

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 104



12th February, 2022

Sunday Mass

Mass each week at Holy Cross is at 10.00am.

"Come Away Day: Monday 21 February (9.30am-2pm)

The theme of our first Come Away Day of the year is "A promise of newness" which is timely, as we continue to navigate what the future looks like, whilst living with the Omicron variant of the Covid-19 virus. It is a government requirement that participation be restricted to those who are fully vaccinated and a mask is required for the indoor sessions. A package of materials used on the day will be provided to any interested person, regardless of their vaccination status. For further details, please contact Frank Burke on burke.frank942@yahoo.com.au

Sunday February 27th: St Gabriel celebration

An outdoor Mass for the feast of **St Gabriel** will be held in the Shrine and celebrated by Fr Chris. You are able to drive around and park on the oval. The Mass will not have the normal procession because of COVID-19. You are welcome to bring your own lunch, arrange your own table of guests etc and share lunch 'under the trees' after Mass. To book a table please contact Mayrose during office hours on: 0423804555

The normal Sunday Mass will be held in the chapel at 10.00am.

Margaret and Tony Aldridge will celebrate the 60th anniversary of their marriage.

Parking

Next Sunday we will have a parking assistant, encouraging drivers to use just one space, in order to provide areas for more people to park. Cooperation with his directions would be appreciated. Thankyou.

50 years

As advised at Mass last Sunday, **John Curtis, Tiernan Doherty** and **Gary Perritt** celebrated their 50th profession on January 29th. All three undertook their theological studies at Holy Cross. Gary and Tiernan spent some years leading our Passionist Charism team and developing Passionist Companions. Tiernan and John both served as community leaders of Holy Cross. **Tiernan** is currently leader of the Passionist community in Highgate, London. **John** is leader of our community in Boroko, PNG, and **Gary**, who turns 70 on Sunday, has recently retired from his long time ministry in the Catholic Education specialising in recent years assisting in crisis events. He is continuing to promote Marist spirituality. At the present time, **John** is in hospital in Sydney following some surgery for skin cancers.

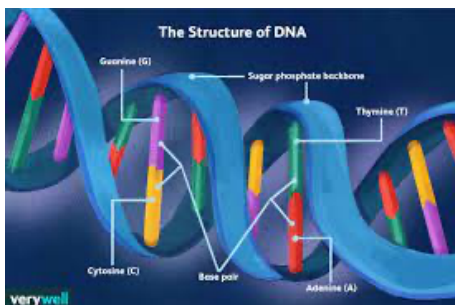
GOD and RELIGION



When we consider the context in which theology arises, it is important to note that every person, scientist, philosopher, Christian theologian or spiritual guide who lived before the nineteenth century did not know about the mass extinctions of life that have occurred. It would have been

impossible for them to imagine that huge rocks had come from the sky and wiped-out giant animals, and that on one occasion this resulted in the wiping out of ninety-five percent of all species living at that time! As any of these great or wise thinkers gazed into the heavens anytime until one hundred years ago, they believed that what they saw was the entire universe, when in fact it was a very small part of one average sized galaxy.

They did not know that what they thought were fixed stars were in fact suns; that many of these suns are massively bigger than our own, and that they are much further away than our sun. They did not know that what they were seeing in the night skies was the past, not the present. They did not know that earth was a 'wanderer' (the meaning of the word planet) just like the other planets they could observe. They did not know about tectonic plates, shifting continents and uplifting mountains.

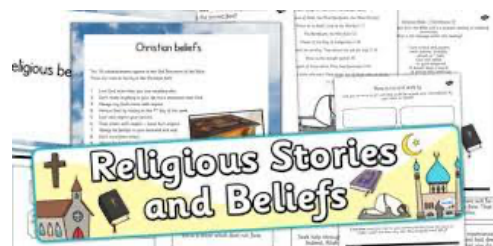


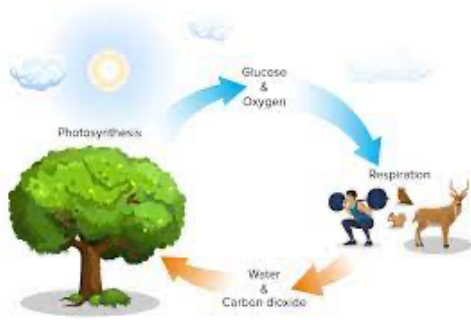
They did not know how genetic information is stored in DNA, and they knew little of the history of life on Earth. Importantly, they could not have known, although some still claim this to be the case, that God did not choose a kind of creation of perfection achieved through design, but instead, emergent evolution has been at work – or play! Neither could they have comprehended that all

life species had a common ancestor.

Today, with the aid of physics, chemistry, biology, geology, archaeology, astronomy, anthropology, and so many other sciences, we know far better who we are, where we came from and what we are made of. This gives us a consciousness not only of our past, but our future.

There has to be a different sense of how we tell our religious story, now that we know this information. God needs to be no less a part of our story.





God is in fact more wondrous and more creative than we knew. Our Christian tradition highlights the human call to be co-creators. Now we have a deeper understanding of the meaning and challenge of that vocation. Religious traditions are being challenged by modern science to reconsider their understanding of the divine, and theology

needs to re-examine its obsessive focus on the human, and instead consider the interconnected relationships of all life. In the twelfth century, Thomas Aquinas suggested that *“A mistake about creation will necessarily result in a mistake about God”*.

Traditions have to be updated as worldviews change. While we cannot be religious in the same way as early peoples, we can identify with their experiences. There have been significant changes in humanity from hunter-gatherer, to agricultural, to village and then city dwelling living, to scientific-technological and now perhaps to ecological humans. Throughout these changes, it is not possible to retain the same views of God, so today our tradition needs to be updated to reflect the reality of the world around us. We can see this change in the development of various peoples and the myths they held. As people developed, their need for a particular god sometimes lessened, so the relationship with that god became weaker and more remote, Sometimes the god was abandoned. That is still happening today.



It proved difficult for single deity religions to achieve their kind of belief, other than over a long process. The story of the people of Israel gives testimony to this. As people developed a more personal relationship with the forces around them, they began to identify these forces as deities, attributing certain forces to particular



gods. In this way, a multitude (poly) of gods (theism) emerged. Such believers were later referred to as pagans. Polytheism was popular because people felt their gods were accessible. The designation of the gods was not dissimilar in intent, from the patronage of Catholic saints, each with a particular area of ‘responsibility’ (Anthony when you lose things, Jude for hopeless situations etc.).

Early humans were nomadic hunter-gatherers. They lived in small family groups and were dependent on finding food for survival. Nature was beyond their control.



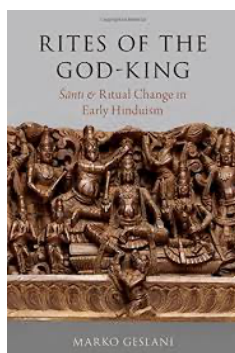
They observed the rhythms of day and night, sunrise and sunset, thunder and lightning, rain and rainbows and for those who lived near the sea, they would have observed the changing tides.

Not surprisingly, their sense of a greater creating power was hidden in the sky as they tried to comprehend how these various forces interacted with each other

and what or who controlled them. This has been referred to as 'the Sky God'. Except for Earth, all the Western names for planets in our solar system have names from Greek or Roman mythology.

As humans moved from hunter-gatherer societies into the agricultural age, fertility was regarded as a mysterious and highly valued power. Humans began to create figures of pregnant women and many developed a Mother Goddess cult. Sun worshipping developed as did the idea of offering the 'first fruits' of the harvest, during this time. While fertility gods, like the Sky god, have receded in the minds of modern people, there are also traces of both that are still evident today, even among Christian believers.

In subsequent developments, such as that of settled village life, and then the movement into urban cities, awareness of the sacred was structured into a variety of religious activities. This sacred presence was revealed or experienced in a variety of ways, such as in nature, historical events, art, music, dance and ritual. It was felt in inner peacefulness and outer healing and through the whole range of human experiences, including suffering, pain, love, beauty, grief and death. It seems their early religious experiences were 'spirit' experiences (animism) which is still strong in some present-day cultures. To express this belief, the spirits and energies of nature were commonly personified as animals.



As civilizations developed and other lands and their peoples were conquered, the warrior image became more popular for depicting the divine. In turn, as kingdoms arose, cultures included references to King, Lord and Almighty to denote God.

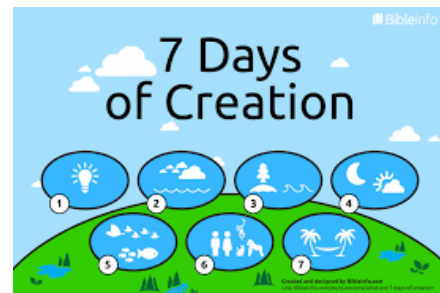
These are still the commonly used terms in Christian prayer despite a millennia of change and the fact that many Christian cultures have never known a king or the characteristics of kings have been replaced by other rulers or leaders.



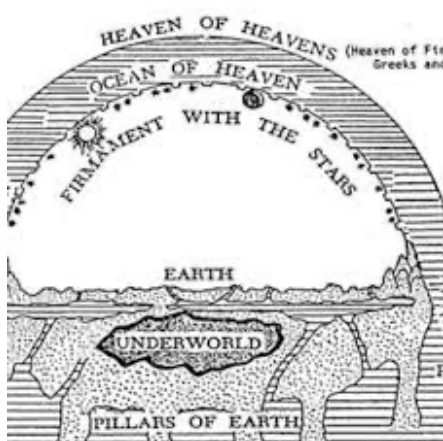
The first Biblical creation account was probably written around 560 BCE and is credited to what is referred to now as the Priestly source. Throughout it, God is mostly referred to as Elohim. It uses material about the origin of the world already collected and used in Babylon, but presents the material differently. It does not depict Creation

occurring as a result of a battle between the Gods, as other myths did, but by the power of God's word ('dabar'), out of a formless chaos. In this unique scenario, humans are not servants of the gods, rather they are an image of God; trustees of creation, and superior to other forms of life.

The second account of creation (Genesis 2:4-25) is an older account, possibly edited around 900 BCE. It identifies God as creating heaven, which as in other nearby cultures, was considered to be a solid dome. Then God created the Earth and the seas. Next God created vegetation on earth followed by the sun, moon and stars. Next were sea animals and birds and finally land



animals and humans. There was no attempt to be scientific in telling this story. God then breathed (God's) life into the man through his nostrils so he now possessed God's spirit. The woman was formed later, from his rib, so that the man had a companion. In this Genesis myth, creation is a revelation of the sacred, and humans are connected to all other forms of life. It admits the reality of sin and death and developed an explanation for this.



The myth includes a flat earth supported above chaotic waters. Over the earth was a solid dome, the firmament, which protected the earth from the chaotic waters above. Beneath the earth was a cavity, called Sheol where all the dead were assembled. The Hebrews came to a unique understanding that God was 'one'. This implied that the universe was created and cared for by a single God, and that people were not at the whims of many gods, each governing their own province (fertility, harvests, victory etc.) according to their

own laws. It is helpful to remind ourselves what a struggle monotheism has been, and to appreciate this, especially within our own Judeo-Christian tradition. It is also necessary to understand something of the effect the cultures surrounding the people of Israel had on their beliefs.

To be continued

Pastor's family

Pastor's father's funeral was a big event – 2000 people attended. Below is a photo of the siblings (Pastor is second from the right).



World Day of Prayer.....Friday March 4th, 2022

Theme: "I know the plans I have for you"

10.00am Donvale Presbyterian Church
5 McGowans Road, (Cnr Springvale Road
Donvale
Speaker: Ms Naomi Chua (from AMES)
Naomi works with Afghan refugees



8.00pm St Bishoy & St Shenouda's Coptic Church
1-8 Prospect Road, Bulleen
Speaker: Isaiah from 'Just Voices'
A program of Jesuit Social Services

Inquiries: 0438 034739

Novitiate:

Luke has created a video that explains the novitiate, which in recent years has taken place in Adelaide under the guidance of Bro Larry Finn CP. The link to the 3.5 minute video is: <https://youtu.be/VYjGaly5Wv0>

Humour



Two antennae met on a roof, fell in love and got married. The ceremony wasn't much but the reception was excellent.

A jumper cable walked into a bar. The bartender said, "I'll serve you, but don't start anything".

Two peanuts walked into a bar and one was a-salted.

A man walked into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his ar. He said, "A beer please and one for the road".

A dyslexic man walked into a bra.

Two cannibals were eating a clown. One said to the other, "Does this taste funny?"

"Doctor, I can't stop singing 'The green green grass of home' Is it common", "It's not unusual". said the doctor.

Two cows were standing next to each other in a paddock. Daisy says to Dolly: "I was artificially inseminated this morning." "I don't believe you," replies Dolly. "It's true, no bull!"

A man said to his doctor, "Doc, I can't feel my legs".
"That's no surprise", the doctor said, "I amputated your arms".

A man went to a seafood restaurant last week and pulled a mussel
Two fish swam into a concrete wall. One of them said "Dam"!

Q. What do you call a fish with no eyes. **A.** A fish

Q What did Kermit the Frog say at Jim Henson's funeral? **A** Nothing

Q What fruit do twins love? **A** Pears

Q What stories do pigs tell their children? **A** Pig tales.

Q Why are obtuse angles so depressed? **A** Because they're never right.

A man went to the doctor and asked. "Do you have anything for wind?"
The doctor gave him a kite!

Tony wrote to his girlfriend. "I'm in shape. Round is a shape".

"A woman went to buy camouflage trousers....but she couldn't find any."

Patient: "Will I be able to play the piano after this operation?"

Nurse: "Sure of course. It might take six weeks though"

Patient: " That's awesome because I couldn't play before."

Do ordinary dogs see police dogs and think, "oh no. it's a cop"?

Bill used to think he was indecisive, now he's not sure!

The link for **Mass link** for **6th Sunday of the Year** will be sent on Saturday

We 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