



1st April, 2022

Greetings,

The newsletter is out a little earlier this week.

Pasta Night

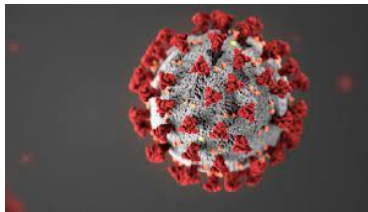
The pasta night is on this Saturday April 2nd at Holy Cross. Please register with Bruno or Mayrose on 0423804555 (today 10am-3pm). You are welcome to book a seat or a table to enjoy a nice meal in a very friendly atmosphere.

Chapel chairs delay



We were very disappointed to be advised that the new chairs, will not be here before June. The reason given is 'the effects of the pandemic'. Once again it is opportune to express thanks for the very generous contributions to purchase these chairs. We apologise that we have to wait longer for them to arrive.

COVID



During the past week, four of our men in St Brigid's community, Marrickville have contracted COVID. That provides a real challenge for a large community. Likewise in St Paul's, Saigon, most of the men have had COVID over recent weeks. May you be safe.

Preparing for Easter

As in previous years, we will celebrate **Holy Thursday** at Holy Cross at **7.30pm**.

On Good Friday we encourage groups to share '**Stations of the Cross**' at a time that is convenient. Scripts will be available. There will be one group beginning at the first station (just past the community carport) at **10.00am**.

The Solemn Commemoration of the Passion will be at **3.00pm**. If the weather is suitable, this will be held as it was last year, 'among the trees'.

There will be two liturgies on **Easter Sunday**

6.00am in the St Gabriel Shrine followed by breakfast in the dining room (Donation for breakfast requested please)

10.00am in the chapel

Quotes

“The grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, someone to love and something to hope for”. (*George Washington Burnap*)

“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity” (*Albert Einstein*)

God and Religion 7

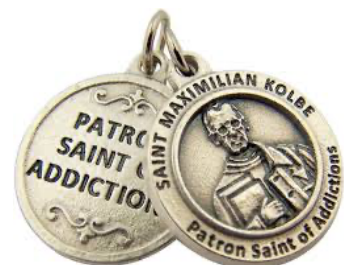


Our Church as we have known it, is dying. To put this into some perspective (or hope), the forty thousand churches in France were reduced to one hundred and fifty following the French revolution! Dying always leads to transformation. Something new will emerge as it did in France. Our younger Western generation is largely religionless. Their desire for community is strong but their sense of the sacred is dull and the values are largely secular. They live in a technological age that promises many of the things that religion either once promised or has failed to satisfy. Religious language and belief systems do not resonate with their worldview, which seeks pluralism and inclusion and has an expectation of instant and pain free ‘happiness’.



What we know about the universe today was not known to previous generations. To be a part of the future Church we must have relevant, not ‘outdated’ images of God and our teachings and practices have to reflect what we know and what we yearn for. We must remain mindful that we cannot understand or describe God. History proves that it has been difficult for single deity religions to achieve their kind of belief, other than over a long process.

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 gods were accessible. The designation of the gods was 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). St Fiacre is the patron of gardeners!



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not



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 lightening, 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 Gods'.



As humans moved from hunter-gatherer societies into the agricultural age, fertility was regarded as a mysterious and highly valued power. Domesticating and controlling crops and animals, as well as storing food and water became crucial given the large numbers of people who required food and water.

Humans began to create figures of pregnant women and many developed a Mother Goddess cult. Sun worshipping also developed as did the idea of offering the 'first fruits' of the harvest, during this time so that the gods who provided the fertility would remain pleased. We know such practice was common even in Jesus time, because women were required to visit the temple and offer a gift to God, for the safe delivery of their child. While fertility gods and sky gods, have receded in the minds of modern people, there are traces of both still evident today, even among Christian believers! Just watch where people look when they pray!

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.

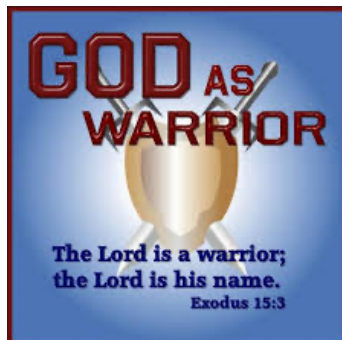
It seems many early religious experiences were 'spirit' experiences such as animism which is still strong in some present-day cultures. To express this belief, the spirits and energies of nature were commonly personified as animals.



Archaeological evidence suggests that where fertility was appreciated and celebrated in Neolithic or New Stone Age village life between 5,000 and 10,000 years ago, expressions of the earth as Mother were present, extending the Mother Goddess image. Then, as civilizations developed and other lands and their peoples were conquered, the warrior image became more popular for depicting the divine.

As various cultures learned how to store grain and other food, and the channel water for their use, they became conscious of the need to protect their supplies from others keen to plunder their wealth. Tribal lords and elders emerged as protectors, and just as warring tribes fought for dominance, there was a sense that the gods were engaged

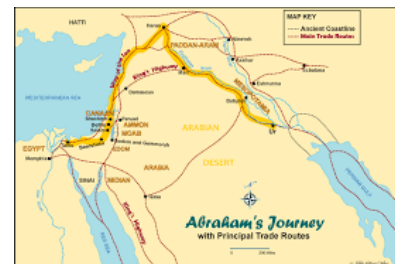
in similar battles. A hierarchy of gods emerged with different gods being credited with their particular responsibilities and at times they were thought to fight each other for supremacy.



Gods were called upon to overcome enemies and to protect the weak and vulnerable. They were recognised as being angry, vengeful and destructive, urged on by the people who called on them. The best God was the god who could protect his (normally a warrior was a male) people. As kingdoms arose, cultures included references to their god as King, Lord and Almighty, to denote God. These are still the most commonly used terms in Christian prayer today despite the millennia of change that occurred and the fact that many modern Christian cultures have never known a king.

The god of Israel reflected the surrounding cultures. Most of their stories and customs were adapted from or were reactions to Babylon, Egypt, Assyria and Caanan. Belief in one god was a long struggle as the various Hebrew (Old) Testament books reveal. It could be worth briefly repeating this development.

Abraham arrived in Caanan around 1850BCE from Ur which had a temple dedicated to Nanna, the moon god. When he arrived in Caanan, Abraham made an offering to the local god (probably El), not Nanna. Abraham was introduced to El Shaddei: the god of the mountain (later translated 'Almighty'). Abraham, Isaac & Jacob probably worshipped several Gods but held 'El' as the superior God. It was four hundred years before Moses met YHWH! (Exodus 6:3)



If the Israelites had followed one god faithfully, there would have been no need for the first commandment! When Moses (@ 1250) was receiving the commandments, his priest-brother Aaron, was helping to build a golden calf to Baal!

El appeared in human form to Abraham. They meet face-to-face and El offers him friendly advice. They share a meal and even have an argument. All of that, is very human. Later, Abraham's grandson Jacob wrestles with Elohim (his only god) and like Abraham, sees him face to face.



When Moses encountered YHWH @ 1290BCE he is told he cannot see God's face and remain alive, nor can he utter God's name. . YHWH means 'the one who is' or 'the one who bring being into being'). It is suggested that originally YHWH was considered one of the seventy sons of El, and was

allotted to Israel (Deut 32:8–9). Certainly, YHWH was originally a storm and warrior

god and in particular references, YHWH destroys Israel's enemies and shows no compassion. Humans, animals and the land are often destroyed.

After the liberation from slavery in Egypt there was a turning point. The people were free but they were called on to commit (covenant) to 'their God' who would protect them – "I will be your god and you will be my people"). A long period of struggle followed. When Elijah appeared (9th century) worship to Baal (a fertility god and a son of El) was common. Baal was called Lord.

Thoughts of the Axial Age

L. Humankind's place in creation opened question of whether they were its lords or stewards.

1. Special relationship with God: Jews began to use the idea of divine love to express this relationship.
2. Jesus seized upon the identification of God and love, it was emotionally satisfying, love is a universal emotion, it freed people from the problems of everyday life. This made Christianity become universally accepted, eventually.


The Axial Age (700-250 BCE) is the period when, roughly at the same time around most of the inhabited world, the great intellectual, philosophical, and religious systems that came to shape subsequent human society and culture emerged.

Greek philosophers, Indian metaphysicians, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Daoism and the

Hebrew Prophets emerged during that time. No doubt trading networks, large cities and increased warfare enabled the spread of new ideas, but all of these traditions were marked by compassion and social justice.

The Hebrew Prophets came to view the god of their nation, Israel, as the God who created heaven and earth and who shaped the destiny of all people. These prophets explained how the destruction of the northern kingdom by Assyria and the deportation of the Southern kingdom to Babylon could be a way of God was using this destruction to achieve 'his purpose'. In this way, God could be experienced in defeat, not power and God is a god of all peoples. The prophets urged people to see that their external actions were not enough. They had to display compassion. It is interesting that author Karen Armstrong has written, "*The religion of compassion is only followed by a minority; most religious people are content with decorous worship in a synagogue, church, temple or mosque.*"

Axial Age: Palestine



- In Palestine, the prophets Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Deutero-Isaiah made their appearance.
- Birth of Monotheism in the Middle East.

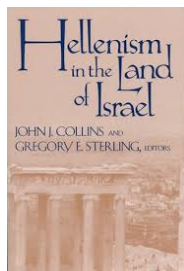
While in exile, the people of Israel were faced with radical questions. How could they maintain their religious tradition without a temple? The prophets urged them to see that God does not live in temples! Further, God does not live only in their land

(Israel) or their city (Jerusalem). They were being called to be sign, a light to other nations. Many did not remain faithful and did not return to Israel.

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By the time of the Babylonian exile (6th century BCE) the name YHWH began to be used less. This seems partly because Judaism was no longer a local religion and because of the belief that the name YHWH was too sacred to be spoken. The more common name became 'Elohim' and in the synagogue 'Adonai' (My Lord).

During COVID many people had a similar experience to those in exile. How can I practice my religion without a temple (a parish church and Sunday Mass)? We might ask ourselves if we would have stayed in Babylon or returned to Israel? During COVID, the 'temple' was brought to the home for many people through recorded Masses. For many people this has become a vital link. For others, it is not enough if there is not a tangible community.



Babylon was overtaken by Persia 435 BCE and Greece ruled Israel (Alexander the Great from 332 BCE). During this period Israel became heavily influenced by Greek culture & philosophy. They had a trinity of gods were Zeus - ruler of the visible world; Hades - ruler of the unseen world and Poseidon - ruler of the waters. They believed that a Council of 12 senior gods met above Mt Olympus. There were many other gods and spirits with human like qualities.

There was a strong emphasis on prayer and sacrifice for favours. Ethics and morality were set aside for philosophy but this concerned Greek (and Roman) 'religious' thinkers. Greek religion strongly influenced early Christianity. A part of that influence was the 'special favour' gods, which as mentioned above, is reflected in what is



referred to as the 'cult of the saints' who were petitioned for aid in times of need, presented as models of proper behaviour and whose relics were sought after for cures or healing.

We can identify four major types of gods influenced from various cultures and present in some form in Israel and in Christianity.

Sky gods have not disappeared (old man with a beard in heaven)

Fertility gods have not disappeared (we pray for rain)

Warrior gods have not disappeared (Crusades, Jihad)

Special favour gods have not disappeared (veneration of saints)

We can explore some images of God throughout Christianity, next week.

To be continued

Humour

Reaching the end of a job interview, the Human Resources Officer asked a young engineer just out of Melbourne University, " And what starting salary are you looking for?" The young engineer replied, " In the region of \$125,000 a year, depending on the benefits package."

The interviewer inquired, " Well, what would you say to a package of five-weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary, and a company car leased every two years, say, a red Corvette?

"The young man sat up straight away and said Wow! Are you kidding?" The interviewer replied, " Yeah, but you started it."

"Lemon Pickers Needed" - ad in the Gayndah Times newspaper.

Ms. Sally Mulligan recently arrived in Launceston, Tasmania, read it, and decided to apply for one of the jobs that many Tasmanians are not willing to do. She submitted her application for a job as a Lemon Fruit picker but seemed far too qualified for the job. She has a liberal arts degree from the University of Tasmania (Sandy Bay) , and a master's degree from Monash University (Melbourne). For a number of years, she had worked as a social worker, and also as a school teacher. The farm owner studied her application, frowned, and said, "I see that you are well educated, and have an impressive resume. However, I have to ask you, have you had any actual experience in picking lemons?" "Well, as a matter of fact, I have," she said... "I've been divorced three times, owned two Holdens, voted twice for the Queensland premier and once for the leader of the Opposition."

Sally started work yesterday.

The cleverness of important people

"Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life,"
(Brooke Shields, for USA anti-smoking campaign)

"I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body,"
(Winston Bennett, University of Kentucky basketball forward)

"Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country," (Mayor Marion Barry, Washington DC)

"That lowdown scoundrel deserves to be kicked to death by a jackass, and I'm just the one to do it," (A Texan congressional candidate)

Joe made a typo on a tombstone. It was a grave mistake!

Berry punny

Q How are false teeth like stars? A They both come out at night.
Q Why do bowling pins have a hard life? A They're always getting knocked down.
Q What do you call a famous turtle? A A shell-ebrity!
Q Why was the students report card wet? A It was below C level.
Q What's worse than finding a worm in your apple? A Finding half a worm.
Q What do cats were to bed? A Paw-jamas!
Q Why are penguins socially awkward?
A Because they don't know how to break the ice.

Looking for Alan....or was that Steve?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXqkNF8fgs8>

Random comments

Do not vaccinate health care workers first. If it fails, we're all in trouble. Vaccinate the politicians first. If we lose a few of them, it won't matter as much.

In the 1980's I fell off my bike and skinned my knee. I'm telling you this now because we didn't have social media then.

Some people seem to have aged like fine wine. I aged like milk ... I got sour and chunky.

Vegetarians live up to nine years longer than meat-eaters. Nine horrible, worthless, bacon-less years.

Someone posted that they had just made synonym buns. I replied, "You mean just like the ones that grammar used to make?" I am now blocked

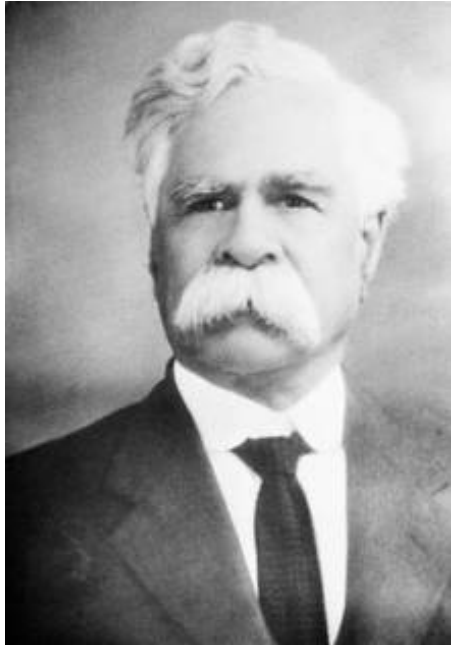


Jim Yeo Today, April 1st, Jim Yeo will be accept a Papal Award for his long-term commitment as parishioner and volunteer of St Brigid's parish Marrickville. Jim has been involved in a variety of ways. Some years ago St Brigid's church was awarded the best garden for the municipality. Jim was the gardener! He has also been a long term volunteer for the Blessed Sacrament community in Haymarket. Jim is member of the Passionist Companions Leadership Group and he is Province archivist. Jim is a man of deep faith, down to earth spirituality and the most engaging and welcoming of people. He was nominated for tis award by Erick when he parish priest. Congratulations Jim.

Watching music

Normally you listen to a composer like Beethoven. Here you can watch as well as listen. This is incredibly creative: Für Elise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1b4q160deU>



On 29th March 1941, iconic Aboriginal leader William Cooper died aged 80.

Born in Yorta-Yorta Country at the junction of the Murray and Goulburn Rivers in 1861, William Cooper did not receive any formal schooling and began his working life as a shearer and handyman. He became an active unionist and soon developed a high level of literacy to complement his fine oratorical and advocacy skills

However it was not until he finally retired at age 72 in 1933, and had the support of an age pension, that he was able to devote all his considerable energies to pursuing justice and equality for Aboriginal people. He became Honorary Secretary of the Australian Aborigines League and in 1937 led a delegation to the Prime Minister, seeking federal control of Aboriginal Affairs. He also organised a petition to King George VI seeking constitutional constituency for Aboriginal people, but the Prime Minister declined to forward the petition to the King.

His advocacy was however not limited to Aboriginal people. In 1938 he led a march from his home in the western suburbs of Melbourne to the German Consulate in Collins Street, protesting about the Nazi persecution of Jews. He also protested about this to the League of Nations and was the only individual in the world who did so.

This unique advocacy earned him the undying respect of Jewish people across the globe, so after the State of Israel was established in 1948, a new university was named after him. About fifty years later, when Julia Gillard was Prime Minister of Australia, she visited Israel and was proudly told of the William Cooper University, that had been named after Australia's most famous civil rights leader. Gillard was baffled because, like many Australians. She had never heard his name before.

Moving the posts

Last Friday, John Hogan and Des Rigby arrived ready to assist with tree mulching which was cancelled owing to our aborist suffering an eye injury. John and Des joined forces for a few hours with Erick to spread mulch on the front gardens.

They also assisted 'A' Team rep, John Stretch to move the post (see the picture) which was embedded very deeply, so that access is easier for people walking along this section from the carpark to the chapel.

Moving the posts



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With some help from our regular garden coordinator, Peter Norman and assisted by 'A' Team rep, John Stretch they moved the deeply post (see the picture) so that access is easier for people walking along this section from the carpark to the chapel.

Below is an action photo of the men at work (Erick had gone to get the trailer)

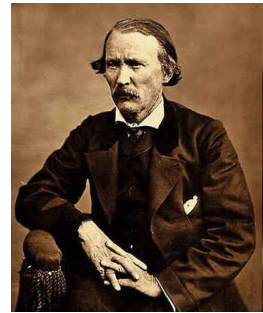


Do you know who this is?

He was illiterate, married three times, had ten children and died in 1868.

There was a TV series named after him?

That should be enough to put into Google and get an answer.



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

Waiting

Tony Mazzei is awaiting surgery but it been delayed until May because his specialist has COVID.

John Lazzari's surgery has also been postponed until April 19th because his operating specialist was a close contact of his wife who contracted COVID.

Please remember **James Zammit** (Maree Bartoli's dad) who's first anniversary is Friday April 1st, **Anne McCrohan** whose seventh anniversary is April 8th and **Lucy Varasso** whose anniversary is this weekend.

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



God bless and have a good weekend.

Brian