

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 74

16th July, 2021

Return from Brisbane

Chris, Kevin (Sunday) and myself (Tuesday) were finally able to leave Brisbane and enter Victoria, and Justin (Saturday) returned to Hobart. The move from our quiet and beautiful environment at Oxley was with some reluctance, because we had lovely community time with Paul and Ray and several 20-22 degree days helped! Ray had not seen another Passionist since March 2020 and Paul since October 2020, so they really appreciated the company and made us feel at home.



As reported previously, Ray is getting around on calipers and it is both amusing and impressive to see him playing 'bucket soccer' with his washing. The trek from his room to the laundry is about 50 metres, so he puts his clothing in a blue bucket and kicks it ahead of him with a caliper, through two separate screen doors either headed to or from the laundry.

Our experience of unexpected lockdowns (which meant we could not be in Adelaide for the profession of the novices and now we are beginning another 5 day lockdown), is like many life experiences, and is well captured in a short Zen story.

A farmer had only one horse to plough his fields. One day, the horse escaped and disappeared into the woods. When the neighbouring villagers tried to console the old man over his bad luck, the farmer replied, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows!" A few days later, the horse returned with a herd of 12 wild horses. The villagers came back to congratulate the farmer on his good luck. The farmer replied "Is this good luck or bad luck? Who knows?"



The next day, while trying to train the wild horses so they could help in the field, the farmer's son fell off one of the horses and broke his leg. The villagers thought this was very bad luck, but again he farmer replied: "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?" A week later, the king's army marched into the village and enlisted every able-bodied youth they could find. When they saw the farmer's son with his broken leg, they left him behind. The villagers congratulated the farmer on his good luck, but again he replied: "Good luck ? Bad luck? Who knows?"

Good morning Vietnam

Our newly professed brothers, Thắng, Cầu, Trí, Toàn and Phúc were scheduled to depart today from Adelaide to Sydney and after a few days there, return to Saigon. There are severe restrictions in Saigon until July 24th and Sydney has extended their lockdown past this week. All this being the case, our five brothers are due to arrive at Holy Cross tonight and remain for at least two weeks to have a holiday. One day before their arrival Melbourne has gone into lockdown. We are hoping everything goes smoothly for their arrival tonight. They have not yet been to our community in Marrickville, so when it is possible, they will travel to Saigon via Sydney. It will be great to welcome them back to Holy Cross.



Sister Valerie Mayo CP

Pastor advised us of some sad news from Tanzania. Last Saturday Passionist Sister Valerie Mayo succumbed to COVID 19. She had suffered from heart issues, and lost her battle to live with the complication of COVID. Under the regime of the previous President John Magufuli, her death would probably have been recorded as having been caused by pneumonia. Valerie was born in the Congo. She was Pastor's spiritual companion for eight years and she had been the Regional Leader for Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria.

Our front entrance

Finally, the work on our front entrance has been completed, and it looks terrific because it is the work of a real craftsman. The painting was done this past week. The finishing touches will be to create a small garden in the area you can see on the extreme left of the photo below. The cost of this project was met by men who prefer to remain anonymous. We are very grateful for their generosity. It is hoped that the drive through will be somewhat easier to negotiate than it has been.



New head for Passionist Movement

Rowena Orejana



Newly-appointed Passionist Family Group Movement National Coordinator Paul Traynor plans to reinvigorate and grow the almost-40-year-old organisation by reaching out to younger families, and inviting those from other cultures to join their family across Aotearoa.

“We cannot do what we do, and have done in the last 30 odd years, if it were not for the generosity of people like Rob and Lynn Hill, John and Mary Ellen (Leen) and Paul and Linda (Darbyshire),” Mr Traynor said. “Rob and Lynn became the first Directors of the Movement, and they maintained that role for 26 years, which is just extraordinary, and did a fantastic job,” he added. The Leens and the Darbyshires led the Movement in the last five years.

Mr Traynor noted that the Church in New Zealand is facing many challenges, including declining attendance, the decline of Pakeha attendance and involvement, the different cultures beginning to dominate the parishes, as well as the amalgamations of parishes, which results in the loss of local community.

“There are some challenges for us. We certainly have to do something about connecting in a changing face of the Church,” he told NZ Catholic.



“The Pakehas are disappearing, but other cultures: Indian, Filipino and other Asians are growing strong. We’ve got to be open and respectful to inviting them in,” he said, noting that some people of different cultures

prefer to keep to their own communities. But sometimes, he said, one comes across people in the pews who are not with anybody. The challenge for us as Pakeha is to open ourselves to invite people in,” he said.

Mr Traynor said Pakehas are experiencing, or will soon experience, “what it’s like to be on the edges”. “As the Church changes, Pakeha will be the minority, and we’ll experience life in the Church as many of them have experienced. If we respond in a positive way, then we can do something to re-connect without feeling left out and without getting angry,” he said.

Mr Traynor said that Passionist spirituality is “very much the spirituality of being ordinary. It’s in

SPIRITUALITY *of the* ORDINARY

the ordinariness of life that we find God . . . our struggles, our pains, our sorrows and our joys, they all come in the ordinary things of life,” he said.

Mr Traynor, who lives in the Wairarapa, said the Passionist Family Groups are “just ordinary people trying to be like Jesus: supporting, caring, loving, forgiving one another, just as the early Christians did”.

He said their approach is not a panacea, nor is it the only way to do things. “The emphasis we have is, before you can believe, you have to belong. And we’re providing a place where people belong,” he explained. “Isn’t that what the early Church was? It’s a gathering of people who remember the presence of Jesus in their midst, and try to live out his message in the best way that they can.”



Apart from practical support and belonging, the Family Groups also provide formation in faith, he said. Mr Traynor said he will be going around the country to connect with the Passionist Family Group regional and group coordinators, as well as with the bishops and parish priests.

“That’s being accountable to the New Zealand Church with this ministry, and connecting with the Church leaders and ministers, and just trying to do our best growing the Passionist Family Groups, connecting them with one another, and being a sign that, in these small groups, they will find support and a way of living out the messages of Jesus.”

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God of the Ordinary: Spirituality of Passionist Family Groups

"Elijah was told, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh.' For at that moment Yahweh was going by. A mighty hurricane split the mountains and shattered the rocks. but Yahweh was not in the hurricane. And after the hurricane, an earthquake. But Yahweh was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, fire. But Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire, a tiny whispering sound. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then the voice of Yahweh came to him." (1Kings 19: 11-13)



By John Kleinsman

John is a moral theologian based in Wellington New Zealand and Director of the Nathaniel Centre for bioethics.

<http://www.nathaniel.org.nz/>.

John and his wife Kerry have had leadership roles in the PFGM since 1994. John has been a member of the Holy Spirit Province Formation Commission for the past twenty years.

The surprise in this story is not that Elijah encounters God, but the way he encounters God. The Israelites typically expected God's revelation in the spectacular; through the marvellous, even frightening elements of nature such as mighty winds, earthquakes, lightning and fire. So we can understand, therefore, Elijah's disappointment and concern when the Lord was neither in the mighty winds, nor the earthquakes, nor the fire. Moreover, we can imagine Elijah's surprise when the Lord appears in a tiny whispering sound. The might and power of God almighty in a tiny whisper? Not at all expected. Too unspectacular. Too ordinary. How easily he could have missed it!



How might this story apply to us and to Family Groups? Well, where do you expect to find God? Ask any Catholic, indeed any Christian, about the traditional ways in which they expect to encounter God. It's my guess that they will all say pretty much the same things: when we gather for liturgy, in our times of personal and group prayer/sharing, or when

we study the scriptures.

It's true we do experience God in these places and at these times. These dimensions always have been and always will be key to our Christian identity. But Elijah's God and our God is not bound by religious systems or by traditional expectations. Our

God is a God of surprises, a God of the unexpected and above all, a God of the ordinary.

The focus of Passionist Family Groups is that we do indeed encounter God and experience God-moments outside the four walls of our churches and beyond the sacred spaces where we spend time in prayer. The spirituality of Family Groups is based around the reality that we encounter God in the ordinary; in the ordinariness of our daily lives and in the ordinariness of our social relationships. In other words, our relationships with one another - the social - are recognised as a space to meet God - the social is capable of revealing the divine.



Sadly, it seems many people find this hard to believe. We seem more comfortable in separating the social and the spiritual! Perhaps, like Elijah and the Israelites of his time, we have very strong expectations

about meeting God only in certain ways. This difficulty of believing that God can be encountered in the ordinary is something Kerry and I experience all the time. Above all it is found in the (very mistaken) understanding that Family Groups, because they seem to focus around social activities, are "just social." We believe however it is only people who fail to recognise God can be in the ordinary who can possibly have such an understanding.

The notion that God can be encountered in the people around us is a fundamental principle of the Family Group Movement. This logic is also expressed by Jesus in the New Testament many times, most notably in the well-known passage from Matthew's Gospel: "As long as you do it to the least of your brothers or sisters you do it to me." (Mt 25: 40).



Sometimes the need of a person close to us is to receive practical support by way of meals or other means. Sometimes the response called for is simply to get alongside and listen. Sometimes there is a need for us to grieve with others. Sometimes it is a need to celebrate important milestones such as anniversaries, births or baptisms. Always there is the need to converse with, understand, accept and love in real, concrete, and ordinary ways. This is what Family Groups are all about.



The gatherings in which we share food and drink and play games are the vehicle whereby we build relationships of trust so we can get close enough to people to recognise their needs. Let's face it, we all know that as a rule people don't stand up and

announce to the world their need for support and help. We prefer to suffer in silence. At best we are prepared to 'whisper' to those we feel care about us. We will only pick up God's voice in the tiny whisperings of persons when we are able to get close enough to them.

Surely, in a time when more and more Catholics seem to be practising their faith "outside the four walls of our churches" there is a greater need than ever to promote movements and structures which recognise we encounter God in a multitude of ways.

- How well do you know the people in our parish community?
- Who are the people in your worshipping community who are lonely, suffering or needing support in some way? The fact you don't know of any does not mean that they are not there!
- How can we reaching out to those on the "margins" – including those who do not attend the weekly Eucharist?
- Have you thought about getting involved in a Passionist Family Group?
- If you are already involved, are you hearing God in the tiny whisperings?

<p>Passionist Family Groups Australia: https://www.pfgm.org/ Passionist Family Groups New Zealand: https://www.passionistfamily.org.nz/</p>
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I'd like to

Big enough to admit my shortcomings honestly .
Brilliant enough to accept praise without it making me arrogant.
Tall enough to tower over dishonesty.
Strong enough to welcome criticism.
Compassionate enough to understand human frailties.
Wise enough to recognize mistakes.
Humble enough to appreciate greatness.
Brave enough to stand by my friends.
Human enough to be thoughtful of my neighbour.
And spiritual enough to be devoted to the love of God.

-- *Author unknown* -

Brihadeeswarar Temple: Thanjavur, South India

We are fortunate today that documentaries can tell us so much about the marvels of previous eras. This brief (3.5 minute) video reveals a brilliant construction that has stood for one thousand years. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlAy-nHzsdU>

Luke Bulley was to celebrate a Thanksgiving Mass this Sunday in Endeavour Hills but COVID restrictions have again affected his plans. Luke has had to be very patient over this past twelve months.

Luke is still scheduled to celebrate Mass at Holy Cross at 10.30am on **Sunday August 1st**.

Humour

Q. Why did the banana go to the doctor?

A. He wasn't peeling well

Q What happens when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

A You get frostbite

Q Why couldn't the leopard play hide and seek?

A Because he was always spotted.

Q How much room is needed for fungi to grow?

A As mushroom as possible.

Bill's mother-in-law fell down a wishing well. He said he was amazed. He never knew they worked!

Q What's an astronaut's favourite social media website?

A MySpace

Q What do you get when you cross a fish and an elephant?

A Swimming trunks.

Q Who led the Australians into the promise land, through a semi-permeable membrane?

A Ozmoses

A husband and wife were golfing when suddenly his wife asked. "Honey, if I died would you marry again?" The husband replied: "No sweetie". The wife insisted, "I'm sure you would." The husband sighed and said, "Okay, I probably would". The wife asked: "Would you let her live in our house?" He replied reluctantly, "Well, I probably would. After all I'm comfortable here." The wife asked, "Would you let her use my golf clubs?" The husband said, "No. I wouldn't. She's left handed!"

Where did Jesus come from?

There were 3 good arguments that Jesus was an Afro-American:

1. He called everyone brother

2. He liked Gospel

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Jewish:

1. He went into His Father's business
2. He lived at home until he was 33

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Italian:

1. He talked with His hands
2. He had wine with His meals

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was a Californian:

1. He never cut His hair
2. He walked around barefoot all the time

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was an American Indian:

1. He was at peace with nature
2. He ate a lot of fish

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Irish:

1. He loved green pastures.
2. He was always telling stories.

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Mexican:

1. He treated his mama as a saint.
2. He was a carpenter who could fix anything.

But the most compelling evidence of all - 3 proofs that Jesus was a woman:

1. He fed a crowd at a moment's notice when there was virtually no food
2. He kept trying to get a message across to a bunch of men who just didn't get it
3. And even when He had died, He had to get up because there was still work to do



Michael Doyle turns 90 tomorrow, July 17th. We send greetings and best wishes to Michael, Mardi and their family. Unfortunately, family plans will have to be adjusted because of the short-notice lockdown.

Masses this Sunday

Please note that the Masses for this Sunday and for next Tuesday, have been cancelled as the result of COVID lockdown restrictions. **The link for Sunday Mass** (Week 16 Year B) will be sent around 3.30pm tomorrow.

We remember

All those affected emotionally or financially by COVID lockdowns throughout Australia and the rest of the world.

**I thank my God
every time I
remember you.
In all of my prayers
for all of you,
I always pray with joy.**

Philippians 1:3-4

Please also remember:

Maree Bartoli, Maria Robson, Jim Molan,
Graham Hille, Peter Owen, Anne Jenkins,
Jan Mulally, Pam Grehan, Angelo Vigilante,
Pam Gartland, Maeve and John Reardon,
Brian Tresseder, Michael and Mardi Doyle,
Jim Monaghan, Kate and Mary Dunn,
Ray Sanchez CP, Jim Coucher CP, and all who seek or
need our prayers.

Have a good weekend – and stay relaxed!

Brian