

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 92

25th November, 2021



Warm greetings,

The newsletter is being sent a day earlier this week, because of the ordination tomorrow (Friday), in Vietnam. (see below for the link).



Here are the smiling faces of our brothers Cau, Phuc, Thang and Toan, having landed in Hanoi and awaiting transportation to the hotel for seven days quarantine.

They are continuing their theological studies online while quarantining, and should be able to return to Saigon on Tuesday

Sunday 28thRemembering our deceased relatives and friends

This Sunday is the first Sunday of **Advent**. During Mass we will especially remember the deceased members of the Holy Cross family as we have done annually for several years. We will have the names of all those we remember, on the altar, and we will display a Power Point presentation after communion with names, and as many faces as is practical to show. If you wish to add a name to be specially prayed for, please bring the name on a piece of paper and place it on the altar before Mass.

Photos

We will remove the photos from the chapel wall after this Sunday. We hope to create a folder to keep and display the photos, and in time add others. Please feel welcome to share a photo with us.

Sr Stella Gleeson

Stella's funeral will be tomorrow, November 26th at Our Lady of the Way Church, Kingsbury, VIC, Friday, November 26th, 11.00. The link for the Mass is:

<https://tobinbrothers.com.au/tribute/details/22536/Sr-Stella-Gleeson-sgs/obituary.html#tribute-start>

Ordination in Vietnam.....Friday 26th November....1.00pm AEDT



Having been delayed because of COVID, six of our Vietnamese brothers Joseph Dominic Tan, Mike Tuyen, Peter Huynh, Vincent Luong, Francis Xavier Tuan, and Paul Kien will be ordained in our community chapel in Saigon on Friday morning. The link for the ceremony is:

Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/1iP2EEWNR>

Youtube: <https://youtu.be/U2SWS5iFWbw>

Upcoming events

This Sunday, September 28th

The St Gabriel's Committee is arranging a BYO picnic after 10.30am Mass

Sun 5th December

Chris will celebrate his 40th ordination anniversary at both 9.00am and 10.30am Mass. Light refreshments and percolated coffee will be provided at the back of the chapel after 10.30am Mass.

Sun 12 December

Luke will celebrate the 9.00am and 10.30am Masses and there will be a BYO BBQ afterwards for those interested.

Christmas Masses

Mass will be celebrated outside on Christmas Eve at 7.30pm, preceded by Carols starting from 7.00pm.

Last year at Christmas and this year on Good Friday we celebrated 'under the trees'. We would appreciate your feedback as to whether we celebrate Christmas this year that same way or from the truck on the back lawn. You might let Mayrose know your opinion please: Phone 98466014 (between 11.00am-2.00pm Mon-Fri).

Mass will be celebrated on Christmas Day (Saturday) at 10.00am.

Mass will be celebrated on Boxing Day (Sunday) at 10.00am.

Mass times

Those who were at Masses here last Sunday were asked to consider a change in Mass times. It will help to provide some background. Holy Cross is not a parish. We live within St Kevin's parish. We have the right to have a Sunday Mass celebration and we have been doing that ever since Holy Cross opened in 1965.

Many years ago, when he was Parish Priest, Charlie McCann asked if the parish could celebrate a 9.00am parish Mass in the Holy Cross chapel. This saved the parish from building a church at this end of the parish. Because of the similar Mass times, he arranged for us to alternate each week. He would come to Holy Cross every second week for 9.00am Mass and on those Sundays one of us celebrated the 8.30am Mass at St Kevin's.

That practice continued until a few months ago. Gerry McKernan always had difficulty getting back from 9.00am Mass at Holy Cross for the 10.00am at St Kevin's, and like some of the previous PP's, had a preference for parishioners to attend St Kevin's rather than Holy Cross. With the approval of those who regularly attended, we did, for a brief time move the Mass forward to 8.45am. I explained to Gerry that the request for 9.00am Mass came from the parish (Fr Charlie) not from the Passionists, and we appreciated the difficulty of him only being able to see some of his parishioners every two weeks.

At Gerry's request we agreed to end the 9.00am Mass as a parish Mass on July 4th. I requested that we continue having the Mass until COVID restrictions allowed us to accommodate enough people at one Mass (10.30am). That time has arrived, so last Sunday I proposed that we cease the 9.00am Mass and move the 10.30am Mass to 10.00am **beginning at Christmas**. The response was very generous. We know that more than half of those who attend 9.00am Mass are not members of St Kevin's parish. We also know that 9.00am is a much more convenient time than 10.00am for many of those who have been participating for many years.

A factor we thought important to consider, is that since Gerry retired from St Kevin's, the parish has been joined with St Greg's Doncaster under the pastoral care of one priest (Fr Charles). To have three Masses at a similar time within what is now the parish boundary, when there is a severe shortage of priests, does not

seem sensible. I think it fairer on Charles that we be proactive in following through on what was requested by Gerry, rather than have Charles have to ask us about it.

We are grateful for your generous co-operation. It is never easy to make such a big adjustment. We want to embrace those who choose to join us at 10.00am, and respect that some others may find it unsuitable for a number of reasons. These changes will not take place until the weekend of Christmas.

Tuesday Mass

We have been asked a few times about the possible resumption of the Tuesday Mass. Unfortunately we do not intend to do this. The chapel is available for hire by various groups, and we desperately need to make up for the loss of revenue to the Holy Cross Centre since COVID forced its closure. School groups need access from 9.00am, and a 9.15am Mass makes that impossible. Even an 8.30am Mass (which we changed because of school traffic) interferes with those bookings. It is also impossible for us to commit to being available every Tuesday next year. We apologise for this being the case. The Mass and cuppa afterwards was very much appreciated by everyone who participated.

Chapel Chairs



We also spoke at the Masses about the proposed chapel chairs which we have now ordered. Every chair will have arms, and they will be of a standard colour, reasonably close to the image here. Interestingly, the percentage of those who preferred this colour over 'charcoal black' at the 9.00am was much higher than at 10.30am. Overall though it was approximately 75%-25% with a number of people commenting "I could live with either colour"

There was a comment about whether we could fit an adequate number of these style of chairs in the chapel (all with arms), given they are wider than most of the chairs currently in the chapel, and we want to have more personal space given our long COVID experience of social distancing. Since Sunday we have rearranged the chapel (including moving the president's chair to the other side of the altar) and made allowance for how wide and deep the new chairs will be. If you are here next Sunday, there will be 180 chairs set out. We will purchase 200 chairs, and leave 20 to be brought out as needed. If more are required (e.g. for a funeral or special Mass), we will use the plastic chairs to increase the numbers.



It is necessary to appreciate that Holy Cross has a chapel, not a church, and there is a limit on the number who can adequately be seated.

A number of people have generously purchased a chair or two. Thank you. An individual chair will cost us \$110. so any contributions are a big help. If you wish assist in this way and donate by cheque, please make the cheque out to 'Passionist Community'. Alternatively, Mayrose can provide our bank details. The Company (Alloyfold) that we are purchasing from is a trading arm of [Pathway Trust](#), (click here) which is a charitable organisation committed to helping people such as those who have been in prison, make a fresh start. They assist with accommodation, employment and reintegration services. All profits are invested into this mission. The chairs are made in Christchurch, New Zealand. We have been advised not to expect to have them until March.

The fountain monument



Toan and Tri completed the placement of our 'Passionist sign and hand' over a home-made fountain. Toan was still working on it three hours before departing for the airport. It is a special feature and placed where it is near the entrance to the chapel, it will invite reflection and invitation to join in celebrating the charism of the Passionists, begun 300 years ago by St Paul of the Cross.



Passionist spirituality

Last weekend we had participants from Vietnam, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Australia, join in a Zoom celebration of the 300th Jubilee of the founding of the

Passionists. There were two presentations each day and two 'Chats' which allowed those online to be randomly placed in a 'Chat room' to share with others. Those meeting in local venues were able to share in small groups. There was a liturgy at the end of each day and a virtual final blessing with a relic of Paul of the Cross. During our Saturday liturgy, our Vietnamese brother, Trí shared a reflection in person. This is the transcript of what he shared

The Passion of Jesus is totally the work of love. You should never lose sight of this.

At the time of Paul of the Cross, people in his home town had a deep devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ. However, instead of speaking about God's love through the mystery of the Cross, they spoke about the sufferings of people as being the result of their many sins. Paul of the Cross said that "the world is sliding into a profound forgetfulness of the most bitter sufferings endured by Jesus Christ our true good of our love, while the memory of his most holy Passion is practically extinct in the faithful." (1747 account Paul wrote to present the life and purpose of the Congregation).

For Paul of the Cross, the Passion of Jesus is totally the work of love and so we should never lose sight of this. Indeed, Jesus the Son of the Living God, chose to live human life; He chose to suffer as we suffer; to die as we die. Many times I have wondered why Jesus, the Son of God, had to suffer. He is God and He could save us in many ways, not just by suffering and dying. One day I found the answer.



One of my friends was involved in an accident while studying at university in Saigon. He was in a coma from that time, for four years before he died. One day, I visited him, I spoke my name and tried to communicate with him. He could not answer with a word, but he did smile.

This experience was a great suffering for him.

However, the one who suffered the most was not him, but his mother. I spoke with her about my friend, and from my first words she cried many tears. She could not put anything in words, but her tears told me all about her great love for her son. This was the love that began when she bore her son in her womb. This was her love for him when she gave birth, when she cared for him until he grew up; and the love for how she longed for his return when he left home to enter university.

Sadly, he did return. She could not see her son as the one she loved, but only as one who was comatose. She cared for her son and any time she saw him on the bed, the tears rolled down her cheeks. She loved him so deeply, she bore his

suffering. I realised that this is how God loves us, and that is why Jesus suffered.
The one who loves bears the suffering of the one who is loved.

Over the last two years Covid-19 has caused many millions of people to suffer seriously illness. Many people have suffered because their loved ones died, but they could not care for them; they could not even come close to them or touch them. They too bore the sufferings of their loved ones. It was because of love that Jesus endured suffering and death. And so, Jesus is there to suffer with those are suffering today, to embrace them and share their burden. This is an invitation for me to stand alongside people. I may not bring any relief to them, but at least I can listen to them and show my love and concern for them.

Creation 13: Thomas Berry – prophet and Passionist

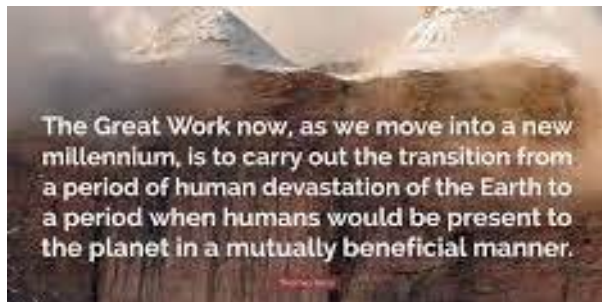
As mentioned in the past two newsletters, Thomas Berry was an incredibly influential Passionist, who died in 2009, aged 94. Tom lamented that without a spiritual awareness of the inter-connectedness of all life, Earth would continue to be plundered for its 'resources' and thus risk the future of so many species (including perhaps, the human!) He noted that concern for what is happening to the planet ranked low in church priorities. Fortunately, that has changed and there is much of his thinking in Pope Francis' encyclical, 'Laudato Si'.

Tom pointed out that Christian tradition recognised two sources of revelation, the divine in the natural world and the divine in the biblical world. However, the book of nature virtually disappeared as a revered source from the time Bibles came to be mass produced. This partly explains why we do not share an intense relationship with the earth as indigenous people do. The Christian emphasis on redemption from a fallen or evil world, and the call to be detached from the things of this world has not helped. Christians have interpreted Jesus' message as being totally focused on a future world and lamented that we live here in a 'vale of tears'.

We now know that plant and animal life was here on earth for millions of years before humans emerged. Trees, plants and insects have been on earth for 400 million years. Dinosaurs roamed the earth 230 million years ago. Birds introduced song to Earth 160 million years ago and flowers brought colour and pollen 115 million years ago. The first humans appeared less than two million years ago and our own species 'Homo Sapiens', only 300,000 years ago.

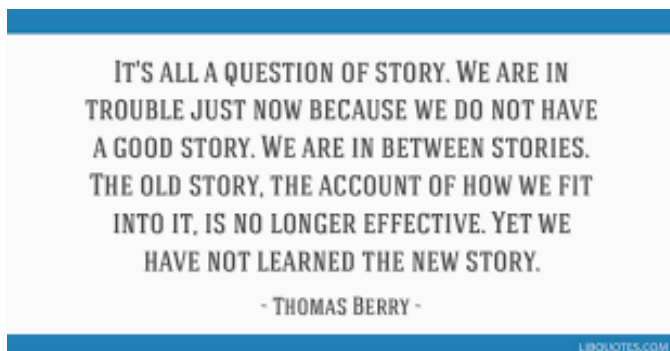
Of course, most Christians did not know of this history until the past fifty years and our primary attitude to the earth and its species by that time was related to 'stewardship' and the book of Genesis was interpreted as giving us dominion over the earth and its creatures, rather than as commissioning us to care for the earth and all life forms. We became detached from the world; disconnected with it.

Tom Berry believed that it is vital for Christians to recognise that the story of the universe, the story of life, the story of earth, and the story of the human are one story. To tell part of the story, we must tell the whole story. We are integral to this world which has unfolded over 13.8 billions years. We are not separate from it, nor superior to it. We emerged from within it and are sustained within it. That wonderul world unfolds even more beautifully for us through the discovery of science and photography. Our imaginations are filled by the beauty of so much variety of life.



Berry continually referred to the hard work to be done to defend the earth and he urged recognition of the urgency of this work. He called for a united effort across the boundaries of nationality, culture and religion. He noted the landmark statement of the 1982 Charter of Nature, passed by the

UN which states, "Every form of life is unique, warranting respect regardless of its worth to humans, and to accord other organisms such recognition, humans must be guided by a moral code of action". This, Berry claimed was the task for every human.

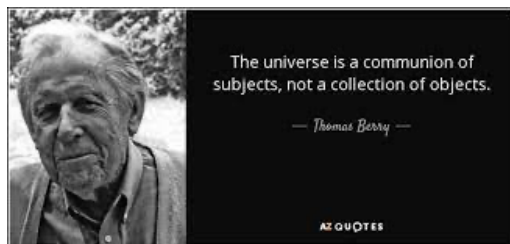


Various groups have responded to crises they have recognised, such as the depletion of the ozone layer, the loss of topsoil, the destruction of forests, the extinction of particular species, the pollution of rivers and oceans, and the dramatic changes in weather. We need a

comprehensive story that binds all of these together.

Berry noted that species were disappearing at a rate between 1,000 and 10,000 per year and declared that we are in the midst of a mass extinction, the first one that has been caused by humans. Many years later 94 year old David Attenborough produced his "witness statement" on the state of our planet and it exactly describes what Thomas Berry was saying forty years ago.

Berry pointed out that every species today lives within a habitat shaped by humans and our lifestyle. He warned that the extinction of one species means its eternal disappearance from the universe. For this reason, we need a new religious sensitivity built on an awareness that every life form is inter- connected and what we do to the earth, we do to ourselves!

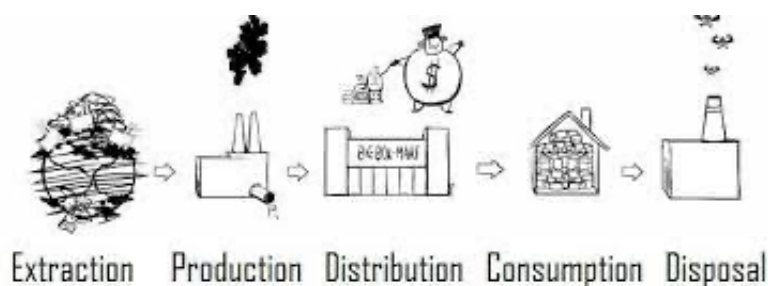


“The universe”, Berry said, “is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects”. There is one single sacred community in which humans share, and the future can exist only if humans understand how to commune with the natural world rather than

exploit it. To do this, we need a new cosmology that recognizes the diversity that has enabled all that has come into being. Each form in the universe is a unique manifestation of existence and exists in communion with every other life form and we must encourage children to appreciate the universe as the primary revelation of the divine.

Berry suggested that “history is governed by those overarching movements that give shape and meaning to life by relating the human venture to the larger destinies of the universe. Creating such a moment might be called ‘the Great Work of a people’”. He suggested that responding to the destruction of the planet and awakening to the call of the sacred is the great work of our times. He wanted children to learn not just to read books but to read the great book of the natural world.

The language they must learn, he said, is the language of living relationships that extend throughout the universe. Learning to garden and grow their own food would be practical ways of connecting with the reality of life and how it grows, develops, sustains and is sustained.



In considering the future, Berry called for us to abandon the extractive economy mentality, developed in the nineteenth century. Such an economy is terminal. It is non-

renewable, unlike an organic economy. As mentioned a few weeks ago, in her video clip, ‘The Story of Stuff’, Annie Leonard quotes that in 1955 retail analyst Victor Le Bow said, “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.” How tragic this is for us. Look at the sales catalogues and you will find ample evidence of this.

The extractive economic mentality was evident in the ‘carbon tax’ debate in Australia. The taxing of carbon was been identified as bad for the economy. That there might not be an atmosphere capable of sustaining life caused by our inaction

was considered too long a view for economists. At the same time, we might look back in the future (already begun), and identify the abandonment of carbon trading, emission schemes or taxes as a spur to focus on the macro level of our reality.

In 1991 in a E.F Schumacher lecture, Berry pointed out that the 'minor scale' efforts such as recycling and reducing our use of energy sometimes work against what we have to do, because we don't take action to cease plundering the Earth and its basic resources, instead, we allow the industrial life pattern to continue. He claimed that the modern global economy lacked adequate controls by any government. Action is taken without restraint, underdeveloped nations are exploited and their resources seriously diminished.

Corporations have had the primary objective of exploiting the planet for economic gain. We live in Berry's future world; a technological world interested in today rather than tomorrow.

Tom Berry warned that the **Earth could live without humans, but humans cannot live without Earth**. We know that because it was that way for most of Earth's history. The Neanderthal species disappeared about 40,000 years ago. To have any future not only for ourselves, but for other life forms, we have to wake up and begin reading the great book of nature that surrounds us.

An anthropocentric view of the world that sees everything as a resource for the human is a primary reason for the mass extinction of natural species everywhere. How easily many people destroy the life of an insect or animal if it is inconvenient for them. In doing this we often reflect the attitude that we are lords of life. Berry said there must be a new understanding and new principles at the political, economic, intellectual, and religious level.

Berry noted that now for the first time, almost universally, children are learning a common story of the universe, but often it is told simply as scientific fact without any sense of the mystique that even scientists themselves today have come to appreciate. He says we must encourage children to appreciate the universe as the primary revelation of the divine.



A Passionist colleague, John O'Brien said about him, "Thomas Berry was convinced that the major concern of contemporary society is the future of the planet and the human role in that future. He was equally convinced that the scientific insights of this century have provided us with a story of the cosmos and the planet earth that can defeat the alienation from the earth that is so ruinously expressed in our industrial economies".

Dairmuid O'Murchi MSC has said, "We need an integrated spirituality and not merely a revamped understanding of Christianity (or any other religion). That

integration is based on a cooperative endeavour, in which everything, and everybody has its rightful place, but for mutual enhancement, so that together we can support forward movement of everything in creation under the creative plan of God”.

For those of us touched to whatever degree by Thomas Berry’s vision, there are some paths he showed for how we can move from where we are, to the future that beckons; a future that has already begun.

Humour

- I scraped my elbow digging for gold, just a miner injury.
- A bike in town keeps running me over! It’s a vicious cycle.
- I tried calling the tinnitus helpline. No answer, just kept ringing!
- Police toilet stolen! Cops have nothing to go on!
- I got my wife a new fridge, her face lit up when she opened it!
- The man who fell into an upholstery machine is now fully recovered.
- Well to be Frank, I’d have to change my name.
- Swarms of flying insects threaten town! Police deploy the swat team!
- My pet mouse Elvis died today. He was caught in a trap.
- I have an Elton John pun. It’s a little bit funny.
- Broken barometer for sale. No pressure
- Dr Pepper is a Fizzicist !
- Acupuncture is a jab well done. That’s the point of it
- I wanted to be a monk, but I never got the chants

Notice

Frank and Ann Burke celebrate their 51st wedding anniversary on Saturday 27th November. Congratulations.

Dominic Isgro celebrates his 89th birthday today (Thursday November 25th)

We remember all of our deceased relatives and friends of Holy Cross

We remember

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

**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

The Mass link will be sent on Saturday afternoon.

May you have a good weekend

Brian