

November 2023

Passionist News Notes

St. Paul of the Cross Province



Date	November Birthday
2	FAGAN, Paul
4	MCKENNA, Robert
10	CASTELLANO, Rogie
15	BURKE, Richard SCANLON, Terrence
18	SALVAGNA, Michael
19	SUMAMPONG, Jed
19	FINNIGAN, Francis
26	MARTINEZ, Cristian

JUBILARIANS HONORED IN 2023	
Years	First Profession
70	Fr. Jesus Echeandia Ormachea, Fr. Kenan Peters
65	Fr. Lucian Clark
60	Fr. Richard Nalepa, Br. Terence Skorka
50	Fr. Robert Joerger
25	Fr. Patrick Daugherty, Fr. William Maguire, Fr. Anibal Rodriguez
Ordination	
65	Fr. Jerome McKenna
50	Fr. Gerald Laba, Fr. William Murphy

The first Passionist of St. Paul of the Cross Province to turn 100.
Fr. John McMillan, CP Monday, October 9
jmcmillan@cproov.org



Today, we celebrate the first Passionist in US to reach 100, Fr. John Fidelis McMillan, CP.
Yesterday, friends and family gathered for Mass and Lunch to honor his years of ministry.
May God bless you, Fr. John.



As He Turns 100, Priest Still Has a ‘Full-Time Job’ Praying for Others

The Tablet October 11, 2023 By [Bill Miller](#)

JAMAICA ESTATES — Father John McMillan is happy to have lived an entire century — time, he feels, has been well spent plumbing the mysteries of the cross.

Father McMillan, a Passionist priest, recently turned 100 years old. It’s the latest milestone in a life shaped by events of the mid-20th century, from the hardships of the Great Depression to aerial combat during World War II. As a priest, he was an eyewitness to the Second Vatican Council.

Sharp as a tack, though a bit hard of hearing, his mind still explores God’s love revealed through the crucifixion of his son, Jesus. Ironically, this is a concept he treated with skepticism as a young man.

“That’s one of the reasons the Lord has let me live so long,” he said with a chuckle. “You see, I’m a slow learner.”

Family, friends, and fellow priests celebrated Father McMillan — the first Passionist of the St. Paul of the Cross Province to turn 100 — with a Mass and luncheon on Sunday, Oct. 8, the day before his Oct. 9 birthday.

They gathered at his home for the past several years — the Passionists’ Immaculate Conception Monastery in Jamaica Estates.

But, a few weeks before his birthday, he confessed to being a “little nervous” about the celebration, unsure why he deserved attention.

Father Bill Murphy, rector of the monastery, said the older priest is “very humble” and “very simple,” but he also has a profound intellectual curiosity.

“John is an avid reader, right up to date on the latest books and *The New York Times*,” Father Murphy said. “He’ll share with you what he knows, but also where the questions are. But he’s not a know-it-all, that’s for sure.”

Father McMillan grew up in Linden, New Jersey, the son of a Presbyterian father from South Carolina and a fiercely Irish Catholic mother.

He and his younger brother were raised Catholic. The Great Depression was underway by the time he turned 7.

“But I didn’t realize how bad it was,” he said. “We had plenty of food.”

Father McMillan graduated from high school in 1941 and went to work for Bell Telephone as a draftsman. He commuted each day from Linden to Lower Manhattan.

“I didn’t know anything,” he said. “A lot of the guys came from technical schools and they were ready to go. But they needed people, so they were patient with me. And they let me develop some skills.”

One day during his commute, he popped into a bookstore to browse the shelves. He came upon a book that he called “a classic” although he couldn’t remember its title.

He did, however, remember that one chapter — “The Royal Road of the Cross” — was a treatise on the Passion of Christ.

“I read that and I said, ‘Wow, this is tough,’ ” Father McMillan said. “But it put a little bug in my mind, which then, I think, was the Holy Spirit working in me.”

Father McMillan said he worked about 18 months for the telephone company, “but then time ran out.” He transitioned from a draftsman to a draftee — literally, having been conscripted to fight in the war.

With no flight experience, he volunteered for the U.S. Air Corps. He endured comprehensive but swift training to become a B-24 navigator with the 15th Air Force in Italy. From there, he guided 35 bombing runs over Nazi-held targets in Europe, and ultimately rose to the rank of captain.

After the war, however, he sought a switch from military to humanitarian service. He first considered a dual career as a religious brother and nurse. But then he visited his younger brother, who was considering formation as a Passionist.

The community impressed the former navigator with its devotion to the Passion so much that he too entered the minor seminary at Dunkirk, New York.

Father McMillan’s brother ultimately didn’t stay, choosing to become a teacher and raise a family. The older McMillan was ordained in 1956.

Father Theodore Foley — now a candidate for sainthood — must have seen some sort of potential in the young priest. He sent him back to Italy to oversee the Passionists’ library at the Vatican. He had no knowledge of library science, and could only speak fragments of Italian that he learned during the war. But he held that job for 15 years.

Later on his journey of service, Father McMillan was a go-to chaplain at a drug and alcohol treatment center operated by the Passionists in Pennsylvania.

The centenarian priest’s compassion is still demonstrated daily by his fervent prayer life, another example of this community’s devotion to the Passion.

“Whatever is going on prayer wise, he’s always participating,” Father Murphy said. “We have morning Mass, and he’s there, usually early, and he’ll stay later, doing his prayer. He’ll be in church all the time.”

Father McMillan confirmed that his prayer list is lengthy, with much of it based on current events, from the war in Ukraine to gun violence on the streets of New York.

“The individual cases that you run into reading the paper or on the television — just terrible crimes,” he said. “I pray for the salvation of those who are guilty and pray for some peace for those who have been hurt.

“It’s a full-time job.”

Honoring Fr Paul Wierichs CP , Chaplain for FBI at NY Office for his service during 9-11



VIDEO



On Fr Paul's Desk



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Office of the Director

Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

September 8, 2023

TO FBI 9/11 FIRST RESPONDERS

On behalf of all FBI employees, I want to thank you for your selflessness and service on one of the darkest days in this nation's history. In the purest expression of service over self, you ran towards danger in the midst of chaos and uncertainty in an effort to rescue as many as you could. And you did it not because you knew the victims—many if not most were strangers—but because you knew they needed help. Your quick actions and your courage amidst such tragedy exceeded all expectations, and it is my somber privilege to acknowledge the heroic role you played on September 11, 2001.


You gave your all at a time when you were needed most, asking for nothing in return. With your service, you demonstrated your commitment to protecting the American people and your dedication to the FBI mission. That commitment and dedication have endured far beyond that fateful day, and the lasting effects of your service are still felt, as the world continues to recognize and understand the full extent of the sacrifices you made as first responders.

We have lost too many friends and colleagues to 9/11-related illnesses, and there is no gesture that can ease the loss you bear or fully express our nation's gratitude for your heroic actions on that day. But on behalf of all FBI employees, and with a desire to commemorate your unwavering courage, I am pleased to present you with a lapel pin. The eagle's embrace represents the strength and support you provided on that day 22 years ago. The protective shield bears the sites impacted by the attacks—the Twin Towers, Pentagon, and Pennsylvania keystone. The gold symbolizes your valuable service, and the blue represents the justice that all Bureau employees pursue. Finally, the scroll displays the FBI motto, with "bravery" cradling the Twin Towers. This is intended to be a reflection of you—the men and women who, even in the face of danger and uncertainty, held themselves to the highest standards of fidelity, bravery, and integrity.

As a highly regarded member of the Bureau family, your commitment to countering the global threat of terrorism will not be forgotten. You have served the FBI and your country dutifully, and I hope you wear this pin in honor of the legacies of those employees who have gone before us, and in recognition of your own dedicated service. To reflect my gratitude for your outstanding contribution to the people of the United States, I will wear it in your honor and in tribute to your lasting impact. Know that to the FBI Family, to this country, and to the world, you will always be a hero.



Sincerely yours,



Christopher A. Wray
Director

We Stood Together on September 11

By Father Paul Wierichs, C.P. 2013

Everyone remembers, and will probably always remember, exactly where they were and what they were doing on Tuesday, September 11, 2001.

I was chaplain for the FBI's New York office. After returning to my office after my morning run, but before I got to my desk, all of my phones began ringing – my beeper, my private line, my business phone – all ringing simultaneously. All were people alerting me to the horrific events that had begun to unfold, starting with a plane crashing into one of the World Trade Center towers.

Traveling into New York City I was struck by the number of New York firemen and police being called back to work. Before I entered into the Queens Midtown tunnel, I stopped for a moment and looked over in the direction of the World Trade Center and saw nothing but billowing smoke. As I rushed into the FBI's New York office, close to the World Trade Center, the office was frantic – faces were grim – something I had never seen in this office. Nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to see in person at Ground Zero: the dust that permeated the air, the acid smell, the carnage, workers putting their own lives at risk to find survivors. I had lived in a monastery while many of my generation served in Vietnam. I could never truly appreciate the horror they went through. When I talked to people at Ground Zero who had served in Vietnam, they said this was more horrific.

During the first couple of days, standing there with my FBI raid jacket with "chaplain" on the back, I was overwhelmed by the number of firemen, policemen and other rescue people who came up to me saying, "Chaplain, may I speak to you for a moment?" I heard more confessions in two weeks than I had in years.

As a Passionist, I am called to preach the passion of Jesus. For me that means entering into the passion of people's lives, particularly when they are called to carry a cross. We offer them hope, consolation, and love. I am honored that I was able to be part of heroic people's lives. Looking into the eyes of everyone around I saw an inner wound to the soul itself. God was also present in those eyes, giving us all the strength we needed to go that extra mile.

Most law enforcement and emergency workers do not express emotion. This was not the case that day. I was standing inside the American Express building when six firemen brought out the body of one of their own. I said, "Let me offer a prayer." The lieutenant called them to attention, hats off, and brought those men but also myself to tears.

What struck me about the heroism of firemen, policemen, and rescue workers was their total dedication to the task at hand. When people were running out of harm's way firemen were running towards the crisis, risking their own lives to help others who needed assistance.

Their unyielding hope in looking for survivors amid all the tons of rubble, dust, glass and steel for more than two weeks showed the true character of each of them. Their outpouring of generosity reflected the outpouring of generosity from all people of all faiths, with their prayers and donations. People came together in unity that day. We can all remember where we were on 9/11, because we were all together.

Father Paul Wierichs, C.P. is director of Our Lady of Florida Spiritual Center in North Palm Beach, Florida.

Passionist Family Formation e-Learning 2023-2024

Holy Cross and St. Paul of the Cross Provinces



NOVEMBER PRESENTATION & REGISTRATION

November 2023

Holy Cross and St. Paul of the Cross Provinces will offer the third of six presentations for our Passionist Family Formation e-Learning (PFFeL). **Dealing with Difference in a Polarized Country and Church** November 9, 2023

Paul J. Wadell taught for many years at Catholic Theological Union. His principal areas of scholarly interest include virtue, ethics, the role of friendship in the moral life, and theological and ethical dimensions of vocation. Wadell earned a B.A. in English from Bellarmine College in Louisville, a M.Div. and M.A. in theology from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and a Ph.D. in theology from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. He retired in 2021 as Professor of Theology and Religious Studies, St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wisconsin.

November 9, 2023	Dealing with Difference in a Polarized Country and Church
	Paul Wadell - Retired Professor of Religious Studies, St. Norbert College
January 11, 2024	The Gift and Grace of God's Compassion
February 15, 2024	If You Want Peace, Work for Justice (3rd Thursday of February) Michael Nasello - Director of Passionist Solidarity Network
March 14, 2024	Keeping Memory of the Passion of Jesus Robin Ryan, C.P. - Professor of Theology (CTU)

Sessions are on second Thursday (except February) of the month and scheduled as follows:

7:30 -9:00 PM Eastern Time 5:30 -7:00 PM Mountain Time

6:30 -8:00 PM Central Time 4:30 -6:00 PM Pacific Time

REGISTRATION


Use this link to register for this series: <https://passionistshcp.wildapricot.org/event-5348404>


You will need to be registered (one time only) to receive a Zoom link for each live presentation.


Seminars on the Passion


The recent Seminar on *'Contemplating the Passion'* featuring video presentations by various speakers – Passionist and Lay members - from the Northern European Configuration


[VIDEOS](#)


- 


1 **Opening Address with Fr Robin Ryan CP | Contemplating the Passion, September 2023**
Passionist Life • 299 views • Streamed 3 days ago
- 


2 **'St Paul of the Cross' with Gregor Lenzen CP | Contemplating the Passion, September 2023**
Passionist Life • 94 views • Streamed 2 days ago
- 


3 **'Blessed Dominic Barberi' with Paul Francis Spencer CP | Contemplating the Passion, September 2023**
Passionist Life • 112 views • Streamed 2 days ago
- 


4 **'The Polish Servant of God, Bernard Kryszkiewicz' with Lukasz Andrzejewski CP**
Passionist Life • 75 views • Streamed 2 days ago
- 


5 **'Thomas Aquinas on contemplating and preaching the Passion' with Mark-Robin Hoogland CP**
Passionist Life • 91 views • Streamed 1 day ago
- 

6 **'The Passion of Christ in the northern mystical tradition', with Rik Van Nieuwenhove (Durham Uni)**
Passionist Life • 55 views • Streamed 1 day ago
- 

7 **'Living the Passionist charism', with Lay Passionist groups**
Passionist Life • 128 views • Streamed 1 day ago
- 

8 **'Training people to be Passion Prayer Guides' with Patricia Carroll | Contemplating the Passion 2023**
Passionist Life • 48 views • Streamed 20 hours ago
- 

9 **'Experiences of Passionist Prayer' with Patricia Carroll | Contemplating the Passion, September 2023**
Passionist Life • 38 views • Streamed 18 hours ago
- 

10 **'Praying the Scriptures of the Passion' with Sean Goan | Contemplating the Passion, September 2023**
Passionist Life • 52 views • Streamed 14 hours ago
- 

11 **'Keeping the Memory of the Passion – Contemplation and Mission', with James Sweeney CP**
Passionist Life • 1 waiting • Scheduled for 9/29/23, 4:30 AM

**WALKING TOGETHER AND COLLABORATING WITH SHARED GIFTS TO KEEP ALIVE THE MEMORY OF THE PASSION OF
JESUS CHRIST**

FR. JOACHIM REGO, C.P. SUPERIOR GENERAL

My dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends in the Passionist Family,

I send you greetings, good wishes, and prayers as we commemorate and celebrate today the feast of our Holy Founder: St Paul of the Cross. Happy feast day! With you, I ask his blessings and prayers to inspire the Passionist Family in our call to follow (BE WITH) Jesus - crucified and risen, and in our mission to BE instruments of God's mercy and compassion to the 'crucified' of our world (BE FOR), according to the gifts and vocation (state in life) of each member of this family.

As you are aware, while we members of the Passionist Family are celebrating the feast of St Paul of the Cross today, the first assembly of the two-part **Synod on Synodality** is currently in session here in Rome. This historic event in the life of the Church is significant for our Passionist Family, for we, too, are members of the People of God, and as Pope Francis who has pioneered this reformation says, "*synodality is the path which God expects of the Church of the third millennium because it is a constitutive element of the Church.*" This is authoritative and not optional. As Passionists, we are obliged by our vow to obey this direction from the supreme Pontiff, who is the highest Superior of our Congregation (Const. 24). Synodality questions and challenges the '**style**' of being church as we have known it in our lifetime and invites us to discern together what God expects now, but always as a response to a **contemplative listening** and to the grace of **conversion** of mind and heart. I exhort and encourage the participation and "*walking together*" of our Passionist Family in this evolving synodal journey, especially through **prayer** and **listening to the Holy Spirit**, as Pope Francis encourages us:

Walk together. Question together. Take responsibility together for community discernment, which for us is prayer, as the first Apostles did. This is synodality, which we would like to make a daily habit in all its expressions. [1](#)

We must never forget, however, and need to always keep before our attention that our Congregation and its mission is not separate, or exempt, from the life and mission of the Universal Church. We are not an "alternative church". On the contrary, our Congregation exists by the legitimate approval of the Church to contribute to its mission of evangelization through the lens of our unique charism: *the **memoria passionis***. As is stated in our Constitutions #2:

Recognizing in Saint Paul of the Cross the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church with her supreme authority approved our Congregation [and its Rule] and entrusted us with a mission: to preach the Gospel of the Passion by our life and apostolate.

In Constitutions #6 we are reminded that by our consecration through a special vow to the Passion of Jesus "*our Congregation takes her place in the Church so as to dedicate herself fully to its mission.*"

And finally, in Constitutions #62:

To our own Congregation, the Church has entrusted a special share of her apostolate. She urges us to keep constantly alive in the hearts of the faithful the memory of the Passion, in which the love of our Saviour is so eminently expressed; and she looks to us by our apostolic labours to render more and more fruitful that redemptive love.

With this backdrop, I wish in this circular letter to share with you some thoughts for reflection on the growing relationship and collaboration of the consecrated religious (the vowed/professed Passionist) and lay members of the Passionist Family, and their mutual engagement in the apostolates of the Congregation today which I have been inspired to see in action and hear about in many parts of the world. This joint relationship and collaboration between consecrated religious and laity is an emerging awareness and phenomenon in all religious congregations and is happening 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 Church;
- 2) on the level of being involved in the **mission** and **apostolates** of the congregation - which is an integral part and responsibility of all the baptized in the evangelizing mission of the Church.

In his message to the 44th General Chapter of the Congregation in 2000, Pope St John Paul II wrote:

In your Chapter work you have reserved special time for reflection on sharing your Passionist charism with the laity. This is "one of the fruits of the teaching on the Church as communion", which has grown in recent times and is "a new chapter, rich in hope, in the history of relations between consecrated persons and the laity" (Vita consecrata, n. 54). It represents a sign of growing ecclesial vitality which should be welcomed and developed. I fervently hope that those whom the Holy Spirit calls to draw from the same sources of your charismatic spring can find in you brothers and, especially, guides who can not only share your charism with them, but, above all, form them in an authentic Passionist spirituality.

The Holy Cross Province (CRUC) in the western United States has expressed it in this way:

For some time now, we Passionists have recognized that the charism, the spirituality, of St. Paul of the Cross, which is the spirituality of the Passion of Jesus, is not something we "own" or control. It is a gift from God that is open to all of God's people, whether they are lay, vowed, or ordained. This was explicitly stated in the Passionist General Chapter of 1994: "Our charism is a great gift. Our vocation to keep alive the memory of the Passion of Jesus does not only belong to our Congregation or to our communities; it is open to all those human beings who are moved by the action of the Holy Spirit. We accept the call to live in communion with so many men and women who witness to its relevance and vitality."

The collaboration between lay and consecrated religious of our charismatic family is to be encouraged by our promotion and it will continue to develop with our sense of welcome and committed nurturing. However, it must be grounded in synodality (journeying together) and rooted in the ecclesiology issuing from the Second Vatican Council document '*Lumen Gentium*', which teaches that **all the baptized** are the People of God, are part of the Body of Christ, and belong to the Community of Disciples. The Venezuelan lay theologian Rafael Luciani reflects:

*[Synodality] is a **constitutive** dimension that qualifies **ecclesiality** and defines a **new way of proceeding** that provides a **form** to the Church as **People of God**, an "**ecclesial we**" where all subjects from the Pope to the Laity, are equals and articulated in a **communion of faithful** with the same responsibility in regards to the identity, vocation and the mission of the Church.*

As such, **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. There is need for consecrated religious (and clergy) when dealing with the question of lay participation, to make a paradigm shift from viewing them as mere *collaborators*, to recognize them as **co-responsible** for the Church's being and action. As Sr. Gill Goulding, CJ a professor of systematic theology and spirituality said recently: "*It is important that lay life, religious life and the priesthood are all seen as complementary as a reciprocity of service.*" In this, the laity must also take ownership of their baptismal responsibility and live out their rightful role in the Church for which they do not need any permission.

In a meeting with members of the Italian Bishops' Conference on 25 May 2023, Pope Francis spoke the following strong words which can equally apply to the members of the Passionist Charismatic Family:

Every baptized person is called to actively participate in the life and in the mission of the church, starting from the specifics of one's own vocation, in relationship with others and with the charisms given by the Spirit for the good of all. We need Christian communities in which space is enlarged, where everyone can feel at home, where pastoral structures and means foster not the creation of small groups, but the joy of being and feeling co-responsible.... A church weighed down by structures, bureaucracy and formalism will struggle to walk in history at the pace of the Spirit, meeting men and women of our time.

There are a variety of groups, and some lay institutes, associated with the Passionist Charismatic Family which exist in the different parts of the Passionist world. These have emerged because of their personal spiritual 'drawing' to the Passion and Cross of Jesus, their discovery of and attraction to the charism and spirituality of St Paul of the Cross, their association and relationship with the Passionist Congregation, and their involvement with and mission to the "crucified" in their society. These groups also include other religious congregations, especially of the Nuns founded by St Paul of the Cross and various groups of Sisters co-founded or influenced by Passionists. While these groups may have different names, foundations, and forms, they are all committed, according to their particular state in life and contexts, *to keep alive and promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus as the greatest sign of God's love for all.*

Some time ago, I received a letter from a group called the 'Passionist Companions' in Dublin, Ireland. These are lay people who, after participating in a Passionist formation Institute in 2006, felt drawn and attracted by the Passionist charism. They wrote:

*Our inspiration to gather as Companions comes from the General Chapter of 2000 and the statement: 'The Passionist charism, like life itself, is a gift for which we are eternally grateful; and one that we may not dispose of as though it were our own personal property. Those who wish to stand with us at the foot of the Cross, to contemplate the love of God and then proclaim its saving power, can rightly be called "Passionist", whether they are men, women, or children.' When we first heard this in 2006 at the Institute, it resonated deeply with us; it touched something that we felt, but to that point, had been unable to describe in words. That statement continues to resonate today. We always 'felt' that we were Passionists. However, our calling has been to live our lives as lay persons, some married, some single, others once married but either now, sadly, widowed or separated. The 2000 statement assured us that it is more than just 'feeling' that we are Passionists; we **are** Passionists.*

I was deeply moved by the conviction, identification, and sense of belonging to the Passionist Family which they expressed. The letter goes on to explain 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, and not just because of the decline or diminishment of consecrated Passionist religious in the Province....

...we believe, without doubt, that there is no place to talk about growing older, less able, dying out, etc. as long as the Companions are about. It is our wish; indeed, it is who we are, that we want to live out the charism of the Passionists and St Paul of the Cross in the lives that we live and if we are faithful to that, then it is only the case that there is a greater dependence on different messengers today when others are not as capable.

For most of our 300 years history as a Congregation, the focus of Passionist life and mission has been very much on those 'professed' (vowed) men and women who have embraced the consecrated religious life within the Congregation. While it is true that the prime responsibility for the Institute and its charismatic mission is entrusted by the Church to those who follow the way of the consecrated life, yet we cannot ignore the facts gleaned from our Congregation's history, and from our own experience, that there have been countless others (lay, religious and ordained) who, through the gift of the Spirit, and/or through their connection with members and works of the Congregation, have borne charismatic testimony to the Passion of Jesus, with some even feeling and identifying themselves as 'Passionists'. Surely, these, too, can be considered today as the "companions" which St Paul of the Cross desired to gather? Needed, however, is a sense of belonging to and identification with the Institute which has a duty to arrange for them appropriate **formation and support** which will nurture and deepen in them the Spirit's call and empower them to be **co-responsible** for mission in accordance with the Institute's vision. In the spirit of synodality, this must be done in a process of **mutuality** with an openness to discerning together the path being opened for us by the Holy Spirit.

I believe a **new way of being Passionists** is being imagined and emerging with the engagement and collaboration of the laity in the life and mission of the Congregation. Respecting the particular vocation and chosen state in life of every individual, the pathway of **synodality** is the way forward requiring respect, trust, and humility. It is the *mode of being* of a church/congregation which wants to go out in mission. Synodality is essentially missionary. 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 let go of our fears, prejudices and narrow-mindedness, and open ourselves

