

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 83

17th September, 2021

Greetings

Lockdown

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



The next 'Come Away Day' will be conducted by zoom conference on Wednesday this coming week, September 23rd 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 by Monday 20th September.

Sr Karen Englebretsen CP



Karen has arrived in Melbourne and is in quarantine. We expect her to join us next Wednesday. Who would have thought two years ago that we would have had two Passionist sisters living with us. It will be good to have Karen here and hopefully she can have effective treatment for her eyesight. Welcome, Karen.



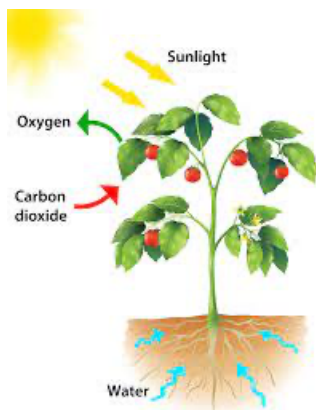
This Sunday, Toàn turns 29! He is the second youngest of seven children and he grew up in a very poor farming area in Vietnam. There is no electricity in the family house and his parents, he and his siblings had to do heavy manual work to provide for their needs. Our Vietnamese students undertake a University degree and Toàn did an Engineering Construction degree. He undertook two years philosophy before coming to Australia in 2019 for English studies (at ELSPM) and novitiate. Happy Birthday, Toàn.

Creation Season – Part 3.....Attraction and Calling

One of the critical things many of us still have to learn is that the earth is not a resource for humans! We are kidding ourselves if we cannot see that the planet's resources are finite. We need a new way of relating to earth and we need a new understanding of what it means to be human. Such an understanding must recognise that we are part of, not separate from, or superior to the earth community. At this time in our history, there is a strong call for this resonating around the globe.

It is helpful to understand the spiritual basis of this call, which can be described as an attraction or allurement. You may see the recent ABC's series 'Adventures of Space and Time', presented by Brian Cox. One episode was devoted to the marvel of 'Gravity'. Some scientists suggest that gravity is the power of attraction that holds the universe together. We are made from stardust, so we are of the universe. We therefore share in this power of attraction, which we experience it every day, though of course we can become deadened in our awareness or response to it.

We know that the stars were drawn to form galaxies and that they have become part of the ongoing allurement, whereby galactic material is always being drawn together. The sun and the earth are in this same sort of relationship. We know now that the sun does not rise, but earth does! It is orbiting and rotating around the sun in a magic connection that is at the basis of attraction. It has been doing this for four and a half billion years. The earth, which came from 'spare bits' of the sun, remains in its orbit, always connected and constantly 'feeding' from it. The sun bathes the earth with light and the earth orients itself towards the sun. Without the sun, we have no life.



What a miracle the creation of the chlorophyll molecule (photosynthesis) was! Light energy is captured by molecules that absorb light (pigments) that include the green pigment chlorophyll, and transform carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates and oxygen. In the photosynthetic reaction, electrons are transferred from water to carbon dioxide. Chlorophyll assists this to happen. The metallic atom at the centre of the pigment is magnesium. Chlorophyll absorbs strongly in the red and blue-violet regions of the visible spectrum, so the light it reflects and transmits appears green.

We take all this for granted, because we don't appreciate the complexity and wonder of it, and yet all our food depends on it. Brian Swimme has suggested that it's good to contemplate that photosynthesis was 'created' by an early life form that did not have a brain, eyes or hands!

Sexuality (two organisms joining and giving rise to offspring) developed around two billion years ago. Genitalia developed with the reptiles who 'gave birth' to the dinosaurs and birds and, in time, to humans. This sexuality continued through a long

process and lead to ongoing intimacy. The methods that led to arousal have been remembered by successive generations, and life responds to this deep powerful 'drag'. The universe houses sexual attraction within humans, only as the result of a process that has been going on for more than thirteen billion years. Allurement is in charge of us, not the other way around, and it is a privilege to be involved in it.

The same power that drew together the stars and galaxies is at work within us. We do not construct allurements or make them happen. It is seeking to burst into our self-reflecting consciousness. All we have to do is allow it to happen; to let it flood over us. So often a profound experience, such as scenic beauty or a magnificent sunset, overtakes our senses and the attraction we feel, connects us. It is not a sedate, measured response, it is wild energy, because that is the nature of life. Control or domestication is a veneer. It is not free and natural.

When we are attracted to someone or something, we have already been acted upon, and an element of 'adoration' that we feel, opens us and allows the very essence of who we are to be moulded by this attraction. We can be attracted to a sunset, an ocean, a river, a mountain, the stars, a farm, a bay, and animal or to other humans. The dynamic is similar to the way the earth is drawn to the sun. Earth reflects the very structure of the sun. Chlorophyll will not work on any other planet that we know of. It works on earth and with our sun.

Humans are tender, and as a result, their encounters can often be wounding. It is likely that what we are attracted to, has been wounded. This is especially true of other humans. When an organism is wounded, it closes down some of its membranes to protect itself, and it remains in a reduced state of life. We have seen this happen in ourselves and others, but it also happens in other species, and even bio-regions experience this. The intensity of attraction can weaken these membranes and draw out what is at the depth, in this way identifying which wounds in fact participates in healing.



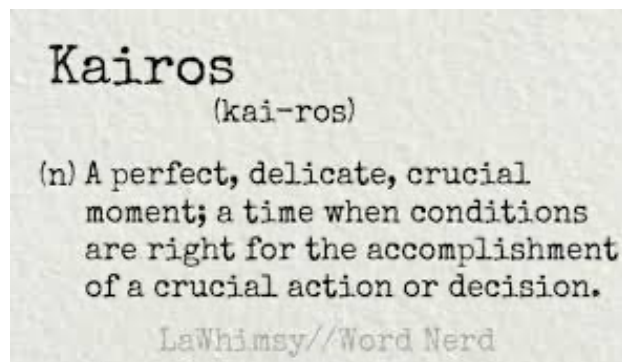
In humans, there is sometimes the profound experience of loving a person back to life, that begins with this profound attraction that reaches to the core of the other, and slowly brings out life.

Humans have an intense desire to commune with others, to be a presence of goodness and joy, and to evoke this from one another. Through the specific quality of self-reflection, humans learn how to experience what another person feels and we desire to feel his or her joy. Then a person wants not only to be a cause of joy for another person, but he or she wants to experience the effect of this joy which creates

a new depth. This is the true meaning of ecstasy. Self-reflection allows us to understand that we can be the cause of the joy that we know another person is experiencing.

Signs of people possessing this sense of attraction are easily recognisable. Such people display a passionate absorption with life. They display a wide spectrum of feelings and moods, because they have absorbed the moods of others. When fully alive, they have a capacity to be completely overwhelmed (lost) in situations that might seem trivial. They have a sensitivity to beauty in all its forms. They are open to the reality that life 'calls' them.

When we appreciate our place in the Universe story, we come to know that we draw on the past and that the future presses into the present. Universe time is not clock time. It is a measure for knowing the moment for creativity, so it changes, depending on our creativity. The great moments in creation, such as the development of the hydrogen atom, the formation of the galaxies, photosynthesis, the birth of the sun, or life on earth, are what marks time. How, otherwise can we speak of a billion years? It has no meaning for us. Rather, we need to come to recognise the 'Kairos', the right time, and this is related to how we read the signs of the times.



If we are attuned and listening, these signs are easy for us to recognise, even if we don't know what they are calling us to. Throughout history great thinking and movements have emerged at parallel times. Think of the development of the great religions and civilizations, particular scientific insights including the almost exact timing for Alfred Wallace and Charles Darwin to 'discover' evolution.

This is no coincidence. It is the result of active listening to the promptings of creativity despite the recipients being in separate locations. This experience tells us what time is. The universe's sense of time, is not linear. It is 'the time for' and Ecclesiastes suggests 'there is a time for everything'. We have to listen; we have to become aware of 'the (right) time'. To do this, we must appreciate that the way the divine, through the Universe, speaks to us, is to remove our former fascinations so that they no longer have the same attraction compared with something else that is stirring or calling. To be in tune with this, we need to listen to what attracts us, what repels us, what bores us. If it is boring us, it will de-energise us, and rob us of potential or of opportunities.

It is this experience that many people identify as 'knowing their vocation'. It is that moment when it becomes clear that there is a beckoning, or an illumination to follow

a particular path. It can be ignored, but any alternate choice we make is taken knowingly. It can be the lure of a new adventure or new opportunity, not necessarily of our own making or choosing. It can seem like a prompting, or even sometimes more strongly, it can be a feeling of being dragged to follow. Perhaps this was Luther's experience when he said, "Here I stand, I can do no other". Knowing the almost incredible demands of achieving it, imagine the vision, the allurements, the knowing, that the Pharaoh Kofu had, to build the Great Pyramid.

To be continued....

The Great Pyramid

(From Wikipedia) Initially standing at 146.5 metres this was the tallest manmade structure in the world for more than 3,800 years. It was built around 4600 years ago, by quarrying an estimated 2.3 million large blocks weighing 6 million tonnes total. Other larger blocks were floated downstream along the Nile river. It was covered in bright white limestone. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3037815/the-great-pyramid-used-to-be-so-shiny-it-glowed>

Some inspirations

Andre Bocelli and his eight year old daughter **Virginia** sing 'Halleluia'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iliqxyLuMjk>

On a train in China I saw a little girl watching me. I had glitter on my cheek and asked her **parents** if I could put some on her too. After 20 mins of playing her **parents** told me she was mute severely disabled and that this was the first time she'd ever smiled. My heart is so full.



Some months back in Nigeria one naked and dying 2-year abandoned child was seen being fed by a lady charity-worker from Denmark - Anja Ringgren Loven, that pic went viral in social media. She later adopted that child and named him Hope. Today, Hope looks like this:

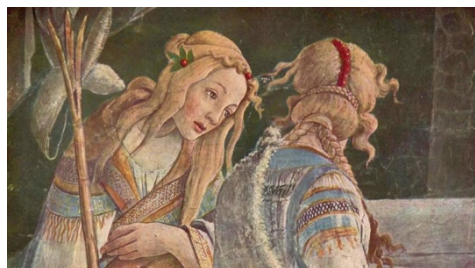


This little girl with Down syndrome got up from her seat during a papal audience and went towards Pope Francis during ministration.

The security guards quickly moved in to take her back to her mother.

The Pope stopped everyone and said to the girl, "come sit next to me." The girl then sat down near him and the Holy Father continued to preach while holding hands with the little girl.

Called to be dangerous women



This four-session series 'exploring the role of women of faith in our tradition' is taking a break this week. The one-hour sessions are presented by Dr Janina Hiebel, Dr Rosemary Canavan, Dr Carmel Posa SGS and Dr Claire Renkin. Each session involves all four speakers who explore three women around a common theme. A Q&A will follow each session.

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.

As advised, the women explored in Week 1 were: [Judith](#), [Mary of Magdala](#), [Mary of Egypt](#). The link is: <https://vimeo.com/595863645>

The women explored in Week 2 were: Esther, the woman who anointed Jesus (in Mark and 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

A creative COVID dinner

I received this description of a recent fantastic and creative event.....

"We recently joined an online Lebanese dinner and wine tasting. The restaurant hosting it sent a food parcel and wines and then we joined 120 other people (strangers) from all over Sydney in a ZOOM meeting where the chef instructed us on how to finish the partly prepared meals and the wine distributor led us through a wine tasting. I

t was a fantastic evening and it felt lovely to be part of an online community of strangers sharing a common love of food and wine and the desire to support a business that had taken such an initiative.

The food and wine were fantastic and the hosts did an amazing job of keeping us interested. At one stage the wine merchant did a live cross to a Lebanese/Australian winemaker in Lebanon who was driving home from the vineyard with his family. He gave us a full history of winemaking in Lebanon and then explained the issues that Lebanon was currently facing. He even pointed out petrol queues as he drove past them and pointed his camera at them so we could see how long they were!. It was quite a unique and moving experience".

What a great idea this was. Could not a group of Passionist Family Groups, or Passionist Companions or fellow-parishioners or any group organise a smaller scale get together like this and include people from 'far and wide'?

International Peace Day



This day will be celebrated next Monday, September 21st. Peace is something everyone desires, yet many choose violent ways to achieve it!

Peace is something some people have never known, through no fault of their own.

Let us remember those who seek peace in our prayer and by our attitudes and our talk. Speak gently

John Denver wrote a beautiful poem on Peace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea9U3E58HC8>

Humour

Joe's wife just found out he replaced their bed with a trampoline; she hit the roof.

Carmen had a neck brace fitted five years ago and she's never looked back since.

If prisoners could take their own mug shots..... would they be called cellfies?

Scientists got bored watching the earth turn, so after 24 hours.... They called it a day.

I was really embarrassed when my wife caught me playing with my son's train set by myself. In a moment of panic, I threw a bedsheet over it. I think I managed to cover my tracks.

I tried to have a conversation with my wife when she was applying a mud pack. You should have seen the filthy look she gave me.

My friend keeps saying, "cheer up man, it could be worse. You could be stuck underground in a hole full of water." I know he means well.

If you think Thursdays are depressing, wait two days. It will be a sadder day.

Q What type of magazine do cows read?

A Cattlelogs.

Q What do you call a snowman with a six pack?

A An abdominal snowman.

Frog jokes

Q. What is green and takes photos?

A . Frogtographer

Q What is a frog's favourite drink?

A Croaka cola

A frog went into a bank and approached the teller. He could see from her nameplate that her name was Patty Whack. He asked, "Miss Whack, I'd like to get a \$30,000 loan to take a holiday."

Patty looked at the frog in disbelief and asked his name. The frog said his name was Kermit Jagger, his dad was Mick Jagger, and that it's okay, he knows the bank manager.

Patty explained that the frog would need to secure the loan with some collateral.

The frog said, "Sure. I have this," and produced a tiny porcelain elephant, about an 2 centimetres tall, bright pink and perfectly formed.

Very confused, Patty explained that she would have to consult with the bank manager and she disappeared into a back office.

She found the manager and said "There's a frog called Kermit Jagger out there who claims to know you. He wants to borrow \$30,000, and he wants to use this as collateral." She holds up the tiny pink elephant. "I mean, what in the world is this?"

The bank manager looked back at her and says: "It's a knickknack, Patty Whack. Give the frog a loan. His old man's a Rolling Stone."

This joke was told by Kerry O'Keefe during cricket commentary. It took a while to tell, because the joke was interrupted a few times by the cricket!

It is really worth listening to.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Y3AXzZqg2k>

Feast of Holy Cross

Thanks to Trí who recorded our community Mass last Tuesday. If you viewed the Mass you would have seen each of the community send greetings and assurance of

prayers at the end of the Mass. The link with a brief photographic introduction is: <https://youtu.be/HOaOq5Vn1HY>

Footy finals and names

There were some sad people last weekend, but not everyone can win, so we have two less that glamorous teams in the AFL Grand final if you just go by their names and how they are popularly understood. There are many people who think bulldogs are beautiful and they have a reputation of relating very well with children. Demons on the other hand.....



In the NRL we have not got to the finalists yet. The Storm have qualified for the preliminary final. The Panthers have to beat the Eels to qualify to play the Storm. The Sea Eagles have to battle with the Roosters to qualify to play the Rabbitohs.



A Storm can be scary. Panthers are obviously formidable. Eels are slippery. Sea Eagles are rarely seen, but they'd probably join in stealing your chips at the beach. Roosters can be annoying if you live near one and you want to sleep in! Rabbits? They are pretty jumpy, and very quickly two become four and four become eight etc.

We await the coming games of both codes



The Rugby Championship is underway. the Wallabies had a surprise win last week against the Springboks after three successive losses to the All Blacks who beat the Argentinian Jaguars last week. With regard to their team names, only the Jaguar seems fearsome, but try to tell anyone that an All Blacks team is not fearsome!

Passionist spirituality

“Passionist Spirituality is a spirituality rooted in the experience of St. Paul of the Cross, which teaches a particular way of relating to the Passion of Jesus and in which community life is not subordinate to apostolic availability”

(Paul Francis Spencer CP)

The link for Sunday’s recorded Mass will be sent on Saturday afternoon:



We remember: Michael O’Callaghan, Mary Hackett, 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 and Mardi Doyle, Carmel King, Kate and Mary Dunn, Rose Sanchez (Ray’s mother) Ray Sanchez CP, Jim Coucher CP and all who seek

or need our prayers.

May you have a good weekend

Brian