

Holy Cross Retreat



30th

Letter 76

July, 2021

COVID-10 update

We can be grateful for an end to the full lockdown in Melbourne and Adelaide even though we will have to live with strict restrictions for some time. Our communities in Marrickville, Sydney, and Saigon, Vietnam remain in lockdown for some time yet. We have been advised that several priests have died from COVID-19 in Vietnam and many religious have been infected. One of the sisters who was living in the same convent in Tanzania as Pastor's sister, died earlier this week. It remains a very challenging time for people everywhere.

Please note that it will be necessary to register for 10.30am Sunday Mass for the next two weeks. Please be mindful that there is a Mass at 9.00am as well celebrated by a Passionist. Masks need to be worn inside and outside. Thank you.

Please register with Tim 0419319003 or horlocktim1@gmail.com
or Tina 0439034116 or tina.minichilli@tpg.com.au

DNA discovery

Many of you will have seen this video which is a great reminder of the reality that 'we are all in this together'. It is so unfortunate to focus on our differences instead of celebrating our sameness. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw7FhU-G1_Q



The term 'hero' can be thrown around rather carelessly during events like the Olympic Games. Certainly years of sacrifice and hard work go into preparing for events that can bring heartache or ecstasy for participants and spectators. The self-discipline of athletes deserves recognition and applause. However we live in an era where sensationalism trumps hidden and heroic efforts by ordinary people.

15-year-old Jyoti Kumari will not win a medal for her efforts in May last year. She cycled her disabled father 1,200 kilometres back home in East India. He had suffered an injury in an accident left him unable to walk. Previously he had earned a living by driving an auto-rickshaw. With all nonessential travel banned as the result of a COVID lockdown in New Delhi, he found himself among millions of newly unemployed. With their remaining funds they bought a second hand girl's bicycle with no gears and a basket affixed to the front.



They set off with all their belongings in a duffel bag strapped to the back. Dad was on the bike seat, and Jyoti pedalled while standing up in front of him. Fortunately food was not a problem on the long journey. People gave them food along the way and they slept on the side of the road. Jyoti said, “I had no other option. We wouldn’t have survived if I hadn’t cycled us to my village.”

Of course there are many such stories and some of them should be told – and remembered. It is tragic that so many people on our shared planet should never be in such a disadvantaged situation as this, yet this is the lot of the poor in so many countries.

From unimaginable horror to hope



We know of the port city of Thessaloniki in Greece because of St Paul’s letters to the early Christian community there. As recently as eighty years ago there were still 60,000 Jews living peacefully in Thessaloniki. One year later on 6th April 1941, Adolf Hitler invaded Greece and only 2,000 of the Thessaloniki community survived. 50,000 of their fellow citizens suffered extermination at the Birkenau concentration camp.

Among the survivors was a young man named Mois Bouria who happened to be out of the Jewish ghetto when the residents were taken to Auschwitz and he never saw his relatives again. A teenage girl named Sara was saved from execution when her Christian brother-in-law paid her ransom to a Nazi official. These two individuals married eight years after the war and had a son Abraham, born in 1961.

Recently Abraham spoke publicly about his parents experience for the first time. “Many Holocaust survivors never spoke to their children of the horrors they endured because it was too painful. But we talked about it a great deal in my family. Growing up in Thessaloniki, Greece, we would get together with our cousins on the weekends, and my parents, aunts and uncles would often share their stories. They did this because they wanted us to remember. To remember all the lives that were lost. To remember what can happen when the virus of evil is allowed to spread unchecked. But, most importantly, to remember the value of a human life”.

“You see, when my parents spoke of the Holocaust, they never spoke of anger or revenge. They didn’t teach us to hate those who did this to our family and friends. Instead they spoke of how lucky they were to be alive ... and how we all needed to build on that feeling, celebrate life and move forward. Hatred would only stand in the way”.



Abraham studied veterinary medicine in Thessaloniki (now called Salonica) and was awarded a doctorate in reproductive biotechnology. When he moved to the United States in 1995 he changed his first name to Albert. He joined the pharmaceutical company Pfizer and rose through the ranks and was appointed

CEO in 2019. Throughout that year Albert Bourla directed the efforts of his company to find a vaccine against Covid-19 which had just struck the world. He expended great financial and technological efforts to achieve his goal. One year later the WHO (World Health Organization) validated his company to produce the long-awaited vaccine. Ironically, this vaccine will save the lives of millions of people around the world including many Germans, and that effort has been led and pushed by a Jew from Thessaloniki, the son of Holocaust survivors who avoided the tragic extermination by Nazi Germany in extraordinary circumstances.

When asked last December if he had been vaccinated, Albert advised that neither he nor other Pfizer executives would “cut the line.” He would wait his turn for the vaccine. What a blessing came from Thessaloniki despite the horrors that came to the Jewish community there, and how refreshing it is that there are men like Albert Bourla in our world at this time.

A boy and his pony

In 1932 Australia was in the grip of the Great Depression. One in three workers were unemployed. On country roads men walked from far to farm looking for any menial work they could get. Outside Leongatha 140 kilometres south-east of Melbourne, farmer Leo Gwyther lay in hospital with a broken leg unable to walk – or work. Leo had been a World War I hero. With the help of his pony Ginger Mick which he had been given by his grandfather when he was two, Leo’s nine year old son Lennie ploughed the farm’s 24 paddocks and kept the farm running until his father could get back on his feet.

His father was keen to reward his young son who was keen on engineering and had been following news of the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. He asked if he could attend the opening. His parents agreed he could go. It is hard to imagine that happening today. Lennie saddled up Ginger Mick, packed clothes and others odds and ends and set off on the 1000 kilometre trek to Sydney in February heat.



Word began to spread about Lennie and his pony. Crowds gathered outside small country towns to welcome their arrival and the Prime minister Joseph Lyons invited him into Parliament House in Canberra for afternoon tea! When he arrived in



Sydney, more than 10,000 people line the streets to greet him. He became a key part of the official parade at the bridge's opening and he and Ginger Mick were invited to make an appearance at the Royal Easter Show. Even Donald Bradman, the biggest celebrity of the era, requested a meeting and gave Lennie a signed cricket bat.

A letter to editor of The Sydney Morning Herald claimed "Lennie Gwyther was such an example, provided by a child of nine summers, and such example is needed to raise the spirit of our people and to fire our youth and others to do things – not only to talk.... let it be remembered that this little lad, when his father was in hospital, cultivated the farm – a mere child." When Lennie left Sydney for home a month later, he had become one of the most famous figures in a country battling difficult times. Large crowds waved handkerchiefs; many cried and shouted "goodbye". Lennie arrived home four months after he left, to a rowdy reaction in Leongatha. Soon afterwards he returned to school and life returned to normal.



At age 19 he enlisted in the army in WW2. He followed his father who fought on the Western Front in World War I and was awarded the Military Cross and bar in 1916 and 1917, respectively. Lennie married and moved to Melbourne. He took up a career in engineering and worked with General Motors Holden. Lennie was modest and did not speak about his childhood experience and most people knew nothing of his fame. Lennie passed away of cancer in 1992. In 1917 a bronze statue was erected in Leongatha to pay tribute to his amazing feat.

New bishops



With the lifting of lockdown restrictions, the ordination of Tony Ireland, the parish priest of St Greg's, Doncaster, will be held 10.30am this Saturday at St Patrick's Cathedral. The ordination had been planned for last Tuesday morning.

Martin Ashe, the parish priest of Doreen, Whittlesea, Kinglake and Merna will also be ordained on Saturday.

Luke Bulley

We had planned for Luke to celebrate Mass this Sunday. We have postponed this until **August 29th**. Luke will celebrate the 9.00am and 10.30am Masses that Sunday.

Looking for a new challenge?

When COVID is over and you are seeking a three minute thrill, you can travel 1,680 metres above sea level on top of Jebel Jais mountain in the UAE on the world's longest zipline at speeds above 120kph.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce9Q5oKGOiQ>

Ticket without a seat

There are false claims that this 3 minute animated video won an Oscar. However it has a simple and profound message.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DlfqFe9xyd8>

Alpha programme



Alpha is a no-cost programme for those seeking to find out more about Christianity. Designed to take participants on a journey of faith over multiple weeks, each session covers a key element of the gospel in a way that is easy-to-follow and leaves space for people to explore their questions about life, faith and God. If you know someone who might be interested there is an 8 week course beginning at 7pm on Wed 1st September, in the St Pius X Hall, Waterdale Road, Heidelberg.

Humour

Q Where do pencils come from?

A Pencilvania.

Q What do you call a girl with one leg?

A Eileen.

Q. And a boy with no legs?

A. Neil

Q Why are ghosts such bad liars?

A You can see right through them.

Q Why are atoms Catholic?

A Because they have mass.

Q Why do pirates like algebra?

A “Annex” marks the spot.

Q What lies at the bottom of the ocean and twitches?

A. A nervous wreck.

Q Where do crazy people travel through the forest?

A The psycho path.

Q Why is gambling illegal in Africa?

A Because there are too many cheetahs!

Q What kind of streets do ghosts haunt?

A Dead ends!

Q Why did the man name his dogs Rolex and Timex?

A Because they were watch dogs.

Molecule 1: I just lost an electron.

Molecule 2: Are you sure?

Molecule 1: I’m positive.

Humour - A scare

Two friends Kevin and Chris were leaving for a holiday on the same flight. Kevin was sad when he couldn’t meet Chris before they got on the plane. After some time Kevin became excited when he saw Chris coming down the aisle of the airplane. He thought to himself “My Godfather” and shouted, “Hi-Jack”! You can imagine what happened then!

Supporting children through Covid 19

This reflection was provided by Sr Brigid CP

It must be challenging being a parent, a grandparent, a teacher or a carer during this season. A few thoughts may help in relation to children.

What do you think children worry most about at this time? What does this season we are experiencing look like for children? It is important to remember that children are all different in how they experience and deal with emotions and like adults they will have many feelings and questions. Some children will mirror how their parents are dealing with issues.

Children, like all of us, are having to adjust to change and uncertainty. It is important not to make false promises 'if we do all the right things we will be out of lockdown and back to normal soon' is perhaps not the most helpful way to go. "We are not going back to normal, we are creating a new normal" may be more positive approach.

Research in Italy and Spain has been interesting in terms of the Covid impact on children. In Italy parents spent more time outdoors with children and they appear to have experienced less impact than children in Spain who spent more time inside. In the States 85% of parents reported changes in their children such as lack of concentration, boredom, frustration etc

It is important to recognise that children experience many emotions in response to loss.



A question 'How have I been feeling and how might my children be feeling?



Lockdown: many things changed, school, work, play



Life will not go back to normal



We cannot protect children from reality but they are helped by talking.



We can't protect children from reality but they are helped by talking.



After Lockdown Different again- more new changes

Many types of loss such as bereavement, family relationships, loss of connection with friends, land, culture, separation by distance, other unexpected events in families or in the country leading to loss.



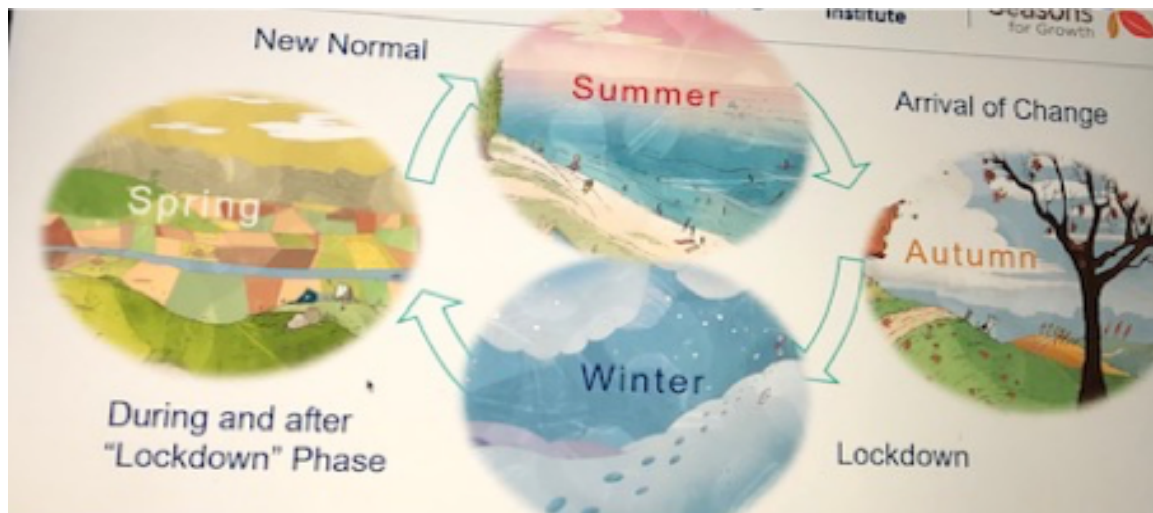
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Grief and loss affects all aspects of our being and it is not just a reaction – it is cyclical. The Good news is that we do have the capacity to develop resilience and we can develop strategies for dealing with feelings - and so can children. The first step is to acknowledge it and express feelings and problem solve with the children and they will come up with solutions and strategies. It is also important to set boundaries so that the child or any person is not harmed.

One very useful model which is used in many schools in Australia and elsewhere, is the metaphor of the seasons. This helps to accept that grief is a process and like the seasons, grief reoccurs - it is not linear.

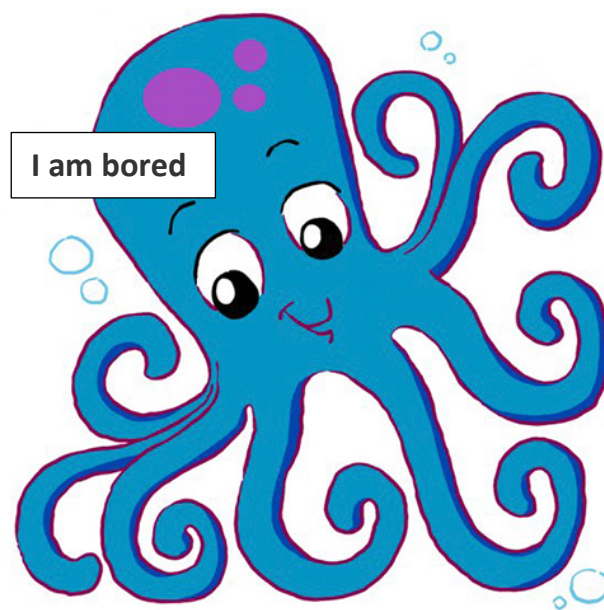
It helps, if we understand that change and uncertainty are part of life and people experience uncertainty, change and loss in different ways.

We can develop skills to help us adapt to change
We can move forward with new insights and learnings.



Tools for children:

The Octopus – write a feeling and then the strategies for dealing with this on each tentacle/arm.



Or use a flower and write the strategies on the petals



In conclusion

We cannot hide children from this pandemic nor from any other major community problem such as floods or fires. Whilst we can't change what a child has observed or experienced, we can support their wellbeing, by maintaining strong positive relationships with them.

Acknowledge the child's story (use 'I') encourage open honest communication
Encourage children to identify their feelings and actions and the choices they can take. ('I can')

The four seasons give us a message of hope even though we experience disappointments, heartache and pain we also have new experiences that bring hope and joy.

Some useful websites:

<https://nyulangone.org/news/helping-children-process-grief-loss-during-covid-19>

https://www.stonybrookmedicine.edu/Crowell_Dealing_with_loss_during_COVID19

<https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/> <https://www.psychology.org.au/for-the-public/Psychology-topics/COVID-19-Australians>

Refer to the YouTube story called 'The Tree that survived the Winter'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymW2QzhuaJE&ab_channel=CarolynLong

It is amazing how this rose has survived winter!

Mass link

The link for Sunday Mass will be sent on Saturday afternoon

We remember

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

Michael Doyle is having a bronchoscopy today to relieve some congestion that has been regularly affecting his sleep. We've known for a long time what a great heart **Peter Norman** has, but the physical side required stents for blocked arteries early this week. We wish both Michael and Peter full recoveries. We've had two of our Holy Cross and Passionist family suffer falls this past week. Another was in hospital for a procedure, another had a shock cancer diagnosis and yet another (too young) is having surgery for cancer today.

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

Brian