

## Holy Cross Retreat

### Letter 82

September, 2021

10<sup>th</sup>



Greetings

### Lockdown

Unfortunately, Masses at Holy Cross remain cancelled and the Retreat Centre remains closed. The Office is unattended but phone messages can be left.

### Come Away Day

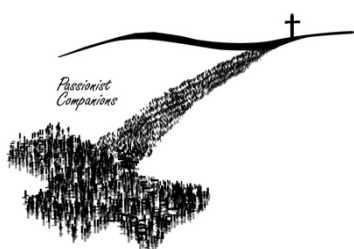


Because of the current extended lockdown, restrictions on gatherings prevent the next 'Come Away Day' being held at Holy Cross. Instead, the 'Come Away Day' will be conducted by zoom conference on September

23<sup>rd</sup> from 10am to 11.30am. The day's theme is "[Connectedness and Presence.](#)"

Those interested in participating need to register for this event and a zoom conference link will be forwarded closer to the day. Please contact Frank Burke to register at [burke.frank942@yahoo.com.au](mailto:burke.frank942@yahoo.com.au) by Monday 20th September.

### Passionist Companions – Holy Cross



Last week the Holy Cross Companions met by Zoom. This was a first, and there were a few technological hitches, but there was strong appreciation for people 'seeing' one another after such a long time. We took up most of the time just sharing experiences of what COVID lockdown has been like. Several who live on their own, expressed the challenges this presents at

such a time. We will meet again, hopefully at the end of the month.

### Passionist Companions – PCLG

The leadership group of Passionist Companions also met last week. This was a good opportunity to learn how groups have been managing during Lockdown. COVID has not affected gatherings as much in New Zealand or Adelaide as in other places. Quite a number of individuals have been accessing Passionist spirituality materials from various websites, but some groups have not been able to meet for some time. Some planning will be done in coming weeks to offer a Zoom session or brief Conference perhaps around mid-October, and again in a more significant way to celebrate the 300<sup>th</sup> Jubilee in November.

### **Sr Karen Englebretsen CP - (a note from Sr Brigid CP)**



Karen, from New Zealand joined the Sisters of the Cross and Passion in May 2015 and took her first vows in 2018. Karen accompanied Sr Joan to Dublin in March 2020 and stayed on to pursue some further studies which she completed in August 2021.

Karen has a serious eye condition which has worsened during the time in Dublin. The eye specialist and eye surgeon, in whom she has confidence, are both in Melbourne. It was felt that she should return to the specialists who know her and have treated her during her time in Melbourne. She is returning to Melbourne this week and will, after two weeks in hotel quarantine, come to stay at Holy Cross in the dry Tavern with Sr Brigid!

Karen will continue to discern God's plan but as Fr Chris often says 'God writes straight on crooked lines' so we trust that God is guiding Karen and will open up a pathway for her to enter into ministry. God is having to do a lot of writing on crooked lines at present as we learn how to navigate the new landscapes in which we find ourselves. We ask you our readers to pray for Karen and those women and men, now a minority, who are choosing religious life.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my brother Passionists for allowing us to be here at Holy Cross ( I only came for two weeks!). It has been a safe haven and very much appreciated and thank you to all of you who read this letter for your ongoing interest and support.

Brigid cp

### **And for us...**

It has been a great delight to have Brigid living with us – even if she is living in the (dry) Tavern, attached to the laundry! Apart from her warm personal presence and always generous assistance and contributions, Brigid joins us for our community prayer twice a day. The community has meals together six times a week. Brigid joins us for four of those meals.

Our lunch time meals Monday to Saturday are GYO, but normally we can find the students sharing lunch on those days. Noodles and rice are very popular!

Brigid is also greatly appreciated by the 'Come Away' team, and the Passionist Companions. Karen will be warmly welcomed and greatly appreciated here by us and by groups like the 'Come Away Team'..

## World Suicide Prevention Day....Friday September 10<sup>th</sup>



This day is a wonderful initiative. It highlights how significant has been the movement from shame and hiding to public awareness and compassion regarding this very human issue that thankfully has been brought into public awareness. Communities play a crucial role in suicide prevention and WSPD helps create greater

awareness, not only of suicide but of suicide prevention. It aims to help change the way suicide is understood and discussed in the community, and it connects people to support services.

The impacts of suicide are immediate, far-reaching and long-lasting. They are felt by families, friends, work colleagues and the broader community. While not all suicides are preventable, we can prevent some by increasing individual and community resilience, and by supporting individuals and communities at risk, to seek and receive help. Our language is important. Suicide had such a stigma that it was classified as a crime. Unfortunately some people still use the phrase 'committed suicide', which reflects this past thinking. "He died by suicide" is a more simple, accurate and non-condemning manner of expression.

A member of my parents generation took his life as a young adult. The funeral was held secretly and no information at all was passed to us, his nephews and nieces. He just disappeared from our life. If only he could have felt able to talk about his emotional pain,

There is much talk today of cyber-bullying and social media harassment. A resilient person may deal with repeated nasty attacks by bullies, but a vulnerable person, lacking in self-confidence, feeling alone or unwanted, can make sudden and tragic decisions as a result of this pressure. We need to keep finding ways for vulnerable people to seek help rather than to think their life no longer has worth or meaning.

Today invites us to take some steps to be informed, and to widen our antennae so we can better pick up clues when someone is seeking or needing our help. Of course there are serious concerns being expressed by a wide array of experts about the effect of lockdowns on mental health. Given our lockdown in Melbourne is going to continue for some time, it is important to seek strategies for those in our care, and active reaching out for those who are isolated or at risk.

### Thailand

Last year at least 800,000 Thais, who were low-income earners and small-business owners who relied on a steady influx of foreign tourists to make a living were plunged into poverty.

Figures have not been made available yet for 2012, but driven by desperation, most unemployed guides now depend on handouts of food and other necessities as they

have had no income for 18 months. Several unemployed guides have resorted to stealing to support themselves and their families. Sadly, quite a number of former tour guides or others with tourism-related jobs have taken their lives out of desperation. This desperation is so sad for us to hear about, and it is repeated in countries where there is no government assistance available to simple living families.

**If the content of the above raises any concerns, please seek assistance from Lifeline – 13-11-14 or a professional**

### **Safeguarding Sunday**



Safeguarding Sunday seeks to acknowledge the immense damage caused by the sexual abuse of children and adults at risk, including by Catholic priests, religious and lay people. We are called and reminded today that we

must each make a commitment to practices and protocols that create and maintain safe environments for all people.

At Holy Cross we are committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young people and people at risk in our community. We seek the support of everyone associated with us, to join us and to hold us to account in our resolve to do everything possible to ensure the protection and dignity of every person. We have policies in place. Tina Minichilli is our Province Risk Management Officer. If you have any concerns about anyone being at risk, please report your concern to Tina (0439034116).

On Sunday especially, let us pray for those so deeply harmed directly by abuse as well as those harmed indirectly. Their pain and suffering is always with them and lasts for decades.

### **Nothing to worry about...non-professional advice!**

“There are only two things to worry about, either you are healthy or you are sick. If you are healthy, then there is nothing to worry about. But if you are sick there are only two things to worry about, either you will get well or you will die. If you get well, then there is nothing to worry about. But if you die there are only two things to worry about, either you will go to heaven or to hell. If you go to heaven, then there is nothing to worry about. And if you go to hell, you'll be so busy shaking hands with your old friends you won't have time to worry.”

### **Creation Season – Part 2**

Climate change today is heightened by the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil that give off gases such as carbon dioxide. These gases act as a barrier in the atmosphere, trapping the heat of the sun, hence the term 'greenhouse gas'.

Humans have destroyed tracts of rainforest, mainly in developing countries, that otherwise act as a 'carbon sink', absorbing greenhouse gases. As a result of the trapped gases, the atmosphere warms; seas expand and sea levels rise, causing ocean currents to alter. This in turn changes entire weather systems. The increasing use of fracking to extract deep deposits of gas, runs the risk of releasing huge amounts of methane gas into the atmosphere, contaminating groundwater reservoirs and causing earthquakes.

A change in rainfall pattern can mean that farmers' crops fail to mature and communities go hungry. Increasingly severe floods and storms are devastating families' homes and livelihoods year after year. Poor communities, already struggling with the burden of poverty, have to cope with increasingly frequent extreme weather events. Victims of extreme weather or natural disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis, experience severe shock and disbelief. They suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. At such times, women generally have less access to healthcare in such disasters.

As a result of climate change, rainfall levels in many parts of the developing world are falling or becoming unpredictable. This creates a 'domino effect'; with less rain, water levels drop in reservoirs or rivers and people have less water to use. The quality of that water deteriorates, as sewage and industrial effluent becomes more concentrated, and as a result waterborne diseases are rife. With a lack of water, vegetation does not grow so livestock have less to graze on. There is less wood for cooking, so women have to spend more time in often unsafe searching for fuel to cook for the family.

We are being advised to start thinking of the world as if it were one country, although we can see what a challenge it is to do that when we consider the trouble we have had in Australia dealing with COVID issues, as a united country! It is morally untenable to decide in terms of the cost to 'my' country or 'my' economy, without considering the damage one might be doing to the rest of the world. In the same way, we cannot simply say that the issues are too big for individuals to make a difference. We have to 'think globally and act locally'.



In 2009 United Nation authorities suggested that if we lowered emissions immediately, it would take one hundred years to keep the increase of temperature at less than 2°C. The Kyoto Protocol offered emission reduction of 5%. The G8,

in its 2007 meeting, offered a 50% reduction in emissions. While some progress is being made, talks in Copenhagen in 2009 offered little of what was needed. and while 195 nations agreed to lowering emissions at the 2015 talks in Paris, at a meeting in Morocco a year later, there was disappointment at the high level of inactivity. We now await the Climate Change Conference in November this year.

For those of us who are used to unlimited access to fresh water, it is sobering to learn that one billion people in the world today do not have access to clean drinking water and a further 2.6 billion are without basic sanitation. In many countries, the upper and middle classes are connected to the water mains, but the poor have to leave their homes to get water. If the poor want clean water, they usually have to buy it, and they pay more for it than those who have running water. The poorer you are the more you pay for water!



Within our own culture, we can conserve and recycle water for maximum benefit. Water used for urban consumption can be cleaned after use and reused for irrigation or on gardens. We can avoid water wastage and prevent surface water running off, which will help to stabilise the soil. Reincorporation of organic material like

compost increases the capacity of the soil to retain water.

Climate change is causing confusion of the seasons in West Africa which relies on agriculture. Lack of rain in the rainy season and too much rain during the dry season is ruining crops. As water becomes scarcer, girls have to walk farther from home to collect water and are at a higher risk of assault, highlighting the hidden implications caused by factors affecting climate change. As the world's population increases over the next 50 years, the United Nations suggests that there will be a need to produce as much food as we have produced in the last 10,000 years.

We know that hazardous and untested chemicals are routinely used as additives in consumer goods. They add certain qualities such as flexibility to plastics, scent to beauty and cleaning products, and fire resistance to soft furnishings. Some chemicals go through the cell into the DNA, changing the genetics and inflicting suffering on every descendent of a species. The use of Thalidomide in the 1960's is an example of the horrible effects of some chemicals used in health treatment.

In Love Canal, a suburb of Niagara Falls, New York, over 20,000 tons' tonnes of chemicals were dumped beneath where later, a school and housing were built. Health studies noted increases in miscarriages, still births, SIDS, nervous breakdowns, hyperactivity, epilepsy, and urinary tract disorders, within the suburb.

From 1974 to 1978, nine of sixteen children born in the area suffered birth defects. This included children born with three ears, double rows of teeth, and intellectual



retardation. Of twenty-two pregnancies in 1979, only four normal babies were born. The DNA of these individuals was forever damaged and will be carried now by the human race. Birth defects such as these are often carried unknowingly and some experts predict that the worst of them remain hidden for twenty years.

Every member of the (human) species has a unique DNA and together they form the human gene pool. Everything that will happen to humans in the future depends on the quality of that combined DNA. Incredible amounts of money have been spent on military defence, while hazardous waste contaminations have continued to risk huge damage to the human gene pool and to the gene pool of so many other species - with everlasting consequences. We need to be educated about these matters so as to avoid future generations being victims of a tragic decline.

Given the beauty of creation, it is so sad to see how badly we can pollute, harm and destroy the habitat of birds and animals, the rivers on which they and we rely. There is often raucous opposition to naming these issues. Instead of taking a leading moral lead, most large corporations and the wealthy individuals who benefit from them, do not want to have their profits reduced by paying attention to the critical signs all around us.

Extreme weather events are a warning that time is running out. Prophets have been warning us. Pope Francis has reminded us that to ignore their warnings is a serious moral failure. Let us do what we can to preserve the beauty God has given us.

## Funerals

We had two funerals at Holy Cross in the past week to celebrate the lives of two valued members of our community.

### Tony Van der Haar



Tony had the horrible experience of spending several years from age one in a concentration camp with his mother. When the war ended and they returned to Holland and school, Tony was the youngest to have survived the camp. Tony's bond with his mother remained very close and his family appreciate his great gift of story-telling was inherited from her.

After school Tony did an electric engineering degree and worked as an electrician until he was conscripted to the army for two years. Following that he spent a year in Switzerland and on his return home he met up again with Ria. However he left Holland and Ria behind and travelled to Australia where his parents were living. He

returned to Holland a year later. He and Ria were married and moved to Australia a few months later in 1965. Tony died one day before their 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

They built a house in Doncaster and had 5 children. Tony worked 6 days a week but Sunday was a family breakfast, Mass and a family day. He began cleaning swimming pools and worked through to pool building. He and Ria were involved in many aspects of church life including Passionist Family Groups and as supporters of Antioch. His optimism was an outstanding characteristic, displayed when his factory was burned to the ground. He battled with health issues and had sixteen significant operations. On medical advice, Tony changed careers. He studied for and qualified at age 60 as a Drug Welfare counsellor.

His life was characterised by hard work, faith, optimism and great love for Ria, their children and extended family, his He and Ria were so much in love. His passing was sudden and unexpected. He leaves behind a family who knew he loved them dearly. There will be a memorial Mass at Holy Cross when the numbers allow for it.

### **Maria del Carmen Robson de Pavan**



Maria was born in Rosario, Argentina 300 kilometres north of Buenos Aires. A gifted student, she studied for and received a teaching diploma and went on to study philosophy at university. She was an activist during the dangerous times in the 1970's in Argentina and was fortunate to be recommended for a role in Jamaica, where she met Robert and a family she was to make her own. In 1984 the family relocated and settled in Adelaide in the closest street to St Paul of the Cross church and the Passionist community in Glen Osmond. As a full-time mother she took up studies and received a University medal, was awarded a doctorate and went on to lecture in Spanish at Flinders and Adelaide university.

In 1995 the family relocated to Melbourne and she made sure she was close to a Passionist community. She became a regular at 9.00am Mass. The family accompanied Robert on a work appointment to Saudi Arabia but returned in 2009 after Maria had been diagnosed with breast cancer. With treatment, Maria recovered and became well known as the warm welcomer before each 9.00am Mass.

In 2019 Maria developed severe brain cancer. She fought a brave and very difficult battle with Robert firmly by her side. Even when she was in care at the latter stages of her life, if she heard someone was distressed, she would get out of bed and use her walker to go over and offer help. Her generosity and thoughtfulness never lessened. Maria died peacefully on August 27th, and was surely warmly welcomed by



the God in whom she invested her life. She left behind a family who knew and appreciated that she loved them.

### Called to be dangerous women



You are invited to share a journey of discovery, exploring the role of women in faith in our tradition. Four sessions will be presented by Dr Janina Hiebel, Dr Rosemary Canavan, Dr Carmel Posa SGS and Dr Claire Renkin. Each session involves all four speakers who will explore three women around a common theme – Old Testament, New Testament, Monastic

Women, and the Artwork around them. A Q&A will follow each session. Each session is one hour.

When this Conference was advertised, there were 1200 registrations! This clearly suggests the attraction of such a topic. The series is being generously offered by YTU at no cost. This is a great opportunity to learn something interesting and inspiring about some women who have exercised significant roles.

The women explored in Week 1 are: [Judith](#), [Mary of Magdala](#), [Mary of Egypt](#).

The link is: <https://vimeo.com/595863645>

The women explored in Week 2 are: Esther, the woman who anointed Jesus (in Mark & Matthew), Radegund . [The link is: https://vimeo.com/600568656](https://vimeo.com/600568656)

The following sessions will be:

3. Hannah, Mary and Elisabeth (visitation), Dorothy Day
4. Ruth, Phoebe, Teresa of Avila

### Humour

Q What did one volcano say to the other?

A Lava you.

Q What is a tornado's favourite game to play?

A Twister.

Q How does the moon cut its hair?

A Eclipse it.

Q How are false teeth like stars?

A They come out at night.

Q Why did the invisible man turn down the job offer?

A Because he couldn't see himself doing it.

Q Who keeps the ocean clean?

A The mer-maid.

Q What kind of haircuts do bees get?

A Buzzzzcuts.

Q What do you get if you cross a pie with a snake?

A A pie-thon.

### **New temporary ministry in Vietnam**

We have six Passionist deacons in Vietnam who were to be ordained in June, but the COVID outbreak has prevented that occurring. Two of them are today taking up an opportunity to take care of the sick, lonely and dying and assist doctors and nurses in this matter. Peter Huỳnh and Francis Xavier Tuấn are leaving our community in Saigon today. They will work in different places for one month, following the directions of the Health Ministry. Huỳnh is going to a hospital in Thủ Đức City, and Tuấn to District 7. They have received training in how to carry out this ministry while taking care of themselves.

Joseph Dominic Tân and Paul Kiện will follow them very soon while Mike Tuyên needs to wait for his second dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Please remember these men in your prayers as well as those they minister to.

The situation as reported previously in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). is dire 200 people are dying each day from COVID. Vietnam's fourth wave began on April 27. At that time, only 35 people had died of COVID-19 while the total number of infections stood just under 4,000. As of September 7th, there have been more than 13,000 deaths, and 520,000 case numbers. Eighty percent of these fatalities and half of the infections have occurred in Saigon. While we in Australia and New Zealand are encouraged to get excited as first dose vaccination rates climb towards 70%, only 3.3% of the population in Vietnam have been vaccinated.

### **Passionist spirituality**

"Chase all gloominess from your heart, and, if even if you do something wrong, don't get upset, since that would do you even more harm than the wrongdoing. Instead, humble yourself gently, ask God's pardon, decide that you will do better in the future and joyfully continue on your way" (Paul of the Cross)

### **70 years**

Congratulations to [Gerald and Margaret Wright](#) on their 70th wedding anniversary. Gerald is Denis Travers' uncle, and with Vin Molloy was the founding member of our 'A Team'.

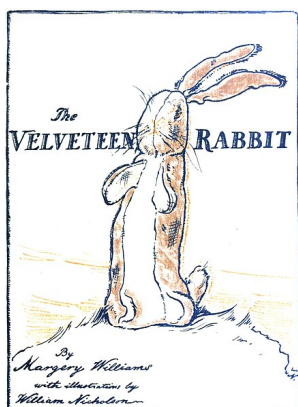
## Centre for Optimism

Victor Perton, a member of our community has recommended the Centre for Excellence. He especially recommended that I might advise of an upcoming event for teenagers, but the event is Friday morning (today). You may be interested in looking at the website and following through on any areas of interest. The link for the webpage is: <https://www.centreforoptimism.com>

## I Still have faith in you –

The newly released Abba song could apply to so many relationships or communities. It certainly is relevant to Passionist Family Groups. So many people have shared their ups and downs with others who began as strangers as long as 35 or 40 years ago, became friends and then family for one another. They are still there for each other. This video link has the lyrics. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrWGDtWFz2Y>

It brings to mind the wonderful story of 'The Velveteen Rabbit' by Margaret Williams. This extract is a great reminder to us of the value of being loved.



"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

'Does it hurt?' asked the Rabbit.

'Sometimes,' said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.'

'Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,' he asked, 'or bit by bit?'

'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.'

Here's to all those who understand, especially those in our Passionist Family,

Hang in there



**How animals can be so friendly with other animals**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MwQYcY479o>

**The link for Sunday's recorded Mass will be sent tomorrow afternoon:**

### **Feast of Holy Cross**

Next Tuesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate the feast of Holy Cross. We will livestream our community Mass at **8.30am**. You will be able to join us by video link at 8.30am, or 'watch' at a later time that suits you. We would normally have our Passionist Family gather with us for Mass and supper, to celebrate with us. Instead, we will invite you to join us in our community chapel.

**The link will be:** <https://youtu.be/K-cR5eJ3FPk>



**The following day is the feast of **Mary of Sorrows****

**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, Robert Robson and Ria Van der Haar and their families as they adjust to the sad loss of their spouse and parent.

We also remember: Jan Mulally, Richard Gibbs, Maree Bartoli, Bronwyn Burke, Peter Owen, Mary Coburn, Graham Hille, Maria Robson, Jim Molan, Anne Jenkins, Pam Grehan, Angelo Vigilante, Patricia Keeghan, Pam Gartland, Maeve and John Reardon, Jim Monaghan, Michael O'Callaghan, Michael and Mardi Doyle, Carmel King, 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

