



Office of the Provincial

THE PASSIONISTS

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December 1, 2021

“We are not living an era of change but a change of era”

-Pope Francis

Sisters and Brothers,

I am thankful for this opportunity to communicate with you! I greet you in the name of the entire Passionist Province of St. Paul of the Cross – stretching from the Caribbean through the eastern United States and reaching into Canada, even as far north as Yellowknife, where Passionist Associate Fatima Lee is accompanying Missions of the Diocese.

I serve as Provincial leader of the Passionists in this part of the world. We are a community of priests and brothers founded 300 years ago by St. Paul of the Cross – a mystic who experienced the depth of God’s love through the Passion and Cross of Jesus. The theme of our 300th Jubilee year is ‘Renew Our Mission!’. We Passionists, today, continue to strive to encounter the mystical wisdom of the Cross as well as to accompany all who continue to be ‘crucified’ by the systems and powers of our day. This includes our very ‘crucified’ planet, a theme familiar to those who reflect on the unique architecture of Toronto’s St. Gabriel’s Passionist Parish.

With this mission at the fore and recognizing that we as Passionists are at a moment of significant change due to our own age and diminishment, I invite you into a process of **Synod**. A synod is a way to gather, to listen and to discern our way into the future. It is a process led by the *Spirit of New Life* and is most powerful when as many voices as possible are heard and revered.

Who is invited? **Everyone** who is willing to enter the process faithfully and respectfully – women and men, old and young, committed believers and disillusioned folks, as well. Most especially welcomed are those who find themselves at the margins of the structures and systems of our world. It will be our special work to seek and invite these, our sisters and brothers who have been marginalized.

How it works? We will begin to gather – first, virtually. A Blog will be created through the St. Gabriel’s Parish website. This ‘virtual’ conversation, which will be launched in January 2022, will allow us to voice our gratitude for the past, our hope for the future and the challenges we must face as a faith community. After this initial phase, we will begin to gather in ‘circles’ during Lent 2022 to listen to one another and begin to discern the voice of the Spirit. Finally, we will come to our summary of what we have ‘heard and seen’ and present that to the Province.

What is the Goal? The goal is to collectively voice our vision for what the Canadian Passionist presence can and could be. This visioning will assist the Passionists in creating the next generation of leadership for the community and to prioritize our mission, particularly with the crucified of today.

Brothers and sisters, it is no secret that we are in an historic moment in the church and in the world. If we, in fact, trust in the Spirit that breaks down walls, leads us to speak and understand one another and to form a community of believers who can transform the world- then this Synod will be an extraordinary opportunity to co-create our future.

With great confidence in the unfathomable God of all Creativity, I invite you to join us!

In JXP,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim O'Shea". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "J" and "O".

Father Jim O'Shea, CP
Provincial