



The Passionists
St. Paul of the Cross Province

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Passionist Community to re-focus resources

Assembly affirms decision to end retreat ministries in Massachusetts and Long Island, NY, as well as return a parish back to Diocese of Rockville Centre

WEST HARTFORD, CT- Members of the St. Paul of the Cross Eastern Province of the Passionist Community, along with their Associates, met last week (May 18-22) in a Provincial Assembly at Holy Family Retreat Center in West Hartford, Connecticut to further their plans for future ministries in the United States.

This Provincial Assembly strongly affirmed its commitment to a vital Passionist presence in the United States, Canada and its overseas missions into the future. To this end, and in light of diminishing number of vowed religious and financial restrictions, decisions were made to concentrate retreat and parish ministries in fewer locations.

As a first step in this ongoing evaluation of its ministries, the Assembly authorized its Provincial Superior and Consultors to cease ongoing public ministries at the Calvary Retreat Center in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts as well as at St. Gabriel's Spiritual Center, Shelter Island, New York and Our Lady of the Isle Parish at Shelter Island Heights, New York. The parish will be returned to the pastoral care of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York at a mutually agreed upon date in the future. The Passionists will conclude their work at the retreat houses this year.

Over the coming weeks the Provincial leadership will be meeting with the Bishops and people of the affected locations to ensure an appropriate process for implementing these decisions as well as seek input for the future of these properties.

In affirming these decisions the Passionist Provincial, Very Rev. Joseph R. Jones, CP, commented, “It is with a heavy heart that I have accepted the recommendations of the Provincial Assembly. The current circumstances, with fewer members, have caused us to think carefully about our future. Our greatest hope is that while Passionist priests and brothers will no longer minister in these locations, the charism and spirit of our community, that which we have shared so freely over these many years, will live on.”

The Passionist leadership team also consulted with the Assembly regarding the care of aging members of the community and the ongoing ministry of their five retreat centers in the United States and one in Mandeville, Jamaica, West Indies. Reports were received also on new initiatives in communications media and the increasing involvement of laity in the life and work of the Passionists. The Passionist Community has been among the pioneers in retreat ministry in the Catholic Church.

Currently the eastern province has 163 vowed members, with the average age being 75 years old, in twenty-one sites which comprise of monasteries, retreat centers, parishes, and other ministries throughout the eastern United States, Canada, Jamaica West Indies, and Haiti.

The Passionist Community was founded in the early 1700’s in Italy by the legendary preacher, St. Paul of the Cross. The first Passionists came to the United States in 1852 where they established St. Paul of the Cross Monastery, Church and Retreat Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.