

**THE CONGREGATION OF SISTERS OF THE
PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

**CONGREGATION DES SOEURS DE NOTRE
SEIGNEUR JESUS CHRIST**



1918-2018



**L'AMOUR DU CRUCIFIE NOUS PRESSE.
2 CO 5,14**

**THE LOVE OF CHRIST OVERWHELMS US.
2 COR 5.14**

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I - HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION

A -The Life of Mother Josepha and of the Congregation.

i. Biography of Mother Josepha Halacińska Foundress of the Congregation

Mother Josepha, christened Joanna was born on the 5th of May 1867 at Bulowice in Poland. She was second in a family of six children and her parents were Theresa and John Hałat. Joanna was baptized the same day she was born. She inherited a very strong faith from her parents who were devoted Christians. They attracted other Christians to God through the prayers and devotions that they held in their house. On Fridays they gathered to pray the Stations of the Cross and on Saturdays to pray the rosary. This initiative was greatly welcomed since the Church was 4km away. It is thanks to this spiritual atmosphere that Joanna's desire to love and serve the Lord developed and grew so strong. Her parents stopped at nothing to bring them up in the spirit of truth, prayer, Love of God and love of neighbor. In their prayers they always remembered the poor, the suffering and also practiced the virtue of charity to lighten the sufferings of those in need. Joanna began Primary school at the age of 8 and was already burning with so much love for God that at break time instead of spending the whole time playing, she went into the Church situated behind her school to pray.

Joanna and her family knew a lot of difficult and painful moments in their lives. She lost two of her junior brothers Joseph and John just within few months, then her father and her elder sister in the interval of a week. At the age of ten she took seriously ill and was healed by God's miraculous intervention. As a result of all these happenings, her family fell into total poverty. But despite all these trials Joanna remained faithful and prayed for God's will to be done in her life.

Joanna was now the only able child left to assist her mother. She was torn between settling in for marriage so that she could assist her family's already in difficult situation on one hand and abandoning everything in order to answer God's call to religious life on the other hand.



ii. The birth of our Congregation.



At the age of eighteen she decided to consecrate herself totally to the service of God. Joanna joined the Franciscan Sisters of Kęty. While there she received a call from the Lord instructing her to found a congregation where the sisters will meditate and propagate the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ for the expiration of sins through their prayers, penance and their work. Due to this call and following the advice of her Superiors and Spiritual director Fr. Honorat Kozmiński, she joined the **Seraphite Sisters** on the 1st of April 1889 where she spent 30 years. During her stay with the Seraphite Sisters, she continued feeling the strong and burning call within her to found a congregation where the passion of Christ will be lived, meditated and celebrated in a special way. She was then advised by Church authorities to write to the Holy Father, asking for his permission to found a congregation. She wrote to Rome on January 1918 and six months

later on the 13th of July 1918, she received a positive reply from the Holy Father authorizing her to found the **Congregation of Sisters of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ**.

She was received in the Diocese of **Płock**, Poland by then Bishop **Antoine Julien Nowowiejski**, where she, together with some sisters founded the first convent of the Passionists Sisters. Mother Josepha realized the greatest desire of her heart and the mission she felt God had entrusted to her; **to love Jesus and to make him loved, to know and to make Him known, to live and spread the Passion of the Crucified Christ: the heart of the spiritual formation of sisters of our Congregation**. The Mother Foundress placed the suffering Christ at the heart of the spirituality of the Congregation. Contemplating the suffering Christ with love, she realized the inestimable value of all men saved by the blood of Christ. That is why she desired that Sisters by their prayers, work, and sacrifices; should participate fully in the redemptive mission of Christ our Lord. Mother Josepha was elected as the first Superior General of the Congregation.

She ended her earthly journey on the 9th of February 1946 at Płock, the Mother House. Her mortal remains were laid to rest in the St Barthelemy Parish Church cemetery. Her beatification process began in the year 2006. Archbishop Edward Nowak, Secretary for the Congregation of canonizations officially opened the process of beatification at the level of the Vatican on the 28th of September 2006. Her mortal remains were



transferred from the cemetery to Saint Bartholomew parish on the 18th of November 2006. The death of Mother Josepha did not mean the end of the Congregation. Her sisters are devoted and determined to continue the mission Our Lord confided to Mother Josepha.

II - THE CHARISMA AND SPIRITUALITY OF OUR CONGREGATION

A- The Charisma of our Congregation.



The congregation of the Passionist Sisters is an international congregation of the Pontifical Right and of the Franciscan order. The charisma of our Congregation is **to expiate for the offenses committed against God, pray for the conversion of sinners and implore God's mercy on all mankind.** It is the love of the suffering Christ that pushes us to be at the service of others through the apostolate of prayer, expiation, sacrifice and work.

B- The Spirituality of our Congregation

Our spirituality is centered on **the contemplation of the mystery of our redemption: the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ.** Suffice it to say here that Passionist Sisters do not spend their time crying at the foot of the cross; they live the passion in joyful hope of the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus into heaven.

The spirituality of the passion is summarized in the motto of the Congregation: **“The love of the Christ overwhelms us” (2 Co 5:14).**

The spirituality is lived through:

- ❖ Contemplation of the suffering Christ.
- ❖ Compassion for the suffering Christ,
- ❖ Thanksgiving to God for the work of salvation.
- ❖ Reparation and expiation of the sins of the whole world.
- ❖ Apostolate on the sufferings of Christ in the view of the resurrection.
- ❖ Propagation of the devotion to the Passion of our Lord Jesus.
- ❖ Cooperating with Christ in His redemptive mission.

These are illustrated in the emblem of our congregation.

C- The emblem



By emblem of our Congregation, we refer to the instruments used during the passion of Christ, namely the crown of thorns, the nails, the sponge attached to a reed, the hammer, pincers, the spear, the cross.

III - PATRON SAINTS OF THE CONGREGATION

Our congregation has as its main patron saint Our Lady of Sorrows, due to her great participation in the life of her Son and most especially at the time of His passion. The Sorrowful Mother is the model of compassion for the salvation of mankind.

The Congregation is also placed under the patronage of:

- Saint Joseph spouse of Mary and guardian of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Saint Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan Order and a lover of the Crucified Lord.
- Saint Clare of Assisi, a model of consecrated life.

IV - THE CONGREGATION IN CAMEROON

The Congregation of Sisters of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ was founded in Cameroon on the 3rd October 1986: Sr. Téodora GRUDZINSKA, Sr. Kolbena FRACKIEWICZ, Sr. Zofia TOMASZEWSKA and Sr. Thomas SADOWSKA under the general superior Mother Cypriana DOMBRZALSKA. The first community in Cameroon was opened in Tigaza – Archdiocese of Bertoua. Our Congregation in Cameroon now counts 5 religious communities spread out as follows:

1- Tigaza community – Archdiocese of Bertoua.



2- Ndélélé community – Batouri Diocese



3- Enia community (Noviciate) – Archdiocese of Bertoua.



4- kpogolota community – Archdiocese of Bertoua



5- Santa community - Archdiocese of Bamenda



6- The Yaoundé community. - Archdiocese of Yaoundé.



V- APOSTOLATE

All our activities are placed at the service of the Local and the Universal Church. This is the spirit that animates the work of all the sisters wherever and whenever they carry out their apostolate; parishes, schools, health centres, neighbourhoods. Our apostolate is made up of the following:

- Serve all movements in which they are members.
- Organise educative talks with youths of different stages of life (primary, secondary, high schools, higher institutes of education, youths belonging to different social groupings).
- Pray for and visit the sick at home and in health centres.
- Do charity towards the underprivileged (persons living in poverty and in difficult situations).



VI-RELIGIOUS FORMATION

Religious formation is very important for all those who receive a call to consecrated life. Formation enables the candidates to consecrate themselves completely to God at the service of Christ, the Church and mankind. Formation into religious life is marked by two important levels: initial formation and on-going formation. Initial formation refers to the initial stage when a candidate is admitted, this is before making religious vows and ongoing formation is every formation received after making religious vows; it goes on all through life.

Any young Catholic girl who feels the call to serve God and the Church and is attracted to the Spirituality of the Passion can be admitted to begin formation. Such a person should be free from any impediment as stipulated by Canon Law, should be mature in decision making and should have a right intension. She should also be of good character and be mature enough to adapt to community life. The age for admission ranges between 15 to 30 years. Candidate is required to present the following documents:

- A copy of her birth certificate.
- A copy of her National Identity Card.



- A copy of her Baptism and confirmation card.
- A recommendation from the Parish Priest of origin.
- A medical certificate.
- School certificate (to attest their level of education).
- An opinion of the Superior General of the former congregation, if the candidate had been admitted into another congregation before.
- A hand written application by the candidate.
- 4 Passport size photos.

Initial formation involves the following stages.

Aspirancy

A period of one year spent in any community of the Congregation and during which the candidate closely observes the way of life of sisters.

Postulancy

A period of one year passed either in the community of the congregation during which into the life of the Congregation.

Novitiate

A period of two years after postulancy, which is intense prayer and studies in all domains for the candidates and for pastoral needs. After this stage the candidate is admitted to

formation house or any other the candidate is introduced

characterized by a life of integral development of do her first profession.

Juniorate

The juniorate period (five years), at the end final commitment to God in the Congregation. Juniorists renew their vows after every 1 year. The temporally professed sister continues formation in many domains; pastoral, spiritual, professional and any other formation that can be of advantage to religious life.

of which the sister makes her



SOME THOUGHTS OF MOTHER JOSEPHA

- I cannot understand that the Lord Jesus really wished to suffer so much to make us worthy.
- It is not possible for anyone who prays the Stations of the Cross zealously and daily not to be sanctified.
- The Lord asks us to encourage all those who propagate His passion.
- May everything you do be done in a spirit of charity and penance.
- A Passionist does not stay idle at the foot of the cross, she collects the drops of Christ's blood and offer it unceasingly to our heavenly Father in reparation for our sins and for the salvation of souls.
- The crucified Christ awaits our help and our hearts.
- Be awake, keep vigil so that Jesus does not remain alone.
- A Passionist has to live the Passion of Christ and imitate Christ daily in the spirit of penitence.
- Know that our duty is to expiate to God for our sins, implore His Divine Mercy for the world and also to save the souls in purgatory as reparation for the great punishment that awaits us.
- You put on crucifixes but you do not accept to suffer.
- I founded this Congregation in order to meditate the Passion of Christ, expiate to God for the sins of the world and pray for the conversion of sects.
- God wants us to continuously venerate His Passion. He will bless everyone who does this.
- Imploring God's Mercy for the world is the duty of every Passionist.
- Do expiation of sins so as to reduce the pain and suffering of Christ.
- As children of the Crucified, it is obligatory for us to live a life of poverty in total love and reverence for God.
- We can live poverty everywhere except in the Chapel.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUALITY RENEWAL

This commitment was made on the 12/02/1964 in the presence of the mortal remains of Mother Josepha.

O Jesus, hidden in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, we, your beloved daughters gathered together on this anniversary of the death of our Mother foundress, solemnly promise:

- To persevere and live as children of the crucified with the same zeal as at the beginning of the Congregation.
- To consciously participate in all spiritual exercises.
- To observe the moments of silence recommended by the Constitution.
- To detach ourselves completely from and to renounce to the spirit of criticism and murmuring.
- To nurse and maintain fraternal love in our thoughts, words and actions.
- To practice and live the virtue of Franciscan poverty.
- To endeavor to live the spirit of total obedience.
- To readily and willingly live the spirit of sacrifice most especially in difficult situations.

O Jesus, You who knows how spiritually weak, lukewarm, and displeasing we are .We implore you to grant us the strength and courage we need to better practice and live all that we have promised with all our hearts. Our Redeemer, we beg you to bless us your poor children who kneel before you asking for help and strength for a Spiritual renewal. Grant us the grace of perseverance so that on our pilgrim journey to the Creator, we will not stumble and fall under the burden of difficulties, but shall faithfully and willingly carry the crosses linked to the vows and religious instructions which we freely and heartily make.

Receive Lord these renewed offerings from our humble and contrite hearts, give us the strength we need in order to courageously face all the hindrances that prevent us from living the charisma and spirituality of our religious family. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF THE SERVANT OF GOD MOTHER JOSEPHA HALACIŃSKA

Lord Jesus Christ, who by your Cross and Resurrection redeemed the world; humbly we beg you to accept Mother Josepha Halacińska who faithfully revered your passion amongst the blessed. So that following her example we may ardently plead for the salvation of all who have been ransomed by the blood of Christ. We pray by the intercession of the servant of God Mother Josepha for the grace (here mention your intention) through which we will glorify you forever. Amen.

1- INTRODUCTION

La Congrégation des Sœurs de la Passion de notre Seigneur Jésus – Christ encore appelée Congrégation des sœurs Passionistes est basée sur la IIIème Règle de St François d'Assise ; de droit pontifical ; contemplative et active.

2-BUT :

Le but de la Congrégation est de glorifier Dieu et travailler pour le salut de tout homme.

3-DEVISE :

« L'Amour du Crucifié nous presse » (2 Cor 5, 14)

4-HISTORIQUE :

Joanna EWA HAŁACINSKA est née le 5 mai 1867 à Bulowice en Pologne. Le 14 mai 1887. A l'âge elle entra chez les Sœurs Franciscaines moniales puis pour répondre à un appel pressant du Seigneur, elle fit son entrée dans la Congrégation des Sœurs Séraphites où elle reçut le nom de Sr Catherine. Membre active de la Congrégation des Sœurs Séraphites et Econome de la congrégation, elle décide après 30 ans de méditation et de réflexion de se retirer pour répondre à l'appel de Dieu qui l'invitait à fonder la Congrégation des Sœurs de la Passion de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ.

Sr Catherine fait part de son projet au saint Siège et le 13 juillet 1918, elle reçoit un accord positif lui permettant officiellement de fonder la Congrégation de la Passion de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ. C'est en 1918, vers la fin de la 1^{ère} guerre mondiale que la Sr Catherine fonde la Congrégation de la Passion de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ. Sr Catherine est poussée par l'Esprit Saint à venir au secours de son peuple dans un contexte de guerre, en proie à la misère, la faim, la déscolarisation... Un grand nombre d'enfants et de jeunes orphelins est dans la rue livré à son propre sort. En ces enfants se trouvent le Christ souffrant. La Sœur Catherine portera dès lors le nom de Mère Josépha et quelques années plus tard, la Congrégation est reconnue comme étant de droit pontifical.

Comme berceau de la Congrégation, la Mère Josépha choisit Plock où elle est accueillie par l'Archevêque NOWOWIEJSKI, martyr de la 2^{ème} guerre mondiale béatifié en 1999 par le Pape Jean Paul II.

La Congrégation de la Passion de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ grandit en nombre et, dans le but de répondre aux besoins de l'Eglise, s'implante dans toute la Pologne puis dans les pays d'Europe, au Canada et en Afrique.

5-CHARISME

Connaitre et faire connaitre, aimer et faire aimer le Christ crucifié. C'est sur cet esprit qu'est basée la formation spirituelle des sœurs.

6-SPIRITUALITE :

La spiritualité est fondée sur des principes théologiques solides car elle a sa source dans le dogme de la rédemption ; la passion, la mort, la résurrection, l'ascension. Au cœur de la spiritualité passionniste, se trouve le Christ. En contemplant avec amour le visage du Christ, la Passionniste perçoit la valeur éternelle de chaque homme racheté par le sang du Christ. C'est pourquoi Mère Josépha désirait de tout son être que ses sœurs, par la prière, le travail, les sacrifices d'expiation, participent pleinement à la mission rédemptrice du Christ. Notre spiritualité est centrée sur la Passion, la Mort et la Résurrection de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ et se concrétise dans :

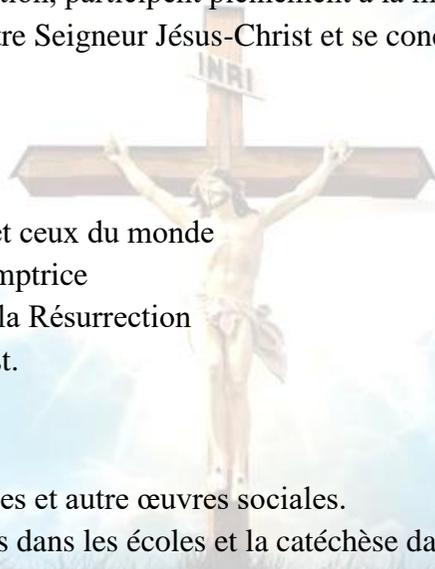
- La contemplation du Christ souffrant
- La compassion pour le Christ souffrant
- L'action de grâce au Christ pour l'œuvre du salut
- La réparation et l'expiation de nos propres péchés et ceux du monde
- La coopération avec le Christ dans sa mission rédemptrice
- L'apostolat de la souffrance dans la perspective de la Résurrection
- La propagation de la dévotion à la Passion du Christ.

7-ACTIVITES PASTORALE

- santé – enseignement – pastorale – œuvres caritatives et autres œuvres sociales.
- Enseignement et éducation des enfants et des jeunes dans les écoles et la catéchèse dans les paroisses.
- Encadrement des jeunes et des enfants et des adultes dans les mouvements, groupes et associations d'action catholique
- Soins aux malades dans les hôpitaux, centres de santé, maisons de retraite ;
- Œuvres sociales et suivi des populations pour leur auto promotion
- Œuvres caritatives.

8-Lieux D'implantation :

- Pologne (Plock – Varsovie ...)
- Belgique (Bruxelles)



- Italie (Rome)
- Canada (Montréal et Peterborough)
- Allemagne
- Cameroun (Bertoua – Ndélélé - Yaoundé – Santa)

Mère Josépha retourne vers le Père à la fin de la 2^{ème} guerre mondiale le 9 février 1946.

9-LES PASSIONISTES AU CAMEROUN :

A la demande de l’Eglise qui est au Cameroun représentée par Mgr Lambert VAN HEYGEN, Evêque du Diocèse de Bertoua, région dans l’Est du Cameroun. Les sœurs passionistes arrivent au Cameroun le 4 octobre 1986 dans la Paroisse en création St Laurent de Tigaza. Quatre sœurs commencent la mission : Sr Théodora – Sr Kolbena - Sr Sophie - Sr Thomas.

- En 1986 la première communauté est fondée à Tigaza.
- En 1990 une communauté est fondée à Ndélélé dans le département de la Kadey à 200 km de Bertoua.

En 2005, une communauté (maison de formation) est créée à Bertoua, en la Paroisse notre Dame des Douleurs au quartier Enia.

- En 2012 une communauté est créée à Bertoua dans la Paroisse St Esprit au quartier Kpogolota.
- En 2012 une communauté voit le jour dans l’Archidiocèse de Yaoundé dans la région du Centre du Cameroun.
- En 2013 une autre communauté voit le jour dans l’Archidiocèse de Bamenda, dans la Région du Nord-Ouest du Cameroun.

Les vocations au Cameroun :

Les vocations religieuses naissent, fleurissent et grandissent de façon progressive au sein de notre Congrégation. Des unes après les autres frappent à la porte de la Congrégation et sont accueillies pour faire partie de la famille des filles de Mère Josépha.

10-LA FORMATION :

- **Aspiranat interne** – période d’une année de connaissance réciproque de la jeune fille avec la Congrégation.



- **Postulat** – période d’une année de discernement, d’apprentissage de la vie de prière, communautaire et pastorale.
- **Le noviciat** – période de 2 années au cours desquelles la novice s’imprègne du charisme et de la spiritualité de la Congrégation. Au terme de ces deux ans la novice prononce les premiers vœux.
- **Le juniorat** – période de cinq années où la jeune professe s’engage à intégrer et à vivre le charisme, les vœux, la spiritualité, la vie communautaire et apostolique dans un engagement définitif appelé Profession perpétuelle. C’est une étape préparatoire à la mission au sein de la Congrégation.

Prière pour la béatification de la Mère Fondatrice

Seigneur Jésus Christ, qui nous a sauvés par Ta Croix et Ta Résurrection humblement nous Te supplions de recevoir parmi les bienheureux Mère Josépha Hałacińska, fidèle adoratrice du Christ dans sa Passion, afin qu’à son exemple nous brûlions de zèle pour le salut de tous ceux qui ont été rachetés par Ton sang. Seigneur Jésus nous te prions par l’intercession de la Servante de Dieu Mère Josépha de nous accorder la grâce (ici on exprime la grâce désirée), pour laquelle nous glorifierons à jamais Ta miséricorde. Amen.

