
❖ The Passionist Heritage Newsletter ❖

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The Passionist Presence in Massachusetts: An Historical Reflection

by Fr. Robert Carbonneau, C.P.

Introduction:

Since the early 1900s, the Passionist name was synonymous with Catholicism in Massachusetts. The year of 2010 signals the beginning of an era whereby no Passionist monasteries, parishes or retreat centers exist in Massachusetts. Though the last Passionist ministry site ceased operations in 2009, Passionists still reside and minister in Massachusetts in 2010. They are Brothers Terrence Scanlon and Terence Skorka in the Springfield diocese, Fathers James Earley (retired) and Bonaventure Moccia in the Worcester diocese and Father John O'Brien serving in the Archdiocese of Boston and Worcester. The Passionists also hope in the future to preach retreats and parish missions or to participate in other Massachusetts-based ministries whenever possible.

The first Passionist foundation was in Brighton, immediately outside Boston proper. St. Gabriel's Monastery operated from 1907 to 1978, as well as the Laymen's Retreat Movement, which ran from 1911 to 1978. St. Gabriel's Parish served the Brighton area from 1934 to 2006. In 1922 the Passionists were invited to the Springfield diocese. The second site, Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery, was dedicated in 1925. A Laymen's Retreat League was soon started. In 1993 the West Springfield foundation closed. Finally, in 1960 an agreement was reached that would see the Passionists come to the Worcester diocese to begin Calvary Monastery and Retreat in Shrewsbury. Those attending the 1965 celebration, it is probably safe to say, would not have anticipated that the Passionists would have closed and successfully sold the Shrewsbury site by 2009.

This issue of the *Passionist Heritage Newsletter* reflects on this historic change in Massachusetts from a Passionist-centered point of view. Part One provides a general historical overview on events and insights that

link the three Passionist ministry sites together over the past decades. In doing so, I would hope that Passionists, in particular, acknowledge the real and psychological impact of the end of the institutional Passionist era in Massachusetts.

Implicit in this is a call to interested people, local history

associations and scholars to initiate study on the Passionist impact in Massachusetts. Part Two includes three essays. At my personal request, these authors agreed to share their personal accounts of what it was like to coordinate the public closing of their respective ministry sites. I, of course, am well aware that other Passionists and laity affiliated with West Springfield, Brighton and Shrewsbury were important contributors and might still, in fact, have diverse memories about their closing. In the end, I hope that the three contributions serve as a public mirror and, perhaps, model of how Passionists and the general public look together at past change and options for the future.



Fr. Justin Carey, CP

Brighton and West Springfield: Hopeful Beginnings:

Passionist Father Justin Carey (1868-1947) serves as a link to reflect on the beginnings of the first two Passionist foundations in Massachusetts. Carey was ordained in 1892. In 1903 he was elected rector, or local leader, of St. Michael's Monastery, West Hoboken (now Union City), New Jersey. Thereafter, his skills led him to be directly involved in the building of Passionist monasteries in the following decades. In 1907 Carey accompanied then Provincial Father Fidelis Kent Stone to Boston to meet with a third Passionist so as to select a site for the new

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Passionist monastery. All indications pointed to building at Jamaica Plain in Boston. However, real estate agent John Kiley suggested the three men check one more location. Because the other two Passionists were tired, Carey went himself to inspect the Nevins Estate at the end of Corey Hill in Brighton. Carey thought it ideal and convinced the others. By April 1908, St. Gabriel's was established. During the next several years, Carey was asked to take charge of the building of the Brighton monastery where he was the local superior. It is said that then Bishop William O'Connell of Boston visited Carey and the topic of a laymen's retreat was broached.

Father Carey was elected provincial in 1917 and re-elected in 1920. During his six years, Passionist expansion was a keynote. For example, priests went for professional studies and the Archconfraternity of the Passion was started, as was *The Sign Magazine* and the missions to Hunan, China and Germany. In 1922, Carey agreed to buy the property in West Springfield, Massachusetts for a new monastery and retreat house. In 1924 Carey secured property for the monastery and retreat house at Jamaica, New York. Once out of office, Carey was appointed to be the superior of West Springfield so as to supervise its construction.

Massachusetts Monasteries in Debt: Passionist Response to the 1929 Stock Market Crash:

Justin Carey served again as provincial for a third term from 1929 to 1932. Due to the sudden October 29, 1929 Stock Market Crash, the Passionists, like so many in the country, found themselves in debt. Given the current fiscal turmoil the country finds itself in, Passionists and the public might be interested to see how he handled the crisis.

On March 4, 1930, Carey sent the local leaders of the Passionist monasteries, known as Rectors, a one page letter. First, he offered a picture of the bleak financial malaise of the Passionists. Since the Province debt on which the Provincial was paying interest was \$553,000, he thought it best to have this debt distributed 'pro rata' among the various houses of the province. Specifically, St. Gabriel's Monastery in Brighton and St. Ann's Monastery in Scranton, Pennsylvania each had a debt of over \$200,000. Likewise, West Springfield was in debt and had the added expenses of training new Passionist novices. To solve the problem, he looked for help from the existing Passionist monasteries in Union City; Baltimore, Maryland and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Second, after Carey consulted with the Passionist rectors, he announced his plan to repay the province

debt: St. Michael's Monastery, Union City was to pay \$250,000; St. Paul's Monastery, Pittsburgh, \$100,000; St. Joseph's Monastery, Baltimore, \$75,000; and the new monastery at Jamaica, New York, \$108,000.

Third, payments were to commence January 1, 1930. Interest on this debt was 4 ½ % every four months and the Passionist economer, or treasurer, was authorized to send each monastery a bill every four months for interest. Money sent to the Provincial would then be sent to the bank. Aware of the dire straits, Carey concluded: "We shall be pleased if every four months or at the end of any given month you can pay something on the principal. Even \$1,000 will mean cutting down your interest."

In retrospect, Carey's strategy to deal with the unforeseen economic crisis was to establish a strong Passionist presence by supporting the monasteries not yet ten years old! Moreover, his plan to apportion the debt among existing Passionist monasteries highlights the then mutual 1920s reliance of Catholics with the institutional church. Brighton and West Springfield were thus able to survive the Depression.

Massachusetts Images of Passionist Prayer, Penance and Solitude:

Up until the mid-1960s, passersby of the Brighton Monastery on Washington Street or the West Springfield Monastery on Monastery Avenue correctly understood Passionist priests and brothers as living an austere and common religious life. Not uncommon in 2010 is a call among Catholic laity and even Passionists to hearken back to this simple, common life. In hearing this, it is always a value to identify what was the actual imposed common life daily schedule for Passionists living in monasteries in Massachusetts, the rest of the United States and throughout the world: Wake up at 2:00 AM for prayer of Matins and Lauds; back to sleep and awake again at 6:00 AM for prayer of Prime and Tierce; 11 AM was spiritual reading; 11:15 AM was time for a solitary walk followed by 11:45 AM prayer of Sext and None. Dinner was at noon. Common recreation was at 12:30 with rest at 1:15 PM. Passionists participated in Vespers and Spiritual Reading at 2:15, study at 2:45, and an outside solitary walk at 5:00 PM. Common prayer was 5:30 PM, supper at 6:30 PM, recreation at 7:00 PM, common Compline and Night Prayers at 7:45 PM, additional study at 8:20 and finally 9:00 PM retire to bed.

Rarely discussed, or, for that matter, understood, by Passionists and the general public is the operative lived

culture in these monasteries. Reflecting specifically on the Brighton and West Springfield sites begs further reflection on what was enjoyable about this Passionist life? For instance, both Passionists and the public were often inspired by the visible witness of both old and young members in their Passionist religious garb trying their best to live together. At the same time, more reflection is needed to discern the lived struggles. Passionist life in these pre-1960 Massachusetts sites for priests, brothers or seminarians required countless permissions which often altered the monastic schedule. Of immediate interest, for instance, is the fact that a close examination of the afore mentioned schedule has no mention of a common celebration of the Eucharist for Passionists. That was more on Feast Days. Usually, Mass was said in Latin, we must remember, at individual side altars.

In contrast, the Passionist site in Shrewsbury blended this reality. Those who visited the site might recall that as one faced the large altar and cross, to the left side were semi-enclosures for individual masses. The liturgical changes of Vatican II meant that soon after these side altars were built their use had changed. Moreover, by the mid 1960s, Passionists living in Shrewsbury, Brighton and West Springfield adapted to a vision whereby rules and regulations were less the norm and communal discernment and prayer as vowed members upholding the values of Passionist founder St. Paul of the Cross was more the norm. Now in 2010, past history might provide lessons to help both the Passionists and the public discover the long-standing value of how prayer, penance, solitude and symbols such as the Passionist habit or devotional prayers anchor faith and belief into the future. Contemporary passersby of the three Passionist foundations in Massachusetts might very well find themselves pondering these issues into the future.

The Saving Power of Passionist Retreats in Massachusetts:

Shrewsbury was designed and built with a specific purpose that reflected Passionist retreat spirituality that was emerging in the post-Vatican II era of the 1960s. While emphasis was to still highlight Passionist preaching and sensitivity as priest confessors, added stress was more than ever on the personal needs of the individual retreatant in terms of space and food and personal time, the need for group discussions, and communal liturgical services. Simultaneously, this Shrewsbury retreat model, which was aided so much by the architecture itself, was necessarily implemented in both Brighton and West Springfield, as well as other

Passionist sponsored United States retreat houses. Most telling of this national Passionist retreat experience was the priority given to team ministry, whereby various vowed Passionists (priests and brothers) brought to life the experience for those on retreat. Putting the post-Vatican value of lay leadership and spirituality into practice, the West Springfield Retreat was led by a laymen, Mr. Jim Greer, in the 1980s. Then, Shrewsbury was directed by Mr. Ernie Rivard in its final years before closing in 2009 (evidenced by the fact that he contributes the essay on Shrewsbury in this issue of the *Passionist Heritage Newsletter*). In time, historians will have studied the impact of their leadership in the history of the Passionists, the respective dioceses and the American Catholic Church.

Historians and the public might do well to recall that the personal dynamics of a post-Vatican II Passionist retreat in Massachusetts were not always the norm. Remember the schedule of a pre-Vatican II Passionist retreat? First, prior to the 1960s, women did not regularly make retreats. This only became commonplace in the 1970s. Second, making a retreat at Brighton or West Springfield was based on the model whereby a man, who was at least of working class status or above since they had the time and money to pay for a retreat, would spend his weekend living as if he were a Passionist in the monastery and, in sum, encouraged to live the values of a Catholic laymen in a secular society. Third, the weekend schedule was as follows: awake at 6:30, attend mass at 7:00, eat breakfast at 7:45, listen to a Chapel Conference at 9:00. Reading and Reflection followed at 9:30, another Chapel Conference at 10:30, and Reading and Reflection again at 11:00. An 11:30 walk preceded noon Dinner and Recreation. The afternoon and evening was 1:15 Reading and Reflection, 2:45 Rosary in the Chapel, a 3:00 Chapel Conference and then 3:30 Confessions and Stations of the Cross. After a 5:00 Chapel Conference, there was time for a 5:30 walk before 6:00 Supper and Recreation. An additional Chapel Conference occurred at 7:30 followed by 9:00 discussion. At 10:00 the men gathered for a Blessing before bed. In retrospect, the saving power of the Passionist retreat in Massachusetts had the stability of helping retreatants seek a relationship with God even as the method and means changed from the 1920s till 2009.

We Preach Christ Crucified: Multiple Passionist Ministries in Massachusetts:

The essay of Passionist Father Roger Elliott on the closing of St. Gabriel's Parish in Brighton is a clear reminder of the diversity of Passionist ministries in Massachusetts. As the economic realities led to changes

in the Brighton neighborhood from the 1950s through 2000, the Passionist parish staff and efforts of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the elementary school did their best to respond. Understanding the historical pulse of St. Gabriel's with the Fidelis Way Housing Complex merits attention.

At the same time, Passionist preachers in Brighton and West Springfield left their respective monasteries to regularly assist in local Massachusetts parishes or preach parish missions throughout the Commonwealth and the United States. While Passionists and laity alike reminisce about this legacy, there exists little critical analysis of the impact of Passionist preaching. What have been the varied public faces of the Passionist parish mission in the 20th century? What is the theological legacy of Passionist preaching? For example, did Passionist preachers advocate Catholic social teachings? How did they meld Thomistic thought with advances in Holy Scripture, Eucharistic Devotion, and diverse Catholic devotions or preaching to ethnic groups in various languages? Were all Passionists known to preach sermons of "hellfire and brimstone" or just some?

In West Springfield, Passionist Father Fidelis Rice was a pioneer in radio and television. From 1954 to 1986, the Crossroads Radio program, offered a United States and limited international audience thoughtful Catholic commentary by Passionists and guest speakers. In 1957 Rice initiated "Chalice of Salvation" as a Sunday televised Mass in conjunction with Channel 22 and the Diocese of Springfield. In 2010 Passionist Brother Terrence Scanlon coordinates this historic Passionist ministry in its present format.

In addition, all three Massachusetts sites have proclaimed the Passionist commitment to the Overseas Missions. As early as the 1920s, Brighton held "departure ceremonies" for missionaries assigned to China and all foundations had Passionists who ministered in the Philippines or Jamaica, West Indies. During the 1990s Shrewsbury promoted mission awareness and fundraising to support the efforts of Passionist Father and medical doctor Richard Frechette in Haiti.

The Passionist Voice in Massachusetts:

The voice of the Passionists in 2010 is different than it was in the 1900s. Concentration on Passionists in Massachusetts in this issue of the *Passionist Heritage Newsletter* reminds both laity and Passionists of this heartfelt legacy.

Passionist Foundations In Massachusetts



Our Lady of Sorrows in West Springfield



St. Gabriel's in Brighton



Father Gilbert Walser, C.P. at Calvary Retreat Center in Shrewsbury

The Closing of Our Lady of Sorrows Retreat Center in West Springfield

by Fr. Donald Ware, C.P.

My experience as the last retreat director of Our Lady of Sorrows Retreat Center in West Springfield, Massachusetts was difficult.

When I arrived there in July of 1991, I was faced with a retreat center with falling numbers of retreatants and a budget deficit in six figures. While I was experienced in directing a retreat center from my years as Retreat Director at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1985 – 1991), I immediately realized I had to cut the deficit and try to increase the number of weekend retreatants.

My main challenge was to try to grow our current retreat groups and also establish new retreat groups. I was not too successful in this because one half of the Catholics in the Diocese of Springfield live in outlying cities and don't come down as far as Springfield. I also attempted to get more "hosted" groups to use our retreat center during the week, but Mt. Marie Conference Center (operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph) had that sewn up. In the end, I was unable to cut the deficit much below \$65,000. Still, our 100 room retreat center was too big for the market in Springfield.

The closing process for Our Lady of Sorrows Retreat Center took place in the Spring of 1994. We had three days of ritualized remembrance services which many retreatants attended. We remembered the blessings so many received at the retreat center and gave thanks for them. We ended with an outdoor Mass presided over by the Bishop John Aloysius Marshall and attended by several hundred retreatants. While many retreatants grieved the closing, they were most appreciative of the many experiences of grace they had received. We also helped those associated with the retreat movement in West Springfield who would look to the Passionist directed Calvary Retreat Center in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts and Holy Family Retreat House West Hartford, Connecticut to continue their weekend retreat experience.

Especially difficult was losing our excellent youth program. I had been impressed by a wonderful high school retreat program directed by a young woman paid by the diocese, whose office was in the retreat center,

and who trained the young adult retreat team. I grieved the loss of this youth ministry.

The closing was difficult on the employees of the retreat center who did not see it coming, even though we had not given raises for a couple of years. One employee in particular felt betrayed. This taught me to always be aware of the consequences of our decisions on employees who are loyal but also have a vested interest in our institutions. Closing our West Springfield Retreat Center was painful. I could see the sufferings of Christ, who had to let go of his will and accept the Father's plan, reflected in the grieving faces of so many people. I myself felt weary and stressed in dealing with the closing process. I had to rely on God's grace and prayer for the strength and patience to bear this burden of ministry.

The Closing of St. Gabriel's in Brighton

by Fr. Roger Elliot, C.P.

It came as no surprise: our returning of St. Gabriel's in Brighton, Massachusetts to the Archdiocese of Boston. After almost 100 years in the area, we would leave with heavy hearts and, yet, with a sense of gratitude for the ministries which had taken place at St. Gabriel's Monastery and Retreat House (which closed in 1978) and up to the present time of 2006 at the Parish. Because of the shortage of Passionist personnel in our religious community (St. Paul of the Cross Province—east coast of the United States), we had already determined at previous meetings that the last Pastor of St. Gabriel's would be Father Justinian Manning.

When Father Justinian died on January 13, 2006, the transfer process began. The Passionist Consultors from the Provincial Council, Fathers Joseph Jones and Melvin Shorter, met with the Parish Council of St. Gabriel's Parish in March 2006. Although the Parish Council was saddened to hear that we would return St. Gabriel's Parish to the Archdiocese of Boston, they understood our position. Still, they held the hope that the Archdiocese might be able to staff St. Gabriel's into the future. I was so impressed with the attitude of the members of the Parish Council that night. They agreed that if the Archdiocese could not maintain St. Gabriel's Parish, they would not stage demonstrations like a

number of other Catholic parishes in the Boston area, but would cooperate fully with the Archdiocesan Officials.

Bishop Richard Lennon, then the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Boston, met with the St. Gabriel's Parish Council at the Archdiocese of Boston chancery offices and gave ample time to their arguments for continuing St. Gabriel's. He agreed to come to St. Gabriel's Parish for a general meeting and answer the questions of those present. He explained how the Archdiocese was affected by the shortage of priests and the lack of funds to repair major damages to the St. Gabriel's Church structure. There were some heated moments as the long-time parishioners argued for continuing St. Gabriel's Parish. Bishop Lennon handled himself very well, and finally the parishioners were persuaded by the St. Gabriel's Parish Council and others present that no matter what the decision of the Archdiocese, they would cooperate fully. Again, I was moved by the attitude of the parishioners during this difficult time.

Waiting to hear from the Archdiocese of Boston regarding their decision seemed interminable. I attended two meetings of the Presbyterian Council with Cardinal Sean O'Malley present. They were all most gracious and grateful for the work of the Passionists and people of St. Gabriel's over the past years. It was not until the end of June 2006 that we received the Decree of Suppression from the Cardinal, which was effective July 14, 2006. The long wait was finally over.

Our "Farewell and Thank You" Mass was held on Saturday, June 25, 2006 at 4:00 P.M. The new Passionist Provincial, Father Joseph R. Jones, was the principal celebrant. As the Parish Administrator, I preached the homily. In attendance from the Passionist religious community were Fathers Salvatore Riccardi and Kenneth Walsh, Passionists from West Hartford, Connecticut and Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, as well as Father John Doyle, who worked with the Spanish Community associated with St. Gabriel's Parish, and Very Rev. Kevin O'Leary, Vicar Forane. The latter represented the Archdiocese of Boston. St. Gabriel's Parish Church was just about filled to capacity, and a simple reception followed in the School cafeteria.

In my homily, I paid tribute to the patience, understanding and cooperation of the parishioners during these difficult months of waiting. I encouraged them to take these virtues with them to the welcoming parish, St. Columkille's, shepherded by Msgr. William Fay, who would most cordially receive them. I

acknowledged the hard work of Father John Doyle and the members of the Spanish Community. I ended my homily reminding the assembled congregation of the words of a member of the St. Gabriel's Parish Council at one of our meetings: "Whatever happens, we will move as a community. This is what the Church is all about. If this Church closes we will move together as a community."

The members of St. Gabriel's Parish have moved as a community. They remember the words of the Lord: "Do not be terrified. I am with you always." I will always be grateful to the people of St. Gabriel's Parish for their response to a difficult decision. I am indebted, too, to Passionist Father Richard Burke, Rector of St. Ann's Monastery, Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the Passionist community for allowing Fathers Riccardi and Walsh to assist me in Brighton from November of 2005 to July 2006. I don't think I would have been able to make it without their presence and assistance.

Looking back on the experience in Brighton those two years, I am grateful for so many graces and blessings. However, I was very disappointed with the media, who were on hand to interview us regarding the closing of St. Gabriel's Parish but declined to print the press release on our history in the Boston Archdiocese or the final Liturgy which had been written by Passionist Father Rob Carbonneau. It seems that an account of a smooth transition wouldn't have sold newspapers.

I have to say that I was disappointed, too, at our Passionist Provincial Chapter of 2006 prior to the formal closing. While we voted officially to return the Parish to the Archdiocese, there was no time to celebrate our years of life and ministry in St. Gabriel's Parish. However, being welcomed back to the Passionist religious community in Scranton made my transition easier. It did take me some time, though, to adjust to a new life after the stress of Father Justinian Manning's sickness and death and the drawn-out approach of the Archdiocese regarding the actual date of the closing of the Parish. All of this, of course, is part of life. The Lord is still with us and will be with us for the difficult days ahead in the Province.

The Closing of Shrewsbury

by Mr. Ernest R. Rivard

In the months preceding the May 2008 Province Assembly of the Passionist Province of St. Paul of the Cross (eastern United States), it became evident that there was sentiment of a need to move toward consolidation of ministries and properties. The potential of Calvary Retreat in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts to be on “the list” for closure became increasingly likely to us associated with the day to day operations there as those months progressed. With this in mind, I scheduled a private retreat for a week at the new children’s hospital in Haiti. On staff there was Passionist Father and doctor Richard Frechette who had had a long-time association with Calvary Retreat. I wanted to go to Haiti and spend time reflecting on my ministry as retreat director at Calvary. I wanted to think about my future, and pray for the approaching Assembly. I sought strength for what was to come. As I later expressed in my statement at the Assembly, the retreat prepared me to “surrender” and “let go.” These were the movements necessary for me and the province to find new freedom and hope.

When the May 2008 Assembly commenced, I was prepared for the decisions that were to be made. It did not make it any easier emotionally, for saying goodbye to dear people and places brings the ache of sentiment when there is mutual care. Yet, for me, the element of surprise was not there and that helped me move through the moment. Once the vote for closure was taken, I was able to turn my thoughts to the planning that would be necessary for a dignified closure. I knew this would be important particularly for some of the employees and retreatants who would be taken by surprise by the decision. I also knew it would be essential for all those who valued the history, life and faith that had taken place because of Calvary Retreat Center.

After the Assembly, there seemed to be a myriad of details that would need attention to prepare for closure. While there had been closures previously in the province, it seemed there was no clear pattern to follow. I was very appreciative of Passionist Provincial Father Joseph R. Jones who remained extremely supportive and open to my many questions throughout the process. His Provincial Council members, as well as his secretary and staff, were quite helpful too. Bev Erickson, the Province land consultant, and eventually Greg Hampson, the newly hired province CFO, were invaluable in providing organization and attention to detail that was much needed. I found their professionalism and level-headedness helped me to keep a sense of balance through a process that had its moments of pressure. Together, I think we all facilitated a reasonably smooth and dignified transition.

From the time of the formal announcement in May 2008

of Calvary’s impending closing, through the final programs and farewell events and services held in the fall, to occasional encounters during the final months before the property sale in May 2009, I found blessing and grace in walking through the process with many of the people concerned. Clearly, not only Passionists, but many people had been influenced by the ministry and Passionist presence in Shrewsbury over four decades. These included retreatants, promoters, employees, committee people, religious, priests and deacons of the diocese, and folks in recovery. While I experienced their sadness in accepting the loss of their “place” where they had found acceptance, consolation, peace, and the freedom and joy of the reconciling cross, I also was amazed to see the maturity of their acceptance as they were well aware of the ways of the world in our times. These were people who not only knew the personal experience of the loss of loved ones, but they also had been touched by the loss of many parishes that had been closed in recent years. They knew the familiar ways of the Church were changing and the closing of Calvary Retreat Center was just one more little indicator of that change. While there was disappointment, I sensed that the core of faith was still meaningful and life-giving for them. They live in the hope that it will flower anew. Sounds like the Easter story, doesn’t it?

I have never been more grateful for the gift of Passionist spirituality that has been nourished in me since my first experiences of Passionist life during youth Encounters held at Our Lady of Sorrows Retreat in West Springfield, Massachusetts when I was a teen. Somehow, that spirituality drew me to focus on the way of the cross during that last year at Calvary Retreat. I walked the outdoor Stations, (that now have been moved to the Passionist Immaculate Conception Monastery at Jamaica, New York), several times during those final months while asking for guidance and strength. I often found peace there. At times during the closing process, I could identify with a particular scene from those stations. For example, when a few retreatants came to me after one of our farewell services to express their disappointment at Calvary’s loss and their concern for my future, I recalled the women of Jerusalem approaching Jesus on the Way. At various points during the closure, each scene from the Way became vivid for me even to the final moment of handing over the keys to the new owners.

The outdoor Stations at Calvary had a 15th Station: the Resurrection. The charism of St. Paul of the Cross has taught me to live in the hope of that fantastic truth, to learn to accept again and again that God constantly offers a renewing Spirit to us. While the loss of Calvary Retreat is still so recent that I emotionally seem to be in the Station’s scene of “waiting in the tomb” for whatever will come next, I have learned to trust that God will not fail us. God loves us too much. Let us live in that love.