

# FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS



The Passionist Nuns of Saint Joseph Monastery in the Diocese of Owensboro KY

Lent 2020

**D**ear Family & Friends,  
Greetings and Blessed Lent to each and all of you! It is always our joy to come to you with the latest news at the monastery.

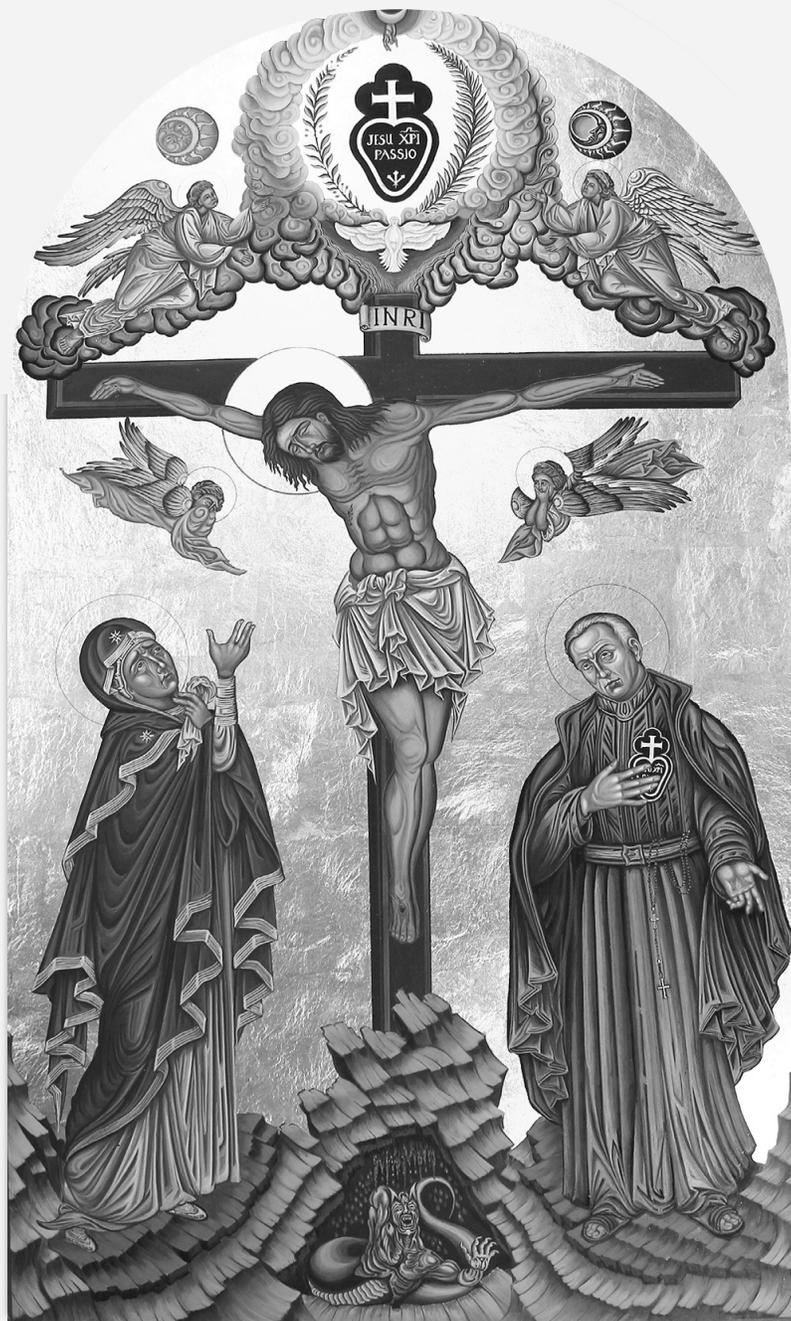
This year, **we begin celebrations of an awesome convergence of four Passionist anniversaries** beginning with the Tricentennial celebration in November of the inspiration of our Passionist charism — see page 6 for details. It is a time to dig back to the roots of our Congregation and to give thanks for the witness of those who have faithfully lived and passed on the flame of our Passionist life and charism. May we, too, faithfully impart that flame!

Please pray for our new members, and for **more vocations who will carry the flame to the next generation**. Our Sr. Lucia Marie just renewed her temporary vows; God-willing, 2020 will also see the vow renewals of her two juniorate companions. Sr. Miriam Esther received the Holy Habit and her new name on our Founder's feast, October 20, 2019, and two young ladies continue in our aspirancy program. God is at work!

Witnessing and surrendering to God's plan for our community is ever awesome and exciting...and also ever a lesson in trust! On page 7 you will see that **we have embarked on a construction/renovation project and are putting on a new roof!** His providence ever watches over us with the help of YOUR spiritual and material support. Please consider helping us financially as we continue to hold you in our daily grateful prayers, here at the Foot of the Cross!

Gratefully in Christ our Redeemer,  
*Mother John Mary*  
and the Monastic Community

## Passionist Jubilee Icon



## Remembering With Gratitude...

1720 **300** 2020  
Start of Passionist Congregation

1771 **250** 2021  
Foundation of Passionist Nuns

1946 **75** 2021  
Nuns come to Owensboro

1995 **25** 2020  
Relocation to Whitesville

# Remembering Our Past, Praying for Our Future

Foundation Day  
& Rosary Procession  
October 2019



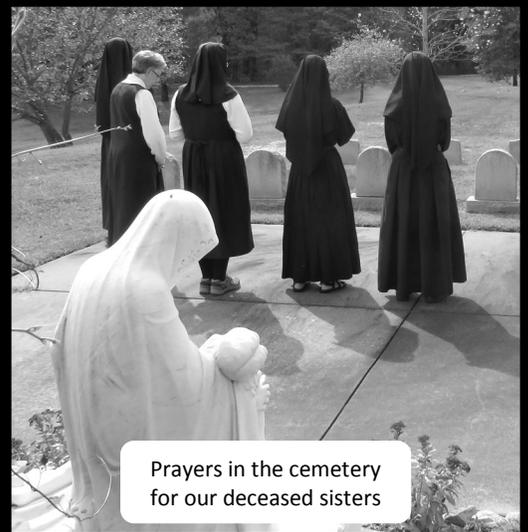
Sharing stories on the patio.



Sr. Mary Elizabeth

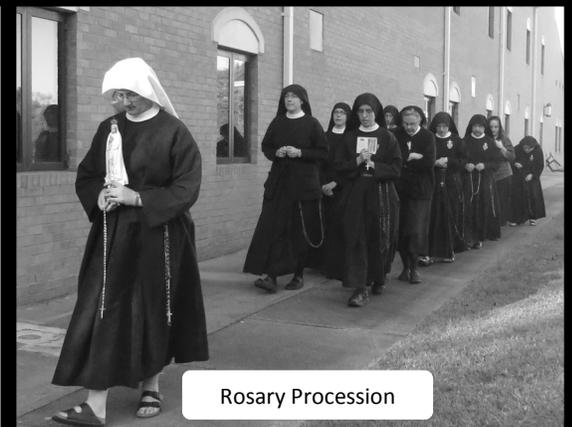


Mother John Mary



Prayers in the cemetery  
for our deceased sisters

At a community sharing in honor of the 73rd anniversary of the founding of our monastery here in Whitesville, the photos of our foundresses and first sisters (held by Mother John Mary in the photo above) came alive. Those who knew them shared about the novice directress who diligently corrected over-curious novices and insisted on recollection in God, the sister who loved to play pranks, the young woman who came on retreat at the monastery "by accident" and wound up discovering her Passionist vocation, the sister with beautiful eyes and a welcoming heart for retreatants, and many more antics and lessons from our early sisters. May we learn from their example and cherish the heritage they have passed on! Our foundation day, October 7th, is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Later in the month, we had our annual rosary procession in her honor.



Rosary Procession



Sr. Miriam Esther  
led the procession.



Sr. Frances Marie, Sr. Cecilia Maria, Sr. Mary Therese, and Sr. Mary Agnes

# You Shall Be Called By a New Name

*Passionist Vestition  
Sister Miriam Esther of the Sacred Heart  
October 19, 2019*

We have a white veil among us again! On October 19, having completed a year of aspirancy and a year of postulancy, our new Sr. Miriam Esther (formerly postulant Theresa) was clothed in the Passionist habit and began her two-year novitiate of intense preparation for vows.

The ceremony was held the weekend of the feast of St. Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionists, which was very fitting, as our habit is a precious part of our Passionist heritage. The habit was revealed to St. Paul of the Cross in a vision in the pivotal year 1720. In some accounts of this vision, it was Our Lady herself, clothed in a black tunic, who appeared to Paul and asked him to found a congregation clothed as she was “in a garment of mourning” for the Passion of her Son, Jesus. For our Founder, for all Passionists through the ages, and now for our Sr. Miriam Esther, the habit manifests externally the grateful remembrance and compassionate love we must always carry in our hearts for Christ Crucified. For her “garment of mourning” to be completed, however, our new sister awaits the day of her First Profession of vows, when she will exchange her white novice veil for a black veil, receive her wedding ring, and most importantly, place the sign of the Passion over her heart.

Along with the holy habit, our novice also received her new name, Sr. Miriam Esther of the Sacred Heart. The long-awaited name change is perhaps the most personally significant part of vestition. According to our custom, Sister’s name was chosen by Mother John Mary after much prayer and discernment. Sr. Miriam Esther said she was delighted that her name ended up not being one that she had suggested, because in this way she feels greater assurance that the name is not her own choice, but God’s, manifested through the Superior.

For Sr. Miriam Esther, the name bestows a special pair of patronesses and bespeaks a special mission which will characterize her religious life. Sister shared that “[The name] ‘Miriam’ is special to me because it is the way that the ‘virgin of Nazareth’ would have pronounced her own name. Every time I hear it, read it, write it, I can feel that especially close connection with Our Lady. She has been a powerful yet hidden guiding force in my life and vocation.” Coinciding with Sister’s discernment of her Passionist vocation has been her discovery of her special gift for the work of intercessory prayer, a mission which inspired her second name, “Esther”. Esther, the Old Testament queen who interceded with King Ahasuerus to save God’s people from certain doom, exemplifies Sister’s mission as a contemplative nun: to come before the throne, not of an earthly ruler, but of God Himself, to intercede for the needs of His people.



**Top to bottom:** The novice-to-be in prayer before her vestition; receiving the habit from **Mother John Mary**; Sr. Miriam Esther with **Mother John Mary** and **Sr. Mary Veronica**; and with dad, **Christopher**, and sister, **Ingrid**.

# VOCATION CORNER

Autumn of 2019 brought us a plethora of vocation visitors from places near and far. First was our October Vocation Retreat with three participants, **Sarah, Ana, and Emma** hailing from Illinois and Ohio. The very next weekend, we welcomed a group of young women from **Benedictine College** in Kansas during their cross-country nun run—a week long road trip with stops at various convents and monasteries to learn about religious life. November brought a guest from warmer climes, **Rebekah** from Florida. Different hometowns, different stories, yet all desire to follow the Lord’s will for them. We pray that He leads many women to join us at the foot of the Cross!



Sarah, Ana, & Emma



Benedictine College Nun Run



Rebekah

## Upcoming Vocation Retreats:

June 26-28    October 9-11

Open to single, Catholic women ages 17 – 30

Register at [www.passionistnuns.org](http://www.passionistnuns.org)

Over the past few months, we have also enjoyed several visits from our aspirant Abbey. However, she seems to have contracted a strange malady, first diagnosed by her father. It might be catching, so with the help of Sr. Miriam Esther’s illustrations, we present the symptoms of this rare disease.



Monastery Sickness Syndrome (MSS) is an emotional condition in which the affected person experiences a strong feeling of longing due to separation from the monastery.

MSS can most easily be diagnosed by the person being unable to hold a normal conversation without referring to the monastery or the nuns who live therein. If you are unable to distract the person from fond memories of the monastery by changing the subject, diagnosis is almost certain.

Nuns everywhere are searching for a cure—they suspect the only remedy is to join a monastery.



Inability to stay up past 9:30 pm, often accompanied by spontaneously falling asleep on the couch.

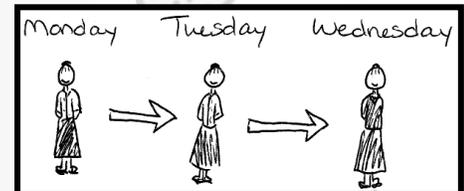


Over-excitement at the appearance of a new blog post on the nuns’ website.



Cravings for peanut butter that cannot be satisfied.

## SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:



Wearing the same or very similar outfits for extended periods of time.



Sudden awareness of cobwebs or dirt in out-of-the-way locations.



**Mother Catherine Marie and Mother Gertrude** beat the heat by wearing gray habits while visiting the **Passionist Nuns in Maumere, Indonesia**.

## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS MOTHER CATHERINE MARIE?

Our globe-trotting sister, Mother Catherine Marie, spent the month of February visiting the Passionist Nuns in Indonesia. At her side was Mother Gertrude Poggio of France, her First Councilor. This trip brought them to a corner of the world where Passionist life is thriving, home to our largest community of Passionist nuns, and to our newest monastery, founded under the direction of Bishop Giulio Mencuccini, CP, in Kalimantan, Borneo. As Mother President of our new Monastic Congregation, one of Mother Catherine Marie's jobs is to visit the monasteries of Passionist nuns world-wide.



**Mother Catherine Marie, Mother Gertrude, and two foundresses** of the Borneo community, with **Bishop Giulio Mencuccini, CP** and local children dressed in traditional Indonesian costumes during the blessing of the new monastery in Kalimantan, Borneo.

## *An Epiphany Gift*

Renewal of Passionist Vows  
**Sr. Lucia Marie of the Mystical Body of Christ, CP**  
 January 5, 2020

On the day when the three Magi offered their treasures to the Newborn Christ, our Sr. Lucia Marie renewed her priceless gift of herself to Christ the Bridegroom by her five Passionist vows. This renewal marks the half-way point of her Juniorate; God-willing, it will be just three more years till the day of her Final Vows. Pray that she and all of us may have strength to live our vows faithfully, and so give our very selves to God in worship!



Photo courtesy of  
 Corey D. Bruns



Courtesy of Elizabeth Wong Barnstead/WKC

**Back Row:** Sr. Mary Therese, Christie, Sr. Mary Magdalen, Mother John Mary, Sr. Mary Veronica, Sr. Mary Elizabeth  
**Middle Row:** Sr. Cecilia Maria, Sr. Lucia Marie, Sr. Mary Andrea, Sr. Miriam Esther; **Front Row:** Sr. Maria Faustina, Sr. Frances Marie

## Visit of the Passionist Tricentennial Icon



Courtesy of Elizabeth Wong Barnstead/WKC

On January 30, we were privileged to host the Passionist Jubilee Tryptic and relic right here at our monastery. We celebrated a votive Mass of St. Paul of the Cross, followed by a public prayer service which concluded with a blessing with the relic of St. Paul of the Cross by our chaplain, Fr. Lou Caporiccio, CPM. The Tryptic was commissioned in honor of this year's 300th anniversary of the founding charism of our Passionist Congregation, and is traveling to Passionist locations around the globe. You can see a close-up of the center panel on the front of our newsletter. Replete with Passionist symbolism, it features Christ Crucified flanked by St. Paul of the Cross and Our Sorrowful Mother. On the side panels are depicted four other holy Passionists: St. Gemma Galgani, Bl. Isidore de Loor, St. Gabriel Possenti, and Bl. Dominic Barberi. It was a grace to venerate the icon and to celebrate the gift of our charism.

For our monastery, this Jubilee year is a big "kick-off" for a whopping FOUR significant anniversaries coming up in the next few years, highlighted in the timeline at right. We have a variety of celebratory events in the works—keep an eye on our website, [www.passionistnuns.org](http://www.passionistnuns.org), to find out how you can join in the festivities!

### Passionist Jubilee Timeline

#### 300 years ago...

In December 1720, the *fire* of the Holy Spirit kindled in St. Paul of the Cross the charism of our Passionist Congregation.

#### 250 years ago...

In May 1771, that *flame* leapt up in the first monastery of Passionist Nuns in Tarquinia, Italy.

#### 75 years ago...

In October 1946, five Passionist Nuns brought the *flame* to a new monastery here in Owensboro, KY.

#### 25 years ago...

In December 1995, eighteen Nuns with hearts on *fire* relocated our Owensboro monastery to Whitesville.



# Cherish the Flame

## The Passionist Nuns Building Campaign

*An Exciting Movement of the Spirit within our Monastic Community*

As we seek to be ever more alive to our charism of cherishing the saving love of Christ Crucified for all men and women, we're building a new wing called the Holy Family Wing and covering a few sidewalks with a traditional monastic archway. We're also renovating our refectory (dining area) and serving area, and knocking out a pantry wall to enlarge our kitchen. AND...we're putting on a new roof! That's right - BIG things are happening at St Joseph Monastery.

St. Joseph is the foreman on the job. The total cost of the project is \$3.5 million and since October he (St. Joseph!) has already raised over \$600,000. With your help the Lord can easily raise the remaining \$3 million we need for these building improvements so that we can better live our life of intercession for the world. We are not going to take out any loans. Sooo...we won't break ground until we have about 65% in the bank. Would you help us meet our goal? You can find more information and see photos at [www.passionistnuns.org/cherish-the-flame](http://www.passionistnuns.org/cherish-the-flame). We thank you in advance for any gift you can give to this monumental endeavor. *Please earmark cash or check for the Cherish the Flame Building Project.*

**Most importantly, will you please join us in prayer for this endeavor? May God reward you!**



## A Saint of the Passionist Congregation

### Our Holy Founder - St. Paul of the Cross

During this Jubilee year, the Passionists around the world are celebrating the 300th anniversary of our founding charism. What does that mean? Specifically, we are celebrating the special graces and inspirations given by God to our Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, way back in 1720. It was through these graces that the Passionist Congregation was conceived in the mind of our Founder, and by God's grace and Paul's zealous work, eventually born in the Church.

In the year 1720 in Italy, young Paul Daneo was shown in a vision the Passionist habit and sign, and asked by God Himself (through Our Lady's intervention, in some reliable accounts) to found a Congregation devoted in a special way to keeping and promoting a grateful remembrance of the Passion of Christ. That same year, with the approval of his bishop, Paul was clothed in the black habit, and commenced a 40 day retreat, during which he wrote the rule for the Congregation of priests he was to found, called by Paul, "The Poor of Jesus", later known as the Passionists. Paul wrote under such a strong inspiration from God that he testified that it was as if someone was dictating to him. This foundational retreat was marked by profound mystical experiences of the sufferings of Christ and fervent prayer for the founding of the Congregation.

Faithful to God's call and to these special graces, Paul founded the Passionist fathers, dedicated to a monastic-style life of contemplative prayer coupled with a preaching apostolate aimed at awakening souls to the love of God and to a fervent Christian life through meditation on the saving love of Christ Crucified. Later, he founded the Passionist Nuns, who live the same mission and charism as the Fathers within a contemplative monastic life.



St Paul of the Cross,  
pray for us!

# FROM THE FOOT OF THE CROSS



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## *Cherish the Flame*



*Don't miss the news on Page 7*



*It's about our EXPANSION and RENOVATION campaign.  
Find out how you can help us continue  
to "Cherish the Flame" of our Passionist vocation.*