

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 131



19th August, 2022

Greetings,

Vietnam



Last Sunday, Tri spoke at 10.00am Mass about the growing number of Passionist vocations in Vietnam and the increasing costs associated with this growth. He asked for financial assistance if anyone could find themselves able to do so. We have seen a number of Vietnamese candidates come to Melbourne in order to learn English at our Passionist learning centre (ELSPM). This coming Saturday Joseph Quyen and Peter Thong will be ordained deacons in Saigon. You will remember them being at Holy Cross for their English studies.

If you wish to make a donation via direct transfer you can do so at:

Bank: Commonwealth Bank Australia

Account Name: Trustees of the Passionist Fathers

BSB: 062784

Account Number: 100002347

Reference: Please use your name followed by the word "Vietnam"

Thank you.

Risk Management session: Saturday September 3rd



Saturday Sept 3rd: 10.45am-12.00pm **or**

Wed Sept 7th: 10.00am-11.15am

Annual in-service is compulsory for active members of the Passionist Family. Hopefully one of these session times suits. More information next week.

National Science week

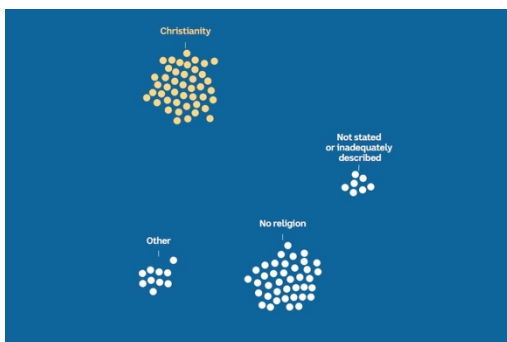
This year's theme is 'Glass: More than meets the Eye'

https://www.scienceweek.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/science-week_glass_teacher_resource_book-2022.pdf

The recent census shows Australians are becoming less religious but why have we chosen to live without God? (Stan Grant, July 2nd, 2022)

The 2021 census revealed that just 44 per cent of Australians practise Christianity. So Friedrich Nietzsche was right, God is dead and we have killed him. That's what the latest census tells us: the number of faithless is [closing in on](#) the number of faithful.

In my lifetime I have seen Australia change from being an almost completely Christian country to one where now just 44 per cent practise Christianity. This is no surprise. It mirrors a widespread shift away from religion by citizens of the Western world, most of whom were traditionally Christian, alongside increases in religions like Hinduism which has grown more than 55 per cent in Australia since 2016 as our communities diversify.



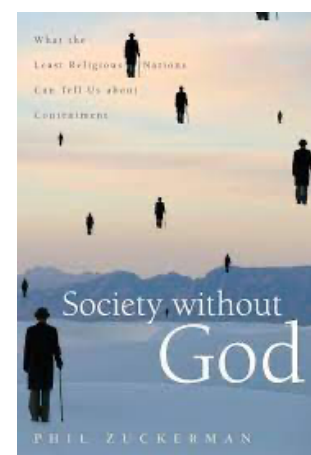
The numbers reporting no religion is also increasing and the impact is rapidly gathering pace. The census showed the percentage of Australians who practise Christianity has continued to fall.

The death of God

Philosopher Charles Taylor, in his book 'A Secular Age', warned: "Modern civilisation cannot but bring about a "death of God." Taylor said we have seen the rise of an "exclusive humanism". We have swapped God, he wrote, for a "culture of authenticity, or expressive individualism, in which people are encouraged to find their own way, discover their own fulfilment, "do their own thing".

Scholar of religion and politics Jocelyn Cesari has traced the evolution of secular modernity in her book, 'We God's People'. We have now reached a point in Western Europe, she says, where "worldly" things are all there is. There is a division between the immanent and the transcendent – between what is Caesar's and what is God's. The immanent is the realm of politics.

Believers, she says, "are expected to keep the transcendent to themselves". Cesari says the nation is now "the superior collective identification" overtaking "religious allegiances."



The Enlightenment elevated reason above faith

This is where the West was bound to end up. The tension between secularism and faith emerged out of the Thirty Years War – the wars of religion – that laid waste to Europe between 1618 and 1648. It's estimated as many as 8 million people were killed. It led to the birth of the modern state and coincided with an explosion of new ideas that we call the Age of Reason or The Enlightenment.

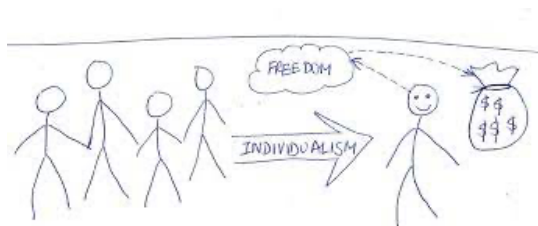
Across Europe reason was elevated above faith. People were encouraged to break with tradition. Thinkers like Rene Descartes – the father of modern philosophy – told us "I think therefore I am." The mysteries of the universe were no longer the province of God.

Immanuel Kant summed up the Enlightenment with three words: dare to know.

While historically the West was founded on Christianity, the modern West was shaped by the break with God. People were sovereign. Liberalism prized the individual above all. Sociologist Phillip Rieff said we swapped a sacred order for a social order. That accelerated in the 20th century with social revolutions upending society and demolishing old ethical and moral boundaries.



French writer Olivier Roy says "secularisation has given way to large scale de-Christianisation." There is now, he says, "a serious crisis surrounding European identity and the place of religion in the public sphere". The Church has found itself out of step with changing societal values on issues like divorce, abortion or same sex marriage. Roy says: "Little by little, the very definitions of sexual difference, family, reproduction and parenthood have been redrawn." The scandal of child sex abuse in the church has further stripped religion of its moral authority.



Personal freedom, Roy writes, "prevails over all transcendent standards." Society is now ordered on "new values...founded on individualism, freedom and the valorisation of desire."

Does tradition still have a role?

The West is a place beyond history. The past is another country. Tradition is seen as stifling, old fashioned. No doubt some traditions are well rid of. Which woman or person of colour would want to return to the white, male, dominated 1950s? But what are we left with? Is there still a role for tradition?

Historian Tim Stanley thinks so. He says the "war on tradition" has "translated into a soulless consumerism, and, while some flourished, many felt alienated and unfulfilled." In his new book *Whatever Happened to Tradition*, Stanley fears our "liberal order is out of ideas, that's partly because we have deprived ourselves of valuable experience".

For some, the response to this soulless void has been a retreat into fundamentalism. We see this in radical Islamic groups like Al Qaeda or Islamic State which represent a rejection of Western modernity. Similarly right-wing or white-supremacist groups reach back to "tradition" as an attempt to recover some lost glory.



Stanley warns against this fundamentalism, yet he wonders what the secular West offers in response. Across the West, he says, "there is a dearth of purpose and spirit: we can't agree on who we are or what we are about, or even of these big existential questions matter."



In the West, religious traditions have come to be seen as stifling.

A faith without religion

Yet if people have turned away from religion it does not mean they are without faith. Atheism in its own way can become an article of faith. The new radical atheists quote the likes of scientist Richard

Dawkins with the certainty of scripture. They proselytise with evangelical vigour.

In the West, identity is the new faith. We are free to re-imagine and reinvent ourselves, untethered from the past; from family or faith.

Beyond the West, religion is booming



It is a peculiarly Western phenomenon. Elsewhere religion is booming. The heart of Christianity has shifted from Europe to Africa and Latin America. Officially atheist, China has experienced what's been called a Christian revival. It is estimated that by 2030 China may have the world's largest

Christian population. And despite what the census tells us is happening here, Christianity is not dying.

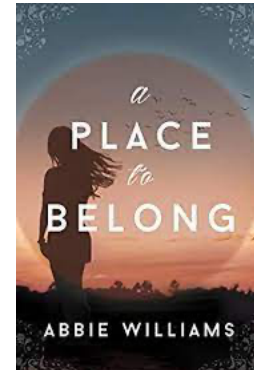
Pew Research shows that in the century between 1910 and 2010, the number of Christians grew from 600,000,000 to more than 2,000,000,000. Pew says that by 2060 Christianity will remain the world's largest religion with more than three billion followers.

Islam is the world's fastest growing religion driven significantly by a higher fertility rate. By the end of this century it is thought there will be more Muslims than Christians in the world. This is a reminder – if one is needed — that the West is not the world. Indeed in many parts of the world the turn to religion is connected with a rejection of colonialism and Western values.



Sudipta Kaviraj, Columbia University Professor of Indian History, asks: "Why should the history of Europe happen elsewhere?" In Bengal, he says, Hindus in the 19th century "rejected an unconditional embrace of the package of moral values of Western modernity". Modern individualism, he says, was seen as "impoverishing the character and content of collective life". In modern India, he writes, even the secular "need and desire transcendence as intensely as the devout."

Kaviraj cautions against seeing the world through eyes of the West, not to speak, he says, "the facts of one history through the language of another." Yes, the West is more secular, less religious, and hyper-individualistic but that is not how most people live. Western ideas of progress are founded on burying the past, killing God, and making the human divine. It can be liberating and holds the promise of freedom. But it doesn't speak to all. It doesn't even speak to all in the West who replace old faiths with new faith, who feel alienated and alone and long for somewhere to belong.



As Charles Taylor sees it, the journey of the secular West is from an enchanted age, to an age of disenchantment. If as Nietzsche said, "God is dead", we in the West might ask what comes next?

Video: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=PI0e2r2PlqM&t=215s>

This video is nine years old, and very moving. One of the three members of the group has changed but they still perform as 'Forte'.

Province history 4: Growth and Expansion (1937-1960) Part 3:

USA called into assist.....

A call went out from Australia for assistance in missions (and some teaching) a little before 1940. It is not clear whether this was a call specifically to the USA or Congregation wide? Stephen Lafferty was Provincial from 1933-1939 and Raymund Ouvrier was Provincial from 1939-1945. It seems certain that the call came from Stephen Lafferty since we know that four men from the USA came for a brief time.



Callistus Connelly was living in Glen Osmond in 1940-1941 and engaged in parish missions and retreats. After returning to the USA he became a military chaplain and was awarded a medal for bravery. He was also a founding missionary in Jamaica in 1955. Eight years later in 1963 without any warning, while saying Mass, Callistus lost his ability to speak. He remained incapacitated for the rest of his life although he did regather enough voice to celebrate a private Mass. He died in 1980 aged 69



Fr Callistus Connelly with a retreat group in Glen Osmond attended by Jeff Foale's father in 1940, who was so impressed as to recommend the Passionists to Jeff.

Brian Murphy was living in Marrickville from 1938-1941 at age 40, and was mainly engaged in preaching missions. After he returned to the USA in 1941, he became an Air Force chaplain and served in Europe and the South Pacific and was awarded a bronze star for distinguished service. After the war he returned to preaching missions and retreats. He died in 1967 aged 65.

Stephen Sweeney arrived in Australia 1940 and while based in Goulburn and Marrickville he worked as a missionary for 18 months. And returned to this ministry when he returned to the USA. He published various writings including 'Whisperings to God'. Stephen died in 1971 aged 82.



Egbert Gossart arrived in Australia in 1941. He was based in Marrickville and engaged as a missionary. The war situation cut his stay short and he returned to the USA where he ministered both as a missionary and a parish priest. Egbert died in 1985 aged 76.

Thousands of American troops began arriving in Australia from early 1942. By 1943, there were 250,000 Americans stationed in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. The pre-arrival of these troops no doubt hastened their return home. In 1944 there were 54 Passionists in the USA serving as military chaplains, a ministry firmly in the tradition of St Paul of the Cross.

In 1956 pastoral care of the city parish of St Joseph's, Hobart was granted to the Passionists. Two priests and a Brother formed the first residential community in 1957. St Joseph's, built of local sandstone in 1841, is the oldest Catholic church in Hobart.



Pioneer missionary Fr Therry was the first parish priest. The 60 feet high tower was finished in 1843. The pews are New Zealand kauri pine made in 1891 and the bell in the tower is by Mears of Whitechapel, London, 1859.

The creation of small rooms in the residence made it possible for the Passionists to conduct retreats for a small number of men from 1958. The facilities did not allow the same opportunity for women.

In 1958 the house in Leopold (founded in 1946) was sold and a retreat community (St Gabriel's) was opened in Highton, Geelong in 1958. Extensions to the building, and a large chapel made it possible to hold men's retreats. At this time, permission for the Passionists to have such a presence in Melbourne continued to be denied by Archbishop Mannix. This resulted in very few Melbourne vocations during the 46 years he was Archbishop of Melbourne.

The establishment of communities in Oxley, Hobart and Geelong together with the mission in New Guinea meant that the Province quite suddenly experienced a manpower shortage together with maintaining a small community with some members who were missionaries, and therefore away for periods of time.

Fortunately five Irish Passionists came to work in the Province between 1954 and 1958, and that helped a great deal

In 1957 Fr Marcellus Claeys from Belgium came to teach philosophy and remained in the Province until his death in 1990. In 1960, Fr Greg Manly came from Ireland to teach scripture and theology and he too stayed in the Province until his death in 2010.

In 1960 the general status of the houses was declared as Canonical Retreats: Marrickville, Goulburn and Adelaide. Quasi Retreats: St Ives, Hobart and Geelong. Residences: Oxley and St Kilda.



The blue tower on Marrickville church was added in 1955. The new Retreat house in Glen Osmond dreamed of for so long by Alphonsus Foley, was opened in 1958, the same year that the Passionists accepted pastoral of care of Glen Osmond parish. This expansion was rapid, and indications of a vocational surge were well founded. Statistics at December 1955, about the juniorate (St Ives) as it had become known, indicate that 121 students including 5 brother candidates, had been admitted since it opened in 1937.

Thirty-nine left the juniorate and forty-five were professed. Of these, twenty-four were ordained, three of whom transferred to become diocesan priests. Thirty-four others left after profession. Because of the lack of opportunity to minister in Melbourne, there were few vocations from Victoria in that period.

In 1960 St Joseph's Province established a community in Hamilton, New Zealand, and soon clerical candidates came to Australia to undertake their formation. Already, Gerard Glynn had been professed in 1954. The growing number of postulants led to an extension wing being added to the novitiate in Goulburn in 1961. In the same year the Passionists in New Guinea moved their temporary base, and were finally given their own mission in Vanimo in the Sepik district. It was to be fourteen years, in 1975 before Papua was joined with New Guinea



Growth was at an all time high. At St Ives, a gymnasium was added in 1963 and a new chapel was opened in 1964. Throughout this period, the mood of expansion and an increased numbers of priests, brothers and students led to bold ventures. One important move was to send men overseas to study theology and scripture and to attract men from other Provinces with these particular qualifications. Sustaining a viable community life and observance was not always easy in communities of

three and four men in the immediate years after expansion. Since they had few sources of income, they had frequent absences while continuing their missionary endeavours.

Humour

1. "I am not sure Dad whether I should specialise in ears o teeth" a young man said. His Dad replied, "Choose the teeth so, there 32 of them, but only 2 ears".

2. An angry diner said, "Waiter , you are not fit to serve a pig". The waiter calmly replied, "I am doing my best sir".

3. A rich uncle said to his niece, "Remember dear, when I die, everything I have will be yours". She replied, "Thank you so much Uncle, Do have some more of this delicious rich pudding".

4. An old friend was excited to see Henry again. "Please Henry, come and dine with me tomorrow evening". "Oh" said Henry, "That's very nice, but I've arranged to see Hamlet tomorrow". The friend replied, "That's fine. Bring him with you".

5. An angry subscriber called a local newspaper. "In your issue yesterday, you said I was a lunatic. I want a retraction". The editor replied, "We don't make retractions but I will advise the readers that you have recovered your sanity".

6. A young ventriloquist was touring Norway and he put on a performance in a small fishing town. With his dummy on his knee, he started going through his usual blonde jokes. Suddenly, a blonde woman in the fourth row stood on her chair and started shouting, *"I've heard enough of your stupid blonde jokes. What makes you think you can stereotype Norwegian blonde women that way? What does the colour of a woman's hair have to do with her worth as a human being? It's people like you who keep women like me from being respected at work and in the community, and from reaching our full potential as people. It's people like you that make others think that all blondes are dumb! You and your kind continue to perpetuate discrimination against not only blondes, but women in general, pathetically all in the name of humour!"*

The embarrassed ventriloquist began to apologise, and the blonde interrupted him yelling, "You stay out of this! I'm talking to that little guy on your lap."

Happy Birthday to Pat Bond who was 87 on Tuesday, and to Marissa Micelotta who is 60 today!

Prayers

We remember the deceased whose anniversaries occur in the coming week. Fr **Mark Nugent CP** (Aug 22nd) **Phyllis Dixon** (Aug 24th), **Tony Vander Haar** and **Maria Robson** (Aug 27th)

Bro Jerome's sister **Mary Dunn** began chemotherapy this week.

**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

We also pray for all of our Holy Cross family who are unwell especially John Gill, Maeve Reardon, Maree Bartoli, Paul Darbyshire, Jim Monaghan John Reardon, Barry Wong, Helen McLean, Gerry Bond, Peter Owen, Graham Hille, Dominic Isgro, Errol Lovett, Angelo Vigilante, Lesley Yang, Peter DeMarzi, Pam Gartland, Anne Jenkins, Pam Grehan, Mary Corkoren, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Peter McNamara, Patricia Keeghan, Michael Doyle, Kate Dunn, Mary Coburn, Mary Hackett, Ray Sanchez CP and those who seek or need our prayers.

The **Mass link** will be sent by Chris on Saturday afternoon.

Have a good weekend

Brian