



Sunday Mass

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

Departed but not gone.



We farewelled Brigid and Karen on Sunday afternoon, and there is definitely a hole in our community life. That happens when people leave a footprint in your heart. We have great admiration and affection for them. There is no doubt that they will be a wonderful asset in the Elwood-St Kilda parish. Karen is already the Spiritual Care Worker at Sacred Heart Mission.

Jerome

Jerome spent Monday night in Knox hospital and now has to adjust to more issues following his UTI difficulties and will have a daily visit from a nurse for ten days.

Volunteer help during the floods

Sue McMahon passed on this ‘information which is inspiring as well as disturbing because it is an insight into the terrible loss, inconvenience and destruction caused by the NSW floods.

“Fiona has been in the thick of things with the floods. Although Byron Bay itself is not flooded, it was affected by blocked roads, no internet, empty supermarkets, dry petrol stations and closed schools and businesses. But once the roads opened, so many locals have volunteered to help at Lismore and other surrounding towns. Fiona has spent the last 4 days volunteering in many different ways: sorting and distributing donated food and clothing at evacuation centres, cleaning out the home of an elderly woman, assisting with the relocation of people to various evac centres and providing them with food and personal items.

Her description each day of the area and the devastation is most graphic. She describes the mud covering everything and the stench as disgusting. She said even their beautiful beach stinks with dead animals, including cows, washing up on the beach. She says the level of water and destruction is ‘unfathomable’. She says other friends who cannot go out to help are cooking constantly at their homes to provide meals and washing linen etc. for others. We are very proud of her and her family”.

The list of schools in Lismore diocese that have suffered severe damage is incredible. It will continue to be a demanding time for weeks and months.



These are the shelves in Woolworths, Byron Bay, Fiona suggests this is likely caused “by our town is feeding so many surrounding towns.”

She and some friends found accommodation in Byron for a family of 5 they knew from Woodburn who lost everything. They know them from the Surf Club where all the kids are in Nippers.

Sue and her husband Kevin had sent money to Fiona to use at her discretion so she used some to stock the kitchen with a week's worth of food and they stocked the bathroom.

Fiona wrote, "The lady cried today when she arrived at her accommodation and saw all the food for her family for the week."

This thoughtfulness and generosity is a wonderful gift, especially in profound times of need.

The Holy Cross Centre

Finally we are securing bookings and the booked groups are turning up, rather than postponing. This is most encouraging, even if it is slow at this stage.

Trees

Late last year on two occasions we had an arborist come and attend to some trees that we thought were dangerous. We have had him come out again to quote for further work, to ensure no one visiting Holy Cross is at risk. This new work will be done in the next two-three weeks. Ten days ago, one large branch fell down in an area where Jerome often works. Fortunately he was about ten metres away at the time. We have roped off that area for safety.

Desks

We mentioned previously that we have some sturdy study desks, if anyone wants one or more. Please contact Mayrose if you are interested.

Quotes

The darkest hour has only sixty minutes

Since the house is on fire, let us warm ourselves



Passionist Family Group National Team meeting

Our meeting last week was a mixture of disappointment, adjustment, excitement and a positive outcome. The first disappointment was that Gwen (from Brisbane) returned home because her long time cocker-spaniel companion, Sammy was diagnosed as having little time to live. Next was Celine Bowman (also from Brisbane) who was met at the airport by Michael Sullivan. On the way to Holy Cross, Celine's daughter who had come to stay with her the previous day because of the floods) phoned her and shared the news "Mum. I have tested positive". Michael and his wife Frances left Celine at their home and came to Holy Cross. The positive side was that despite feeling unwell, Celine participated in the entire weekend by Zoom.

Next, was Roger Gurney. He became unwell on Friday. He took a RAT test but was negative, so he stayed home and his wife Trish came to the weekend. On Saturday afternoon Roger advised Trish that he had now tested positive. Trish left Holy Cross and returned home. She has taken two RAT's but tested negative. Trish participated in the remainder of the weekend by Zoom! On Sunday afternoon, Frances and Michael returned home with one of our vehicles, and Celine drove herself to Holy Cross and took up isolated residence in the just vacated Tavern!

4/7 were affected by these events. This was our first face-to-face gathering since November 2019. It became a stark reminder that despite planning, Omicron COVID can disrupt that. The National Team has been planning for a new way of pastorally caring for the many people who participate in PFG's. This is a major ministry of the Passionist Family, safely entrusted to our lay partners. The Movement reflects the current reality of ageing and diminished parish numbers, but it remains vibrant and meaningful for thousands of people. In a future newsletter we will reflect a little on the history and spirituality of PFG's.

In the spirit of the 30th Jubilee of the Passionists which we are still celebrating, we examined what we are **grateful** for, and it was not difficult to nominate so many things. We spent considerable time naming the signs of the times (**prophecy**), and the ways we are called to respond, and we shared the **hope** we have for the Movement in the times ahead.

It was a very positive gathering, brought to a very happy ending by the NT sharing a delightful meal with the community cooked by Tri, during which we were all able to express our appreciation of Brigid and Karen and farewell them with our gratitude.

(A photograph of the PFGM National team (minus Gwen) is on the next page)



Russell, Mary, Trish (TV) Dennis, Celine (TV) Brian, Paul, Michael, Frances

The grounds



Vince Celestino has spread around 300 truckloads of fill around the area where the pool used to be and beyond. You can see the labyrinth in the background. This large area will eventually be grassed.

Brain study:

See how you go. Read this out loud, Take your time!

7H15 M3554G3
53RV35 7O PRoV3
HoW oUR M1ND5 C4N
Do 4M4Z1NG 7H1NG5!

1MPR3551V3 7H1NG5!

OK? Now read this

1N 7H3 B3G1NN1NG
17 WA5 H4RD BU7
NoW, oN 7H15 LIN3
YoUR M1ND 1S
R34D1NG 17 4U7oM471C4LLY
W17HoU7 3V3N
7H1NK1NG 4BoU7 17,

B3 PROUD! oNLY
C3R741N P3oPL3 C4N
R3AD 7H15!

PL3453 FoRW4RD 1F
U C4N R34D 7H15.

Can you raed this?

I cdnuolt blveiee that I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd what I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in what oerdr the ltteres in a word are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is that the frsit and last ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it whotuit a pboerlm. This is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the word as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? Yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt! If you can raed this forwrad it.

God and Religion: Part 5: The Bible (continued)



As mentioned at the end of last week's reflection, it is the wrong question to ask 'Did these events really occur?' or 'Did these people really exist?' Biblical stories were not written to satisfy a mind that asks such questions. They were written to express beliefs explaining God's action and how humans responded. Most of us learned and saw expressed in pictorial images, Eve and Adam eating an apple. The story of dam

and Eve never mentions them eating an apple!

There obviously was a time when people became aware that they had acted against the free gift they had been given. There was a time when they grew jealous and then hurt, and killed each other, to get what they wanted. The story of Cain and Abel reflected this. The story tells of Cain being afraid to wander the earth with a mark on his forehead because "other people will kill me". If we read the story literally, there were no other people on the earth at that time! There were people with different coloured skin who spoke different languages. The story of the tower about the tower of Babel explained these realities for the people of that time.

Amazingly, we know from science that the eruption of Mt Toba 74,000 years ago, wiped out nearly all the humans on the planet except perhaps one thousand 'breeding' couples, echoing the story of Noah. It is estimated the eruption ejected 2800 kilometres of magma and spewed thousands of tons of sulphuric acid and sulphur dioxide. Perhaps the story of that eruption had been passed on for



thousands of years and like other cultures of the time, the people of Israel put their interpretation on that event, in the light of the behaviour they saw around them?



It was this interpretation that eventually led them to the belief that God had called them to act in a faithful way, and urged on by their prophets, they believed they had to act with compassion and justice. While it took some time to understand it, they came to recognize that there was an obligation that flowed from being 'chosen'. They were to bring 'light' to the rest of

the world. The God that called them to do this was different from any of the other gods that they or other peoples had known.

Learning from life's experiences



The journey to discover this unique God, to be trusting of God and to be faithful to this God's demands, took a long time, and the Bible is full of stories of failure in faith. Often the Scriptural authors interpreted defeat by enemies as punishment from God for their unfaithfulness. Later they came to see that God acted through all events, and that in defeat and sorrow they sometimes learned their richest lessons, as do we all.



Every primitive culture has sought to address the fundamental questions of life that they have experienced. People of the land will have different interpretations from people 'of the sea'. All of them experience suffering and death and seek to explain it. People live around a natural landscape and seek to explain how it formed. They seek to understand the place of the animals and their relationship with them. They seek to clarify their obligations with one another and towards their neighbours (or enemies!). Whenever people such as the Israelites sought to do this in story form, we must look for the deeper truth they knew.

According to some mathematicians, the ark of Noah would not have been big enough to be a house, so it could not have carried large animals. During the forty days, how did they survive? Sometimes people ask, Who would have cleaned the ark and what did the animals and humans eat? How did they propagate if they were all related? The Hebrews would never have thought it important to answer such questions, because they were story people seeking the deep truths of their existence. They did not dismiss the truth of an event because the facts or details seemed too fantastic. They understood what their stories meant and that is what mattered to them. Children listen to stories in this same way and benefit from a sense of wonder and excitement.

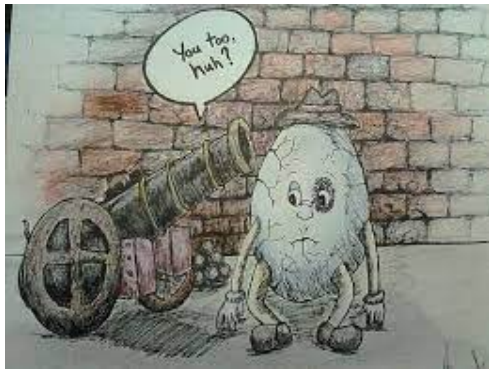


The people of Israel knew that a rainbow often came after rain so they took this to be a sign God had given when the rain and flooding stopped and that such severe flooding would not be repeated. So, what did the story of Noah mean? People had rejected God and God punished them, while rewarding the few who were faithful, allowing them to 'start again'. The sign that they could be confident of God's goodness, was the rainbow. It was a constant reminder that God would never destroy the earth again. They could be confident of this, even if other peoples were not.

The meaning of cartoons and nursery rhymes



We have our own comparison to this kind of literature in nursery rhymes and cartoons. Nursery Rhymes are a particular type of literature recited to children. If we took all the words literally we would cease this practice. Imagine sending a young child off to sleep with the less than soothing words from the rhyme 'Rock a bye baby' which says, "down *will come baby, cradle and all!*" Many of these rhymes originally were political messages, conveyed, like modern day cartoons, in a way that helped avoid charges of libel or treason.



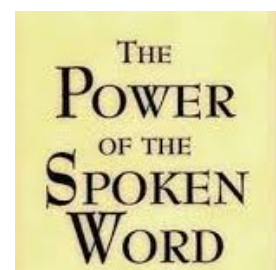
Humpty Dumpty is believed to have been a cannon, used in the Siege of Colchester during the English Civil War ((1642-1649). The cannon was reputed to be indestructible, but when the brick wall supporting it collapsed under enemy fire, the cannon smashed into bits and could not be repaired. Are we better off for knowing these facts? Could we tell those facts to a child and imagine they would be singing about them three hundred and sixty years later? Imagine what the original song must have meant to those who destroyed Humpty Dumpty!

This reminds us that when we read a form of literature that has a unique style, we destroy its true meaning if we take all the words literally, as fundamentalists do. If we do not understand the context in which the original words were written or we fail to appreciate deeper meanings and if we do not know some of the culture and meaning of symbols, words and stories, it is likely that we will misinterpret the message.

The Word

For a Jew, words were so important that they considered once they were spoken, they carried a power. Because of this power (given through the life force of breath, the word(s) could never be taken back. We know that people often say, "I wish I could take back what I said!" It can't be done! Sometimes regretted words cause great destruction or disharmony. A power has gone out and it creates something.

In a culture where arrangements, deals, treaties, promises and trade were conducted orally, the spoken word carried a promise. Truth and honesty were vital. Given this understanding of the power of 'the word', we can appreciate how seriously the people understood God's word when it was spoken.

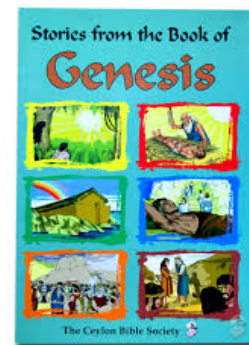


In Genesis 27:30-40, we read the story of how Isaac having given his blessing to his younger son Jacob, could not take it back, even though he had been tricked into giving it by his wife Rebekah. We see other examples like this in Isaiah 55:10-11 and Ezekiel 2:9-3:3.



If the people who wrote the stories and those who later included them in their canon of literature, were concerned with fact-giving they would never have allowed contradictory stories to sit side by side, such as the separate creation stories in the first two chapters of Genesis. The word they were interested in was a living word, that reflected their experience of God. No peoples before them had ever come to such a belief in a God of unity who was both profoundly mysterious yet intensely close and personal. If we understand properly what this literature was seeking to convey, it becomes as pointless to search for Noah's ark as it does to search for the inn where the Good Samaritan visited. The story of Adam (Adamah = of the earth) is the story of every man and woman.

The story is not focused on origins but on every person's existence, their alienation and need for reconciliation. The Cain and Abel story tells of the disharmony in human relationships as the result of a wrong relationship with God. In the twentieth century one hundred million people were killed in wars, so this story of Cain and Abel is still alive for us. It is being relived in Ukraine. Adam's story is our story. The Exodus – the story of release from captivity and finding a new home, is the personal journey of each of us. The events and the lives of the patriarchs are not told like a newspaper account. They are more like the memoirs of a large family with a focus on remembering how God had acted through the generations of this family. The story of Joseph is an epic description of the many and varied events that combined to show how God had worked to look after God's people.



Differences about God in the Bible



The early books of the Bible have to do with the central and most important document of Judaism (the Torah) because it forms the basis for Biblical belief. It provides the founding legal and ethical texts and contains 613 commandments. It was long believed that these first five books of the Bible were the work of a single, author, Moses. For all sorts of reasons that is clearly not the case. What Biblical studies have revealed is that several authors contributed to this work and they brought to it, quite different ideas and experiences.

The most commonly accepted theory highlights that there were four separate sources. While this theory is challenged in some of its detail today, in essence it contains very helpful and scholarly insights.

Many people today regret that the one word 'God' is open to dozens and maybe thousands of different interpretations. Can any two persons, even from within a common tradition be sure that they are talking about the same reality just because they name that reality

• Hebrew Titles of HaShem •

אֱלֹהִים שְׁדַי

EL SHADDAI - GOD ALMIGHTY

'God'? When we read an English translation, the word 'God' is sometimes used in a way that does not allow the reader to

appreciate that 'God' may have been called something different in the original text (e.g. El Shaddai or Elohim or YHWH). Elohim, for example, appears over 2,500 times in the Bible. El Shaddai is often translated as 'Almighty God' (e.g. Exodus 6:3), occurs only seven times but this does not capture its real significance. YHWH occurs 6,807 times.

The **Elohists** tradition was written in the northern kingdom, Israel, and the author calls God, Elohim. The tradition is measured and calls for an exacting moral standard, highlighting ethical issues. It maintains a careful distance between God and humans and has God communicating indirectly, often through angels or dreams (e.g., Genesis 20). It has no primordial history and simply begins with Abraham.



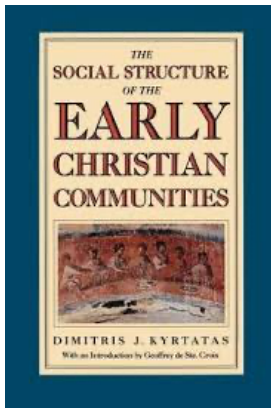
The **Yahwist** material was written in the southern kingdom, Judah, around 1000 BCE, at the beginning of the monarchy (King David). This source called God YHWH and portrays God in human terms interacting directly with people (e.g., Genesis 2:4 - 3:24) but the text reveals a deep sense of the divine.

It is lively and vivid and appreciates urgent human questions. It is made clear that this name should never be written or spoken in its full form.

The **Deuteronomist** (the book of Deuteronomy) is a collection of laws put together late in the monarchy (which ended with the death of Solomon in 928 BCE). It was a basis for religious reform and highlights what is required for fidelity to God.

The **Priestly** source was written during the exile or later and comes from the priests of Jerusalem. Like the Elohists source, it calls God, Elohim, but emphasises rituals and religious purity, and portrays God acting in an orderly, all-powerful way (e.g., Genesis 1:1—2:3). It contains chronicles and genealogy.

Differences about Jesus



At some point, after the exile, the Pentateuch reached its finished form, combining the four sources and including redacted-material that tied it together. Centuries later, the Christian scriptures were gathered together, to tell their story of how YHWH had been revealed through Jesus. The many early Christian communities would have 'looked' very different from one another, perhaps in a way that a Baptist, Anglican, Lutheran and Catholic parish community might look different from each other today. In particular, a Jewish community, such as existed in Jerusalem, would have seemed significantly different from others in Greece.

The gradual breakaway from Jewish synagogue life was forced upon some Christians, because their claims about Jesus were deemed subversive (towards Rome) or incompatible with Jewish belief. Certainly, all of the Christian communities believed that Jesus was the anointed 'One'; the messiah, but it was to be some time, before there would be specific claims of divinity. The first gospel (Mark) did not appear until almost forty years after Jesus' death.

Humour

Q Why wouldn't peanut butter tell you a secret?

A It's afraid you will spread it!

Q What's the difference between a car and a fish?

A You can tune a car but you can't tuna fish.

Q Why did the computer get sick?

A It caught a virus!

Q Why didn't the lamp sink?

A It was too light.

Q What kind of chicken is the funniest?

A A comedi- hen!

Q What's a cats favourite colour?

A Purrr-ple

Q How does a scientist freshen her breath?

A With experi-mints

My train of thought was derailed. There were no survivors.

Every box of raisins is a tragic tale of grapes that could have been wine.

We were told to limit gatherings to eight people without issues. I don't *know* eight people without issues.

Dear paranoid people who check behind their shower curtains for murderers .. if you do find one, what's your plan?

Covid-19 Fact: 87% of gym members don't even know their gym is closed.

I never make the same mistake twice. I do it five or six times, to make sure.

Dr. Oz says rubbing coffee grounds on your naked body will get rid of cellulite. Apparently you can't do this in Starbucks. And now the cops are here.

A woman had identical twins and gave them up for adoption. One went to Egypt and was named Arhmal. The other went to a family in Spain and he was named Juan. Years later, Juan sent a photo of himself to his birth mother. She said to her husband, "I wish I had a photo of Ahmal". Her husband replied, "They are twins, if you've seen Juan, then you've seen Arhmal"

The link for **Mass** for **2nd Sunday of the Lent Year C** will be sent on Saturday.

We remember **Peter Robson** (husband of Maria who used to hand out the newsletters for 9.00am Mass). Maria died in August last year. Peter died suddenly from a Stroke, this week.

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



God bless and have a good weekend

Brian