

## Holy Cross Retreat



27<sup>th</sup>

### Letter 80

August, 2021

Greetings

### Lockdown

Masses at Holy Cross remain cancelled and the Retreat Centre remains closed. At this stage, the earliest we could resume 9.00am and 10.30am Masses is on Sunday September 5<sup>th</sup>, but only if the present lockdown ends next Thursday, and few expect that to happen.

Below are some brief video links that may interest you.

### Table-tennis

How can a man who lost both legs at age 10, represent his country Egypt, at the Paralympics?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4FiBl2WSOs>

### Music for animals

In several zoos, animals have displayed anxiety because they have no visitors. In Cologne a pianist took his portable piano to several places in the zoo and played for different animals

<https://www.facebook.com/dw.euromaxx/videos/a-piano-concert-for-zoo-animals/237055981349722/>

### Bangkok street market artistic pancakes

At a time when people are invited to think of creative ways of staying connected and using their time in lockdown, an example of doing this differently at a food stall in Bangkok is both impressive and joyful.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_e1V5ieJvVU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_e1V5ieJvVU)

### The Secret Life of Chaos

Chaos was once considered the enemy of order, but the great discovery by of Deterministic Chaos theory by meteorology professor Edward Lorenz in 1961 demonstrated that in the natural world, self-organising dynamics result on chaos and unpredictability leading to creativity and order!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6NnCOs20GQ>

## **Chaos**

Up until recent times Western society has operated on the seventeenth century model of '**clockwork machinery**' where the focus was on the parts which make a machine or a system effective. When this thinking was applied to people they were seen as 'cogs' in a system (people with functions and roles), such as exists in a machine. They could be replaced at any time to allow the machine or the system to keep working.

Discoveries in science in the last sixty years have shattered our old concepts of the universe and led to the development of quantum physics, field theory, evolutionary biology and much more. These have been formed under the umbrella of '**chaos theory**'. Such scientific models are not fixed or absolute; they can be 'played with'.



It is clear from observations of nature that **order can emerge from chaos**. This is easier to see when we look at an overall picture rather than just the parts (machinery model). Chaos theory famously proclaimed that the flap of a butterfly's wing can affect the weather thousands of kilometres away and helped

explain why Melbourne weather forecasters are like they are! This is an expression of order without predictability. Order develops naturally from within a system. Complexity, flexibility and adaptability exist within the natural world and from this seemingly unpredictable mix there is an 'order'.

A small example is the design of snowflakes. They seem random and of no consequential shape, but microscopic photos of snowflakes show that each one is not only unique but an example of profound order.





When we use the machinery model we can supervise an area, take out of one section or observe numbers, but this focus on a 'small moment' does not allow us to stand back and see a pattern. As a result, solutions can be taken without sufficient overview.

To operate within a situation of chaos, one has to take a plunge. This requires some vulnerability but it means difficult situations can be approached with greater calm.

In systems within the natural world, information is the key, so we need to remember that **information forms and informs us.**

None of us truly knows who we are until we are in relationships. We cannot do things alone. We need to communicate (talk, listen, tell stories) and support others. In the end, **relationships are all there is.**

It is not the role of any team leader to impose a vision. A vision emerges from the 'hearts' and genuine searching of a team, because the vision is 'out there' and it has to be discovered and grasped. **Vision is an invisible field.**

Collaboration requires thinking together, 'playing' together and trying things. This is the way children learn and we know that it is effective for them. If we copy their way of learning, we need to 'see if it works'. In this way, chaos can lead to creativity.

Don't we marvel at how young people so quickly master technology? They learn by experimentation and building on prior experience. For them COVID-19 has created a lot of chaos, but what seeds of 'order' and creativity do we see already emerging? When you think about it, there is so much we are doing that we did not know about two years ago. Who Zoomed then? Who knew about contact tracing and QR codes? Who knew what imprisonment was like but have now found new opportunities for creativity?

What more is there that will provide us with hope? Life does move forward and order emerges from unpredictability and chaos, so it is important that we move forward too by being open to surprise and discovery. Let's rejoice in the chaos because it means something new is being created!

## When Crisis Comes.....Richard Rohr OFM

Living in a transitional age such as ours is scary: things are falling apart, the future is unknowable, so much doesn't cohere or make sense. We can't seem to put order to it. This is the postmodern panic. It lies beneath most of our cynicism, our anxiety, and our aggression. Yet, there is little in the biblical revelation that ever promised us an ordered universe.

The whole Bible is about meeting God in the actual, in the incarnate moment, in the scandal of particularity. It is rather amazing that we ever tried to codify and control the whole thing.

Chaos often precedes great creativity, and faith precedes great leaps into new knowledge. The pattern of transformation begins in order, but it very quickly yields to disorder and—if we stay with it long enough in love—eventual reordering. Our uncertainty is the doorway into mystery, the doorway into surrender, the path to God that Jesus called “faith.” In her work on “crisis contemplation,” CAC teacher Barbara Holmes confirms what we and others have long suspected—that great suffering and great love are the two universal paths of transformation. Both are the ultimate crises for the human ego. Barbara writes:

The crisis begins without warning, shatters our assumptions about the way the world works, and changes our story and the stories of our neighbours. The reality that was so familiar to us is gone suddenly, and we don't know what is happening. . . .If life, as we experience it, is a fragile crystal orb that holds our daily routines and dreams of order and stability, then sudden and catastrophic crises shatter this illusion of normalcy. . . . I am referring to oppression, violence, pandemics, abuses of power, or natural disasters and planetary disturbances. . . .

We can identify three common elements in every crisis: The event is usually unexpected, the person or community is unprepared, and there is nothing that anyone could do to stop it from happening. Even if there are signs everywhere that something is not right, we tend to ignore the warnings and the signposts. Not even sky writing, or messengers from other worlds, would shift our gaze from the comfort of our daily routines. Thus, the slave catchers, the roundups for native removal, the pandemics, devastating hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions catch us off guard. . . .

When the unexpected happens during a communal crisis, we are not alone. We are with friends and neighbouring villagers, and we all experience the same break in reality. Bereft of words, all of us hold the same question: How could this be happening? . . .

I consider crisis contemplation to be an aspect of disorder that prepares communities for a leap toward the future. This is a leap toward our beginnings. We are not just organisms functioning on a biological level; our sphere of being also

includes stardust and consciousness. We all have a spark of divinity within, a flicker of Holy Fire that can be diminished, but never extinguished.

Adapted from Richard Rohr, *The Wisdom Pattern: Order, Disorder, Reorder* (Franciscan Media: 2020), 15–16.

Barbara A. Holmes, *Crisis Contemplation: Healing the Wounded Village* (CAC Publishing: 2021), 19–20, 21, 124.

### **The Philippines**



With more than 1.8 million cases and 31,198 deaths, the Philippines has one of the highest coronavirus tolls in Asia. Last Monday, authorities in the Philippines eased lockdown for the 13 million people in the national capital region, despite recording its highest daily number of Covid-19 infections on Friday of 17,231 new infections and 317

fatalities.

More than 26% of samples taken, tested positive, while active cases hit a four-month record of 123,25,. Hospitals were filling up, with 73% of the country’s intensive care capacity already utilised and 61% of isolation beds occupied. But, President Rodrigo Duterte said the country could not afford more lockdowns after coronavirus measures shattered the economy and threw millions out of work.

Manila barber, Joel Carino is eager to get back to normal life. “Ever since the start of lockdown, we felt hunger. I’m not in favour of it, since a lot of Filipinos are struggling. There are no jobs given most establishments are closed,” he said.

### **Lebanon**



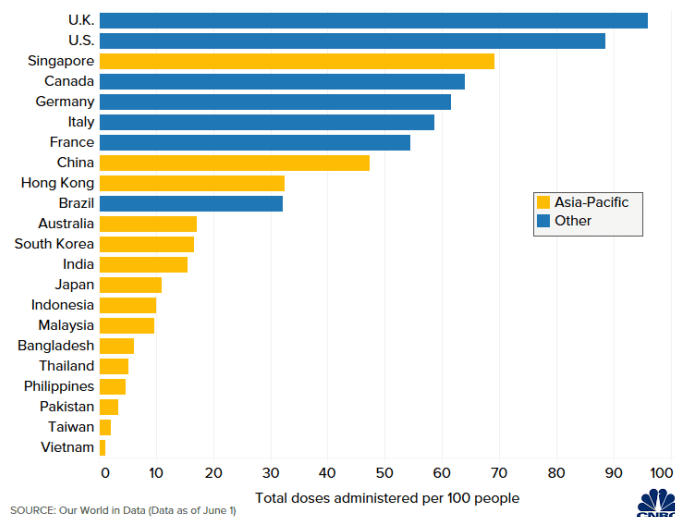
Cath News reports that Lebanon is facing a dire humanitarian crisis with power, water, fuel, medicine and food running out. “The current situation is worse than the darkest years of the Lebanese war,” said Melville Fernandez, Caritas Australia’s humanitarian emergencies manager.

The Lebanese economy has been in freefall since October 2019. “There isn’t enough cash in the country, so

people are forced to queue for hours to withdraw money, only to find out that the ATMs have run out of funds. Even if people can access funds, it's next to impossible to buy fuel to run generators or medicine because the country is rapidly running out of these basic goods," Mr Fernandez said. He added, "Australia and Lebanon have a long and special relationship, and with a large Lebanese population here, Lebanon is in even more need of support."

### Other countries

Covid vaccinations in major Asian economies vs. global peers



We could list several other countries, especially Haiti, Afghanistan and Myanmar, that are facing extreme challenges. News reporting this past week has focused on Australia reaching a satisfactory vaccination rate of 70%-80% before we can 'open up'. The vaccination rates in countries where poverty, lost businesses and homelessness is drastically higher than in Australia. Reaching an 80% rate for them,

is years away. At the current rate of vaccinations, it is estimated that PNG will have 10% of the population vaccinated by November 2026!

Attempts have been made to estimate the percentage rate of full vaccinations in different countries, based on the total number of jobs given. The data cannot be entirely accurate, but the figures clearly reveal some realities. As an example, 25% of Australians are fully vaccinated; Haiti: 0.1%; Afghanistan: 0.6%; PNG 0.6%; Iraq 1.3%; Vietnam 1.9%; Myanmar 3.3%; Egypt 2.1; Iran 5.3%; Pakistan 6.2%; South Africa 8.5%; India 9.5%; Indonesia 11.8%; Philippines 12.2%.



We know in many of these countries, social distancing is impossible a lot of the time, because of the huge populations living in crowded cities. Java (145 million people) in Indonesia is half the size of Victoria (7 million people).

Banning family visits would likely result in millions of deaths. We are hearing many reports of entire

families being found dead in houses in Vietnam. Tragically, this must be happening in many Asian family homes.

Our own Passionist (male and female) communities in Saigon have just been put under an excessive lockdown for two weeks. Everything they need for those two weeks had to be purchased beforehand and now, not one member of the community is allowed outside the front door or front gate for two weeks!

Faced with these realities, we must retain a sense of human solidarity. Perhaps it begins by giving thanks for what we do have, rather than what we don't have; for the freedom we have, rather than the freedom we don't have; gratitude that most of us can look forward to ending lockdown, but for so many people that will continue to be their everyday reality because of sickness, age or imprisonment.



Sitting with sorrow can be a profoundly prayerful action. If we sit with the disturbing questions for long enough we have to admit our powerlessness and lack of control. This can give rise to our sense of compassion more than to self-pity, it can lead to us reaching out in new ways to family and friends rather than locking ourselves away, it can lead to us being more

conscious of creating joy and fellowship rather than separating ourselves from the sea of humanity that we feel helpless to assist.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be people of hope, despite suffering. Once each year we are offered a religious day to contemplate emptiness. Unfortunately for many people it is another day at the football. Holy Saturday is a day to sit and stay with the feeling of goodness being killed!

Perhaps, as the talk of football finals risks drowning out our ability to reflect on this moment in our collective lives, we can find some time to stop and reflect. What is happening – to me, to us; to our animals (we are told that those in zoos are anxious because they have no visitors); to our sense of who we are and what we really need?

We don't have to have answers – just be brave enough to sit with that reality itself; to sit and acknowledge that for all that we have (which is far more than we need)



and for all all that we can do, we are reliant on new discoveries to help us in a variety of ways, and we are reliant on being patient – on waiting.

It can be a deeply spiritual time because we have to look beyond ourself and ourselves, and wait for a new coming.

Do we trust enough to wait?

Can we be beacons of hope, calm and peace for others? That might be what we are being invited to be at this time.



“Chris has some new bees and they are excited about some sunshine and warmth.

One group is from Slovakia, so he is referring to them as refubees’!

### Humour

A man was walking his two dogs.

A passer-by asked him “What are their names?”

The man replied, “Rolex and Omega.”

“Wow. “I haven’t heard those names used for dogs” the passer-by said.

The man replied, “These are watchdogs!”

1. I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows, and nuts. I won’t lie, it was a rocky road.
2. What do you say to comfort a friend who’s struggling with grammar? There, their, they’re.
3. I went to the toy store and asked the assistant where the Schwarznegger dolls are and he replied, “Aisle B, back.”
4. What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture self.
5. I’ve started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It’s all about raisin awareness.

Q What did the drummer name his twin daughters?

A Anna one, Anna two

Q What do you call a sleepwalking nun?

A A roamin’ catholic.

Q What do you call a bee that can’t make up its mind?

A A maybe.

Q What do you call a woman who sets fire to all her bills?

A Bernadette.



Q Which branch of the military accepts toddlers?

A The infantry.

Q Why don't sharks eat clowns?

A Because they taste funny.

Q What does a pig put on dry skin?

A Ointment.

### **A Passionist reflection**

“Humility of heart, love and gentleness towards all, attention to your family affairs, union with God’s will in every happening, suffering unpleasant things in a silence and love: these are the virtues you need. But never leave prayer so that your heart will be always turned toward God, even when you have to be busy with other things”.  
(Paul of the Cross)

### **Rosemary Sandram**



Rosemary was a regular Holy Cross attendee until she was unable to attend owing to increased dementia. Mary Corcoran used to bring her immediately prior to that stage. Rosemary was a former school principal. She had been a member of the choir and the flower arranging group and a member of the ‘Come Away’ team. She had been Deputy Principal of Our Lady of Tours, Rosanna. Rosemary entered Blue Cross in Ivanhoe in 2019 and passed away Wednesday August 18<sup>th</sup>. We have added her photo to the chapel wall.

### **Joachim Nguyễn Quang Vinh**



Vinh was a postulant at Holy Cross during 2018-2019 (in the same class as TJ and Peter (Danh)). Two years earlier while in Saigon, he received the shock news of his mother’s (Anna) sudden and unexpected death in Bà Rịa - Vũng Tàu, South-eastern Vietnam. His father, Joachim has had a history of poor health but on Monday this week unexpected news arrived for Vinh of the sudden and unexpected death of his father.

### **Alone together**

Last year Croatian cellist Stjepan Hauser performed a special concert in the famed Arena Pula, Croatia. He dedicated his performance to the amazing efforts of all the frontline workers around the world and wanted to pay tribute to what is good in humanity.

This link is to one segment from the concert and if ever we doubted the power of music to move the heart, this proves it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGax96Snt00>

The 26 minute concert includes Benedictus, Air on a G String, Intermezzo, Caruso, Nessun Dorma and was performed alone without a live audience.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eYuUAV4YE4>

“Hauser, as he is known was able to draw together millions of people around the world with his music and this message: “Though we are forced apart we have come together. We stand together while we keep our distance, and find hope in our humanity.”

**The link** for Sunday’s recorded Mass is early this week It is:

<https://vimeo.com/592542782>

### **We remember**



Please also remember in your prayers, Rosemary Sandram and her family, Irish Passionist Brother Martin Denny CP, Bro Vinh from Vietnam and his family at this time of their loss. May Rosemary, Martin and Vinh’s father rest in peace.

We also remember: Carmel King, Richard Gibbs, Peter Owen, Mary Coburn, Jan Mulally, Graham Hille, Maree Bartoli, Maria Robson, Jim Molan, Anne Jenkins, Pam Grehan, Angelo Vigilante, Patricia Keeghan, Pam Gartland, Brian Tresseder, Maeve and John Reardon, Jim Monaghan, Michael O’Callaghan, Michael and Mardi Doyle, Kate and Mary Dunn, Ray Sanchez CP, Jim Coucher CP and all who seek or need our prayers.

May you have a good weekend

Brian