

## **Holy Cross Retreat**

### **Letter 103**

5<sup>th</sup> February, 2022



### **Sunday Mass**

Mass each week at Holy Cross is at 10.00am.

### **Provincial Council meeting**

This week the Provincial Council met face-to-face for the first time since November, 2019. Tom McDonough (Provincial), Denis Travers, Brendan Connell, Chris Monaghan and myself, met from Monday to Thursday at Holy Cross. Provincial Secretary, Fr Giltus Matthias was also here and generously cooked some delicious meals for us. The Council has met many times using Zoom, so it was a welcome change to have protracted time for face-to-face communication. We still did use Zoom to have a prolonged session with Symon Scott, our business manager, and another session with Joachim our brother who is serving as General of the Passionists. We learned from Joachim that after ten days isolation with COVID, he was still positive, so he spent another week in isolation. This was how he spent the major part of his holiday!

For Joachim and for Tom as leaders, COVID has provided many challenges in dealing with the variety of issues that have emerged, and both have been unable to travel to most places where it would normally have been possible.

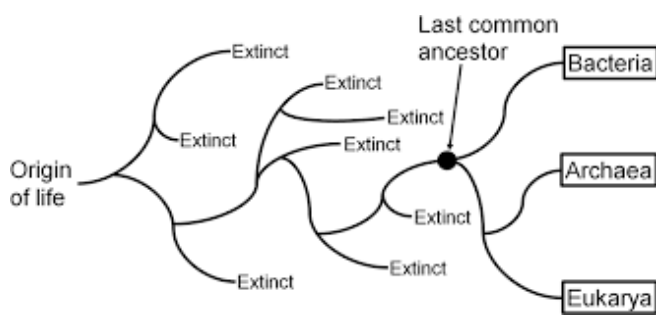
### **Annual Passion Play**

The management of the annual Passion Play have decided that the Play which was to have been held again at Holy Cross, will not go ahead in 2022. The Manager, Gino Gammaldi said that discussions had been held and it had been decided to cancel this year's performance as they had done last year. He said he was not prepared to expose any of the cast or those who might attend unnecessarily, to a potentially serious health risk. Acting produces a particularly high level of respiratory particles which could potentially contain Coronavirus. If one of the actors became infected, he/she risked infecting others via the air they breathe, especially since acting often involves people inhaling and exhaling deeply. "Too many people are ending up in hospitals already crowded with Covid patients", Gino added. He also acknowledged the challenge it could provide if a key actor developed COVID close to the staging of the play. While this is disappointing, we commend Gino and his Committee for their responsible actions and wish them well.

### **Jerome**

Jerome has continued to carry on despite inconvenience and discomfort. The change in weather has enabled him to spend some time in the garden.

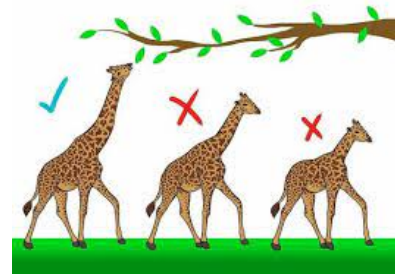
## Creation 22: Life on earth 6 (Humans)



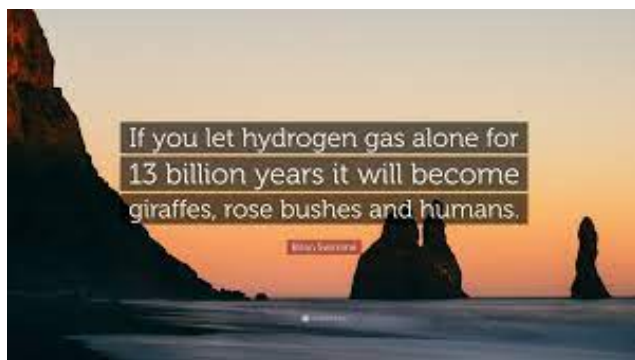
The story of human life on earth cannot, of course be separated from all the other forms of life on earth. All life is interconnected. In the evolving forms of life we can recognise a common ancestor has endowed future forms of life with what they have needed. We also

have ample evidence of Charles Darwin's theory of Natural Selection.

Darwin wrote, "Variation is a feature of natural populations and every population produces more progeny than its environment can manage. The consequences of this overproduction is that those individuals with the best genetic fitness for the environment will produce offspring that can more successfully compete in that environment. Thus the subsequent generation will have a higher representation of these offspring and the population will have evolved." A short form of this principle claims that species that adapt best, are the ones that flourish.



Humans have given birth to a particular power within the entire gene pool, but it has been suggested that if worms had been eliminated, all life that flowed from them: vertebrates, reptiles, dinosaurs, mammals and humans would not have come to be. We know that cells have a living memory. What they are today, includes the memory of earlier forms. It is amazing to appreciate that the capacity for music, art, dance, and all that humans can do, was somehow present within those early worms!



When asked what is the vast scope of evolution, cosmologist Brian Swimme answered, "It's really simple. Here's the whole story in one line. This is the greatest discovery of the scientific enterprise: *You take hydrogen gas, and you leave it alone, and it turns into rosebushes, giraffes, and humans*". He added,

"The point is that if humans are spiritual, then hydrogen's spiritual. This is an incredible opportunity to escape the traditional dualism—you know, spirit is up there; matter is down here. Actually, it's different. You have the matter all the way through, and so you have the spirit all the way through. That's why I love the short version"!



The story of how humans evolved over a long time is a wonderful discovery that has only been known in our times. We are in a new era, where we are facing new questions about humanity. The rapid development of our abilities over the past century has created new and urgent challenges. The destruction of traditional habitats has forced millions of

people to seek a living in the cities, where most lose their treasured sense of community. The human era involving Neanderthal and Early European modern humans up until the creation of the first villages around 8000 BCE, proved to be a great advance and the rapid technological development of humans in our lifetime in contrast to the previous millions of years, is amazing.



In 1974, the skeleton of a hominoid species was found in Ethiopia. The skeleton became known as Lucy and was dated around 3.2 million years ago. Much of our human development depended upon a gift we take for granted every day. This gift was not present in Lucy. It is the gift of our human hand. Humans,

chimpanzees and monkeys can oppose the thumb to the index digit. However, only humans have the ability to rotate the small and ring fingers across the palm to meet the thumb. This provides unique grip, grasp, and the capability of providing force while rotating. This is referred to as "ulnar opposition".

The human hand acts, knows, and speaks. The same hand that can hammer, thrust, grasp and crush can also thread a needle, play a piano and cut material with scissors. It can 'see' in the dark and is incredibly sensitive. With one tap of the fingernail it can distinguish between paper, cloth, wood, plastic and steel, and between hot and cold. In this way, it can 'question' objects to determine what they are. It complements the voice by conveying feelings and emotions that lie beyond words: the hand touches, strokes and caresses, conveying affection and assisting with healing by massage or manipulation. Our brain works our fingers yet we have no muscles inside our fingers. The muscles which bend finger joints are located in the palm and up in the mid-forearm. They are connected to the finger bones by tendons, which pull on and move the fingers, like the strings of a puppet. All the great works that have led to the creation of culture have been possible because humans have this unique use of their hands





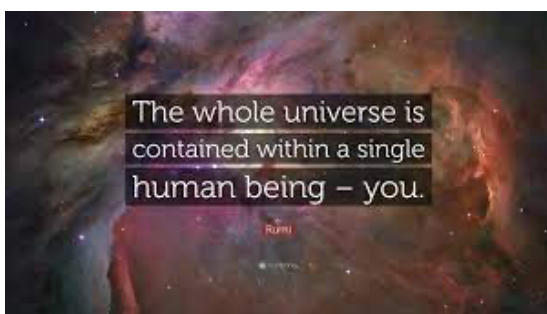
Scientists suggest that life invented sight (eyes) forty separate times. There exists in different animals and birds almost every type of eye, every way of seeing that is imaginable, from the eagle to the worm. It seems the universe was determined to find a way to see itself, just as it found a way to hear itself. Life on earth existed for three and a half billion years without eyes. Then five hundred million years ago, a new way was found to see. Of course, as non-sighted people know, there is yet another way of 'seeing'; and that is with 'the heart'.

It is interesting to read about the evolution of eyesight. An example is: <https://www.nature.com/articles/eye2017226>. When scientists have taken cells from the beak of a developing chicken embryo and placed them in the jaw of a mouse, these cells have developed into teeth!



Throughout tens of thousands of years, fascinating developments have occurred in the parts of the human body that keep us functioning every day, such

as our legs, jaw, and most especially our brain. While there are unique human characteristics, we know that animals and plants also have unique characteristics, including many capabilities, staggeringly greater than our own. The roar of a lion can be heard eight kilometres away. African elephants have a sense of smell that is twice the capacity of tracking dogs. The Greater Wax Moth has twice the sense of hearing of a dolphin and sixteen times the capacity of a human. An eagle can see a rabbit five kilometres away. The Peregrine Falcon when diving can reach 300 kilometres per hour.



It is vital for us to appreciate the interconnectedness of all life. Brian Swimme suggests, "Our ancestry stretches back through the life forms and into the stars, back into the beginnings of the primeval fireball. This universe is a single multiform energetic unfolding of matter, mind, intelligence and life".

We share a common home with every species and for the first time in history, the threat to that home lies largely at the feet of we humans. No species lives in a habitat unaffected by human activity and development. If we do not appreciate and celebrate our interdependence, millions of species will disappear forever. In time one these species could be our own.

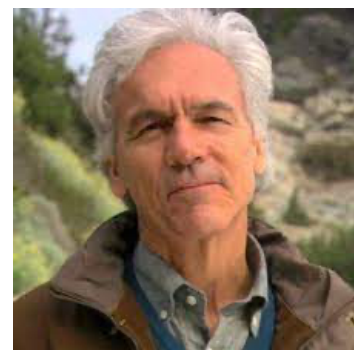


Jesuit John Surette has written, “The story of God’s Universe is our story. We are located within it. Today we do not know ourselves adequately unless we know this story and that story reminds us that we are cousins. We find ourselves in an evolutionary, time-developmental, Universe. From its beginning it has never been fixed or finished. Chaos, change, and transformation are intrinsic to it. What can we say about the Creator of such a dynamic and unpredictable evolution?”



Surette continued, “We can say that the Divine is One who enjoys taking risks, is immensely patient, and has a fundamental trust in the creative process! It has taken the universe 13.8 billion years to arrive at our human reflective consciousness. There is evidence that the universe seems to be in search of us. Herein lies our uniqueness as humans. What can we say about the Creator who has given us such a special and responsible role in the order of things? We can say that the Divine is One who has a special love for us!”

I will finish this section with another quote from Brian Swimme, “The creation story unfurling within the scientific enterprise provides the fundamental context, the fundamental arena of meaning, for all the peoples of the Earth. For the first time in human history, we can agree on the basic story of the galaxies, the stars, the planets, minerals, life forms, and human cultures. This story does not diminish the spiritual traditions of the classical or tribal periods of human history. Rather, the story provides the proper setting for the teachings of all traditions, showing the true magnitude of their central truths”.



### Humour

Q Why was the baby ant confused?

A Because all of his uncles were ants!

Q What did the traffic light say to the car?

A Don’t look! I’m about to change.

Q Why are piggy banks so wise?

A They’re filled with common cents.

A What kind of tea is hard to swallow?

A Reality.

Q What do you call a dog with no legs?

A It doesn't matter, it's not going to come anyway.

Q What is a snakes favourite subject in school?

A Hissss-tory.

A Roman legionnaire walked into a bar, held up two fingers and said, "five beers, please."

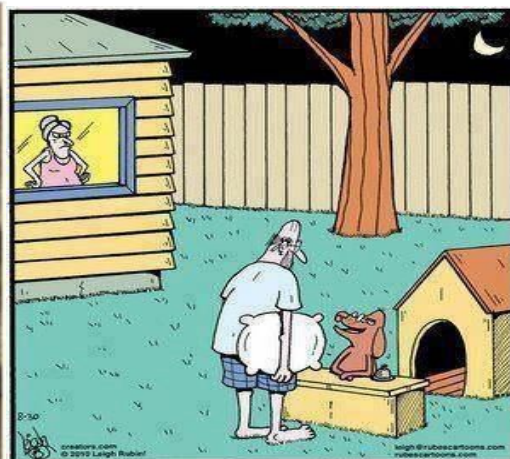
Working in a mirror factory is something I can totally see myself doing.

I came up with a new word yesterday: Plagiarism.

A man asked his new girlfriend what sort of books she was interested in, and she said: "cheque books".



Dear Lord,  
Please don't let Brussel Sprouts  
be a part of the cure of Covid-19 Virus.



"Welcome back, sir. Are you planning on being our guest for one night only, or will this be your usual extended stay?"



**Drawing a bird**

Enjoy a beautiful four minutes.....<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=6GvnQ1NCiek>

**Grace Ko**

Grace is back in Malaysia and has spent a lot of time with her ailing mother who rallied for time, but handed her life back to God at 5.28pm Thursday. Grace wanted her Mum to be freed from her suffering. She has asked for our prayers for strength at this time..

The link for **Mass link** for **5th Sunday of the Year** will be sent on Saturday

We remember George Gonsalvez (Brenda Rodrigues' uncle) who was in palliative care, but has now entered eternal life 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.

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

God bless and have a good weekend

Brian