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# ❖ The Passionist Heritage Newsletter ❖

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Summer 2005

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## From Pictures to Reality: Finding Fr. Viktor Koch, C.P.

By Katherine Koch

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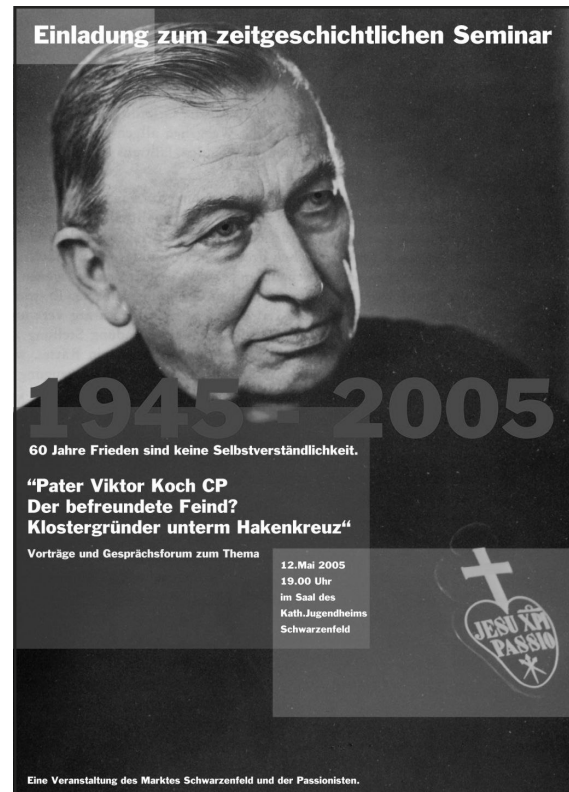
### Editor's Introduction:

In May 2005, German and Austrian Passionists of the Vice-Province of the Five Wounds, the American relatives of Father Viktor Koch, C.P., (1873-1955), three American Passionists, and the people of Schwarzenfeld, Germany joined together in a series of events to celebrate the holy courage of Father Viktor during the war years (1939-1945). The people of Schwarzenfeld explained to the Koch family their personal memories. Ms. Katherine Koch is writing the life of Father Viktor. The Koch website is [www.viktorkoch.com](http://www.viktorkoch.com).

Father Viktor was made an honorary citizen of Schwarzenfeld. He died in 1955 and was buried in the monastery cemetery. Father Viktor Koch was a faithful Passionist priest. With a determined spirit he worked hard to establish the German Passionists. In many ways, his spiritual intensity was at the very heart of his character. —*Rob Carbonneau, C.P.*

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I've never met this solemn-faced ancestor gazing at me from the crinkle-edged, black and white pages of distant history, though after spending two years researching his extraordinary life, I'm convinced that our bond of kinship transcends a common birthplace and family surname. While reading typewritten correspondences my great granduncle composed over seventy years ago, I recognize our unifying character trait whispering beneath his words - in the darkest hours when radiant hopes diminish into a dying spark and insurmountable adversity towers before him, he remains spiritually and emotionally entrenched, incapable of abandoning a cause that must reach fruition. Empowered by unshakable faith and adamant perseverance, Fr. Viktor Koch, C.P., founded three Passionist monasteries during an economic depression, defied Nazi Germany within a miniscule church sacristy, and defended the Bavarian town of Schwarzenfeld as advancing Allied forces threatened retaliation against its innocent population. Sixty years later, his equally determined great grandniece fights a different battle: this obscure literary neophyte is determined to shatter the



Poster of the Event. English translation: Invitation to the Historical Seminar. 1945-2005. 60 years peace are not matter of course. "Pater Viktor Koch CP the friendly enemy? Monastery founder under the swastika" Lectures and discussion forum to the topic. 12 May 2005 at 7:00 p.m. In the hall of the Catholic Youth Center, Schwarzenfeld. A

book publication barrier and reveal Fr. Viktor's untold story.

Last year my father and I visited the Passionist Archives in Union City, New Jersey, where we uncovered a gold mine of information documenting Fr. Viktor's inspiring struggle to establish and protect the Order's German Foundation. In my great granduncle's personal account of his wartime experiences, he refrained from describing the story in its entirety: an admirable penchant for humility prevented him from elaborating upon his own actions during its dramatic twists and turns. If I wish to craft an historically faithful portrayal of this unknown Passionist

hero, it's imperative that I venture beyond monochrome photos and personal letters. I must explore the gilded pilgrimage church where he prayed, preached and endured Nazi oppression, and indelibly etch the memory of those surroundings deep within my creative consciousness. I need to hear firsthand accounts from the lips of aging witnesses who remember Fr. Viktor's tenacity and heroism. Finally, I want to absorb the cultural and religious atmosphere of the Bavarian town Fr. Viktor defended long ago, for I suspect that his spiritual imprint lingers there amidst the people who revere their Ehrenbürger, or "honor citizen."

I've never traveled overseas, and I consider the prospect of conducting international research more daunting than confronting the inevitable language barrier. In 2005, the year Schwarzenfeld holds its sixtieth anniversary celebration honoring my Passionist ancestor's bravery during the war, I sense history's forces uniting, opening a unique window of opportunity. Fr. Viktor's magnetic stare haunts my computer desktop; during those times when my courage fails, I focus on those clear, gray-colored eyes and envision the eternally frozen, powerful contours of his face shifting in fluid motion, crinkling into a pastor's compassionate smile. "Have faith!" he reminds me. "Don't worry, God will provide." As my family and I board an airbus carrying us across the Atlantic for the first time in our lives, I leave all doubts and fears behind on familiar shores, and open my mind, heart and soul to adventures awaiting us in a faraway country.

### Many Greetings

We arrive in Schwarzenfeld around noon on Wednesday May 10<sup>th</sup>. Our exuberant guide, Herr Peter Bartmann, takes us to the Miesberg, where Fr. Viktor built a Passionist novitiate house beside the towering pilgrimage church seventy years ago. Moments after my family and I wander into a circular, stone-paved courtyard, the monastery's arched wooden door creaks open, revealing our welcoming committee: a procession of priests dressed in ankle-length black robes bearing the embroidered Passionist symbol in white, along with townspeople dressed in their Sunday best. Their leader is a benevolently smiling priest wearing dark-tinted glasses, and in a serene, softly accented voice, he introduces himself as Fr. Gregor Lenzen, C.P., Provincial of the Passionist German Foundation.

As I acquaint myself with Fr. Viktor's present-day successor, I'm peripherally aware of the procession drifting into the sunlit courtyard, greeting my family and collecting around me in patient circles. I've never met these friendly strangers, and yet the eager warmth

radiating from their broad smiles convinces me otherwise. A mysterious familiarity binds us.

"Katherine?" A middle-aged, blond-haired woman gently touches my arm, her bright blue eyes sparkling behind smart, gold-rimmed glasses. "I'm Irmi Ehrenreich!" I stand agape, embracing her: like a magician's incantation, that jubilant announcement transforms this stranger into my godsend research contact who answered countless emails over the past two years. Next she introduces additional memorable names magically bounding out of a parallel, text-based universe into reality – Frau Rita Wittleben, who composed a detailed letter describing Fr. Viktor's vital role in establishing the St. Nikolaus Apothecary; Schwarzenfeld's historian, Herr Oswald Wilhelm, who spent long hours behind his keyboard, emailing answers to my endless lists of questions; and our Passionist contact at the Miesberg monastery, Pater Klemens Hayduck, C.P. Finally, I encounter a face I instantly recognize, Passionist Archives Director Fr. Rob Carbonneau, C.P., who swept me under his wing after last year's visit to the Archives and mentored me along this rugged journey into history. I stand back and absorb it all, the Miesbergkirche's picturesque steeple towering against a blue-white sky – no longer a photo, but reality – my family and I surrounded by friends new and old, gathered near the marble plaque honoring our heroic ancestor. Are we really here? I wonder. A dreamlike quality pervades the scene.

"Shall we proceed with the wreath laying ceremony?" Fr. Gregor suggests at length. A reverent hush descends over the crowd, and en masse, we follow him past a crosslaced, black iron gate to the Miesberg's enclosed cemetery grounds, where another momentous introduction is about to take place. Each step across the courtyard's cobblestone walkway brings me closer to another sight I've beheld in photographs and video footage, a silent row of granite memorial stones peacefully nestled amid pillow bushes and prim flower gardens. The instant my traveling gaze falls upon Fr. Viktor's grave marker glistening in the afternoon sunlight, I stand transfixed, a knot swelling in my throat. This unexpected wave of emotion mystifies me. Is it a delayed reaction to meeting people I've known only in the virtual sense? I ask myself, or pure bliss at the realization that, after spending five long months planning this trip, I've actually arrived in Schwarzenfeld?

Upon further reflection, I sense that the reason behind my impending tears runs far deeper than the fulfillment of eager expectations: since 2003, I've researched an ancestor who, from my perspective, existed only in stories, photographs, and typewritten letters. Although I'd

established a profound emotional connection with him as a writer and family member, he always remained confined inside the boundaries of my vivid imagination. This marker bears tangible proof that Fr. Viktor is more than an engaging protagonist from a story evolving within the recesses of my creative mind. A flesh and blood human being, he once walked the grounds where I presently stand, and at this moment his earthly remains are physically here, separated from me only by a few meters of earth.

Those crisply engraved letters, “P. Viktor C.P., Nikolaus Koch,” so entranced me that I barely register the rustling behind me as my father and Peter Bartmann hoist a wreath brimming with palm leaves and fresh cut flowers onto the grave site. I hasten to my father’s side and assist, straightening a silky white bow tousled by spring breezes so that the message in elaborate gold lettering, “From his grateful and admiring family and friends in America and Germany,” is visible to cameras digitally capturing this scene in minute detail. The whole time I perceive myself moving mechanically, for I’m still captivated by that granite stone and its inscription. The powerful forces of reality surging from the grave marker intensify when I draw near, and as my trembling hand rests upon its cool, gritty surface, the tears of joy at meeting Fr. Viktor finally begin to flow.

### **From Black and White to Living Color: The Story Unfolds**

Standing in Miesberg’s flower sacristy, I close my eyes and conjure memories of a photograph in monochrome clarity. An exposed light bulb protrudes from the plaster ceiling, casting pale light on sparse white walls, pine board paneling, and electrical cords snaking along wood and plaster boundaries. On the left, Fr. Paul Boeminghaus, C.P.’s spectacled, shadowy form looms in an arched doorway, pausing for the unknown cameraman; to his right, a descending staircase fashioned out of unfinished wooden planks diagonally slices the photograph at a severe angle. Tucked beneath the steep, slanting stairwell, Fr. Viktor perches himself on a blanket-covered bench. Without the striped mattress and limp, telltale pillow lumped on its far end I’d never imagine that this inadequate furnishing is, in reality, the improvised cot where he slept.

Sixty years later the two courageous Passionists are mere images forever trapped in that grainy black and white photo, but the austere flower sacristy where they heroically defied Nazi orders to abandon their monastery remains. Guiding our tour group through



Katherine Koch and her father, Gary Koch stand before the grave of Fr. Viktor Koch, C.P.

shadowy recesses concealed beyond the Miesberg church’s ornate, beautifully painted altar, Fr. Gregor unlocks a heavy wooden doorway. My family and I follow him into an old, dimly illuminated storage room no larger than a walk-in closet, cluttered with gold-plated candlesticks and assorted seasonal decorations. It’s smaller than I expected. I realize for the first time that it’s V-shaped, and the narrowing walls create an ominous perception of confinement compelling the five people presently squeezed within its limited space to rigidly stand together. Curious onlookers clustering outside the arched threshold pause at Fr. Gregor’s upraised palm. “Perhaps we should have only the Koch family at this time,” he says, “just the Koch family, please. I doubt very much that we can fit any more people.”

While the German Foundation Provincial recounts his predecessor’s wartime trials and tribulations, I ruminate over this claustrophobic enclosure, the dingy floorboards creaking beneath my feet. In that cramped triangular space beneath the slanting stairwell I imagine my great granduncle’s plump, robed figure uncomfortably huddled upon a bed so small that, if he rolled over, he’d tumble to the floor in a bruised, miserable heap. It’s heartrending, imagining any family member enduring four years of hardship, though on an intuitive level, I understand Fr. Viktor’s reasons. He willingly embraced this spiritual challenge, because as a Passionist, he offered suffering to God, and in doing so, deepened his connection with Christ Crucified.

Later that week, Peter Bartmann and his English-speaking daughter Elizabeth continue this journey from photos to reality, affording my father, Fr. Rob, and I an

opportunity to tour other pertinent historical sites: Schwarzenfeld's cemetery, the winding road where American tanks rolled into town, and the train station where the opening chapters of a harrowing human drama occurred. Together, we contemplate rusty, grass-covered train tracks stretching and receding into an overcast horizon, and the old station warehouse, a stark, red-bricked hulk awkwardly juxtaposed against a backdrop of tidy modern houses. Except for faint clicking from an occasional camera shutter, nothing breaks the meditative pall descending upon us. Knowledge of past events enhances our perception of ghosts that still haunt this aging, dreary relic from human history's darkest era, and for an instant, unbidden images race through our minds: Allied airplanes scream overhead, swooping, strafing train cars they've mistakenly identified as a German military convoy. The real occupants – shuddering, emaciated Poles, Jews, and Russian prisoners from the Flossenbürg concentration camp – thrash against locked doors in a frantic effort to evacuate. Those tortured souls who succeed leap toward Nazi soldiers ordered to fire upon anyone attempting escape.

My personal contemplation shifts toward the moments when Fr. Viktor confronted the atrocity's remains in horrific living color – an incident he omitted from written accounts and, to my knowledge, never discussed with another human being. However, he lacked the luxury of relegating this atrocity to his subconscious, for in WWII's devastating aftermath, he helped Schwarzenfeld's Catholic population contend with lingering spiritual and emotional trauma. "How did you face this, Viktor?" I long to know. "What thoughts crossed your mind after you realized the full magnitude of what the Nazis had done?" Where details are lacking, the literary artist reaches into personal life experiences and draws out a common reference point: Christ's Passion and the religious significance of His suffering and Resurrection. Perhaps my great granduncle believed that, despite the incomprehensible acts humanity is capable of inflicting upon itself, the cross always triumphs over evil, bringing peace and reconciliation in its brilliant light. My wandering gaze follows train tracks vanishing into the distance, and I realize that people in our modern world desperately need to hear that message.

### Opening a Dialogue With the Past

Every night as I drift to sleep in my hotel room at the Schloss Schwarzenfeld, I dream of waking tomorrow morning, pulling back tasseled, heavy red drapes covering the large picture window, and discovering WWII-era American troops parking jeeps along the

cobblestone driveway below. Clutching my tape recorder, I push through the hotel's revolving glass doors and dash into May 1945. I know precisely where to locate the famous priest who speaks perfect English: by this time he's at Schwarzenfeld's town hall, interpreting for local citizens presenting requests to American officials. Naturally my great granduncle is a little perplexed by this young stranger bursting into the Rathaus, silencing the din as she cries out his name. After explaining who I am and tearfully expressing how he's become such an inspirational force in my life, I'd flip on my tape machine and, with a fierce persistence he'd find eerily familiar, I'd eventually pose questions I've pondered well over a year. "Tell me about the day when the American 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division arrived. Who called you to the Rathaus? Where were you when..."

But no such luck. I awake the next morning, frowning at silvery satellite dishes perched upon red-tile roofs and shiny, modern BMWs parked below my window. Despite the unavoidable fact that I'm rooted in 2005, I realize that my great granduncle can still relay his story – perhaps not with his own voice, but through those of eyewitnesses who experienced the same historical events.

Since I'm verifying basic facts, I find myself engaged in a dynamic process. The questions I prepared prior to my flight across the Atlantic are partially based upon old theories and incomplete information that eyewitnesses are updating each passing minute. I'm also facing another inevitable difficulty in investigating sixty-year-old facts: each person remembers events differently (and sometimes incorrectly), and thus it's incumbent upon the historical researcher to discern similarities relayed in each verbal account, for this is where the true story lies.

Pressing my tape machine's record button, I conduct my first interview and immerse myself in a new experience: I'm gradually learning the art of asking questions. Probing an eyewitness' knowledge challenges the researcher to rapidly evaluate information offered and, with a combination of skill and luck, formulate a strategy that will verify theories or unearth factual gems. I often wonder, "How much should I focus my witness' train of thought? If I permit them to wander into stories they believe are most pertinent, will I lose precious time, or potentially gain new perspectives?" In an international research setting, the translator introduces yet another component in this delicately balanced equation; I'm fortunate that my interpreter, Fr. Gregor, is a local Naaburg native who understands the Bavarian dialect and culture. Perpetually serene, he listens to a full minute of testimony and helps sift answers for valuable information.

On one occasion a spontaneous, communicative Frau describing encounters with Fr. Viktor offers details worth gold. Her wrinkled, bony hands slicing the air, she rambles an eager, breathless stream of German describing “the Blacks,” a colloquial term referring to citizens who regularly attended church during WWII, solidly supporting the Catholic clergy despite escalating social pressure to abandon their faith. Eyewitnesses who clearly remember this time period affirm that Fr. Viktor’s continued presence in Schwarzenfeld fortified the religious spirituality of this group. Rather than publicly leading from the pulpit where Nazi collaborators scrutinized his sermons for politically sensitive messages, he guided devout Catholic followers through the confessional, and indirectly by setting an unforgettable example of nonviolent resistance. Caution is essential, as Fr. Paul Boeminghaus’ story suggests: in June 1944, Gestapo officials observe him distributing letters purporting a “miracle that will bring joy to the world,” and they summarily arrest him for spreading anti-war propaganda. Any act interpreted as an attempt to counteract Nazi ideology resulted in swift, severe retribution.

Another eyewitness offers an intriguing personal story that reveals an insight into my great granduncle’s tedious situation: “I was a mass boy in the parish church,” he explains, Irmi translating in flowing English. “One morning, the parish priest asked me to fetch something from Fr. Viktor. I was accompanied by another boy, and we both wore heavy wooden shoes with nails. We approached the church sacristy and the metal of the nails made a loud sound against church’s stone floor. Fr. Viktor heard footsteps pounding through the church, approaching the sacristy ... he emerged looking very pale and when he saw us he said, ‘Thank God, it’s you! I thought the S.S. was coming to get me.’”

### **Invoking the Spirit**

When we first drove into Schwarzenfeld on Wednesday afternoon, I could estimate our proximity from the town based solely upon seminar advertisements. On its outskirts, mounted poster boards sprang up near the curbs like occasional roadside flowers; once we reached its thriving center, Fr. Viktor’s likeness covered so many street corners, lampposts, tree trunks, and store windows that I sensed my great granduncle watching our taxi – and the poster density afforded him an unhampered view of every twist and turn on our way to the Miesberg.

Thursday evening, a record-breaking three hundred local

citizens flock to Schwarzenfeld’s Catholic Youth Center, the Jugendheim, attending this long-awaited event held every ten years in Fr. Viktor’s honor. On stage, a folded paper announcing my name in bold black letters draws my attention. Crisply printed speech papers rolled in my curled palm, I cross a banquet hall packed with townspeople contentedly sipping the local golden lager, their eyes following me, fingers pointing. They’re prattling in rapid German, though a translation is unnecessary: long before I occupy my seat at the speakers’ discussion table, they recognize my face and name, both of which accompanied front-page headlines splashed across their morning newspapers. They all know who I am - Fr. Viktor’s great grandniece from America, scheduled to deliver a presentation exploring their Ehrenbürger’s unforgettable persona at tonight’s seminar. When I approach the podium they study me, searching for shadows of the beloved honor citizen who defended them from enraged Allied soldiers and provided for their material, spiritual, and emotional welfare in the war’s devastating aftermath. In my words, they long to hear his “convincing fiery speech.”

Although the transient fame flattered me earlier that day, I find the sensation unsettling once this realization dawns on me. During fleeting moments before my speech begins, I recite a silent prayer and briefly reflect upon the unyielding gaze in my ancestor’s steel gray eyes – a vision that always inspires me during stressful times. Halfway through my lecture, I reach a favorite quote extracted from a letter he once composed to Fr. Stanislaus Grennan, C.P., his superior in America. Within the context of this correspondence, both parties exchange unsuppressed opinions regarding the Passionist German Foundation’s progress. I easily identify with my great granduncle’s reaction to Fr. Stanislaus’ dismal evaluation, especially when he’s spent four years fighting an uphill battle, conquering obstacles so daunting that he once reported, “it seems that hell itself is bent upon keeping our Foundation from being brought to a success.”

“You speak of this Foundation possibly proving a failure,” I read aloud to my attentive audience, allowing the expressive force I perceive in Fr. Viktor’s words to surface in mine. “To the best of my knowledge, such a thought has never entered our minds here... Everything considered, it seems to me we are doing wonderfully well. I am absolutely convinced that God is blessing this foundation, and therefore it will succeed eventually...the work must and will succeed.”

*(Continued on page 7)*

## The Befriended Enemy

by Father Gregor Lenzen, C.P.

### Editor's Introduction

Father Viktor was born in Sharon, Pennsylvania, and ordained a Passionist priest in 1896 for American St. Paul of the Cross Province. In 1922 Father Viktor and Father Valentine Lehnerd, C.P. established the Passionists in Pasing, Germany, outside of Munich. In 1925 Maria Schutz, located in the scenic Austrian Alps became the second foundation.

By 1941 World War II forced a good many German Passionist priests and seminarians to enter the military. During the 1930s Father Viktor became an Austrian citizen. Consequently when the "Anschluss" resulted in Germany and Austria being formed into one country, all Austrians automatically gained German citizenship. Uniquely, Father Viktor was not deported even as other American Passionists had to return home. He was allowed to stay in part of the Schwarzenfeld monastery—much of the time with fellow Passionist Father Paul Boeminghaus, who was arrested for a short time. During the early 1940s the Nazis used the monastery for a school and study center for atomic research. Still, through this period local Catholics known as the "Blacks" defied Nazi prohibitions and continued to bring the priests food. All the while both priests continued as best they could to minister under the local Nazi occupation. The monastery in Schwarzenfeld survived the war intact. However, the monastery and church in both Pasing and Maria Schutz, suffered damage.

—*Rob Carbonneau, C.P.*

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Establishing a Passionist foundation in Germany was not Fr Viktor's idea. He had been chosen for this work by his superiors. After he had gone to Germany out of obedience, as he said, he wanted to do "the work of the Congregation", i.e. "to implant the Cross". This was what motivated him most strongly. He took on board all the accompanying difficulties and obstructions.

The motives of the men whom he encountered in the process of founding the individual monasteries were often of a quite different nature. Germany was in politi-

cal and economic turmoil when the first Passionists arrived there. The "rich Americans, also the enemies of World War I" were not exactly given a sympathetic reception. If they were determined to settle down there, then at least they ought to help to create jobs and to improve the economic situation. In the meantime, in the mother province in America, people were becoming tired of the huge financial outlay and they regarded the enterprise as a failure.

In spite of pressure from all sides, Fr Viktor did not give up. And his efforts were rewarded. Before the outbreak of World War II he was able to look on a thriving, stable foundation and some promising young people. But running parallel to his development work the National Socialist movement had also flourished, from the Hitler putsch of 1923 to the seizing of power in 1933. The new rulers with their xenophobic and anti-religious decrees demolished the work that had been accomplished at great sacrifice.

After the war Fr Viktor had to start at the beginning again. Why did he do this? Why did he not simply leave the Germans to their own devices and go back to America? Why? — because he wanted to do the work of the Congregation, because he had initially come to implant the Cross on this soil and because he placed his belief in the triumph of the Cross above that of human wisdom. Furthermore, for the people he knew so well, he wanted to be what the parish priest of Schwarzenfeld had expressed as a wish to the Passionists at the consecration of the monastery: a messenger of peace and adviser and helpmate in times of spiritual need and distress.

The former enemy had come with the best of intentions and in spite of great opposition he had become a friend to many people. He was suddenly to find himself in the role of the enemy again, without really wishing to. He did not withdraw his friendship in this difficult situation and some thanked him for this by their loyalty. In a time of great danger the unwilling enemy proved his friendship and thus saved a whole town and its population.

As a priest and religious Fr Viktor did not think in terms of "friend" or "enemy". As a German-American, and as a member of an international religious community, in which all treat each other as brothers, he was not marked by any feelings of nationalism. For him it was people who mattered, and their salvation, which for him originates in the Cross of Christ. He had come to implant this Cross and in so doing had become a messenger of peace. □

(Continued from page 5)

I hear my own amplified voice rhythmically thundering throughout the banquet hall as I deliver his final statement, one containing monumental significance for us both. We're entrenched and spiritually united in parallel battles across time, Fr. Viktor and I, but over the course of this journey into WWII history, my motivations have expanded beyond personal desires to publish a spellbinding historical novel. Encapsulated inside the story's spiritual and emotional human drama I've uncovered enduring, poignant messages of hope and faith relevant to our modern world. Despite the mountainous obstacles awaiting me on the road ahead, I must and will succeed!

### **Bis später, Schwarzenfeld**

During the first plane flight carrying my family and I away from our homeland, I remember combating natural fears of leaving a comforting and familiar world behind, if only for a short time; on Monday the 19<sup>th</sup>, the day of our departure from Schwarzenfeld, an equally powerful sensation overwhelms me. After shedding joyful tears at Fr. Viktor's gravesite, finding myself absorbed in gripping personal narratives relayed from eyewitnesses who venerate his memory, touring the magnificent Miesberg church and monastery, and experiencing it all inside the warm, inviting embrace of a deeply religious Bavarian community, I'm leaving a second home and bidding farewell to a newfound family. I've spent only days or mere hours in each person's company, and yet during those moments when we're exchanging parting words, I'm drowning in tears and floundering in an emotional undertow of golden memories I'll treasure forever. Rather than bidding each other a customary "Auf Wiedersehen," we say "bis später," knowing that God will permit our paths to cross once again. Within each cherished bond of friendship, I gleaned ethereal fragments of my great granduncle's spirit. I hope my extended spiritual family in Schwarzenfeld established a similar, magical connection to their Ehrenbürger in meeting his living kindred. □

**On the average it costs \$600 to publish an edition and mail an edition of the newsletter. We ask for your support and thank those who have already donated.**

**Make check payable to:  
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## Archives

### Notes

- Fr. Rob will attend the 21st National Catholic China Conference. Coordinated by the U.S. Catholic China Bureau at Seton Hall, New Jersey, it will be held June 24-26, 2005 at Seattle University, Seattle, Washington. The theme is "The Growth of Christianity in China: Realities, Challenges and Opportunities."
- Beginning in May 2005, Br. André Mathieu, C.P. began to lend his expertise to the Passionist Historical Archives. He has identified and organized photos from Pittsburgh. In addition he organized the records from the Mission Office which contain a history of Passionist domestic preaching in the mid-twentieth century and wrote a research guide for the material.
- Fr. Rob has processed the sermons of Father Leander Delli Veneri, C.P.



### Did you know?

Want to learn more about the world-wide expansion of Passionists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Begin with the Passionist publication *Bolletino* [Bulletin]. Published in Rome from 1920 to 1929 [volumes 1-10], primarily written in Italian and Latin, it offers readers official Passionist documentation and fascinating history, such as how the Passionists ministered in Bulgaria, South America, and China, and survived persecution in Mexico from 1914-1917. Interestingly, 1920-1922 [volumes 1-3] were translated into English and distributed from Holy Cross College, the Passionist foundation at Dunkirk, New York. Beginning in 1930 [volume 11] the journal was published in Rome in the same form under a new name: *Acta Congregationis a SS. Cruce et Passione D.N.J.C.* [Acts of the Congregation]. The Passionist Historical Archives in Union City has a complete set until 1963 [volume 32].

To our surprise we found that there is a chronological gap in the international Passionist story until it resumes again in 1977. At that time the Passionist International Bulletin [PIB] commenced publication. It continues to the present day. As in the past, official Passionist documents are published and readers are kept up to date about a variety of world-wide ministries. The PIB is published in English as well as other languages. Truly, there is much to still discover about Passionist history.



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Editor: Rob Carbonneau, C.P., Ph.D., Province Historian and Director of the Archives.  
Layout: Anita Lewis

It is the intention of the Commission to present material that will be both interesting and informative. We want to make better known the story of our Congregation and especially of our own Province; the Passionists, lay people and benefactors who made it, the immense labors they undertook in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ's Passion, and their successes and failures. We also want to look at the present situation of the Province through the eyes of Faith to try to ascertain what lessons, if any, history may be able to teach us as we try to understand our present moment and the future.

We hope to make this an **international** newsletter and so we welcome contributions from our readers of **any** Province. If you have any interesting stories or reflections or even questions that you are willing to share with us, we beg you to do so.

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