



Mountain Pieta

Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center

Spring/Summer 2017

'WE ARE PASSIONISTS, — AND — WE PROCLAIM CHRIST CRUCIFIED'



St. Paul of the Cross,
founder of the Passionist Community

Many years ago, in the parish church St. Alphonsus in East Los Angeles, two priests dressed in black habits began a parish mission with the words: "We are Passionists, and we preach Christ Crucified" They were members of a religious community whose gift to the Church is to keep alive the memory of Christ Crucified. They were among many followers of a young man named Paul Daneo.

It was late November of 1720. The town was Castellazzo in northern Italy. Paul Daneo, knelt in a cold, damp little room, which was part of the Church of St. Charles. Paul was beginning a retreat, and felt on fire with a vision. As it happened, this was not just a retreat. It was the beginning of a new way of life. Previously, he had been a businessman, working with his father, dealing mostly in tobacco. But as Paul knelt in prayer, all this was behind him.

He heard himself called to follow the example of the Jesus Crucified.

On Nov. 20, 1720, Bishop di Gattinara clothed Paul in a black habit in memory of the Sacred Passion. During his retreat, Paul wrote: "I desire only to remain on the Cross with Jesus."

He would become the founder in 1741 of a religious community that would come to be called the Congregation of the Passion, or simply the Passionists. Paul himself would later be canonized St. Paul of the Cross.

Today, St. Paul of the Cross has numerous followers of priests, brothers, sisters and nuns. They also include many lay partners (a type of third order), as well as laity who advise and minister with the religious community. The Passionists minister in 59 countries in the world. They came to the United States more than 150 years ago. The Passionists came to Sierra Madre in 1923. Shortly thereafter they

purchased the 83-acre parcel located in the upper foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, the place where, since then, thousands have come to experience the silence and solitude of the retreat that would come to be known as Mater Dolorosa, the Retreat of the Mother of Sorrows. They have come to embrace the treasure of Sierra Madre, the gift of the Passionist Community.

MORE ON THE PASSIONISTS

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Dear friends,

As I write this column, Easter is immediately before us. As you can imagine, this time of year is very exciting here at Mater Dolorosa. During Holy Week, we have our annual Men's retreat in Spanish, as well as our prayerful Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. We are planning for more than 3,000 people to join with us in praying the Stations on Good Friday morning and afternoon. It is truly inspiring that so many people here in Southern California make praying the Stations of the Cross at Mater Dolorosa an important part of their Good Friday devotions.

This is also the time of year that we begin the last three months of our regular weekend retreat season. By the end of June, we will have completed 20 men's retreats, eight retreats for women, two married couples' retreats and a retreat for young adults. This retreat season of 2016-2017 has been a remarkable one. The theme of the retreat throughout this past season, The Crucified One is No Stranger, has invited us all to remember and reflect on the unimaginable love that Jesus has revealed by giving his life for us, and to recognize that we are called to live in and share that love with the crucifieds of today's world. It was a retreat that both comforted us and, at the same time, challenged us to live out more faithfully and generously our Christian life. We are indeed grateful for God's many blessings throughout these retreats.

Since last September, the retreat center has also been home for more than 35 high school retreats, several high school faculty and board retreats, a variety of programs for ecumenical groups, retreats for priests and religious and a series of 12-step programs. All in all, it has been a very busy year here at Mater Dolorosa.

During the summer months of July and August, though we don't have our regular weekend retreats, we will be having a series of retreats for men and women in recovery, a Spanish retreat for women (Aug. 5-7) and a contemplative retreat. Every weekend offers a retreat, though there are fewer mid-week programs. So, it is a good time for our staff members to slow down a bit and find time for renewal and rest.

These approaching summer months are a welcome change that allow all of us to spend more time with family and friends

and live at a slower pace. I pray that you and your family find in these summer months a bit more leisure for enjoying one another's company. Thank you for being part of our Mater Dolorosa family and please keep us in your prayers. We will continue our prayers for you and your loved ones.

Peace,

Father Mike, Higgins, C.P.
Retreat Director



ST. MARIA GORETTI — A Passionist saint

During the life of Maria Goretti, the bond between her and the Passionists was forged. She received her final instructions and her first Communion from a Passionist, Father Jerome of St. Michael the Archangel.



She was born Oct. 16, 1890, in Corinaldo, Italy. When her farmworker father died of malaria, Maria's mother had to struggle to feed her children. Maria's mother, brothers, and sisters worked in the fields while she cooked and sewed.

On July 5, 1902, while 12-year-old Maria was sitting alone outside the steps of her home sewing, a young man, whose name was Alessandro, surprised her and attempted to rape her, but she fought him off. He finally took a knife and stabbed her repeatedly.

Maria's family returned home and found her bleeding on the floor. They quickly took her to the nearest hospital, where she underwent surgery without anesthesia.

Maria forgave Alessandro and said she wanted to see him in heaven with her. She died that day while looking upon an image of the Virgin Mary and holding a cross to her chest.

Shortly after, Alessandro was captured. He was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Alessandro repented his crime. When he was released 27 years later, he went to Maria's mother to beg forgiveness, which she gave, saying, "If my daughter can forgive him, who am I to withhold forgiveness?"

The postulator of her cause for beatification was Passionist Father Mauro. Maria Goretti was beatified on April 27, 1947, and on June 24, 1950, she was declared a saint. Alessandro was present in the St. Peter's crowd to celebrate her canonization. St. Maria's body lies in the Passionist Church at Nettuno.

Father Ignatius Spencer, C.P.,

distant relative of Princess Diana,

is on the path to sainthood

Fr. Ignatius Spencer, C.P., a distant relative of Princess Diana, Prince William and Prince Harry, has moved a step closer to sainthood. A 19th century convert to Catholicism from Anglicanism, Fr. Ignatius has been hailed as an exemplar of Catholicism's "second spring" in England.

Britain's Catholic News Agency reports that a 20-year investigation into the life and works of Father Ignatius Spencer has recently been approved by Vatican historians.

The positio, or document used in the process to declare someone "venerable," has officially been passed to the theologians of the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Sainthood. If sufficient "evidence of sanctity" is found, they will appeal to Pope Francis to declare the Passionist priest "Venerable," the second of four major steps on the path to canonization as a saint in the Catholic Church.

A Vatican investigation has declared that Father Ignatius Spencer, C.P., who is buried in the Church of St. Anne and Blessed Dominic, St. Helens, Merseyside, lived a life of "heroic virtue."

At that point, the Catholic Church will begin the search for two miracles needed first for his beatification – when he will be given the title of "Blessed" – and then his canonization, when he will be declared to be a saint. Father Ben Lodge C.P., who is responsible for promoting Father Spencer's cause, said the Vatican's move was "good news."

Born George Spencer in 1799, he was the youngest child of the second Earl Spencer, who was First Lord of the Admiralty at the time. The Spencers, who were ancestors of Winston Churchill, were the fifth wealthiest family in the country.

As a child, he would have met such people as Lord Nelson, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Isambard Kingdom

Fr. Ignatius Spencer, C.P.



Brunel, who were regular visitors to the family home.

But he turned his back on a life of immense wealth and comfort by converting to the Catholic faith – a move that horrified his contemporaries.

He grew up at Althorp (where Diana, Princess of Wales, is now buried) and was an Anglican clergyman in the area. Delete the rest of the sentence. On becoming a Roman Catholic priest, Father Spencer was attracted to the Passionist congregation. He became noted as a preacher who was equally at home among the aristocracy as he was among the urban poor. He ministered among Irish migrants in the West Midlands and people so poor that they lived in caves dug out of slag heaps.

The priest also took advantage of the rail network that was being laid out by the Victorians to travel widely throughout Britain to preach missions.

He died from a heart attack in 1864 while he was walking through the Scottish countryside to visit a godson.

Church scholars say Father Spencer was about 150 years ahead of his time in his quest for Christian unity. He has been credited with "preparing the ground" for the ecumenical movement in Northern Europe in the late 20th century.

Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center,

A PLACE WITH DEEP ROOTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The first retreat at Mater Dolorosa was preached under the “old rubber tree” that still stands on the property.

The Passionists came to Sierra Madre in 1923 to pastor the small Parish church of St. Rita on Baldwin Avenue. A year later, they acquired the site of Mater Dolorosa Monastery and Retreat Center. It was an 83-acre plot, at an elevation of about 1,200 feet, originally called Monte Olivette, commanding a sweeping view from Los Angeles central city to the eastern limits of the San Gabriel Valley and all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Behind the retreat center, the San Gabriel Mountains rise sharply.

Some Passionists resided at St. Rita's Parish, where they served until 1951. Others lived at a farmhouse on the property.

The first retreat at Mater Dolorosa was preached in 1926 under the “old rubber tree,” a Morton Bay fig that still stands on the property. Mater Dolorosa Monastery and Retreat House, dedicated in 1932, was the

first in Holy Cross Province to be constructed precisely for a men's retreat movement. The community lived on the second floor, and the retreatants occupied the first and third floors.

By 1950, they had outgrown the space and a separate structure was built uphill from the monastery. The new structure brought the capacity to 70 retreatants on a weekend. Additional expansion took place in



First retreatants at Mater Dolorosa relax under the shade of the “Rubber Tree”

1985, adding another 17 retreatant rooms, two meeting rooms and living space for the retreat director and those on extended personal retreat.



Fr. Mike Higgins, C.P., preaches during a retreat Mass



Br. John Rockenbach, C.P., leads the outdoor Stations of the Cross



The Sign that captures the meaning of Passionist Life

On a summer evening in Castellazzo, while on his way home after Mass, St. Paul of the Cross wrote:

“While walking I was recollected in prayer: when I turned the corner to go home I was raised up by God to the heights of recollection to the point of forgetting everything else and sensed an interior sweetness: it was at this moment that I saw myself, in spirit, vested in black from head to toe, with a white cross on my breast and under the cross the Most Holy name of Jesus in white letters.”

The special insignia of every Passionist is the “Sign.” “It captures, in an image, the meaning of Passionist life,” as Father Don Senior, C.P. beautifully describes it.

This “Sign” was given to the Passionists by the community’s founder, St. Paul of the Cross. He described how in a vision he saw Mary, the Mother of Jesus, dressed in black with a badge over her heart. He understood from her that he was to found a religious family that would be clothed in the same manner and wear that special badge.

The Sign is a heart-shaped symbol of love. The heart is surmounted by a white cross, a reminder of the suffering love shown by Jesus for us on the cross.



The words in the heart are:

Jesu: the name of Jesus in Hebrew

XPI: the contracted form of Christ in Greek

Passio: the word Passion in Latin

Thus, the text reads “The Passion of Jesus Christ,” written in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Hebrew, Greek and Latin were the main languages used in the time of Jesus, thus they were the languages used by Pontius Pilate in writing the sign he placed above Jesus on the cross.

Beneath the lettering within the heart there are three nails — these three nails represent the nails used to fix Jesus to the cross and are a constant reminder of the Holy wounds that he bore.

All Passionists takes a special vow, the “*Memoria Passionis*,” to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ. This vow defines the purpose of the Passionist Congregation. They vow to keep deep in their hearts the memory of the Passion of Jesus and to bring others to the knowledge of Jesus and His great love for them manifested in his Passion.

“The special Sign we wear,” says Father Don, “is meant to symbolize a solemn commitment to proclaim God’s great love made known through the cross of Jesus.

“We nourish that memory in our hearts through prayer,” he continues. “We share that good news with all the world. We proclaim it through preaching, in our parishes and retreat centers, through radio and television and by our presence in hospitals, classrooms, campuses, missions and those ministries of service to the community.”

The Sign is what is captured in the words that St. Paul of the Cross was fond of repeating: “May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.”

In 1991, an earthquake devastated the monastery and it subsequently was demolished. In its place, the beautiful Monastery Memorial Gardens were created in 1999. This area consists of the Garden of Seven Sorrows, Sacred Heart Plaza and an amphitheater.

Today, Passionists offer retreats for men, women, young adults and married couples in English and Spanish. Hosted Programs began in the 1980s. They include archdiocesan/diocesan groups, Catholic school faculties a students, Christian universities and seminaries, church groups and other ecumenical groups. Annually, more than 10,000 individuals come to Mater Dolorosa.

Additionally, 2,500-3,000 people visit on Good Friday to walk and pray our uniquely beautiful Stations of the Cross.

Throughout its 91 years, Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center has been a place of silence, solitude and spiritual growth for the thousands who have passed through its gates. Like that majestic Morton Bay fig tree, this retreat center has deep roots in Southern California.

Countdown to Mater Dolorosa's 'year-end'

– a special reminder –

This is a special reminder to our generous and loyal supporters that June 30, 2017, is the end of Mater Dolorosa's fiscal year. What this means is that the retreat center has a short time remaining to achieve our financial goals. Just like you, the retreat center has an annual budget and financial responsibilities to meet.

As always, you play a major role in achieving our goals. It is your gifts that Mater Dolorosa depends on to meet its financial responsibilities and to sustain the important retreat ministry that takes place here.

We have many loyal supporters who give generously to Mater Dolorosa and we are grateful. It is your gifts that:

- help with the maintenance and repair of the retreat center and grounds (*Century Club*)
- help with weekend retreat expenses and support the longstanding tradition of welcoming all who wish to hear the message of the Passion (*Sponsorship Circle*)
- help us to offer Kairos retreats to high school students (*Sponsorship Circle*)
- help with operating expenses, special projects or where needed (*Unrestricted Donation*)
- support important events such as Harvest on the Hill Auction and the Golf Classic (*Events*)
- support special projects such as the new and safe main entry to the retreat center (*Special Projects and Century Club*)
- support the future of Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center (*Endowment donation*)

We are grateful for your loyal support and we thank you. Your gifts make many things possible, especially the opportunity to offer a special environment of peace and tranquility – a special place to reflect, to pray and to be restored by the love of Christ. We are all blessed to be members of the Mater Dolorosa family.

If you have not done so already, please consider renewing your Century Club and Sponsorship Circle membership. Become a new member. Send us your donation to be used where most needed. Consider a donation to our Endowment Fund. Support the upcoming golf tournament.

Remember: June 30, 2017, is our fiscal "year-end," so please submit your gifts before that date.



Mater Dolorosa's 11th annual Golf Classic, May 22, 2017

Join our golf chair, Pat Wickhem, for a fun day at Glendora Country Club Golf Course. Last year was a full course, register early!

Register your friends and family in a foursome and invite your spouse or significant other to join us for the social and awards dinner afterwards at Mater Dolorosa.

New this year:

For \$100, you will have the opportunity to win golf for two at beautiful Pebble Beach and Spanish Bay, plus two nights at the Spanish Bay Inn. We will choose a card for you from a deck of 52 cards and notify you of your card. This opportunity drawing will take place on May 22 at the awards dinner at Mater Dolorosa. Winner need not be present.

Play golf and support Mater Dolorosa's "Save our Trees" Project

Your participation this year will help Mater Dolorosa save the beautiful trees on the property. The retreat center has struggled to maintain all of our landscape during the recent years of drought.

Our Building and Grounds Committee is actively working on developing a system of drip irrigation using gravitational pull to deliver water to specific trees. Progress on this project depends on securing a source for funding. The proceeds from our 11th annual Golf Classic will support this dire need.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER CONTACT:

Pat Wickhem, our 2017 Golf Chair –
626.416.8824 or pickempat1@aol.com

The Development Office –
626.355.7188, ext. 103 or jwarlick@materdolorosa.org

2016 YEAR- END GIFTS TO MATER DOLOROSA

We want to thank you and express our gratitude for your continued loyal support of the Passionist mission and ministry that enables us to offer weekend retreats and special programs to so many men and women year after year. It is through your spirit of generosity that we welcome all who wish to hear the message of the Passion.

Your gifts to our 2016 year-end appeal totaled \$28,875. You can take comfort in knowing that your gift helps to transform the life of someone who is in need of God's special grace.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Men's & Women's Retreats 2017 Retreat Season

03/17/17

Holy Family, South Pasadena	Ernie Arnold	323-982-0927
St. Denis, Diamond Bar	Mike Kellogg	909-860-1332
St. Mary Magdalen, L.A.	Al Wilson	310-559-7159
St. Peter Claver, Simi Valley	Gary Carlson	805-522-0875
St. Pius X, Santa Fe Springs	Tony Reyes	562-868-7696
St. Rose of Lima	Joe Ferrall	805-428-1894
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President:	Gary Carlson	805-522-0875

03/24/17

Immaculate Conception, Monrovia	Patrick Moore	626-358-4700
Holy Name of Mary, San Dimas	Tom Kiely	909-592-5906
Lay Bros. of the Poor / St Mary's	Dennis Cook	760-356-4198
St. Polycarp, Stanton	Jiggs Herold	714-539-2894
St. Rita, Sierra Madre	Bill Cosso	626-355-5656
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice-President	Don Juge	714-897-9067

03/31/17

St. Joseph, Placentia	Joanna Rogers	714-325-1421
St. Margaret Mary, Lomita	Nancy Castiglione	310-325-7625
St. Edward, Dana Point	Liz Mojica	949-661-9647
St. Angela Merici, Brea	Cecilia Witchey	714-745-6117
St. Charles Borromeo, No. Hollywood	Evelyn Medel	818-982-8929
Vice President	Cathy Hainley	714-996-1793
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188

04/07/17 24

Holy Name of Jesus, L.A.	Clyde Sparrow	323-734-8978
St. Barbara, Santa Ana	Thomas Mueller	714-876-8342
St. Dorothy, Glendora	Jim Shivers	626-963-5162
St. Teresa of Avila, L.A.	Edwin Ongsingco	818-982-6833
St. Joseph, Upland	Dan Wilson	909-230-3234
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President	Clyde Sparrow	323-734-8978

04/13/17

Spanish Speaking Men's Retreat	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
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04/21/17

St. Columban, L.A.	Rollie Agonoy	818-846-3050
St. Kilian, Mission Viejo	Bob Bochniarz	949-716-9055
St. Louise de Marillac, Covina	Brian Lee	626-966-7989
St. Mel, Woodland Hills	Bob Driscoll	818-704-9087
St. Mel, Norco	Rene Vargas	951-279-5299
St. Thomas the Apostle, Riverside	Michael McVeigh	951-639-5290
Padre Serra, Camarillo	Dave McCormick	805-987-7629
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
Vice President	Michael McVeigh	951-639-5290

04/28/17

St. Timothy, Laguna Niguel	Ren Lopez	949-859-2397
St. Linus, Norwalk	Francis LeDuff	562-864-3482
St. Margaret Mary/Tom Reis Group	Scott McKechnie	310-427-2758
St. Stephen Martyr, Monterey Park	Bob Montanez	626-201-5083
Beatitudes of Our Lord, La Mirada	Dcn Mike Hidalgo	562-943-3993
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188

05/05/17

Italian Men's Retreat	Tom Vasile
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05/12/17

St. Dorothy, Glendora	Michelle Connors	626-422-9885
St. Anthony	Mary Baum	310-643-7699
St. Paul the Apostle, Chino Hills	Marian Molina	909-591-5661
St. Louise de Marillac, Covina	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
St. Kateri, Saugus	Ada Loys-Abshire	661-296-5903
Holy Family, So. Pasadena	Shelly Stokes	714-350-6865
Santa Clara, Oxnard	Rosa Dominguez	805-985-8706
St. Thomas Apostle, Riverside	Debi Young	951-237-3283
Visitation, Westchester	Mary Rotolo	310-503-8949
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188

05/19/17

St. Peter Claver	Linda Cravens	805-522-0981
St. Rose of Lima	Annelies Bruemmer	805-584-2363
Beatitudes of Our Lord	Joie Azurin	562-947-4942
St. Joseph the Worker	Rosemarie Bartolata (Camonayan)	818-414-4353
Mission San Juan Capistrano	Irene Langer	949-228-3923
St. Catherine of Alexandria, Temecula	Patricia Sanchez	951-506-1422
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188

05/26/17

Men's Memorial Day	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
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06/02/17

Men's AA	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
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06/16/17

Young Adult Retreat	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
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06/09/17

St. Timothy, Laguna Niguel	Margo Hartle	949-285-8922
St. Benedict, Montebello	Irene Wolf	323-722-3471
St. Dominic, Los Angeles	Linda Van Dyke	323-258-6045
Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, LA	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
St. Linus, Norwalk	Irene Arias	562-242-8234
St. Paul of the Cross, La Mirada	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
St. Catherine, Laguna Beach	Lori Obermeyer	949-699-0916
St. Paschal Baylon, Thousand Oaks	Cynthia Torres	805-660-0700
Padre Serra, Camarillo	Eileen Richards	805-386-4017
All Other Parishes	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188

06/23/17

Couples Retreat	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
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08/04/17 Spanish Women

	Call Retreat Center	626-355-7188
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07/14/17 Women's All 12-Step Recovery

07/21/17 Women's 12 Step

07/28/17 Fr Barney Nixon Men's AA

08/11/17 Men's Dana Point Recovery Retreat

08/18/17 Diaconate Women

09/01/17 Fellowship of the Spirit West

11/10/17 Men's Dana Point Recovery Retreat



Mater Dolorosa *Passionist Retreat Center*

700 N. Sunnyside Avenue
Sierra Madre, CA 91024



Mountain Pieta Spring/Summer 2017



YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

June 16-18, 2017

MARRIED COUPLES' RETREAT

June 23-25, 2017

**SPANISH-SPEAKING WOMEN'S
RETREAT**

Aug. 4-6, 2017

Call the retreat center for information:
626-355-7188

