

## Holy Cross Retreat



### Letter 94

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

Warm greetings,

#### November remembrance at Masses

Unfortunately a few names and faces we wanted to remember last Sunday were not displayed. We think when the second song ended, instead of the audio 'looping', it stopped and the remaining 15 slides were not displayed. We will display those slides after communion this Sunday.

#### Sun 5th December

Chris will celebrate his 40<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary at 10.30am Mass this Sunday. Light refreshments and percolated coffee will be provided at the back of the chapel after that 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. On the oval or under the trees? What do you prefer?

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

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

#### Mass times

From Christmas Day, there will be one Mass each Sunday, at **10.00am**.

#### Chapel Chairs



We continue to receive contributions towards the cost of the chairs for the chapel, and we want to express our gratitude for your generous assistance. Thank you.

#### Mulch and burn

With the help of a professional as well as Vince Celestino with his machinery, and members of our St Gabriel Committee, we managed to reduce the huge heap of green waste that has collected over the past year. We had a small fire which helped reduce the pile. We will have a second working day before Christmas, to remove a number of branches that are at risk of falling and remove a couple of dead trees. We still have suitable firewood if anyone wants it.

## Advent

Advent means 'the arrival' and we understand this to refer to the arrival of Jesus at Christmas. Advent marks the beginning of the new liturgical church year. This is Year C which features Luke's gospel.



Originally Advent was a time of preparation for January 6<sup>th</sup> (the feast of Epiphany, and this was related to the visit of the wise men from the East. Often they are called kings and usually people refer to them as the 'three' wise men, but Matthew does not tell us anything other than 'wise men (or astrologers) from the East followed a star and came to Bethlehem. These wise men only appear in Matthew, so we won't hear about them in Year C.

Epiphany was an important feast because it celebrated Jesus as the universal Lord. The men from the East signified that people from 'east and west' had come to pay homage to Jesus, the ultimate revealer of God's love and fellowship. The period of advent started on December 17<sup>th</sup> and it was a festival period of prayers & activities celebrating Jesus' arrival, rather than it being a preparation period during which we wait for Jesus to arrive.



In 274CE the Emperor Aurelian inaugurated the Roman feast of the 'Unconquered Sun', which celebrated the beginning of the sun's return at the Winter Solstice. December 25<sup>th</sup> became the day to celebrate this feast, and in 336CE we know that Christians chose this date to celebrate the birth of 'unconquered Son', Christ. In time December 25<sup>th</sup> became the day to celebrate Jesus' birth and Advent became a four-week season of preparation for the feast. Christmas was a celebration of hope; when the promise of peace and justice would come about.

Christmas in the Middle Ages became sentimental and more focused on the birth of Jesus. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, St Francis introduced the crib, so Christmas became associated with Bethlehem, the stable, the star, shepherds, angels, wise men from the East etc. Christmas became such a popular feast, it took over priority from Epiphany, and Advent became a penitential period of preparation, like Lent before Easter. St Nicholas, who cared for the poor, became Santa Claus the gift giver.



The feast of the Unconquered Son became the feast of the baby Jesus in the manger. Instead of looking forward to the time when evil would be overcome, and doing our part to bring this about, we looked back to the innocence of Bethlehem. The Advent wreath and Christmas tree were introduced.

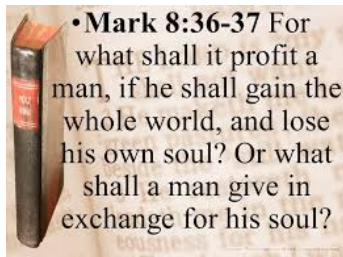
Their symbolism was that they were evergreens that did not die, despite the cold. But the emphasis was on waiting, not for Christ to bring about the reign of peace, but for him to be born...again! We pretended Jesus had not been born before.



Christmas is meant to make a difference to the poor. It is not meant to be a commercial bonanza or an orgy of spending! We know that people hunt around for an item to justify 'giving a gift' and yet most gift giving excludes the less fortunate who should be the focus of the Christmas spirit.

We associate Christmas now with shopping sales, Christmas cards with dogs, cats and snow images, and carols like 'Frosty the Snowman' that have no relevance to a Christian Christmas. We erect Christmas trees and have family get-togethers, with all the traditions we have inherited. These have become meaningful for us, but how do we recapture a deeper meaning?

Advent is a time of expectancy for what's possible in our life here and now. Too many people spend their lives either living in the past or the future, as Eckhart Tolle highlights in 'The Power of Now', "*Be at least as interested in what goes on inside you as what happens outside. If you get the inside right, the outside will fall into place*". Jesus too, was concerned about getting the inside right and about living in the present. Jesus cautions, "Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will look after itself; each day has enough problems of its own" (Matt 6:34).

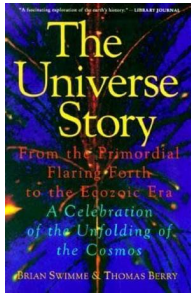


Many people spend their lives either living in the past or the future. We need to pay attention to what is happening around us now and how we are being invited to respond. Tolle advises, "Pleasure is always derived from something outside you, whereas joy arises from within" Advent is a time when we might make a determined effort to live the present moment God gives us. We don't need the past for our identity, or the future for our fulfilment. The four weeks of Advent focus on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.



We celebrate the liturgical coming of Jesus at Christmas, but God is not coming. God is already here! We are not waiting for life to begin. Life is happening now!

## Creation 14: The Universe Story



Over the past three newsletters, we have reflected on the thinking of Passionist Tom Berry. In 1992, Berry and mathematical cosmologist, Brian Swimme published a book titled 'The Universe Story'. It reflected thinking that Tom Berry had been sharing since the 1970's. It is worth presenting a summary of the story and then making some observations about it, particularly in relation to the Biblical story of the universe. To do that will take two or three newsletters.

Every culture has a creation story. Since every language has its own culture, and there are 6,500 languages, there are many creation stories. The one we are most familiar with, is the Biblical story recorded in the Book of Genesis, and to some people's surprise, there are two creation stories (one in Chapter one and another in Chapter 2). It is suggested that the first story was not written until around 800BCE and the second story about 400BCE. We can devote some time to these creation stories later, and emphasise the importance of understanding myth.

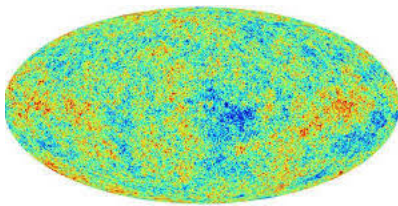
As a result of the insights of Charles Darwin (1809-1892) with regard to evolution, and the amazing discoveries of science over the past century, Thomas Berry believed it was not only possible, but advantageous to have one story that tells what we now know; a story that everyone can know and understand. To list just four example of discoveries that have given us totally new insights

1912: Tectonic plates: (Alfred Wegener) Finally confirmed in 1967

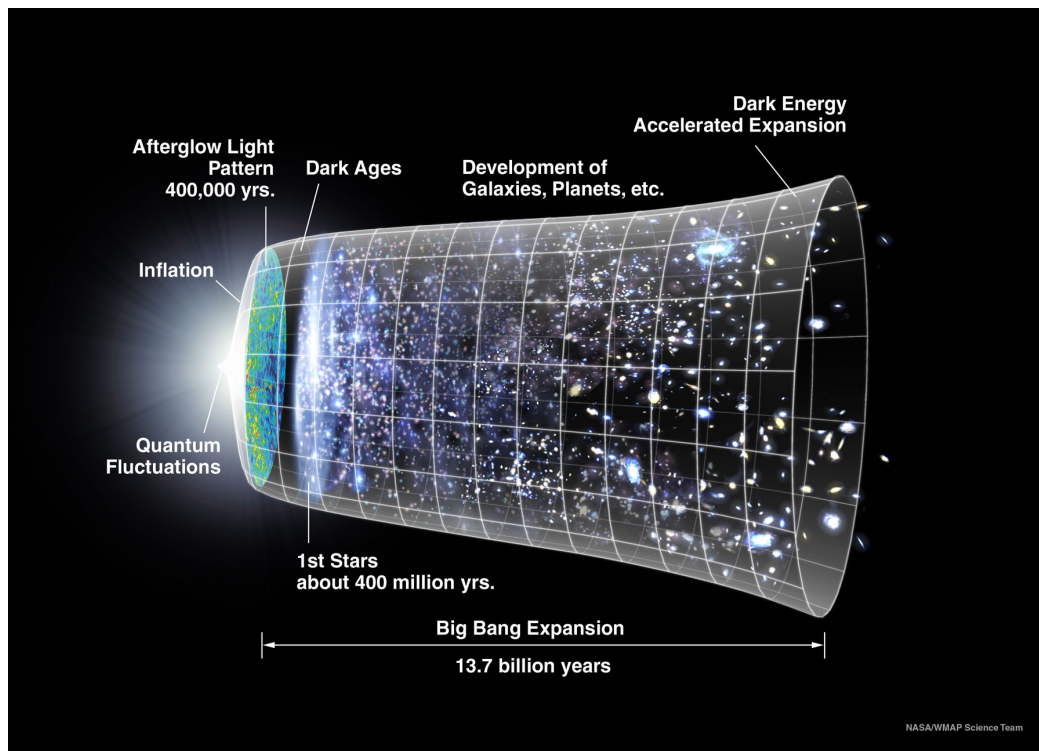
1924: The knowledge that there is more than one galaxy: (Edwin Hubble)

The knowledge that the universe is expanding: It's diameter today is 46.5 billion light years (A light year is the distance light travels in a year at 300,000 kilometres per second.

1964: Cosmic Radiation Background (residual heat from Big Bang):(Penzias & Wilson)



The most common reference to the beginning of life is the 'Big Bang'. In fact there was no bang! The universe began in a flaring of light. From a region smaller than a single atom, that initial flaring was so powerful that it has continued, even after 13.8 billion years, to overpower the combined gravitational force of the entire Universe. To the left is a map of the universe 380,000 years after the Big Bang (or 'Great Flaring'). It shows some parts as 'hot' and some as 'cold'. The map of the history of the universe (see below) highlights how long it has taken for life to unfold. In the story, we have to appreciate that Earth did not form until 4.8 billion years ago – and homo sapiens (us) did not appear until 300,000 years ago. Those two facts are reason enough for us to explore 'The Universe Story'.



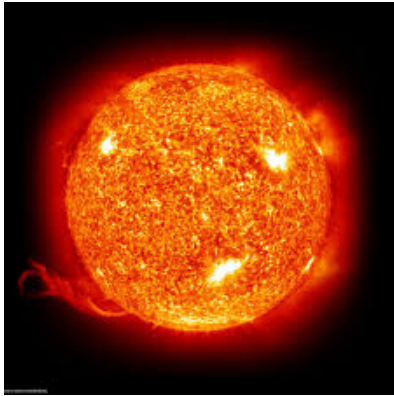
The first elements present in the universe were hydrogen and helium, and after 100,000 years, they combined to form helium hydride, which through its interaction with hydrogen helped in the formation of stars. Brian Swimme suggests that the short version of the universe story is “You take hydrogen gas and leave it alone, and it turns into rosebuds, giraffes and humans”. Swimme also says that the story of ‘the big bang’ is far more than a story of fact. “Life as we know it would never have formed if the conditions affecting the expansion of the universe had varied more than one hundred millionth of one percent right after the big bang. Too much, and the galactic material would have fallen in on itself. Too much, and the material would have been flung apart. This incredible ‘accurate’ variation was responsible for the formation of all life as we know it.



It took one billion years to begin to fashion the hundreds of billion galaxies that have been created. In that first unfolding of life, the density of the universe erupted into galactic collisions. Some galaxies were blasted into shreds of gas; some were scattered and mixed with abandoned stars; some of the spiral galaxies had their interstellar gases

sucked away by other galaxies passing through. Most of us grew up thinking that our solar system within the Milky Way galaxy was the universe.

In fact there are two hundred billion other solar systems within our galaxy and it takes 100,000 years for light to travel from one side of our galaxy to the other. If that seem big, there are a trillion other galaxies! In time, under the incredible pressure of primal stars, over one hundred elements were formed for the first time: carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, copper, silver, silicon, magnesium, calcium, sulphur, iron; all the elements in existence now on earth that have enabled so much to be created.



Like other forms of life, stars do not live forever. They have a birth a middle age and they die. They are not at all like the 'twinkle twinkle little star image' we learned about as children. They have been described as cosmic factories. Stars bring hydrogen atoms together and changes them, first into helium and then into other chemical elements such as carbon. We still draw stars as five sided figures, but stars are not like that.

Some large stars, as they collapse, rebound in a massive explosion called a supernova which sends giant shockwaves projecting the newly made matter into space. During the first 10 seconds. Sub-atomic particles (neutrinos) propel this matter so it is not drawn back by the star's gravity. Without this, no life would form. The elements that had been created in the star are dispersed into the galaxy where they can gather into new second generation stars which are richer in potential and more complex in internal structure. Here in the galaxies we discover an ultimate paradigm for life. Sacrifice and death give way to a new form of living. This is part of our universe story and is again reflected in Passionist spirituality.



The carbon of our bodies could not have been created except through the process of a star fusing its elements. We, and everything on earth is composed and came out of the explosion of that star. That is why we can say that we are made of stardust! Brian Swimme suggests, *"This is one of the deepest mysteries in the universe itself"*.

4.6 billion years ago a star in our spiral Milky Way galaxy exploded in a supernova. The galaxy used the remains of that star to give birth to ten thousand new stars. One of these stars is our sun! It blasted off most of the elements around it. As these bits were spun increasingly faster and closer, some broke away, and became spherical discs of matter - the planets in our system.

Of these, only Earth was able to provide a chemical womb from which the first living cell

arose, four billion years ago. That supernova did more than produce our sun. It brought forth an array of elements that had not been present in the original star, but which made life on earth possible. We might call it our Grandparent star.



The supernova experience highlights how beauty and destruction are built into our origins and our ongoing story. For life to renew or transform itself, it must pass through this destructive, yet creative experience. Our sun is part of a huge galaxy and a universe whose size is beyond our comprehension.

The sun is 1,400,000 kilometres in diameter and 150,000,000 kilometres from Earth. Some bright stars we observe in the night sky are 1,000 000 times as far away as the Sun. The Andromeda galaxy (our closest) is about 19,000, 000,000,000,000 kilometres from earth.

It is difficult for us to believe today that we are not 'standing still'. It is more difficult to appreciate the incredible speeds at which we are travelling.

Earth rotates at 1600kph.

Earth travels around the sun at 67,000mph

The Milky Way galaxy travels at 825,000 kph.

The local group of galaxies to which we belong (the Virgo Cluster is travelling at more than 21 million kilometres per hour.

In the unfolding universe story, there is little to be told from the beginning until nine billion years had passed and earth was created. When we reflect on how impatient we can be waiting for an appointment, the truth is that life had to wait 13.8 billion years for any of us to arrive on planet earth. The preparation of the nursery took a very long time. Whatever was God doing during these nine billion years, human life was a long way off. It makes you think, God is not in a hurry!

To be continued.....

### **COVID news from Vietnam**

Vincent Luo'ng who was ordained on Friday has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is quarantining at home at St Paul's, Saigon. Let's hope the others in the community avoid COVID infection.

### **Chris - 40 years ordained**

It is true that 40 years is not 25 or 50, but it is a milestone deserving of recognition. After serving as a deacon in Hobart, Chris was ordained towards the end of 1981. Much of his life since then has been devoted to study and sharing his learning. Taking up the request to study Sacred Scripture, Chris left Australia and before learning about Scripture he had to learn the languages of the Bible (Hebrew and Greek as a minimum) various semitic languages, and the main languages of study – Italian, German and French.

A few days ago, our Provincial, Tom McDonough wrote a few words about Chris' ministry since returning from those initial studies.

*“Chris has worked in ministering the Word of God in countless ways, just sometimes in teaching and lecturing. He has worked as a lecturer and writer in Sacred Scripture, in adult faith formation, theological college and university. He has led seminars, workshops, institutes, days of recollection, retreats, and keynote addresses. He has written books, journals and articles. He has communicated through his works of art in wood, stained glass, oils and charcoal. Chris has brought mystery and beauty to us through music, song and voice. He has created the world-in-miniature in the environmental eco-system around the dam at Holy Cross. In between times, he has been a member of the North Melbourne Cheer Squad, President of the Yarra Theological Union, a teaching college of the Melbourne University of Divinity. This is not to mentioned terms of office as a local community leader and Provincial Consultor”.*

Of course in the past year he has added bee-keeping to his multiple interests. Chris has recorded an online Mass every week since Easter (April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020). This week will be the 92<sup>nd</sup> Mass he has recorded. Chris has been especially mindful of those who are shut-in and not sufficiently mobile now to come to Holy Cross.

Our recognition of Chris and all he has contributed to Holy Cross is important, even if carried out in a low-key way this Sunday.

1. Our local bees always give us their swarm wishes.
2. What did the bee say to his girlfriend? “I can’t help pollen in love with you.
3. What did the bee girlfriend say in return? “Hive never felt this way bee-fore.”
4. What did the teacher say to the bad bee? “Bee-hive yourself.”
5. The bee bank robber said to the tellers, “Your honey or your life.”
6. Why was the barber bee fired? He only knew how to give a buzz-cut.
7. What do you call a bee who speaks too softly? A mumble-bee!
8. A bee that resides in America is called a USB.
9. Where do worker bees go on vacation? Sting-apore.
10. What do you call bees that constantly drop things? Fumble bees!

### **Passionist Institute**

The recent two-day Passionist Jubilee Institute was conducted by Zoom and the sessions were recorded.



**Below are the recordings of the 4 major presentations:**

**Renewing our Mission:** Brian Traynor CP:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/651394348>

**Gratitude:** Kevin Dance CP:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/646784520/4cc6125384>

**Prophecy:** Chris Monaghan CP

<https://vimeo.com/652412794>

**Hope:** Paul Traynor

<https://vimeo.com/652318176>

Also

**Saturday Opening Prayer:** Jim Yeo (Marrickville)

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/647115196/b8537ab6bd>

**Closing Liturgy Day 1:** Brigid Murphy CP and Karen Englebretsen CP

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/651396007>

**Local Companions Video:** Edited by Luke Bulley CP

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/651395021>

## **Fans**

Thanks to a kind donor from our community, we have been able to install air-conditioning in the rooms on the top floor of the Holy Cross Centre. As a result, we have 22 fans we no longer need. If you would like a fan or know someone who does, please ask for one after Mass on Sunday or make arrangements with Mayrose (98466014 Mon-Fri 10.00am-2.00pm).

## **Humour**

### **Murphy's other 15 laws**

- Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak
- A fine is tax for doing something wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well
- He who laughs last, thinks slowest
- A day without sunshine is like, well, dark!
- Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine
- Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.
- Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool
- The 50-50-90 rule. Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong
- If the shoe fits, get another one just like it
- It has been said that if you lined up all the motor vehicles in the world end to end, someone from Queensland would try to overtake them all
- The things that come to those who wait, may be the things left by those who got there first

- Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer
- Flashlight. A case for holding dead batteries
- God gave us toes as a device for finding furniture in the dark
- When you go into court, you are putting yourself in the hands of twelve people, who were not smart enough to get out of jury duty

Q. What do bees take with them when they go bird watching? A. Bee-noculars

- If you try to fail and succeed, which have you done?
- Who's cruel idea was it for the word 'lisp' to have an 's' in it?
- Would a fly without wings be called a walk?
- Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?
- Can an atheist get insurance against acts of god?
- One nice thing about egoists is they don't talk about other people
- Where do park rangers go to 'get away from it all'?
- If one synchronised swimmer drowns, do the rest drown too?

### Notice

We were saddened to hear of the passing of [Carole Mernagh](#) on November 29<sup>th</sup>, just five months after Barry. Carole and Barry were members of 'Team 29' for many years.

[Herb Bennetto](#) (aged 93) a long time associate of Holy Cross, died this same day, November 28<sup>th</sup>.

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

### We remember

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



The **Mass link** will be sent on Saturday afternoon.

May you have a good weekend

Brian

