

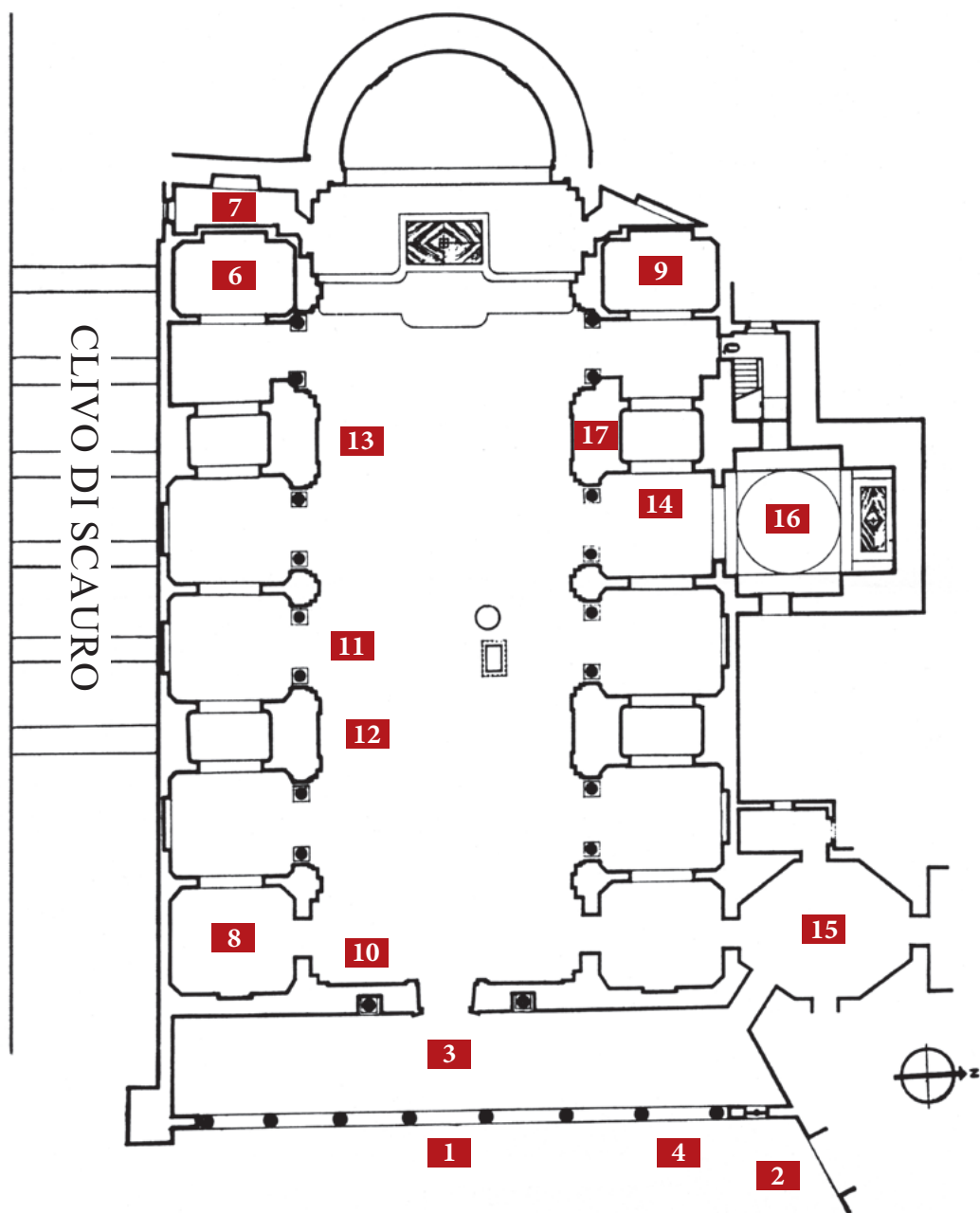


A Passionist Guide

to the Basilica and the Retreat of
Sts. John and Paul

Lawrence Rywalt, C.P.

*THE BASILICA OF STS. JOHN AND PAUL
AND THE CHAPEL OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS*



Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ



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Lawrence Rywalt, CP

Cum permissu:
JOACHIM REGO, CP
Superior General

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Layout and graphics: ANDREA MARZOLLA
Cover and final page images: SILVIO VANZAN, CP

Photographs: LAWRENCE RYWALT, CP and ANDREA MARZOLLA

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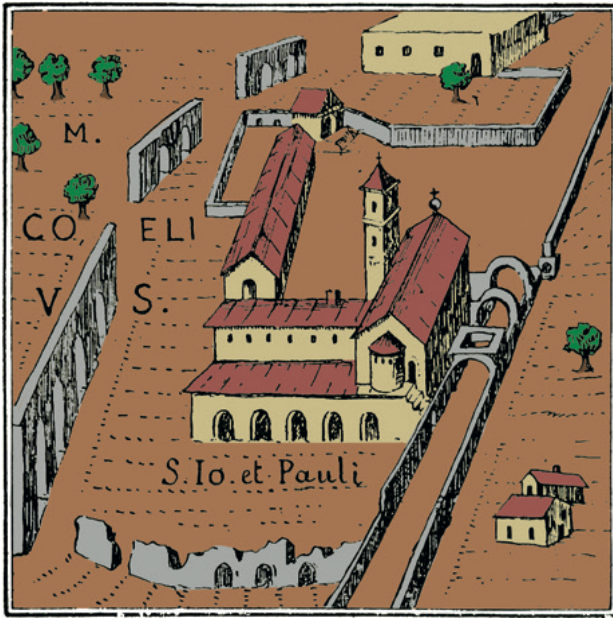
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INTRODUCTION



The Basilica in 1576.

The year 2020 marked the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of the Passion by St. Paul of the Cross. The various initiatives planned for this Jubilee Year were designed to facilitate the maximum participation of the religious of the Congregation, as well as the friends and benefactors of the Passionist Family – nuns, religious Sisters and laity.

In particular, the aim of this special year was to welcome those who wish to come to the Basilica and **Retreat** of Sts. John and Paul as a pilgrim, i.e. a traveler, literally one who has come from afar and who is on a journey to a holy place.

For over 2,000 years this Celian hill in the city of Rome has been a holy place and for almost 250 years it has been a sacred place and a “retreat” of the Pas-

sionist Congregation (Passionist monasteries are traditionally called “retreats”). Prior to assuming residence in this monastery, Paul of the Cross felt a special attraction to this location.

In 1747, Paul had hoped to establish a retreat of the Congregation in Rome at the small church of San Tommaso in Formis that the Trinitarian religious had to vacate. On 16 December of that year, he wrote to Fr. Fulgentius Pastorelli at the retreat of the Presentation on Monte Argentario, in which he described the Celian Hill:

“It is one of the most solitary places in Rome, a place of great silence and recollection, almost a mountain, with good air, a garden with water [...] There are cabbages, enough fruit for summer and winter, at least partially, figs, grapes, artichokes, beans, broccoli, enough even to give to your novices. [...] It is a fine location, not a better one is to be found in Rome and with delightful air — a place prepared by our Great Father for his servants.”

This dream of Paul did not come to fruition at that time; he would have to wait almost 30 years before, on 7 December 1773, he and several companions took possession of the monastery and Basilica.

Before the Passionists arrived here in 1773, there was over 1,500 years of history that shaped the Basilica, the complex of Roman houses beneath it, and the adjoining monastery. Today, a tourist or pilgrim who arrives here, especially someone who does not understand Italian, would find it very difficult to even begin to appreciate the wealth of Church history, and

especially Passionist history, that exists on this solitary hilltop in Rome. While several generic guidebooks and scholarly studies about the Basilica have been written in the past in Italian, there are very few that are available in English or Spanish, as well as other languages. Additionally, although bits and pieces of information concerning the history of Passionist presence here are available, in particular in our General Archives, and while some recent works have provided some general information, to date there has been no comprehensive work that has been published in any of the three major languages of the Congregation. Therefore, with the approval of Fr. Joachim Rego, Superior General, and Fr. Ciro Benedettini, First General Consultor and coordinator of the Passionist Jubilee, I undertook this work of preparing a simple **“Passionist Guide to the Basilica and Retreat of Sts. John and Paul”**.

Although the scope of this publication is not a scholarly or professional study of this topic, I would like to cite several of the more important texts in Italian (and some in English and Spanish) that provided the basis for the information provided in this guidebook. Most of these books have been long out of print; however, they are available in scanned format in our General Archives. Other material exists in varying degrees in other books, registries, and collections of documents in our General Archives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank several people who were especially helpful to me in this project. First, Dr. Eunice Dos Santos, General Archivist, for her guidance, assistance, and patience in locating and providing materials for me from our General Archives. Secondly, I am most grateful to several of our religious who patiently translated from Latin the

many plaques and tombstones in the Basilica and Chapel of St. Paul of the Cross, thereby providing valuable information that would otherwise have been inaccessible: Fr. Tito Paolo Zecca (MAPRAES), Fr. Félix Ramos Lores (SCOR), and Fr. Ciro Benedettini (General Consultor). Finally, I would like to thank my confreres Fr. Paul Francis Spencer (PATR), Fr. Tito Paolo Zecca (MAPRAES) and Fr. Adriano Spina (MAPRAES) for their valuable assistance in guiding and encouraging me in the preparation of this work.

Venerable Fr. Germano Ruoppolo, Passionist, concludes his scholarly work on the Basilica with these words:

“May this poor book of mine be pleasing to God and may it awaken in those who will read it the ancient love for this blessed shrine on the Celian hill, and increase greater devotion to these glorious Martyrs, who have always been powerful [intercessors] at the throne of his infinite mercy.”

Similarly, I hope that this simple **Passionist Guide** will awaken in our Passionist Family a greater appreciation for over 250 years of Passionist history in this sacred space that God, in his infinite mercy, entrusted to St. Paul of the Cross and his spiritual sons. In particular, I pray that those men and women who have preceded us, Passionist religious and laity, in particular our Founder and Father, St. Paul of the Cross, will inspire and sustain us with their prayerful intercession, so that we may continue to live and proclaim the charism of the **Memoria Passionis**, the Passion of Jesus Christ— *“the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love”* (St. Paul of the Cross).

Lawrence Rywalt, C.P.
Sts. John and Paul, Rome



2. THE CELIAN HILL

The Basilica at the time of St. Paul of the Cross (Engraving- Giuseppe Vasi).

— THE CLAUDIANUM AND THE CLIVO DI SCAURO —

The Celio is one of the seven hills of ancient Rome. In antiquity it had a different appearance from what we see today. Now its natural shape is somewhat hidden under the maze of modern buildings covering it. This hill, by reason of the sharp rocky cliffs on its northern side, stood out somewhat isolated and in direct contrast to the surrounding parts of the city, resembling more like some geological oddity than a gently sloping Roman hill. This section of the Celio was, strictly speaking, outside the city limits, since it extended beyond the enclosure of the city wall which passed over the edge of the hill at the ancient **Porta Celimontana** (the **Celimontana Gate**, called today the **Arch of Dolabella**, at the end of Via San Paolo della Croce).

It was on this majestic and isolated Celian hilltop that the unusual and impressive temple dedicated to the Emperor Claudi-

us (10 B.C. – 54 A.D.) was erected. It was begun by his wife, Agrippina, and partially demolished by Nero, her son, to make way for an extension to his **Domus Aurea** (Golden House). It was called the **Claudianum** or the **Claudium** by both ancient and modern writers. The remains of this massive structure, the grey blocks of stone, form the foundation of our monastery and bell tower in the piazza in front of the Basilica. The Claudianum, like the Roman houses under the basilica, is below the level of the piazza because over time the land was built up with additional soil and debris.

In Roman times there was an excellent street system which served this zone of the city; however, practically no trace of this intricate system has survived. The one exception is the **Clivo di Scauro**, the arched street that borders the Basilica, perhaps named for **Marcus Aemilius Scaurus** (161

B.C. – 89 B.C.) a Roman statesman who served as consul in 115 B.C. Its first tract is still called the Clivo di Scauro, but after passing through the piazza in front of the basilica, it changes to the modern name of **Via di San Paolo della Croce**. In Roman times, as also today, this street continued beyond the Celio, passing through the city walls by the ancient Porta Celimontana (called today the Arch of Dolabella, next to the Church of San Tommaso in Formis).



THE ROMAN HOUSES BEFORE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BASILICA

On the western slope of the Celio a comfortable but not sumptuous private home was erected along the street passing in front of the Claudianum. Next to this house and somewhat higher up on the hill, two other private dwellings were constructed, one during the second century, the other during the third. Belonging probably to affluent Roman families, these homes were embellished with fresco paintings, and one even had an ornamental fountain with niches (called a **nymphaeum**) in its courtyard. Although not luxuriously planned, their lay-out showed signs of good taste and comfort. These houses bordered on the Clivo di Scauro.

It was in one of the houses that an event of major importance took place which was to provide the very reason for the foundation of the basilica now located above them. Not long afterward another decisive event took place in the history of these dwellings: the two houses were united and passed under a common owner. It was the owner of the later house (that further up the hill) who also became the proprietor of the adjacent earlier one. The older house, originally erected by a pagan family, was immediately transformed, and frescoes rich in pagan mythological con-

tent were covered over with a fresh coating of plaster.

It was in this housing complex or **insulae**, i.e. a block of grouped but separate buildings or a single structure, providing economically practical housing where land values were high and population dense, that the house of the brothers John and Paul was located. In this house, between 26 -27 June 361 A.D. the brothers were beheaded and secretly buried in a hastily dug grave under their home (see biography).

In the early 5th century, their grave and home became a pilgrimage site. This shrine was exceptional in early Christian Rome, for it was one of the rare instances in Roman history when bodies were buried within the city walls, contrary to long-standing usage and legislation. The Twelve Tables, the earliest codification of Roman law, expressly forbade burial or cremation of the dead within the city. The mere existence of this monumental sanctuary and the graves discovered there, provides sufficient justification for the function, form, and spiritual importance of the entire complex of Sts. John and Paul.

3. THE MARTYRS STS. JOHN AND PAUL

– a brief biography

The earliest knowledge of these martyrs comes from the so-called *Passio*, an early sixth-century account of their martyrdom. According to this ancient document, John and Paul were officers at the court of the Emperor Constantine (c.272 A.D. – 337 A.D.) and entrusted with the protection of the Emperor's daughter, Constantia. At his death, the Emperor left a sizable legacy to the two officers, who were thereby enabled to purchase a home on the Celian Hill and retire to private life. They remained there until the then emperor, Julian the Apostate (331 A.D.– 363 A.D.) requested their return to military service at the court. Upon their refusal to comply (their acceptance would have implied a denial of their Christian faith) the Emperor threatened to punish them for impiety. As this threat was the equivalent of a death sentence, the two Christians prepared themselves for martyrdom, giving their possessions to the needy of Rome and courageously refusing to flee their home on the Celian Hill, so well known to many at the court. The emperor sent the captain of the court guard, Terentianus, to this home, and there he found John and Paul at prayer. Since they steadfastly refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan god Jupiter, Terentianus ordered them beheaded that same evening, between the 26th and the 27th of June, 361. Fearful of the reaction of the people who had often benefited from the charity of these two Christians, Terentianus, after starting the rumor that they had been sent into exile, secretly buried the bodies in a hastily dug grave



under their home. After a few months, however, the truth came to be known.

A later version of this same *Passio* adds another element to the legend, explaining the association of the priest Crispus, the cleric Crispinianus and the matron Benedicta with the martyrdom. They, called to assist the two martyrs in their last moments, were aware of the true facts of the killing and the burial. Later while praying at the tomb of the two saints, they too were discovered and ordered beheaded by the same Terentianus on 3 January 364. Their bodies, at first buried elsewhere, were later transferred, and reinterred near the other tombs in the houses.

The basilica was begun, according to this late version of the *Passio*, by Byzantius, a Roman senator. A third and still later version of the same document has it that the basilica was completed by the son of Byzantius, Pammachius, also a senator.

4. THE BASILICA AND ITS ORIGINS

— THE PIAZZA OF THE BASILICA OF STS. JOHN AND PAUL —

By the time of Pope Leo I (440-461) the senator Pammachius was considered to have been the founder of the basilica. This Pammachius, called “*a learned and noble man*” (*vir eruditus et nobilis*) by his close friend St. Jerome, died in the year 410; his life was spent mainly in public service, but after the death of his wife Paulina he dedicated himself to the monastic life and gave his fortune to the needy. It is quite probable that Pammachius was the last owner of these houses on the Celio Hill which were transformed into the Basilica/shrine, especially since the basilica erected above them is recorded from the year 499 as the Titulus *Pammachii* (the ti-

tle church of Pammachius) - one of the 25 earliest parish churches of the city. Therefore, it was listed among those churches whose names denote the owner of the houses later transformed into edifices of Christian worship.



— THE FAÇADE OF THE BASILICA —

1

Despite the many radical transformations undergone by this basilica, it has always been possible to pick out some essential elements for the reconstruction of its primitive form. To the west is the semi-circular apse, in the walls of which are still discernible the outlines of the original windows, now walled up (see the “rear” of the basilica). The outer wall of the left aisle (along the Clivo di Scauro) is nothing else than the southern front of the Roman houses which existed on the site before the erection of the basilica.

A change in planning during the construction left no windows in the outer side walls, so the aisles were dark. However, in contrast the nave must have been extraordinarily light and airy. It had four tall

windows in the apse, thirteen in a clerestory down the long sides, with another thirteen circular (oculus) windows set above them, and the east wall was almost entirely open, with five arcades on two stories (the upper arcades can be seen on the outside). The present narthex (vestibule) was added by Cardinal Giovanni di Sutri (+1182), but there would have been an earlier porch or forecourt.

This original appearance of the basilica, however, could not have lasted long. In 410 the hordes of Alaric sacked the city of Rome, and it is known that the Celian Hill and Sts. John and Paul were not spared their fury. It may well have been that the sizable gash-like chips and splinters visible on the columns of the upper story



arcade at the height of a man's head are the effects of this pillage and destruction. Whether this be true or not, the weakening of the columns was undoubtedly among the causes calling for reinforcement of certain parts of the structure. The left flank of the basilica was strengthened by the addition of two large flying buttresses, of which one is today still intact and located at the far end of the left side, and the other was found at the corner of the Clivo di Scauro and the piazza in front of the basilica; this latter sealed off one of the windows of the tower. Both buttresses were composed of sturdy double arches which spanned the Clivo.

The basilica was damaged again, probably due to the earthquake of 442, that was also responsible for the destruction of many edifices in the region of the Colosseum. It weakened the basilica to the extent that it required a restoration which entirely altered the aspect of the church. After this restoration, the triumphant radiance of light that pervaded the entire interior of the old basilica was supplanted by a

constant subdued glow; the building now became a closed and well-defined room. In other words, because of these restorations the structure was transformed into one of the traditional Roman basilicas - having assumed those forms which for centuries have characterized this type of church. This restoration of the basilica was probably the work of Pope Leo I.

In 1084 Robert Guiscard broke into the city and gave it over to his soldiers for pillage and sacking. And it was in the region of the Celian and the Palatine Hills that the severest fighting took place, one faction making the Palatine its strong point, the other holding out in the monastery of St. Gregory and the nearby basilica of Sts. John and Paul. The repairs and restorations carried out immediately after this disastrous event show that the damage suffered by the basilica must have been considerable indeed. During the reign of Pope Paschal II (1099-1118) the cardinal titular of the basilica, Theobald (ca.1117-ca.1123), was forced to entirely reconstruct the adjacent monastery.

There are, then, sound reasons for supposing that a type of monastery existed adjacent to the basilica prior to the erection of the new one by Cardinal Theobald next to the north side of the church. The front of this monastery, brought to light during the restorations of Cardinal Spellman (1956-1958), forms the inner right-end wall of the basilica's narthex, and continues out into the piazza at a blunt angle from the church's facade. From this it is obvious that the narthex in front of the basilica did not exist at the time of the monastery's erection. This front wall of the monastery is pierced by two twin windows, whose jambs and sills are in white marble, and by the ancient portal which gave entrance into the monastery. The window to the right and the entrance (today partially walled-up) are visible from the piazza.

Cardinal Theobald did not restrict his building activities to the monastery alone; he also began the construction of the characteristic bell tower.

THE MEDIEVAL BELL TOWER — 2

Separated from the basilica and monastery by the ancient Roman road which ran from the Via Celimontana down to the Colosseum, this bell tower was erected on the ancient *Claudianum*, making use of the parts of the massive arcade as its foundation. The two lower stories, erected by Cardinal Theobald, are of heavy construction pierced only by narrow embrasures. One entered the tower by a small door still visible today from the street mentioned above. This impressive undertaking was continued and completed by another cardinal, Giovanni di Sutri (+1182), who ranks among the foremost benefactors of the basilica of Sts. John and Paul. His contributions to the growth of the entire complex of Sts. John and Paul were carried out around the middle of the twelfth century.

Further developing Cardinal Theobald's original plan for the bell tower, Cardinal di Sutri completed the construction by adding five stories to the two begun by his predecessor. The upper five stories, pierced by elegant pairs of arched twin apertures, blend well with the two lower ones. Embellishing the tower, the porphyry and serpentine marble discs together with the rare colored ceramic bowls of Arabic-Spanish (*Mudéjar*) manufacture were inserted in the masonry on all the stories of the bell tower.

Cardinal di Sutri then connected the bell tower to the wing of monastery of Theobald (to the left of the tower and attached to the Basilica) by means of a great arch which extends over the ancient Roman road of the *Claudianum* (that



connected to the Colosseum). The arch sustained a new additional wing of the monastery which can be identified by the two trifora windows (A *bifora* is a type of window divided vertically in two openings by a small column or a pilaster; similarly, *trifora*) above the iron gate leading into the *Claudianum* area. These two windows were part of the monastic chapter room. The bifora window above the trifora windows, are the windows of the cell in which St. Paul of the Cross lived and died.

Above the level of the gray colored blocks of stone of the *Claudianum* is an inscription commemorating the restoration



of the tower by Francis Cardinal Spellman. It reads:

THIS VENERABLE TOWER AND THE
ADJOINING RESIDENCE OF THE
CARDINAL PRIEST OF THE BASILICA
OF STS. JOHN AND PAUL, CONTAINING
THE REVERED CELL IN WHICH ST.
PAUL OF THE CROSS, THE FOUNDER

OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE
PASSION, ENDED HIS HOLY LIFE, HAVE
BEEN RESTORED TO THEIR FORMER
BEAUTY THROUGH THE GENEROSITY
AND INTEREST OF HIS EXCELLENCY,
FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN,
ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK, IN THE
YEAR 1951.

— THE NARTHEX OR VESTIBULE OF THE BASILICA —

However, Cardinal di Sutri's most outstanding contribution to the Basilica was the erection of the narthex or vestibule, which today serves as the entrance to the basilica. And even though much material (especially the columns) was taken from the older narthex, the new one was conceived and erected according to the architectural principles current at the time.

Just as the capitals, so also the architrave shows the hand of a master craftsman. The fine inscription running its entire length records the erection of the narthex by Cardinal Giovanni di Sutri, who dedicated it to the honor of Sts. John and Paul:

+ PRESBITER ECCLESIAE ROMAN(A)
RITE IOHANNES H(A)EC ANIMI VOTO
DONA VOVENDO DEDIT MARTYRIBVS
CHRISTI PAVLO PARITERQVE IO(H) ANNI
PASSIO QVOS EADEM CONTVLIT
ESSE PARES*

*(*The priest of the Church of the Roman Rite, John, with a heart-felt vow, willing donates this vestibule to the Martyrs of Christ Paul and John who equally shared the Passion.)*

At the very peak of the facade is the coat of arms of the Archdiocese of New York. It was placed there by Cardinal Spellman when he was titular of the Basilica and Cardinal of the New York archdiocese. The three central bays are closed with an iron gate, erected by Cardinal Fabrizio Paolucci (1651-1726), who became titular in 1697. His copper coat of arms embellishes the middle one and is incised on the back with the date 1704. The two roses at the peak of the side gates are especially delicate and show the hand of an expert craftsman. The marble escutcheon in the center of the brick frieze is that of the French Cardinal Nicolas de Pellevé (1518-1594). He was named titular in 1572 and remodeled the basilica in 1575.

The present entrance to the Basilica is of medieval construction (13th century). Just in front of the cosmatesque (tile mosaic design; the same craftsmen also worked on the magnificent floor of the Basilica) two lions stand guard. They are reminders to the visitors of the temporal and eternal role of the Church. The lion on the left is devouring a small living creature symbolizing the Church militant and its judgment on the unrepentant sinner, while the lion on the right fondles an infant, indicating the Church's protection and concern for neophytes and the just. Above the architrave is an eagle, a symbol of divine purity, that grasps a hare (rabbit) in its claws. In in the medieval "bestiaries" the hare was considered a

symbol of disorder and lust par excellence due to its prolific nature.

On the wall to the left of the entrance is a plaque (text by Cardinal Antonio Bacchi) commemorating the restoration done by the then Cardinal titular of the Basilica, Francis Spellman (1948-52) under the direction of Professor Adriano Prandi. The plaque reads:

EUGENIO CARDINAL PACELLI, HAVING BEEN ELEVATED TO THE PAPAL THRONE, ENTRUSTED THIS SHRINE, FORMERLY HIS OWN TITULAR CHURCH, TO FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN, ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK, THROUGH WHOSE GENEROSITY THE FACADE AND VESTIBULE WERE RESTORED TO THE SPLENDOR OF THEIR ORIGINAL FORM IN THE HOLY YEAR OF 1950.



The eagle and the hare sculpture.

THE ORIGINAL SACRISTY OF THE BASILICA

When St. Paul of the Cross and the original Passionist community arrived here in 1773, the façade of the Basilica was different from what we see today, the result of the restoration of Cardinal Spellman. Of the eight columns that comprise the vestibule, only the four at the center were free standing, connected by the wrought iron gate. The space between the three columns on the left and on the right was walled in, creating rooms on either side. The room on the right hand side was the sacristy of the Basilica (the current sacristy was built in 1847). The sacristy was an important location during the final years of the life of the Founder.

of the monastery which was cloistered (until the reforms following Vatican II, all Passionist monasteries had areas that were cloistered, in particular concerning women.) When Paul arrived at Sts. John and Paul in 1773, his health had already deteriorated, and he could hardly walk. Therefore, when he wanted to meet with people who could not have direct access to him in his room, he had to be carried to the front door or to the Basilica. For this purpose, a special chair was prepared (the chair can still be seen in the Room of St. Paul of Cross) where Paul sat, while two religious carried him to the place of meeting, in particular to the sacristy of the Basilica.

Although Paul's room in the monastery was on the ground floor in close proximity to the front door, it was located in an area



The façade of the Basilica prior to the restoration of 1948-52.

The arrow indicates the location of the sacristy at the time of St. Paul of the Cross.

THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS AND ROSA CALABRESI

One of the people for whom Paul of the Cross was a spiritual director was a laywoman, Rosa Calabresi (1743-1805). A native of the Italian city of Cerveteri, Rosa corresponded with Paul for spiritual direction since she was in her early 20's, about ten years before their first meeting that took place towards the end of April 1775. Rosa, who had come to Rome because of the Holy Year of 1775, planned to stay in the city for about two months. It was during this period that she had frequent meetings with Paul in the sacristy of the Basilica. Because of her letters of spiritual direction with Paul and these encounters in Rome, Rosa was a witness during Paul's Canonization Process. Her accounts of their spiritual direction conversations give an insight into Paul's early prayer life. Additionally, she described Paul's various mystical experiences that occurred in this sacristy and in which she also participated. Following is Rosa's description of perhaps the most famous of these events. Drawing on Rosa's testimony in her depositions

during the Processes, the event is summarized by Passionist author, Edmund Burke in his biography, *Hunter of Souls* (1946, pp. 152-155):

"The first of this remarkable series occurred when the saint was speaking of the state of his soul and of his fear of having committed infidelities unknown to his conscience. Rosa felt an interior assurance that his fears were groundless and that his conduct was pleasing to God. She told him this, but her words had no effect. Then came the miraculous intervention. Quite clearly a voice, which seemed to come from a picture of the Madonna and Child, was heard calling the saint: 'Paul, Paul.' Looking up in amazement, Rosa saw the Blessed Virgin surrounded by rays of light, sitting on a throne, and holding the Child in her arms. Her first reaction was neither dread nor fear, but a great sense of happiness and peace. St. Paul of the Cross, crippled by infirmity, was seated in an armchair, but in a moment, his infirmity forgotten, he had fallen on his knees. His ex-

ample was followed by Rosa, who distinctly heard all that followed. The Blessed Virgin said: 'My son, ask graces of me.' Paul still bowed down to the ground, replied by voicing the thought that was ever in his heart: 'My soul's salvation.' The answer was immediate: 'The grace is granted: I assure you of that,' and she added: 'Be assured that the Congregation is doing very well; it will spread greatly, and its work is most pleasing to God.' After some further conversation in the course of which it was revealed to the saint that he would die on a Wednesday in October, the Blessed Virgin and the Divine Child blessed Paul and Rosa, placing their hands upon their heads. When Rosa again looked up, she could see no sign of the heavenly visitors, but the saint was raised some distance from the ground in the same kneeling position, lost in ecstasy. His very countenance seemed changed. Usually he had a serious, even a severe expression; now his face lit up with happiness and a smile played about his lips. He remained thus for almost an hour, and on returning to himself, quietly blessed Rosa, without saying anything further, and was brought back to his room."

In addition to saying that our Blessed Mother and the Child Jesus were present in this space, in another mystical experience in this sacristy, Rosa also attests that St. Michael the Archangel, and another angel came to assist Paul at the conclusion of a supernatural event. Again, the summary of Edmund Burke:

"In a subsequent vision at a later spiritual conference, Our Lord suddenly appeared as a beautiful little child, gracious and smiling. Again, Paul knelt in a transport of adoring love. In his humility he sought assurance of divine forgiveness: 'Lord, I beg forgiveness for my innumerable faults committed in so many years of preaching, in so many Sacraments administered and received, so many irreverent acts, so much ingratitude!' The Divine Child consoled him: "Everything has been well done in accordance with My Divine



Will." Overcome with love, the saint, greatly daring, asked if he might embrace the Child. This favour too was graciously granted, and thus holding the Child pressed to his heart, Paul again asked with tears the grace he so ardently desired: his soul's salvation. Rosa distinctly heard the answer: 'Your salvation is as certain as is the fact that you are holding Me in your arms.' The vision then disappeared but another favour was to follow. The saint's corporal infirmity was forgotten when he had fallen on his knees; now he was so weak and infirm that he could not resume his seat upon the chair. The Archangel, St. Michael, accompanied by another angel appeared and gently lifted him into the chair and then immediately vanished."

5. THE INTERIOR OF THE BASILICA

Although it is not the scope of this Guide to offer a general tourist orientation for the church, however an historical overview could be helpful for a Passionist pilgrim to understand at least what he/she sees upon entering the structure.

Today the church's interior is largely the result of the changes made by Cardinal Fabrizio Paolucci in 1718. The walls of the church are entirely covered with imitation marble. Above the entrance is the inscription recording the works of this Cardinal:

“THIS BASILICA BUILT BY ST.
PAMMACHIO ON THE HOUSE AND
THE SITE OF THE MARTYRDOM OF
ST.S.JOHN AND PAUL, ERECTED AS A

TITLE, DISTINGUISHED AS A STATION
[CHURCH] AND BY THE REMARKABLE
HOMILY OF POPE GREGORY THE GREAT.
DUE TO THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS
OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME, CARDINAL
FABRIZIO PAOLUZZI CONSOLIDATED
IT AND DECORATED IT IN THE YEAR OF
THE LORD 1718.”

The present floor was refurbished in the eighteenth century, but many sections of the original thirteenth-century cosmatesque mosaics have been preserved. The ceiling, although partially restored in 1904, is essentially that erected in 1598 by Cardinal Agostino Cusano. It depicts the two martyr saints, describing them as “*Vere Germani*” (true brothers).

THE APSE AND PRESBYTERIUM (SANCTUARY)

The apse decoration was executed during this same period; the painting in the apse half-dome was done by Nicolo Circignani (called Pomarancio) in 1588 under a commission from Cardinal Antonio Carafa (1538-1591). The three large paintings depicting scenes from the martyrdom of Sts. John and Paul and the conversion of the one who ordered the martyrdom of the saints, Terentianus, were executed (from left to right) by Giovanni Domenico Petri, Giacomo Triga and Pietro Andrea Barbieri. In the center is the scene of the martyrdom of Sts. John and Paul (Triga). On the left, John and Paul distribute their goods to the poor (Petri). On the right,



Terentianus is converted to Christianity, and assists at the healing of his own son through the intercession of the two martyr saints (Barbieri).

Located half-way up the central aisle a bit to the right there is a stone bearing the inscription:

LOCVS MARTIRII SS. IOHANNIS ET
PAVLI IN AEDIBVS PROPRIIS –

(The place of the martyrdom of Sts. John and Paul in their own house).

Cardinal Philip Howard (1629-1694) placed this stone in the floor in 1677 and enclosed it with a railing. The remains of the saints were collected in a cherry-wood coffer and deposited under the high altar where they remained until Pope Benedict XIII collected them in the porphyry urn in 1726. This event is recorded on a marble inscription now preserved in the sacristy's vestibule. A glass disc was inserted in the floor immediately over the shrine enabling



the visitor to peer into this sacred place. During the restorations and explorations of the Roman houses in 1948-1952 it was discovered that this stone was not located directly above the shrine, but a bit in front of it.

THE MINOR ALTARS

In addition to the main altar containing the relics of the Martyrs Sts. John and Paul, there are 8 minor altars. Of these, there are three that are associated with Passionist saints.

LEFT SIDE AISLE

The Altar of the Blessed Sacrament 6/7

The Blessed Sacrament is reserved at the altar to the left of the main altar and is dedicated to the **Assumption of the Virgin Mary**. The painting of the Assumption by Giovanni Torelli (1716) is painted on a sliding panel that was moved aside on certain feast days to reveal an elaborate throne for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

At various points in time, this altar contained the remains of St. Paul of the Cross and St. Vincent Strambi. During the period when the altar contained the relics of Strambi, a large painting by the artist Ballarini was commissioned depicting Strambi preaching a popular mission.



The medieval fresco behind the altar of the Blessed Sacrament.

This painting can still be viewed on the right hand side of the altar.

In a narrow space behind the altar (which currently serves as a small sacristy) one can still examine a medieval fresco (1255) of Christ the Redeemer in the act

of blessing, holding a book inscribed with the words “EGO SVM LUX MVNDI” (“*I am the light of the world*”, Jn. 8:12) flanked by six Apostles (L-R) St. James the Minor, St. John, St. Paul the Apostle, Jesus, St. Peter and two others that are unidentifiable.

The Altar of St. Gemma Galgani and the portrait of Fr. Germano Ruoppolo 8

At the opposite end of this side aisle is the altar dedicated to St. Gemma Galgani. Cardinal Eugenio Maria Pacelli (1876-1958), who became Pope Pius XII in 1939, was the Cardinal Titular of the Basilica from 1929 to 1939. In 1940 he canonized St. Gemma Galgani. The *Platea* of the community records the construction of the altar dedicated to St. Gemma on 13-14 May 1943. It was a particularly extraordinary event, considering that it took place

during World War II. Following are some excerpts from the text of the *Platea*:

“On numerous occasions the happily reigning Supreme Pontiff Pius XII asked our religious what gift/memorial he could donate to the Basilica of which he had been the Cardinal Titular. Very willingly he accepted the suggestion of erecting an altar in honor of St. Gemma Galgani whom he had canonized during the early years of his pontificate. Therefore, it was decided to erect it in the first arcade of the left aisle where our holy Founder was originally buried. The remains and the funerary monument of Cardinal Vincenzo Macchi were relocated to the end of the central nave to the left of the entrance. [see above]

The architect of the altar was Angelo Giorgi, under the direction of Pietro Enrico Galeazzi, the director of the Technical Office of Vatican City. The altar was constructed of “pietrasanta” [marble carving-stone from an area near the city of Lucca]. The stained-glass window above the altar was designed by Biagio Biagetti, the artistic director of the Pinacoteca Vaticana (Vatican art studio). [...] The dedicatory marble plaque states that it was dedicated in 1942. However due to the extraordinary circumstances created by the war, the altar could not be installed at that time.

On 13 May 1943, the altar was consecrated by his Excellency Bishop Frances-



co Pascucci, the secretary of the Vicariate [of Rome], assisted by the religious of the community and many devotees of St. Gemma. Relics of St. Gemma, St. Paul of the Cross, Sts. John and Paul, St. Lawrence, martyr, St. Hyacinth, martyr, and St. Eugene I, Pope were placed in the small sepulcher of the altar.”

The *Platea* entry concludes with an historical note. At all the various liturgies that took place during the dedication the Sisters of the Institute of St. Gemma (the Zitine).

Mother Vincenza, a member of the Giannini family, was the superior, and the children of their school participated. The Sisters and the children stayed at the altar during the day offering various prayers and singing hymns. However, at one point the warning siren sounded in the city indicating a possible bombing attack; consequently, the Sisters and children had to seek refuge in the grottos of the *Claudianum*.

The current painting of St. Gemma and her Guardian Angel is by Italian artist Francesco Manzini. It depicts Gemma writing a letter (perhaps to her spiritual director, Fr. Germano). According to Gemma, her guardian angel would personally deliver her letters to Fr. Germano in order to avoid them being destroyed by the devil. In fact, the angel extends his hand to keep the Evil One away, so that she can continue to write. It is dated 2012.

On the wall to the right of the altar is a portrait of Venerable Fr. Germano Ruoppolo, Passionist (1850-1909)

Germano Ruoppo (of St. Stanislaus) was a central figure in the history of this Basilica and the Generalate of Sts. John and Paul during the late 1800’s, as well as in the life of St. Gemma Galgani and the cause of the beatification of St. Gabriel. Consequently, in addition to viewing his portrait, below are some excerpts that



Fr. Germano Ruoppolo

may help to appreciate the life of this remarkable Passionist.

He was born Vincenzo in the region of Naples in 1850. At the age of five, he received his First Communion-- something extraordinary at that time. He was highly intelligent and had an insatiable thirst for knowledge. At the age of fifteen he joined the Passionists, receiving the name of Germano of Saint Stanislaus. His novice master was Blessed Bernard Silvestrelli. After religious profession, on December 7, 1866, he resumed his studies in the Generalate of Saints John and Paul, in Rome. Due to political events related to the capture of Rome and the fall of the temporal power of the popes, his superiors transferred him to Belgium to continue his studies. He was ordained a priest on November 3, 1872. He immediately devoted himself to ministering to Italian exiles in Belgium. When he returned to Italy, he was assigned to the spiritual and cultural formation of young Passionist students. He taught theology, canon law, church history, classical studies, philosophy, science, and mathematics.

A self-trained archeologist, he rediscovered the house located below the Basilica inhabited by the martyrs John and Paul as well as the vast complex of the Roman Houses. For this work he was applauded by internationally renowned archaeologists, such as Giovanni Battista De Rossi. Archaeologist Paul Allard said that it was rare to find researchers who were as “wise, conscientious and disinterested in any personal glory as was Father Germano”.

Pope Leo XIII asked him to prepare a plan for the reform of the clergy and wanted to name him a bishop. Pope Pius X sent him as an apostolic visitor to some dioceses of the Italian regions of Calabria and Tuscany, including the important dioceses of Lucca and Florence, that were in distress during the period of the fight against modernism.

Among the Passionists, he was elected General Consultor and was appointed Secretary General. In 1890 he was appointed General Postulator for Congregation. One of the highlights of his work in this capacity was the conclusion of the processes and the beatification of St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows. He also promoted the causes of St. Vincent Strambi, St. Gemma Galgani, Blessed Dominic Barberi and Blessed Lorenzo Salvi, as well as Venerable Giacomo Gianiel and Giovanni

Battista Danei. He wrote works on philosophy, theology, psychology, and hagiography. His biographies of Saint Gemma Galgani and St Gabriel of our Lady of Sorrows are particularly valuable.

However, spiritual direction was indeed his most esteemed area of ministry. For this task he had a particular gift and heavenly charisms. Priests, men and women religious, committed lay people, cardinals, founders of congregations throughout Italy, chose him as director because of his prudence and holiness, and his knowledge of ascetical and mystical theology.

Nevertheless, Germano’s name will be forever associated with that of Gemma Galgani. Germano became her guide and spiritual father. He defended her against criticism and suspicion, perplexity and the slander that surrounded her and the humanly disconcerting episodes that afflicted her. He was a privileged eyewitness of her mystical life.

On December 10, 1909, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage while correcting the fourth edition of Gemma’s biography. He died the next day, December 11. Originally, he was buried in the “Campo Verano” cemetery in Rome. In 1953 his remains were transferred to the Shrine of St. Gemma in Lucca. He was declared Venerable on July 11, 1995.

The altar of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin 9

At the far end of the right side aisle is the altar dedicated to **St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin**. St. Gabriel was canonized by Pope Benedict XV on 13 May 1920. As this date was approaching the decision was made to prepare a special altar in the Basilica dedicated to him. The site that was chosen was the altar which, until that time, housed the relics of St. Saturnino. After seeking authorization from the appropriate authorities the decision was

made to transfer St. Saturnino’s remains to another altar (the last altar in this aisle, at the rear of the Basilica) and to assign the former altar to St. Gabriel. Although they had hoped to inaugurate the new altar in May of that year, it was not until November that the work was completed. In fact, the inauguration of the chapel took place in the context of the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation.



The **Bollettino**, (No.1,1920) quotes an article in a Roman newspaper that describes the altar and the event. Following are some excerpts: “The altar is of very fine marble [...] The walls are also all covered with rich marble. [...] The vault is framed in gold stucco harmonizing with the design of the walls, with festoons of roses and lilies. In the center is a beautiful fresco by Prof. [Gian Battista] Conti [1878-1970] depicting faith, hope and charity. The floor is also of colored marble, designed by the Passionist Brother Gabriele Zamarin (of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). [...] The oil painting is another artistic and inspired work by Conti. The figure of the Saint is portrayed perfectly: from his face shines a beauty of angelic simplicity. Gabriel is kneeling, his hands in the act of indicating a vision, in which - in the midst of a soft light - is Jesus Crucified with the Virgin, and prayerful angels in glory. On the right, at the top of the cross, there is an angel that symbolizes prayer; further down another angel with a thurible depicts adoration of the Crucified, and with tender affection sustains the Saint; on the left, another angel presents him with a lily, the emblem of purity. [...] On both sides of the walls, there are frames with a large number of ‘ex-votive’ offerings: silver hearts, medals, jewel crosses and two

golden bars of a brave officer of our army.” At the request of the Superior General, Fr. Silvio di Vezza (1849-1929), the blessing of the altar and painting was done by Bishop Francesco Pascucci, the Secretary Vicar of Rome. The article concludes by stating that at 9:30 AM on 21 November, they began the liturgy by singing the hymn “Iste confessor” and over one hundred voices *“hailed the fortunate young man, who had the pride of being, after the Holy Founder; the most beautiful fruit of the first two centuries of the Institute of the Passion that came to maturity.”*

In this same aisle, immediately after the Chapel of St. Paul of the Cross is the altar dedicated to St. Pammachius, the original *“titulus”* of the Basilica. He is represented with the plan of the basilica under construction. The artist was Aureliano Milani.



Ex-votive offerings for favors received through the intercession of St. Gabriel.



The Crystal Chandeliers

Perhaps one of the most well-known features of the Basilica is the crystal chandeliers. In fact, the church is often referred to as the “*chiesa dei lampadari*” (the church of the chandeliers). Originally there were 40; currently there are 36. According to the historical memoir of Fr. Paolo Maria Totaro, CP (1912-2010) four of them that were located above the cornice on the right hand of the presbyterium of the Basilica were destroyed during the triduum that was celebrated for the canonization of St. Gemma in 1940. Sparks from a faulty electrical wire ignited the cloth draping decoration and subsequently the cord sustaining the chandeliers also caught fire and fell. There are two possible explanations of their origins.

Brother Angelo Tonelli (1822-1901)

One explanation of the origin of these chandeliers concerns one of our religious, Brother Angelo Tonelli, of the former Presentation Province of Italy. He spent almost all his religious life in the retreat of Sts. John and Paul. In the book of the necrology of this Retreat the following is recorded: “*He was an industrious ‘questor’ [the brother who begged for charity for the monastery], and with only his genial appearance and a few key words, he was able to move the soul of others so that he got*

what he requested. In the new chapel of the holy Founder, he left memories that will never perish. With great diligence he managed to arrange for the purchase of much of the precious marble that adorns it. He made the forms for the stucco that can be seen there, and he also prepared the [original] mannequin for the relic of the body of our holy Founder, including the [face] mask. Additionally, he embellished the church with 50 exceptionally beautiful chandeliers of various sizes.”

Francis Cardinal Spellman and the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York City

The second explanation of the origin of the chandeliers is a popular “legend” that concerns a Cardinal Archbishop of the Diocese of New York and the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. According to the legend, while Francis Cardinal Spellman was the Titular of the Basilica (1946-1967), a renovation may have taken place in the famous Waldorf Astoria Hotel in

New York City, and these chandeliers were placed on sale. Supposedly, he purchased the chandeliers from the hotel and had them transported to Rome and installed in the Basilica. To date, no documentation has been found in the records of the Basilica nor in the General Archives to verify or disprove this story.

FUNERARY MONUMENTS AND TOMBSTONES

This Basilica, like most of the historic churches of Rome, contains burial sites—some in elaborate carved monuments and others placed in church floor. Among these tombs there are some dating to prior to the arrival of the Passionists and others that are associated with the Passionists. In addition to the Passionist religious, there are many Passionist benefactors who are also buried here. These burials continued until the Napoleonic reign in Italy of 1805-1814 when, in accordance with the Edict of Saint Cloud of 1804, burial sites had to be located outside of the city walls. However, as noted in Chapter 6, at the time of the construction of the Chapel of St. Paul of the Cross in 1867, an area was prepared beneath the Chapel for

burial crypts for the Passionist religious, in particular, the Superiors General who died in this community. However, in 1870 this process was again temporarily halted due to the political decisions made by the newly established government of Italy that included the prohibition of burials within the city walls. Today, the deceased Passionists of this community are buried in the public Roman cemetery known as the “Campo Verano”.

Following is a list of those burials in the Basilica that are of interest to Passionists, including a translation of the Latin inscriptions on the tombstones and funerary plaques, from the left side aisle to the right side aisle.

LEFT SIDE AISLE

CARDINAL VINCENZO MACCHI (1770-1860)

10

After an illustrious career as a Vatican diplomat under the guidance of Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi (see below) he was created a cardinal in 1826 and named the titular of the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul in 1827. In the last three decades of his life held various posts in the Roman Curia.

During his period as Cardinal Titular of the Basilica (1827-1860) in 1847 the General Curia decided to construct the new sacristy and the Chapel of St. Paul of the Cross. However, because of a lack of funds, the work for the new sacristy was not begun until 1856 and the following year, the work began on the construction of the Chapel. Cardinal Macchi was among the major financial contributors to these work projects. He died on 30 September 1860. He requested to be buried in the Basilica in the place that had been occupied by St. Paul of the Cross.



Originally St. Paul of the Cross was buried in the location that is now the site of the altar dedicated to St. Gemma. When this altar was erected, the gift of Pope Pius XII, who canonized Gemma, the white marble funerary monument containing the remains of the Cardinal was moved from that location to its present location at the side of the entrance of the Basilica. The plaque on this monument reads:

HERE, WHERE BLESSED PAUL OF THE CROSS WAS BURIED, VINCENZO MACCHI, A NATIVE OF CAPODIMONTE IN THE PROVINCE OF VITERBO, WHO WAS A GUEST IN THIS HOUSE, WANTED TO BE BURIED. DURING EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TIMES, HE CARRIED OUT THE TASK OF APOSTOLIC NUNCIO

AMONG THE PORTUGUESE, SWISS, AND FRENCH, LEO XII APPOINTED HIM CARDINAL. GREGORY XVI SENT HIM AS A LEGATE IN EMILIA. PIUS IX APPOINTED HIM SECRETARY OF THE HOLY AND SUPREME ROMAN INQUISITION. HE DIED AS DEAN OF THE HOLY COLLEGE OF CARDINALS, AND AS BISHOP OF OSTIA AND VELLETRI. HE DIED ON SEPTEMBER 30, 1860, AT THE AGE OF 90 YEARS AND ONE MONTH. HE WAS ATTENTIVE TO EVERYTHING RELATING TO DIVINE WORSHIP AND ASSISTANCE TO THE POOR. HE WAS ACTIVE IN THE COUNCIL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ATTENTIVE SO THAT CHRISTIANITY DID NOT SUFFER ANY HARM. THEY RECOMMEND HIS FAME TO POSTERITY.

ANTONIO FRATTINI (1729-1797)

11

The most outstanding benefactor of St. Paul of the Cross and the Passionists of the retreat of Sts. John and Paul in Rome was Antonio Frattini, who continually lavished upon the religious his generosity. They could turn to him in any necessity, sure of his help and counsel.

He was born in Rome in 1729. He met St. Paul of the Cross in 1744 in the city of Sutri (Viterbo) in a monastery of Carmelite nuns where his sister was a member of the community. Another one of his sisters was a cloistered nun in the Carmel of Vetralla, where St. Paul of the Cross preached and did spiritual direction. A great friendship developed between Frattini and the Founder. However, Frattini's affection for the Saint reached its apex above all in Rome. He was the one who bought and then donated to the Passionist Congregation the "Ospizio del SS. Crocifisso" (The Hospice of the Holy Crucified), inaugurated on 9 January 1767.

Paul remained in this residence with his religious until December 9, 1773 when he transferred the community to the new re-

treat of Sts. John and Paul. However, Antonio not only favored Paul and his Congregation during his lifetime, but also when he was on the verge of death, on 14 March 1797, he urged his children to continue his charitable works towards the Institute. Among these was Candido, a priest and canon, who later became Vicegerent of the diocese of Rome. The portraits of An-



tonio and his son, Candido, can be found in the “Sala dei Papi” in this retreat.

In his Spiritual Testament St. Paul of the Cross stated: “Also in view of the obligations that the entire Congregation has, especially this retreat, to Mr. Antonio Frattini and his family (for he did so much by way of contributions to bring the poor Congregation to Rome) I leave as a testamentary memorial, that on the day of the death of said Mr. Antonio as well as that of his wife, Mrs. Agata, (for both of whom I wish with all my poor heart a long life) that a funeral service be held in this Church, and that all the Religious perform for them the same Suffrages prescribed by the Holy Rule for our members; then on the anniversary of said Mr. Antonio every year an anniversary service be held for him and for the deceased of his family.”

Frattini’s tomb is in the floor of the Basilica near where St. Paul of the Cross was originally buried (currently the site of the altar of St. Gemma). The following epi-

graph, written on the stone on his tomb, reminds posterity of his affection for Paul of the Cross and the Passionists, including his generosity toward them:

“TO ANTONIO FRATTINI, ROMAN CITIZEN, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PRIVATE PATRIMONY OF POPE PIUS VI, PONTIFEX MAXIMUS. A MAN OF SOLID PIETY AND COPIOUS CHARITY FOR THE NEEDY, WHO, HAVING LOVED THE DISCALCED CLERICS OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, PROVIDING ALSO FOR THEIR PERSONAL NEEDS, SINCE THE DAYS OF THE VENERABLE FOUNDER FATHER PAUL, EVEN IN HIS DEATH DID NOT WANT TO BE SEPARATED FROM THESE MEN WHO WERE DEAR TO HIM. IN HIS WILL HE STIPULATED THAT HIS BONES WERE TO BE BURIED IN THEIR CHURCH. HE LIVED 68 YEARS AND 35 DAYS, AND DIED ON 14 MARCH 1797, LEAVING SEVEN CHILDREN. GOODBYE FATHER, AND PRAY FOR YOUR CHILDREN, TO OUR LORD.”

— ST. VINCENT MARY STRAMBI (AND FR. PIO CAYRO) - 12

St. Vincent Mary Strambi was born in the city of Civitavecchia, north of Rome, on 01 January 1745. As a young priest, he entered the Passionist Congregation and was received by St. Paul of the Cross.

Vincent was a great missionary. He tirelessly devoted himself to promoting Christian life among the people of his time. He preached about the Passion of Jesus throughout almost all of Italy. At the request of the Pope, he often preached in the city of Rome to the local clergy and especially to the cardinals, bishops and prelates of the Roman curia and the papal court. For the opening of the Holy Year of 1775, Pope Clement XIV entrusted him with preaching to the people of Rome in the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere.

Vincent also wrote books on the lives of the saints and the spiritual life, includ-

ing one on the Precious Blood to which he had special devotion. He was an eminent spiritual director guiding, among others, St. Gaspare Del Bufalo, Blessed Anna Maria Taigi, Venerable Maria Luisa Maurizi and Maria Clotilde Adelaide of Savoy. He was the first biographer of St. Paul of the Cross.

In 1801 Pope Pius VII appointed him bishop of the Italian cities of Macerata and Tolentino where, with tireless apostolic zeal, he worked to reform the clergy and the people, proving to be a true Shepherd of his flock. He lived an austere, penitential, and exemplary life.

In 1805 Napoleon Bonaparte began to occupy the Papal States, including the city of Macerata. During this political upheaval Vincent was a fearless advocate for the freedom of the Church. In 1808 he chose an unjust and painful exile rather than the

unlawful oath of allegiance in accord with the political machinations of Napoleon.

When he returned to his diocese after nearly six years of exile spent in Novara and Milan, he resumed his pastoral activities with even greater zeal. However, after many years of suffering, exile, and poor health, he asked the Pope to be allowed to return to religious life in one of our monasteries and to prepare himself for death.



St. Vincent Mary Strambi.

In 1823, Pope Leo XII reluctantly accepted his resignation as bishop of the diocese. However, the Pope wanted him to be with him for spiritual support as his adviser and confessor. He took up residence with the Holy Father in the Quirinal Palace in Rome. Every day he would go to the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul, where he was consecrated bishop, to pray at the tomb of St. Paul of the Cross. In December 1823, the Pope became seriously ill. On 23 December, Vincent was called to administer the Sacrament of Viaticum to the

dying Pontiff. With great effort the Holy Father whispered to him, "Vincent, I had always thought that I would declare you a saint, however another Pope will have to do so." Vincent responded, "*Have courage Holiness; the Lord will not deny the Church its pastor in these difficult times. There is a person who will offer his life for your recovery.*" On the 24th, Vincent celebrated Mass, offering his life for the Pope. Shortly afterward, the Pontiff began to recover and on 1 January 1824, Vincent died in the Papal palace.

He was initially buried in the floor of the Basilica in the left side aisle. Currently on the wall above the site there is a white marble plaque with his image.

Shortly after his Beatification on 26 April 1925, his remains were exhumed, and a beautiful urn was prepared. The urn was originally placed under the altar of the "Crocifisso" (see painting of Jesus Crucified above the altar diagonally across the aisle from this plaque). A bronze plaque with the Passionist "Sign" at the base of the altar is all that remains of this site of Strambi's burial.

According to the *Platea* of the community, during the generalate of Fr. Tito Finocchi (of Jesus) (1931-1937) the remains of Strambi were again moved, this time to the Blessed Sacrament altar at the end of this side aisle. The relics were placed in new urn and the altar was embellished with precious pieces of marble. The American Passionist bishop Paul Joseph Nussbaum (1870-1935) helped to finance this project.

Twenty five years later, on 11 June 1950, Strambi was canonized. On 21 November 1957, his remains were transferred to the city of Macerata and initially placed in the church of Saint Filippo Neri that was administered by the Passionists. Later the relics were transferred to the Cathedral where they remained until it



Fr. Pio Cayro.

was damaged during an earthquake in 2016. Presently his relics are in the adjacent shrine church of Our Lady of Mercy (Maria SS. della Misericordia).

Currently one of our religious, Fr. Pius Cayro (1800-1864), brother of the then Superior General, Pietro Paolo Cayro (1812-1877) and former Procurator and Secretary General, is buried in the floor. There is a small cross “+” in the floor that marks this site. The inscription on the plaque reads:

I. X. P.
 HERE FOR 73 YEARS THE SACRED
 REMAINS OF
 BLESSED VINCENT MARY STRAMBI OF
 THE CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION
 WERE VENERATED
 +
 NOW THE SERVANT OF GOD PIUS OF
 THE NAME OF MARY, C.P. RESTS IN THE
 PEACE OF CHRIST.
 A DISTINGUISHED AND PIOUS
 MINISTER OF THE WORD.
 HE DIED ON 1 APRIL 1864
 AT THE AGE OF 64 (1928)

————— CARDINAL GIUSEPPE GARAMPI (1725-1792) —————

13

Cardinal Garampi was among the great benefactors of the Congregation. He was a great scholar and collector of documents and books. He was a valuable friend of the Founder in his dealings with the Vatican, often interceding on his behalf. In 1767, as Secretary of Ciphers under Clement XIII, he blessed the oratory of the Hospice of the Holy Crucified (Ospizio SS. Crocifisso). In 1769, together with his friend, Cardinal Francesco Saverio de Zelada, the Secretary of the Congregation of the Council, he facilitated the preparation and presentation of Paul’s request for papal approval of a new text of the Rule.

He was named titular of this Basilica on 4 April 1786. According to the Platea of the retreat, he wished to take possession of the Basilica in the simplest possible way in the sacristy, talking to the Passionist community, “*showing the appreciation, affection and interest which he always had toward the Congregation; the singular*

bond of intimate friendship that had existed between him and our Founder, Fr. Paul of the Cross and with other religious, like Bishop Struzziere when he was with us.”



He died in Rome at the German College on 4 May 1792, and was buried temporarily in the church of St. Apolinario. On 16 November 1792, his remains were taken to Sts. John and Paul for permanent entombment, near the altar of the Blessed Sacrament.

The white marble tombstone reads:

GIUSEPPE LORENZO F. GARAMPI A
NATIVE OF RIMINI. HE WAS BORN
THERE ON 29 OCTOBER 1725. CARDINAL
PRIEST OF THE HOLY ROMAN CHURCH.

TITULAR ARCHBISHOP OF BERITO
BISHOP OF MONTEFIASCONE
AND OF CORNETO/TARQUINIA.
A MAN OF PROVEN INTEGRITY AND
INNOCENCE, WHOSE SINGULAR MERITS
IN THE REDEMPTION OF CHRIST ARE
ATTESTED TO BY HIS DEEDS AND
WRITINGS. HE DIED ON 4 MAY 1792 AT
THE AGE OF 66 YEARS, 6 MONTHS, AND
6 DAYS. THE EXECUTORS OF HIS WILL,
THE CARDINAL PRIEST FRANCESCO
SAVERIO DE ZELADA AND LORENZO
CALEPPI, PREPARED THIS MONUMENT.

RIGHT SIDE AISLE

— DR. GIUSEPPE GIULIANI (IULIANI) (1721-1801) —

14

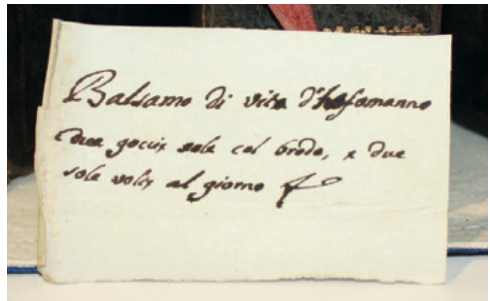
During the last two years of his life in this retreat of Sts. John and Paul, in addition to his infirmarian, Brother Bartolomeo Calderoni (1732-1796) who cared for Paul for twenty years, the Founder was cared for by Dr. Giuseppe Giuliani. A native of the island of Corsica, he practiced medicine at the nearby Lateran Hospital of San Giovanni and was Paul's primary doctor. Paul felt so indebted to him that, along with Antonio Frattini, he mentions him explicitly in his Spiritual Testament: *"And then since I am so much obliged to Doctor Giuliani who took care of me with such great charity during my long illnesses, I also leave as a testamentary memorial that if he ever wished to retire and live with us, to remain at the feet of the Crucified to prepare for a holy death, he shall be lovingly admitted and treated with all charity and amiableness."*

His tombstone reads:

THE ASHES AND MEMORIES OF
GIUSEPPE GIULIANI, OF THE ISLAND
OF CORSICA, A VERY SKILLED DOCTOR,
WHO WAS A PRIMARY DOCTOR IN THE
LATERAN HOSPITAL. TO THIS UPRIGHT,
BENEVOLENT, AND RELIGIOUS MAN,
THIS CONGREGATION DEDICATES
THIS MONUMENT TO HIS EXCELLENT
MERITS WHO IN THE 80TH YEAR OF HIS

LIFE DIED IN THIS RETREAT, RESTING
IN GOD ON JANUARY 8, 1801. MARQUIS
ANGELO TIBERIO DE MASSIMI,
VINCENZO LUIGI FRATTINI HIS HEIRS
AND TRUSTEES AND CLARO BONELLI
HIS SUCCESSOR IN THE HOSPITAL,
PLACE THIS MONUMENT.

There are also additional interments of individuals associated with the Passionists; however there is little biographical information available other than what is written on the tomb stones, to explain their association with the Congregation and why they wished to be buried in the Basilica. Among these are: Tommaso Carosanti, Alfonso Emanuele Carvahlo, Stanislao De Cesaris Ferentini, and Carlo Giorgio.



Medical prescription for St. Paul of the Cross, perhaps written by Dr. Giuseppe Giuliani- "Balsam of vita di Hoffmann- two drops only with broth, and only two times a day."

THE OCTAGON 15

(Vestibule to the Sacristy)

In 1725, when Cardinal Fabrizio Paolucci was the titular, a small room was constructed in this area. In 1847, the General Council decided to construct the chapel that would be dedicated to St. Paul of the Cross (see Chapter 6). At the same time, they decided to build a new sacristy for the Basilica (1856-57) (as mentioned in Chapter 4, the former sacristy was located in the portico at the front of the Basilica).

Subsequently, the Octagon room became the vestibule of the sacristy which now contains the marble busts of several titular cardinals and Popes important in the history of the Vincentians and the Passionists.

The busts of these benefactors are as follows (L-R, beginning above the office of the Rector):

CARDINAL FABRIZIO PAOLUCCI (1651-1726)

He was the titular of the Basilica from 1697 until 1719. However, even when he was newly ordained, he worked with the Vincentians doing various pious works at their "House of the Mission" on the Montecitorio hill in Rome (where St. Paul of the Cross and John Baptist made their pre-ordination retreat.) As the titular of the Basilica, he worked extensively with the Vincentians who were responsible for the Basilica until the arrival of the Passionists in 1773. He gave the Basilica the definitive form of its interior that we see today.

After his work, all traces of the ancient basilica of Pammachius disappeared, and only the recomposed cosmatesque floor of the medieval church remained. In the period between Cardinal Paolucci and the year 1911 only two notable changes were made to the complex-- in 1857 the large, new sacristy with its octagonal vestibule was erected and the majestic chapel in honor of St. Paul of the Cross.

The plaque dedicated to him reads:

TO FABRIZIO, CARDINAL PAOLUCCI,
BISHOP OF OSTIA, DEAN OF THE

SACRED COLLEGE, INCLINED TO
WORKS OF PIETY AND RELIGION, HE
SPLENDIDLY RENOVATED THIS TEMPLE,
OF WHICH HE WAS THE DISTINGUISHED
TITULAR, HE PROMOTED THE HOUSE
OF THE MISSION OF FORLÌ AND HE
GRANTED MANY GREAT FAVORS TO
THE WHOLE CONGREGATION, THIS
EVERLASTING MONUMENT.



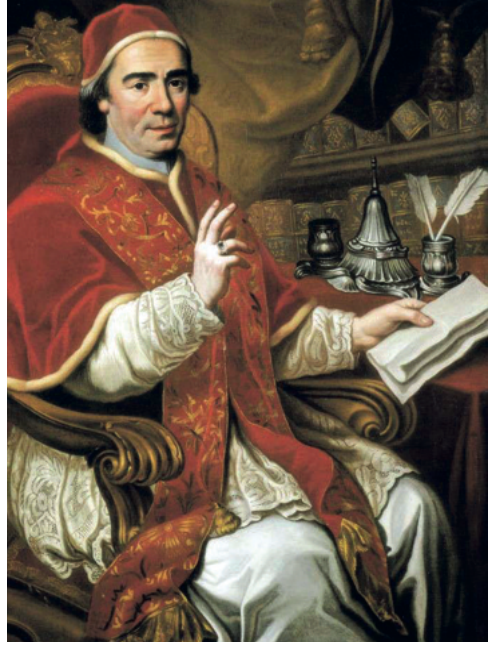
POPE CLEMENT XIV (1705-1774)

Pope Clement XIV, born Giovanni Ganganelli, was elected Pope on 19 May 1769. At the time of his election, he was the only Franciscan friar in the College of Cardinals, having been a member of the OFM Conventuals. In that same year, on 16 November, he issued the Papal Bull **Supremi Apostolatus** by which the Passionists were recognised as a Congregation of Pontifical Right, exempt from the jurisdiction of local bishops. The document made legal history as it was the first time that a Congregation with simple vows was given all the rights and privileges of orders with solemn vows.

On 30 September 1770, Pope Clement approved the Rule for the Passionist nuns. On 3 May 1771 the first monastery of the nuns was opened in Tarquinia.

After years of political debate and extensive discernment, on 21 July 1773, Pope Clement issued the Apostolic Brief, **Dominus ac Redemptor**, the document of suppression of the Jesuits. With the suppression of the Jesuits, their houses in Rome were emptied of their religious and other religious orders were asked to take over their churches. Paul had originally suggested to Pope Clement that the Jesuit novitiate at Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, opposite the papal palace, could be given to the Passionists. Although the Pope initially agreed, afterward it was suggested to Paul that he should ask the Pope for the church and monastery of Sts. John and Paul on the Celian Hill, and that the Vincentians who were already living there, be given Sant'Andrea. After some political and financial negotiations, Pope Clement granted the Passionists the Basilica and monastery of Sts. John and Paul which they entered on 9 December 1773. Paul's last visit to the papal palace on the Quirinal took place on 8 May 1774. Again the Pope showed him great signs of affection, tak-

ing him by the arm to his own room where they spoke for two hours. The Pope died later that year on 22 September 1774.



As Fr. Paul Francis Spencer notes in his book (***As a Seal Upon your Heart***, p. 191) *“Clement had been a true father to the Congregation of the Passion, but he had in his turn treated its founder as a father, turning to Paul for comfort and encouragement. He gave the Congregation that stability in the Church which Paul had sought for so many years... [He is] remembered by the Passionists as the Pope who helped them the most.”*

The plaque dedicated to him by St. Paul of the Cross and the community reads:

TO CLEMENT XIV, THE SUPREME
PONTIFF, FOR HAVING APPROVED
THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST
HOLY CROSS AND PASSION OF JESUS
CHRIST, FOR CONFIRMING WITH
HIS AUTHORITY THE RULE OF THE
INSTITUTE, FOR GIVING THEM IN
PERPETUITY THE BASILICA OF SAINTS

JOHN AND PAUL, FOR GIVING THEM
THE HOUSE AND THE ADJOINING
GARDENS, TO THE BEST PRINCE
AND MOST GRACIOUS FATHER. PAUL
OF THE CROSS, FOUNDER AND HIS
COMPANIONS.

G.A.M.P.P.
[Grato Animo Memoriam Posuerunt,
*this memorial was erected with heartfelt
gratitude.*]
THE YEAR OF THE LORD, 1774

POPE PIUS IX (1792-1878)

As a student in Rome, Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti, the future Pope Pius IX made two retreats at Sts. John and Paul in 1816 and 1817. It was even said that he considered joining the Passionists, but he was impeded due to poor health. However, the Passionist spirituality was very present throughout his life because of the turbulent political climate of his pontificate. At the time of his death, his pontificate was the longest in the history of the Church.

Concerning the Passionist Congregation, Pius IX beatified the Founder in 1853 and he canonized him in 1867. He granted the Passionists the care of the Scala Santa and he built the adjacent monastery at his own expense. On 2 May 1853, the day after the beatification of Paul of the Cross, he visited the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul to venerate his remains. He prayed there for a long period of time and as a sign of his great generosity, he donated to the Basilica a gold chalice embedded with many precious stones. The following year, on 15 May 1854, he visited the Generalate and had lunch with the religious. The large marble plaque in the current Retreatants' refectory (the original refectory of the community) records this historic visit.

Subsequently he approved the construction of the Chapel in honor of the Founder on the side of the Basilica. At his own expense, he restored the Room where Paul of the Cross died. He also made substantial gifts for the construction of the Chapel (see Chapter 6).

Following the canonization of the Founder on 29 June 1867, Pius IX further

showed his benevolence toward the Congregation by extending the liturgical feast of St. Paul of the Cross, originally on 28 April, to the entire Church. Additionally, he approved the celebration of the complete text of the Proper Mass and Office of our Congregation.

The plaque dedicated to him states:

PIUS IX, SUPREME PONTIFF,
EMBRACING WITH GREAT AFFECTION
THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION
OF THE PASSION, WITH GREAT
AFFECTION ELEVATED PAUL OF THE
CROSS, THE FATHER AND FOUNDER OF
OUR CONGREGATION, TO THE HONOR
OF THE BLESSED IN HEAVEN ON 01 MAY
1853, AND INCLUDED HIM AMONG THE
SAINTS ON 29 JUNE 1867, THE FEAST OF
THE APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL, WITH
BISHOPS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD
PRESENT, AT THE REQUEST OF THE
SUPREME PONTIFF.





In 1775, Cardinal Giovanni Braschi was elected to succeed Pope Clement XIV. Within two weeks of his election, the new pope visited Paul of the Cross at Sts. John and Paul on 5 March. He was received by Paul, now bedridden, in his cell. Paul told him: “*When your predecessor died, I wept because I felt like an orphan, but I am an orphan no longer; I have a father, and what a father!*” (*Processi*, IV, 215) Although Paul’s life was nearly over, he wanted to undertake a thorough revision

of the Rule that he would then present to Pius VI for confirmation. At the end of the General Chapter in May of that year, the revised text of the Rule was presented to Pius VI with a request that he confirm the approval given in the Apostolic Brief of Benedict XIV and the Bull of Clement XIV. On 15 September 1775, Pope Pius VI confirmed the new text of the Rule by the Bull, *Praeclara virtutum exempla*.

When Paul died on 18 October of that year, Antonio Frattini went to tell the Pope of the news. Pope Pius ordered that Paul should be buried in a wooden coffin, and placed in a tomb of his own, rather than being buried in the common burial place of the Passionist religious in the Basilica. He said that he himself would pay for the funeral expenses. Shortly after the funeral, Pope Pius asked the new General, Fr. Giovanni Battista Cioni, to begin preparations for initiating the Cause of Canonization of Paul of the Cross.

The plaque dedicated to him is as follows:

TO PIUS VI, SUPREME PONTIFF, HAVING AGAIN APPROVED THE CONGREGATION OF CHRIST’S PASSION, WITH AN ILLUSTRIOUS DOCUMENT, HAVING COME TO VISIT PAUL OF THE CROSS, FOUNDER, WHEN HE WAS SICK, AND PRAISED HIM AFTER HE DIED AND, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS CANONIZATION, IN A TIMELY FASHION, USED HIS AUTHORITY AND PROCLAIMED HIM VENERABLE.
THE 200 DISCALCED CLERICS OF THE PASSION EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE FOR HIS FAVORS.

POPE INNOCENT XII (1615-1700)

The presence of the bust of Pope Innocent XII is because of his association with the Vincentian Congregation (Congregation of the Mission) who were the immediate predecessors of the Passionists at Sts. John and Paul.

Antonio Pignatelli was born on 13 March 1615 of one of the most aristocratic families of the Kingdom of Naples, which had included several Viceroys and ministers of the crown. At the age of 20 he became an official of the court of Pope Urban VIII. He was elected Pope in 1691 taking the name Innocent XII. In 1699 he took part of the House of the Mission (the “Via della Missione” on Montecitorio in Rome, which is currently the Parliament building of the Italian government) to construct a building for his Curia (Curia Innocenziana). In exchange, he gave the Vincentians the complex of Sts. John and Paul, where they remained until the arrival of the Passionists in 1773.



His plaque reads:

A TESTIMONY OF GRATITUDE
TO INNOCENT XII, SUPREME PONTIFF
FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN AND ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE
AND AMONG HIS OTHER EXPRESSIONS OF GREAT GENEROSITY
HE ASSIGNED TO THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION
THIS BASILICA, THE HOUSE AND THE ANNUITIES
IN PERPETUAL UNION

FR. ANTHONY TESTA (OF ST. JAMES) (1787-1862)

“The Second Founder”

One of the most illustrious figures of the Congregation was born in Marciana on the island of Elba. He excelled for his clear ideas, richness of thought, logic in argument and precision in expression. His contemporaries note his amiable, understanding, affectionate and cordial nature. He entered the Passionist novitiate and professed vows on Monte Argentario in 1804. Following the Napoleonic suppression, and Pius VII re-establishing the Congregation on June 26, 1814, he returned to Rome and resumed Passionist life.

He first served the Congregation as formator of our young religious for over 20 years. In 1821 he was elected rector of this

retreat of Sts. John and Paul. He worked on various important improvements for the retreat. In 1824 he was elected Provincial, residing in Vetralla, a position he held until 1830. At the 17th General Chapter of 1839 he was elected Superior General. He was re-elected in 1845, 1851 and 1857. During his mandate 20 new retreats were opened – 8 in Italy and 12 outside Italy. He guided the cause of the Beatification of the Founder and began the cause of Vincent Strambi.

(For additional biographical information see Vol. III, History of the Passionists, Italian edition, Alonso/Pielagos, 2011).

To mark the centenary of his death (1962) his remains were transferred to the Octagon area. The “*Notiziario*” of the Congregation (1963) describes the event:

“On June 29, 1963, after the solemn vespers of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, the entire community of this house participated with the General Curia in the transferal of the mortal remains of Fr. Anthony of St. James, as desired by the Superiors in the context of the celebrations for the first centenary of his death. Raised from the shadow of the common tomb, located under the Chapel of our holy Founder, the urn containing the bones of the one who, rightly, was considered as the “second founder” of the Congregation, was buried with due solemnity in a niche specially prepared in the small Octagon, through which we must pass in going from the retreat to the Church or to the sacristy or to the Chapel of the holy Founder. In this place so frequented, (a bust) and a marble plaque will remind our religious of the ongoing presence of the one who did so much for the renewal and expansion of our Congregation.”



The white marble plaque reads:

FR. ANTHONY OF ST. JAMES, 1839–1862 SUPERIOR GENERAL
OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,
WHICH HE LOVED AS A MOTHER AND HONORED WITH HIS WORDS.
ONE HUNDRED YEARS SINCE HIS DEATH.
M.P. [MONUMENTUM POSUIT – *This monument was placed*]

Also of interest are the marble plaques, already mentioned above, recording the transferal of the relics of Sts. John and Paul to the porphyry urn under the high altar by Pope Benedict XIII. The first and last busts are the work of Pietro Bracci.

Finally, the Octagon is crowned by a “lantern” that can be seen from the window in the monastery at the end of the hallway where the Room of St. Paul of the Cross is located. At the top there is a globe surmounted by a cross. On its base there is an inscription with the name of Cinthius, Cintius, or Cencius. This is Cardinal Cencio di Savelli who was titular of the Basilica at the end of the 12th century, until 1216, when he was elected Pope Honorius III. This object was originally located at the summit of a marble baldachin (“*ciborium*”) over the main altar of the Basilica and was the work of a school of craftsmen directed by the Master Cosma (hence, “*cosmatesque*”). Like in many other churches in Rome of this period, these craftsmen also prepared the marble mosaic floor and the marble work adorning the main entrance of the Basilica. Fr. Germano Ruoppolo writes that he rediscovered this piece amidst the rubble of the Roman Houses and perhaps it was he who had it placed in its current location on top of the lantern.



The inscription reads:

+ CINTHIVS
INDIGNVS PRESBITER
FIERI FECIT

(*Cinthius, the unworthy priest, commissioned this work.*)

6. THE CHAPEL OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS (PAOLO DANEI)

— THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS — 16



On Wednesday, 18 October 1775 at approximately 4:45 P.M., St. Paul died peacefully in his room in the retreat of Sts. John and Paul, surrounded by Bishop Tommaso Struzzi, Fr. John Baptist Gorresio, the First Consultor, Giammaria Cioni, his confessor, and religious of the local community. The next morning, 19 October, at 6:00 A.M., Paul's remains were brought to the Basilica. The body was placed on a wooden board with a brick under his head for a pillow, as prescribed by the Rule. When evening came, the basilica was closed and the artist, Gian Domenico Porta took a cast of the face for the death mask (this is currently located in the historic museum of the retreat). The body was placed in a coffin of pine (currently located in the historic museum), which was enclosed in another of lead. When it was sealed, the lead coffin was placed in a third coffin made from chestnut wood.

On the evening of 20 October, at the first altar on the left as one enters the Basilica (currently the site of the altar of St. Gemma), a place was opened in the floor near the wall. More than half of the coffin was lowered into the pavement of the church. Above the remainder of the coffin a kind of urn of cement and bricks was prepared against the wall. A plaque was placed on the urn with the following inscription in Latin:

HERE LIES THE BODY OF THE SERVANT
OF GOD PAUL OF THE CROSS FOUNDER
OF THE DISCALCED CLERICS OF THE
MOST HOLY CROSS AND PASSION OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. HE DIED
HERE IN ROME DURING THE JUBILEE
YEAR 1775 ON 18 OCTOBER.



During the year of Paul's beatification (1 May 1853), his remains were exhumed from its burial place in the pavement of the Basilica, and were located, for public veneration, under the altar of the Blessed Sacrament in the Basilica.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHAPEL OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

In 1847, the Superior General and his Council, decided to build a new sacristy for the Basilica (the former sacristy was in the atrium). Considering the upcoming Beatification of Paul, the Council also decided to build a chapel to house his remains. However, due to financial constraints, the work on the construction of the new sacristy did not begin until 1856 and the work on the chapel was begun in 1857. The construction of the Chapel was entrusted to the architect Filippo Martinucci who was the chief architect for Apostolic buildings. He died in 1862 and the work was completed by his son Vincenzo. The financial generosity of the titular cardinal of that time, Vincenzo Macchi, and other benefactors allowed the project to commence.

In 1860 they began to assemble the various materials that would adorn the chapel – yellow oriental alabaster (alabastro cotognino orientale) from Egypt and other precious pieces of marble. In July 1870, a contract was signed with Giuseppe Salvi for the construction of the gold plated metal urn that would contain the relics of St. Paul and would be placed under the altar. The altar was the gift of Prince Alessandro Raffaele Torlonia (1800-1886). He was a Roman nobleman whose family made their fortune from banking. The coat of arms of the Torlonia Family can be found on the bronze plaques on either side of the altar which is constructed of rare marble and adorned with precious stones: onyx, jasper, agate, carnelian, lapis lazuli, etc. Behind the altar there is a dedicatory inscription that states:

“TO ALMIGHTY GOD, IN HONOR OF
PAUL OF THE CROSS, FOUNDER AND

FATHER OF THE RELIGIOUS OF THE
PASSION, ALESSANDRO TORLONIA,
ROMAN PRINCE, HAD THE ALTAR
AND SHRINE BUILT TO CONTAIN HIS
[PAUL OF THE CROSS’] BODY, IN THE
CHRISTIAN YEAR 1879.”



On 25 June 1862, Pope Pius IX was visiting some locations on the Celian Hill and he entered the Basilica of Sts. John and Paul where the First Vespers of the Martyrs were being celebrated. After venerating their relics, he went to visit the new sacristy. He also visited the chapel of the Founder to see the progress of its construction. The **Platea** of the community notes--

“To add to the magnificence of the chapel, the Holy Father offered to donate two massive alabaster blocks of stone to sculpt two columns. The two blocks of stone arrived at Sts. John and Paul from the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls and on 18 June 1863, the work was completed, and the two columns were placed on the sides of the future altar. He also donated a substantial amount of marble that was used for the floor of the chapel.”

The six massive matching bronze-gilded candelabra and the central crucifix, all with the instruments of the Passion, as well as two smaller candlesticks, bear the coat of arms of Francesco Sturbinetti, who is buried in the Basilica in the funerary monument to the left of the entrance to the Octagon and Sacristy. (Sturbinetti was born in Rome in 1807, a lawyer for the Sacra Rota, he took part in the reform movement under Pius IX. During the first secular ministry of the Papal States he was first minister of public works, then of

justice. After the fall of the Roman Republic, he was excluded from papal amnesty. The fact that, in the constituent assembly of 1849, he voted in favor of the abolition of the temporal power of the Popes, cost him exile. He was not able to return home until 1857 but had to remain in the city of Frascati. On 7 November of the same year he was received in audience by Pius IX, who was cordial and friendly toward him. Sturbinetti died in Frascati in 1865, at the age of fifty-eight and was buried in the Basilica).

— THE ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE CHAPEL —

The Chapel is in the form of a Greek cross. During the construction of the foundation the engineer discovered rooms that were part of the complex of the Roman houses in the area of the *Claudianum*. Fr. Germano Ruoppolo (1850-1909), the Passionist who did extensive excavations of the Roman houses in 1887, undertook the work of studying this area. Many of the artifacts that he discovered are now housed in the museum beneath the Chapel.

Among the rich embellishments of the Chapel is the painting of the Ecstasy of

St. Paul of the Cross (1870) over the main altar by Francesco Coghetti (1802-1875), who was also responsible for the dome paintings. The fresco in the dome depicts St. Paul of the Cross in glory and in the surrounding quadrants there are scenes from his life-- his birth; his retreat at Castellazzo when he composed the Rule, including the apparition of Our Lady and the Child Jesus; the approbation of the Rule; and his death in his room in this retreat. The murals on the sides of the Chapel, "**The Agony of Jesus in the Garden**" and "**The Pi-**



The 40-day retreat at Castellazzo and the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus.



The approbation of the Passionist Rule.

età”, are by Francesco Grandi (1831-1891). The four allegorical paintings depicting Christian virtues, faith, hope, charity, and religion, are perhaps the work of the Italian painter Luigi Cochetti (1802-1884).

The original intention of the Passionists for the area beneath the Chapel, that is currently the museum of the Roman Houses complex, was to use this site as a burial crypt for our religious, including our Superiors General. Interestingly, the first person to be buried in the crypt was the architect of the Chapel, Filippo Martinucci. There are four small rooms in the corners of the area (currently these contain museum artifacts). Originally in the center of the room there was a marble altar. In the floor of the current museum there are two inground crypts—one directly beneath the altar of St. Paul of the Cross, that apparently was intended for the Superiors General, and the other in an area to the left of the crypt which was intended for our Passionist Religious and some benefactors. Beginning in 1864, Fr. Germano began to collect the remains of our Religious that were buried in the original crypts that were used for this purpose in the Basili-

ca (see Chapter 5) and to relocate them in these new crypts beneath the Chapel of the Founder. Among these remains are those of Fr. Marco Aurelio Pastorelli (1693-1774), the first Passionist to die at Sts. John and Paul.

On 25 April 1880, the relics of St. Paul of the Cross were transferred to this new Chapel, which was dedicated by the then Cardinal Titular, Edward Howard (1829-1892). The *Platea* of the community contains a very detailed description of the event. Following are some excerpts from this text.

“The year 1880 will always be memorable for us due to the transfer of the body of our holy Father and Founder Paul of the Cross to the new Chapel erected in his honor. It was begun in 1857 when Most Rev. Fr. Antonio of St. James [Testa] was Superior General and it was completed this year. [...] [When] the Chapel was completed, preparations began for the great solemnity of the transfer of the holy remains on 25 April. [...] [The Basilica] was richly decorated and adorned with many chandeliers. The body of the Saint was already removed from beneath the altar of the

most Blessed Sacrament, where it had been kept for many years. It was again clothed in a Habit and a mantle of silken cloth, a gift from Cavaliere Carlo Buttarelli, and was placed on a silver etched cushion. It was enclosed and sealed in a glass paneled urn and was carried in procession.

When everything was arranged, on Friday 23 April the holy relics, that were to be placed the next day in the three new altars by Cardinal Howard, the Titular, were solemnly displayed. On Saturday 24 April the solemn consecration of these three altars took place, that is, that of our Holy Founder in the new chapel, the other of the Immaculate Conception in a chapel on the left side of the altar mentioned above, and the third, the altar of the Assumption in the Church. The first was consecrated by Cardinal Howard, the Titular and the other two by two bishops. On Saturday evening the body of our holy Father was brought to the Church and exposed for public veneration before the high altar. On Sunday evening it was solemnly transferred to the new chapel.

The procession was composed of all the religious of this retreat and many others of the Scala Sancta, followed by four mitred abbots. Then came the urn adorned with flowers with the body of the Saint. It was carried by four priests in dalmatics surrounded by various bishops. Finally, the pious procession concluded with the Cardinal Titular and two other assistant bishops. Once the holy relics arrived before the altar of the new chapel, the cantors began to sing the antiphon [...] “O animarum Venator”. Finally, the only thing remaining was to place the relics under the altar. However, this was not possible because of the multitude of faithful who arrived and who wanted to approach the sacred urn, something which was extraordinary for our church. Guards had to be employed to direct the crowd, allowing them to enter a few at a time. It was moving to see the tenderness, piety, and devotion of the good people, who prayed and kissed the sacred

urn, and it seemed that they did not want to leave, yet as they departed each took out of devotion some flower or leaf which adorned the urn. At last, being already late, and when the people had left the church, the Vicegerent opened the sacred urn, and the body of our holy Father was placed under the prepared altar.”

There are two commemorative plaques in the chapel that record these events. The one to the left hand side of the altar, above the door to the sacristy/side altar of the Immaculate Conception reads:

“ON 7 MAY 1880 THE BODY OF SAINT PAUL OF THE CROSS WAS LAID UNDER THE ALTAR OF THE NEWLY BUILT CHAPEL. (ANTONIO ANGELINI, JESUIT)”

On the opposite side of the altar, the inscription above the door on the right states:

TO THE ETERNAL GOD ONE AND THREE,
CARDINAL EDWARD HOWARD, THE
TITULAR OF STS. JOHN AND PAUL
DEDICATED THE ALTAR TO THE HONOR
OF ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS ON 8 MAY
1880. (ANTONIO ANGELINI, JESUIT)

(Note: Fr. Antonio Angelini-Rota, Jesuit, was the epigraphist who composed this text).

The two stained glass windows on either side of the altar date from January 1923. The Platea explains that the original windows were in disrepair and needed to be replaced. The window on the left side of the altar bears the coat of arms of Pope Pius IX and on right side that of Pope Pius XI (1857-1939) who was the Pope at the time—both great benefactors of the Passionists and the retreat of Sts. John and Paul.



7. THE MONASTERY AND RETREAT OF STS. JOHN AND PAUL

EARLY HISTORY OF THE MONASTERY

Adriano Prandi, the engineer and restorer who planned and executed the restoration of the façade of the Basilica, the bell tower and the Roman houses in 1957, notes that the repairs and restorations carried out immediately after the disastrous event of the fighting, pillaging and sacking of the city of Rome, including the Basilica by the troops of Robert Guiscard in 1084, are evidence that the damage suffered by the basilica must have been considerable indeed. During the reign of Pope Paschal II (1099-1118) the cardinal titular of the basilica, Theobald Boccapeccora, installed as titular in 1101, was forced to reconstruct the adjacent monastery in its entirety. Although, notes Prandi, the lack of positive proof for the existence of the monastery prior to this time makes the above conclusion somewhat questionable, it cannot be denied that some type of edifice must have been annexed to the basilica from the earliest times to provide housing for the clergy who were stationed there to care for pilgrims and provide liturgical ministry. There are, then, sound reasons for supposing that a type of monastery existed adjacent to the basilica prior to the erection of the new one built by

Cardinal Theobald next to the north side of the church.

The front of this monastery, brought to light during the restorations of Cardinal Spellman and Prandi, forms the inner right-end wall of the basilica's narthex, and continues out into the piazza at a blunt angle from the church's façade. From this it is obvious that the narthex in front of the basilica did not exist at the time of the monastery's erection.



This front wall of the monastery contains two twin windows, whose jambs and sills are visible in white marble, and by the ancient doorway which gave entrance into the monastery. The window to the right and the entrance (today partially walled-up) are visible from the piazza.

LATER HISTORY OF THE MONASTERY

THE GESUATI

During the fifteenth century this large monastery was practically abandoned, devoid of liturgical services, and the basilica and monastic buildings were threatened with ruin. The remaining canons living there were finally removed in 1448 by the energetic action of the cardinal titular, Latino Orsini, who gave the monastery to the then flourishing congregation of the Gesuati in 1454. The Company of the Poor Gesuati was founded in Siena, Italy between 1360 and 1364 by a merchant and banker named Giovanni Colombini. The institute was a movement of laity. Initially they lived a hermetical life dedicated to long meditations, severe penances, and public scourging. Especially during the Black Death plague in that city in 1348, following the joyful example of St. Francis of Assisi, they cared for the sick and the poor. They preached peace, poverty, extreme humility, and they shouted the name of Jesus (“Gesù” in Italian); hence their name “Gesuati”. They did not live in religious houses, nor did they have a fixed superior. By imitating Jesus and St. Francis, in a spirit of humility, they were not ordained priests. In addition to prayer, they applied themselves to practical activities, such as painting, miniature illustrations, bell and sundial art, carpentry, glassmaking; but above all the collection and distillation of herbs for the care of the sick. The fifteenth century experienced the maximum flowering of the Gesuati, who adopted the symbol of St. Bernardine of Siena, the sun with twelve rays, symbol of Christ the light of the world together with the Apostles. In 1668, however, the Congregation was suppressed by Clement IX.

Among the reminders of their stay here are the water well erected in cortile of the

General Curia in the rear of the retreat, that bears their insignia. This emblem can also be found above the entrance to the Madonna Chapel on the ground floor of the retreat. Opposite the chapel of the Madonna, there is a large stone mortar which, together with a pestle (missing), was possibly used by them to prepare substances by crushing and grinding them into a fine paste or powder in their laboratory and pharmacy. Additionally, their saints in white habit, can be found in a painting in the corridor leading to the refectory (Blessed Antonio Bettini) and in another painting depicting the deposition from the Cross at the main door of the retreat choir.



The water well constructed by the Gesuati.

THE OBLATE SISTERS OF ST. PHILIP NERI (THE FILIPPINE SISTERS)

When the Gesuati were suppressed in 1668 and left this monastery it was held in commendam by the Cardinal titular, Giacomo Rospigliosi (1628-1684). It was then entrusted to the Oblate Sisters of St. Philip Neri. The Congregation of Oblate Sisters of St. Philip Neri (Filippine) had its origins in a charitable outreach by one of the followers of St. Philip Neri. He established a house of refuge for poor homeless girls

next to the church of San Filippo Neri on Via Giulia in Rome, and the female volunteers who ran this were the beginning of the new congregation. The religious dedicated themselves to teaching catechism to poor girls and preparing them for First Communion. The solitary environment of the Celio was perfect for this ministry. However, they only remained here for a few years, from 1669-1672.

THE ENGLISH DOMINICANS

A few years later in 1677, during the time of Cardinal Philip Howard, a Dominican, the Filippine Sisters ceded their quarters to the English Dominicans who remained here for 25 years. Although the Cardinal was not a titular of the Basilica, he nonetheless intended that this residence would be a school for Dominican religious to study English, and for this purpose, he sustained them financially. However, his premature death in 1694, brought an end to this project. A remnant of their presence in this retreat is perhaps the large painting in the monastery refectory of Our Lady of the Rosary with various Dominican saints.



St. Dominic Guzmán.

THE VINCENTIANS (THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION)

As has been seen, the eighteenth century marked the most radical change in the appearance of the church and monastery. More specifically this period of profound change began in 1697 when the monastery was inhabited by the priests and brothers of the Congregation of the Mission, called Vincentians, from whose ranks came Fr. Andrea Garagni (1675-1742), the assistant of Antonio Canevari (1681-1764), both of whom were instrumental in exe-

cuting the many modifications of the Basilica sponsored by Cardinal Paolucci (see Chapter 5).

The Vincentians, a Society of Apostolic Life were founded in France in 1625, by St. Vincent de Paul for the purpose of preaching missions to the poor country people and training young men in seminaries for the priesthood. They were first invited to Rome in 1642 and settled on Montecito-



St. Vincent de Paul with St. Louise de Marillac.

rio where they dedicated themselves to retreat ministry, in particular the spiritual preparation of aspirants to the priesthood and those preparing for ordination. Among those who made retreat with them on Montecitorio were St. Paul of the Cross and John Baptist, in preparation for their diaconate and priestly ordinations in 1727.

This retreat house became overcrowded and unsuitable due to the noise of the city, and in 1697, when Pope Innocent XII offered them Sts. John and Paul. In addition to offering a site for their novitiate, the Basilica, that was semi-abandoned, profited from their presence.

They dedicated themselves to various restoration projects that included updating the monastery to make it more comfortable and hospitable. It was during the presence of the Vincentians that Sts. John and Paul also welcomed retreatants, although for the most part, these were young Vincentians. The rooms on the second floor of the current retreat were dedicated for retreatants and the anteroom to the community library at the end of the hallway was the chapel for the retreatants.

A vestige of their presence is the large painting of St. Vincent de Paul that hangs above the entrance to the Octagon in the Basilica. It was originally located above one of the side altars that was dedicated to this saint. Among the busts in the Octagon is that of Pope Innocent XII who offered the Vincentians this Basilica and retreat.

EARLY PASSIONIST HISTORY AT THE RETREAT OF STS. JOHN AND PAUL

In December 1744, St. Paul of the Cross and Fr. Thomas Struzzieri (later bishop), were traveling to the Scala Santa in Rome. As they were ascending the Clivo di Scauro, the beautiful bell tower, the basilica and the retreat came into view. Paul asked his companion if he knew anything about these buildings. When he was told the name of the church, he suddenly became deeply moved, and exclaimed, “*Casa mia! Casa mia! Qui ho da venir a star io!*” (My home! My home! This is where I need to be!”)

Paul’s initial dream for a house in Rome as a sign of ecclesial unity, and to facili-

tate official relations with the Holy See, almost came to fruition in 1747. That year it seemed that there was a possibility of acquiring the Church of San Tommaso in **Formis** in the Villa Celimontana (at the end of the present Via San Paolo della Croce) with the adjoining former monastery of the Trinitarians. As Paul attests in a letter dated 16 December 1747 to Fr. Fulgenzio Pastorelli, the superior of the retreat on Monte Argentario and novice director, he was delighted with the location of the Celian hilltop. He wrote: “*I visited the church, house, and garden of San Tommaso in Form-*

is. [...] It is one of the most solitary places in Rome, a place of great silence and recollection, almost a mountain, with good air, garden with water [...]. There are cabbages, enough fruit for summer and winter, at least partially, figs, grapes, artichokes, beans, broccoli, enough even to give to your novices. [...] it is a fine location, not a better one is to be found in Rome and with delightful air — a place prepared by our Great Father for his servants.” However, the opposition of the Canons of St. Peter, who had the rights to the church of San Tommaso and the buildings, negated the transaction.

On 21 July 1773, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was suppressed by the Holy See and on 9 August 1773 a commission of cardinals was established to oversee the disbursement of their assets. In his book **“As a Seal Upon Your Heart”**, Fr. Paul Francis Spencer describes this important moment in Passionist history: “Before the suppression, Paul had suggested to Pope Clement that, in the event of the Jesuits being suppressed, their novitiate house of Sant’Andrea al Quirinale could be given to the Passionists. Paul was familiar with the house, which was directly opposite the papal palace, as

he had made a retreat for subdiaconate there.

The pope was pleased with the suggestion and said that he had been thinking the same thing himself. However, after the setting up of the commission for the carrying out of the act of suppression, on 9 August 1773, one of the commission members (probably Cardinal Zelada) suggested that Paul should ask the pope for the church and monastery of Sts. John and Paul on the Celian Hill, allowing



The Basilica and the Clivo di Scauro in the 17th century.

Instead, on 9 January 1767, with the help of Antonio Frattini, St. Paul of the Cross took possession of a small house along the Via San Giovanni which was purchased from the Jesuits. Paul named it the “Ospizio del Santissimo Crocifisso” (The Hospice of the Most Holy Crucified). There was room there for only seven to nine religious. As St. Paul of the Cross had predicted, the religious remained there for only a few years (six). In fact, in 1773, they definitively left the house and moved to Sts. John and Paul.

the Vincentians who were living there to move to Sant’Andrea. Sts. John and Paul was at that time away from the centre of Rome. Paul wrote to Pope Clement that it was “more in conformity with the spirit of our Institute, being in a more solitary place.” In addition, “the church and house at the Quirinale were smaller and would not”, he said, “allow the religious to carry out their life of prayer according to the Rule.”

The Vincentians (Congregation of the Mission) had resided on the Celian Hill

since 1697. In recompense for leaving this site, the Holy Father offered them the former Jesuit Church of Sant'Andrea al Quirinale with its adjoining residence, which would offer them more possibilities for their pastoral activities. Through the firm insistence of Pope Clement XIV, an agreement was made with the Vincentians and on 7 December 1773, they left the monastery on the Celio and several Passionists

privately took possession of the complex. On the afternoon of 9 December 1773, the whole community, together with Paul of the Cross processed from the Hospice of the Most Holy Crucified to Sts. John and Paul. They sang the "Te Deum" in the basilica before the Blessed Sacrament and the religious immediately began their schedule of daytime and nighttime prayer for the Church.

LATER HISTORY OF THE PASSIONISTS AT STS. JOHN AND PAUL

(FR. FABIANO GIORGINI, CP)

The original retreat that the Passionists found when they arrived is located in the area of the room used by St. Paul of the Cross and dates to the 18th century. The Passionist religious were located in the wing off the main entrance (currently the "Garbatella" guest rooms section) and in the corridor leading to the refectory, which ended at the present day retreatants' refectory. There was no third floor of rooms. The choir of the community was formed from the façade of the basilica above the portico of the main entrance (currently the general postulation museum). Therefore at least six times every day the community passed by the room of the Founder to get to the choir. The Founder resided in this room (where he died) because he could no longer walk, and it would have been difficult for him to climb the steps to the area where the rooms of the religious were located. Additionally, since he received many male visitors (due to enclosure, women were not allowed in the retreat) this location was more convenient and less disturbing for the rest of the community. Across from the room of the Founder were two bedrooms where two religious resided.

The Vincentians used to give retreats here for seminarians and priests and the Passionists continued to set aside the

second floor of the retreat for this same purpose. The retreat movement gradually developed. In 1798 the community experienced the first occupation by French military troops, and they were forced to house them and their families in the retreat. In 1810 a general suppression of religious organizations was decreed by Napoleon and only a custodian for the basilica could remain. The retreat was completely stripped of its contents. When Napoleon was defeated and Pope Pius VII was released from prison, the religious returned to Rome in May and through the mediation of Cardinal Lorenzo Litta (1756-1820, his tomb is in the Basilica), a friend of St. Vincent Strambi, on 26 June 1814 the Passionists obtained permission from the Pope to once again live in community. On 10 July 1814 at Sts. John and Paul the religious, that were dispersed throughout Rome and in nearby areas, reunited and resumed wearing the religious Habit and living in community. When they returned here, the religious found nothing remaining in the retreat: no chairs, tables, or beds. The community continued to function as a student residence and as a retreat center for priests and laity.

At the time of the political unification of Italy, on 19 June 1873, the new government suppressed religious institutes, including



Cardinal Lorenzo Litta.

the community of Rome. The Superior General, Fr. Domenico Giacchini (1816-1884), asked the Cardinal Vicar to request permission of the Ruling Council to use the house of Sts. John and Paul for retreats for clergy as had always been the custom. Influential persons who were well-known in the government as well as by the Superior General of the Passionists also spoke in favor of this request. On 30 June 1875, the minister of Mercy and Justice announced that the Ruling Council had promulgated a decree of dissolution of the community of Sts. John and Paul and on 01 July 1875, it consigned the establishment with its garden to the Cardinal Vicar. He assumed responsibility for its maintenance, and he allowed the then Superior General and his Curia to live there as the superior of an international Congregation. Thus, the Passionist community was able to remain in the retreat although in very precarious circumstances. Legally, until 1929, the property belonged to the Cardinal Vicar; in that year by means of a settlement with the Holy See, the retreat of Sts. John and Paul and its garden were included in the

Lateran Concordat through the kindness of Cardinal Pietro Gasparri (1852-1934), a great friend of the Passionists. He obtained permission from Pope Pius XI to have the retreat and the garden declared extraterritorial property.

The major work undertaken by the Passionists are as follows: the third floor of rooms in the main sector of the building was built in 1933 in order to accommodate the needs of retreatants; the construction, in 1933-1935, of the wing that currently houses the community refectory and the library above it which, at one time, also served as the Chapter room. Until 1963, the current retreat house, built shortly after World War II, was the residence of the General Curia on the first floor; the second floor was designated for the university/ graduate students. The construction of the Curia wing on the side of the Coliseum in 1961-63 enabled the relocation of the General Curia and the seminarian students to this new site, thus allowing the former residence to be used exclusively for retreats.

The garden of the community is located on a quadrant of the Temple of Claudius (the Claudianum). Originally the Vincentians owned the area below the retreat where presently the tram passes, but St. Paul did not want the property. Until approximately 1880, in the area of the Military Hospital on Via Claudia, the Passionists owned the land that is presently bordered by Via Claudia and where the block of houses, between the Via Claudia and the Via Celimontana is currently located. In that year the government decided to develop this area of the Celio and it expropriated the land. With the monies from this sale the long section of the wall of "tufo" rock material along Via Claudia was built. It can be easily distinguished from the original roman construction.

In 1958, the British journalist and pioneering travel writer H. V. Morton visited the Basilica and Retreat. His guide was Fr. Alfred Wilson (1901-1972/IOS). In his book, "**A Traveller in Rome**" (Dodd, Mead & Company New York, 1958) he provides an interesting description of the retreat garden-- "*The garden, which is one of the unknown glories of Rome, not as a garden, for the Passionists have more reflective occupations, but as a foreground for the most unusual view of Rome that I know. The large stretch of land had been flattened for Passionist beans and artichokes by Agrippina when she built the temple of Claudius; and Vespasian, when he constructed reservoirs for sea battles in the Colosseum, laid the foundations of Rome's last farm, where the monks keep four cows, a few pigs and hens: and it is a pleasant reflection that cows now graze on the site of the vivarium, or menagerie, in which wild beasts from every part of the world were kept until they were required in the Colosseum. Who would have dreamt that cows are still milked within sight of the Colosseum: one*

might say within sight of the Campo Vaccino, for the Forum is only just out of view at the back of the Palatine? A hen passed proudly with her chicks. 'The cats from the Forum and Trajan's Market come prowling round at night,' said Father Alfred. 'We have to lock the hen houses!' Here, I thought, the last of Pio Nono's Rome, which was also the Rome of the Middle Ages, has been casually preserved on the Caelian. Time has stood still here for centuries, and by the strangest of illusions one looks down over Rome, at the Colosseum, the dark fretwork of the ruined Palatine, and the distant dome of St. Peter's, seeing it as if it were an etching by Piranesi."

From 1775 until 1994 all the General Chapters took place here, except for those of 1790, 1796 and 1802. Groups of missionaries departed from this retreat for Bulgaria in 1781 and in subsequent years for Belgium and then England in 1840; in 1842 for Australia and in 1852 for the United States of America.



Lord God, You gave our Father,
 Saint Paul of the Cross,
 a knowledge of the unfathomable riches
 of the mystery of the Cross,
 and the gift of perfect love for your Son.
 As we celebrate the wonders
 of your power revealed in our Founder,
 grant that we may learn from his example,
 and be protected by his prayers.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

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