

## Holy Cross Retreat



### Letter 90

5<sup>th</sup> November, 2021

Greetings,

### Mass attendance

We continue to be allowed **66 fully vaccinated** people at a Mass until the end of November. After that we hope to be able to have a minimum of 127. It was really nice to see familiar faces again.

### Noticeboard

Thanks to Frank from our 'A' Team, we have relocated the noticeboard, which no one used to notice, from the back wall of the chapel foyer, to the left hand wall after you exit the chapel. Most people didn't notice on Sunday!

### Staff



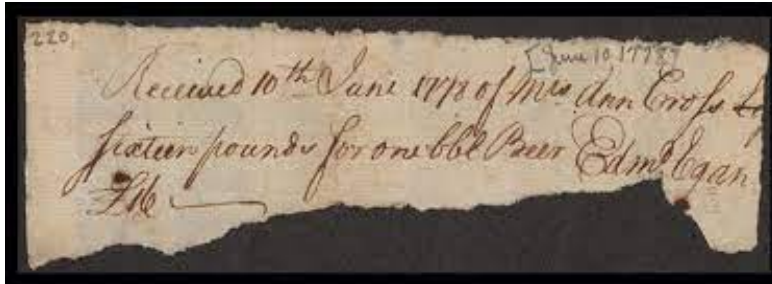
On Wednesday, Mayrose and Rose returned to 'working on site' after several weeks of working from home on reduced hours. Ann called in a few days earlier and will return to her volunteer work when her health has improved. It is good to have 'the girls' back and hopefully we can take some residential bookings for 2022.

### 'Come Away Day'

The final 'Come Away Day' will be held on **Thursday 11th November. From 10.00am-2.00pm** The theme of the day is "New Life- Encounter". Remembrance Day will be acknowledged at 11am. Lest we forget. Attendees must be doubly vaccinated and register on arrival with proof of vaccination (around 9.30am) in time for a cuppa. To assist with planning please express your interest in attending 'the day' by emailing Frank Burke: [burke.frank942@yahoo.com.au](mailto:burke.frank942@yahoo.com.au) or phoning 0407998781. An offering of \$25.00 or a donation is suggested, please.

## Passionist spirituality: Paul of the Cross – His personality

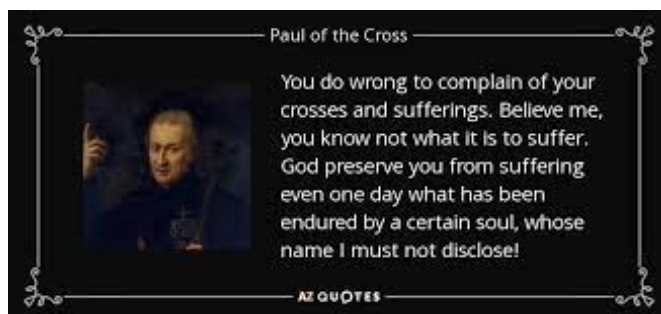
Paul was frequently described as an extremely robust and impressive person. His biographer, Passionist (and now Saint) Vincent Strambi described Paul as being of imposing stature, considered, charming and eloquent. *“His gaze was keen and clear, his forehead high and open, his voice clear, serious and penetrating, his manner affable and respectful, devoid of affectation. He was of sanguine temperament and truly sensible.”*



Twice there have been graphological analyses of Paul’s handwriting with very similar results. These descriptions suggest, *“The writer thinks with his emotions, more than*

*reason. He was anxious, distressed or under physical or emotional strain at the time of writing. Determined; expressive and responsive personality; marked social concerns, compassionate, intelligent, inventive and imaginative. Difficult to understand at times because logic is disregarded and the heart of the matter taken out of sequence. Very introspective, abrupt and decisive in action, intolerant of some things. Analytical, psychic, sensitive, reserves facts and keeps confidences. A man you could depend upon.”*

For more than forty years of his life, Paul was regularly incapacitated by sickness. He suffered from malaria, rheumatism, sciatica, debilitating headaches, frequent heart palpitations and 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 and he was virtually a permanent invalid for the last ten years of his life. Many people reported that despite his sickness or feebleness he still showed great energy. He moved from Vetralla to Rome in 1773, and continued to deal with Congregational matters until his death in 1775



Paul lived eighty-one years and according to Strambi *“he remained lucid in mind and robust in spirit to the end. His writing is always realistic even when speaking of spiritual things. It is never empty headed or sentimental.”* This was an outstanding characteristic of his personality and his spirituality. In a telling self-description, Paul

said, *“I am a Lombard and what I have in my heart, I have on my tongue. Jesus Christ said, “Say Yes when you mean Yes and No when you mean No.”*

His early life of extreme penance led him to periods of ‘extreme melancholy’. One contemporary Passionist described his face as ‘becoming enflamed like a furnace of fire or turning white like a corpse’. He continued, *“There were sometimes smiles and tears mingled together and while he could express a near maternal tenderness he also showed a marked exuberance when correcting someone or defending a cause. What was noted was how quickly he returned to a peaceful affability, which he possessed internally”*.



Paul’s letters indicate that he carried an air of good humour and a love of companionship. He was courteous, friendly, uncomplicated and at ease, and people wanted to stay and listen to him. He did not hide his weaknesses, and his humility is most notable. Many times in his letters he describes how he was humanly affected, worried or worn out by the countless difficulties that he constantly faced. In 1736 he wrote to Agnes Grazi, *“Oh, if God should inspire me to abandon this Retreat, how gladly I would – nobody knows.”*

Sometimes he seemed overcome by pessimism, distrust of himself or the painful episodes of melancholy that he experienced during his severe illnesses. He experienced frequent spiritual desolation that caused him to say, *“Some days, in fact almost every day, I don’t know what to do to help myself. Nevertheless with great effort, I make it my business to bring help to others, without ever fully succeeding.”*

Despite these strong feelings and his acknowledgement of them, it is testimony to his character and faith that his trust was unshakable and his serenity firm. His experiences brought a deeper appreciation of Jesus’ sufferings on Calvary and a fuller sharing of his desolation. He was so habitually aware of God’s presence, that he could say to one of his religious, *“I cannot understand how anyone can be found who does not think of God always.”* Paul understood that we must accept whatever God permits, not with mere resignation, but with faith and love. He wrote *“We must bow our heads before the Will of God. This is the rule for our perfection.”* This is a constant theme in his letters.



We are each a product of our times. The world in which Paul lived was different in many ways from ours, and it is sometimes a challenge to adapt his language and practices to our day, but it can be done.

We must also remember that Paul was shaped significantly by his family experiences, the nature of society and church life in Italy during his time and even the geography and landscape of his times.



Our task in reflecting on his spirituality is not to copy it in detail, but to appreciate his core experience and determine how the founding charism of the Passionists speaks to our life today, faced as we are with similar human and religious challenges that Paul faced.

Undeniably, the overwhelming love of God deeply present within suffering, was Paul's great contribution.

Today we can reflect on supernovas, tectonic plates, volcanic eruptions, mass extinctions, and the seething creativity of life that so often reflects a death and resurrection experience. There lies within these events, a mystery that Paul of the Cross experienced in a most profound way. It is this mystery that we must strive to celebrate.

Our language may be different today from many of the mystical writers who influenced Paul, but we are discovering that they had an innate sense about the deepest mysteries of life. None, is more topical for those seeking a spirituality that connects the ongoing dynamic of creation than Meister Eckhart. Eckhart influenced those who later influenced Paul of the Cross.

As we continue to explore the meaning of the Passionist Charism, we cannot reduce it to an event 2000 years ago. Rather, that event of Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection is an expression of the deep ongoing creative loving action of God, that connects everything and everyone.

**“The Passion is the most overwhelming work of God’s love”**



### **A picture paints a thousand words**

On this page and the next are two quite extraordinary photos.

Both photos invite us to reflect on the emotional horrors inflicted on so many people as a result of conflict, be it domestic, national or global.



**German prisoners of war in an American camp were photographed as they were forced to watch a film about the German concentration camps, 1945**

I have had the opportunity to visit death camps such as Dachau and Auschwitz, but I could not do it. I did visit the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem once in 1981, and had to leave. The horror was too great.

Being forced to watch film of the camps must have been traumatic for these men. Most of those who generously responded to protect their country in whatever war, paid a high price – the lifelong effects of trauma.

**This girl, who grew up in a concentration camp, was asked to draw "home," while living in a residence for disturbed children. Warsaw, Poland in 1948**



The impact of trauma on a person can be subtle, insidious, or outrightly destructive. The immediate reaction of survivors in the aftermath of trauma are quite complicated and will be affected by their prior experiences, the lack of natural and normally reliable supports and general coping and life skills. In the case of this girl, her trauma would have been prolonged and painful.

She is likely to have suffered persistent fatigue, sleep disorder, nightmares, fear of this happening again, anxiety caused by flashbacks, depression, and the avoidance of normal emotions, sensations, or activities associated with the trauma-event. Perhaps hardest to bear would be the reality that for her, memory will have been a life-long burden.

## Creation 10: Consumerism

The history of spirituality and religion suggests that humans need to reflect on and discover their place in nature. In earlier times, children gathered in caves or around fires and listened to the stories and music of their elders. They observed and became engaged in the rituals of their clan and in this way, they learned to make sense of their world.



Young children today are introduced to the 'meaning making' of our world through television and the internet. Increasingly they spend little time gathered with their whole clan, and not much more with the immediate members of their family. Instead, from a very young age, they are placed in front of a medium that communicates what is called, 'entertainment'.

Regardless of its content, the only way this entertainment can continue to be offered, is if those who produce it can afford to do so, and that is determined by the number of people who purchase products advertised during the programmes. Those who advertise try to convince those watching that they need to purchase the recommended products. Whether the viewer needs the product or not, often enough children learn to say "I want that", as can be heard frequently in supermarkets or shopping malls.

In his book, *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos*, Brian Swimme, makes the point that 'consumerism' is the dominant world faith or religion of our present age. It is how children are initiated into the world. He suggests that, *"the cave has been replaced by the television set, and the chant has been replaced by advertisements, whose aim is to make people feel unhappy with what they presently have!"* He suggests that it is advertisements that give children their basic meaning in the world. *"They learn that humans go to work to earn money to buy stuff and the Earth is what provides the stuff"*.

Surveys reveal that people's feelings of satisfaction in developed countries have declined in the fifty years of increased consumerism. Not least among the indicators are the high levels of suicide and depression. It is clear that materialism does not bring happiness, yet that myth continues to be espoused. |

In the immediate wake of the September 11th disaster, American President George W Bush urged his people to go out and spend! The response to the 2009 global recession in most countries was to borrow money for 'stimulus spending'. In Australia, the government borrowed money from present and future tax payers, and gave some of back it with the encouragement to 'spend it'. Such spending is not directed towards any personal need, but to satisfy the dynamics of a consumerist culture.





In her video clip, 'The Story of Stuff', Annie Leonard quotes 1955 retail analyst Victor Le Bow "Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and selling of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction

*in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, replaced and discarded at an ever-accelerating rate."* Leonard also quotes President Eisenhower as explaining on one occasion that the purpose of the American economy-was to produce more consumer goods! Leonard suggested, "Given the more noble options any of us could think of, it is hard to believe that the biggest economy in the world would have that as its purpose"!

Cosimina Dannoritzer produced a documentary titled, 'The Light Bulb Conspiracy' that focuses on the ever-shrinking lifespan of consumer products.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9xmn228HM0>

The film reveals some of the strategies taken to ensure particular items do not last. Sub-titled 'The Untold story of Planned Obsolescence', the film demonstrates that a Shelby light bulb, in Livermore California, is still working after 120 years, and should be the norm! Other examples given include the claim that originally all women's stockings were ladderless, and that computer printers have chips inserted, to reduce their 'life'.

Everybody at some level knows that the continual replacement of items is costly, but it is the extra features of a new model that entices them to upgrade. The model that is selling



sometimes has multiple follow-up versions already in storage, but they are released, one at a time. Computer equipment and mobile phones are a classic example of this planned obsolescence. In the USA alone, over 150,000,000 mobile phones are discarded annually. This is the world in which we live and seek to find our meaning, and new generations are being initiated into this way of life.

Profit today depends on convincing people that the product they recently purchased, can already be improved upon. Corporate executives represent the leadership of consumerist 'religion', and promote the careless plundering of the earth's finite resources for financial gain. For their reward, they are paid exorbitant salaries. One tragic aspect of this destruction is that so little of what is produced is required, or indeed, used. The vast majority of what is produced is trashed within a year of sale. An article by Justine Calma published in 'The Verge' in June this year pointed to millions of unsold products labelled by Amazon for destruction. This practice is repeated by so many consumerist companies. Products are created to make profit, not necessarily to respond to need

Modern shipping containers move goods around the globe in such staggering numbers that it has been estimated that a large ship delivering T shirts to another country, adds no more



than two cents to the cost of the shirt! The consumerism story depends on a five-stage linear progression that takes finite resources from the earth, produces 'stuff' from them, distributes the stuff often across the globe, consumes it, and then disposes of it!

When thinking about some of the effects of consumerism and the rise of big corporations, it is notable that many have far larger financial assets than most countries! In recent memory, lead has been banned from petrol in western countries. Not long ago, lead was present in nearly every product like petrol and paint (even in food cans and toothpaste tubes). Despite being aware of the severe poisoning of factory workers, which sometimes resulted in fatalities, corporations, continued to use lead. Its promoter, Thomas Midgley also introduced chloro-fluorocarbons (CFC's) into refrigerators. Later, CFC's were used in air-conditioning and deodorants. It has been said that his drive for profit contributed to the poisoning of three generations of children, and contributed greatly to global warming.

Debate about climate change and setting a low carbon emissions target as is occurring in Glasgow this week, takes place within the context of preserving the economy. Serious attempts will not be made if each entity fears another will gain an economic advantage. The few who are undertaking new initiatives are often doing so because they see a financial advantage in new 'clean' technologies. Annie Leonard points out that we have all had the experience at a 'Two Dollar' shop of asking ourselves 'how could they possibly make this product for that much?' She says we should remember that the purchaser is not paying for it. Those who have been exploited (people in under-developed countries) pay for it with their cheap labour and the pilfering of their natural resources. The reality is that unless serious action is taken, there could be no economy!

Earth is our home and everything we dump from our home is there to stay. Every single material good we see, be it a chair, refrigerator, car, curtain, computer or other, has come from the earth. Attempts at recycling are admirable and necessary, but they do not address the fundamental issues. The critical issue is the preservation of resources, and this is the area we need to address and influence. We are more likely to take positive action if we truly recognise that preserving natural resources is what will sustain us as a human family. When someone threatens a member of our human family we do not hesitate to act. It is time to recognise that the human family is interdependent and that what we do to the earth, we do to ourselves!

## Up

In the English language this two-letter word can be a noun, verb, adjective, adverb and preposition: UP. It has more meanings than any other two-letter word.

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP? Why are the officials UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, polish UP our speech, warm UP the engine, and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and fix UP the

old car. At other times, this little word has other meanings. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP is special. A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP. We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP!

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look UP the word UP in the dictionary and you can count UP to about thirty definitions. If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more. When it threatens to rain, we put the umbrella UP. When it does rains the earth soaks it UP, and when the sun comes out, we say it is clearing UP. When it does not rain for a while, things dry UP. One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now . . . my time is UP!

It's an amazing word when you think also that before going to be and when you get up it is very likely that U P ! What you do with this information is UP to you.

## Humour

I just got pulled over by a cop. He asked me if I had a police record? Apparently "Roxanne" was not the answer he wanted to hear.

A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray attacks is now a seasoned veteran.

It was an emotional wedding, even the cake was in tiers.

I'm reading a horror story in Braille, something bad is going to happen, I can feel it!

Did you hear about the ice cream truck that crashed? The driver blamed it on the rocky road!

If attacked by a mob of clowns, go for the juggler.

Yesterday I wore something from 5 years ago and it actually fit!! So proud of myself. It was a scarf. But still, let's be positive here!

If you suck at playing the trumpet, that's probably why.

Where there is a Will there's a relative.

Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft and I'll show you A-flat miner.

A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France and resulted in Linoleum Blownapart.

You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.

Local Area Network in Australia : The LAN down under.

He broke into song because he couldn't find the key.

A plateau is a high form of flattery.

### **Traffic Camera**

A driver was quite relaxed until he saw the flash of a traffic camera. He figured that his picture had been taken for exceeding the limit, even though he knew that he was not speeding. Just to be sure, he went around the block and passed the same spot, driving even more slowly, but again the camera flashed. Now he began to think that this was quite funny, so he drove even slower as he passed the area again, but the traffic camera again flashed. He tried a fourth time with the same result. He did this a fifth time and was now laughing when the camera flashed as he rolled past, this time at a snail's pace. Two weeks later, he got five tickets in the mail for driving without a seat belt!



JESUXPI  
PASSIO

300  
1720 years 2020

# Jubilaeum

GRATITUDE PROPHECY HOPE

Renewing our Mission

You are invited to join us from around the Province  
(AUS, NZ, PNG, VN)  
for the

## 2021 Passionist Institute

SAT NOV 20TH 10:00AM - 1:00PM AEDT  
SUN NOV 21ST: 1:45PM - 6:00PM AEDT

*Each day will begin with prayer, followed by two presentations, as well as two group sharing sessions focussing on how we can best "Renew Our Mission"*

SATURDAY ZOOM LINK: [CLICK HERE](#)

SUNDAY ZOOM LINK: [CLICK HERE](#)

For more information, contact Gerard Daly  
[gerard.daly23@bigpond.com](mailto:gerard.daly23@bigpond.com)



### **We remember**

We remember: Jacki Tomm, Maree Bartoli, Peter Owen, Bronwyn Burke, Anne Cunningham CP, Richard Gibbs, Brenda Rodrigues, Mary Coburn, Graham Hille, Jim Molan, Sr Stella Gleeson, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Michael O'Callaghan, Mary Hackett, Anne Jenkins, Angelo Vigilante, Pam Gartland, Pam Stretch, (NZ) Patricia Keeghan, Maeve and John Reardon, Pam Grehan, Jim Monaghan, Michael and Mardi Doyle, Kate and Mary Dunn, Ray Carmel King, Sanchez CP, Jim Coucher CP and all who seek or need our prayers.

May you have a good week

Brian

