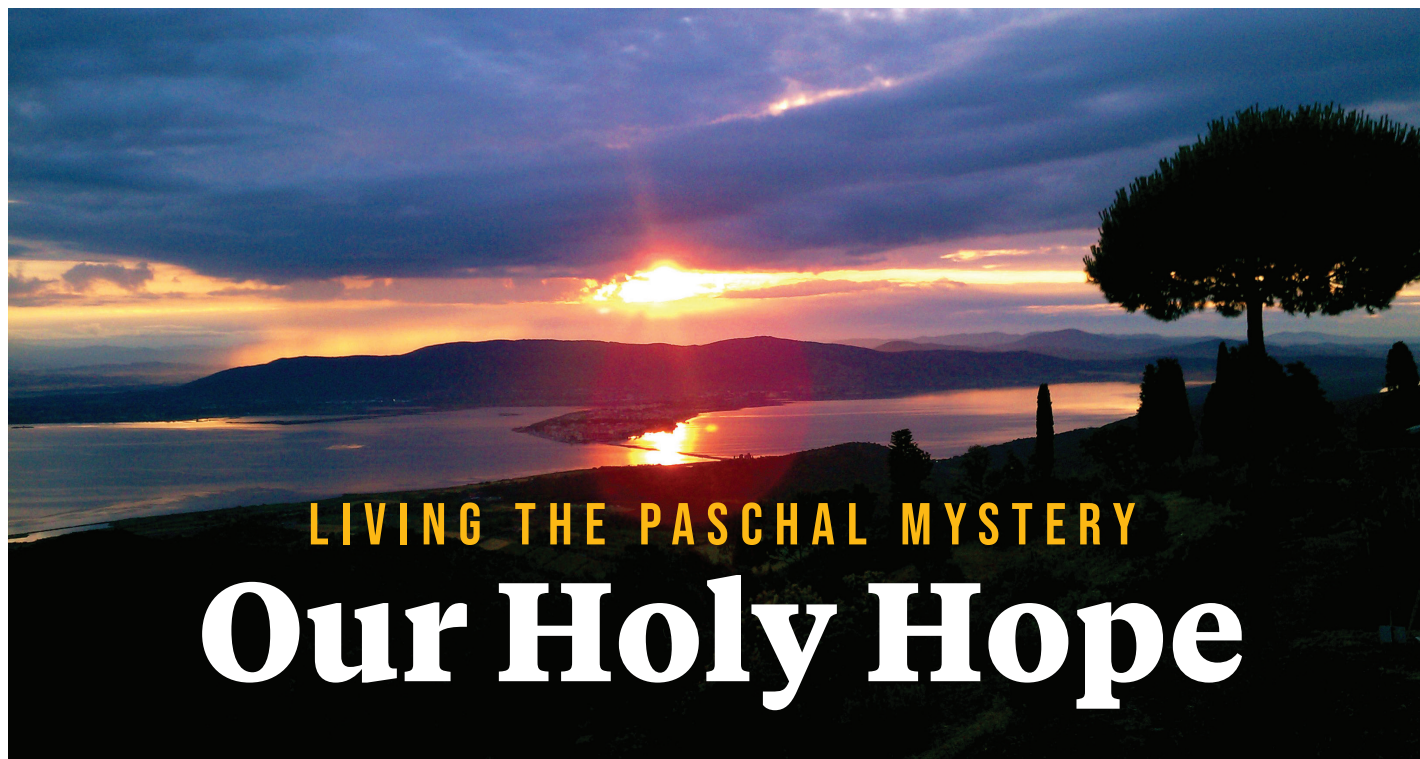




MOUNTAIN PIETA

Mater Dolorosa *Passionist Retreat Center*

SUMMER 2024



LIVING THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

Our Holy Hope

The fruit of centuries of prayer and contemplation finds expression in the theme chosen for this retreat season.

“Living the Paschal Mystery” calls us to active, ongoing engagement with the Spirit of God in Christ in our hearts, our communities, the Church and the world. St. Paul of the Cross’ day was no less confusing and challenging than ours. His message invites a commitment to trust in God’s presence within and among us. The abundant love of Christ stirs in us the deepest kind of hope — not optimism, but a Holy Hope.

The Paschal Mystery — the life, passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ — lies at the heart of Christian faith and life.

For 100 years, the Paschal Mystery —

“THE ABUNDANT LOVE OF CHRIST STIRS IN US THE DEEPEST KIND OF HOPE — NOT OPTIMISM — BUT A HOLY HOPE.”

with particular attention to the Passion of Jesus Christ — has been the focus of retreats at Mater Dolorosa. In the spirit of St. Paul of the Cross, Founder of the Passionists, his companions and followers have faithfully implemented his vision.

As we anticipate the great Jubilee Year of Hope, this retreat offers an invitation to receive the Spirit’s gift of hope at the core of “Living the Paschal Mystery.” This year’s retreat season kicks off with the first Men’s Retreat Weekend on September 6th. †





Rev. Dr. Febin Barose, C.P. blesses retreatants.

I am excited to announce that we have a great retreat theme for our upcoming 2024-25 retreat season, and with it also come a few personnel changes at Mater Dolorosa.

First of all, Fr. David Colhour, C.P., the Provincial of Holy Cross Province asked me to take the position of Director of Ministry at Mater Dolorosa, effective Aug. 1, 2024. With God's grace and your support, I look forward to serving you as Director of Ministry. We stand on the shoulders of those who have served before us, and we continue our mission to proclaim the Passionist charism at Mater Dolorosa.

We are deeply grateful to Fr. Bruno for his exceptional leadership over the past year as the interim director of the retreat center and director of retreat ministry. His faithful ministry and commitment these past 12 years have been an inspiration and blessing for us all. We wish him every success in his new ministry.

On a related note, I am pleased to share that Fr. Welfen Xavier, C.P., my classmate from the Passionist Seminary in India, will join us as the Assistant Director of Ministry in mid-September 2024. More information about Fr. Welfen is available in this newsletter.

Many of you know me already, but to refresh your memory, I offer a short introduction: I was born, raised and formed as a Passionist in India. I was ordained a priest on May 10, 2014. I transitioned to the United States in May 2018 as the Associate Pastor at St. Agnes Church, Louisville, Kentucky. I joined Mater Dolorosa Passionist Community and Retreat Center in August 2022.

As I mentioned earlier, we have a wonderful theme for the 2024-25 retreat season — "Living the Paschal Mystery: Our Holy Hope." Living the Paschal Mystery calls us to active, ongoing engagement with the Spirit of God in Christ in our hearts, our communities, the Church and the world. The retreat team is ready to lead all of God's people to witness hope, peace and love on the holy ground of Mater Dolorosa. †

With your prayers and support,

REV. DR. FEBIN BAROSE, C.P.
Director of Ministry, Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center

Chapel Room rededicated as the St. Gemma Room

Father Bruno D'Souza, C.P., with fellow Passionists and staff of Mater Dolorosa, rededicated a meeting room in the retreat lobby area as the St. Gemma Room. It had formerly been called the Chapel Room.

This rededication follows the Passionist tradition of naming its retreat conference and meeting rooms after Passionist saints. The St. Gemma Room now joins Founder's Hall, dedicated to St. Paul of the Cross, Possenti Hall, named after St. Gabriel Possenti of the Sorrowful Mother, and DeLoor Hall, named after Blessed Isidore DeLoor of St. Joseph, as Passionist gathering places.

A spiritual daughter of St. Paul of the Cross, Gemma Galgani (Gemma means "gem") was the first female child born to the traditional, Catholic Galgani family on March 12, 1878, near Lucca, Italy.

Inspired by her mother's teachings, Gemma developed a love for Jesus and a strong devotion to prayer at a very young age. Gemma lost her mother when she was 8 years old. Tragedy struck again when Gemma was 19 years old when her father died.

Soon after, Gemma experienced a long and serious illness. It was believed that no medical remedy could cure her. With hopes of a miracle, Gemma prayed to St. Gabriel Possenti after she received a novena card along with the story of the life of the young saint.

On her deathbed, during the prayers of the novena, Gabriel appeared to Gemma. In promising her that she would wear the same habit he did, Gabriel told her that she would be blessed with a cure and that a special grace was being prepared for her.

The miracle of a cure came on March 2, 1899. Then, on the evening of June 8, 1899, while she prayed with Jesus in his sufferings, the Blessed Mother appeared to Gemma.

During the remainder of Gemma's life, many witnessed this recurring miracle of the holy stigmata. Soon after this extraordinary blessing, Gemma made the Holy Year mission at the Cathedral of St. Martin where she first met the Passionist missionary, Father Cajetan. He listened to her miraculous story and allowed her to take private vows.

Gemma died on Holy Saturday, April 11, 1903. The Passionist Sisters clothed Gemma's body in the habit of the Passionists, the order to which she had aspired. Pope Pius XII canonized Gemma

Galgani in 1940. Her body is buried in the chapel of the new convent at Lucca.

Although Gemma Galgani was not a Passionist in the canonical sense, God raised her up as a true paradigm for all vowed Passionists, as well as lay men and women, with a desire to follow St. Paul of the Cross. †



Julius Ernest Livermore/British Library/Public domain

Personnel changes

Personnel changes are coming to

Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center in the fall. After nearly 12 years in Sierra Madre as part of the retreat team, Fr. Bruno D'Souza, C.P., interim Retreat Director, is preparing for a new assignment. Fr. Febin Barose, C.P., has been assigned as the new Director of the Retreat Ministry. And Fr. Welfen Xavier, C.P., will transfer from Christ the King Retreat in Citrus Heights, near Sacramento, to join the Mater Dolorosa retreat team.

Fr. Bruno was ordained on Dec. 4, 2002, in his home parish, Our Lady of Remedies, in Vasai, India. He served in various capacities, including Director of Students in India, before coming to the United States. On Nov. 30, 2012, he was assigned to Mater Dolorosa and quickly became a popular member of the Passionist retreat preaching team. Most recently, he had been selected as interim Retreat Director and local community superior. Fr. Bruno currently serves as a consultant on the Provincial Council of Holy Cross Province. Fr. Bruno will become the Pastor at St. Agnes Church, a Passionist parish, in Louisville, Kentucky.

Before arriving at Mater Dolorosa in August 2022, Fr. Febin, a native of India, served as Associate Pastor of St. Agnes Church. He was ordained to the priesthood May 10, 2014, in India. Fr. Febin received his first appointment as an administrator in the Passionist Novitiate in Nilambur, Kerala, India. He was also involved in administration, preaching and other religious ministries. He is the eldest of three children born to Felix Barose and Juliet Felix. Fr.



Rev. Dr. Febin Barose, C.P., Director of Ministry, Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center

Febin also currently serves as a consultant on the Provincial Council of Holy Cross Province.

In addition to his leadership gifts, Fr. Febin brings breathtakingly impressive credentials to his new position. He holds undergraduate degrees in psychology, social work and political science from Barkatullah University, India. He also has an undergraduate degree in philosophy. In addition, Fr. Febin holds master's degrees in theology from the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome and in business administration from Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky. In June of this year, Fr. Febin completed his doctorate in education/organizational leadership from Spalding University.

Fr. Welfen, also a native of India, came to the United States in 2023 to serve as Associate Retreat Director at Christ the King Retreat Center in Citrus Heights for about nine months. "Now, I'm excited to continue in retreat ministry at Mater Dolorosa," he said. Fr. Welfen was ordained a priest in 2014. As a Passionist priest, he served as minor seminary associate director, finance administrator and parish pastor. He is the eldest of three children born to George and Daisy Anjiparambil.

Finally, Mater Dolorosa plans to hire a Retreat Center Director whose duties will involve administrative and developmental functions.



Fr. Welfen Xavier, C.P.

Everyone, including the Passionist community, staff and retreatants, will miss Fr. Bruno and his cheerful demeanor. Nevertheless, Mater Dolorosa looks forward to Fr. Febin's able leadership and welcomes Fr. Welfen to Sierra Madre and the Passionist Family. †

"Now, I'm excited to continue retreat ministry at Mater Dolorosa."

— Fr. Welfen

AN 'OLD RUBBER TREE' STANDS AS A MAJESTIC REMINDER *of the Passionists' first retreat in Sierra Madre*

In July of 1926, two years after arriving in Sierra Madre, the Passionists held their first retreat. No monastery or retreat house had yet been built. But that did not hinder Father Ignatius Conry from leading 25 men on that retreat. He gathered them under the shade of the "old rubber tree," a Moreton Bay fig, which still stands today on the property.

It wasn't until 1932 that the Passionists dedicated Mater Dolorosa Monastery 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 1985, adding another 17 retreatant rooms, two meeting rooms and living space for the retreat director and those on extended personal retreat.

In 1991, an earthquake devastated the monastery and it

subsequently was demolished. In its place, a beautiful Monastery Memorial Garden was created in 1999. This area consists of the Garden of Seven Sorrows, the Plaza of the Sacred Heart and an amphitheater.

Mater Dolorosa's programs have expanded significantly over the years. Today, the Passionists offer retreats for men, women and married couples in English and Spanish. Hosted programs are available for high school groups, other Catholic programs and many ecumenical groups.

In addition, the retreat center hosts programs for Twelve Step and AA recovery, Archdiocese of Los Angeles clergy and lay persons, high school and college students, faculty, Mass participants and visitors to special events.

Although much has changed since 1926, the giant Moreton Bay fig still stands majestically in testimony to the days when 25 men gathered under its shade on a warm July weekend for the first retreat in Sierra Madre. †



First Mater Dolorosa Retreat, July 23, 24, 1926

FROM THE FIRST RETREAT UNDER THE SHADE OF THE ‘RUBBER TREE’ IN 1926

to solar energy at Mater Dolorosa Retreat in 2024

Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center plans to switch to solar energy by mid-January 2025 as part of its response to Pope Francis’ encyclical “*Laudato Si*,” which teaches on the relationship between God, humans and the Earth in caring for creation.

The Sierra Madre retreat joins other Passionist retreats and monasteries in the Congregations of the two U.S. provinces — its own Holy Cross Province and the Eastern Province of St. Paul of the Cross — in making the switch to solar energy to power their work. Following are some of the highlights of the Mater Dolorosa solar project:

- **Nearly 450 solar panels at two parking locations will be mounted on steel structures.**
- **Batteries, which are expandable, will have energy storage for daily usage with 4 EV chargers being installed, as well as serve as backup in the event of a grid outage.**

Annual utility savings are estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$110,000.

- **Output for the system is approximately 186 kilowatts.**
- **Funding to cover the solar project will come from significant federal and state incentives. The balance will come from retreatant donations.**

“Converting to solar energy will be a big change at Mater Dolorosa,” said Filippo Fanara, past chair of the Retreat Center’s Board of Directors. “We have two goals in mind with this project,” Fanara said. “We want to respect our environment by using clean and efficient energy, and we want to save money as the average monthly electric bills continue to go up.”



The project was conceived and has been supported by the Passionist community at the local and provincial levels, the board members and staff of Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center. Development and construction of the project are being done by JNG Power Corporation. JNG’s founder has worked diligently with the Passionist Community, Board and staff for the last few years to locate the solar panels in the most optimal locations. He has also navigated the application process with Southern California Edison on our behalf. The construction agreement was signed in early June.

The project construction plans should be completed in September or October. The plans would then be submitted to the city of Sierra Madre and permits for construction would be issued upon their approval. Construction of the project will begin soon after.

Climate change is real, Pope Francis wrote in “*Laudato Si*.” The May 2015 encyclical signaled an urgent need to transition to renewable energy. “There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gasses can be drastically reduced,” Pope Francis wrote. †

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT:



getty images/lidibug

Leaving a legacy of love at Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center

Doug and Maureen Peel both attended retreats at the invitation of Maureen's brother, Bud Steffen. Maureen recounts: "My brother Bud Steffen from St. Joseph's Parish in Placentia had been inviting me for years, but I kept telling him, 'Later.' I was too busy with work and raising my two sons. But Mothers' Day 2009 was the right time for me. My mom had passed away; she didn't want me to be sad, but I couldn't seem to get past my grieving. She was a prayer warrior and helped me when I struggled with life and with my faith. She was always there for me. I missed her presence."

"On retreat, I felt the presence and comfort of God in a very special way. I cried and felt so much sorrow, especially when I was in Mary's Garden of the Seven Sorrows. Afterward, I had so much peace. At the end of the retreat, I did not want to leave because I felt so much peace and love from God."

"On my drive home, I decided to stop and buy flowers to take to my mom's grave site. When I was there, I ran into Bud. So, we spent some time together remembering our mom and talking about the Retreat Center. I felt so much healing and hope after talking with my brother."

"I have been going on retreat almost every year since then. I even went three times in one year because I had to take my nieces. Father Bruno D'Souza said something like, 'You're back again? Did you need to hear the retreat messages again?'"

Doug's first retreat story has a funny twist. Bud has also invited Doug several times. Fr. Pat Brennan was the Retreat Center Director then; during Fr. Pat's orientation, he said, "When you cross the threshold, we're in silence." But Bud hadn't mentioned that it was silent to Doug! Doug's initial response was: "Wait, I can't talk all weekend?!" Doug had a surprise introduction to the power of silence, closing out the world of white noise and allowing the inner world to become silent to hear the whispers of God. He admits that the first year was a little challenging, but he has been on retreat at Mater Dolorosa about 20 times since then.

Doug and Maureen have both been Mater Dolorosa Retreat Captains, organizing the men's and women's retreats for St. Timothy's in Laguna Niguel. They have also named Mater Dolorosa in their estate plans to leave a legacy to such an important ministry. Maureen says, "I want to support Mater Dolorosa and the Passionist priests, and I want their mission to continue. The world needs more places like Mater Dolorosa and more people dedicated to helping people and helping people to know about God." Doug echoes that sentiment, saying, "Leaving the Retreat Center in our estate planning is the fruit of the spirit. We have to ensure this little slice of heaven on Earth for future generations." †

+ FOR MORE INFORMATION on leaving a legacy gift to Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center, please visit MaterDolorosa.org/planned-gifts/ or contact Development Director Melanie Goodyear at MGoodyear@MaterDolorosa.org or 626.355.7188, ext. 103.

MATER DOLOROSA PASSIONIST RETREAT CENTER

Ways to Give Form

I want to support the important ministries at Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____ .

Unrestricted Donation: To be used where it is most needed.

Century Club: Supports maintenance and improvements to buildings and grounds.

■ **MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:**

\$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$2,500 \$5,000

Please restrict my Century Club membership to the solar installation

Sponsorship Circle: Supports retreat ministries, including Passionist preached retreats for women, men, young adults, married couples, parents and teens, recovery and Spanish-language communities. Sponsorship Circle membership also supports various events, both fundraising and spiritual events.

■ **MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:**

\$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$2,500 \$5,000

Planned Giving

I have named Mater Dolorosa in my will or estate plan.

I am interested in receiving information on how to make a planned gift of an appreciated asset (bequest, trust, real property, stocks, etc.)

Naming Opportunities: I would like more information about naming a space at Mater Dolorosa; opportunities include chapel seats, outdoor seats, Garden of Sorrows pillars, rooms and more.

MaterDolorosa.org/Donate

Thank you!

Scissors graphic: Getty Images/Artizarus

Stay connected!

Mater Dolorosa sends out a digital newsletter about twice a month; if you do not already receive these emails, please sign up by scanning the QR code below or email RRamirez@MaterDolorosa.org.



Additionally, if you need to update any of your contact information, please email RRamirez@MaterDolorosa.org.

SAVE THE DATE!
SPRING GALA

Saturday,
May 10, 2025

There will be no Harvest on the Hill gala in fall 2024, but we will have a spring gala; please save the date for spring 2025!





Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center

700 N. Sunnyside Avenue
Sierra Madre, CA 91024



MOUNTAIN PIETA

SUMMER 2024



SIGN UP TODAY!

The 2024-2025 retreat season is open for registration! Please register online or call 626-355-7188 ext. 133. To see all retreat dates, please visit <https://materdolorosa.org/calendar/> or scan the QR code below.

You are welcome to attend with your parish, although you may also attend any week that is most convenient. To find your parish weekend, visit <https://materdolorosa.org/retreat-groups/>.

