

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 88

22nd October, 2021

Greetings,

Thankfully from today, we have some welcome relief from restrictions in Melbourne. Technically the most recent lockdown (no 6) is over. We were locked down from March 30th-May 12th and from July 8th-October 27th, last year, from February 12th-17th, May 27th-June 10th, July 15th-27th, and from August 5th this year until today. That is a total of 262 days or 37 weeks. The Victorian Government has extended the 'State of Emergency' twenty times from 16th March 2020 until 11.59pm last night, October 21st.

There are many restrictions still in place, but it is a great relief to everyone that they can see family and friends, with unlimited travel across Melbourne. For us at Holy Cross, we are still unable to provide accommodation in the Holy Cross Centre according to the immediate restrictions, but we can have up to twenty double vaccinated people for a Mass or funeral and up to 10 people, to visit. These numbers will increase when the 80% double vaccination rate is reached.

One remaining restriction that is difficult for a lot of people is the inability in most cases to visit relatives in hospital or aged care. Chris is one person who is longing to see his aged Dad.

Mass attendance

By the weekend of November 7th we should be able to increase numbers at Mass to one per 4 square metres, which for our chapel, is 66. This is in line with when the 80% double vaccination target is expected to be reached. We should know more about that later this week.

We suggest you register with Tim Horlock via email: horlocktim1@gmail.com to attend 10.30am Mass on **October 31st**. Another option is to attend 9.00am Mass. This is no longer a parish Mass. We will celebrate Mass at that time for a while, whilst numbers are limited at 10.30am. You could indicate a preference when you register with Tim as to whether you wish to attend 10.30am or 9.00am. Tim will confirm with those who are 'successfully' booked.

As explained last week, it is a government regulation and a consideration of the health of those attending, that participation for the coming weeks requires double vaccination for an indoor gathering.

I have had three messages of objection to 'locking people out' of Mass. There may be others who did not write. It is a difficult situation about which we have no choice at the moment. It is a government regulation for indoor gatherings such as religious services. Rather than engage in a public debate, we will dialogue privately about this, and we know it is a pain for those who would like to attend Mass. Our offer is repeated that if you are not doubly vaccinated and would like to receive communion, please let Chris, Pastor or myself know.

If you cannot attend either of those Sunday Masses or the bookings are full, you are welcome to register for 9.00am Saturday October 30th which is the recorded Sunday Mass. It is important at that Mass to avoid background noise, so as not to disturb the recording.

Celebrating the feast of Paul of the Cross



Chris led a beautiful Eucharist for the feast of our Founder, on Tuesday morning. Our brothers at Endeavour Hills joined online and they are coming for dinner on Friday evening (tonight). Because we celebrate the 300th founding of our Congregation in a month's time, I will share something more of our founder in this newsletter over the next four weeks.



Holy Cross community (Left to right)

**John, Toan, Thang, Brian, Phuc, Chris, Tri
Brigid, Karen, Pastor, Jerome, Cau**

Passionist spirituality

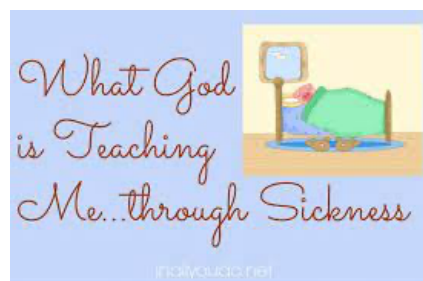
Paul and Sickness

Given the age and state of health of many Holy Cross Companions and others of professed and lay members throughout the Province, it may be of value to reflect on the place of sickness in Paul's life and spirituality. Paul 'saw' sickness and death first-hand in his family. Nine of his siblings died in infancy. He cared for the sick, dying and deceased as a young adult with the Confraternity of St. Anthony in Castellazzo. He stayed by the bedside of many who were sick or dying, and assisted them with prayers. He prepared many who died for burial and often led the funeral prayers because there was no priest to do it.



He never fully recovered from an attack of rheumatic fever in 1719, when he was twenty-five years of age, nor from a severe attack of malaria in 1727. Paul's constant travels in frosty weather and cold winds weakened him and for more than forty years, he was regularly incapacitated by sickness. He suffered from malaria, rheumatism, sciatica, debilitating headaches, deafness and frequent heart palpitations. From 1745, at the age of fifty-one, he was forced to use a walking stick to get about. In later life, he was often bed-ridden sometimes for many months, and he was a permanent invalid for most of the last ten years of his life. His letters and writings reflect that in all his sufferings, his deepest desire was to be conformed to Jesus crucified.

In the 1741 Rule, it was decreed that when one of the men was seriously ill, he was not to be left alone. One of the brothers was always to be with him, especially at night to provide spiritual and bodily support. *"They should be given every possible remedy; their room should be kept clean. They may have flowers and other scented herbs; they should have a straw bed, a woollen mattress, good pillows and good linen as well as good linen handkerchiefs."*



Paul's many illnesses had a significant influence on his spirituality which grew and developed throughout his life. His letters indicate that at times his sufferings were severe. *"Excuse my writing, but I can hardly hold the pen."* Comments such as these, and references that he could not travel *"on the advice of the doctor"* make clear references to his illnesses. As he aged, Paul became troubled with conjunctivitis, deafness, dizziness, loss of appetite, gout and a racing heartbeat. At times he was in such poor health that he required someone to write for him. He frequently shared his difficulties or struggles, with some to whom he wrote. Others knew nothing of his pain. Paul responded to sickness in a practical way. He often sent people remedies he had come across for various ailments, especially quinine for malaria. He knew well the value of his own advice, *"If*

sickness comes, it is a great gift from the Lord; it helps us to know ourselves. It is then that a person can see if they are patient, humble or unselfish.” In his old age when a religious asked his permission to visit a hospital, Paul said *“What a harvest awaits us in a hospital! What good can be done there for the souls of the sick! With my blessing go and attend the sick. If I was not deaf and broken in health, I would willingly go myself, but God does not will it for me. I am content.”*

Despite his determination for poverty, the sick were to be especially cared for. He wanted those who were sick to be surrounded with flowers and to be given every possible aid for recovery, including bed linen not normally allowed. He also directed that the Eucharistic vessels should be sold if necessary to procure what was needed for the sick religious. *“Poverty is good” he said, “but charity is better.”* He saw sickness as an opportune time for spiritual growth and self-insight. He often counselled people to obey the doctors; to avoid complaining; to be patient and to hand over to God: *“wait for peace in silence and hope”*. He learned that exaggerated asceticism such as he and his brother exercised when they were young, could lead to sickness and this could result in a situation he never wanted – *“I would rather lose a house than a missioner”* he wrote.



Paul wrote, *“For many years I had a picture of the child Jesus asleep on the cross. I gave it to a holy person afflicted by all sorts of evils so that he might learn to sleep on the cross of Jesus”*. This was a favourite image of confidence in times of suffering. Paul was not talking theory. He knew the pain and discomfort of illness. It restricted him, but did not stop him doing his

work. He worked energetically and when unable to do that, he wrote or dictated letters. When he had to delegate things, he did so.

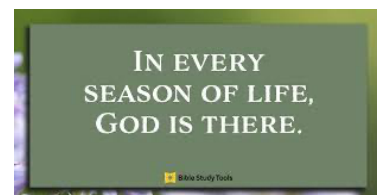
As we age and encounter sickness and death, we can be inspired by Paul to reflect on and pray that we may learn from these opportunities. They will come our way – for so many, they already have!

It involves letting go...but the spirituality of the Passion is that in every death there is life!

Creation 8: THE ENVIRONMENT

The 2021 United Nations Framework Climate Change Conference of over 200 UNFCCC member countries will take place in Glasgow 31st Oct -12th Nov this year. This is the 26th Conference of the Parties (hence COP26) and is taking place five years since climate change agreements were made in Paris.

‘Climate change’ used to be referred to as ‘global warming’, but that sounded too alarmist, yet alarms are designed to wake us up. Another problem was that



whenever someone announced temperature reductions, a cohort of people would say this proves climate change is a hoax. Change is best demonstrated by a pattern, such as the increasing temperatures over most years. 20% of Americans believe there is no evidence of global climate change, yet nineteen of the hottest years with the exception of 1998 have occurred since 2000. Looking at the pattern rather than the one year exception should call us to be concerned.

Experts say that global temperatures are rising and oceans are warming at a concerning rate. Sea levels are rising and oceans are becoming increasingly acidic from absorbed carbon dioxide. Over 90% of excess heat caused by human emissions ends up in the oceans, which



makes the study of ocean temperatures crucial for understanding climate change. Many who argue against climate change refuse to accept that change is anything unusual. But what is different now is the levels of methane and carbon dioxide in earth's atmosphere. Deforestation and other human activity such as the burning of fossil fuels to create energy, is contributing to this.

Jesus said, "prophets are not accepted in their own country". What a huge risk for following generations for us to deny climate change! Of course there are people who are concerned about the financial cost of changing systems and where this affects individuals more than corporations, it can be a great hardship. It always has been. History is full of such changes. Those who used swords had to adapt to guns or risk annihilation. Those who insisted in working by hand lost out to those who used tractors. Cardinal Newman said "to live is to grow; to grow is to change, and to become perfect is to have changed often"

We are earthlings and most forms of life on earth are at risk. Already it is the poor who are most vulnerable to rising sea levels. Where will they go, if life around them becomes inhabitable. Conspiracy theorists do not want to think about this. To me, to save arguments, the simplest matter is to look to the experts who can demonstrate that global temperatures are rising and then ask, is there anything humans can do to reduce this? If there is, then we should do something about it. We have a moral responsibility. Some people ask why we should do something in Australia when we are small contributors to this challenge compared with China and India. We should do something because it is the right thing to do. Moral choices are not ignored because 'others are doing it to'.

We consistently 'throw away' today because we think what we see produced from the earth, is ours to dispose of. We say "we will put the rubbish out". Everything we choose to dispose of, remains on or in the earth. There was a time

when little was disposed of, but when everything is packaged and the packaging is not needed or cannot be recycled, where does it go? It goes 'out' of the house but remains to contribute to the pollution and spoiling of earth.

Life has unfolded on earth in transformative episodes. We were not added to the earth; we came out of it. There has been increased biological diversity added every day giving rise to an ever-increasing expression of diversity. Suddenly now, there is less diversity, because vitality has plummeted.



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years ago as a result of an asteroid crashing into the earth, which resulted in the total demise of the dinosaurs and seventy percent of Earth's living species. What is happening today alarming. It is a warning of danger and it invites us to ask, 'Why would we destroy the system we rely on?'

Chief Seattle explained, *"The air is precious to the red man for all things share the same breath, the beast, the tree, the man; they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. 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"*.



If we can do something to prevent the loss of the human species, would it not make sense to do so? We know that humans cannot live without the earth, and we know even more clearly that earth can live without humans. Earth has been here for 4.5 billion years. Homo Sapiens only appeared 195,000 years ago. Neanderthals were far more sophisticated than has generally believed. They appeared around 230,000 years ago and disappeared 28,000 years ago. Many human species have become extinct. We are not the supreme species we make out. We are reliant on so many species for our own survival.

Remove the trees or the bees and we would not last a day.

Dr David Hallam, Climate Change
Co-ordinator for the World



The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human. To damage this community is to diminish our own existence.

— Thomas Berry —

AS QUOTES

Council of Churches, said in 1996: *“Church people all over the world in rich and poor societies have taken notice of the spiritual importance of environmental problems.*

Not only must we deal with the effect of industrial society on the quality of the air and water essential to life, but many religious people have recognised the "meaningless of their consumer society" and have a longing to re-establish a connection to the earth. Many non-Western societies have retained a strong sense of the natural world as sacred and the unity of humanity with nature.”



At a spiritual and theological level, the positive role of earth itself in the story of Christian salvation must be reclaimed. Within the Christian tradition, the outpouring of God’s love in creation is inseparably linked to its culmination in the saving work of Jesus; the earth is good, revealing of God and integral to Christian

prayer. It is vital to correct an almost exclusive Gospel focus on the human or fundamentalist scripture notions that condemn nature to human’s indiscriminate use. Both St Paul and St James declared that ‘faith without good works is dead’.

So, action on climate change is a moral imperative, a human rights issue, a development issue, a peace and security issue, an economic issue, a survival issue. We are running out of time to remedy the situation. Each of us has a part to play in addressing the greatest crisis our world has faced since the arrival of humans.

To be continued.....

If you think you’re too old to dance.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDtYyL9ewtA>

Our phones were finally fixed yesterday – it only took a month!

Humour

Q What noise does a 747 make when it has a bouncy landing?

A Boeing, Boeing, Boeing.

A man was recently hospitalised with 6 plastic horses inside of him.
The doctor is describing his condition as stable.

It's a 5 minute walk from my house to the pub, but a 35 minute walk from the pub to my house. The difference is staggering.

I caught my son chewing on electrical cords, so I had to ground him;
He's doing better currently and conducting himself properly.

Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon?
Great food, no atmosphere.

A locksmith had to go to court last week to give evidence
It seems he was the key witness.

Why did the scarecrow win an award?
Because he was outstanding in his field.

Did you hear about the guy who invented the door knocker?
He won the no-bell prize.

All flights at the John Lennon Airport were grounded yesterday.
Just imagine all the people.

I couldn't believe that I got fired from the calendar factory.
All I did was take a day off.

A boiled egg is hard to beat

Police were summoned to a daycare centre where a 3 year old was resisting a rest

When she saw her first strands of grey hair she thought she would dye

My teacher pointed a ruler at me and said "At the end of this ruler is someone who is not very bright." I got detention for asking "Which end?"

Singing in the shower is all fun and games until you get shampoo in your mouth.
Then it becomes a soap opera.
People are usually shocked when they find out I'm not a very good electrician.

If I am ever on life support, unplug me..... Then plug me Bach in.... See if that works..

Sometimes I wonder what happened to the people who asked me for directions?

I am trying to make a good tree pun, but I'm stumped.

My boss hates it when I shorten his name to Dick, especially since his name is Steve.

If you boil a funny bone it becomes a laughing stock. That's humerus.

If a cow doesn't produce milk is it a milk dud or an udder failure.

Bread is like the sun, it rises in the yeast and sets in the waist.

Upcoming events

Joan O'Callaghan returned home yesterday after a nasty bout of vertigo

Congratulations to **Gerard Daly** who celebrates his 60th birthday tomorrow

Congratulations to **Lynn Hill** who celebrates her 75th birthday on Sunday

Congratulations to **Mardi Doyle** who celebrates his 90th birthday next Friday



New postulants

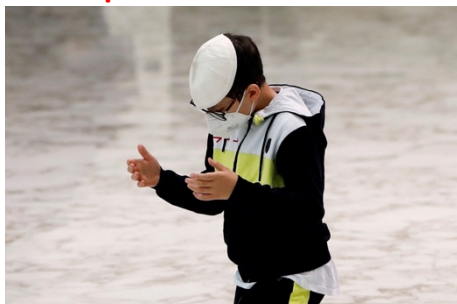
On October 19th, six men were admitted to postulancy in our community chapel in St Paul's, Saigon. They have completed a university degree and two years of philosophy studies. Under normal circumstances they would have come to Melbourne in July this for English language studies at ELSPM while residing at Holy Cross. A year later they would have moved to Adelaide for novitiate. COVID has changed that and they are doing their English studies online through ELSPM and they will proceed to novitiate in Saigon and join the class of three men ahead of them.

In the photo from left to right at the back is:

[Vượng](#) (who is the Aspirant formator) [Tuệ](#) (our senior formator) Deacon [Lượng](#) (one of six Passionists to be ordained on November 26th) and Joseph [Tuấn](#) (formator for the philosophers)

Seated in the front row from the left is Trọng, Tài, Phúc, Jeff Foale Huy, Tiến, Nam

The Pope and Paolo



Ten year old Paolo wandered on to the stage and clasped Pope Francis hands who was seated. Francis returned the grasp warmly. He then sat down beside the Pope after an aide secured a chair for him. Soon afterwards Paolo repeated the double hands grasp and pointed to the Pope's zucchetto. From the photo, you can tell what happened next!

Another deceased Passionist



We give thanks for the life of Gerard Glynn CP who passed away quietly in Sydney on Wednesday afternoon. Gerard was born in New Zealand and joined the Passionists and came to Australia when New Zealand was part of the Anglo-Hibernian Province. He was a very bright happy man who radiated joy wherever he went. Appointed leader of communities several times and conducted many parish missions. He was He would have celebrated his 89th birthday on Sunday. May he rest in Peace.

We remember: Joan O'Callaghan, Michael O'Callaghan, Mary Hackett, Bronwyn Burke, Richard Gibbs, Maree Bartoli, 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 week

Brian