAMILY
IN ENGLAND, WALES & SWEDEN



‘Being a Passionist invites us to see everything through the lens of the love of God, a self-surrendering love which embraces suffering and death so that resurrection life bursts through into this world’

John Kearns CP



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The icon of Our Lady of Holy Hope on the front cover was written by iconographer Noreen Thornhill for The Sisters of the Cross and Passion for the occasion of Sr. Susan's First Profession of Vows at the Briery, Ilkley, in July 2021. Devotion to Mary, under the title 'Mother of Holy Hope', has been practised in the Passionist Congregation since its beginning. Mary is depicted as holding the child Jesus who has a cross in his hand, recalling the preaching of St Paul of the Cross that 'the whole life of Jesus was a cross' and the life of a disciple of Jesus means remaining on the cross with him.

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EDITORIAL

by Paschal Somers

None of us could have imagined when reading John's editorial piece for 'Passio #7' (Lent 2021) as he shared his hopes for the Congregation of the Passion's Tercentenary year (which began in November 2020) that it would be his final contribution to this newsletter. It seems right, therefore, to begin this issue, with a short tribute to John in thanksgiving for the wonderful example he gave to all he met, especially through his service as a Passionist over so many years:

God is Love: A Tribute to John Kearns

The requiem mass for John Kearns CP was held in his home parish at The Abbey Church, Erdington, Birmingham on Friday 7th May 2021. It was followed by interment in the churchyard close by. During the readings for the mass, which were chosen by family members and confreres, we heard that 'The virtuous man, though he die before his time, will find rest' (Wis 4:7) and found comfort in the fact that John was, indeed, a virtuous man. We also heard St Paul's words about preaching a 'crucified Christ' – something to which John devoted his entire Passionist ministry – and that 'God's foolishness is wiser than human

wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength' (1 Cor. 1:25) – surely a secret known to all the saints throughout the ages and well known by John too. The Gospel acclamation encouraged us with the words of Jesus to Lazarus' sister, 'I am the resurrection and the life says the Lord. Whoever believes in me will never die' (Jn 11:25) and the Gospel message, 'Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother...' (Jn 19:25) reminded us of John's ministry to the crucified ones of today, especially those to whom he ministered in his prison work. The Gospel ended with these words, 'And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit' (Jn 19:30), urging us to pray for a 'double portion' of John's spirit as we continue our

Christian journey. Perhaps, though, it is the response to the psalm that best captures the essence of John's life and Passionist ministry, 'No greater love can we have than to lay down our lives and to follow the path of the Lord'. This is what John did so faithfully and to an admirable extent. It would be impossible to do justice to an appreciation of John's life without mentioning the word 'love'. Those of us who were blessed enough to have known John will have experienced him as a quiet and unintrusive presence of unconditional love within our lives. Quite simply, that John was a lovely and loving human being is all you need to know and everything else is a footnote to that fact.

John's life was a Gospel: not just Good News, but the best possible and only unambiguously Good News there is – because it witnessed in a gentle and unassuming way to God's love for us. John's life was one giant

reassuring hug from God that all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well. Not that it bypassed the cross in any way. His short illness and death earlier this year are an obvious testament to this fact. John often spoke of living our lives 'between the cross and resurrection'. That is to say, there is more of Holy Saturday than anything else about the quality of life as we live it here and now, accompanying the Crucified Christ in his Crucified People on a Crucified Earth but always having faith that our journey's end lies beyond the garden tomb with the One who is Lord of all. John's life was a faithful 'yes' to the Crucified and Risen One and, in this, he was a true 'Son of the Passion'. Rest in Peace, dear friend.

*Paschal Somers
is the Passionist
Development Worker
for St Joseph's
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Our hearts remain filled with hope, hope in the Crucified One who is also the Risen One, the One always in solidarity with those who are crucified and with the earth which we continue to crucify. Hope which resides even in frail, sinful humanity, made new in the Holy Spirit.

- John Kearns CP



PARTNER GATHERING

Passionist Partners Gathering 2021 by Paschal Somers

Following its cancellation last year, it was wonderful to be able to hold the Passionist Partners Gathering at Minsteracres Retreat Centre from 13th to 15th September 2021. Although with twenty attendees the number of participants was lower than in previous years, there was still representation from eight of the Partner Groups and it proved to be a memorable few days.

This year's meeting had a eucharistic shape to it as Partners were invited to share the concerns and hopes that they had brought with them to the gathering. There was also the opportunity to reflect on the scripture readings for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and what they might say

about the situation in which the various Partner ministries are carried out. In another session, those present were invited, in terms of an offertory, to consider what gifts or talents they have to offer to God and to one another. Finally, the whole event culminated in the liturgy of the eucharist and a very moving sharing of the body and the blood of Christ.

At the end of our time together, one of the Partners remarked on how it had been 'a truly valuable and nurturing time'. Before we departed our beautiful venue, action points were agreed for supporting and strengthening the Partnership going forward.

WALKING

WITH THE CRUCIFIED

by Mary Chojnowski

Mary Chojnowski runs 'The Learning Refuge' which provides on-the-ground support for refugees in the Paphos region of Cyprus with her husband, Leigh.

From 2015-16 many Syrian refugees began migrating to escape war, persecution, loss of homes and employment, seeking peace and a new start in Cyprus. Families arrived here

in large numbers by boat from Syria or via Turkey or from refugee camps in Greece.

A small group of women volunteers in Paphos decided to get together and do something practical to help. The key women involved in starting The Learning Refuge were Rehab Alhabrat, Rachael Pettus, Wendy Burdon and myself, Mary Chojnowski.

Rehab Alhabrat is a Damascus-born volunteer, mum of four who invited us volunteers into her home to teach. She is now an official Social Outreach Volunteer working for UNHCR (The Learning Refuge is the "safe space" for UNHCR dealing with family advice & difficulties).

Rachael Pettus is a co-founder who pushed us to establish ourselves in a rented apartment, and a volunteer teacher of Greek and English as well as an avid community activist.

Wendy Burdon, the "then-Chair" of Caritas Paphos and beloved mother to many beneficiaries, flagged up more families who needed extra support and still supports us from her "retirement".

Wearing my "Cyprus Mosaics" hat, I was busy making mosaic commissions for churches, exhibitions, and teaching mosaic-art in schools where I saw the problems of the refugee children. Meeting Syrian mum Rehab sparked the idea to help children who were having difficulties at school.



Today we have over 20 active volunteers and many more community supporters. A mixed group of Cypriot, African, Syrian, and British volunteers help out - driving, delivering, gardening, cleaning, teaching and fundraising.



Our initial programme was homework, art, play and the desire to offer all sorts of practical help. Later, informal English and Greek for mothers... it became clear that families loved and needed the atmosphere of togetherness, sociability and play. We celebrate birthdays, we have Christmas and Easter fun, we enjoy day trips. We encourage families to partake in wider community life through the Learning Refuge. We have staged art exhibitions and performed song. We plan a theatre performance. Our friendships with local media, businesses and the public have been essential to our growth and success.



Currently many more people (now from Cameroon, Nigeria, Guinea, India, as well as more Syrian, Kurdish, Egyptian etc) are arriving daily in Paphos from the refugee camps. Numbers far outweigh the speed and ability of local government to house and process benefits, so local charities and humanitarian organisations are stretched to cope. The Learning Refuge was very fortunate to receive help last year from The Passionists UK through the late John Kearns, our wise and gentle supporter, enabling us to rent a larger place and van/people carrier. We are now in the process of registering as a community-led volunteer group, not as an NGO ourselves, which will allow the Learning Refuge the flexibility to provide help where it is needed, and to offer our unique range of programmes to help other charities and humanitarian organisations in a very challenging environment.

We now run a group for teenage girls every week, experimenting with jewellery making, sewing, painting and whatever they wish. It's time free from home duties for the girls and a chance for them to interact freely with their peers.



This year's new project was the sewing centre. Volunteer Anne Brown sourced good second-hand sewing machines and we collect fabrics & equipment thanks to kind local people of Paphos. We have two machines at the centre, two more promised to come, and two machines in the homes of Ruth and Hawzhin.

Hawzhin is a mother of two and arrived from 2 years in Pournana Refugee camp last year. Dad seeks work daily. With no car and two babies, we felt she needed support. She has amazed us by producing lovely bags and purses. We help with household items and hope to sell her bags through the Learning Refuge fundraisers.

Ruth is a single Cameroonian mum to a baby boy with Down Syndrome born here in Cyprus. Separated from her two older children, she wanted creative opportunities at home to help her focus on a better future and reunite her family. Ruth has great religious fervour and says she wishes to help us with funding if she sells her products.



A jewel in our crown is the mini chapel at the end of our garden. It is a modern architectural wonder, highly unusual in its design as an Orthodox chapel. Built by our landlord's family, it was running into a state of neglect and so we are honoured to care for the building now and escape into its beautiful shade for moments of peace and prayer under the golden icon of "Panagia" (Mary & child Jesus).



We know our families' needs, and at the Learning Refuge we collect school uniforms & bags, household items such as curtains, furniture, bedding, kitchen tools, clothes, and shoes. With a dedicated room for collections, volunteers fill and beneficiaries empty. On average we provide a van full of household help to 2 or 3 families per week.

A volunteer chef Neil (also driver) joined our team providing ready meals for a few families in difficulty. This is another aspect of our work which will undoubtedly flourish over time.

We have also begun transforming a large garden, with a local French-Lebanese community gardener Joan Laure, who uses forest garden techniques (water saving & high

nutrition). Workshops for the children and plant zones have begun and the long-term aim is to create a community garden producing nutritious food for our families too.

Mary Chojnowski – runs 'The Learning Refuge' which provides on-the-ground support for refugees in the Paphos region of Cyprus.





SPOTLIGHT

on Mark Robin Hoogland CP

Mark Robin is the Provincial of Holy Hope Province which ministers in the Netherlands and North Germany

What is one word that you would use to describe yourself?

Loyal

What one memory do you most treasure?

Only one...? At the end of our profession liturgy my classmate of the novitiate and I played the Magnificat on flute and recorder together with his former music students. It was like we were standing on a cloud!

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Relax and enjoy also what you receive!

Which person (living or dead) would you most like to meet and why?

In 1996, participating in a memorial walk of London's fascist history, I met a man who revealed himself as an agnostic Jew. After a while he asked me: "Have you ever considered becoming a priest?" I never even told him I was a Catholic, a Passionist or a deacon. His face I do not remember, but ever since I wonder: was it Jesus, walking with me, encouraging me?

What is the most important thing you have learnt in the past year?

Do not just believe in God's call, but also share what you see as God's call with others, so that they may support you in responding to it. I learned that it works and that it is enriching for all. This is how we began our new Passionist mission to the Portuguese speaking migrants in the city of Rotterdam (the Netherlands), in December 2020.

Brown sauce or red sauce?

As a Dutchman I consider it quite risky entering into a sensitive, typically

English discussion ;-). But, frankly speaking, I cannot deny that I prefer "sambal manis" i.e. a red spicy Indonesian sauce (or paste, rather), with a touch of sweetness. It is "the best of both worlds"!

When did 'God' become more than a word to you?

"God" has always been "You/Thou" for me, i.e. relational. This is also how I was raised. And through good and bad experiences/encounters, prayer/liturgy and study/reflection I began to realise how "God" is for me, with me and within me and uniting me with my fellow human beings – a never ending journey of faith, hope and love.

How does your faith shape your work?

My faith gives meaning to all I do and undergo, my achievements and my failures as well. I cannot imagine how I could live without it.

If you could go anywhere in the world right now where would it be and why?

Due to the covid-19 pandemic I cannot give my annual retreat to the Passionist novices in Brasil. Sharing thoughts, experiences and insights with these young men seeking to live from the Passionist charism is a true blessing and I miss it.

If you were about to be castaway on a desert island, what three items would you take with you?

Hopefully not indefinitely... Anyway, I would choose to take with me the book without end: the Bible. Secondly, music without end: Händel's Dixit Dominus (all versions please – and device to play it). Finally, binoculars, in order to better see what is here and now and what is to come.



Over the last few months, the focus of FaithJustice has been on supporting the Climate Relay, an initiative of the Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN), a self-organised group of young people in their twenties. In the Autumn of 2020, they decided to take on the daunting challenge of organising a walk from the G7 summit in Cornwall to the COP26 summit in Glasgow.

The Passionist grant fund was able to offer them some start-up funding to get this project off the ground, combined with plenty of my own working hours to assist them.

The walk set off from near Carbis Bay on 14th June and it is scheduled to reach Glasgow on 30th October.

My most active involvement was on the section of the relay from Oxford to Birmingham in late August. I took the lead in organising this part of the walk. Asking churches for accommodation, planning routes, finding support drivers, and most crucially recruiting walkers to join the relay either for a day or a few days were all part of my remit. However, I was ably assisted by many good people.

Walking those eight days was, of course, hard work but, above all, it was a source of profound joy. About 55 people of all ages (and three dogs) walked some of the route. A similar number of people offered us food, a bed for the night, or other forms of help. Seeing such energy for climate

action was very heartening.

The act of walking and receiving hospitality has a long tradition in faith history. Since time began, human beings have set out on foot to walk pilgrimages. There is something special about walking which slows us down and connect us with the world in which we are living. Certainly, it was a powerful experience to see the landscape slowly change from industrialised countryside to housing, to factories, to urban centres, and so on. We also saw great differences in how people live. Pilgrimage forces us to simplify, to let go of being able to have everything and to do everything. It reminds us that there is much we need to learn about simplifying our lives if we are going to live better on this earth.

The experience of welcome was especially memorable. A reminder, perhaps, that ultimately everything is gift and that we inhabit all our spaces,

not as owners but as guests passing through, yet also invited to participate and be creative. How much of our current crisis has been born out of forgetting that we do not own our earth and it is not ours to do with as we please?

As the relay makes its way northwards, please find out if it passes near you (yccn.uk) and, if you are able to do so, join them for some part of the journey.

And please continue to pray for a collective waking up and rising up to this moment. We would be naïve to place all our hope in the leaders' gathering at COP26, but it remains a crucial moment in this entire process of climate action.

*by Matthew Neville,
Young Adult Outreach
Worker for St Joseph's
Province*



INSIGHT

by Kevin Gallagher

Refugee Community Sponsorship

I'm fairly sure very few of you reading this will be avid Daily Mail readers but you may have seen one inexcusable front page which headlined "The Swarm on our



Streets" or the headline from the Daily Express, "The Invaders". Or how about Nigel Farage's "Breaking Point" poster during the Brexit campaign? They were of course referring to asylum seekers and refugees.

Again, I'm sure you will have also seen those harrowing pictures of refugees crossing the channel and that disturbing picture of 3-year old Syrian boy, Alan Kurdi, lying lifeless on a Mediterranean beach. Who could not be moved by such scenes and who would not want to be a participant, rather than just an observer, in doing something to alleviate this global tragedy?

But what can we practically do? Of course we can donate money to refugee charities or perhaps raise awareness with others on social media. All good of course, but how about forming a local community group to adopt and resettle a refugee family in your local area.

In July 2016, the Government refugee "Community Sponsorship" scheme was officially launched at Lambeth Palace, with the Archbishop of Canterbury welcoming a family to live in a house in the grounds of the palace. Since then, many community groups all over the UK have welcomed refugee families into their local community through this scheme. Putting a Christian community at the heart of a refugee family's journey to a

new life in the UK is a wonderful and life giving Christian witness to Jesus's call to reach out with compassion to our sisters and brothers on the margins. And who could be more marginalised than a refugee family presently stuck in a refugee camp with no hope of ever returning to their home country?

WE ARE PART OF THE UK-WIDE COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROJECT, IN WHICH COMMUNITY GROUPS TAKE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RESETTLEMENT FOR A REFUGEE FAMILY.

A group of Christians from Portsmouth, of which I am a part, has already formed a small ecumenical team called PompeyReset to adopt and resettle a refugee family in our city. The name originates from "Pompey" which is the nickname for Portsmouth and "Reset" which is short for resettlement. From meeting the family at the airport, arranging schools for the children, arranging English lessons and offering friendship, through to full settled independence as part of their local community, our group takes responsibility

for the family. Each member in the team is responsible for a certain area of resettlement, such as access to benefits, English language training, befriending, education etc. The group makes a commitment for two years, during which time we aim to help the family achieve independence.

We are part of the UK-wide Community Sponsorship project, in which community groups take on the responsibility of resettlement for a refugee family, most likely originating from Syria. These could be various kinds of community groups, a parish, a sports club, book club etc. Our "community group" is an ecumenical group of Christians from different churches coming together to put our faith into action, but we also know that the project will have a transformative effect on the receiving community.

If you are interested in getting involved in this life-giving refugee project and putting your faith into real action or just interested in this issue in general, please get in touch with me at apprenticeboy@gmail.com

Until recently, Kevin worked for Caritas and is also a member of the Community of the Passion





HOUSE OF MERCY *by John Thornhill*

In 2020, the Passionists in England, Wales and Sweden provided funding to the Passionist Province of the Assumption of Mary (Poland) to support their mission in the Ukraine. The House of Mercy has been developed in an area where there is great poverty and limited state support and assisting its ministry was very close to the heart of our late provincial, John Kearns CP.

Today the House of Mercy, financed by the Polish Province of Passionists and supported by benefactors and friends from other countries, has twenty-five permanent residents. Among them, six residents who require 24-hour nursing and medical care due to chronic illness. They are looked after by three Sisters of Charity as well as Passionists and volunteers from Poland.

In addition, there is a social centre for children and young people in the House and about forty young people use it every day. They can do their homework here, obtain support for school and family, receive material support, and eat a hot meal. Thanks to the work of the Sisters, and volunteers, young people can participate in activities developing their talents and skills. The House of Mercy also always has four rooms available for women escaping from domestic violence can seek shelter. This year, thanks to the support of benefactors, the House of Mercy has managed to renovate the roof, install a fire protection system, build a fence around our property, construct garages and utility rooms with a large hall for young people and developed part of the garden.



CARE



SUPPORT



MERCY

ST PAUL OF THE CROSS

Reflection by Paul Fogarty



**'OH, WHAT HAVE I SEEN?
— MY CHILDREN IN
ENGLAND, — MY
RELIGIOUS IN ENGLAND!'**

Late in his life, having spent at least fifty years praying for this country, St Paul of the Cross was granted some kind of revelation in a time of ecstatic prayer during Mass. All he was able to express afterwards was the overwhelming joy of knowing his religious would one day work in England. The episode is often linked to Blessed Dominic's ministry, but I've been wondering lately what exactly it was that Fr Paul was given to know. The Apostle Paul teaches us that such extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit are never "private" but are, in fact, gifts intended for the up-building of the whole Church. We are able, then, to derive grace in our own time from reflecting prayerfully and imaginatively on the incident. For me, it has been a very helpful way of entering into the Jubilee theme of Gratitude.

My own story with the Passionists has deep roots. My family comes from

Sutton, in St Helens, and have been blessed to know Passionists since the beginnings of their ministry there. I was named after St Paul of the Cross and keep 19th October as my special patronal feast. Perhaps inevitably, I asked to join the congregation in my twenties and lived for a while in the Liverpool Inner City community in Granby Street. Although the Congregation of the Passion was not to be my permanent home, I remain inspired by St Paul's life and writings. The "Memoria Passionis" has been at the heart of my spiritual life, and I have tried to make it the guiding principle in my choices. Now in my fifties, I still haven't worked out exactly how I am to live out that principle and often reflect for inspiration on the example of the men and women whose ministry has nourished me over the years.

Central to my reflections has been my certainty that the simple presence in

SEEKING
HUMAN
KINDNESS

England of Passionist religious would not be enough to cause St Paul of the Cross such ecstatic joy. It must surely be the work of those religious that St Paul found so consoling. I'm sure he saw Bl Dominic's work of preaching and reconciliation, particularly in the industrial cities. He was presumably granted knowledge of the converts Fr Dominic would receive into the Church. Imagine, though, if he had been allowed to know details of the men and women who came after Bl Dominic, the 180 years of varied ministry for which we can give thanks.

Perhaps St Paul was granted knowledge of Bl Dominic's first companions. Men from rich families such as the Spencers and Pakenhams, they nevertheless ministered among the very poor, exposed to the dangers of cholera, dysentery, typhus and TB. Did St Paul understand the immense contribution Elizabeth Prout and her

sisters would make to the education, health and wellbeing of the poor in industrial Manchester, Leeds and St Helens? Was he given to understand their contribution to the training of Catholic teachers and care of the dying?

What joy there must have been for St Paul to see years and years of parish missions preached by his priests, especially in the first half of the twentieth century. How moved he would have been to understand the great multitude who would find the consolation of Christ's Passion in the sacrament of Confession, many of them returning to the sacraments after some time. These men, too, continued Bl Dominic's mission of reconciliation, and many people, my Grandfather included, were received into the Church through their preaching.

We know that it was not part of St

Paul's original intention that his religious would work as parish clergy, but the circumstances of the English mission were such that most of their communities were also parish churches. In these churches, generations of Christians would be nourished by Passionist spirituality at every Mass, every Confession, every sick visit, every conversation in the parish club. I think particularly of the care those religious offered to the poor of those parishes, and those suffering in any other way: men crushed by the diseases and injuries of mining and heavy industry; families brought to poverty; men and women away from family support in search of work or escaping starvation. In my own family, we hear how a mother with four school-age children and little income was given worn-out habits to re-tailor into school trousers. God bless the Passionist brother who spotted that opportunity to help!

I am confident that St Paul's heart understood how Passionists would minister to prisoners in our country. Perhaps he was particularly warmed to know of Fr Ignatius' ministry to his own countrymen, Italian prisoners of war near Broadway. He would surely be pleased to see Passionist priests, brothers and lay associates reaching out in Walton, Hindley, Holloway and Pentonville prisons. To those imprisoned by addictions, too, his children have been called to minister. He may well have seen Br Leo heading to Leeds after a day working at the retreat house at Ilkley, to cook for AA groups, ensuring the recovering alcoholics he met there would get a good, nourishing meal at least once that week. I am certain he was made aware of the priests who were called to be diocesan exorcists, bringing Christ's love and protection to men and women in particular anguish. I am certain, too, that those

priests benefited significantly from his fatherly prayers.

Passionists have never been "selfish" with their charism. Hundreds of young Catholics have been given confidence and the tools of social engagement through Passionist support of the Young Christian Workers movement. How many, I wonder, have made local and national politics their apostolate from the seed sown at YCW meetings by Fr Gerald, Fr Timothy or Sr Maire? How many more have found ways of building the Kingdom in their own place of work? When the Church was encouraging lay Catholics to deepen their spiritual life, Passionists opened up their retreats to share the fruits of community life, and in the quiet months, they welcomed families who needed a reasonably priced holiday in the beauty of Pembrokeshire, Co Durham and the Yorkshire Dales. The Cross and Passion Sisters would open their own retreat in Ilkley, too, and we are blessed to have had a community of Passionist nuns in our country, sustaining all who draw inspiration from St Paul of the Cross by their prayers.



Did St Paul, in his ecstasy, perceive Fr Austin's great gifts and how he would use them to reconcile, advocate, challenge and serve? Did he see the dingy basement flat in L8 that was the first home for Austin's important mission? Imagine how he must have felt to know of the works that Passionists and their partners would undertake through these missions – work with refugees, those struggling for justice, people affected by HIV, and bearing witness to the crucified Earth. Did he know what courage God would provide, for his religious to take such a step into the unknown, away from traditional models of community and ministry? Or did he see in that movement the fulfilment of a tradition of going to the margins, seeking out the poor and the suffering, of innovation and doing what is necessary, a tradition that appears to have been the constant and grace-filled ethos of Passionist life in England?

I wonder, finally, if he was allowed to know the important sign of humility his religious would live out in their dying? Be it men like Fr Christopher and Fr Jeremias, living active lives well into old age and passing peacefully among their brothers, or the holy death of Fr John Kearns, lovingly surrendering his own suffering into the hands of the Crucified.

My meditation has only scratched the surface of how St Paul's religious have been active in England. We have much to be grateful for. What stands out to me, and – who knows? – perhaps it was what overcame St Paul, is the sheer variety of roles Passionists have undertaken, and the hundreds of thousands of lives touched by them. Their names and sketchy details of their ministry are mainly known only to the people whose lives they touched. Holiness is everywhere, though often unseen. Did St Paul of the Cross catch a glimpse of my life, too?

I wonder.

As a young man, Paul lived for a while with the Passionist Community in Liverpool 8. He and his family have long been associated with the Congregation.



TALKING

with Scott Albrecht



THE GOOD NEWS HAS LEAD ME TO BELIEVE THAT IT ISN'T GOOD NEWS FOR THE POOR IF CHRISTIANS DON'T OFFER THEIR LIVES IN THE SACRIFICE OF SERVICE.

I have often felt that my relationship with God would develop in proportion to my relationship with the poor. And... I might be able to address some of the issues regarding my own inner poverty. As Phil Berrigan said, "The poor tell us who we are..."

We started The Catholic Worker Farm in August 2006. Here we normally live with between 18-20 formerly homeless women and children at any one time.

We have lived with approximately 530 since we first began. Our Sisters, as we call them, share certain unfortunate difficulties. The 2 systemic political barriers are that they are not allowed to work or to

collect State Benefits. The other more personal traumas are that most have escaped Human Trafficking, Honour Based and Domestic Violence, FGM and Torture. (We have won the "True Honour Award" for helping women escape Honour Based Violence).

They seek work if they are from Eastern Europe. Asylum or Leave to Remain in the UK under The



Human Rights Convention if from outside Europe. Or The Domestic Violence Concession if they came to the UK on a Spousal Visa and experienced Domestic Violence.

We write many letters and do administration tasks for our Sisters. We are often contacting Solicitors who might take their case. We also accompany them to their Solicitors, or sometimes chase up their cases as the need may arise.

We offer them a bed, food and clothing, register them with a GP and get them free dental work.

Spiritually and psychologically we offer Group Therapy, Communal Prayer, Pastoral Visits from local Clergy, Individual Psychotherapy when necessary, Yoga and Choir.

Culturally we share Birthdays, Halloween, Diwali, Bonfire Night, Christmas and Easter.

If they have children we help them to register at our local schools. We have found that many young children have had no access to education as a result of being homeless. If our Sisters have a child under 5 we contact the health visitor who assesses the needs of the small family.

We have put many of our Sisters on The Hera Courses to develop entrepreneurial skills. We have also taught dozens of our Sisters English and some to read and write.

We continue to help them understand British culture,

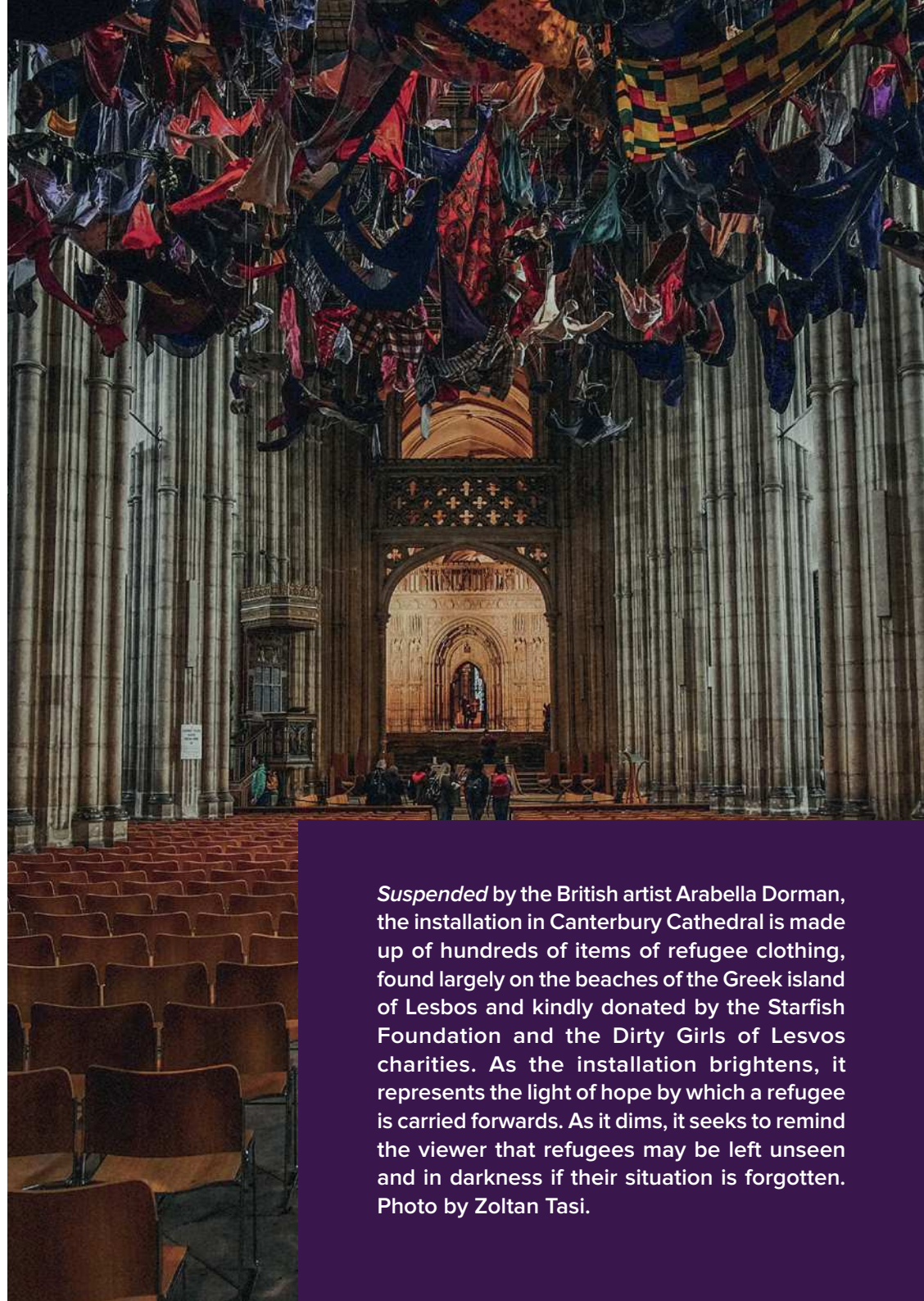
multiculturalism, a strong work ethic and respect for other faiths (some of our Sisters have also become Christians). We have seen many broken women and children healed through our work. This has simply been through the love and support which we have offered and God has, in his love for the poor, graced.

Almost all of our Sisters have received Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK and have gone on to successful careers, education, marriages and families. Many remain our friends and revisit us regularly.

We need serious financial support as we renovate the empty house next door so that we can look after more mums with children.

A bright future awaits The Farm as it has been purchased by Patriks Trust and constituted to serve the poor indefinitely.

Scott is a member of Passionist Partner Organisation 'Catholic Worker Farm'



Suspended by the British artist Arabella Dorman, the installation in Canterbury Cathedral is made up of hundreds of items of refugee clothing, found largely on the beaches of the Greek island of Lesbos and kindly donated by the Starfish Foundation and the Dirty Girls of Lesbos charities. As the installation brightens, it represents the light of hope by which a refugee is carried forwards. As it dims, it seeks to remind the viewer that refugees may be left unseen and in darkness if their situation is forgotten. Photo by Zoltan Tasi.

CRUCIFIED EARTH

By Paschal Somers

YCCN
CLIMATE
RELAY:

RISE
TO THE
MOMENT



GODIVA
THEN SHE RODE BACK CLOTHED ON WITH
CHASTITY, SHE TOOK THE TAX AWAY AND
WILT HERSELF THE PERLASTING NAME

- RELAY
TO
COP26
- YCCN petitions the UK Government to:
1. Reinstate the foreign aid budget to pre-covid levels.
 2. At least double the \$100bn a year for climate finance to be pushed further into debt fighting climate.
 3. Develop an international climate Loss & Damage Fund to save lives and livelihoods.
 4. Cancel the debts of the world's poorest countries so they can be pushed further into debt fighting climate.

This year is a significant one for worldwide climate negotiations, with the G7 summit having taken place in June and the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference coming up in November, where delegates including heads of state and climate experts will come together and agree coordinated action to tackle climate change.

To mark this important year, Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN) have organised 'Rise to the Moment' a Climate Relay which began in Carbis Bay, Cornwall, at the end of the G7 meeting and will end in Glasgow where COP26 is due to take place. The Passionists of St. Joseph's Province are one of the major sponsors of this relay. At the time of writing, over 1,000 people have taken part in various

legs of the relay as it zig-zags its way up the country. Indeed, local people of all ages are taking part in this monumental effort. A boat, named 'The Pilgrim', is being used as a symbol of the relay and will accompany the whole route. It represents YCCN's hope that we can all rise to the moment and use this year to set sail towards a more just future, especially for the poorest who are predominantly affected by the ravages of the climate emergency.

Along the route they will be joined by local walkers and will have stopovers at 10 cities where various events will be held to draw attention to this urgent message. Meetings with politicians have been arranged and social media

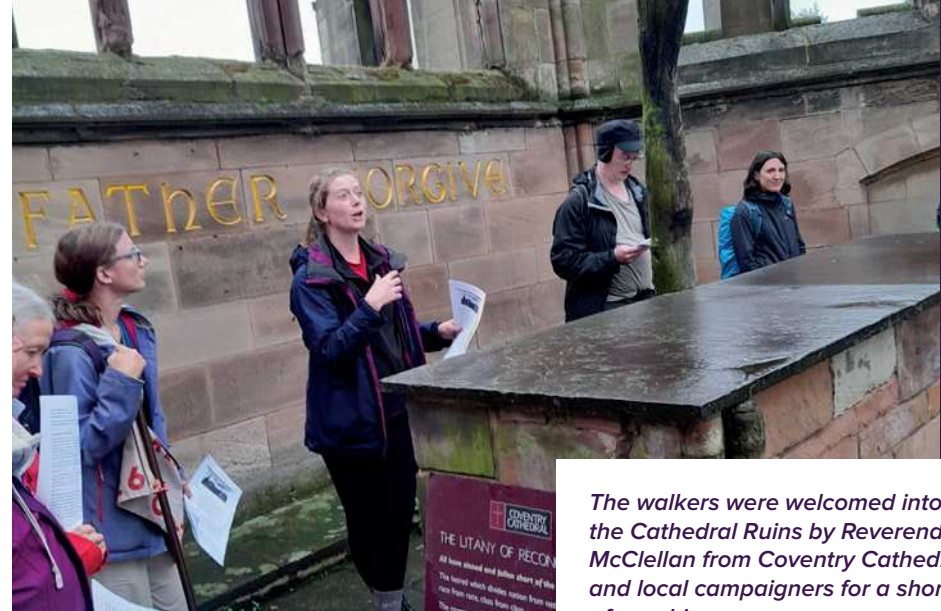
events set up to talk about the impact of climate change, especially on poorer countries.

It was a privilege to act as support driver for the leg of the walk from Leamington Spa to Coventry on Saturday 21 August. At 5pm that day, the walkers were welcomed into the Cathedral Ruins by Reverend Su McClellan from Coventry Cathedral and local campaigners for a short act of worship. They were offered overnight hospitality by the Salvation Army and meals were provided by parishioners of St Thomas More RC Church. The next day, I joined the other dozen or so walkers for the fourteen-mile leg of the relay between Coventry and Solihull. We stopped for lunch at St Peter's Church, Balsall Common and were given a royal welcome by the clergy and some of the parishioners there. It was one of countless examples en route so far of those who are making their voices heard in the call for climate justice.

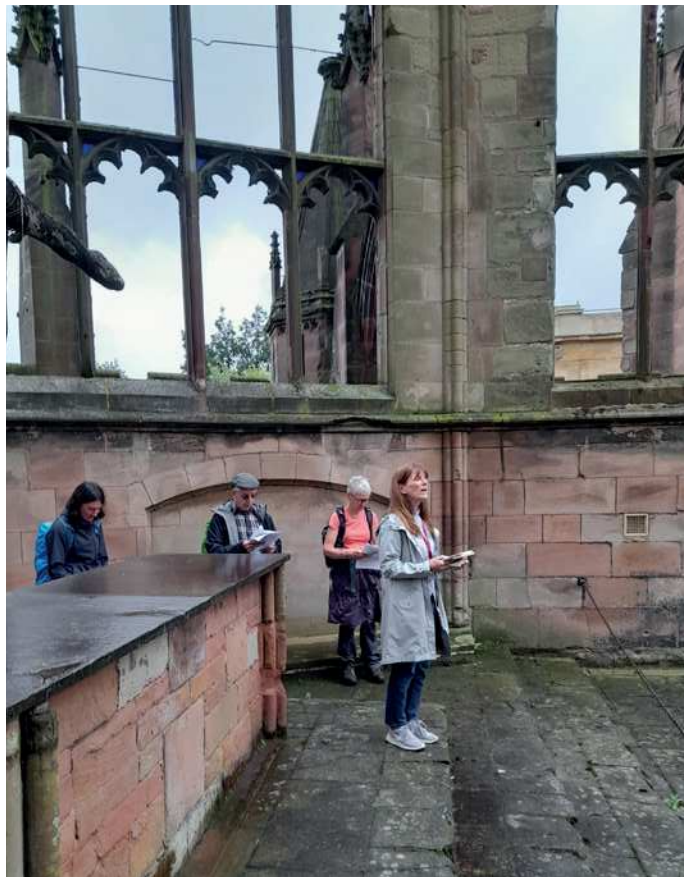
That call is for the UK government to reinstate aid, secure the \$1 billion promise made in 2009 for richer nations to pay this amount per year over a decade in climate finance to other countries. This has yet to be paid. It calls for the provision of finance for climate induced loss and damage which we are already seeing and asks how to redress this as well as to look at debt cancellation.

The Relay is an act of faith, hope and love as UK prepares to host the most significant climate talks so far. It is a summons to rise to the moment and make courageous decisions for setting the direction for the time ahead.

*Paschal Somers
is the Passionist
Development Worker
for St Joseph's
Province*



The walkers were welcomed into the Cathedral Ruins by Reverend Su McClellan from Coventry Cathedral and local campaigners for a short act of worship.

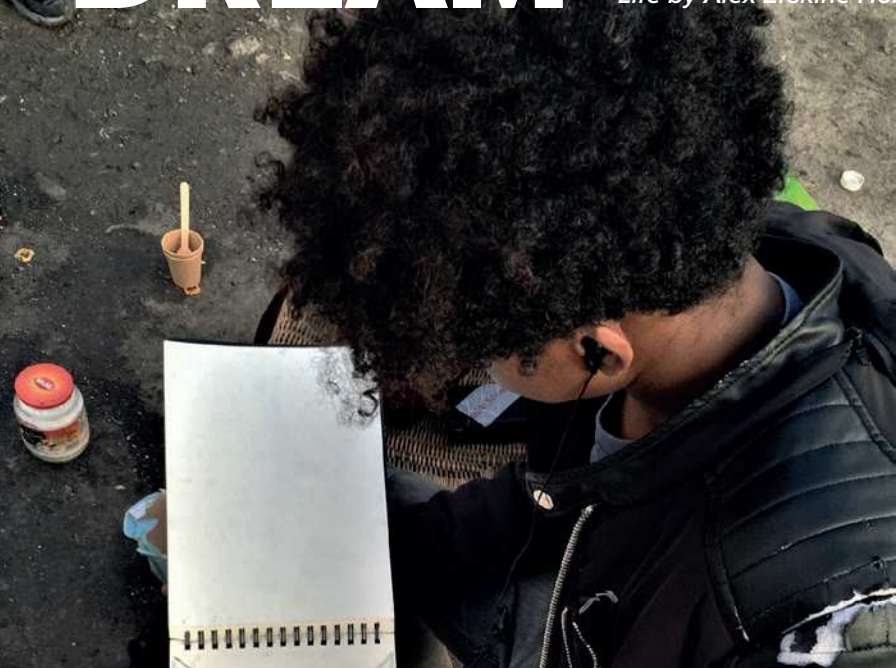


YCCN PETITIONS THE UK GOVERNMENT TO

- 1** Reinstating the foreign aid budget to pre-COVID levels
- 2** Developing an international climate loss & damage mechanism to save lives & livelihoods
- 3** At least doubling the \$100bn a year for climate finance promised by rich countries
- 4** Cancelling the debts of the world's poorest countries so they won't be pushed further into debt fighting climate change

I HAVE A DREAM

*Snapshots of Calais Refugee
Life by Alex Erskine Holmes*



Fireside. Hamid is drawing. A broad highway tapers across the paper towards the mid-distant horizon. He uses the side of his phone to draw the tall walls that cut the road from the surrounding landscape. 'Like here', he says, pointing to the 4 metre high, UK funded, 'security wall' beneath which the small Eritrean encampment nestles. 'When I get to the UK, I will be an artist or I will have a restaurant. That is my dream'.

Provisionally, just metres away, Rue Pasteur Martin Luther King runs as straight as the road in Hamid's drawing towards the city centre. 58 years ago, Martin Luther King led the Walk to Freedom in Detroit where he gave the first of his 'I have a dream' speeches. He spoke of the Right to Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, of 'dark yesterdays' being transformed into 'bright tomorrows'. Calais' Collège Martin Luther King proudly displays the 3 worded icon of French identity: Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité. Liberty is in short supply for this exiled community. They have no documented identity, they're deemed to have entered the country illegally, and are evicted from their encampment every day. But there is equality (every 2 weeks there is a change of the leadership group) and a deep fraternity.



 **Pas-de-Calais**
Le Département

**Collège
Martin Luther King**

Liberté . Egalité . Fraternité



'There are good times here and I can be happy. We look after each other'. Beside the fire, Yusef tells me of his most intimate experience of fraternity, when imprisoned in Eritrea after attempting to flee the country to avoid indefinite military conscription. A 2015 UN inquiry into gross human rights violations in Eritrea states that 'thousands of conscripts are subjected to forced labour that effectively abuses, exploits and enslaves them for years'* According to the Global Slavery Index, 'Eritrea has the highest prevalence of modern slavery across Africa (and the second in the world)**' 'We were so close to each other in prison; we might fight but the next day we were best of friends. I will always remember those guys'.

Yusef escaped in a mass breakout. He walked 6 days with no food, no shoes, terrified he would be informed on if he knocked at a door to ask for help. He eventually made it home, only to be caught and imprisoned after a second failed attempt at escaping the country. We discuss happiness. 'If you listen to your body, you are never satisfied', he tells me, 'the body always wants more. You must listen to your soul. Your soul is with God. If you listen to your soul, you will want to do good to others, and that will make them happy, and make you happy'. Suddenly he's gone, reappearing a few minutes later with a black bin bag which he slits open and puts around my shoulders. It has started to rain.

Fireside, the wind is relentless, in perpetual self-combat. A paper cup pirouettes around the fire. 'Tiki (smoke in Tigrinya) is your best friend, it always comes to you' jokes Mewael. Rats scuttle out from the undergrowth in search of food. Mewael picks up a stone and hurls it towards a stationary rat sniffing the air. He misses his target by a whisker. His English, like Yusef's, is good. 'I tried to read 'The Power of Now' by Eckhart Tolle, but it was a bit hard. Now I am reading 'Think and Grow Rich'. I ask him what he will do if he grows rich. 'I will have a chain of hotels all around the world'. Like Hamid, Mewael too has a dream.

Fireside. Milk heating over the flames. At last a feel of summer. Fikru, his hair freshly dyed black, grins as he points at my head, 'I used to look like you...and now I am a young man again.' Each day, I'm taught a new phrase in Tigrinya. Today Fikru's offering is 'alam dirfo', (the world is a chicken). 'Explain!' I ask. 'The world is a chicken, to one person it gives an egg, to another, shit'. There is much laughter. I share news of Eritrean friends I first met here in Calais, Isaias who has just graduated in chemical engineering, Sheshy who is about to study pharmacy, Anbesa, dentistry. Dreams materialising. Hamid joins the fireside gathering. 'This is for you', he says, handing me his now completed drawing. The walled-in road arrows into the mid-distance; once there, a new world opens, hills, the sun, birds, a plane. Still a dream for Hamid, but one that he's determined to birth. 'You go to UK tomorrow'. He punches the air. 'I will get there before you!'

* <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=16054&LangID=E>

** <https://www.ife-ch.org/news/report-on-eritrea-by-the-global-slavery-index/>

Alex is a member of Passionist Partner Organisation 'Calais Catholic Worker'. He spends much of the year at Maria Skobtsova House in Calais, offering safe sanctuary to especially vulnerable exiles.





CHAPTER 2021

A Reflection by Mark White CP

My initial reflection on our Chapter this July is that it was a joy and a blessing that it occurred in a real place, with real people and in real time. It was so good to see the brethren and so many of our extended family and friends. It was also a very great blessing that we had with us our Father General, Joachim Rego: originally a diary clash had meant he was unable to

attend but another diary shift suddenly made it possible again. We felt this was providential.

The one word I would use to describe this Chapter was that it was intense: the very serious matter of the future of St Joseph's Province, the first Passionist Province founded outside of Italy, was the focus of the week. This required

out utmost attention and it meant that a large number of sessions had to be reserved for just the men of the Province – normally we try to include our friends and guests in all our sessions, but this particular issue had to be largely hammered out by ourselves – and there were only eight of us! (It was a relief that the weather was so good so that those not attending sessions could enjoy being out in the sunshine.)

The result of our lengthy deliberations was that we decided not to elect a Provincial Curia and thus to put ourselves under the care of the General and his Council. At the same time we opted to explore ways of closer co-operation with St Patrick's Province – and all of this was passed by a convincing majority. We were blessed with the presence of Jim Sweeney, St Patrick's Provincial and Mark-Robin Hoagland, Provincial of Holy Hope Province, both of whom took part in the majority of our sessions. We benefited from their wide experience of leadership over the

years and they made several significant interventions.

The excellent facilitation and secretarial work of John Thornhill and Paschal Somers, who with Margaret Thelwell and Ben Lodge constituted, with Fr General, the central co-ordinating committee ensured that all the logistics were extremely well organised – their work was outstanding. And all the time in the background was the hospitable care provided by the Minsteracres resident community, which meant we lacked for nothing.

It was a hardworking week, but we truly felt we had listened to one another and to the Holy Spirit and we are very confident that we had pointed out the best way forward for the Passionists in England and Sweden.

Mark is Rector of Passionist Herne Bay Community and parish priest of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish.



TERCENTENARY SPECIAL

by
Ben Lodge CP

THE PASSIONISTS AND ENGLAND *(Part two)*

The nascent Passionist Community was to live a penitential life, in solitude and poverty, teaching people in the easiest possible way how to meditate on the Passion of Jesus. Paul's first companion was his own brother, John Baptist. In the belief that it was necessary to reside in Rome in order to secure approval of the Rule, Paul travelled to Rome and went to pray in St. Peter's but he only experienced desolation in his prayer. He moved on to the Pilgrim's hospice where he stayed for two nights, and was amazed to have his feet washed by a Jesuit Cardinal; he gratefully accepted the gift of two loaves of bread. Paul must have looked like a real beggar, as when he tried to see the Pope, the result was that he was thrown out from the Papal Palace into the street – to see the Pope was not as easy as seeing his Bishop!

His dream was shattered, he could not see a way forward and so went to sit by a fountain to eat his one

remaining loaf. At which point a poor man came and begged for bread: Paul shared half his loaf. He then walked into the Basilica of St. Mary Major with the intention of entrusting his mission to Mary. The icon of Mary is said to have been painted by St. Luke, and kneeling in front of it Paul prayed for understanding. Slowly he realised that it was not yet the time for presenting the Rule to the Pope. In the meantime, he must be faithful to the inspiration God had given him. Before the icon of Mary, he made a vow to promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus and to work to gather companions for this purpose.

After a short course in theology, the two brothers were ordained to the priesthood by Pope Benedict XIII. Following ordination, they devoted themselves to preaching missions in parishes, particularly in remote country places where there was not a sufficient number

of priests pastorally involved. Paul was known as one of the most popular preachers of his day, both for his words and for his generous acts of mercy. Their preaching apostolate and the retreats they gave in seminaries and religious houses brought their mission to the attention of others and gradually the community began to grow.

The first Retreat was opened in 1737 on Monte Argentario, a mountain set in the sea, but not quite an island; Paul called his monasteries "retreats" to underline the life of solitude and contemplation which he believed was necessary for someone who wished to preach the message of the Cross.

In addition to the communal celebration of the divine office, members of his community were to devote several hours to contemplative prayer each day. The austerity of life practiced by the first Passionists did not encourage large numbers, but Paul preferred a slow, at times painful, growth to something more spectacular: "Few, but good."

For about fifty years Paul worked trying to establish a number of communities. He struggled with administration, politics (both civil & religious), misunderstandings, even hostility from other Religious Orders. But he persevered and continued to give missions throughout central Italy; in



addition, he gave retreats to many communities and dozens of individuals, as well as conducting an entire apostolate of spiritual direction by way of correspondence.

The Church was always looking for missionaries, and so Paul was asked to provide men to open a mission in Mosul (present day Iraq). Unfortunately, three of the men selected to go died the night before they were set off, as a result of being accidentally poisoned. Sadly Paul did not live to see any Passionists develop a foreign mission. The first such mission was in 1782 in Bulgaria; England was to follow sixty years later.

Towards the end of his long life, Paul was an invalid and spent his last few years in the Retreat of SS John and Paul in Rome. The Brother who acted as infirmarian records that early one morning, as Paul was celebrating Mass, he reached the Our Father. "Tears coursed freely down his cheeks. His arms outstretched he became suspended in midair. The expression on his face indicated that a conversation both lively and joyful was taking place. At its conclusion his enraptured body slowly and gently descended to the altar platform." After the Mass, as Paul was making his thanksgiving in the sacristy, the Brother reports that Paul was sobbing gently: "Oh, what I have seen! My children in England – my children in England."

Paul was no ordinary man; he was

a man of God who was steeped in a life of prayer – this was his inspiration, this is what sustained him. Today he is recognised as one of the greatest mystics of the 18th century. Paul died on 18 October 1775. By the time of his death, the congregation founded by Paul of the Cross had one hundred and eighty fathers and brothers, living in twelve Retreats.

Nineteen years after Paul's death, Dominic Barberi was born, the man who would begin to fulfill the vision of Paul of the Cross in England. Dominic was born on 22nd. June 1792 near Viterbo, about fifty miles north of Rome. Today his family would be described as tenant farmers, although a number of writers have wrongly described Dominic as a peasant. His parents died while he was still young and he was raised by an uncle who hoped that eventually Dominic would take over the farm. He had no regular education, although he was taught to read by a local Capuchin priest, and he was always eager to get help in reading. Dominic had a phenomenal memory and quickly knew entire sections of the Scriptures; he also had the ability to repeat in full a sermon he had just listened to.

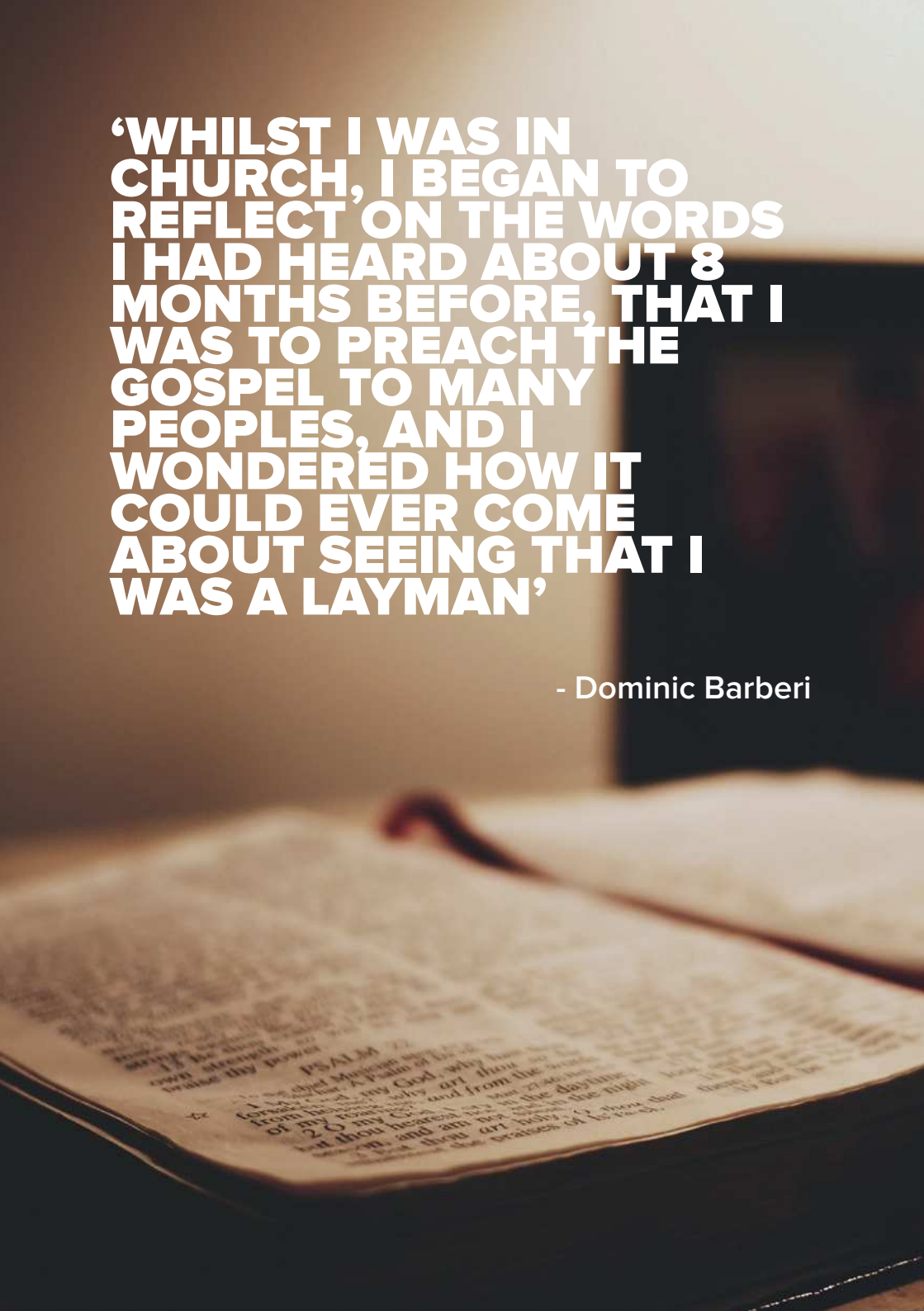
When Napoleon suppressed the religious communities in the Papal States, Dominic became acquainted with several Passionists living in exile near his town. He befriended these Passionists and served daily

Mass with them. When Dominic was one of the few men in his locality not chosen for military conscription, he felt it was a sign from God that he should enter a religious community. Of the 40,000 young men to leave the Papal States, only 2,000 returned after Napoleon's disastrous 1812 campaign against Moscow.

Before joining the Passionists, Dominic recalls, that in prayer he experienced a sort of revelation. He wrote "The voice told me that I was destined to announce the truths of the Gospel and bring back stray sheep to the way of salvation. It did not specify to me how, where, or when, or to whom – whether infidels, heretics or bad Catholics, but left a hazy notion in my mind that the mission in store for me, would not be among Catholics only." He had no doubt that the message came from God, but Dominic could not see how this could happen, especially as the Passionists had accepted him as a lay Brother.

Dominic gave two accounts of an experience which happened to him in September 1814: "Whilst I was in Church, I began to reflect on the words I had heard about 8 months before, that I was to preach the Gospel to many peoples, and I wondered how it could ever come about seeing that I was a layman. All the same, I was quite certain, that if it was God's will, he could provide means known only to himself. I began to imagine that, perhaps after my profession, I should go to

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- Dominic Barberi

pagans or to America or to China. And then in an instant (so that I could hardly believe that it had really happened) I was told that 6 years must pass before I should begin the ministry of the word, and that I should go neither to China nor America, but to many provinces of Northern Europe, of which I knew almost nothing, and whose names were made known to me. The name that remained most impressed on my mind was “England”, about which I did know something.” The extraordinary thing about this vision is that it took place at the same altar where Paul of the Cross had had his vision.

In 1814 Dominic entered the Passionist novitiate, initially as a lay Brother, but it was quickly recognised that he was a man of deep prayer and also had a great intellect, and so he became a clerical novice; this change of status was almost unheard of. He was ordained in 1818 and immediately began to give lectures to his fellow students in both philosophy and theology. In his prayer life, just like Paul of the Cross, Dominic focused on England and its return to the Catholic faith. He was so centered on this idea that his students quickly learned that if they wanted to avoid a difficult subject with him, all they had to do was raise a point about England!

Living in Rome he was able to meet a number of English travelers – the wealthy were doing the “Grand Tour” of Europe. In 1830 he was delighted to be asked to help train

an English convert clergyman to say Mass. As he did not speak English, he was helped by Ignatius Spencer, another recent English convert clergyman studying for the priesthood at the *Venerabile* or English College in Rome. Dominic and Ignatius became great friends, and eventually Ignatius would enter the Passionist Congregation and work alongside Dominic.

Convinced he was called by God to work in England, he was frustrated by frequently being appointed to offices in Italy: superior of a community, Provincial, consultant etc. When a friend suggested that Dominic should put in a plea to his superior to be allowed to go to England, his response was that if God wanted him to go, God would arrange it. After many years of frustration and delay Dominic was asked in 1840 to go to Belgium to establish a community there – this community was seen simply as a stepping stone to England.

In Belgium the local clergy were unimpressed by the arrival of the Italian Passionists, and so they arranged for them to be examined in theology. Halfway through the exam the Bishop intervened and said it was Dominic who should be examining the Professors. From then on, the Passionists enjoyed great success, even though they were living in abject poverty.

In November 1840 Dominic went to England in the belief he was going to take possession of Aston Hall near Stone in Staffordshire. He

stopped at Oscott where he met Nicholas Wiseman the future Cardinal, and Ignatius Spencer. His excitement was soon crushed when he discovered that the priest already living in Aston Hall refused to move out. Dominic spent some time developing his English in Oscott, but soon had to return to Belgium. The fact is that Dominic had been misled by the enthusiasm of Spencer and Ambrose Phillips who had convinced him that England was on the cusp of national conversion back to Catholicism.

In October 1841 Dominic arrived in Folkestone and again went to Oscott where he spent several months until February 1842 when he took possession of Aston Hall. After 28 years of praying and longing to get to England, he had started to fulfil the vision of Paul of the Cross. His reception did not go well: people not only laughed at him and his garb, they threw mud and stones at him; they had considerable difficulty understanding his poor, heavily accented English.

Opposition was plentiful, but Dominic worked away quietly, gradually earning not only the respect, but also the love of the people, resulting in his making many converts. Because of the growth of the Church Dominic found himself increasingly in demand to preach missions throughout England, even going to Ireland on one occasion; he was constantly preaching retreats to communities of Sisters and to men preparing for ordination. Within the Passionist

Congregation he was occupied forming and strengthening the communities, acquiring property for new churches, and doing the hundred and one things associated with administering several communities.

Dominic was very clear that each community would be located in a Retreat which was away from the centre of any town so as to ensure a sense of quiet solitude. At the same time he was practical in choosing the location. Thus he agreed to accept land at Sutton, St Helens in Merseyside. It was an equal distance between the two great industrial cities of Liverpool and Manchester, located beside the newly constructed railway line, thus giving quick access to the cities.

Dominic was happy working with the poorest of the poor, many of whom were Irish fleeing from the potato famines, but he was equally at home with leading intellectuals. For a number of years he had followed the activity of the “Oxford Movement”, and eventually wrote to the University Professors, in particular rejecting the claim that the 39 Articles could be interpreted in a Catholic way. By 1845 a number of Anglican Divines became Catholic, including John Henry Newman who was received into the Church by Dominic Barberi. Newman subsequently became a Cardinal and was declared a saint in 2019.

Fr. Ignatius Spencer (1799 – 1864) converted from being an Anglican clergyman on the Althorp estate,

entered the Passionists, and took his vows at the hands of Dominic Barberi. Ignatius was to continue the work of preaching missions and begging for prayers for the conversion of England; his entire ministry was given over to working for the fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus “That they may be one” – Ignatius was the great advocate of ecumenism long before such an idea was common.

On 27th. August 1849, aged 57, Dominic died while travelling from London through Reading, as a result of a heart attack. Cholera was rife in London and so no hotel in Reading would provide a bed. He died in great pain, but with the words on his lips: “Thy will be done.” Dominic was eventually buried in Sutton, beside Fr. Ignatius Spencer and Mother Mary Joseph Prout, his two co-workers.

This year 2020/2021, the Passionist Congregation is celebrating the tercentenary or three hundred years since St. Paul of the Cross had his initial vision of an Order dedicated to preaching the Crucified Christ. Around the world, in various Passionist communities this momentous event will be celebrated in various forms, and hopefully more people struggling to cope in our broken world will come to know the love of God.

Ben is a member of St Joseph's Province of Passionists.

“We see quite clearly that what happens to the nonhuman happens to the human.

What happens to the outer world happens to the inner world.

If the outer world is diminished in its grandeur then the emotional, imaginative, the intellectual and spiritual life of the human is diminished or extinguished.

Without the soaring birds, the great forests, the sounds and colouration of the insects, the free-flowing streams, the flowering fields, the sight of the clouds by day and the stars at night, we become impoverished in all that makes us human.”

– Thomas Berry CP

THE LAST WORD

by Sr. Anne
Hammersley CP

JOHN KEARNS CP - 'A LIFE WELL LIVED'

I first met Fr John Kearns, CP when he was a novice. He was standing at the back of Westminster Cathedral giving out booklets at a celebratory Mass in honour of St Paul of the Cross. It would've been about 1990. The next



studied for his banking exams and passed them, which meant he



time was at Heythrop in Cavendish Square. He was starting his first year of the BD and I was starting second year. He said he had asked for some money so he could invite me out for a pizza lunch so we could get to know one another. John's perpetual saying was that I helped him with his studies, which of course was totally untrue! After A levels, John joined the National Westminster Bank and

was well on his way to being a Bank Manager when he felt a call to Religious Life/Priesthood. He was brought up in Erdington and attended Erdington Abbey, which is a Redemptorist parish. In fact, it was to a Redemptorist that he went for Vocation discernment. Then he saw an advert in the Universe and went to see Fr Timothy in St Non's in Wales.

That meeting set him on the road to being a Passionist. John was always a gentleman and a very unassuming fellow. He was genuinely surprised when he did exceptionally well in his exams at Heythrop and won the Scripture prize that year. Fr Theodore Davey, who was still teaching there at the time, was so proud of him beating all the Jesuits in his class! John went on to do a Masters in Moral Theology; then went to St Anne and Blessed Dominic's in Sutton and, after ordination, was assistant to Fr Mark White. He worked alongside Sister Brigid Murphy in the prison and later Sister Eileen in the parish. When Mark moved and the monastery was demolished, John became Parish Priest and lived with Fr's Luke and Richard. John always had a yearning to work with the Crucified and



found his niche working in a prison for young offenders, which he did right up to being made Provincial. John attended a number of our Province Assemblies and his introductory talk always fitted in with our theme extremely well. He was

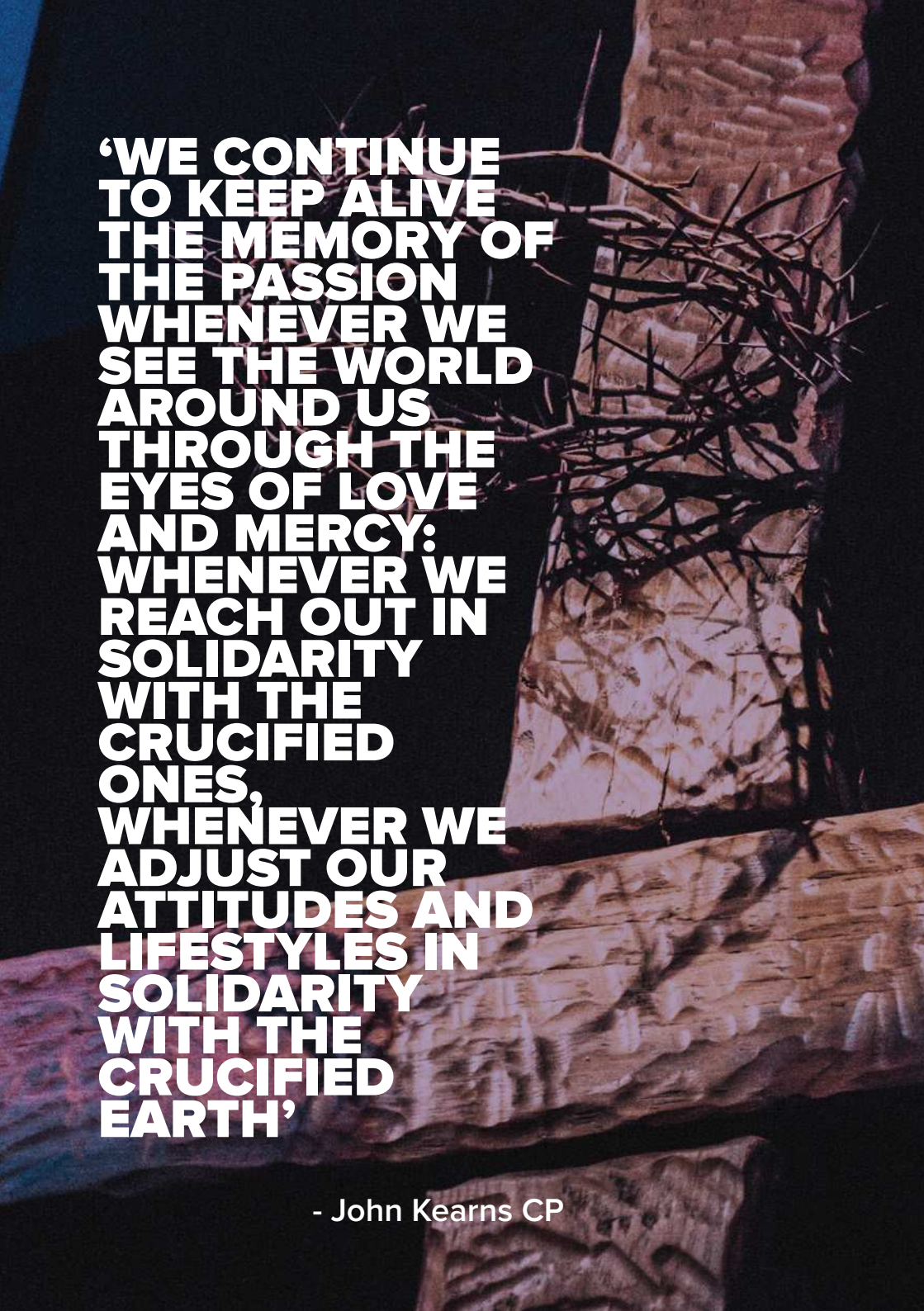
very fond of all our Sisters. I remember once, when he was in civvies at table on the first night with a group of our Sisters, they didn't know him and so they asked what he did. I heard John say very humbly that he was the Provincial of St Joseph's Province. From then onwards it was, 'Would you like more tea Father? Can I get you anything Father?' True to form, John insisted on getting his own! I was in touch by video call with John in his final days and I know he was very ready to go to God. As a true Passionist he looked on his time of suffering as his small part in the Passion of Christ. He will be greatly missed but I am sure he will be interceding for us in heaven. Our thoughts and prayers are now with his mother Eileen and his brother



Anthony, the Community of the Passion, his many friends and particularly our Passionist brothers who will now be feeling very deeply the loss of such a kind and talented confrere.

Anne is a member of St Paul's Province of The Sisters of the Cross and Passion



A close-up photograph of a wooden cross with a crown of thorns. The cross is made of weathered, light-colored wood. The crown of thorns is made of dark, sharp, and tangled branches. The background is dark, making the cross and thorns stand out. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**‘WE CONTINUE
TO KEEP ALIVE
THE MEMORY OF
THE PASSION
WHENEVER WE
SEE THE WORLD
AROUND US
THROUGH THE
EYES OF LOVE
AND MERCY:
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REACH OUT IN
SOLIDARITY
WITH THE
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WITH THE
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EARTH’**

- John Kearns CP