

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 100

20th January, 2022



Sunday Mass

Sunday Mass each week at Holy Cross is at 10.00am.

Car park

Thank you for the response to the request to avoid parking in a way that blocks the exit on to Smiths Road. Please park in the designated areas. Thank you

Around the grounds

Jerome has had a week of significant discomfort and pain, as well as a number of medical appointments. Please keep him in your prayers.

Pastor has continued his painting efforts and his work in the garden. The main driveway was leafless last Sunday. By Tuesday it was 'covered' in leaves again!



During this past week, Pastor's father **Peter Mumburi** had a difficult time in hospital with various medical issues. No one in his family, other than Livin, Pastor's (doctor) brother was able to see Peter. Sadly, Peter passed away on Thursday morning (Tanzanian time). A number of the family, like Pastor are living overseas, which makes this more sad. Pastor's mother, Agnes now has a deep pain as a result of her sudden loss. Today is the feast of St Agnes, Please remember the family in your prayers. Thank you to the many who have already sent condolences.

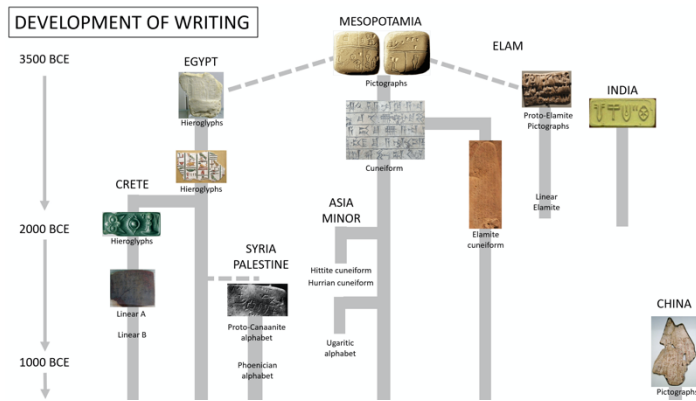
Please also remember Helen Choi (Grace Ko's mother) and Alexander Lim (her bother) who are both seriously unwell in Malaysia.

Barry Hanrahan's funeral will be celebrated at Holy Cross on Monday at

Chris completed his bike trip and is back home. Fortunately he has a few more days of holidays to appreciate.

Karen returned from Brisbane on Sunday evening, where she led a retreat for the Passionist Youth Team. She is still catching up on sleep (not of her own choosing!)

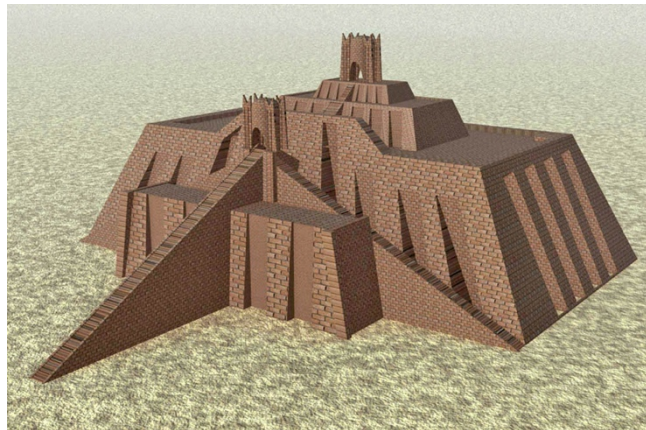
Creation 20: Life on earth 5 (Humans)



The oldest known civilization was established in Sumer in Southern Iraq, beginning around 5300 BCE. King Sargon of Akkad united the warring Sumerian cities to create the Akkadian empire around 2300 BCE. Skilled agricultural methods and the storage of food had led to a great population increase so

that by 4000 BCE Sumer had taken a leadership role in the transformation to urban culture by the creation of a dozen city states, each with its own temple, dedicated to a god or goddess, with its own priest protector or king. It is estimated that ninety percent of the population lived in these cities.

Temples such as the ziggurat at Ur show how developed the culture had become. Sumer had more than ten thousand workers, including a large number of slaves. They were kept busy with the irrigation system which involved repairing canals, channels and reservoirs after the regular and massive floods from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.



Sumerian technology included the wheel as well as the potter's wheel, writing, the calendar, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, irrigation, boats featuring bitumen waterproofing, axes, hammers, chisels, saws, knives, swords, daggers, pins, rings, glue, boots, sandals, water skins, war chariots, arrows and quivers.



Together with Egypt, Sumer contributed our earliest cosmological thinking, mathematics, recorded writing and metallurgy! Administrative process, legal codes and schooling developed, and the city state idea was taken up and modified by the Greeks. When we note the rapid advancement in technology in our day, we can appreciate that Sumerian culture was one of marked

intellectual development. Homo Sapiens were living up to their name. By 3000 BCE the world was a different place for human habitation. Survival had been the basic drive in the hunter-gather era. In the era of agriculture and

urbanisation, security and protection from invasion or theft became characteristic.

Egypt and the Indus valley (modern day Pakistan, southern Afghanistan and the major part of Iran) continued to move from Neolithic life to classical civilization and it is estimated at that time, there may have been five to ten million humans on the planet, although as few as three percent lived in these large cities.

Babylonian civilization was highly urbanised while based mainly on agriculture. It contained a dozen or so cities, surrounded by small villages. Kings had absolute power. Monarchs exercised legislative, judicial and executive powers.

They appointed governors and administrators. Each city had a mayor and council of city elders who were in charge of local city administration. Throughout 1200 years, there were no major changes in this way of life as the system proved to be highly effective. However history proves that no kingdom or empire lasts forever and King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon in 539. It was Cyrus who allowed the people of Israel to return from Babylon to their homeland.

The Minoans established a civilization in Crete in 3500BCE. The palace of Knossos is a notable expression of their advancement which included paved roads and running water. They are regarded as the first international traders. They were replaced as the result of a volcanic eruption and then by the invasion of a Greek-speaking people known as the Mycenaeans who moved to Crete from the mainland around 1770BCE. They represent the end of the Bronze Age.



The Persian Empire stretched from the borders of India down through Egypt and up to the northern borders of Greece. The empire was defeated by Alexander the Great in 334 BCE and Greece was conquered in time by Rome and Rome by the German Barbarians which gave

way to the domination of the (Eastern) Byzantine empire which lasted until defeated by the Turkish Ottomans in 1453 and their empire was divided after WW1. Of course there is a lot of history within the past two thousand years, much of it dominated by Christianity and Islam. That detail is not so relevant in the context of this reflection. What is clear, is that by the time of the Babylonian empire whose history intersected with Biblical times, humans had developed to an incredible degree.

While subsequent civilizations continued this development in agriculture discovering how to grow and cultivate, wheat, rice and corn, there was also development in a wide array of areas such as education, trade, languages, politics, administration, law and order, engineering, irrigation, exploration, transport, medicine, health, religion, etc. Towns and cities became more common leading 'modern' humans to make their impact on the planet.

What cannot be avoided in the human story in the era of early civilization and empires is the wild expressions of violence. Leaders tried to extend their power by conquering other nations and crushing them with destruction, death and slavery.

Sennacherib, the leader of the Assyrian empire, inherited an empire in 705BCE that extended from Babylonia to southern Palestine and into Asia Minor. He was a bloodthirsty ruthless leader who it is estimated enslaved four million people. His treatment of captives was brutal. He torched cities he conquered. He used prisoners of war for labour which enabled him to display his engineering skills. In Nineveh he extended and beautified the city, laid out streets, restored and extending public buildings, and erected a great inner wall thirteen kilometres long, which encircled the city.



Sennacherib established plantations of fruit trees and parks of exotic trees and plants and introduced the cotton plant. Despite this, nothing remains of this Assyrian era. The Assyrians were conquered by the Persians. While their leader, Cyrus was another violent leader, unlike previous rulers, he was willing to listen and learn from other cultures which led to decreasing bloodshed. The people of Israel referred to him as a Messiah.

One people who left something lasting without relying on warfare, were the Phoenicians. They became a dominant commercial power based on their seafaring and trading skills and survived for a thousand years. As traders they developed the first alphabet which was in time adapted by the Greeks, and used by the Romans as the basis for Latin. Their international trade network is believed to have fostered the economic, political, and cultural foundations of Western civilization.

Warfare and bloodshed has continued to be a sad part of the human story. Of course in the twentieth century there were two World Wars in which tens of millions died. This included the first use of an atomic bomb. Advanced technology and the use of poisons such as agent orange, nerve agents and other chemical weapons have been used in subsequent wars, and there are a various weapons of mass destruction, whose effects would have been unimaginable in early human history. Terrorism has existed throughout history, and it remains a critical reality.

Modern technology, including the use of drones, allows for distant and impersonal attacks on unsuspecting people. Despite these and conceding ongoing regional conflicts, threats, mortality rates from military conflicts are lower than for many periods. Can humans of our time rise above the great challenges of our times? What is ahead for our species?

As noted last week, there are today twenty-eight megacities (population over 20,000,000) in the world. Despite the creation of more than fifty cities with over one million people in India,, 75% percent of the people in India today live in over six hundred and forty thousand villages, most of them extremely poor. China has more than one hundred cities of more than one million people and has reduced the percentage of village life from 84% in 1960, to 38%.

The trend in this past one hundred and twenty years as China is showing, has been for homo sapiens to live in cities of increasing populations. Today, over 55% of the world's population live in cities and it is projected that this will increase to 65% by 2050. This has already transformed the way we live, work, travel and build networks. The signs are that this transformation will continue at an accelerated rate. At the same time across most high-income countries, more than 80% of the population live in urban areas.



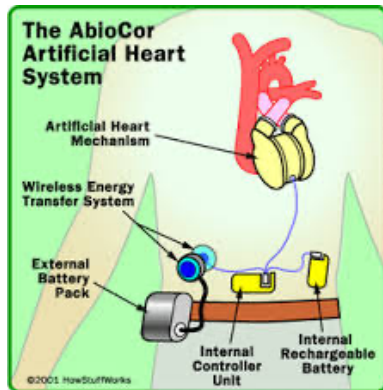
Across most upper-middle income countries, between 50% to 80% of people do. In many low to lower-middle income countries, the majority still live in rural areas. In our Province the percentage of people living in urban areas is 86% in Australia and New Zealand, 37% in Vietnam and just 13% in Papua New Guinea.

Homo Sapiens today is different and becoming more so. Two hundred years ago there were one billion people living on the planet. Today there are 7.5 billion people. It is projected this will increase by another three billion by 2050. We live thirty years longer than we did 100 years ago and we are a globalized community, though far from unified. The largest library in the world, the US Library of Congress, holds 32 million books. This represents 20% of all the books in the world. The internet, universally available only since 1995, is estimated to have five trillion gigabytes of information, most of it accessible by anyone on the planet.



There are challenges humans face in the immediate future on account of our domination and destruction of the planet and our contribution to climate change. Based on the phenomenal development any of us living today have seen in our

lifetime, we have every reason to be confident that we only have to find the collective will, to discover the way forward.



For over 100,000 years, homo sapiens have been shaped by natural selection and genetic mutation. Now we have the ability to edit DNA of every living person, as well as that of future generations. We are capable of directing the evolution of our own species.

What will happen as a result of this enormous power we now have?

Humans are already creating robots, artificial intelligence, and developing cyborgs. Many people today have artificial limbs, contact lenses, cardiac pacemakers, cochlear and other implants. Already, confronted with what military robots can do, some people are asking if robots can have a conscience and will they become more wise than homo sapiens?



Hybrid thinking is projected within this decade, allowing nanobots to connect our neocortex to a synthetic neocortex in the cloud, giving our brains access to all the information on the internet without needing to 'google' it.

Cyborg technology and Artificial Intelligence are still early sciences, but they promise amazing things, far more astounding than driverless cars. Some machines are already helping human functions, to the extent that humans could in time, form a hybrid cyborg. This could lead to a system in which 'the creatures' who might transcend humans in the chain of evolution would be creatures that humans have designed and created! Of course this does not mean that such creation would occur without divine influence, but it raises many questions..

While some see this as an exciting jump in human evolution, Thomas Berry has cautioned that there will be no future species including homo sapiens, if we do not take heed of the environmental challenges of our time. We know that the Earth can live without humans, but humans cannot live without a healthy Earth.



To be continued

Two recommended vidoes

Famous father and young daughter sing

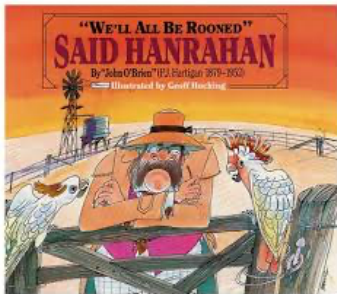
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilqxyLuMJK>

Stavros Flatley

You can be rated Number 1 in a sport, but not greatly admired. You can have less talent and give people amazing entertainment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ou2tKKA3U>

Said Hanrahan (John O'Brien – Mons Patrick Hartigan)



"We'll all be 'rooned' " said Hanrahan,
in accents most forlorn,
Outside the church ere Mass began, One frosty Sunday morn.

The congregation stood about, Coat-collars to its ears ;
And talked of stock and crops and drought,
As it had done for years.

"I believe y're right," said Daniel Croke; "You'll find I'm right, bedad,
For never since the banks went broke, Has seasons been so bad.

" It's looking crook," said young O'Neil; At which sedate remark
He squatted quietly on his heel, And chewed a piece of bark.

And all around the chorus ran — "It's keepin' dry, no doubt."
We'll all be 'rooned,' said Hanrahan, "Before the year is out."

"The crops are done; ye'll have your work, To get one bag of grain;
From here 'way out to Back-o'-Bourke, They're singing out for rain.

"They're singing out for rain," he said, "And all the tanks are dry ;"
The congregation scratched its head, And looked around the sky.

"There won't be grass, in any case, Enough to feed an ass.
There's not a blade on Casey's place, As I coming down to Mass."

" If rain don't come this month," said Dan, And cleared his throat to speak;
"We'll all be 'rooned," said Hanrahan, "If rain don't come this week."



A heavy silence seemed to steal, On all at this remark;
And each man squatted on his heel,
and chewed a piece of bark.

"We want an inch of rain, we do," O'Neil observed at last ;

But Croke maintained we wanted two, To put the danger past.

"If we don't get three inches man, Or four to break this drought,
" We'll all be 'rooned'" said Hanrahan. "Before the year is out."

In God's good time down came the rain, And all the afternoon
On iron roof and window pane, It drummed a homely tune.

And all the night it pattered still, And lightsome sleepless elves
In dripping spout and windowsill, Kept talking to themselves.

It pelted, pelted all day long, A singing at its work,
And every heart took up the song, 'Way out the Back-o-Bourke.

And every creek a banker ran, And dams filled overtop.
"We'll all be 'rooned'" said Hanrahan, 'If this rain doesn't stop."

But stop it did in God's good time, And spring came in to fold
A mantle o'er the hills sublime Of green and pink and gold.

And day went by on dancing feet, To harvest hopes immense,
And laughing eyes beheld the wheat, Nid-nodding o'er the fence.

And oh; the smile on every face, As happy youth and lass,
Through grass knee-deep on Casey's place, Went riding down to Mass.

But round the church in clothes genteel, Discoursed the men of mark ;
And each man squatted on his heel, And chewed a piece of bark.



"There'll be bush fires for sure, my man. There will beyond a doubt.
"We'll all be 'rooned' " said Hanrahan, "Before the year is out".

We don't need the Hanrahan message. Let's strive to be encouraging and hopeful
and uplift peoples spirits by what we say and do.

"All shall be well and all manner of things shall be well" (Julian of Norwich)

Humour

Q What do you call a bear without teeth? A Gummy bear

Q What do you call a sad cup of coffee? A Depresso !

Q What do you say to a thirsty dinosaur? A Tea, Rex?

Q What do you get when you cross a pig with a cactus?

A A porky-pine

Q What do you call an egg that goes on safari? A An eggs-ploer

Q What kind of bull is the cutest? A Adora-bull

Q What kind of car does an electrician drive? A A Volts-wagon

It is not boring at all to stay in the house during lockdown. But I do wonder how come a bag of rice has 7546 pieces and another same sized bag has 7396?

Home schooling update:

My child just said I hope I don't have the same teacher next year!

Clever 1

Paddy, went to heaven and was met at the Pearly Gates by Saint Peter who told him he had done well to get this far but before he could enter into Heaven, he needed to answer 3 questions of various levels of difficulty.

St PETER: How many of the days of the week start with the letter T?

PADDY: Two: Tuesday and Thursday.

St PETER: Correct. Now, how many seconds are there in 12 months?

PADDY: (after pondering for a time) replied TWELVE.

St PETER: How did you decide that answer?

PADDY: Well there is the 2nd of January, 2nd of February, 2nd of March, 2nd of April, 2nd of May, 2nd of June, 2nd of July, 2nd of August, 2nd of September, 2nd of October, 2nd of November and 2nd of December.

St PETER: You're clever. I'll allow that. Now finally, your 3rd question. What is God's name?

PADDY: (after giving the question some considerable thought) replied: ANDY.

St PETER: Why did you say that?

PADDY: I recall hearing in the Gospels: 'Andy said to his disciples'

Clever 2

Gavan worked as a shop assistant at the Happy Apple grocery store. A man came in and asked to buy half a head of lettuce. Gavan told him that they only sold whole heads of lettuce, but the man replied that he did not need a whole head, but only a half head.

Gavan said he would go and ask his manager, about the matter. He said, "There's some idiot out there who wants to buy only a half a head of lettuce."

As he finished saying this, he turned around to find the man standing right behind him, so Gavan added, "and this kind gentleman wants to buy the other half."

The manager okayed the deal and the man went on his way. Later the manager called out to Gavan and said, "You almost got yourself in a lot of trouble earlier, but I was impressed with the way you got yourself out of it. You think on your feet and we like that around here. Where are you from?"

Gavan replied, "New Zealand sir."

"Oh really? Why did you leave New Zealand "asked the manager.

Gavan replied, "They're all just whores and Rugby players over there."

"Really?" replied the manager, "My wife is from New Zealand!!"

Gavan quickly replied, "Are you serious! What team did she play for?"

Imagine what we'd have thought if we had seen these headline five years ago:
"SA Premier asks ACCC to investigate reports of RAT supply 'interference' by NSW and Victoria"

Additional 50 million RATs ordered for NSW

Victorians forced to report RAT results to authorities

We're moving towards a RAT pandemic



We remember the people of Tonga and all their relatives and friends who remain concerned for them. "Tongan officials have made their first real contact with the outside world revealing a tsunami has wiped out hundreds of homes on parcels of paradise".

Congratulations to Merv and Carmel King (David's parents) who were married 69 years on January 8th. What a great milestone!

Phil Muldeary a former Passionist student and classmate of Kevin Hennessy died yesterday.

The link for **Mass link** for the **3nd Sunday of the Year** will be sent on Saturday

We remember the Mumburi family, Helen Choi, Alexander Lim, Pam Gartland, Jacki Tomm, Maree Bartoli, Peter Owen, Brenda Rodrigues, Barry Wong, Mary Hackett, Mary Coburn, Graham Hille Bronwyn Burke, Patricia Keeghan, Errol Lovett, Margaret Titteringcom, Peter McNamara, Jim Monaghan, Michael & Mardi Doyle, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Anne Jenkins, Pam Grehan, Mary Corcoran, Angelo Vigilante, Carmel King, Pam Stretch, (NZ) Maeve and John Reardon, Kate and Mary Dunn, Ray Sanchez CP, Brother Jerome, and all who seek or need our prayers.



Have a good weekend

Brian