

## Holy Cross Retreat

### Letter 81

September, 2021

2nd



Greetings

### Spring is here!

If the likelihood of lockdown restrictions being eased soon does not bring you hope, surely the arrival of spring does. Everywhere there are signs of new life – colour, vibrancy, growth and warm sunshine.

### Lockdown

Masses at Holy Cross still remain cancelled and the Retreat Centre remains closed. At this stage, the earliest we are likely to resume 9.00am and 10.30am Masses is October.

### Local news

There is little to report from Holy Cross. **Mayrose** and **Rose** continue to work from home, and both have voluntarily taken some time off each week as holiday leave. For Mayrose to look after four young children who would normally be studying and socializing at school, is very difficult.

We miss our Friday '**A' Team**. They have used up all their holiday and sick leave!

A few moments of change occurred on Wednesday afternoon when the **fire alarms** went off and several fire trucks arrived. There was a faulty detector in one of the rooms. This event got everyone out of the house at the same time!

Our Vietnamese brothers are very grateful for **Ms Thu and her friends** who have supplied them with noodles and a few other Asian niceties.

**Jerome** has continued to lay mulch on his rose gardens and loves a sunny day for this work. We never have to worry about filling the green topped garden bin!

**Vince Celestino** has continued to arrange more fill to spread with his bobcat or digger, to level the area between where the swimming pool used to be and where the labyrinth is. He says it will take about ten more truckloads of fill. We are very grateful for this generous work. The area will look great when it is grassed.

Our **Passionists Companions** had their first meeting for quite some time, by Zoom. There were some unsurprising technical issues but it was great to touch base and hear how each one is managing with COVID. For some it has been very difficult.

## Creation Season...Part 1



September is dedicated as 'Creation Season' so it seems appropriate to offer a reflection about creation and our everyday environment. I will spread this out over three or four newsletters.

I have visited the same dentist for thirty-five years. Richard was only 26 years old when I first saw him and he is a real philosopher. One thing he likes to do as a dentist, is to sing to children, while he works. He is always positive. His most common reply to 'how are you?' is, 'Wonderful, thank you'. One visit about five years ago, I asked him how he was. He replied, "I'm on top of the world looking down on creation". With amusement I corrected him saying, 'Actually you are not looking down on creation.'

After a very brief reminder than on this planet we are swirling around our sun and stars. Our solar system is a very small part of the Milky Way galaxy, and it too is swirling around and is connected to forty-five galaxies within our 'Local group'. They swirl around in space, and are joined with other galaxy clusters, such as the Virgo Cluster, which includes over two thousand galaxies. All of these galaxies are swirling around in connection with each other, and they are connected with the other three hundred billion galaxies in the universe. Richard agreed he would need to change the words, because sometimes we looking at, up, down or around. On my the next visit when I asked, how he was. He said "I'm in the midst of creation looking all around"!



Such a simple awareness as we now have about the earth, planets, stars (suns) and solar systems give us an entirely different appreciation of the vastness of creation. This does not mean we appreciate it any better that generations before us. In fact most of us sharing this planet live in cities and we rarely see the stars, whereas in primitive times, this would have been

one of the most awe-inspiring events, starkly visible on any clear night.

Our understanding of the relationship between the human species and the rest of creation has revised theological thinking in the past thirty years. This arose as the result of an accusation that humans had come to believe they could do whatever we liked to our planet, as a result of a command in the Genesis story. *"And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every*



*living thing that moves upon the earth."*  
(Genesis: 1:28)

This text of Genesis reflects the experience of an ancient people trying to make a living under difficult conditions. Urban people today find it difficult to appreciate the context and therefore the appropriateness of the language that was used. The words "*subdue*" and "*have dominion*" have been

problematic. The Hebrew word translated into English as "subdue" suggests English equivalents like conquer, subjugate or force, and the Hebrew term translated as "have dominion over" has equivalents such as tread down and reign over. Such a verse does not say what we as environmentally concerned people today, wish it did.

In its original context, however, it had a quite positive meaning. Israel faced a natural world that was mysterious, powerful and threatening. Within that setting, the text is liberating. It sees nature as good, as part of a God directed world and not to be feared. It is to be engaged with and used for human purposes. People who have cleared and prepared new ground for a garden or farming or have ploughed rocky ground, would know that 'subdue' is the proper word to describe this.

Both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures teach that God is good and has made a good world. In the first chapter of Genesis after every stage in creation, we are told that God looked at what had been made and saw that it was good. The heavens and the earth and the sea, the plants, and the animals are all good. All of this is said before humanity entered the scene. The world before and without people is good in and of itself, and is seen to be good in God's eyes.

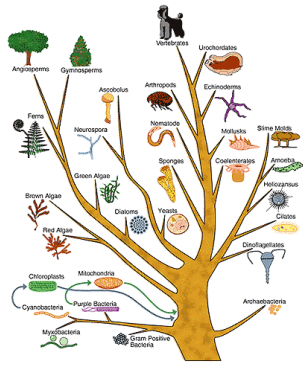


Another significant theme of Genesis, is the fall of creation. The original goodness of creation is seen to have been corrupted by the sinfulness of humanity (Adam and Eve). Some suggest that we abandon this symbol because we know that a perfect



paradise never existed in any literal sense. The theory of cosmic and biological evolution teaches us that the universe emerged from a flaring of light ("big bang") 13.8 billion years ago, and expanded and developed into the present world. Death has always been a part of that expansion and development. Earth formed



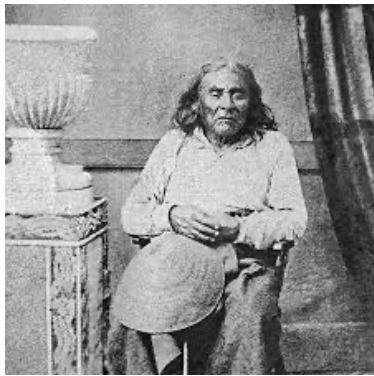


from a star that died!

Rather than a fall from some primordial perfection (in Eden) Original sin can be viewed from the perspective that we are still developing, still evolving; that we have not yet achieved what God is inviting us to become. We have failed to rise to the heights of which we are capable. We have failed to actualise the potential provided for goodness, justice, and love. We have achieved much good, but rather than reduce evil as we might have done, ‘we’ have introduced massive evils and deep suffering into history and spoiled our natural environment by

ruthless and reckless exploitation in quest of wealth, power, and glory. That one hundred million people died in wars in the last century is proof of this. The fact is, life is still evolving – creation is unfinished.

*“How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?”* These are the opening words of Chief Seattle’s alleged address in 1854, spoken in a situation similar to the signing of New Zealand’s Treaty of Waitangi fourteen years earlier. Seattle spoke about the concession of native lands to white settlers. In his speech, he highlighted the close connection his people had with nature. This is a connection our culture has never understood and is challenged to appreciate now, as we face ecological crisis and climate change.



Chief Seattle explained, *“Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers*

*are our brothers and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.*

*The air is precious, for all things share the same breath, the beast, the tree, the man; they all share the same breath. You must remember that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. One thing we know which the white man may one day discover is that our God is the same God. The earth is precious to Him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator. Contaminate your bed and*



*you will one night suffocate in your own waste”!*

### **Humour**

A father knocked on his son's door. "Jaime," he says, "wake up!"

Jaime answered, "I don't want to get up, Papa."

His father shouted, "Get up Jamie, you have to go to school."

Jaime moaned, "I don't want to go to school."

"Why not?" asked the father.

"First, because school it's so dull; second, the kids tease me; and third, I hate school."

His father said, "Well, I'll give you three reasons why you must go to school. First, because it is your duty; second, because you are forty-five years old, and third, because you are the headmaster!"

Q What is a witch's favourite subject at school?

A Spelling.

Q What did the Dalmatian say after lunch?

A That hit the spot.

Q How Long is a Chinese man's name.

A No, it actually is.

My fear of moving stairs is escalating.

As I get older and I remember all the people I've lost along the way, I think to myself, maybe a career as a tour guide wasn't for me.

Does refusing to go to the gym count as resistance training?

I struggle with Roman numerals until I get to 159, then it CLIX.

People say I've got no willpower but I've quit smoking loads of times.

I asked God for a bike, but I know God doesn't work that way, so I stole a bike and asked for forgiveness.

My three favourite things are eating my family and not using commas.

The person who invented autocorrect should burn in hello.

### **A Passionist reflection**

"Give yourself the rest you need. When you are walking alone, listen to the sermon preached to you by the flowers, the trees, the shrubs, the sky, the sun and whole world. Notice how they preach to you a sermon of love, of praise of

God, and how they invite you to proclaim the greatness of the One who has given them being” (Paul of the Cross)

## Videos

### Chief Seattle's Letter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gv1BDTWQsj0>

### Amazing Grace – Wently Phipps (8 minutes)

Some of you have seen this played at Mass at Holy Cross one Sunday

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNuQbJst4Lk>

### Creation Calls – Brian Doerksen

This has been played most years at the early morning Easter Mass

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwGvfdtI2c0>

### The beauty of Creation – Reflection

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lXpqUNEwU0>

### Coffee – not the cup

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74sebP2WH8A>

## Father's Day



### “I Want to be Just like you” (Craig, Philipps and Dean)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCUKPia-Y3M>

## Dads

We send warm greetings to all the Dad's associated with Holy Cross or the Passionist Family. This is a very special vocation in a man's life. There are several phases.

The first begins when a new Dad, young and inexperienced, but totally enraptured with his new child, is determined to be the best he can, and is often over-confident in his capacities.

The challenges of life sometimes intrude unfairly. This can be caused by sickness, grief, unemployment or personal problems. The Dad has to try his best to continue to shower love on his child (or children). Failures are inevitable.

Balancing being a hero or being deeply admired, with one's personal weakness can be very difficult, and as children grow older they come to recognise that wonderful as they are, their parents are flawed. It takes a little longer for them to realise this is simply because parents are human – and not perfect. The child grows better if Dad is consistent – firm but gentle.

In mid-life years (@ 35-45) when a child can be asking very difficult questions that a Dad feels a need to answer, he can be questioning some of his own prior certainties. He can feel confused. Honesty and patience wins through. Dad doesn't have to know everything. He has to love his children. One reality today, thanks to Dr Google is that some kids know some things that Dad doesn't know. It can be humbling or exciting that Dad can learn some things from his children. Kalil Gibran advised, "You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth".

As children grow into being adults, a Dad's relationship becomes different. Respect for personal individuality replaces attempts to coerce. Dad will always be a parent, and though some talk of being 'best friends' with their children, this is most likely possible only when roles start to change, and the Dad who has cared for his children, becomes the one being cared for. Even so, he is always Dad!

Many Dad's revel in having the time and freedom to love their grandchildren. We have seen in recent years a deeper recognition of the adage, "it takes a village to raise a child". Too much is expected of a father or mother if they do not have real or adopted relatives to assist them. Grandparents appreciate that they can love their children's children with little need or desire to discipline. They enjoy giving them back at the end of a 'baby-sitting' day. Grandad's have more time to love, and they know children benefit from this.

To all the fathers who are much loved as Dad and Grandad, because they have loved, we send our prayers and best wishes for Father's Day.  
Blessings from us all at Holy Cross.

**Tony Van der Haar**



Tony passed away very suddenly last week. Ria is being well supported by her daughters, after this unexpected shock. He will be farewelled on Friday from Holy Cross at 11.00am.

The Mass booklet can be downloaded and the funeral service video can be viewed via the Tobin Brothers website.

<https://tobinbrothers.com.au/tribute/details/21369/Antonius-Tony-Van-Der-Haar/obituary.html#tribute-start>

### **Maria Robson**

Maria' funeral will be celebrated next Tuesday at 10.00am. The link for the live-streaming is: <https://youtu.be/jgjM9JyXI7Y>

We will have more information about both Tony and Maria next week.

**The link for Sunday's recorded Mass will be sent on Saturday afternoon.**

### **We remember**

**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 in your prayers, Ria Van der Haar and her family and Peter Robson and his family . Also Jan Mulally, Richard Gibbs, Graham Hille, Maree Bartoli, Peter Owen, Mary Coburn, Jim Molan, Anne Jenkins, Angelo Vigilante, Pam Grehan, Pam Gartland, Michael O'Callaghan, Patricia Keeghan, Brian Tresseder, Jim Monaghan, Maeve and John Reardon, Michael and Mardi Doyle, Kate and Mary Dunn, Carmel King, Ray Sanchez CP, Jim Couchier CP and all who seek or need our prayers.

May you have a good weekend  
Brian