

48TH GENERAL CHAPTER 2024 SUPERIOR GENERAL'S REPORT

"HERE I AM, SEND ME"

A journey of transformation through prayerful listening and surrender to growth in transparency, authenticity and humility.



"THE PASSION OF CHRIST: OUR SOURCE OF LIFE AND MISSION"

Our meaning and vision for a transformed future is found in
'the greatest and most overwhelming work of Divine Love',
- the Passion of Jesus.

INTRODUCTION: A SPIRIT-LED JOURNEY [2012 – 2024]

As I begin to write this report giving an account of the state of the Congregation over the past six years since the last 47th General Chapter in 2018, my mind is being oriented to reflect on a broader panorama, i.e. to look back and take a glance since the 46th General Chapter in 2012 when I began my mandate as Superior General. *With a sense of listening and obedience to the Spirit, where has the journey of our Congregation led us to today?*

The 46th General Chapter in 2012 had as its theme, **Passionist Life: Solidarity and Mission**. This was because, since 2000, attentive to the workings of the Holy Spirit and reading the signs of the times, the Congregation felt a need to renew its structures: a process of **Restructuring** for the sake of giving greater vitality to its mission. The process of

'restructuring' led us through a period of experimentation with 'Configurations', i.e. entities grouping together to find a supportive future and to create **structures of Solidarity** in the areas of *personnel, formation, and finance for mission*. The 46th General Chapter confirmed the establishment of six Configurations and focused on the themes of *solidarity, communion, and mission*.

After some years of focusing on the structures and *looking within*, the 47th General Chapter in 2018 felt it was time to *look out* – to focus on the charismatic testimony of our mission – the reason for our being and existence as a Congregation. This was encouraged and supported by the global promotion and call of Pope Francis to be a **missionary church**. Further, due to the upcoming commemoration of the Tercentenary of the foundation of our Congregation, the theme chosen for this Chapter was, **Renewing our Mission: Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope** in light of the dynamic force of the *Memoria Passionis* which motivates and impels us. The Chapter's goal was to promote reflection and response to the call for renewal of our mission with the awareness that '*what we do*' is closely linked to '*who we are*'. Three closely connected and intertwined areas were identified for the renewal of our mission: **1) community life; 2) formation – initial & ongoing; 3) the promotion and institutionalization of structures of solidarity in the Configurations.**

Now, as we prepare for the celebration of the 48th General Chapter, we want to continue the theme of *mission*, which is at the core of our vocation. However, we want to emphasize not just the mission of the institution, but, rather, focus on the individual Passionist members – the missionaries. *What should be the response of those called to God's mission? From what standpoint does a Passionist make his response in mission?* And so, we were inspired by the theme, **"Here I Am, Send Me" - The Passion of Christ: Our Source of Life and Mission**. As I reflected in my letter convoking the General Chapter:

We were hoping for a dynamic theme that would be missionary in nature, but closely connected to our Passionist charism and identity. It was felt that the Congregation was in need of an injection to 'shock' us out of our lethargy and inspire us with a new

*enthusiasm to fan the ashes into fire, to stand ready and available to “go to the other side” [the margins, the peripheries, the places where no one wants to go], to leave behind our tents and comfort zones, and to take the risks necessary along the journey always with our awareness plugged to the Cross and Passion of Christ which, for us Passionists, is the wellspring and source of Divine Love and Wisdom. Are we, am I, truly ready to listen to the Spirit and respond: “**Here I Am, Send Me**”?*

Looking back to the past two General Chapters, and looking ahead to the next Chapter, we get a sense, and we can trace the orientation of the journey on which the Congregation has been led. We can see that it has been a journey in response to the Spirit guiding and inspiring us to take the direction which would strengthen our fidelity in accordance with our charism and challenge our relevancy in accordance with the time of history in which we are living. So, for example, in response to the confusion, challenges and struggles being experienced in religious life (considering areas of growth and areas of decline), we discerned the creation of structures of solidarity within ‘configurations’ as a way of greater authenticity and relevance of our Passionist life and mission. Of course, there is no time-limit; it is ongoing. We have had our struggles in the institutionalization of these structures, but there are no manuals, or quick fixes or guarantees. What we need is the openness and patience to *walk together, evaluate, and make necessary changes* to achieve the outcome we want, which is the revitalization of the mission. Any signs of resistance and closedness from our part only serve to place obstacles in the path of building an albeit smaller, but life-giving future, different and new.

Similarly, in considering the renewing of our Passionist mission in the Church and the world today, three foundational features emerged:

- The close connection between our Mission and our Community Life: *“Our life is our Mission (by witness), our Mission is our life (by action).*
- The integral connection between our Mission and our Charism: renewing our Mission must build upon our dedication to Jesus in his Passion and to the crucified of today.

- The need for continual discernment of our Mission in light of the Signs of our Times and the Gospel of the Passion; we have to respond to the needs of our world today.

(Reflections and Orientations from the 47th General Chapter)

In a world situation which at the time was troubled by armed conflicts and wars, refugees, hunger and famine, ecological and environmental disasters, oppression of the rights and dignity of peoples, trafficking of peoples, growing poverty, race issues, gender and sexual discrimination, and the Covid-19 pandemic, Pope Francis, in his message to mark the 300th anniversary of our foundation, challenged us Passionists to deepen our commitment to **“the crucified of our age”** toward whom our missionary calling is directed. According to Pope Francis, this missionary calling of ours can only be strengthened by an **“inner renewal”** among us. In the words of Pope Francis:

The implementation of this task will require a sincere effort of inner renewal on your part, which derives from your personal relationship with the Crucified-Risen One...Only those crucified by love, as Jesus was on the cross, are able to help the crucified of history with effective words and actions...In fact, it is not possible to convince others of God's love only through a verbal and informative proclamation. Concrete gestures are needed to make us experience this love in our own love that is offered by sharing the situations of the crucified, even totally spending one's life, while remaining aware that between the proclamation and its acceptance in faith there is the action of the Holy Spirit.

I believe Pope Francis' invitation for an **“inner renewal”** among us Passionists is prophetic and calls our attention to focus more precisely and personally on the missionary thrust which the Congregation has been reflecting and renewing in these past recent years. Thus, it is no accident that this next part of our Congregation's journey focus on the **missionaries** – those called and sent. Hence emerged the Spirit-inspired theme which is presented for our 48th General Chapter and which confronts each one of us, individually and personally in the

journey ahead: **"Here I Am, Send Me" – The Passion of Christ: Our Source of Life and Mission.**

To truly respond with conviction: **"Here I Am, Send Me"** is a huge challenge and cannot be taken lightly. Obviously, this response presupposes a question which demands attentive listening, deep reflection and prayerful discernment. Making this response tests our faith in the God who calls. It demands the courage to leave one's comforts and familiarity and invites full confidence to surrender in trust to God and in the gift of the charism centered on the Passion of Christ in which is contained God's Power, Wisdom and Love. **The Passion of Christ: Our Source of Life and Mission?** *How convinced am I of this? Does the 'Passion of Christ' really influence my life? Can I surrender with confidence ("Let Go and Let God")?*

The grace of surrender and answering with obedience and freedom **"Here I Am, Send Me"** will mean that we must be open and ready to be *transformed and renewed* – from the inside, out. As St. Paul exhorts in Romans 12:2 – *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..."* This verse highlights the importance of a renewed mindset in the life of every Christian. It challenges us to reject the values and beliefs of the world (*being conformed to the world*) which tempts us to cling to our comforts, idols and ideas, and instead, align our thinking with the teachings of Christ (*being conformed to Jesus*). This *renewal of the mind* involves a transformative process that leads to a renewed perspective, values, and actions. By renewing our minds, we align ourselves with God's truth and experience the transformative power of God's grace.

Our regular personal reflection and spiritual check-ups will help us to guard against being *"conformed to this world"*. Experience confirms for us that without conscious reflection it is so easy to fall into, and become absorbed by, the 'worldly' which poses a danger to our consecrated life. In a RAI3 Italian broadcast interview in 2022, Pope Francis quoted the great theologian, Cardinal Henri de Lubac who called **'spiritual worldliness'**: *"the biggest problem and greatest evil in the Church"*. Pope Francis has himself stressed this many times, particularly in meetings with priests, warning that the seduction of

spiritual worldliness is the worst thing that can happen to the Church because it makes clericalism grow which is “a perversion of the Church and generates rigidity, and under every rigidity there is something putrid. Spiritual worldliness generates clericalism which leads to rigid, ideological positions, where ideology takes the place of the Gospel”. In this context it is difficult to freely surrender ourselves to the Lord and respond: “**Here I Am, Send Me**”.

My hope for this Chapter is that by our *walking together* in synodality, and by our openness and *respectful listening* to the Spirit, to each other, and to the signs of our times, we may be able to discern a transformative path and experience the inner renewal desired, so that we may be joyful Passionist apostles and authentic missionaries witnessing and proclaiming by our life and mission a message of hope which reflects the love of God – and the God of Love – always with our eyes fixed on Jesus Crucified-Risen who is our source and meaning, our strength and hope.

SYNOD OF BISHOPS: ON SYNODALITY

We cannot ignore the fact that while we are gathered here for our General Chapter, the Synod of Bishops is in session in the Vatican on the theme of the **Synod on Synodality**. ‘Synodality’ is now a fundamental feature of the Church’s identity and ecclesiology, and so it is important that we give attention and keep contact with the process of the Synod, because it is about us as members of the Church, the People of God. I Invite us all to adopt the ‘synodal way’ in the process of our Chapter, where all the voices are welcomed and heard, even if the full representation of the People of God is incomplete. Let us recognize that the **Holy Spirit is key**, without whom there is no synodality. The Chapter is not simply a question of like-minded people coming together to share, discuss, and come up with statements and plans and strategies. Rather, in synodality, we gather as a community of faith, of worship, of service and of mission. The call of Jesus and his vision of the kingdom of God, i.e. God’s rule of justice, love and peace, is central and the goal. Listening, dialogue, silence, prayer and discernment are also necessary elements and key activities.

For these past six years, our Congregation has been journeying with the dream of a mission option, to take on a missionary attitude and be ready to go out to the margins of humanity. Synodality is defined in Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* as “an indispensable prerequisite for giving the Church a renewed missionary impetus.” If our Congregation wants to become missionary, then it has to be part of a synodal Church, because synodality is not just a method, but the *mode of being* of a church which wants to go out in mission. It is a way towards a re-thinking, re-imagining of the Church's (and of our Congregation's) role in today's society. This requires that we undergo **conversion (metanoia)** – a new way of understanding and approaching how we do our mission. For us, Passionists, our contribution in mission must also bear the mark and be inspired by the specific vision of our charism: the *memoria passionis*, with the awareness that, as Pope Francis said in his message for our Jubilee: “For a charism to endure over time, it is necessary to adapt it to new needs, keeping alive the creative power of its beginnings.” The Pope went on to express his hope and offer us a challenge for our mission:

*I hope that the members of your Institute will feel 'branded' by the mission rooted in the memoria passionis. Your Founder, Saint Paul of the Cross, calls the Passion of Jesus “the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love” (Letters II, 499). He felt consumed by that love and wanted to set the world on fire with his personal missionary activity and that of his companions. It is very important to remember that “Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people. When we stand before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love which exalts and sustains us, but at the same time, unless we are blind, we begin to realize that Jesus' gaze, burning with love, expands to embrace all his people. We realize once more that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people. He takes us from the midst of his people, and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging, we cannot understand our deepest identity” (Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii gaudium*, 268).*

Synodality is about involving people in **discerning God's will** and **listening to the Holy Spirit**. It is about **prayerful discernment** which needs space and time, and which must mature in contemplative silence. The goal is to be attentive to the movements within – the movements of the Spirit – and thus to perceive God's desire in knowing the best way to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus as God's saving love and compassion in the situation of the contemporary society and world. As Pope Francis expressed in his Jubilee message to us:

This significant centennial anniversary represents a providential opportunity to move towards new apostolic goals, without giving in to the temptation to "leave things as they are" (Ap. Exhort. Evangelii gaudium, 25). Contact with the Word of God in prayer and reading the signs of the times in daily events will enable you to perceive the creative presence of the Spirit whose outpouring over time, points out the answers to humanity's expectations. No one can escape the fact that today we live in a world where nothing is the same as before.

My hope is that in this Chapter, the issues which have emerged from the broad consultation of the Congregation will be prayerfully reflected upon in a synodal spirit of deep listening, respectful dialogue, and prayerful discernment leading to consensus decisions inspired by the Spirit.

PASSIONIST MISSION – FORMATION PLAN - FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

a) Passionist Mission Renewal

Over the past six years, since the beginning of the 47th General Chapter in 2018, the theme directed for reflection and promotion in the Congregation has been: **Renewing our Mission – Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope**. This theme was chosen as a call for us to focus on the charismatic testimony of our Passionist mission, especially because of Pope Francis' emphasis on **evangelization** and **mission: proclaiming the joy of the Gospel to the poor and going out on mission to the peripheries and margins**.

Our specific mission as Passionists is “to preach the Gospel of the Passion by our **life** and **apostolate**” and in order to fulfil this mission, “we come together in **apostolic communities** ...” (Const. 2). So, there is an integral connection of **our mission** with **our life** in community. Our **community life** and our **mission** cannot be separated; they are two sides of the one coin. Our life is our mission (by witness), and our mission is our life (by action). Together, they both shape us and give us our identity and authenticity as Passionists. **Who we are** and **what we do** are interconnected and interrelated. “Our involvement in the apostolate flows directly from our life in community.” (Const. 67)

As mentioned previously, the 47th General Chapter discerned Three interconnected priority areas which were to be studied and reflected upon for the renewal of our mission, i.e. **community life; formation: initial and ongoing;** and **the revitalization of the Configurations – our principal structures of solidarity**. While this work did not progress further during the Chapter, it became a ‘work in progress’ which involved the participation of everyone in the Congregation. A document, **CALL TO ACTION: Reflections and Orientations from the 47th General Chapter** was composed inviting everyone at the level of community, Province/Vice Province and Configuration to participate and contribute their responses which would result in a Congregation-wide *Plan for the Renewal of our Passionist Mission* to be presented and ratified at the 16th General Synod. There was quite a good participation from the Congregation, the responses of which were collated by an appointed ‘Renewal of Mission Commission’ composed of: Frs. Juan Ignacio Villar Cabello (SCOR – President), José Luis García Pérez (CJC-REG), Elie Muakasa Ngumba (CPA-SALV), Denis Travers (PASPAC-SPIR), Wojciech Henryk Adamczewski (CCH-ASSUM), and Giuseppe Adobati (MAPRAES). With the resignation of Juan Ignacio some five months later, Fr. Gwen Barde was appointed as President, and Fr. Omar Trejo Valdéz (SCOR) as new member. The Commission then prepared the *Instrumentum Laboris* which was discussed during the General Synod (2022) and evolved into a document: **RENEWING PASSIONIST MISSION – A Call to “Walk Together” (Post-Synod Directions for a Passionist Mission Plan)**.

I encourage the use of both documents, **Call to Action** and **RENEWING PASSIONIST MISSION**, as resource tools for sharing at the local community level. They contain achievable goals, objectives and actions which can assist us to “walk together” in our life and mission, rooted in the charism of the *memoria passionis*.

b) Passionist Formation Plan

In March 2023, the much-awaited document entitled **The Passionist Formation** – a revised and updated version of the Congregation's General Program of Formation – was approved and distributed. This new program envisages a wholistic and life-long formation for Passionists and articulates the values needed in formation in these times of our history. It also highlights the importance of areas such as mission, the spirit of synodality, the need for international and multicultural formation, the new digital culture, healthy human formation, safeguarding and right relationships.

We are greatly indebted to Fr. Martin Coffey as the Secretary for Formation, and members of the Formation Commission, for carrying out the work of this document.

To encourage familiarity with the General Formation Plan, the Formation Office in the Generalate has begun producing and sending to all members of the Passionist family a series of catechesis on various themes concerning formation. This material is a resource for use both in initial and ongoing formation.

c) Passionist Financial Stewardship Manual

In September 2023, the Congregation's Financial Regulations and Directory, entitled the **Financial Stewardship Manual**, was approved and distributed. It incorporates the values, norms and customs of our Congregation in matters related to the administration of its assets, with particular reference to our vow of poverty. This is a valuable manual, not only for superiors and economies, but also for formators and students in understanding and developing a right culture of evangelical poverty and solidarity in the religious life.

Our sincere thanks is extended to Frs. Alessandro Foppoli and Antonio Munduate for coordinating and organizing the material to be included in this document

TERCENTENARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE CONGREGATION: A JUBILEE

A highlight in this last six-year term was the preparation and celebration of the Congregation's 300th anniversary of foundation by St. Paul of the Cross, with the added privilege of obtaining from Pope Francis the permission to celebrate this historical and ecclesial event as a '**Jubilee Year**'. It was proposed to a creative and hardworking Commission appointed to prepare for this year-long event, that the commemoration of the Jubilee be planned as **a celebration of a charism** which we are to proclaim by word and deed. The focus was the "keeping alive" and "the promotion" of the charism, as is stated in Const. 6:

We express our participation in the Passion by a special vow, which is at once personal, communitarian, and apostolic. Through this vow we bind ourselves to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Christ. By word and deed, we strive to foster awareness of its meaning and value for each person and for the life of the world.

The Tercentenary Commission was headed by Fr. Ciro Benedettini (MAPRAES) and included as members: Frs. Juan Ignacio Villar Cabello (SCOR), Vital Otshudialokoka Onasaka (CPA), Anton Lässer (CCH), Francisco das Chagas da Silva Marques (CJC), John Pearce (PASPAC) who sadly passed away and was replaced by Einstein Thyparampil (PASPAC).

Reflecting on the theme of the Jubilee: **Renewing Our Mission: Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope**, all local areas of the Congregation were encouraged to actively motivate the members of the Passionist Family to participate and be involved in:

- ✚ remembering the past humbly with thanksgiving to the God of Love and Compassion who has blessed us (**Gratitude**);
- ✚ reading the signs of the times and finding fresh ways to evangelize through the lens of the Passion of Jesus (**Prophecy**); and,

✚ discerning God's plans and promises for a meaningful future
(Hope).

A Jubilee Icon was written for this historical event and a docu-film on St. Paul of the Cross was produced, directed by Elizabeth Valgiusti. The 'pilgrimage' of the Jubilee Icon and Relic of St. Paul of the Cross which traveled to all parts of the Congregation, including the regular catechesis and publications on aspects of our Passionist spirituality contributed by various religious, and also the planning, celebrations, prayer, conferences and publications in the local areas, assisted in promoting and rekindling a new appreciation and interest in our spirituality.

Many adjustments, postponements and revisioning had to be made to our plans due to the disruption brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the 300th anniversary commemoration of our Congregation's foundation was a significant event in the history of our Congregation and a time of grace.

THE PASSIONIST INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CONGRESS

The *International Theological Congress* on the theme: ***The Wisdom of the Cross in a Pluralistic World*** was one planned Jubilee event which brought together Church authorities and renowned scholars (both Passionists and others) from all parts of the world to reflect and present papers on the theme. Due to the limits and difficulties posed by the pandemic protocols regarding public safety and travel, the Congress was held from 21 – 24 September 2021 both 'in person' at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, and with presentations and participation 'online'. Despite our anxieties and concerns regarding this mode of participation, the results were very pleasing and gratifying. The Congress was sponsored by the Passionist *Gloria Crucis* Chair of the Pontifical Lateran University and organised by the Director of the Congress, the late Fr. Fernando Taccone CP. The three-volume set of printed and e-books containing all the papers and acts of the Congress in various languages (Italian, English, Spanish, French and Portuguese) are available, which I recommend as a wonderful resource for our libraries.

THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The experience of the global Covid-19 pandemic, which seems to have come and gone so quickly, was a life-changing event in our times and history and has affected us all in different ways and intensities. While the pandemic can easily be filed into the archives of history, it must not, and should not be forgotten because, like it or not, it has caused a profound change in each one of us and taught us many lessons, including in the way we look at life and do our ministries into the future. Rather, this change needs to be reflected upon. For example, the pandemic has taught us that we are not in control of the destiny and plans of our lives; rather, we must learn to live with openness, flexibility and trust, and not with rigidity and closedness. This was a lesson taught us by a little deadly virus. The many protocols and restrictions guiding our health during this time, meant the disruption of our many plans, including meetings, celebrations, apostolates and canonical visitations which had to be postponed and rearranged for another time.

The pandemic was not just a temporary disturbance and interruption in our lives; rather, it was a *watershed moment* for the world, i.e., a critical turning point in time where everything changed and will never be the same as before. Yet, many opportunities and new creative ideas have emerged and opened up for us which we must evaluate and discern in light of our life and mission.

At no time has **solidarity** been so meaningful and necessary as in the time of the global pandemic. We discovered, as Pope Francis pointed out, that we are **all** in the same boat and must row **together**. This is a contemporary expression of commitment for the **common good** and demands a sense of sacrifice and generosity in self-giving. In this spirit of solidarity and commitment for the common good, I encourage our 'walking together' in synodality as we journey into the future, sharing, and growing together in communion and mission in the distinct and diverse entities which comprise the Configurations and our Congregation.

THE XVI GENERAL SYNOD

All the Major Superiors of the 22 Entities (Provinces and Vice Provinces) that comprise the Passionist presence in the world came together in Rome to participate and celebrate in the 16th General Synod from 11 – 21 September 2022. This event which normally takes place three years after the General Chapter and was scheduled for October 2021 (to coincide with the Congregation's Third Centennial Jubilee), was postponed by one year due to the continuing Covid-19 global pandemic.

The Synod was to respond to some of the demands of the last General Chapter, related to the renewal of our life and mission, and to offer its advice and support on some issues presented by the Superior General. In the months leading up to the event, the Synod members were invited to study the main documents, both to prepare for their own participation and to make evident the "synodality" of the journey, which invites all to dialogue and discernment as a spiritual experience.

The Synod, which is an advisory body to the General Council, focused its agenda on the analysis and orientation of the three main documents: the **Mission Renewal Plan**, the **General Plan for Formation**, and the **Financial Stewardship Manual**, which contain many topics concerning the life of communities and provinces.

Other areas concerning the Congregation's life were also considered in the agenda, such as: the report of the Superior General; the reports of the Presidents of the six Configurations about their realities during this period; the suppression of the Province IOS (England, Wales and Sweden) by aggregating the religious to the PATR Province (Ireland, Scotland and Paris); the reflection on our Laity in the light of the Lasallian Brother Antonio Botana's reflection regarding "**Charismatic Families**"; the administrative reports of the General Econome and the General Secretary for Solidarity and Mission. To this were added other topics related to the various roles

There were also special and significant moments, such as the spiritual retreat on the theme, ***The Spirituality of the Synodal Process*** animated by Maria Campatelli; the online meeting with Ms. Anne Marie O'Connor, the Executive Director of Passionists International; the vibrant witness and service of the Passionists present in Ukraine and Haiti; the cordial and inspiring meeting with the Passionist bishops invited to Rome for their jubilee visit; and the pilgrimage to Monte Argentario and Vetralla.

A serene and positive atmosphere was experienced among the Synod members as they studied and discussed the various reports and proposals, as well as in presenting and accepting critical or dissenting remarks. The invitation to experience dialogue and confrontation in a "synodal" atmosphere helped to maintain an open and constructive profile.

MEETING WITH PASSIONIST BISHOPS

One planned event for the Jubilee was to invite our Passionist Bishops to Rome and to organize for them a pilgrimage to the sites of St. Paul of the Cross. This took place from 21 – 25 September 2022. Due to the interference caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, this event was postponed from its original date to coincide with the ending of the General Synod. This was the first time that our Passionist Bishops were invited to come together as brothers in fraternal communion. As the General Synod was in session at this time, it was also an opportune time for them to meet and be with all the leaders of the Congregation.

Only six Bishops were able to be present: Giulio Mencuccini (retired of Sanggau Diocese, Indonesia), Jesús María Aristín Seco (Yurimaguas, Peru), Emery Kibal Mansong'loo (Kole Diocese, Congo), Luiz Fernando Lisboa (at the time in Pemba Diocese, Mozambique), Amilton Manoel Da Silva (Guarapuava Diocese, Brazil), and Pedro Luis Fuentes Valencia (La Paz Archdiocese, Bolivia). They were particularly inspiring in sharing their experiences in mission and describing the challenges of their life as Bishops. Their sharing and presence

among us were much appreciated by all. In the subsequent days the pilgrimage organized for them followed.

MEETING AND PILGRIMAGE OF YOUNG PASSIONIST RELIGIOUS

A very successful meeting was held in Sts. John & Paul from 1 – 12 October 2022 which brought together about 64 young religious from all parts of the Congregation, representing the six Configurations. This meeting, which was organized in light of the 300th anniversary of the Congregation's foundation, included a pilgrimage to the sites connected with St. Paul of the Cross: Ovada, Castellazzo, Monte Argentario, Vetralla and Rome. Time was given for the participants to internalize and share their experiences.

The last two days included a Passionist Spirituality Course with input and "lines of action" on the topic: **Passionist Consecrated Life – Foundations and Expressions** which was led and directed by Fr. Massimo Parisi (Postulator General).

The participants also had the opportunity to attend the Wednesday General Audience with Pope Francis and to meet and build friendships with each other, including sharing an evening of cultural festivities.

Unfortunately, I was not able to participate personally in all the activities of this event as I was recuperating from surgery. However, I managed to join with everyone in presiding and celebrating the closing Mass. We are grateful to Frs. Rafael Vivanco Pérez, Eddy Alejandro Vásquez López and Gwen Barde for their work in coordinating this event.

REFLECTIONS ON THE STATE OF THE CONGREGATION A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The predicted future reality

A consideration of the statistics of the Congregation and Configurations **[see Appendix at the end of the Report]** over the last 11-year period from 2012-2023 shows a consistent decline in the numbers of Congregation's personnel. It is expected that this downward trend (principally in the northern hemisphere, though not exclusively) will continue, with those now active religious ageing and retiring naturally, with deaths, departures and few new entries. As a consequence of this trend, it is likely that our houses and presences will have to be evaluated for closure, communities will need to be more concentrated and consolidated, and ministries limited or renewed. **'Solidarity'**, especially in the areas of personnel, formation and finance within Configurations was considered as a way of responding to and dealing with this phenomenon. It was seen as *a new way of being Passionists*. While some good and successful attempts have been made in some parts of the Congregation regarding the solidarity structures within Configurations, there have also been many struggles and misunderstandings (even *lack of understanding*) which calls for regular evaluation in the search for what works best for the goal.

In the last six-year General administration term, two Provinces in northern Europe: St. Gabriel's (GABR), Belgium (at the 2018 General Chapter) and St. Joseph's (IOS), England/Wales/Sweden (at the 2022 General Synod) were suppressed. Both were unable to or did not have the "appetite" to provide personnel for leadership. GABR expressed their desire to be under the responsibility of the Superior General, while IOS chose to be incorporated into St. Patrick's Province (PATR). Since then, due to advanced age and illness, the decision was made in Belgium to down-size further. Thus, the religious from the house in Wezembeek were transferred to the only surviving house in Kortrijk which now houses the last five living Belgian Passionists. The Wezembeek property was sold in September 2020. Negotiations are underway to sell a part of the Kortrijk property and to hopefully assign

two Congolese religious to boost the Passionist presence in Kortrijk where exists the shrine/tomb of Blessed Isidoor De Loor and where the principal language medium is Flemish.

This reality of ageing and decline in both number and strength in some Provinces and Vice Provinces continue to exist, with the only mechanism to respond being, either reduction in the status of the entity (which is always resisted) or suppression (which is the last resort) - even though up to this time, generally, the status quo has been maintained. Since the predictions show that this phenomenon of decline is a future reality, *what means of response can the Congregation suggest being applied? How best are we equipped to deal with this situation?*

Ordained-religious life integration

Another concern is the number of religious who request to leave the Congregation **[cf. Appendix at the end of the Report]**. The number of exits/departures each year is quite significant. They comprise mainly younger to middle-aged ordained priests, mostly requesting exclaustation or incardination into a diocese. There are multiple reasons for these moves such as, for some, the demands of community life, issue of poverty, disagreements with superiors, authority issues, strained relationships with confreres, past hurts, the desire to be in charge and self-sufficient, feeling of not belonging and not being accepted etc. For others, it is seeing a slow 'death' of the institute with no clear meaningful hope for the future. And for others again, there is no opportunity or certainty for personal self-promotions and to "climb the ladder". This smack of our religious life being captured by the influence of "*spiritual worldliness*" which Pope Francis warns about, and which promotes individualism, self-centredness, independence, and clericalism.

While we can understand this in the context of our human weakness and sinful condition, it is nevertheless important that better attention be paid toward these signs in the community and, even more so, that they be brought to the awareness of the candidates during the time

of initial formation where it should be first addressed. Primarily, our vocation call is to **a life** (*consecrated life*), not **a job**!

It seems to me that the ordained religious of our membership, especially in the times and needs of the Church today, identify strongly with the '*priestly*' role and ministry which is quite clear-cut, and the demands for which are very much sought. Every bishop is ready to accept more priests for the diocese. There will always be work available for a priest. Of course, there is nothing wrong with this in principle; after all, we are a clerical congregation. However, our life as consecrated religious can be compromised. Perhaps this can be one reason why we so easily and readily get drawn to accept parish apostolates and other sacramental ministries. It allows us to feel sufficiently 'employed' and engaged and shapes our identity as *priests*. While this fulfills his sense of being needed and useful, it can also bring about stress-related and health issues, not to mention the detrimental effects on the *priestly life*, such as time for personal prayer, reflection, spiritual reading, ministerial preparation, personal rest etc. My point is that for a *religious priest*, a whole other side of the *religious life and vocation* can be left neglected, undernourished and unfulfilled, especially that of a genuine **community life and witness**: fraternity, communion, prayer, contemplation, simplicity of life, study, reading, welcoming, hospitality, pastoral ministry etc.

In this context, I refer our attention to the document **Call to Action** wherein the following is proposed as elements for our *objectives* in community life - and which is worth pondering...

- ✚ Making our community life a "*school of prayer*":
 - a) Ensuring our relationship with God is the centre of everything we do.
 - b) Through commitment to the experience of prayer, contemplation, silence.
- ✚ Making our community life a "*school of humanity*":
 - a) We promise a spirit of dialogue and tolerance, sacrifice and patience – creating something that is humanly likeable.
 - b) We practice understanding, forgiveness and reconciliation – integrating all aspects of our life in common.

Laity in the Passionist Charismatic Family

The 47th General Chapter recommended the possibility of creating “an international commission, composed of religious and lay Passionists, to promote cooperation and exchange between the various lay groups associated with our Congregation.” (Recommendation n.6) This recommendation did not progress very far, not because we do not consider it important or worthy, but because it is generally felt that much satisfactory cooperation and collaboration is already happening in the local Province/Vice Province situations and which is encouraged and given tacit approval by members of the General Council at meetings during the canonical visits or Chapters. And so, we did not give it the priority attention it deserves. Certainly, previous General Chapters and Synods have given good attention to this topic of the “Passionist family”. Nevertheless, I believe some work is necessary in clarifying the terminology used, e.g. “lay Passionist” or “Passionist laity”, and in understanding the nature and status of ‘lay belonging’ to the Congregation (rights and responsibilities).

In the past year a General Consultor has been assigned to this area and some work of gathering information and understanding the complexity of the various lay groups and styles in the Congregation was begun, but it is still in its early days and in process. Members of the Passionist charismatic family on pilgrimage, or visiting Rome were always made welcome and guided at the General House of Sts. John and Paul.

It is always very inspiring to witness the interest of the lay faithful in our Passionist charism and spirituality and their thirst for deeper formation. I am also pleased to see the generally good collaboration of the “professed religious” and “lay persons” in the various ministries of the local entities throughout the Congregation. This joint relationship and collaboration between professed and lay happens on two levels:

- 1) On the level of being drawn or attracted by the **charism** of the congregation - which is recognized as a spiritual gift given to the whole Church.

- 2) On the level of being involved in the **mission** of the congregation - which is an integral part and responsibility of all the baptized in the evangelizing mission of the Church.

With the current emphasis on “*synodality*” and the “*synodal church*” which promotes the ecclesiology issuing from the Second Vatican Council that **all the baptized** are the People of God, are part of the Body of Christ, and belong to the Community of Disciples, this collaboration between lay and professed members of religious institutes will continue to grow and develop as the laity understand and accept their legitimate role in the mission of the Church. It becomes clear that **all the baptized** have a share in the spiritual gifts and are *co-responsible* in the evangelizing mission of the Church. They are not simply followers of Christ, and not simply disciples, but they are ‘apostles’ – ‘sent’ by Christ as missionary disciples. When dealing with the question of lay participation in mission, we need to make a paradigm shift from viewing them as mere *collaborators*, to recognize them as **co-responsible** for the Church’s being and action. Similarly, when addressing the issue of the belonging of lay people to a charismatic family, we need to understand and accept the way in which they live and promote the charism through their vocation as lay people and speak of their **right** and **responsibility** as apostles of evangelization.

Safeguarding Creation

With regard to *Safeguarding Creation*, the 47th General Chapter recommended the following:

In the light of the concern for the environmental crisis of our time and inspired by the Encyclical "Laudato Si" by Pope Francis, the General Chapter recommends that all the entities of the Congregation evaluate how best to respond to this concern and commit themselves to assuming concrete action steps in this respect.

In May 2021 we launched ***Passion of the Earth – Wisdom of the Cross***, a six-session program of formation and action for the Passionist family. The objective was to engage with Pope Francis’ landmark Encyclical: ***Laudato Si’ (On Care for our Common Home)***.

This project was realized in collaboration with *Passionist Solidarity Network* (Louisville, USA) to whose members the Congregation owes a debt of gratitude for the many hours in research, reflection and creative writing. **Ecological and evangelical conversion** was the goal of the program, inspired by our shared contemplative engagement with **Laudato Si'** in the light of our Passionist charism. Our desire was to listen and hear *the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*, and to find concrete ways to act in favor of justice, solidarity and peace.

The program (all six sessions) which was prepared in the three languages (English, Italian, Spanish) was to have been completed and available within a year. However, due to unforeseen circumstances and illness, the last two sessions (5 & 6) have only recently become available. We apologize for this delay and beg your understanding.

Unfortunately, however, it is disappointing that not everyone or every community took up the call to participate in this program. These are urgent matters of concern and impact directly on our humanity and our world. They are, further, related to our Passionist charism and spirituality, yet they do not seem to excite our interest. I, therefore, renew my appeal to all members of the Passionist family to commit to engage with **Laudato Si'** by your participation in the program: **Passion of the Earth – Wisdom of the Cross** which is available on the Congregation website: www.passiochristi.org

The Generalate

The **General House, SS. Giovanni e Paolo** has seen a number of changes in leadership since the last General Chapter. After the 2018 Chapter, Fr. Luis Alberto Cano (SCOR) was appointed Rector, but unfortunately after only two years, due to serious health reasons, resigned his position to return to Spain and concentrate on his medical treatment. These were difficult times for leadership and management of the community due to the complexities associated with the global pandemic.

In September 2021, Fr. Natale Panetta (MAPRAES) was appointed the new Rector. He generates a good atmosphere of welcome and

hospitality in the community while also guiding and animating a greater spirit of fraternity, spirituality and ministry. He is ably supported by Fr. Erasmo Sebastiano (MAPRAES) as Vicar, Econome, and Carer, especially of those who are sick and infirmed. The community is ever grateful for the ministry, generosity, and commitment of these two brothers.

After suffering severe losses during the period of “lockdown” and restrictions due to the pandemic, with no new international university students, and a shortfall in the house finances, the House is once again ready to welcome our religious, both those seeking to do further studies, and others who can contribute to the life and ministries of the community. The Retreat House and Basilica have also resumed its ministries to full strength offsetting the financial stress. We are grateful to the committed efforts and hard work of Fr. Vito Patera (Director of the Retreat House) and Fr. Graziano Leonardo (Rector of the Basilica) in this regard.

The General House welcomes many visitors, both religious Passionists and friends, and generally exudes a friendly and cordial atmosphere which is always appreciated by the visitors. There has been a greater openness in recent times to share out some smaller rooms in the house on a day basis for the ministry of outside groups. The community has also shown its compassionate face by welcoming and providing a space in the house for refugees and a family fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Of course, our Passionist Sisters (Daughters of the Passion) who work so hard for the mission of the General House are dearly appreciated and included in the celebrations of community events.

Maintenance of the vast building and property of Sts. John & Paul is always a major financial burden. However, with a generous gift donated by the former St. Gabriel's Province, Belgium, the Chapter Aula was renovated and upgraded recently to accommodate the dynamics of the synodal style of meetings. This is becoming more sought after by groups who use our Retreat House for meetings and

Chapters. We are grateful to our Belgian brothers for their generosity and solidarity.

Myanmar Mission Foundation

The Passionist mission in Myanmar, coordinated by the PASPAC Configuration and canonically under the Superior General, began with two missionaries in the Diocese of Pathein (southern Myanmar) in September 2018. Frs. Paul Motoyuki Hata from Japan (MAIAP) and Marsilin Sony Kannanaikal from India (THOM) were the first missionaries, though some others had been there by invitation to preach retreats. Both Paul and Sony showed great commitment and patience since they were on a visa which did not permit them the stability to remain in the country for any suitable length of time but required that they go in and out multiple times after short periods. Nevertheless, they persevered until late 2020 when they were out of Myanmar due to Covid-19 and then were prevented from returning because of the military coup d'état which followed in February 2021.

Both Paul and Sony were well considered by the former Bishop John Hsane Hgyi, who sadly succumbed to Covid in June 2021. Both Passionists were well appreciated and involved in preaching retreats and offering spiritual counsel to the Clergy and Sisters, and also in teaching English to the seminarians.

The new Bishop Henry Eikhlein was appointed in May 2023 and stands ready to welcome the Passionists back to Pathein. The time is not yet opportune, but let us keep this mission in our prayer and look forward with hope to the day when we can respond: **"Here I Am, Send Me"**.

Passionist Africa Summit

From 8th – 10th February 2024 a *Passionist Africa Summit*, comprising the Superior General and Council, the Secretary General, the Procurator General, the General Econome, the Provincial or Vice Provincial Superior, and one formator representing every Passionist entity on the African continent was held at the Passionist Ushirika Retreat Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. The Summit had as its theme: **"Passionists, together on the Way in Africa: Renewing and Strengthening Solidarity"**.

The objective of the gathering was to set in motion a process of listening to and comparing the various Passionist realities present in Africa (currently operating in 8 nations), with a view to greater mutual knowledge and awareness, and better collaboration and solidarity. The days were an excellent opportunity to listen to the reports on the various presences, highlighting their riches and poverty, which then generated an exchange of ideas, insights and perspectives for a common vision on the future of the Passionists in Africa. In confrontation and dialogue, we followed the **synodal method** of "*spiritual conversation*" which, in an atmosphere of prayer, invited each one to listen to the others, and to allow what has been heard to generate new ideas and perceptions, which was then shared with simplicity and freedom.

Besides the presentation on the current state of the various entities, four thematic poles were developed: **1) *The Church and Religious Life in Africa***, with a presentation by Bishop John Mbinda, on the socio-ecclesial reality in Africa and the challenges that are being faced with the help of the synodal path; and by Prof. Aloyce Ojore, on the weight and value of traditional African cultures and religions, and the need for better inculturation of the Gospel; **2) *Community Life and Mission in Africa***; **3) *Formation for Passionist life in Africa***; **4) *Management of economic resources for Passionist life and mission in Africa***.

The following priorities emerged at the conclusion of the Summit when the participants were asked to outline the most important actions to be implemented as soon as possible:

1. To continue, in each individual entity, dialogue and discussion on the issues that emerged at this gathering. Each Superior should set aside a time (Assembly) to share and discuss with all the religious the results and issues that emerged.
2. Promote the unity of the Plans and Programmes of formation in Africa, in order to gradually create an inclusive project for our African formandi.
3. Identify and prepare confreres to be initiated into the Formators' Course.

4. To commit ourselves to re-launch the house of Kisima as an *international Passionist Theological Studentate in Africa*, with the view to sending theologians from the various entities and studying a plan to be presented at the next General Chapter.
5. To identify a new *common missionary project for the Passionists in Africa*, which could be, primarily, assistance to the mission in Mozambique and then some possible new openings, e.g. Uganda, Malawi.
6. To study a way of including the missions of Angola and Mozambique in the moments of meeting and dialogue of the Passionist Africa Configuration (CPA).
7. To study a renewal of the structures and modalities of aid and economic support to the various African entities.

Born into Eternal Life

During this six-year period, the General Curia mourned the deaths of the following brothers who served the Congregation with faithfulness and commitment, and were called to their eternal reward while in office:

- Fr. Fernando Alfredo Ruiz Saldarriaga (52), Secretary General, died in Colombia on 6 February 2020.
- Fr. Luis Alberto Cano Seijo (76), Rector SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Roma, died in Spain on 1 March 2023.
- Fr. Paolo Aureli (78), Secretary General for Missions and Solidarity, died in Rome, Italy on 6 August 2022.

May their souls and those of all the faithful departed rest in peace with God.

Appointments by the Holy Father

We are grateful to the Holy Father, Pope Francis for appointing the following religious to the service of leadership in local churches. We are also grateful to these brothers of ours for their obedience and sacrifice in accepting the call by the Holy Father to service in these particular churches:

- ✚ Amilton Manoel da Silva (GETH) – appointed Bishop of Guarapuava, Brazil in 2020, after serving as Auxiliary Bishop of Curitiba.

- ✚ Luiz Fernando Lisboa (GETH) – appointed as Archbishop of the Diocese of Cachoeiro de Itapemirim, Brazil in 2021, transferred from the Diocese of Pemba, Mozambique.
- ✚ Pedro Luis Fuentes Valencia (SCOR) – appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of La Paz, Bolivia in February 2022 and Apostolic Administrator of Military Ordinariate of Bolivia in August 2022.
- ✚ Valentinus Saeng (REPAC) – appointed Bishop of Sanggau, Indonesia in June 2022.

We are also thankful for the many years of episcopal service provided by the following brothers who have reached the age of retirement, and we wish them every blessing and peace for their future life and ministry:

- ✚ Bishop William Kenney – Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham, UK
- ✚ Bishop Giulio Mencuccini – Bishop of Sanggau, Indonesia
- ✚ Bishop Neil Tiedemann – Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn, USA
- ✚ Archbishop Washington Cruz – Archbishop of Goiania, Brazil
- ✚ Bishop Tommaso Cascianelli – Bishop of Irece, Brazil

CONGREGATION VISITS AND MEETINGS (2018 – 2024)

2018

- Korea/China (MACOR) – Chapter (December)
- Japan (MAIAP) – Congress (December)

2019

- Indonesia (REPAC) – Chapter (January)
- Vietnam (SPIR) – Visit (January)
- Madonna della Stella, Italy (MAPRAES) – Visitation (February)
- Cirò Marina, Italy (MAPRAES) – Visitation (March)
- Alghero, Sardinia, Italy (MAPRAES) – Visitation (March)
- Cameri, Italy (MAPRAES) – Visitation (March)
- Carpesino, Italy (MAPRAES) – Visitation (March)
- Rome, Italy – MAPRAES Chapter (March-April)
- Rimini, Italy (MAPRAES) – 150th Pio Campidelli Mass (April)
- Livorno – Visit (April)
- Belgium (GABR) – Visitation (May)
- Sierra Madre, USA (CRUC) – Chapter (June)

Australia/NZ/PNG/Vietnam (SPIR) – Chapter (July)
Highgate, London (CURIA) – Visitation (August)

2020

India (THOM) – Visit (January)
St. Gabriel's Shrine, Italy (MAPRAES) -Feast Day Mass (February)
[Covid-19 pandemic postponements of Chapters/Congresses/events]

2021

Mexico (REG) – Chapter (January) *delegated to P. Rafael Vivanco*
Kenya (CARLW) – Congress (February) *deleg. to P. Aloysius J. Nguma*
Tanzania (GEMM) – Congress (February) *deleg. to P. Aloysius J. Nguma*
D.R. Congo (SALV) – Congress (March) *deleg. to P. Aloysius J. Nguma*
England/Wales (IOS) – Chapter (July)
Ireland/Scotland (PATR) – Chapter (July)
Germany/Austria (VULN) – Congress (July)
Poland/Ukraine (ASSUM) – Visit (August)
Romania & Bulgaria (MAPRAES) – Visit (August)
Basella, Italy (MAPRAES) – 100th anniversary celebration (September)
Netherlands (SPE) – Chapter (October)
Botswana/Sth. Africa/Zambia (MATAF) – Congress (October) *deleg. P. Aloysius J. Nguma*
Brazil (GETH) – Chapter (October) *delegated to P. Rafael Vivanco*

2022

Spain (SCOR) – Chapter (February) *delegated to P. Rafael Vivanco*
India (THOM) – Congress (April)
New York, USA (PAUL) – Chapter (May)
Poland/Ukraine/Czech Rep. (ASSUM) – Chapter (June-July)
Brazil (EXALT) – Chapter (July)
Korea/China (MACOR) - Chapter (December) *deleg. P. Gwen Barde*

2023

Indonesia (REPAC) – Chapter (January)
Philippines/Sweden (PASS) – Extraordinary Elective Chapter (February)
Japan (MAIAP) – Congress (February)
Italy, Portugal, France, Angola (MAPRAES) – Chapter (March)

Bethany, Israel (PASS) – Visit (April)
Peru/Yurimaguas (SCOR) – Visit (May)
Sierra Madre, USA (CRUC) – Chapter (June)
Poland (ASSUM) – Centenary Jubilee celebration (June)
Australia/NZ/PNG/Vietnam (SPIR) – Chapter (July)

2024

Kenya (CARLW) – Passionists Africa Summit (February)
Mexico (REG) – Chapter (June)
Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia (SCOR) – Visit (June)
Bethany, Israel (PASS) – Visit & St. Martha feast celebration (July)
Rome, 48th General Chapter – (4 – 26 October)

**Note: Most of the canonical visitations were conducted by the General Consultors. They also participated in Configuration assemblies and meetings.*

GENERAL COUNCIL & EXTENDED COUNCIL MEETINGS

From 2018 (October) until 2024 (September), 27 meetings of the General Council were held. In addition, there were a number of extraordinary mini-Council meetings called when required.

In that same period of time, 5 Extended Council meetings were held. The General Council also participated in 4 annual retreats (2019/2021/2022/2023) which were conducted each year by Fr. Rafael Vivanco (Consultor) based on a modified 'Castellazzo Program'.

GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

- ✚ To all the Provincials, Vice Provincials, Consultors, Presidents of Configurations, Local Superiors, Economes, and Formators – for your commitment in leadership and service to our brothers and sisters in the Passionist family of your local areas.
- ✚ To Fr. Natale Panetta (Rector, SS. Giovanni e Paolo), Fr. Erasmo Sebastiano (Vicar/Econome), Fr. Graziano Leonardo (Rector of Basilica), Fr. Vito Patera (Director of Retreat House), Fr. Mario Collu (Librarian), and all those who lived and served in the various ministries of the General House of SS. Giovanni e Paolo over

the six years, especially Fr. John Baptiste Ormechea, Br. Efraim Diakon Ambon, Br. Elfidius Pidi and all the wonderful employed and volunteer staff of the House: Lucia, Michele, Francesco, Monica, Delia, Gaetano, Carlo.

- ✚ To all our Passionist Sisters (Daughters of the Passion) over the past six years for the tireless and humble service they carry out every day in the kitchen and laundry to provide for us all in the General House.
- ✚ To all those who served as members of the various Commissions and Committees. At this time, I particularly recognize the members of the General Chapter Preparatory Commission: Frs. Elie Muakasa Ngumba, Gregor Lenzen, Alessandro Cancelli, Yoseph Pedhu, Tarcisio Hernando Gaitán Briceño, and Clemente Barrón (until his resignation and replaced by Rafael Vivanco Pérez).
- ✚ To all those who served in the General Curia over the past 6 years (and to their collaborators):
 - Fr. Lawrence Rywalt (Translator; Communications & PIB-BIP until 2020)
 - Fr. Javier Antonio Solís Basilio (Director, Communications Office since 2020)
 - Mr. Andrea Marzolla (Webmaster, Assistant in Communications Office)
 - Fr. Antonio María Munduate Larrea (Procurator General until Sept. 2019; Spiritual Assistant to the Congregation of Passionist Nuns)
 - Fr. Alessandro Foppoli (Procurator General since Sept. 2019)
 - Fr. Leonello Leidi (Canon Law Advisor)
 - Fr. Fernando Alfredo Ruiz Saldarriaga (Secretary General until July 2019)
 - Fr. Rafael Blasco Bordejé (Secretary General since Sept. 2019)
 - Ms. Federica Franco (Office of the Secretary General)
 - Fr. Vincenzo Carletti (General Econome until Oct. 2019)
 - Fr. Antonio Siciliano (General Econome since Oct. 2019)
 - Fr. Massimo Parisi (Postulator General)

- Ms. Eunice Dos Santos (Archivist General)
- Fr. Mario Collu (Librarian)
- Fr. Martin Coffey (Formation Office until Oct. 2022) – replaced by Fr. Rafael Vivanco Perez
- Fr. Paolo Aureli (Secretary for Mission & Solidarity until Aug. 2022) – replaced by Fr. Aloysius John Nguma
- Mr. Franco Nicolò (Voluntary Assistant in Office of Mission & Solidarity)
- Fr. John Kathoka Muthengi (Executive Director of Passionists International until Sept. 2021)
- Ms. Anne Marie O'Connor (Executive Director of Passionist International since Sept. 2021)

✚ To the General Consultors, my closest collaborators in the governance of the Congregation over the past six years: Frs. Ciro Benedettini; Rafael Vivanco Pérez; Juan Ignacio Villar Cabello who resigned in 2021 and was replaced by Eddy Alejandro Vásquez López; Miroslaw (Mirek) Lesiecki; Aloysius John Nguma; and Gwen Barde...thank you for your support to me, your availability, patience, and for sharing your wisdom with openness and trust in the best interest of the Congregation and the common good of all. I have attempted to work with you in a collaborative manner, with a leadership style I believe was co-responsible and inclusive, making use of the gifts, strengths and expertise of each one. I am indebted to each one of you and can only wish and hope for you many blessings in your future life and service.

✚ I leave the last word for my faithful and loyal brother, Alessandro Foppoli, who has endured a close and patient relationship with me over the past twelve years as my personal secretary and translator. One can say that this was his role, and he did it well. But over and above this duty, I am particularly indebted to him for his brotherly and fraternal care shown during my times of need, especially with the hospitalizations, surgeries, medical appointments, and pharmaceutical necessities. I appreciated greatly his “hands-on” concern for me, his availability, and his management of my health and other appointments. Thank you, brother!

CONCLUSION

There are some areas of the Congregation's life and activities which I have not mentioned or ventured into in this report, because they will be covered by separate reports which you will have received, e.g. the report of finance, solidarity and missions, the Configurations, procurator, postulator, Passionists International (PI) etc.

So, all that is left for me to say is: THANK YOU. Thank you for giving me the honor and opportunity to serve our beloved Congregation and the Passionist Family as Superior General over the past twelve years. It has been a real privilege, and I will certainly miss this multi-task, multi-cultural and international ministry. However, I also know and feel it is time after twelve years in this role to hand on the baton.

To conclude, I share these following thoughts and reflections which I was asked to write recently for an article in the *Passionists International Bulletin (PIB-BIP)* describing my time and ministry as Superior General.

My call to service in the office of Superior General I would describe as a time of **"holy privilege"**, because it gave me the privilege to enter into the lives and stand on the "holy ground" of my brothers (and sisters), whose pastoral care was my first responsibility within the Congregation. I tried my best to always be available and open to all the brothers and to receive them fraternally with the honor and respect they deserved. For me, it was always a special moment to meet my brothers and to give of my time and attention to listen to whatever they felt free to share with me. Similarly, it was also a special time for me to meet with the brothers in the community visitations and to participate in the various Chapters/Congresses in which I presided. These were 'graced moments' for me, occasions of "holy privilege" in which I was able to listen to their joys and sorrows, hear their cries and pain, and sense their deeper desires to grow in their faith and to live out their vocation more authentically. In a similar way, meeting the many lay people and religious Sisters associated with our charismatic family was always a highlight and a delight. My faith was always nourished and strengthened by the example and witness of their faith and their desire to be formed and grow in our Passionist

spirituality and to keep alive the grateful memory of the Passion of Jesus. In my role as leader, I was proud to represent our Congregation at many levels, to hear of the “good fruits” of my brothers in ministry which has touched others, to express gratitude and appreciation, and to encourage and confirm my brother-Passionists in their vocation and mission.

Of course, with travel which took me to all five continents over the 12 years, I was blessed with many experiences and learned to appreciate and respect the distinct cultures and styles within our Congregational family which are so enriching, unique, and yet all-encompassing. Perhaps St. Paul of the Cross today would never recognize the Congregation he established 300 years ago: small and limited in accordance with the times. However, we can be certain that from his place in heaven, Paul has been happily encouraging, accompanying and supporting the growth of the Congregation throughout the world, pleased that his vision, the charism to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus by his sons (and daughters), and to promote its precious fruit of God's overwhelming love everywhere, is being fulfilled.

I feel blessed to have accepted the call to serve as the Superior General of the Congregation. I thank God and I am grateful to all of you, my brothers in the Congregation, for the trust, respect and privilege in allowing me to serve. I know there is much to be desired, and I am well aware of my limitations, mistakes and shortcomings. Not all was fulfilled, but, as I walk in the Curia corridor of SS. Giovanni e Paolo past all the portraits of the Superiors General beginning with the Founder, I become aware of men who with their strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, lights and shadows obediently accepted the call to this service, surely with the surrender prayer of Jesus: **“Not my will, but your will be done”**. Relying always on the power of the **“Passion of Christ: the source of our life and mission”** they responded with that generous missionary spirit: **“Here I Am, Send Me”**. It's been a privilege to serve the Congregation as the 25th Successor of St. Paul of the Cross. THANK YOU!

APPENDIX

48th General Chapter 2024 Superior General's Report



CONGREGATIO PASSIONIS IESU CHRISTI

RELIGIOSI et NOVITII
PER STATUS ORDINATI
AD DIEM 31 AUGUSTI 2024
1.766

Sacerdotes: 1340

Diaconi permanentes: 8

Fratres votorum perpetuorum: 117

Fratres votorum temporalium: 13
--

Clerici votorum perpetuorum: 56
--

Clerici votorum temporalium: 198

Novitii Fratres: 2

Novitii Clerici: 32

APPENDIX

48th General Chapter 2024 Superior General's Report

RELIGIOSI et NOVITII PER NATIONES et STATUS ORDINATI

COUNTRY	Totale dei religiosi	A1: Sacerdotes	A2: Diaconi permanentes	A3: Fratres votorum perpetuorum	A4: Fratres votorum temporalium	A5: Clerici votorum perpetuorum	A6: Clerici votorum temporalium	AB Novitii Fratres	AC: Novitii Clerici
1 Angola	18	9		1			8		
2 Argentina	5	3					2		
3 Australia	53	43		7		3			
4 België	12	10		2					
5 Bolivia	9	9							
6 Botswana	6	6							
7 Brasil	129	98		1		5	19	6	
8 Bulgaria	7	7							
9 Canada	7	7							
10 Chile	12	12							
11 China	8	6						2	
12 Colombia	32	23		2		2	5		
13 Cuba	3	3							
14 Deutschland	23	18		3		1	1		
15 Ecuador	10	9				1			
16 El Salvador	10	4					6		
17 England	10	9		1					
18 España	141	114		13	1		8	1	4
19 France	16	15		1					
20 Guatemala	4	4							
21 Haiti	1	1							
22 Honduras	12	8		1		3			
23 India	37	30		1		5	1		
24 Indonesia	194	94		19	8	10	53		10
25 Ireland	19	18		1					
26 Israel	3	3							
27 Italia	309	266	6	17	1	7	9		3
28 Jamaica, West Indies	4	4							
29 Japan	10	6	1	3					
30 Kenya	75	52		7	1	4	11		
31 México	56	43		1		5	7		
32 Moçambique	3	3							

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COUNTRY	Totale dei religiosi									
	A1: Sacerdotes	A2: Diaconi permanentes	A3: Fratres votorum perpetuorum	A4: Fratres votorum temporalium	A5: Clerici votorum perpetuorum	A6: Clerici votorum temporalium	AB Novitii Fratres	AC: Novitii Clerici		
33 Nederland	6	6								
34 New Zealand	1			1						
35 Nigeria	2	2								
36 Northern Ireland	20	16		1		1	1		1	
37 Österreich	5	3		1			1			
38 Panamá	10	9					1			
39 Papua New Guinea	8	4					4			
40 Perú	27	23		3		1				
41 Philippines	58	48				3	7			
42 Polska	39	32		1	1		4	1		
43 Portugal	21	17		2		1	1			
44 Puerto Rico	5	5								
45 Rép. Dém. du Congo	46	35		2			7		2	
46 República Dominicana	11	4				1	6			
47 Scotland	5	5								
48 South Africa	6	6								
49 South Korea	23	19		4						
50 Sverige	7	7								
51 Tanzania	57	29		4			20		4	
52 U.S.A.	119	97	1	17			4			
53 Ukraina	4	4								
54 Uruguay	3	3								
55 Venezuela	7	7								
56 Vietnam	29	13			1	3	12			
57 Zambia	9	9								
	1766	1340	8	117	13	56	198	2	32	

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CONFIGURATIONES

AFRICA: 224

Sacerdotes: 160
Fratres votorum perpetuorum: 13
Fratres votorum temporalium: 1
Clerici votorum perpetuorum: 4
Clerici votorum temporalium: 40
Novitii Clerici: 6

CHARLES HOUBEN: 135

Sacerdotes: 113
Fratres votorum perpetuorum: 10
Fratres votorum temporalium: 1
Clerici votorum perpetuorum: 2
Clerici votorum temporalium: 7
Novitii Fratres: 1
Novitii Clerici: 1

JESÚS CRUCIFICADO: 317

Sacerdotes: 244
Diaconi permanentes: 1
Fratres votorum perpetuorum: 19
Clerici votorum perpetuorum: 11
Clerici votorum temporalium: 36
Novitii Clerici: 6

MAPRAES: 345

Sacerdotes: 290
Diaconi permanentes: 6
Fratres votorum perpetuorum: 19
Fratres votorum temporalium: 1
Clerici votorum perpetuorum: 8
Clerici votorum temporalium: 18
Novitii Clerici: 3

PASPAC: 447

Sacerdotes: 287
Diaconi permanentes: 1
Fratres votorum perpetuorum: 37
Fratres votorum temporalium: 9
Clerici votorum perpetuorum: 24
Clerici votorum temporalium: 77
Novitii Clerici: 12

SCOR: 298

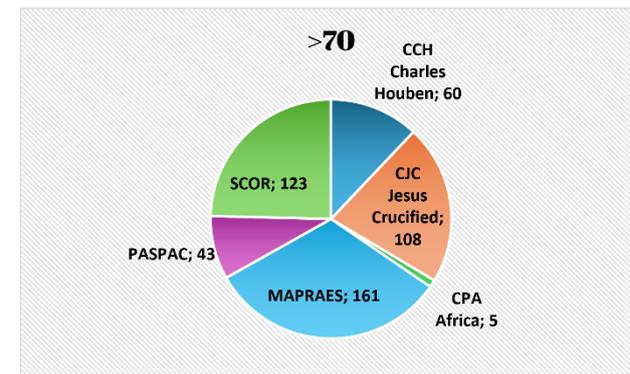
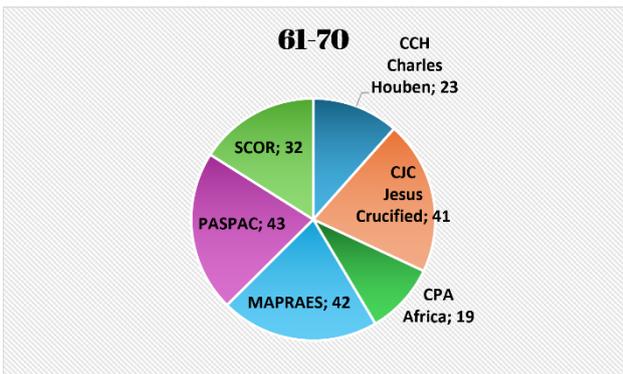
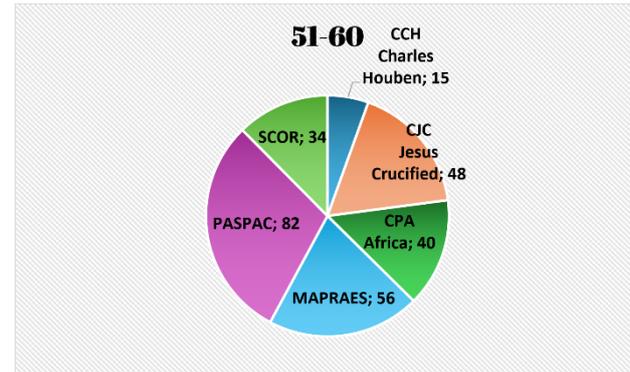
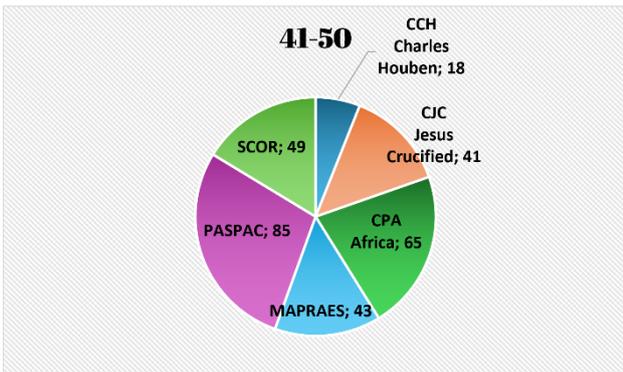
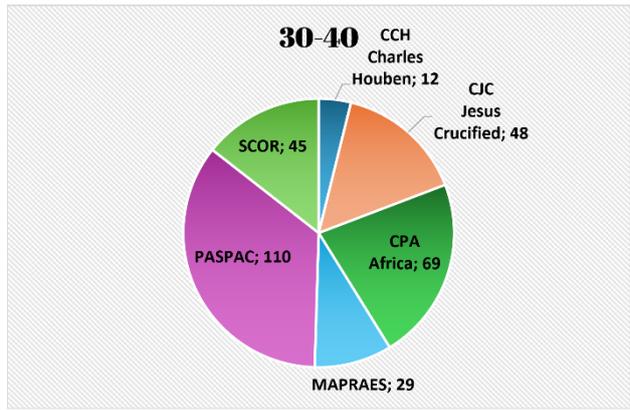
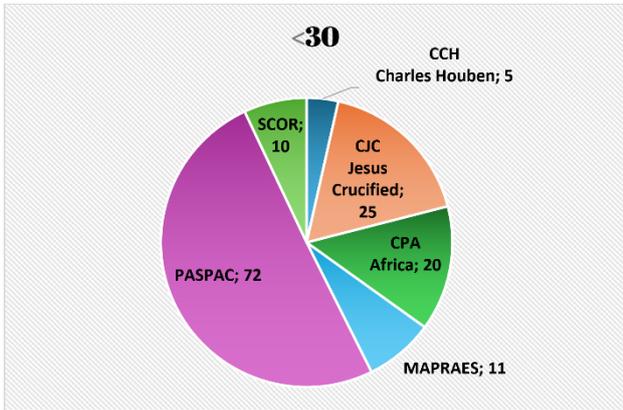
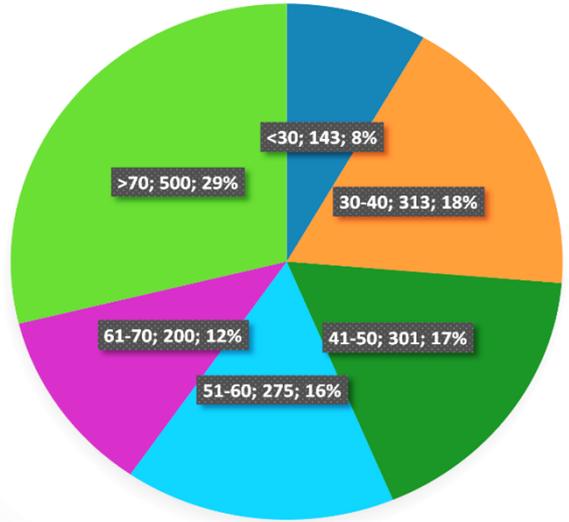
Sacerdotes: 246
Fratres votorum perpetuorum: 19
Fratres votorum temporalium: 1
Clerici votorum perpetuorum: 7
Clerici votorum temporalium: 20
Novitii Fratres: 1
Novitii Clerici: 4

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AGE/EDAD/ETÀ <i>without novices sin novicios senza novizi</i>	CCH Charles Houben	CJC Jesus Crucified	CPA Africa	MAPRAES	PASPAC	SCOR
<30	5	25	20	11	72	10
30-40	12	48	69	29	110	45
41-50	18	41	65	43	85	49
51-60	15	48	40	56	82	34
61-70	23	41	19	42	43	32
>70	60	108	5	161	43	123
SUMMA	133	311	218	342	435	293

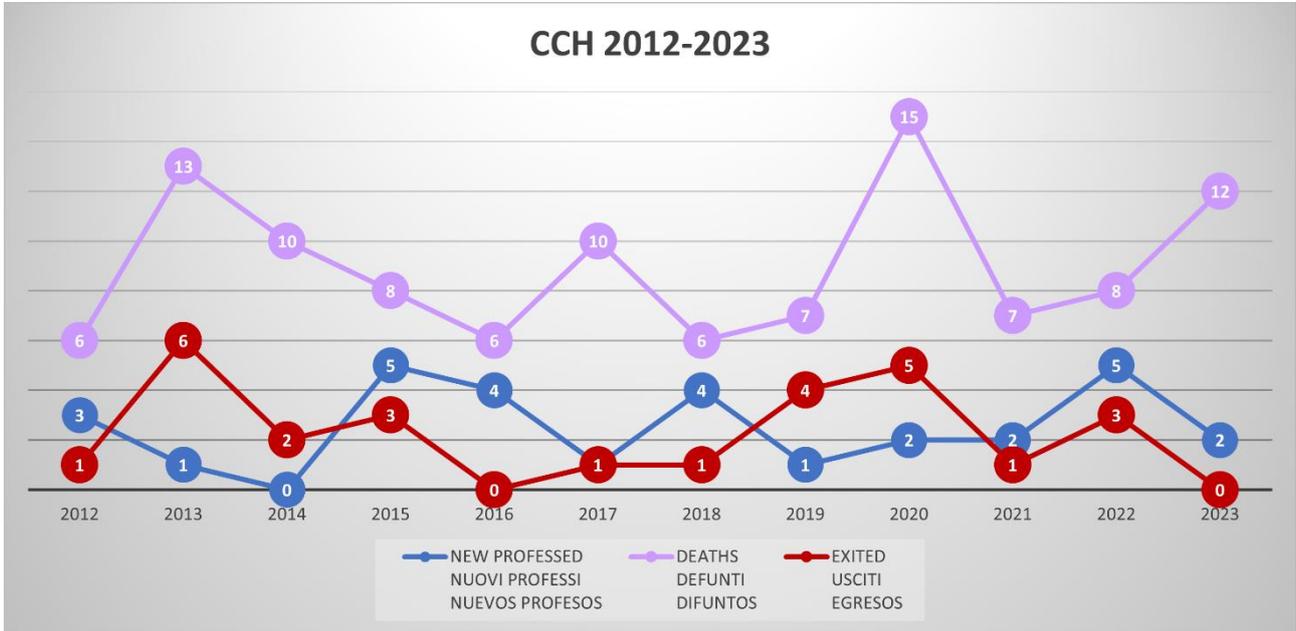
Summa omnium



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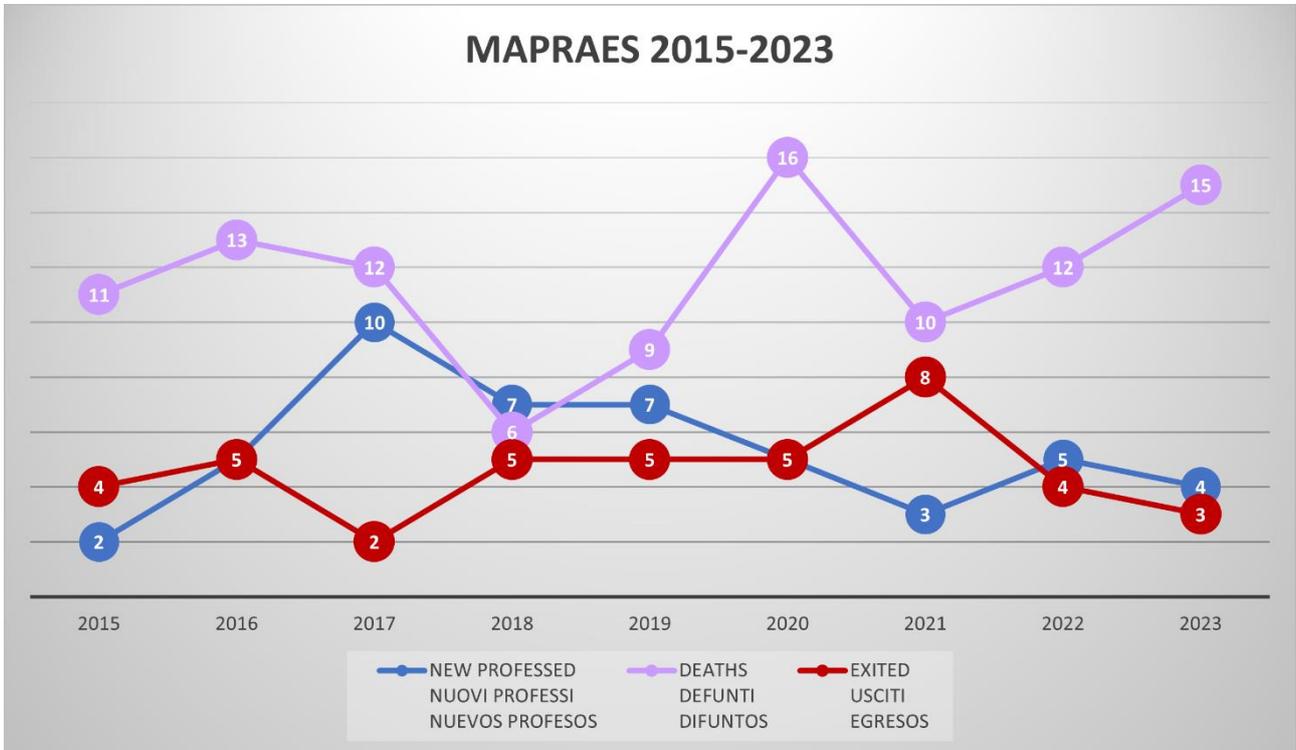
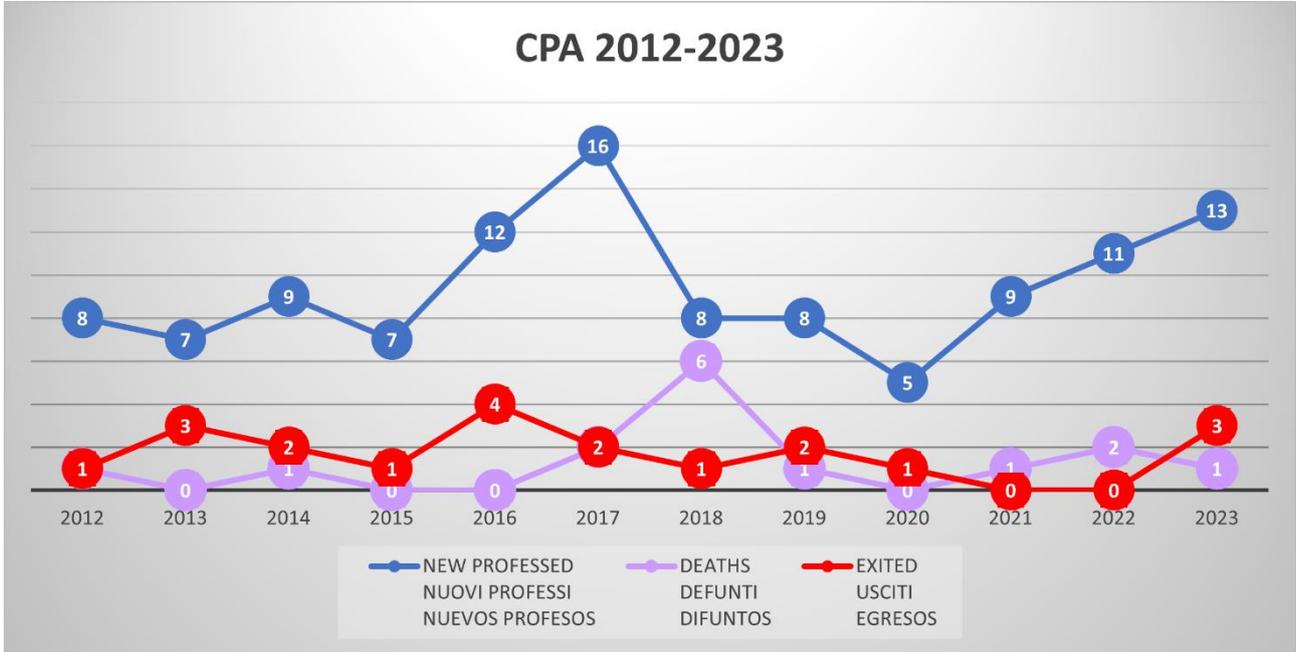
VARIATIO PROFESSIONES / OBITI / EGRESSI



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