



# Congregazione della Passione di Gesù Cristo IL SUPERIORE GENERALE

Piazza dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo, 13 - 00184 Roma



Dear brothers, Sisters  
and friends of the Passionist Family,

Although it has been only a few days since the conclusion of the 48th General Chapter, I would like to reach out to you with this letter, also on behalf of the General Council, to gratefully share with you what we experienced together while meeting, listening and in dialogue as a Congregation. We are grateful to the Lord for what He has accomplished and is accomplishing in the world through the presence of Passionists, religious and lay people, who dedicate themselves to the proclamation of the Gospel and giving witness to it despite their difficulties and frailties.

The Chapter experience, with various reports from the General Curia and the Configurations, the discussions, testimonies, and personal meetings, fostered an awareness of being a large family spread throughout the world, varied and rich in diversity, but rooted in the one vocation of the "*Memoria Passionis*." For many of the capitulars this was their first experience at a General Chapter and among them there were several young people who shared their enthusiasm and conviction. There were numerous reminders about the decline in the number of our religious which has characterized our Congregation for some time, calling us to reflect on the reasons for this crisis, and pointing out as a possible solution, improved quality and greater authenticity concerning who we are and what we do.

The General Chapter opened with a clear invitation to involvement, summarized in the theme-- "*Here I am, send me! the Passion of Christ, source of our life and mission*." Each participant was invited to return to the charismatic source, to draw new vigor and motivation for supporting his evangelization efforts in the world. This means "*promoting a desired inner renewal, so that we can be joyful Passionist apostles and authentic missionaries, witnessing and proclaiming through our life and mission a message of hope that reflects God's love - and the God of love - with our eyes always fixed on the crucified and risen Jesus, who is our source, meaning, strength and hope*" (cf. Superior General's Report to the 48th General Chapter).

## Post-Chapter Letter of the Superior General

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We know that this inner transformation is not only our own doing but is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis also reminded us of this in his greeting to us: *“The Chapter event you are about to celebrate is an important moment for the Congregation since you are called to listen to the Holy Spirit, the One who can stir up new pastoral goals to be implemented with joy and renewed vigor in the Church and in the missionary field where He has sent you. Therefore, with a grateful and docile spirit dispose yourselves to take on the innovations He will reveal so that strengthened in faith and enlightened by Him you may make creative choices to face the challenges of the present hour.”* (29 September 2024).

In order to foster this listening to the Holy Spirit and his inspirations, the General Chapter (which, by the way, was held at the same time as the Synod of Bishops on Synodality) chose a "synodal" style. This is how Fr. Joachim presented it: *“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.”* (cfr. “Report of the Superior General to the 48th General Chapter”).

In fact, guided by the facilitator’s suggestions, the Chapter members were invited to spend the various days and their activities in an attitude of listening and sharing, in small and large discernment groups. The synodal dynamic constantly invited each Chapter member to approach the days in a "contemplative spirit," looking at the various issues, problems, and projects, not only from a pragmatic and organizational point of view, but especially from a point of view of discernment of God's will. The method of "spiritual conversation," which involves gradual group sharing, enlightened by prayer and deepened by what the Spirit makes meaningful from what has been heard, invited everyone to enter into the various issues and problems with an attitude of freedom, overcoming the logic of the pros and cons of various personal opinions. The facilitators repeatedly invited the Chapter assembly to identify the common points emerging from the various group reports in order to grasp that mysterious "leitmotiv" within our discussions and sharing, which can give unity to what appears to be divided and fragmented. Honestly, it was not always easy to live out this synodal dynamic, on one

hand because many of us did not have much experience with it, and also because it requires time, patience and commitment, and over days, it became a bit tiring. However, a request emerged from the General Chapter to apply this synodal dynamic to the various meetings and discernment gatherings which take place in our entities, since it is important to give more space to listening that is enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

With these motivations and using this method, the Chapter sought to reflect on the areas of our personal, communal, and institutional life highlighted by the pre-Chapter consultations as problematic or needing attention. Time was spent listening to and reflecting about our "interior life" (the personal and community dimensions that roots and sustains our mission), on our "sense of belonging" via our vocation (an expression of fidelity and support for the Congregation); on the service of "leadership and authority" in our provinces and communities (involving those who lead but also those who are called to follow and collaborate); on the promotion of apostolic "new ministries" (in order to respond to the epochal changes in the Church and society of today, with creative fidelity to our Charism); and on the vitality and viability of the "Configurations" (created to stimulate greater solidarity among the various Provinces and Vice-Provinces). After a process of reflection and listening there were proposals that the Chapter defined and approved in order to support individuals (religious and laity) and institutions (authorities, juridical entities) in an itinerary of growth and renewal.

Soon the "Chapter documents" will be published and circulated, with the various guidelines and decisions established, which should guide us in the animation of the Congregation in the coming years. Many of these "recommendations" are directed toward the renewal and revitalization of our life and mission and include proposals for animation and formation at the local or General level. Other proposals are more incisive and specific, and concern certain sectors or areas of the life of the Congregation.

Frequently there were two elements that were present in these decisions, and they were also very present during the work of the Chapter: "formation" (as a dynamic that helps to develop and re-motivate our life and mission) and the "laity" (as a reality that exists around our communities and that shares in our charism). Precisely with regard to our laity, the Chapter had a significant moment, thanks to the online meeting with representatives of the various lay groups present in the world. In a simple and direct way, men and women from various continents took turns presenting to the Chapter members their experience of "Passionist lay life," bearing witness

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to the richness and vitality of our charism. The desire of these laity to share in our mission and to keep alive the "Memory of the Passion of Jesus" in today's world through witnessing his love for the people of our time clearly emerged. Chapter decisions acknowledged the value and importance of this sharing with the laity in our mission, proposing formative paths and shared apostolic initiatives. In part, it is a journey that has already begun, and which must grow with the collaboration of everyone, religious and laity, and in mutual support and encouragement. Looking toward the future, we will have to think about how to make the contribution of our laity in our Chapters (or Synods or Congresses) broader and more meaningful, in order to foster mutual knowledge and support in discernment.

The General Chapter, although focused on the journey of our Congregation, was not closed to the world and its complexity. An example of this is *"The Appeal for Peace and Reconciliation,"* which the Chapter members shared and disseminated through our NGO Passionists International accredited at the United Nations, expressing solidarity with all those who suffer from wars and injustice and, in particular, with our religious who work in contexts of violence. We were also reminded of this by Pope Francis, in his speech during the audience he granted to the capitulars on 25 October: *"I am pleased to meet you at this time, as you are about to conclude your General Chapter, which questioned how to respond appropriately to our tumultuous time – all times have been tumultuous – and how to respond to the initiative of God, who always calls us to cooperate in his plan of salvation. [...] With the joy and strength of this charismatic belonging, Passionists also know how to proclaim the presence of the Crucified and Risen in the suffering of our day. We know its vastness and devastation in poverty, in wars, in the laments of creation, in the perverse dynamics that produce divisions between people, and the rejection of the weak. Let everything possible be done to prevent the pain of our brothers from remaining meaningless and resulting in a waste of humanity and despair. Christ passed through the throes of this pain, suffering and crucified, living every wound in love and offering meaning to pain offered out of love."*

Before concluding this sharing of mine, I would like to call attention to the request that the Chapter addressed to me and to the General Consultors about service to the Congregation. As I said in my homily on the Solemnity of St. Paul of the Cross, -- *"I am here, still dimly conscious of the role that has been entrusted to me. As the successor of St. Paul of the Cross, I feel rather poor and inadequate; but I am consoled by the presence of brothers and sisters who share with me the journey in the charism of Paul of the Cross, and I am encouraged by the prayers of many who feel part of our Family."* Additionally, I

## to the Congregation and to the whole Passionist Family

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cannot fail to mention here my two uncles (brothers of my father) who were Passionists and who fostered my vocational growth-- Brother Giuseppe Adobati (1932-2012) and Fr. Andrea Adobati (1934-2019). I pray that they will receive the reward from our Heavenly Father for the gift of their lives to the Congregation and for their service to the Church and to their brothers and sisters.

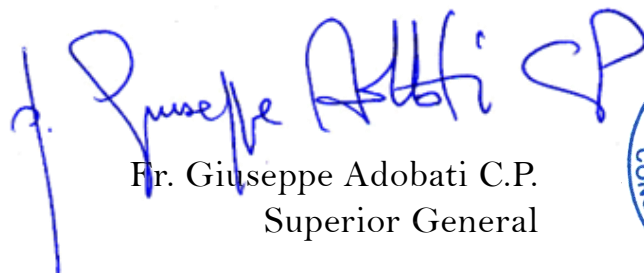
I thank the Lord for the election of the General Consultors with whom we will collaborate in service to the Congregation: Fr. Paul Francis Spencer, Fr. Paul Cherukoduth, Fr. Eddy Alejandro Vásquez López, Fr. Aloysius John Nguma, Fr. Aurélio Aparecido Miranda, and Fr. José Gregório Duarte Valente.

I wish to again express my gratitude to Fr. Joachim Rego, for his long service in leading the Congregation, and to his outgoing Consultors: Fr. Ciro Benedettini, Fr. Rafael Vivanco Pérez, Fr. Mirosław Lesiecki and Fr. Gwen Barde.

I invoke the intercession of St. Paul of the Cross and our Saints and Blesseds for all of you, renewing my commitment to serve the Congregation with humility and patience and entrusting myself to your prayers and collaboration.

*“May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts!”*

Retreat of Sts. John and Paul, Rome  
1 November 2024  
Solemnity of All Saints



Fr. Giuseppe Adobati C.P.  
Superior General

