

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 87



15th October, 2021

Greetings

Welcome to another end-of-week newsletter which is considerably longer than usual.

Plenary Council

Quite a number of articles are available that provide information concerning the recent 1st Assembly of the Plenary Council. A list of some of them is below:

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Time between assemblies a chance for prayer, maturation

Brisbane Mass closes Plenary Council's first assembly

Plenary Council's first assembly 'inspiring, challenging'

Plenary members present final reports of first assembly

Plenary Council's task: 'Reveal the face of Christ'

Plenary members focus on mission in God's world

Plenary Council journey one for 'dusty, patient pilgrims'

Plenary Council to contemplate woundedness, seek new peripheries

Members unpack big questions facing the Church

Archbishop Fisher: 'Be Powerhouse of Prayer'

Council members begin work of communal discernment

Pope sends blessings to historic Church event

St Francis a model for Australia's Plenary Council

Catholics in Australia urged: 'Become true disciples'

The Journey to the Plenary Council.....*Australian Catholics*

[Anticipating the Plenary Council](#)

[Truth-telling and the Plenary Council](#)

[The Plenary Council](#)

[Listening to the Holy Spirit: A guide to discernment](#)

[Listening to the Holy Spirit: A Church where everybody leads](#)

[What is God asking of the Catholic church?](#)

[*Eureka Street*](#)

[**The Plenary Council: Consulting the faithful**](#)

[**Strapped in for the Plenary Council ride**](#)

[**The challenges of representing Catholic Australia**](#)

[**The uncomfortable legacy: colonisation and the church**](#)

[**Plenary Council needs the Catholic community**](#)

[**A skeleton for the Plenary Council agenda**](#)

[**The Plenary Council must address structural inertia and church decline**](#)

[**Aussie bishops can't shy from celibacy questions**](#)

[**Plenary Council rocket science a matter of trust**](#)

[**Defend inclusiveness at Catholic Plenary Council**](#)

[*Assembly 1 blogs and podcasts*](#)

[**Toward a transparent, inclusive and humble church – John Warhurst AO**](#)

[**Opening Eucharist – Francis Sullivan blog**](#)

[**Plenary Matters – Geraldine Doogue**](#)

[**Fr Frank Brennan's homily – 3 October 2021**](#)

[**Plenary Council podcast**](#)

[**Vaccinations and Mass attendance**](#)

When restrictions ease and we leave lockdown, the Victorian government will release some instructions that are likely to affect what we will be required to do at Holy Cross. Already the Archdiocese has outlined that parish workers (paid and volunteers) who work at or are in connection with a place of worship, will be subject to mandatory vaccination directions. This means secretaries, readers, eucharistic ministers, musicians, recording technicians etc will be subject to these directions. By October 15th these people must be vaccinated or show they have a booking for a first dose by October 22nd and a latest booking for a second dose by November 26th.

They must show a vaccination information update to the parish centre engaging them. This information must be retained and it must remain confidential, unless requested as required by law.

In anticipation of Holy Cross reopening, the community met to consider our position regarding those who are not vaccinated. We did this, while being mindful that the government may provide requirements that mandate something similar.

We are very mindful of and sensitive to the reality that there may be some people who wish to come to Mass (or some other activity) at Holy Cross who are unable to be vaccinated for health reasons. There may be others who hold an ideological position on this matter. We are also aware of the vulnerability of many people who worship with us regularly who will not attend unless they feel fully safe.

Our position is affected also by the fact that despite everyone within our own community, including the students, being doubly vaccinated, we have a responsibility to one another, and especially to Jerome. Given his health issues, contracting COVID could well be fatal for him. The same would apply to some others we know, who normally attend Mass.

For that reason we want to share with you our recommendation, which is that we will insist on those who attend Mass or any activity at Holy Cross be fully vaccinated. This will provide certainty and security for those whose attend ,that they have the best possible protection from COVID. We have been warned that the person tasked with gathering this information and therefore perhaps being challenged by these restrictions could be in a very difficult position and we will hope he or she is treated with respect.

Being mindful that this practice could mean some are disadvantaged and may well feel 'unwanted', we propose that any such people contact us so that we can arrange for them to be given weekly communion.

If you have any feedback to offer about this, please contact me on bttraynor@icloud.com

Creation 7: RESONANCE....Part 3



As a species, horses have learned to be corralled by barb-wire without injuring themselves, though injuries did occur to most horses when this practice was first introduced. There have been successful experiments carried out with fake (painted) cattle grids. Some wondered what would happen if one animal overcame this 'trick'. Would others also learn to do the same?

In 1985, some sheep in Wales overcame the fake cattle grid by rolling over them. This rolling over technique occurred in the same year in Sweden. Twelve years later, sheep in Hampshire began to use this technique and in 2004, some sheep in Yorkshire also adopted this technique.

When the European Cuckoo is hatched, it never sees its parents. It is reared by birds of other species. The adult birds migrate to their other home in Southern Africa.

One month later, the young cuckoos get together and without the aids humans would use, migrate across the Sahara Desert to Southern Africa, 5,350 kilometres away, where they join their elders!



There is so much for us to be in awe of. Bats can fly through complex wiring at full speed, without sight. No one teaches spiders to spin webs, yet spiders everywhere know how to do it. It has been in their spider 'memory' for millions of years. Robert Sheldrake claims that memory is in herent and it is transmitted by morphic resonance which is *"the idea of mysterious telepathy-type interconnections between organisms and of collective memories within species and accounts for phantom limbs, how dogs know when their owners are coming home, and how people know*

when someone is staring at them". These phenomena can also be observed in flocks of birds who can commonly change direction, or in schools of fish, some of whom even change colour in the same instant.

Look at this video and it is clear that there is no leader.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eakKfY5aHmY>

Chaos theory highlights how a 'strange attractor', at times, rearranges chaos into some order. Scientists propose that any system prevented from acquiring new energy, will decay. Everything is connected to everything else. The universe is a system within a system and it is important for us to appreciate that humans are not in

control of it! An atom, an animal, a community, an organisation, an ecosystem, even a civilization, requires new energy. It seems that development and growing pays a price for creativity. Often attempts are made to avoid this cost in human communities and in families and as a result, they become stagnant. Human endeavour in all its multiple activities, reveals the 'cost' of achievement.

Supernovas can teach us that there is an innate tendency towards fulfilling our inner nature. The acorn has an inner map of its destiny and adjusts to its surroundings in order to achieve it. The caterpillar enters the cocoon to 'become' its destiny. We have a destiny to be united with God and all creation. Unless there was this fight to be oneself, there would be nothing to prevent one species overtaking the earth, as humans are threatening to do, at this present time in the universe's history. Without the fight and sometimes without violent control of other species, earth could be covered in thistles, or infested with locusts. What mechanism will Earth find to overcome the destruction caused by humans? It will find one!

The universe is self-organising and it uses this power to create and unify the amazing diversity within it. No two galaxies, no two stars or planets are identical. On Earth, we discover a similar reality. Despite their similarities, no two members of a species are identical. Nor even two shells or snowflakes. The universe has an incredible drive to create diversity and complexity, to re-create and to be 'born again'. Each form of life is integrated with every other form of life. Even beyond the earth, by force of gravitation, each particle of the physical world is attracted to, every other particle.



Humans often relate experiences of attraction that seem unrelated to the rational world. Upon reflection couples often appreciate how their first meeting was so unlikely, or that there was an immediate attraction, that they could not explain.

We do not see the major part of what really happens, because it is invisible. If we agreed to devote as much time to what cannot be seen, to mystery and things of the heart, as we do to the material things we buy and use, we would have a different perspective. Material goods are not what gives meaning to our species. Jesus warned, "*you cannot serve God and possessions*" (Matthew 6:24).

There is an energy that is continuing to create every moment of every day. This energy also holds on to chaos, destruction and even death, and releases new life. The sustaining power of this ever-present active energy is of far more significance than anything we see, or are unable to see. When we take time to appreciate the story of our universe, and reflect on the many mysteries that bring it alive every day, we can only stand in awe and reverence that this divine power calls us, into communion, to be co-creators.

Whatever the place of the human species in the ongoing story of the universe, at this particular moment of the story, we have an opportunity to respond to the gift we have been given. This beautiful planet and all that lives on it, is our family. Nothing on it, or indeed within the universe, is perfect. That gift belongs to the creating and sustaining God. Mutations occur and add to the creativity and diversity as well as to the challenges for every species in every generation. We battle weeds in the garden and we battle mutations, such as the Delta variant of COVID-19. Animals and plants adapt to the threats to their survival. Humans have to do the same. "Some say eat or be eaten, some say live and let live, but all are agreed as we join the stampede, we can never take more than we give, in the circle of life" (Elton John)

Despite imperfection and the misbehaviour, cruelty and aggression of some members, we make our life with all that is around us.

Passionist spirituality

MEMORIA PASSIONIS

On Tuesday 19th October we celebrate the life of St Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionists. It is a good opportunity to reflect on his gift or charism. Paul took a vow not just to live but also to promote the living memory of the Passion of Jesus.

Living this means trying to live daily life with the same openness to God that Jesus displayed in his Passion and death.

Promoting this means making it attractive to others and leading them to discover this same openness in their lives.

Living this requires a complete openness to God and God's 'way'.

Promoting this means leading people to experience letting go and letting God

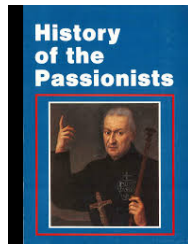
Living this means striving to be empty of self and alive to God. "I live, no, not I, but God lives in me"

Promoting this means challenging those things in our life and our culture that encourage self-interest and discourage awareness of God

Living this, Paul of Tarsus reminds us in his 'kenosis' theme from Philippians, is setting aside status and control and becoming little before God. This is central to Paul Danei's spirituality

Promoting this means witnessing individually and corporately that we are men and women of God, seeking God's will, not our own.

Living this means patterning our life on Jesus' openness to God, ("not my will, but yours be done"). We die to the 'me' in me and live instead for 'God' in me.



Promoting this means preaching that Jesus, in abandoning himself to God's will, knew of God's overwhelming love for him. This conviction allows a person to know that since God loves me, God will take care of me and 'all will be well'. We 'see' this in the Passion, and we experience it through our own openness to God.

Living this means abandoning ourselves to the loving hand of God. This is the quickest and best way to spiritual perfection. It means we live in peace

Promoting this means encouraging people to practice letting go and reflect on how life itself and the Universe Story invites us to do this.

Living this means we seek to be open to do God's will, not to know God's will.

Promoting this means pointing to the belief (in workshops, homilies, at funerals, weddings and other celebrations) that "all things work together for God for those who love him".

Living this means even when we fail or experience suffering we do not lose peace with God because we know and experience God's love.

Promoting this means sharing Paul of the Cross' teaching that whatever happens comes from the loving hand of God.

Paul wrote, "I will strip myself of everything by a complete abandonment of myself to God. I will leave the care of myself entirely to him. He knows what I need and I don't know. Therefore, I shall accept with equal resignation both light and darkness, consolation and calamities and crosses, suffering and joy. I will praise him in everything. Above all, I will bless the hand which scourges me, as I put my total trust in him"



Living this means self-surrender in love. Each of us is called to be a living memorial. This operates at our deepest core and is observable in how we deal with the unexpected, the painful, etc.

Promoting this means showing the difference between monuments of stones and mortar and living monuments to Jesus' Passion.

My personal experience

I trust in God, I have often seen and experienced blessings through trial, gift through failure, freedom through letting go, joy through pain. I try to be a living memorial. Naturally I fall short of the mark, often. But I try to promote this in conversations, in preaching, through writing and spiritual advice, in assisting the formation of leaders etc.



Just before my Dad died (in 2003), I spoke with him about his funeral. He told me how uplifted he felt by the prayers and support of so many people. He said he couldn't explain how, but he felt a great joy and peace. I said "I know I am a great sinner, but I know how strong God's love for me is, so I feel a real joy". He went on to say that the last words my Mother wrote to him (she was unable to speak) were "We will meet again". He said "I know I will do that soon". Heather, who married him five years after my Mother died, said to me "I can't believe how peaceful he is. Look at him. He is happy". He was being a living memorial! Our vocation as Passionists is to live and promote the living memory of the Passion. God is doing the work, we are just the instruments. How can we promote the living memory if we are people of action, but not of contemplation ?

Paul the founder, had problems getting episcopal permission for some things he wanted. His faith could accept disappointment...but like Jesus in Gethsemane, he still asked for what he wanted. He was attached in the mind but detached in the heart, because he saw everything as coming from the loving had of God.

Celebrating the feast of Paul of the Cross



Chris will celebrate our community Mass at 8.30am on Tuesday October 19th. As he did for the feast of Holy Cross, Trí will livestream this Mass. It can be watched as we celebrate, or you can watch at a more convenient time. The link for that Mass is:

<https://youtu.be/jmj3WYDJsK8>

Tri also recorded a 45-minute session in which I presented a reflection using Power Point slides. I addressed two questions related to Paul of the Cross and ourselves.

Q 1. What was unique about Paul's call to evangelise ?

Q 2. How does Paul's life and work still resonate today?

The format is a brief prayer and then the talk. After a little over twenty minutes there are three questions for reflection or discussion on Q1 and again after about 43 minutes there are three questions for reflection or discussion on Q2. This enables a person to watch alone, as some may need to do. Alternatively a group could watch and pause the recording to share their responses to the questions. Hopefully this can deepen out appreciation not only of Paul of the Cross, but of the Passionist vocation, whether it be professed or lay.

The link is: <https://youtu.be/4hpto7bhZmE>

Humour

Q What do you call a priest that becomes a lawyer?

A Father-in-law.

Q What do bees wear to the beach?

A BEEkini

Q Where do you take someone who has been injured in a Peek-a-Boo accident?

A To the I.C.U.

Q Why did the blind man fall down the well?

A Because he couldn't see that well.....

Q Where do cows go on a first date?

A To the moooooooooooooooooovies.

Q Why is Peter Pan always flying?

A Because he Neverlands.

Q Why did the elephant leave the circus?

A He was tired of working for peanuts.

Wife: Did I get fat during quarantine?

Husband: You were never really that skinny!!

Time of Death: 13/10/21 @ 07.35pm

Cause of Death: Corona Virus

Felix Kiaoli CP

On Monday October 11th our brother **Felix Kiaoli** died unexpectedly at home not long after sharing the evening meal with the community. Felix was the first PNG Passionist to be ordained, but he succumbed to mental illness a few years afterwards and has lived most of the subsequent years battling this illness, with wonderful support by our religious, particularly from Jerome and Felix's class mate Ben Telu. Felix was loved by his Passionist brothers, especially the students. Those in the photo above sat through Monday night with him in prayerful vigil. May he rest in peace.

Next Wednesday October 20th, the oldest professed Passionist in Holy Spirit Province, **David Wilkie**, will celebrate his 94th birthday. David has been in hospital for a few days this week.

On Wednesday this past week we remembered the tenth anniversary of Cathy Hardinge's father **Frank Mandile**, and on Thursday we remembered the first anniversary of Alida Valmorbida's husband, **Maurice**. God bless and comfort them.

Joan O'Callaghan is still in hospital.

Congratulations to **Gerard Daly** who celebrates his 50th birthday on Saturday 23rd October. Gerard, with his wife Linda, has been a wonderful liver and promotor of Passionist life through his leadership of Passionist Companions.

We remember.



We remember: Joan O'Callaghan, Michael O'Callaghan, Mary Hackett, Bronwyn Burke, Richard Gibbs, Maree Bartoli, Bill Davies, Peter Owen, Mary Coburn, Graham Hille, Jim Molan, Anne Jenkins, Angelo Vigilante, Pam Gartland, Pam Stretch, (NZ) Patricia Keeghan, Pam Grehan, Maeve and John Reardon, Jim Monaghan, 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