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ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS BIOGRAPHY

(1694-1775)

by
ELMER SCHEPERS
Passionist Oblate

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INTRODUCTORY WORD

In an excerpt from St Paul's letter to the Romans, Chapter 5, he says "...let us exult, too, in our hardships, understanding that hardship develops perseverance, and perseverance develops character.

St Paul of the Cross had more than his share of hardships. It is no wonder then that he developed such perseverance and character.

It wasn't until toward the end of his life that people understood his character. Once they realized how much character he did possess, everyone rushed to be part of his life.

Before we proceed, though, we need to know something about the period during which he lived and worked which contributed to his trials. Several movements were prevalent before and during his life which presented numerous problems for the Church and all Christians.

In the early 1700's, The Age of Reason, or the Age of Enlightenment, reared its ugly head. It began in France, eventually entering England, and in a limited way took hold in Italy. This period is known as "The Century of Enlightenment. The French Revolution was in preparation during St Paul of the Cross' life, although it didn't actually occur until twelve years following his death. (1787)

New attention was given to "nature" and to man. "Reason" was the outstanding element of the 1700's. Their concepts of "nature" and "reason" were that man must see with his own eyes, and examine with his own mind in order to arrive at critically founded judgments. In other words, it established reason as a critical act, as the principle and supreme value of people.

From this, man acquired absolute value and was considered the binding norm for all knowledge and action. Reason was accepted as the sole test of truth and prevailed over all other values.

Anyone who proclaimed himself the herald of this new science became the true "scholar", the "philosopher".

All this influenced political, social and economic ideas. They believed that help of Divine Revelation was not necessary for a person's well being. They sought a new image for man and woman, free from all constraints, even help from above.

These ideas provided a basis for the controversies over the rights, privileges and immunities of the Church and its temporal structures.

There also appeared a science of natural law, as opposed to Divine law, which was conceived as an untouchable hierarchic social order with its social classes; monarchs, nobles, clergy and then people. This gave rise to a heretical basis for the powers of the monarch and the absolute state.

The whole period was subject to the problem of reform by the governors of the Enlightenment who one sidedly commanded what was to be done in the formation of the clergy, in liturgy and in catechesis. But generally the Bishops were loyal to Rome.

All of this created much laxity in religion and away from the need for God. Clergy became very lax, more aware of worldly affairs, not dedicated to the affairs of the people and the parish. "Reason" followers of the Enlightenment held them in ridicule. Pastoral work of Bishops became more difficult. Relations between Bishops and Popes constituted doctrinal and pastoral problems. Under Pope Benedict XIII, St Paul of the Cross insisted on reforming the priesthood.

People became lax, to the extent even that attending Sunday Mass was not always upheld. Life was not always what it should be in the Convents.

People sought ways to avoid the Cross of Jesus. From the triumph of Rationalism, there remained less and less room for what they referred to as "the folly of the Cross".

Contrasted with this attitude, St Paul of the Cross never wanted to see anything but the Cross. He was convinced that he was called by God to contribute towards the betterment of ecclesiastics and the people.

Paul fought the prevalent attitude in his preaching and way of life, when he proclaimed that Christ, Crucified and Risen, is the only successful fulfilled person.

Thus God is the measure for the meaning and destiny of the human person. The Crucified One challenges all human attempts to form models for humankind.

There are many stories of Passionist journeys, but this one is about St Paul of the Cross and the founding of the Passionists, which can be said is synonymous.

Much more than what I will present can be told. This is only a drop in the bucket. I just hope you will derive some benefit from what I have to tell.

Elmer Schepers
Passionist Oblate

CHAPTER 1

Family and Childhood

Born, Paul Francis Daneo, January 3, 1694 at Ovada in Northern Italy.

The second child of 16 children born to Luke and Anna Maria Daneo. But the eldest of only six children who survived infancy. (10 died)

Paul's mother said that a mysterious light, brighter than daybreak, illuminated the room at his birth. A sign for his future, possibly. He was Baptized on Jan 6, Feast of the Epiphany. But he was not confirmed until he was 25 years old; which was common in those days

His father, Luke Daneo, was born at Castellazzo. He was a man of deep faith, highest integrity, and purity of conscience. He never gave anyone cause for displeasure or complaint. Luke had a brother and uncle who were priests. The Pope was always his spiritual and temporal leader; Paul inherited this quality from his father, Luke.

Luke operated a dry goods store; including the sale of tobacco products. Because the income from his business was not sufficient to provide for his family's needs, they suffered through some difficult times - economically. Because of this, the family was forced to move frequently, looking for better opportunities. Finally, they settled in Castellazzo in 1718.

When Paul was about 10 or 12 yrs. old, he and his brother John Baptist were called upon to help in their father's business; including making business trips to other towns. This was a valuable learning experience for the two, and I'm certain laid some groundwork in teaching Paul how to deal with establishing and operating his monasteries in the future.

Paul always felt a deep and loyal obligation to help his family; so much so that he delayed any of his future plans until he was 27 yrs. old, and then only until he was convinced his family could spare him.

When Paul was about 15 yrs. old (1709), Luke was unjustly implicated, and even jailed, for an alleged customs violation on the sale of tobacco products. Of course he was cleared and quickly released. However, this did cause some disgrace for the family.

In July, 1727, only 3 months after Paul and John Baptist were ordained to the priesthood, Luke died, resulting from a fall caused by his neighbor. In testimony to Luke's character, on his deathbed, he advised his children to forgive the man who caused it.

Paul's mother, Anna Maria, was a woman full of faith; meek and humble and very devout. Never a complaint; very patient; traits she passed along to her children, especially Paul.

Anna Maria was blessed with a deep devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ; meditating on the Passion of Christ every day. So her children, especially Paul and John Baptist, were given an early introduction to the Passion of Jesus Christ. It is understandable that the Passion of Christ dominated Paul's spirituality.

It didn't hurt either that she wasted no opportunity to admonish Paul, in order to stimulate him to virtue, by pointing out the sufferings of Christ.

Two examples:

- (1) In times of pain or discomfort, she would show Paul the crucifix (which I'm sure was always handy and available) and say: ***"See how much he has suffered for you."***
- (2) Or, when she would try to unravel his curly hair (and Paul probably crying about it), would point to the crucifix and say: ***"See the crown of thorns on his head?"***

Anna Maria read the lives of the saints to her children, and in order to get them to sleep, she would make them into lullabies. (In particular, the desert saints.) From these stories Paul learned the value of solitude, and came to crave a life of solitude.

The Passion of Jesus in particular, fascinated him and filled him with amazement. This was his motivation to bear pain (and bear pain he did.)

Paul himself tells us; ***"From this I conceived a great desire to belong wholly to God, and I remembered it."***

We don't know much (or anything) about Anna Maria's education, but it is evident that her teaching method, which came from her own spirituality, had a profound formative effect on Paul and exerted a tremendous influence on his

young life and also on his future. It is no wonder that her neighbors called her a saint.

After his father's death in 1727, Paul and John Baptist went home from Rome and spent two months with their mother. We can only imagine the joy and pride she must have felt being with her two priest-sons. Conversely, we can't know her sorrow when they had to return to Rome. She must have realized that she would never see them again. Sure enough, they never saw their mother again; she died Sept 10, 1746; 19 yrs after Luke died. They did not attend her funeral; they were on missions.

Paul's Parents were very loving and caring parents who watched over their children with God in mind at all times. They instilled in them a deep faith in God and a great love of Jesus Crucified; uprightness of life; concern and care for the poor. They were rich in virtue, more than money. Their way of life was the foundation for Paul's own spirituality and personal development.

During this period of history, faith had a great influence over family life and the connection between life and death. And thanks to his parents, piety and devotion to Jesus Christ came early to Paul and John Baptist. His parents were devoted to help the poor, a virtue Paul would practice to a heroic degree.

Paul was especially close to John Baptist, who was 15 months younger than Paul. He shared many of Paul's ideals, and was his life-long companion.

Three of the six surviving children became priests. None of the Daneo children ever married; so this branch at least, of the Daneo family would die out physically. But we can be proud to be a part of his spiritual descendants, which populate the world.

Paul's Life Experiences

Between the ages of five and fifteen, Paul lived through nine of his sibling's deaths. The experiences of seeing cribs, and then coffins so close is bound to have a dramatic influence on one's life. Paul learned several important lessons about life, in particular; the reality of death and the uncertainty of life. He developed a deep sense of seriousness and he appreciated the preciousness of life. (Why not, he was one of the blessed ones who survived.) Due to these death experiences, he had a sense of life rooted in God and eternal life.

With so many children in the household, there was no room for selfishness and sharing was imperative. As we progress through his life, we will witness his boundless charity.

Schooling

We know very little about Paul's early education. Formal and systematic education, as we know it, was non-existent. It was arranged privately and was not for everyone.

His first schooling came from his parents; working in his father's business- his mother taught him catechism, as well as the stories she would read to the children - not forgetting the life and death experiences already mentioned

He received some education, on a more or less regular basis, from the Carmelites at Cremolia, and the Dominicans at Ovada.

Paul was sent to Genoa on business trips. It was while he was there that his father sent money for tuition to a seminary; so it is assumed that he attended it for a short time when he was 13 or 14 yrs old. Somewhere, and from someone, he learned Latin, and he learned it very well.

There were several monasteries in the area, and priests would teach anyone who wanted to learn and had the time to devote to study. As noted earlier, there were priests in his father's family and it would seem likely he received some education from them. What is known though, is that Paul was a good student, dedicated to learning; he was a quick learner, and possessed a marvelous memory.

Paul's Early Spirituality

When Paul and John Baptist were very young, they would go to the attic of their home, and what they referred to as their "desert cave", where they would pray and perform many acts of penance (some of them very extraordinary).

From the time Paul was eight yrs old, he would get up during the middle of the night to pray for three hours. Paul had a special gift for prayer. It seems like Paul was among the pre-destined. No one is born a saint; God creates saints. but sometimes his destiny appears even at birth. (Remember the mysterious light at Paul's birth)

The marvels of grace begin early in a receptive soul and he certainly was receptive to the graces with which God blessed him. He performed many acts of piety. God was constantly at the center of his life. While other boys played, Paul prayed.

Paul lived at a time when the theory and practice of the liturgy was appalling. In spite of this, his only interests were --to go to church as often as possible (Paul was even allowed to receive Holy Communion daily, a practice un-heard of in those days) --to assist priests in singing the divine praises in choir --to learn ecclesiastical ceremonies --serve at Mass whenever he could --to help at Mass, however they would allow him. It was always said that if you wanted to find Paul, you just need to go to Church. (**NOTE:** Paul was disturbed by the laxity of the Religious, and constantly tried to rectify the practices.)

The first nineteen years of Paul's life were not filled with a lot of excitement, or drama, or adventure, in the sense we might think of it, or expect. But Paul's excitement was having God at the center of his life every moment. Important to Paul too, was his obligation to his family.

CHAPTER 2

It took Paul about seven years, (from age 20 to 27) and several very important formative experiences to understand what God was calling him to do.

First Formative Experience - 1714

His first formative experience occurred when Paul was about 20 yrs old. He heard a sermon by the parish priest, possibly on the Gospel text: *"Go, sell all you have and come follow me."* The sermon moved him deeply. In a sudden illumination, a never-before-experienced interior light, which nearly blinded him he acquired an indescribable knowledge of the unspeakable reality of God. He perceived God as a Person whose all powerful greatness hovers over him and loves him personally. He experienced God as "his" God, infinitely great, while he himself was very insignificant. He viewed his own life as unworthy of God. He saw his own wretchedness and viewed his own life as unworthy of God, painfully aware of his own nothingness in the presence of God's allness. In this light he proposed to give himself up to a 'holy and perfect life'; to consecrate himself wholly to the service of God.

Paul thought of himself as a great sinner, and immediately made a general confession, with deep contrition for his faults. He felt God as his "Supreme Good", the "Infinite Good", not as an abstraction of a distant being, but as the mystery of a person deeply within him to whom he felt totally bound. His adherence to God was no longer an intellectual act, but a living in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. He called this his "conversion", a turning point in his life. This spiritual conversion was a true and lasting interior transformation, and it initiated him into the mystical life and the grace of enlightenment by which God was to manifest His Will regarding the congregation.

Paul suffered many temptations during this period, particularly, against faith; the existence of God and of God's attributes. To counter these temptations, Paul pushed the spirit of mortification to a heroic degree. Some of the lesser penances were; sleeping on the floor of his "desert cave", using bricks as pillows. Instead of wine, he drank gall and vinegar. One time he ate some sour grapes; later during mental prayer, he was so remorseful for his greediness, he made a vow to abstain from all superfluous foods and only eat food that was strictly necessary. All the time he continued working for his father.

Second Formative Experience

On Dec 8, 1714, The Turks invaded and declared war on the Republic of Venice and the Christian west. The Pope considered this a war against Christianity and therefore, called for a crusade in order to help the Christian princes of Venice. - Still full of zeal from his previous interior illumination experience, Paul thought he heard the call of God, so, in 1715, at age 21, he joined the crusade; he thought that this might be a good way of giving himself to God. Paul saw this crusade as a way to shed his blood in defense of his faith and for all who believed in Christ. Since it was a war for the faith, he saw the crusade as a way to martyrdom.

In February, 1716, while he was on his way to the front lines he stopped at a Church in Crema and prayed before the Blessed Sacrament (which was being exposed during 40-hours devotion). During intense prayer, an inner voice assured him that God was not calling him to a bloody battle in warfare, but to spiritual warfare. Being an unpaid volunteer, it was not difficult to receive a discharge, and he was on his way home.

On his way home he stopped at Novello, where he helped an aging, childless couple until the end of 1716. What is noteworthy here is that the couple offered to make him their heir, but he rejected the opportunity for wealth. (First rejection for wealth)

After a year or so, sometime in 1718, he returned to his family in Castellazzo. His family was doing better now and this released Paul to pursue his life of prayer and penance more vigorously, detaching himself even further from earthly things. Paul wasn't sure what God wanted from him; but he knew that God would provide the answer in His own time. He was still obsessed with the notion that he was needed at home and stayed home for another four years.

Third Formative Experience

His third formative experience was a series of interior inspirations (signs of God's Will) occurring over a period of 2 1/2 years or so.

Paul was sent on business trips to Genoa and often times stopped to pray at the small chapel of Our Lady on the solitary heights of Gazzo. During one of these visits, Paul felt drawn by a love of solitude. He returned there every chance he had, and the desire for solitude became more intense.

A Mosaic is beginning to appear. Paul consecrates himself to lead a "holy and perfect life" and now he has this intense desire for solitude. In another inspiration he had this idea to wear a poor black tunic; go barefoot; and live in radical poverty(fasting).In short, to lead a penitential life. Later, this understanding would enter the spirituality of the Congregation; "The spirit of the Congregation is one of solitude and penance", per Paul.

In order to accomplish this, Paul understood that he must retire from the world - somewhere. Only an existing monastery or hermitage would do for the type of life being born within him. But he did not want it to be one of the existing monasteries at Castellazzo, or Ovada, or Cremolino. Now he needed a suitable way of freeing himself from his family.

He intensified his life of prayer and penance; knowing that he had to obey the Will of God. In 1718, at age 24, there was an intervention of Our Lady (dressed in black); an interior vision, not sensible, which filled him with joy and certainty. It was an inspiration to gather companions, and that the companions he would gather must live a life centered on the Passion of Jesus Christ, and they must dress this way. Now he had a new worry; how was he expected to do this.

As time went by, he had another inspiration; to gather companions who would live together and promote the holy fear of God in people. From this he knew that he was not to enter an existing monastery. But what? He wasn't sure, but he could wait until God would reveal it to him.

The Test

Paul was 24 yrs old, handsome, with a good job; enough to attract the young ladies, right? But Paul's thoughts were on other things, and he wasn't interested in marriage; he had his own ideas about his life (and God did too).

Paul's uncle, Fr Christopher, had inherited the Daneo patrimony, interested only in maintaining the Daneo name; he wasn't interested in spiritual descendants. He concocted a plan for Paul; since Paul laws the eldest male in the family, Fr. Christopher promised the inheritance to him on the condition that he must marry this beautiful, young, rich girl he had selected for Paul. (He even arranged a meeting between them.) (Sounds like a perfect set-up.) But Paul remained faithful to the vow of chastity he had made and refused to marry; thereby renouncing his inheritance; instead, it went to the other brothers. He asked only for a breviary, and this in the name of charity. As mentioned

previously, none of the Daneo children ever married. (NOTE: This was the second time Paul renounced the opportunity for wealth.)

It was somewhere around this time that Paul was confirmed on April 23, 1719. Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation certainly was a special day for Paul. He had already volunteered for Crusade back in 1716; now he became a soldier for Christ.

Undoubtedly, Paul spent a great deal of time trying to discern what God wanted him to do. He was being pulled by conflicting needs. He knew his family needed him at home, or so he thought; yet how could he ignore or doubt these interior movements/inspirations which were becoming clearer to him.

So what was Paul doing during this time?

PRAYER:

Paul was devoting up to ten (10) hours per day in prayer; much of this time being spent in the attic, "desert cave", of his home, performing many acts of penance (copying those of the desert saints).

CHARITY:

Paul regularly visited the sick.

Despite his own self-imposed poverty, the poor were never turned away by Paul.

Gave alms-he would give his clothes to the needy; sometimes returning home without some of his own clothing. (his parents didn't object too strenuously, because they too were extremely generous to the poor)

(NOTEWORTHY ; Paul gave food and clothing to the 'poor", but he gave alms while he was on his knees. What a manifestation of true humility)

APOSTOLIC WORKS:

Paul's Apostolic work began at home; teaching his brothers and sisters how to meditate on the Passion of Christ.

Later, he joined an association of young men at St Anthony's Church at Castellazzo. (By the way he was elected "Prior")

On Sunday morning, he gave an exhortation to his fellow members

Sunday afternoon, he taught catechism to other children (and soon, adults would come to listen to him.)

Finally, he was invited to teach catechism in Church. (NOTE: A little later we will see how much he loved to preach.) Paul's words made a deep impression on the people and as a result, several people were led into a religious vocation.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION:

Paul was fortunate to have been guided by increasingly enlightened spiritual directors, as his soul continued to progress in God's intimate friendship. He sought out the more learned in order to know more about God.

He was placed under one spiritual director; but he quickly realized that Paul had already attained great heights of contemplation by himself. So, he was recommended to another director, Fr. Columban, who was better versed in the ways of mysticism. He helped Paul find nourishment in the works of the great mystics; but he lived 21 miles away, and this became inconvenient. So Paul placed himself under another spiritual director, Canon Cerruti, who lived only 5 miles away in Alessandria. He was a man of great learning and judgment.

Paul devoured the writings of St John of the Cross and in doing so, he was inspired to make two vows; **a.** to deprive his body of all superfluous satisfactions (food, etc) (as if he hadn't before), and **b.** he resolved to imitate Jesus Christ in all things. In particular, he studied the works of St Francis de Sales, who inspired him in writing his Rule.

Paul was nourished and reassured by the study of the great masters of the spiritual life, and Ascetical and Mystical spirituality. He studied a treatise, "Introduction To The Devout Life" which taught him the elements of Asceticism, and another, "The Treatise On The Love Of God", to learn the elements of Mysticism. So that by age of 24, he had a profound understanding of Ascetical and Mystical theology.

He studied the works of Theologians regarding Spiritual and Moral Theology and the direction of souls. Some of St Teresa of Avila's, "The Foundations" and, of course, Paul immersed himself in the study of Sacred Scripture (He loved the Bible). What a brilliant mind he possessed. (NOTE; If anyone was prepared to lead, it was St Paul of the Cross.) And lest we forget, Paul is still at home, helping his family.

Fourth Formative Experience

The last and decisive intervention happened in the summer of 1720. Paul had gone to Mass and Holy Communion. After praying for a long time, he entered a state of deep recollection. As he was walking home, he was raised up in God, oblivious of everything; as Paul tells us; "I was elevated by God to the deepest recollection with complete forgetfulness of all else, with great interior peace." In that moment, he saw himself, in spirit (not a corporal form) clothed in a long black garment that touched the ground with a white cross on his breast and below the Cross, the Holy Name of Jesus was written in white letters. At the same time, Paul says these words were spoken to him; "This is a sign to show how pure and stainless must be the heart that is to bear written upon it the most Holy Name of Jesus". His vision came to an end. (NOTE; It was the Passionist habit.)

The Final Part.

Later, Paul would confide to Fr John Mary that; *"He accepted and understood the presence of the Blessed Virgin, but did not see her with his bodily eyes"*. He said that this was the intervention of the Blessed Mother presenting him the holy tunic.

Paul united all his previous visions/inspirations; of solitude, poverty, penance, his desire to lead a holy and perfect life, and to gather companions; these would be symbolized by the "black tunic" and the "sign". The black tunic and the sign with the Cross of Jesus was very significant to Paul. To him it meant a religious institute and its particular spirituality. God gave him a more compelling desire to gather companions. Paul states; "It was after this God permanently infused into my soul the form of the holy Rule to be observed by the Poor of Jesus and me". To Paul this meant founding a new congregation, to be called the "Poor of Jesus", whose spirit and purpose would center on the Passion of Jesus.

All the parts of the mosaic are put in place:

1. Lead a holy and perfect life.
2. Live a life of solitude.
3. Wear a poor black tunic (black for mourning), go barefoot and live in radical poverty (live a penitential life).
4. Gather companions who would live together and promote the holy fear of God in all people
5. Final enlightenment; To be clothed in a long black garment that touched the ground, with a white

cross on his breast, under the cross, the Holy
Name of Jesus written in white letters.

Final Days At Home

Paul is 27 years old now. The invitation was loud and clear to him, and he was absolutely certain now what God was calling him to do. Without hesitation, and no one able to stop him, he charged ahead to follow the vocation he was called by God to fulfill.

Amid great sorrow, trials, depression, doubts, and temptations by the devil himself (the devil told Paul he was being deceived) and with Paul not knowing that the drama in his life was just beginning, Paul left his father's house forever. Paul is on his own now.

Paul left, but for fifty years he would be like a sailor on a rolling sea. One wave higher than the next. Faith alone gives assurance of God's fidelity, but it never says real life will be smooth. Paul's certainly was not smooth, but he endured it with much patience and perseverance.

CHAPTER 3

Historic Beginning of the Passionists

Paul was convinced that he was called by God for an extraordinary vocation.

Clothed by Bishop Gattinara:

Paul contacted Bishop Gattinara of Alessandria, who was his spiritual director and Related all his experiences and visions. The Bishop was very interested but not quite certain what it all meant. So, he referred Paul to a Fr. Columban of Genoa who was more knowledgeable and enlightened about these matters.

Fr. Columban was satisfied that Paul's claims were credible and sent Paul back to the Bishop. On Friday, Nov 22, 1720, the day after the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple, Bishop Gattinara clothed Paul in a simple black penitential hermit's tunic but without the sign of the Passionists. The Feast of the Presentation was on Thursday, but Paul, always mindful of the Passion of Jesus waited until Friday.

The tunic was made of either horse or goat hair; he put a heavy cord around his waist, with a cross, blessed by the Bishop, on his breast. (NOTE: This marks the historic beginning of the Passionists.)

The Bishop did not have jurisdiction or authority over founding a new order or to allow the gathering of companions. Since there were several monasteries in the area, he wasn't interested in the idea anyway. But he did allow Paul to live a life of penance in a solitary place amid great poverty in a small, cold , damp place, attached to the Church of St Charles at Castellazzo, with access to the Church

When Paul did sleep, which was only a few hours each night, he slept on the floor on a bed made of vine branches, spread out in a narrow trough wrapped only in a blanket, brought to him by his sister so he would not freeze to death.

He lived on bread and water, left there by his sister, or by a friend, in a basket outside the small window. Once, someone left an apple, but he didn't touch it. (A superfluous food, probably!)

Paul always went barefoot, and without a coat, hat or sandals. Some people admired him; but some pitied him. As might be expected for a young man who just left home, Paul's first days were filled with fear, depression and sadness

40-Day Retreat - 11-23-1720 to 1-01-1721

Nov 23, 1720, at Paul's request, he began a 40-day retreat in these quarters probably, to commemorate Christ's 40-day sojourn in the desert at the start of His public life. These 40-days were nothing but fasting, penance, and intense prayer to reflect and meditate about the mission God had revealed to him. After all, God placed a marvelous privilege on him, yet with a tremendous responsibility. He had to compose the Rule for his proposed institute. A Rule that had already been formulated in his mind by God or, at least, the substantial parts.

He spent part of his days and nights serving as sacristan, sweeping the Church, adorning the altars, reciting the office. His free hours were spent in mental prayer, writing the Rule for his proposed institute and keeping a Diary, as ordered by the Bishop. Paul spent the first nine days in intense prayer, as only he knew how.

Writing the Rule - Dec 2 to Dec 7, 1720

On the tenth day, Dec 2, 1720, he began writing the Rule for himself and for the companions Our Lady told him to gather. He said he wrote the Rule very rapidly, as if someone was dictating the words to him. The words were coming from his heart. Paul had never read the Rules of any other order - only the voice dictating to him. While he was writing the Rule, he had this urge to go to Rome; I assume he knew that the Rule and his Institute required the approval of Rome.

Six days later, on Dec 7th, he finished writing the Rule. The Rule consisted of the Preamble, which told of the mission he had received from God, twelve chapters, inspired by the life of St. Francis de Sales and his own attractions to solitude. The Rule had to be re-touched several times during Paul's life, but mostly, it was kept intact, especially, as to its substance, just as it had been dictated to him.

Paul wanted himself and the companions he was to gather to be called "The Poor of Jesus"

Paul's retreat, as well as the Diary he kept, ended on Jan 1, 1721.

Beginning of Paul's Ministry

On January 1, 1721, Paul took the Rule & Diary and presented them to Bishop Gattinara (Paul wastes no time.). The Bishop was kind to Paul and I assume, impressed. Again, he sent Paul to consult with and seek the opinion of Fr. Columban who was at Genoa. Genoa was about 36 miles away and it was in the coldest part of winter. But this did not deter Paul in the least, and without coat, hat or sandals, and not even bread to eat, he proceeded to Genoa. (NOTE: Some policemen came to his aid with food, or he may have starved to death. Paul never forgot this charitable deed and was always kind to policemen.)

Fr. Columban studied the Rule very carefully, then returned it to the Bishop declaring it to be truly holy and worthy to be sent to the Holy See for approval. Paul returned to the Bishop, who still refused to allow him to gather companions, and really, did not intervene for Paul.

Instead of being assigned to St Charles, the Bishop now sent Paul to St. Stephen's Chapel at Castellazzo to live as a hermit, and to be custodian at the Church. Disappointed, but forever obedient, he returns to his life of poverty, penance, solitude and prayer.

Apostolic Action

Bishop Gattinara held Paul in high esteem, and as a man of outstanding virtue. He urged Paul to devote himself to Apostolic Action/Work.

Paul got his first real taste for Apostolic work by teaching catechism to the children. He went through town, holding a crucifix in one hand, and while ringing a bell with the other, would shout out; "Come to catechism class in St Charles Church". Soon, children as well as adults, filled the Church to listen to him; he urged them to meditate on the Passion of Christ. Many were eager to learn of Jesus Crucified. He was overcome with emotion when he saw the number of people who attended. He dressed as a hermit, but was a layman

A carnival was being held in town and the local pastor asked Paul to delay his preaching until it was over. However, during mental prayer, God scolded him for this delay, and he immediately returned to his Apostolic work. (Paul's obedience)

The Bishop assigned Paul to preach from the pulpit. His first assignment was at St Charles church in Castellazzo. He was assigned to preach the sermons for the four Sundays preceding Lent, and to preach a Triduum during the carnival. Paul's practice, again, was to go through town with his crucifix and bell to encourage the people to come to church.

Paul would preach for two hours, and the people were so captivated by his fiery sermons that they would shout out; "We repent", and they would be reconciled right on the spot. Many people were converted. Since Paul was not a priest, he was unable to hear confessions. However, people came to him for counsel, and in this way, he prepared them for confession. There weren't enough priests to give absolution. Quite naturally, the carnival was cancelled.

At Easter, a mission was organized for a local village and Paul was asked to preach at it. He was asked to preach to the cloistered nuns there. (**NOTE:** Paul's renown was beginning to spread.)

Paul's Call To Preach

Paul had now discovered the "intoxicating" joy of the spoken word. He said it was exhilarating, invigorating. He became aware of the magnificent gift he received from God to communicate his convictions, and to make his soul enter the soul of the crowd. He said: "It now appears that it is the Will of God that I devote myself to this holy occupation". (**NOTE:** Slowly, but most assuredly, Paul arrives at his vocation.)

The Bishop continued being opposed to Paul gathering companions, and forming his own institute. However, John Baptist and three other young men followed him to St Stephen's church. They were anxious to live together in a new venture. They looked to Paul as their leader. Perhaps, in a way, this was his "foundation", but certainly not in any official sense.

CHAPTER 5

First Meeting With The Pope

Encouraged by Bishop Cavallieri, and with his letters of recommendation in hand, Paul and John Baptist go to Rome , in the spring of the 1725 Jubilee Year to gain the Jubilee Year indulgence and hoping to see the Pope, with the expectation that he would approve the Rule and the proposed Institute.

Upon their arrival, their piety and attire attracted the attention of a Msgr. (Bishop) Creszenzi, a Canon at St Peter's, who just happened to pass by. He asked them where they were from and what their plans were. Paul had a way of winning hearts with his polite and affable manner. Msgr. Creszenzi was won over, and promised to help them in their endeavor. Msgr. Creszenzi, in turn, introduced them to a Cardinal Corrandini, a key figure in the Papal Curia, and who desired Church renewal for clergy and religious. He was similarly impressed and he, too, promised to help them. The two became their important contacts and support in Rome.

After, I'm certain, having his ears bent pretty hard by Paul, Cardinal Corrandini arranged a meeting for Paul with Pope Benedict XIII, on May 21, 1725 (Paul was 31 yrs old). They met in the Church of St Mary in Dominica on the Celian Hill. FINALLY, Paul the hermit was before the Pope. Now even if Paul may have been shy or timid, his bulldog determination and his outstanding courage was enough to prompt him to tell the Pope about his inspirations, his Rule and about his proposed Institute. He asked for the Pope's approval. The Pope was extremely busy with the Synod that was taking place, as well as the functions taking place for the Jubilee Year. But Pope Benedict XIII did give verbal consent for Paul's Institute only; not the Rule. Nothing was put in writing, and no one made a note of his consent. (Maybe the Pope intended for it to be just verbal.) The Pope encouraged Paul in his work, and gave Paul his blessing.

This simple and informal verbal approval on May 21, 1725, constituted the first approval of the Congregation by the Holy See, and was also the first step in securing approbation of his Rule, and in launching his foundations. (NOTE: Doesn't it make a difference having contacts?)

Paul had a great love and respect for the Papacy. So, the word of the Pope was good enough for him and in earnest, he immediately began his search for companions. This gave Paul peace of mind and interior certitude. He was on his way now.

More Attempts For His Institute

Over the years, several more attempts were made by Paul to have his Institute officially approved by Rome. But it wouldn't be until 44 years later, in 1769, that he finally received official approval from Rome.

St. Gallicano Hospital

Cardinal Corrandini and Bishop Crescenzi offered Paul and John Baptist work at St Gallicano Hospital in Rome, to minister to the spiritual welfare of the sick and the dying. They weren't at all happy at Gaeta, yet weren't certain about what they were meant to do. They were constantly searching, but Paul knew that God would provide the answer in His own good time. Thinking that this might be it, they accepted the offer.

They left Rome, I assume to straighten up matters at Gaeta, or whatever, then returned to Rome in September, 1726. They stayed at St Gallicano Hospital from 1726 to 1728. Cardinal Corrandini witnessed the wonderful works they were performing at the hospital. However, he thought that they could serve more effectively and be more useful if they were priests. (Bishop Cavallieri had already told them so.) He recommended the priesthood, and after some thought, and surely, much prayer, they accepted. Paul knew Divine Providence was responsible. In quick succession, they received all minor orders (from 2-16-1727 to 5-1-1727), and were ordained to the priesthood on June 7, 1727 by Pope Benedict XIII in St Peter's Basilica (Choir Chapel of Pieta). Paul was 33; John Baptist was 32. Now they could not only serve the needs of the people they could administer the sacraments.

They were permitted to wear the penitential habit. The only change the Pope required them to make in their mode of life was that they must wear sandals while celebrating Mass. They endured much abuse from fellow priests; all in silence and with great humility.

Their father, Luke, died in July, 1727, while they were at St. Gallicano. In September, they went home to console their mother.

Return To Mt. Argentario

Paul and John Baptist never lost their zeal for the solitary life on Mt. Argentario. Paul, who is now 34 yrs old, wanted to get along with his life, to preach and minister to more people, enhanced now by the faculties of his priesthood and to gather companions for his proposed institute. A goal he began to feel was lost while at St. Gallicano. Paul tells; ***"-----I took refuge in my work at St. Gallicano and, by His constant prodding, the Lord convinced me to leave there. He called me to attend to the work he willed from me"***. In March, 1728, with the permission of Cardinal Corrandini, they returned to Mt Argentario; Divine Providence led them back.

Paul must have never had a day in his life without major problems. Upon his arrival at Mt Argentario, he encountered more difficulties. The hermitage of the Annunciation was occupied and the occupants were unwilling to share it with Paul and John Baptist. Paul's solution was that they just climb higher up the mountain and find the Hermitage of St Anthony, a small, miserable residence with two rooms and a small chapel, that only they would be happy living under those conditions.

At the end of 1733, some men, including their brother, Fr. Anthony, joined them; but life was too miserable, and too strict, so they abandoned Paul after 3 months. Paul looked at it this way; ***"When God truly wills to give you companions, he will not only send them but he will also give them perseverance in their vocations.....It is evident the hour has not yet come."*** Fr. Pastorelli, who became Paul's most faithful companion, and later was Superior, joined them at St. Anthony's in 1735.

In the meantime, Paul became more aware of human limitations as he saw postulants leave. He had the capability of understanding their needs and of altering his ways and the Rule. They renewed their life of solitude, strict penance and prayer. It seems like Paul has finally settled on his mountain.

Bishop Palmieri, now Bishop for Mt. Argentario, urged them to extend their preaching and Apostolic works, and allowed them to hear confessions. The Bishop could rely on them to perform their priestly duties regarding confessions. This was not a problem for Paul. Remember, he found great joy in preaching; but now he had the added pleasure to help sinners repent, and giving absolution.

Paul's agenda at Port Ercole would literally kill people today, Saturday, he walked down the mountain, spent the night in prayer. Sunday, he heard

confessions, preached the sermon, taught catechism on Sunday afternoon and returned to the mountain on Sunday evening. The terrain is extremely rugged; rocks, thorns, brush, trees, and almost straight up. Yet Paul and John Baptist thought nothing about making that journey barefoot, without coat, hat or sandals. One can't help but marvel this and wonder how he did it, and how he endured it for so many years.

Apostolic Missions

Just as we needed to understand the meaning of a "trip", it is important that we know something about "mission" when it comes to Paul. Paul gave three Apostolic campaigns each year: **1st**.Christmas to Ash Wednesday, **2nd**.Easter to Feast of St John (6/24),**3rd**.September 15 to Advent. Each campaign was a series of three missions, one after another, without a break. All were at different locations; sometimes, many miles apart. (NOTE:Even given the mode of travel we enjoy today, that was a remarkable feat.)

Each mission lasted 8 days; sometimes 10-15 days. He would preach for hours, in the morning and then at night. Always in the presence of a large crucifix. He preached to anyone and everyone; even the most hardened criminal or sinner.

In 40 years, he preached 250 missions. In order to truly appreciate the immensity of this accomplishment, try to imagine the conditions under which he traveled, where he lived, and also the areas where he preached. Paul said that he was meant to preach, and preferred preaching to the poorest of the poor, in the most abandoned areas.

First Passionist Mission

Paul began his Passionist Apostolic missions, in the strict sense, in 1730; thus began the "Missions by the Passionists". Rome heard of Paul's work and bestowed the title of "Apostolic Missionary" on him.

Paul's first mission was given at Orbetello in 1730, on the Grazi family estate, near Mt. Argentario. It was here that he met an Agnes Grazi, a social minded girl who loved to dance and party. Paul guided her for the next fourteen years, (which was the rest of her life), in the path of humility to the heights of mystical union. All accomplished through the 165 letters that he wrote to her. Although she was not permitted to join the Congregation, she had the honor of being laid to rest in the Church of the Presentation on Mt. Argentario. We had the privilege of visiting and praying at her resting place.

The wear and tear on Paul's body after so many years of walking barefoot, without coat, hat or sandals to give these missions took its toll on him. His body deteriorated to the point he was forced to slow down. He required more rest. Yet, when he was asked to talk, he spoke with the enthusiasm of a 20 yr old.

Despite his poor health, the demand for his time was overwhelming. The people wanted Paul; no one else was acceptable. Once, in a humorous mood, Paul said: "People don't know me. I'll send someone else". Naturally though, Paul relented, and went anyway. One of his retreats was 75 miles away, across the Apennine Mountains. Paul kept on working until he reached the utmost limit of his strength. He was literally exhausted from his life's efforts. He was so exhausted that, many times he yearned for death. Somehow, he always found the strength to continue.

CHAPTER 6

Foundations

First monastery - Presentation of the Blessed Mother

Paul had been focusing on restoring the Hermitage of St Anthony's in order to attract companions for his institute, and to be able to accommodate them when they arrived. Some men had come at various times, but did not persevere; however he trusted in Divine Providence and knew it was just a matter of time before they would come. He was right.

Paul had a favorite tree in a very scenic spot on Mt. Argentario. One day, while he was meditating and praying, he saw the Blessed Mother (Our Lady) smiling on him through the branches of an olive tree. He took this as an indication that his first house should be built on that spot. So it was.

In appreciation for the successful mission Paul gave at Orbetello, in 1730, the people wanted him to build a monastery on Mt. Argentario. They bought the land and turned it over to him. Naturally, there were the usual problems he had to endure; opposition from the clergy, jealous that Paul would recruit more men than they would. On March 4, 1733, the cornerstone was laid and blessed. Paul named it the Retreat of the Presentation of Our Blessed Mother, which happened to be built on Austrian ground. After the walls had been built, construction was halted in February, 1734, the consequence of a series of wars that occurred in Europe from 1733 to 1738. In this particular war, Austria had declared war on France, Spain and Savoy.

Spain took advantage of the situation and profiting from Austria's weakness attacked its territories in Italy for itself. The Spaniards landed at Orbetello, and then the war spilled onto Mt. Argentario in April, 1735. At some point, Paul was captured as a badly disguised spy. After interrogation he was released as "unharmable". When you look back, this seems humorous, but I'm sure it wasn't at the time.

The war separated Paul from the people of Orbetello, but Paul was permitted to minister to their needs. He also ministered to the needs of the wounded and dying men on both sides of the battle; being Chaplain to both armies, Austrian and Spaniard. They had such great respect for him that they ceased firing whenever he went from one camp to the other. Only when Paul

was unsuccessful in getting pardons for men condemned to death by the firing squad for desertion would he intervene, he prepared them for death.

Paul heard that the Spaniards were about to destroy Orbetello. Everything was already in place. He rushed up to the General and pleaded with him to save the town and the people. He refused for a long time; finally he agreed to stop, saying; *"Alright, I agree but I'm doing it only for you"*. Orbetello surrendered to the Spaniards. The Spanish General wound up feeling totally proud of himself for sparing Orbetello. Construction on the new monastery started up again, this time, with the help of the Spaniards.

Paul encountered many problems while construction was in progress. Local people, clergy, and religious, whom he had just saved from disaster, were now opposing his project. Free-Masonry reared it's ugly head; they even hatched a plot whereby they would infiltrate the monastery, and ultimately destroy it. But Paul smelled a rat (literally almost) and threw the imposters out. Some of the people even tried to destroy the monastery at night. But St. Michael, with sword drawn, sent the intruders back down the mountain. Even a Cardinal got into the act by attempting to stop the construction. Good old envy and hostility was still present. Paul was denounced as "being lax in morals" and not to be allowed to live on Mt. Argentario. But, the Retreat of the Presentation finally opened on September 14, 1737 with five priests, and four lay brothers.

More Recruits and More Retreats

Demand for the Passionists was increasing. The number of vocations was increasing likewise. That could mean only one more thing; houses must be secured to house this influx of vocations. Paul gave a lot of attention to doing this, yet, never shirking his responsibilities in giving his missions. His health was a problem too; he had terrible back problems

Following the founding of The Presentation, Paul founded eleven more monasteries for men and one for women before his death. (These do not include the "Royal Gift" that Paul is to receive; more about that later).

Each monastery had its own story, with its many problems and crosses. But what was the Passion about? Buildings were in horrible conditions; no one else wanted them. Possibly due to his own health problems resulting from years of living under the conditions that he did, Paul became more aware and selective as to where he located his monasteries. Even though the monasteries were in conditions that no one else wanted them, they had to be located in

places conducive to better health; spiritual and physical. He refused to locate anywhere else, yet his missions were given in the least desirable places. (Remember, this was his desire from the beginning.)

During one three year period, recruits had to be turned away because there was no place to house them. Life was joyous, though, despite the extreme poverty. Paul was convinced that the men had a special call by God. The men who came were courageous, even heroic. Many of the retreats opened in winter, when travel was most difficult, to say the least. There was hunger, cold, and unfurnished buildings. But, Paul always had the support of the Bishops. Obedience, there was no other way for Paul!

CHAPTER 7

Election Of Congregation Leaders

Need for structure

Paul had several foundations and more were to follow. Companions were arriving, filling their houses. Changes in the Rule necessitated the need for Superiors, Vicars, Counselors, etc. and to allow the election of a Superior General. (In business, you would say things were progressing very well!)

Almost single-handedly, Paul founded the Congregation (institute). It was his talent, his resolve, his patience, perseverance, determination etc. which helped him set up the Foundations. His leadership qualities included his ability to motivate, and his compassion for others; he made others feel more comfortable than himself. Even in poor health, and old age, he did more than his share of work. He did not want other's working unless he could carry his load; even when he was in extremely bad health.

Paul had the ability of combining the two talents of inspiring and organizing, the charism of founding and guiding, and the patience and perseverance of keeping them in harmony. In short, he did all that was necessary to protect and guide the community through all the problems, trials, etc, for which he labored relentlessly. Three communities were in existence at this time, with a superior at each house. A Superior General was called for in the Rule.

Election

It was only appropriate, then, that Paul be elected the first official Superior General on May 21, 1746. April 10, 1747 the First General Chapter was convened at Mt. Argentario. Paul was unanimously elected Superior General. The Congregation was organized at last. But, Paul wasn't ready for what would transpire over the next 28 years. He was elected Superior General five more times. (1753-1758-1764-1769-1775).

The Second General Chapter was convened in Vetralla in 1753. Vetralla became the fixed residence of the Superior General; Paul moved to Vetralla from Mt. Argentario. The next four General Chapters were held at Vetralla. The Rule limited the terms of a Superior General to two terms. Paul served his two terms, and was ineligible for another. Paul had always set 1759 as the year

he wanted to retire into solitude to his beloved Mt. Argentario to return to his Apostolate and contemplation. Paul was now 65.

The Third General Chapter was supposed to convene in 1759. However, all capitularies renounced their tenure early, and new Superiors were elected and the Third General Chapter convened in 1758, thirteen months earlier than its scheduled 1759. The capitulars, in turn, asked Rome to grant a dispensation for Paul from the two term rule and allow Paul to be re-elected. Rome granted the dispensation. Though he was disappointed, but still the obedient servant, Paul again accepted re-election.

These Guys (the capitulars) Were Cunning: In 1764 during the Fourth General Chapter at Vetralla, Paul asks for solitude on Mt Argentario, instead, he is re-elected for the fourth time.

Paul's boundless charity was manifested

A terrible famine plagued parts of Italy from 1762-1767, especially during 1764-1767, during which 300,000 people died. Paul exhorted his monks to sacrifice one-half of their meager rations, by voluntary mortifications, abstaining from all superfluous foods, to give relief to the people. Naturally, Paul led his monks through his heroic example, as sick and weak as he was.

Paul's tenderness

John Baptist, Paul's brother and faithful companion, fell victim to a flu epidemic that broke out in some of the monasteries during the famine, and died on Aug 30, 1765. Paul's deteriorating health did not stop him from celebrating the funeral Mass. He always found the fortitude to lift himself up in situations that would definitely get others down. He wept, and, tenderly, said; ***"I am left an orphan. I shall say no more"***.

It was during this tenure also, that Paul began his final farewell by visiting his congregations. At each Congregation he was welcomed with enthusiasm, love, affection and tenderness. People met him on the way and joyfully, knelt at his feet. Remember how he would kneel at the feet of the person he was giving alms to? No one, people or clergy, wanted to see him leave. They begged him to stay. They considered him a "father", and a saint. People cut pieces from his clothing. After so many years of silently and humbly enduring the constant insults, jeers, threats, false accusations, rumors, etc., etc. by clergy and people, he deserved this triumphant journey, though I'm sure he didn't

dream of this. What sadness and sorrow they must have felt knowing that they would never see or hear him again.

What a reward for his humbleness.

Triumph, at last, but what a painful one, all endured as the Will of God. What a lesson for all of us. During his visit to Rome, he stopped to visit his friend, Cardinal Ganganelli, and confided to him what God had intimated to Paul; that the Cardinal would be Pope someday. Sure enough, later he became Pope Clement XIV.

1769 - Fifth General Chapter at Vetralla

Paul was re-elected for the 5th time. Paul wanted retirement very badly; even wrote a formal renunciation in writing to this effect, as well as a verbal refusal. But obedience prevailed, and in tears he accepted. Much more on this tenure later.

1775 - Sixth General Chapter - at Sts John & Paul

Paul was re-elected, and this would be the last one presided over by Paul. It was the first one convened at Sts John & Paul. Unable to rise; he remained in bed until his death.

Paul's Driving Force

The driving force that governed Paul throughout his life was his total abandonment to the Will of God, which he practiced to a heroic degree. His submission, his obedience was the central idea that dominated his entire spirituality. Each trial and contradiction was accepted in this spirit of submission. Each defeat and illness always closed with the formula of Gethsemani; *"Thy Will be done."*

CHAPTER 8

Rule Approval

Now what happened to the Rule he wrote way back in 1720, while he was on his 40-day retreat at Charles in Castellazzo? The Rule that had been written in his heart by God. What was the Institute without the Rule? It was absolutely mandatory that the Holy See approve the Rule.

Faith in the Will of God, and undying patience guided Paul all those years with the knowledge that God would provide; but he didn't expect it would take so long. He continued working and waiting. We know that in 1721, he went to Rome, only to be turned away as a "vagabond", receiving nothing except insults from clergy and others.

Encouraged by Bishop Cavalliere of Troy, he went to Rome in the Jubilee Year of 1725. With the assistance of Cardinal Corrandini, he met with Pope Benedict XIII, who granted verbal approval for his Institute only, leaving the Rule in "limbo" for the next twenty years. But his thoughts about the Rule were never forgotten. Paul realized, as time went by, that changing times and situations dictated the necessity for Rule changes.

Cardinal Corrandini once asked that Paul send the Rule to Rome for evaluation, but without Paul accompanying it. Workers, filled with the ideals Paul inspired in them, filled the increasing number of Foundations. Getting his Rule approved by Rome is now the focus of his attention. He understood that with the Rule, he would pass from "a pious union of priests living in common under the local bishops jurisdiction" to that of a Congregation or religious order of pontifical right which would be exempt from the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary. This is how he always perceived his institute as being. Rejection was something Paul did not accept for himself. His persistence, perseverance and determination could not be denied. So he tried again.

Paul became a friend to a powerful figure in Rome by the name of Cardinal Rezzonica, who later became Pope Clement XIII, and was a friend to Pope Benedict XIV. Cardinal Rezzonica once washed the bloodied feet of Paul, which was caused from his trip to Rome. Cardinal Rezzonica favored Paul's Rule and his Institute, and helped modify the Rule so it could be presented to the Pope. Cardinal Rezzonica arranged a meeting between Pope

Benedict XIV and Paul. (NOTE: Paul is making some powerful friends in Rome.)

May 15, 1741 Pope Benedict XIV granted Approbation to the Rule by rescript. This time, however, the Institute was by-passed, and remained with the verbal approval from Pope Benedict XIII back in 1725. Paul was overjoyed that his Rule was approved; even if it was twenty years later. Now they were part of the visible Church. Paul hurried to have the Approbations of the Rule officially registered in the Abbatial Curia of Orbetello, since the community was no longer a "pious" union of priests" under the local Bishop's (Ordinary) jurisdiction. No wasting of time for Paul.

Pope Benedict XIV said; ***"The Congregation of the Passion should have been the first founded by the Church, and behold it comes last"***. Paul himself spread the news and made known the news of his new congregation by telling the Bishops (and his mother; if you want news spread, just tell your mother). His intention was to awaken interest in vocations and spread its growth.

On June 11, 1741, Paul and his five companions professed their religious vows as Passionists. The Passionist sign, with the heart and white cross appeared on the black tunic for the first time. Paul dropped the name "Daneo" and assumed "...of the Cross", thus we have St. Paul of the Cross.

Paul wanted his order to be called "The Poor of Jesus", but Rome officially named them; "The Congregation of the Least Regular Disalced Clerics under the Invocation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ".

Solemn Vows

In this meeting with the Pope, Paul asked permission for solemn vows. This was denied; the order was too small. Paul tried to secure permission for solemn vows several more times. Paul's last attempt for solemn vows was in 1758. The request was denied; only simple vows. Paul never asked for solemn vows again. He told them it was the Holy Will of God, and not in God's design for them.

Finality of Rule

We need to jump all the way to 1769, to get to finality for his Rule and Institute. Remember Cardinal Ganganeli, whom Paul told that he would be Pope someday? Well, he was elected Pope in February, 1769, and assumed the name Pope Clement XIV. On May 25, 1769, Paul left Vetralla to see his

friend, Pope Clement XIV. Paul was extremely disabled at this time, so the Pope had Paul brought to Rome in his carriage. The Pope seated Paul near the Pontifical throne; this attention caused him to weep. But Paul hadn't lost his mental capacity, manifesting his astuteness and shrewdness, and his never say die attitude. He handed the Pope a petition requesting official Approbation for his Institute (but not for his Rule), with simple vows (remember, he gave up on solemn vows). The Pope assured Paul that his Institute would be approved. But the Pope lost the original document and immediately requested another one from Paul. (NOTE: Paul saw the hand of God in this. A Providential opportunity to make but one petition which would request the establishment of his Institute and a new approbation of the Rule.)

Paul takes advantage of this carelessness or whatever and displays his shrewdness, by handing the Pope a new petition, which now included a request for confirmation of his Rule, which was unintentionally omitted in his original request. The Pope imposed some changes; that they must allow for more and better food, and more time for sleep.

What a negotiator

The Pope asked Paul to remain in Rome until the bull, approving Paul's Rule and Institute, was ready. Paul went to St Mary Major Basilica to give thanks, and then visited seven other Basilicas, but this time, he went by carriage, ordered by the Pope. (I'm not sure about coat, hat or sandals.)

Pope Clement XIV granted an Extraordinary Jubilee and asked Paul to preach. Prelates-clergy-noblemen-laity, all came to listen to a "saint". Because of Paul's extremely poor health, he had to be carried to the platform. The Bull was ready in November, 1769.

FINALLY; November 16, 1769

The Institute was solemnly approved as a Congregation with simple vows and the Congregation was granted autonomy. Forty-eight years after he first went to Rome, and forty-four years after Pope Benedict XIII granted verbal approval to the Institute.

The Rule was officially approved; separate from the Institute. Done absolutely free, as a gift from the Pope. Everything came to fruition through this Bull.

On his deathbed, Paul requested one final revision to the Rule, and it was sent to the current reigning Holy Father, Pope Pius VI, who gave the Rule Solemn Approbation on September 15, 1775, only one month prior to Paul's death. (Great timing.)

CHAPTER 9

The Royal Gift

Paul always wanted a home in Rome to spur growth in his Congregation, and to be near "the action", so he could tend to the needs of the Congregation without having to make those long treks to Rome. He did move closer to Rome when he took up residence in Vetralla, and still later to the Hospice of the Most Holy Crucified. But now he was about to get his "home" in Rome.

In 1773, Paul was thought to be dying. Pope Clement XIV had in mind to present Paul with a gift. He sent a message to Paul telling him that he could not die just yet; ***"Tell him I grant a reprieve. He must obey"***. Who was anyone to disobey such an order, much less Paul. So guess what happens. Paul asked Christ to improve his health and Paul's prayer was answered; he got better.

Pope Clement XIV gave Paul and his Congregation the Basilica and monastery of Sts John and Paul in Rome, a beautiful monastery on a big hill across the street from the Coliseum in Rome. Knowing the urgency of the situation, the Pope ordered that this be done immediately. On December 9, 1773, Paul and seventeen religious walked from the Hospice of the Most Holy Crucified to their new home - Sts John and Paul. Eventually it became the Motherhouse of the Passionists. Paul now rarely went out, except occasionally to visit Pope Clement XIV. (**NOTE:** We were fortunate to have attended Mass there on the Feast of St. Paul of the Cross. It was a most impressive ceremony. I understand why it was called the "royal gift".) Now all his foundations were in place. (No more for Paul)

Popes

On December 31, 1773, Paul went to the Vatican to thank Pope Clement XIV for his generosity. After speaking to the Pope for two hours, Paul left, with the Pope watching from his window. The attention brought tears to Paul's eyes. Just imagine, going from being thrown out of the Papal Palace to being honored and venerated by Popes. How many people can say that?

By June 26, 1774, Paul no longer could get out, so, Pope Clement XIV visited Paul. Paul was carried to a reception hall, where a throne had been erected for the Pope. Religious, benefactors and close friends were granted an audience with the Pope. But, I would bet that most, if not all, were there to see

their beloved Paul. The Pope and Paul went to an adjoining room where they talked for a long time. Wouldn't you love to have been a bird in that room to listen to what they spoke about. This was the last meeting they ever had, Pope Clement XIV died in September, 1774, just over two months later.

Wrote the Biography of St Paul of the Cross;

One person Paul called to Sts John and Paul from Mt. Argentario to be a teacher and Director of Studies was Vincent Strambi. He became Bishop Strambi and finally, St. Vincent Strambi.

He wrote the Biography of St Paul of the Cross, but he wrote it while on his knees. Remember the knees; how Paul gave alms to the poor while on his knees; and people falling to their knees when Paul made his farewell visits?

CHAPTER 10

The Institute for Nuns

Paul always considered an Institute for women a complement to his institute for men. He was obligated to help all souls and if he refused he would be failing his mission, and Paul was not destined to failure. Eventually it would come to him.

As early as 1733, he had thoughts of founding a Congregation for women who would follow the same rule of life.

In 1733, Paul gave his first retreat ever to nuns. It was here, at the cloistered Franciscan Convent at Piombino, that he met a very holy nun, Sr. Cherubim Bresciani, whom Paul had selected to be the future foundress of the Institute for women. She died before this was fulfilled.

Many women and/or nuns wrote Paul, asking him to found a convent for women. Due to his cautiousness, he advised them to be patient and when God wills, it will be done.

In 1736, Paul gave the first of seven retreats at the Benedictine Convent at Corneto. Here he met a holy nun, Mother Mary Candida. She knew, through a vision, that one day she would follow the Passionist way of life as a Co-Foundress. Paul kept up a correspondence with her for thirty-three years. (To 1769)

Paul didn't reveal his plans for a women's institute to anyone except his most intimate friends, including Mother Mary Candida. Paul now gave his full attention to this work. In January, 1769, Paul spoke to Pope Clement XIV regarding this project. The Pope promised his benevolent protection.

Construction on the convent was in progress when Paul was making his farewell visit to his men's monastery in Corneto. He demanded some changes in the construction in order to integrate his Rule for more strictness.

July 1, 1770, Paul presented the Rule for the Nuns to the Pope. It was basically the same as his Rule for the men. September 3, 1770, Pope Clement XIV, approved it by rescript, the same as had been done for the men. Also, the

Pope gave Mother Mary Candida permission to leave the Benedictine Convent and transfer to the new Passionist Community at Corneto. She now becomes Mother Mary Crucified of Jesus, the first Passionist Nun.

Paul wanted to be present for the founding of the Passionist Nuns, and to give the habit to the eleven Postulants he had chosen and prepared. But Paul got sick and never recovered enough to participate in the ceremony of profession or to see the Nuns in their habits.

May 3, 1771, the clothing ceremony took place with Mother Mary Crucified and the other ten postulants receiving the Passionist habit. Mother Mary Crucified received the keys to the monastery and the Rule. She was appointed Mistress of Novices and temporary Superior.

May 30, 1772, after one year of Novitiate, the ceremony of profession took place and all eleven postulants made their Profession of Vows with a crown of thorns placed on their head and a plain black Cross over their right shoulder. Mother Mary Crucified was elected the first Superior.

St. Paul was pleased to watch over them until his death.

CHAPTER 11

Death of St. Paul of the Cross

February 15, 1775, Pope Pius VI was elected Pope. On March 5, 1775, only eighteen days later, he visited Paul (the second Pope to visit him) Paul foretold the Pope that he would remain on the throne for a long time; as a matter of fact, he was Pope for twenty-four years, finally dying in exile.

Pope Pius VI asked Paul for his prayers and kissed him on his forehead before he left. What a display of the great affection and admiration the Pope felt toward Paul. He assured Paul of his good will for the Congregation. (Another protector for the Congregation)

On August 29, 1775, Paul was advised that he should receive Holy Viaticum. He asked that the whole community be present. He gave his last spiritual testament. He asked forgiveness of all his brethren, past and present. He made his profession of faith.

He gave his final recommendations: That they nurture the spirit of prayer, the spirit of solitude and the spirit of poverty in the Congregation, and that they must promote in all hearts, devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, and to the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin.

His only concern now was with his God and his soul. October 18, 1775, still in command up to his death, Paul said, "I am about to die". He asked for Fr. John Mary to recite the prayers for the dying. But Paul was told that the monks were at vespers. No problem; Paul said he would just wait until they were finished.

While the prayers of the dying were being recited, and with his eyes firmly fixed on the Crucifix, Paul died serenely at approximately 4:30 p.m. on October 18, 1775. He died in ecstasy.

Paul Francis Daneo; Fr. Paul Francis Daneo; Fr. Paul of the Cross; but most important, **St. Paul of Cross**.

St. Paul of the Cross was 81 years and 9 months old when he died.

CHRONOLOGY of ST PAUL OF THE CROSS

1694-01-03	Paul Francis Daneo born in Ovada to Luke and Anna Maria Daneo
1694-01-06	Baptized on Feast of the Epiphany
1695-04-04	John Baptist Daneo born
1713	Time of his "conversion"; first formative experience
1716	Volunteers for the army in the war against Turks
1719-04-23	Received Confirmation at Castellazzo
1720	Vision by which he discerns his future
1720-11-22	Paul is vested in the penitential hermit's habit by Bishop Gattinara Historic beginning of Passionists
1720-11-23	Makes 40-day retreat at St Charles Church-Castellazzo To Writes the "Spiritual Diary" - 11-23-20 to 1-01-21 1721-01-01 Writes the Rule-Dec 2 to Dec 7, 1720 1721, Sept.First journey to Rome; Rebuffed at Quirinal Palace Visits St Mary Major Basilica, where he makes a vow to promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus Christ
1721-09-08	Paul discovers Mt Argentario
1721-11-28	John Baptist clothed in penitential hermit's habit

1722-1725	Paul and John Baptist live at Hermitage of Annunciation on Mt Argentario, at Gaeta and Troia
1725-05-21	Verbal consent of Paul's institute by Pope Benedict XIII
1726-1728	The two minister to the sick at St Gallicano Hospital in Rome
1727-06-07	Paul and John Baptist ordained priests by Pope Benedict XIII at St Peter's in Rome
1727, July	Luke Daneo died; the two spend two months with their mother
1728-1737	They lived at St Anthony's on Mt Argentario; teach catechism at Orbetello
1730	Paul preaches his first mission as a Passionist
1730	Meets Agnes Grazi
1737-09-14	Retreat of the Presentation on Mt Argentario opened
1741-05-15	Pope Benedict XIV approved the Rule by rescript
1741-06-11	Paul and his five companions profess religious vows as Passionists
1746-05-21	Paul is elected Superior General for first time
1746-09-10	Anna Maria Daneo died.
1747-04-10	Paul is elected Superior General at First General Chapter held at the Presentation retreat on Mt Argentario

1748-1767	Paul preaches many parish missions and retreats. Paul founded 12 retreats before his death
1753	Second General Chapter - at Vetralla Paul re-elected Superior General
1758	Third General Chapter - at Vetralla
1758	Last attempt for Solemn Vows
1764	Fourth General Chapter - at Vetralla
1765-08-30	Fr. John Baptist died.
1769	Fifth General Chapter - at Vetralla
1769-05-25	Paul visited Pope Clement XIV
1769-11-16	Solemn Approbation of the Passionist Institute
1769-11-16	Official approval of the Rule
1770-09-03	Pope Clement XIV approved Rule for Nuns by rescript
1772-05-30	First profession ceremony of the Passionist Nuns in Tarquinia (11 Nuns)
1773-12-09	Take possession of the retreat of Sts John and Paul in Rome; a concession of Pope Clement XIV
1774-06-26	Pope Clement XIV visits Paul at Sts John and Paul; Paul was too sick to leave monastery
1775	Sixth General Chapter - at Sts John and Paul

1775-03-05	Pope Pius VI visits Paul
1775-09-14	In Papal Bull, Pope Pius VI approves revisions to the Rule; Rule given Solemn approval
1775-10-18	Death of Paul at Sts John and Paul in Rome
1777-01-07	Opening of the process of Canonization
1778-12-22	Introduction of the Cause for Canonization
1786	First biography of Paul of the Cross; Written by Vincent M. Strambi
1821-02-18	Proclamation of heroic virtues
1853-05-01	Beatification of Paul by Pope Pius IX.
1867-06-29	St. Paul of the Cross is canonized by Pope Pius IX
1880-04-25	Transferral of the relics of St. Paul of the Cross to the Chapel dedicated to him in the basilica of Sts. John and Paul

FOUNDATIONS

I. Hermitages

- A. Hermitage of Annunciation (1722-1723)
on Mt. Argentario
- B. Hermitage of St Anthony's (1728-1737)
on Mt. Argentario
First Passionist Community
Fr. Pastorelli joins Paul - 1735

II. Retreats

- A. Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
on Mt. Argentario
Opened Sept 14, 1737
First Passionist Retreat
First General Chapter held here
- B. St. Michael the Archangel at Vetralla
(on Mt Fogliano)
Opened Mar 6, 1744
John Baptist was Superior and died here
Paul lived here 1746-1769; close to Rome
Became the Motherhouse of Passionists
Second thru Fifth Gen Chapters held here
- C. St. Eutizio at Soriano
Opened Mar 8, 1744; with four clerics
and 1 Brother Fr. Pastorelli was Superior
- D. St. Mary di Corniano at Ceccano
Opened Jan 14, 1748
- E. Our Lady of the Oak
at Toscanella
Opened at end of Mar, 1748
- F. St. Sosio at Falvaterra

Opened Apr 22, 1751

G. Our Mother of Sorrow at Terraacina
Opened Feb, 1752

H. St. Mary of Pugliano at Paliano
Opened Nov, 1755

I. Blessed Trinity (Most Holy Trinity)
at Mt Cavo (near Rome)
Opened Mar, 1758

J. St. Joseph's Retreat for Novices (only)
on Mt Argentario
(second on Mt Argentario)
Opened July, 1761

K. Hospice of the Most Holy Crucified
(First in Rome) Opened 1767
Paul moved here from Vetralla

L. Our Lady of Sorrows at Corneto
(now Tarquinia)
Opened in 1769

III. **Royal Gift**

A. Sts John and Paul - in Rome
Opened in 1773
Paul moved here from Hospice of the
Most Holy Crucified
General Chapters now held here
Paul's last General Chapter

IV. **Institute for women (Nuns)**

A. Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
at Corneto (now Tarquinia)
Opened May 3, 1771
Mother Mary Crucified - first
Passionist nun, and First Superior

POPES ELECTED

During the life of St. Paul of the Cross

A. Clement XI

Elected 1700 Died 3-19-21

Crusades - 1715

B. Innocent XIII

Elected 5-18-21 Died 3-07-24

Pope when Paul turned away from
Quirinal Palace

C. Benedict XIII

Elected 5-29-24 Died in 1730

Granted verbal approval for
Paul's Institute-5-21-25

Ordains Paul and John Baptist to
priesthood in 1727 at St Peter's Basilica

Pope wanted to give fresh life to
clergy and religious

D. Clement XII

Elected 1730 Died 1740

Paul did not know him

E. Benedict XIV

Elected 1740 Died 1758

First Approbation of Paul's Rule
by rescript -May 15, 1741

Approved Rule again 4-18-1746

F. Clement XIII

Elected 1758 Died 2-03-69

Was Cardinal Rizzonica, friend of Paul
(yet, he did not help Paul too much)

G. Clement XIV

Elected 1769 Died 9-22-74

Was Cardinal Ganganelli; Paul foretold
that he would be Pope some day.

His first request was to see Paul;
called Paul "my father"

Granted official approval to Paul's Rule -
Nov 16, 1769

Granted solemn approval to Paul's Institute -
Nov 16, 1769

"Royal Gift" of Sts John and Paul in Rome
to Paul-1773

Visited Paul at Sts John and Paul -
June 26, 1774

Approved Rule for Nuns by rescript -
9-3-70

H. Pius VI

Elected 2-15-75 Died 1799

Granted Solemn approbation to Paul's Rule
Sept 15, 1775

Mar 5, 1775, he visited Paul

Was told by Paul to expect a long tenure;
served 24 years - died in exile.

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