

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 102

28th January, 2022



Sunday Mass

There are a few people each week who come at 10.30am, so this note is included in case you know people who might not be aware of the change in time for Sunday Mass each week at Holy Cross at 10.00am.

Pastor



For those who could be present last Sunday, Pastor spoke gently (as he always does) about his gratitude for the very warm welcome he received from 'everyone at Holy Cross'. He spoke of how 'at home' he has felt.

When he first came to Melbourne, Pastor was appointed to our Endeavour Hills community and the parish where he was much loved. He undertook a two year programme in spiritual direction and became qualified to teach others. This was always seen as a mutually beneficial arrangement between his Vice-Province and our Province. We were able to fund his learning which he could not do in Tanzania and we benefited from his presence and his ministry.

His father Peter (pictured above) died just over a week ago and Pastor led the funeral liturgy around 6.00pm our time yesterday.

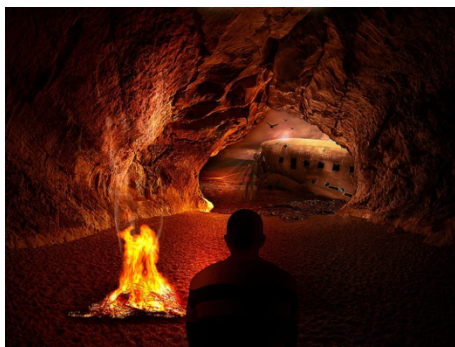
Pastor was excited to learn at Doha airport on the way home that the Kilimanjaro marathon is being run at the end of the month. That will bring him memories of running around Templestowe and perhaps motivate him to enter the event.

Creation 21: Life on earth 5 (Humans) CREATION 21:

Following are two stories I created in the attempt to imagine what it must have been like for some of our ancient human family, when their way of life was totally uprooted. We know this was the experience of our indigenous people. Something similar has happened to many people, including many who worship at Holy Cross. In some eras people did not just leave their family behind, they left their entire culture behind. Many cultures have been lost forever.

ZAR: LEAVING HIS WORLD BEHIND BY INVITATION: A STORY

(The move into the Neolithic world)



The man stared at the fire in his damp cave. He did not have a name. That seemed unimportant. His family knew who he was, by his red hair. Today in Australia or New Zealand, they might have called him 'Bluey'. In his time, some may have called him Zar, because it was a sound he made regularly. Zar could tell that the long period of rain was easing, but he was puzzled. He didn't think very much or very often, but strange things

had been happening and the world didn't seem right.

It had been much colder, but he didn't know for how long, and hunting had become more difficult. Looking around at his small group of family and friends, he knew they needed more food. As he stared at the fire, he seemed to be aware of something bigger that was beyond him, but he couldn't explain it. Zar couldn't speak many words and didn't know many things, but he did know about the cold, the rain and the hunting. And he knew about his family group.

There was no one to discuss things with, yet most of the time they all knew what the others were doing. They knew nothing of any other world, so their thoughts were limited to what they did know; a small area of land they had lived in, and the various animals they knew to hunt or avoid, what to eat and what not to eat. Zar had learned some of these things from his father before he died.

He remembered now, that when his father died, there was much sadness and all the family gathered stones and placed them in a big pile over his body and another pile at his father's favourite resting spot. They left some seeds on the stones, but he didn't really know why.

When Zar was small he used to follow his father, who always seemed to know what he was doing. This cave was where his father sat when it was cold, Zar made a fire like his Dad used to. He remembered his father and felt a good feeling. Something new was happening. Zar had a feeling that his world was changing and that he had to change too.

This reminded him of his mother. In fact, the earth around him reminded him of her. Every year there was new life; new crops and new animals. He learned from his mother that these plants and animals had to be cared for.



It made him sad that he could not see new life this year. That is what happened to his mother. Maybe like her, they were dead and would not come back. Like his mother, he was worried for his family. If his family could not hunt, and if they stayed cold, he had seen what would happen. Maybe, in a new place, there were animals to hunt and the sun might be warm, like it used to be. Could

Zar leave this cave, this home behind? Would his family be scared?

Zar knew that tomorrow there would be light, and he would have to talk with his wife and decide for his family. Was it time to leave behind what he knew? He felt something deep inside like someone calling, inviting. He looked into the darkness. He listened to his father inside him, to his wife inside him and his babies and friends inside him. Now, he did not feel scared. He felt his heart beating faster. This was excitement. This was a message from somewhere. As he lay down to sleep, Zar knew this would be his last night sleeping in this cave.



AREB & SUSA: LEAVING AGRARIAN LIFE BY FORCE

EARLY 'CIVILIZED' LIFE

Areb and Susa were brother and sister, happily tending the family group's small herd of sheep and goats. They undertook this each day and had done so for a number of years. Each day Susa would leave Areb for a while and collect berries and small flavoured plants for the family. Before returning home, they would each carry some water in small plant braided pots.

They had no way of knowing that there was any other way of life than theirs, set in the attractive hills, a little way from their home. Rarely did they see people other than those in their small village and the stories they were told suggested life had always been like this. But there was another way of life and they were about to experience it. Suddenly, one day, a band of long haired bearded men clothed in helmets and full length robes that pulled across at the shoulder, appeared in front of them. One of the men spoke but they were not able to understand what he was saying. His threatening gesture indicated that he was not friendly. Neither Areb nor Susa had met unfriendly people before.

Soon they were prodded with sticks and forced to walk where the men directed them. They were joined by several members of their family and friends, but neither their parents nor the young ones had joined them. They could see from a distance that they had been physically restrained and beaten. What did this mean? Who were these people?



They walked for two days down from the low mountains, across the plains, and were joined by other small groups mysteriously forced to leave their home. They could speak only a few words, even among themselves, but none that other groups could understand. They saw something unimaginable; a throng of people such as they never knew possible. This, they

would come to know was a city. Its name was Kish and they were to become forced inhabitants; Areb as a worker slave, Susa as a concubine.

As they looked around, they recognised sturdy dwellings that were made of compacted mud. Areb and the other men, who arrived with him, were allocated to live in one of these small dwellings. He had only lived either in a cave during the cold times, or under branched shelter in the warmer months. It was clear that they had been allocated guards to ensure they did as required. These men showed them around the city and they looked in wild wonder. They saw a huge structure that they could not imagine existed, let alone be man-made.



They could not comprehend the purpose of the rectangular receding tiers with a shrine at the summit made from colourful sun-baked bricks. Areb and his friends would come to learn that only priests ever entered this area which was where the city's god lived. Even when it was explained to him, Areb could not understand what a god was.

The small group walked along smooth roads and saw donkeys, a new animal to them, dragging behind them a cart on wheels which contained various goods. Areb watched the wheel with amazement. They noted small rivers directed by crafted canals flowing around the outskirts of the city to a large river where boats were moored. They could not know what a boat was until they observed them being loaded. Then they watched them sail off down the river. Areb wondered where these boats came from, where they were going, and why the goods had been placed on them. In time, he would see other goods arrive without knowing where they came from. In his small village, nothing ever arrived like this. Areb wondered who

had sent these goods and why. It was bewildering.

He saw men holding wet clay tablets and pressing different shapes into them. He later learned that this was record keeping and a form of language. He watched them displaying their open hands to one another in various formations. He learned this too was a language; a way of counting and agreeing that the numbers were correct.

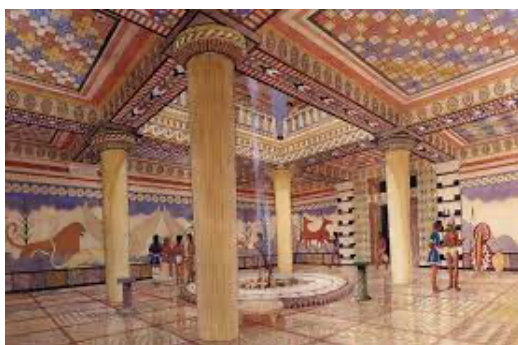
They passed an area where a donkey cart was unloading shiny metal which they later learned was tin, as well as some dull brown copper. Inside, men were bashing and burning these metals, a task Areb would undertake himself at one time. This simple herdsman would create bronze. But first he was ordered to carry heavy bags of materials from the boats and he learned that there were foods he had never known of, such as barley, wheat, lentils, beans, date palms, apples, figs, grapes, eggs, fish, leek, cucumbers and more. These were stored and cared for by guards who traded them with the people, usually in return for work. Even Areb was given some food each day, as well as the water he required.

Susa was equally amazed – and dismayed. She was handed over to a small group of elegantly clad women adorned with beautiful jewellery and embroidered headdress. Many of the women had deep blue eyes, and she had never seen that colour in an eye before. She wondered if they could see in the same way that she could, and she guessed that they could. They wore attractive sandals and had a strong and appealing aroma which she was to learn was created by flavoured herbs.



Susa compared her wild look with these women and wondered at such difference, especially as they were much like her, in that they were not children nor senior women like her mother. These women spoke to her, but she did not understand them, although she was pleased that they smiled at her and she could understand that. Within one day of her arrival, Susa was transformed in appearance, but she required training in allurement, in order to please her lord. She had to have explained to her that she was to provide pleasure whenever it was demanded and she would learn new skills

such as weaving and sowing. She also began to learn and understand some words and she was taught how to count, using her hands. These women were to be her friends.



Susa did not know where Areb was, nor did he know where she had been taken. They did not know how to ask, although he too was being taught some words. The palace was forbidden to Areb and because he did

not see many women walking the streets, except at the markets, he wondered if Susa had been taken to the palace, and if so, what work she would have been given there.

Those first nights were puzzling for them. Their different worlds were separated only by a brief physical space. Susa thought of her family and inside she felt a new feeling. She was sad. Some tears came from her eyes as she recognised that she did not even know how to find her way home, even if she could leave. She had many unanswered questions, yet before, she never even asked questions of herself. Areb too was puzzled. He wanted to ask someone about his thoughts. Like Susa, Areb did not think much before. Now, when he tried to sleep, he found himself wondering. Just continually wondering.

“Church must change”



Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ is Archdiocese of Luxembourg and is president of COMECE (the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union) As a young priest he was shocked when he arrived in Japan as a missionary. He said he and his confreres arrived with a model of Catholicism that they saw very quickly did not correspond to the expectations of Japan. He said, “For me, this represented a crisis. I had to put aside all the piety that had been the richness of my faith until then and give up the ways that I loved. I had to start an inner journey. Before I could proclaim God, I had to become a seeker of God. I had to ask" God, where are you? Where are you, both in traditional culture and in postmodern Japan?"

When I returned to Europe ten years ago I have to do the same thing: seek God, and start over again. The Luxembourg of my youth was a bit like Ireland, with great processions, strong popular piety, etc. But upon reflection, I can see that this past was not so glorious. I realize now that there were already many cracks and hypocrisies in that society back then. **Basically, people didn't believe any more than they do today, even if they went to church. They had a kind of cultural Sunday practice, but it was not inspired by the death and resurrection of Jesus.**



For many, calling oneself Catholic is still a kind of disguise endowed with a general morality. It helps them to keep up with society, to be "good Christians", but without really defining what that

means. But this era must end. We must now build a Church based upon faith. We know now that we are and will be a minority. We should not be surprised or saddened by this. There is no magical recipe, only the humility of the Gospel.

The message is still relevant, but the messengers sometimes appear in costumes from times gone by, which is not the best service towards the message itself. This is why we need to adapt. Not to change the message itself, of course, but so that it can be understood, even if we are the ones announcing it. We must present the Gospel message in such a way that people can orient themselves towards Christ.



We can no longer be satisfied with giving orders from the top down. In all societies, in politics, in business, what counts now is networking. This change in decision-making goes hand in hand with a real change in civilization, which we are facing. And the

Church, as it has always done throughout its history, must adapt to it. The difference is that this time the change in civilization has an unprecedented force. **We have a theology that no one will understand in 20 or 30 years. This civilization will have passed.**

This is why we need a new language that must be based on the Gospel. And the whole Church must participate in the development of this new language: this is the meaning of the synod.

The formation of clergy must change. It must not be centred only on the liturgy, even if I understand that seminarians attach great importance to it. Lay people and women must have a say in the formation of priests. Forming priests is a duty for the whole Church, so the whole Church must accompany this step, with married and single men and women.



Secondly, we need to change our way of looking at sexuality. Until now, we have had a rather repressed vision of sexuality. Obviously, it's not about telling people they can do just anything or abolishing morality, but I think we need to say that sexuality is a gift from God. We know that, but do we say it? I'm not sure. Some people

attribute the increase in abuse to the sexual revolution. I think exactly the opposite: in my opinion, the most horrible cases of clerical sex abuse occurred before the 1970s.

As for celibacy and the priestly life, let us ask frankly if a priest must necessarily be celibate. I have a very high opinion of celibacy, but is it indispensable? In my diocese, I have married deacons who carry out their diaconate role in a marvellous way, who give homilies through which they touch people much more powerfully than we who are celibate. Why not have married priests too?

This is an edited article that appeared in the international Catholic Daily 'La Croix' written by Loup Besmond de Senneville , January 25th, 2022

Humour

Automatic blame?

Two young boys who had been naughty were taken by their mother for a lecture by the local preacher who was from the 'hell, fire and brimstone' school. The youngest brother went in first. The preacher was holding a Bible in his hand.

"Son, do you know where God is?" he asked

The boy was frozen with fear and could not answer.

The preacher thundered: **"Son, do you know where God is?"**

Again, the boy was unable to answer.

The preacher bent down waving his finger at the boy, and bellowed **Where is God?**

The boy turned and ran out the door and returned home. His brother was hiding behind a door and asked him 'What happened?'

'We are in big trouble' the boy says, 'God is missing and the preacher think we are responsible'.

A police officer stopped a car and talked to the driver: Your tail light is broken, your tyres have to be changed and your bumper bar hangs halfway down. That will be \$300.

The driver said, "Great go ahead; they wanted twice as much as that at the garage.

An invisible man married an invisible woman. Their kids were nothing to look at either.

Q Where does a sheep go to get a haircut?

A The baa baa shop.

Q What has four wheels and flies?

A A garbage truck.

Q What did the letter say to the stamp?

A Stick with me and you'll go places.

Q What do sea monsters eat?

A Fish and ships.

Q What do you call a monkey who loves potato chips?

A A chipmonk!

Q What do you call a plant that roars?

A A dandelion.

Q How can you tell the difference between a dog and a tree?

A By their bark!

Q What did the queen bee say to the naughty bee?

A Bee-hive yourself!

Q How do billboards talk?

A Sign language.

Q What do you call birds that stick together?

A Vel-crows.

Q Why did the physics teacher break up with the biology teacher?

A There was no chemistry.



Tri returned from holidays in Adelaide, yesterday. While there he wrote and recorded a song (in Vietnamese). The footage in the video is from the grounds of our community in Glen Osmond, and Tri was camera man and performer.

<https://youtu.be/f9lwEJ0gfTs>

Last night, [Tri and Luke](#) went to the Australia v Vietnam soccer match at AAMI stadium, with [Peter Gardiner](#) from our Marrickville community. Peter kindly thought they might be interested in attending.

Lessons from crayfishing

Nature has many lessons for us; There is a time for everything; Nature does not do repeats; Everything is interconnected; Darkness is necessary to truly appreciate light
What doesn't bend, breaks; Nature does not hurry; Bigger is not always better

One of our Holy Cross members has been fishing recently and he shared some wisdom to be learned from catching crayfish.



"The smaller Crays are cautious and have fear. They let the bait go when things don't seem quite right. On the other hand, big Crays have learnt to be Master and they lose the caution of the smaller Crays. The big Cray thinks he can win all the battles, so when he latches onto the bait he locks his claws and won't let go. It's as if he says "this fish bait is mine" His strength, which is very admirable, is his biggest weakness, because he forgets or overlooks, that there is always an unseen net".

We have to know when to let go, and remember St Paul's words, recognizing that his real strength was Jesus, rather than himself. "When I am weak, then I am strong". (2 Corinthians 12:10)

The link for **Mass link** for the **4th Sunday of the Year** will be sent on Saturday

We pray for Helen Chai (Grace Ko's mother who is dying.
We also remember George Gonsalvez (Brenda Rodrigues' uncle) who is in palliative care,

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



God bless and have a good weekend

Brian