

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 95

10th December, 2021



Warm greetings,

Chris' 40th

There was a real buzz in the chapel last Sunday, and not only was it inspiring to acknowledge Chris Monaghan's 40th ordination, but quite moving to hear him speak about the years, his gratitude to God and to 'the people'. Tim Horlock's words of appreciation for Chris' ministry were also very touching. We enjoyed a cuppa and morning tea on the grassed area behind the chapel. It is the first time we have used that area for morning tea, but surely it will not be the last. There were suggestions of doing this 'once a month'.

Sun 12 December

It is a wonderful occasion to welcome Luke to celebrate the 9.00am and 10.30am Masses this Sunday. Luke has been shaped by the Holy Cross community, of whom he is very fond, and this occasion allows you to see and hear the priest who spent most of his formation period at Holy Cross. It allows Luke the opportunity to return and give thanks for what he received in his formation journey. Please join us for a BYO salad BBQ after 10.30am Mass. The meat for the BBQ has been generously supplied by Angelo Batistella.

Christmas Masses

Christmas is only two weeks away now. Please take note that Mass will be celebrated outside on Christmas Eve at 7.30pm, preceded by Carols, starting from 7.00pm. It is a government requirement that attendees be vaccinated.

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 have received more contributions towards the cost of the chairs for the chapel, and again we want to express our gratitude for your very generous assistance. We now have more than half of the chairs paid for, which is fantastic, Thank you so much.

Creation 15: The Universe Story – Mystery and Wonder



One of the key learnings about life has been that galaxies appear to be living, self-creating, self-organising systems. Everything we see on the earth either living or constructed (including the chapel chairs) has come ultimately from the galaxies, where the core elements were formed. It

is for this reason that many scientists suggest we are Earthlings made of stardust.

South Australian theologian Denis Edwards suggested that *"Life is intimately related to the stars. If there were no stars there could be no trees, flowers, kangaroos, or human beings. We are all made from stardust"*. The interconnectedness of life begins with this relationship. Everyone has seen the amazing regeneration of a forest after a bushfire, despite tree trunks being charcoal black and the underground totally scorched of life. Destruction and death always give way, to rebirth, new life. This is as true on earth as it has been in the galaxies.



Our sun is a third-generation star and it contains early life elements as well as the ninety-two other elements that occur in nature. Earth was formed out of material from the sun that was 'cooked up' in earlier stars and sent into space during supernova explosions. An amazing aspect of this

process is that two helium atoms fuse to make beryllium. The beryllium atom has to be struck within a billionth of a second of its formation by another helium atom, to form carbon! If this did not occur we would have no life. The scientific story of the formation of life is full of miracles.

The sun is earth's life supply system. Every second it burns 4,200,000,000 metric tons of energy which it transforms into light. It has been doing this for four and a half billion years! We receive just the right amount - one percent of the sun's heat.

The sun consumes even itself to give light to a dark world

-do likewise.

Photosynthesis changes the sun's energy into chemical food for plants, algae and bacteria. All forms of life depend on it. We can explore the miracle of photosynthesis next week. As the sun gives out its energy, a part of it dies because this energy is not

returned. Without this gift, there would be no life on earth. In the miracle of life, giving and dying become gift and life. When we open ourselves to appreciating this experience, we know that we too find an urge within ourselves to give for the wellbeing of others.

Our sun is a middle aged star and that means it only has five billion years of life left! When it has completed its current life, it will follow the path of very large third-generation stars and collapse into an incredibly dense point (black hole). Not even light can escape from a black hole.

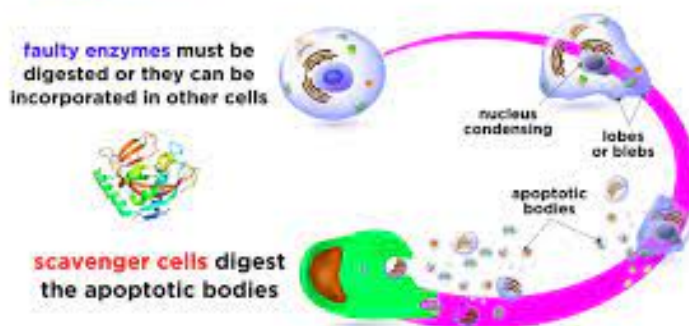
Powerful forces such as the sun that emerge from chaos and develop through destructive explosions, rebirth and death, not only present in the galaxies. These forces are also present earth. "Unless a grain of seed falls in the ground and dies, it remains just a dead grain. But if it dies it will yield a rich harvest" (John 12:24)



are on

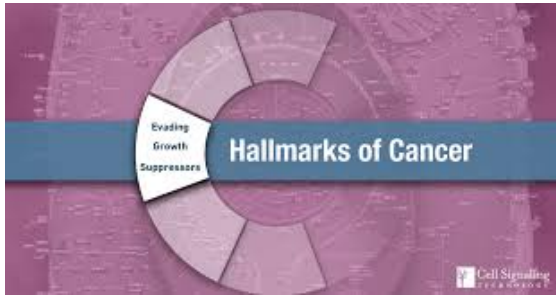
All of our body's cells need glucose (blood sugar) for energy. Healthy cells follow a life cycle of growth, division and death. Like leaves on a tree, old cells die off and are replaced by an equal number of healthy cells. 1,000,000 cells in our bodies die every second of every day, and are replaced!

apoptosis is programmed cell death



When cells experience DNA damage, they try to repair it. But if the repairing fails, the damaged cells are programmed to self-destruct, in a process called apoptosis (sometimes called voluntary cell death). This process allows a controlled

sequence of events leads to the elimination of cells without releasing harmful substances into the surrounding area.



Scientist professor Caroline Schild-Poulter says, "One of the hallmarks of cancer is that the cells don't initiate apoptosis despite having defects in their genetic material. In other words the damaged cells do not voluntarily die as they should, and this develops into cancer. Failure to

activate apoptosis also makes it difficult to cure cancer. You cannot kill these cells by causing DNA damage to them using chemotherapy or radiation, because these cells resist dying." So cancer can develop when old cells refuse to die, and instead keep growing, dividing, and building up in one place. Cancer is caused when what is supposed to die, refuses to do so! What lesson is there in this?

Before considering the development of life on earth (next week) it is valuable to look at the dynamic that has created, sustained and transformed life. Scientific books will not credit God for what has unfolded. That is the responsibility of theology and faith. Scientists will admit to the beauty and wonder of life, and the incredible journey life on earth has been. The sustaining and transforming power of the ever-present active energy alive in the universe is of far more significance than anything we see or are unable to see. It helps believers to recognise that God is not just the creator.

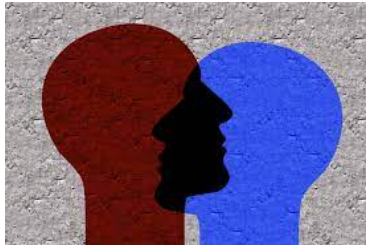


God is still creating, and the Universe has been gifted to be self-emergent, self-organizing and increasing in complexity. Creation is continuing every moment of every day and through chaos, destruction and even death, new life is released. This happens at the cellular level and every other level of life – even in mass extinctions. 'The cross'

around which Christians gather, is the paradigm for life and living.

A principle of the 'quantum world' that states everything is a 'bundle of potential', has much to teach us because we do not see things as 'they are'; we see them as 'we are'! If you doubt this, get in touch with your own bias. **Things are not what they are created to be until they are interacted with.** Particles which can appear as matter or as waves, are more easily understood as 'places where energy takes temporary form'.

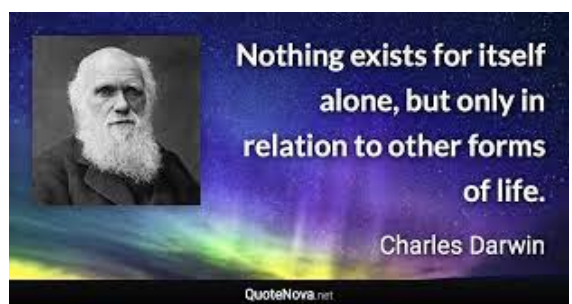
We have a human experience that parallels this. In our relationships with others, different people evoke a different 'part' of us. This is reflected in the different feelings we have, the different levels of attraction we feel, the different ideas we have and the different behaviours we engage in. Sometimes as a result of a particular interaction we discover something new about ourselves, or we know something is evoked that has not occurred before.



How many more potential reactions may lie dormant within us? Is there not still a dream within us – a calling to something more?

Who we are, in one sense, depends on who we meet and interact with, as well as our interactions with aspects of the natural world. Who we are also depends on that one-off success that an individual sperm makes, while millions of others do not. If conception happened five minutes later or on another day, the person we are would be different! The experience many of us have had of the Passionist charism being evoked in us rather than it belonging to an elite group, is an example of this principle at work.

Nothing exists by itself. You cannot even find a quark on its own. Anything that live is in relationship with its environment and all the influences this brings. Why do some species seem favoured? Some flourish because their genes come alive and bloom. Their replacement rate is quicker than the others. This is a feature of ‘natural selection’.



Charles Darwin did not promote the idea of ‘survival of the fittest’. What he recognised in the natural world was that the species that adapt best (and at times, that means they adapt more quickly) are the species that survive and thrive. We know this is also true in human organisations and communities.

The environment shapes the population, and calls forth new and different genes in response to the need. Those that respond best to this change are the ones that flourish. Natural selection grabs hold of the magnificent forms of life and cherishes them. There is always something beyond the present. Success is ‘remembered’ and carried forward by the population. Life insists on a communion experience. Failure to respond positively and to ‘flourish’ can result in elimination.

Chaos and destruction are present at every level of existence. We can observe this in powerful tornadoes, tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanoes, or in climbing vines that as they grow stronger, sometimes choke all life from their host tree. We observe it in the animal world and among humans.

According to scientific studies a massive volcanic eruption in My Toba, Indonesia 74,000 years ago has been the largest of the past 25,000,000 years. Nearly 300,00 cubic metres of lava and ashes were expelled.

Another violent volcanic eruption occurred when Tambora mountain on the island of Sumbawa, Indonesia, exploded in 1815. It had a force similar to that of 60,000 Hiroshima bombs. In the following year, there was no summer in Europe.



Despite the sky being full of ash and smoke for months, people in Europe did not learn of the cause until seven months after the eruption. The Krakatau volcano in Indonesia, erupted in August 1883. The sound of the explosion was heard 3,000 kilometres away in Australia and ash fell in New Zealand. The resulting tsunami killed more than 36,000 people.

Lake Taupo in New Zealand and Yellowstone Park in Northern America are super-volcanoes. Yellowstone last erupted 70,000 years ago and Taupo last erupted 22,500 thousand years ago. If Yellowstone Park volcano erupts, it is suggested five billion people could die!



In the short term, volcanoes and earthquakes cause great destruction, but in the long term they are great creators. Today they can occur in large population centres. The 7.9 earthquake in Los Angeles in 1857 shook around one thousand people. A similar quake today would shake 8,000,000 people! These events,



together with the melting of glaciers, are responsible for the shifts in continents that create stunning mountains, deep canyons and picturesque lakes. They give new species of plants and animals, opportunities for expression.

This is the archetype of so many of our experiences. Can we see this pattern of chaos, destruction and death giving way to rebirth, at work in our lives? It became and remains 'the' centre of the Christian myth, its 'meaning making' story. The apostle Paul wrote, "*all things work together for good for those that love God*".

To be continued.....

The Most Astounding Fact (Neil Degrasse Tyson)

“To me, the most astounding fact is the knowledge that the atoms that comprise life on Earth, the atoms that make up the human body, are traceable to the crucibles that cooked light elements into heavy elements in their core under extreme temperatures and pressures.

These stars, the high mass ones among them, went unstable in their later years. They collapsed and then exploded, scattering their enriched guts across the galaxy. Guts made of carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and all the fundamental ingredients of life itself.

These ingredients become part of gas clouds that condense, collapse, form the next generation of solar systems, stars with orbiting planets. And those planets now have the ingredients for life itself.

So that when I look up at the night sky and I know that yes, we are part of this universe, we are in this universe, but perhaps more important than both of those facts is that the universe is in us. When I reflect on that fact, I look up—many people feel small because they’re small and the universe is big—but I feel big, because my atoms came from those stars. There’s a level of connectivity.

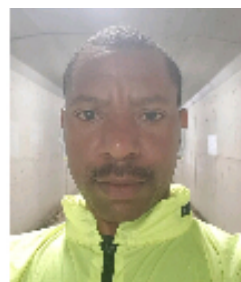
That’s really what you want in life, you want to feel connected, you want to feel relevant, you want to feel like you’re a participant in the goings-on of activities and events around you. That’s precisely what we are, just by being alive.



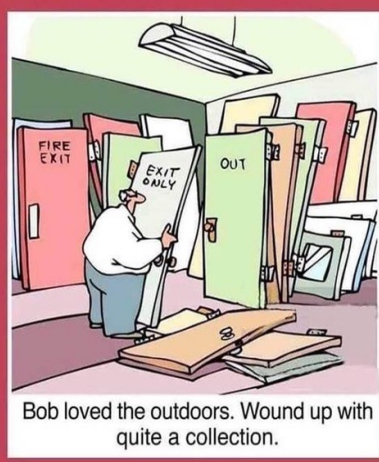
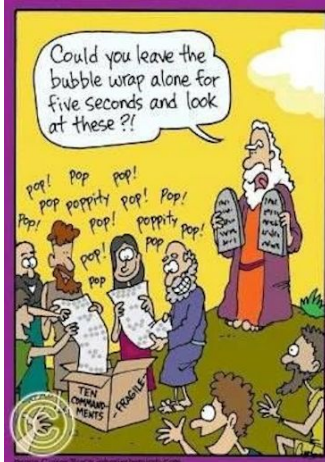
**MELBOURNE
MARATHON
FESTIVAL**

Marathon Runner 21022

This Sunday, Pastor will run in the half-marathon event, which will begin at Batman Avenue and head north to Flinders Street, turn into Swanston Street, and head south along St Kilda Road to St Kilda Junction and then do an anticlockwise lap of Albert Park Lake. Then back to St Kilda Road up to near Federation Square, along the William Barak Bridge and into the MCG for a lap of the famous stadium.



Remember when





Humour

An engineer was crossing a road one day, when a frog called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess." He bent over, picked up the frog, and put it in his pocket. The frog spoke up again and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn back into a beautiful princess and stay with you for one week." The engineer took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it and returned it to the pocket.

The frog then cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a princess I'll stay with you for one week and we can have a wonderful time." Again, the engineer took the frog out, smiled at it and put it back into his pocket. Finally, the frog asked, "What's the matter? I've told you I'm a beautiful princess and that I'll stay with you for one week and make you happy. Why won't you kiss me?"

The engineer said, "Look, I'm an engineer. I don't have time for a girlfriend. But a talking frog - now that's cool."

Q. What do you call Santa when he stops moving?

A. Santa Pause.

Q. Who is Santa's favourite singer?

A. Elf-is Presley

Q. What did Mrs Claus say to Santa when she looked out the window?

A. Looks like rain, dear.

Q. What do you call a fat psychic?

A. A four-chin teller.

I had a happy childhood. My dad would put me inside a tyre and roll me down a hill! -- They were Goodyears

I just found out that there is no training for garbage men.

- They just pick things up as they go along

- Mary had a photographic memory which was never developed

- If you drink a milkshake on the edge of a cliff.... That's ledge and dairy

- The girl in the middle of the tennis court is Annette

- I'm reading a book called "quick money for dummies" by Robin Banks

- When I found out my toaster wasn't water proof... I was shocked

- My friend David had his ID stolen. Now he's just Dav.

- Batteries were given out yesterday free of charge

- A will is a dead giveaway

- Where there is a will there is a relative

- When you see one shopping centre you've see a mall

- Those who get too big for their pants will be exposed in the end

Thankyou

Every week Sr Brigid composes the beautiful prayers that we use for the Prayers of Intercession. Brigid's contribution is greatly appreciated.

Flowers

Every week Peter Norman collects the flowers from Kew that we use in the chapel. The flowers are donated by Joe and Anne Toscano and there is roster of women who arrange them. Brigid also did this job during lockdown.

Fans

As mentioned last week, we have a number of fans we no longer need. If you would like a fan or know someone who would, please make arrangements with Mayrose Ph 98466014 (10.00am-2.00pm) or ask one of us after Mass.

Study desks

We also have a number of good study desks (123cm x 77cm) that we are happy to give away. Maybe you know someone with a genuine need. Please also contact Mayrose about these desks.

We remember

We remember Rose Mandile, Cathy Hardinge's Mum who's 15th anniversary is Saturday December 11th.



Albino Cavarello

On Thursday Dec 10th our 'always smiling' friend Albino was farewelled from Holy Cross. We did not have a photo of Albino for last week's Power Point remembrance.



Masked Christmas

This is part of a very clever crib arrangement using COVID vaccine masks.

We pray for

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



This list would be much longer if all those with quite serious health issues were added.

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

May you have a good weekend

Brian