

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 135



17th September, 2022

Greetings,

John Gill



John was diagnosed with bowel cancer and immediately hospitalised. Seven weeks later he passed away quietly at Caritas Christi.

His funeral will be at Holy Cross on Tuesday September 20th at 10.00am and he will be buried at Eltham cemetery.

Arrival

We are really delighted to see Pastor again. He arrived in time to celebrate the feast of Holy Cross with us.

News report

Kevvie has been on the oval enjoying the sunshine this week.

An interesting story



The man in the centre of the above photo is embracing his parents. None of them were originally Catholic. Soon after his ordination, he was able to baptise his parents.

Queen Elizabeth

Since her death, there has been tremendous recognition given and celebrated for Queen Elizabeth 11's devotion and service over 70 years. We can join in admiring and giving thanks for her example, including her ability to adjust during an era of incredible change, and for living her commitment right through to her final hours.

Mayrose – holidays

Mayrose is taking a well-earned and welcomed holiday until October 5th. Rose will be acting in her place three days each week. Rose works two days a week at YTU, so she will not be as available as Mayrose. Messages can be left on the HCC phone answering service on 98466014.

Feast of Holy Cross

We shared a lovely evening on Wednesday> mass was followed by an excellent supper. Karen CP made the effort to come all the way from Elwood.



Another resident



On Tuesday, Holy Cross will acquire another Vietnamese student. Phi is in the final year of his theological studies. He has excellent English but he will spend some weeks in 'English language for Academic Purposes (EAP) studies to qualify him to complete his studies at YTU during 2023. Phi is a very bright character and will be a true asset to our community. (See page 12)

Chapter 6. PAPUA NEW GUINEA Final Part (4)

The Passionist formation programme in PNG has been through several changes and many challenges. It began by taking candidates who had not completed Year 12, and different strategies were taken to provide this necessary level of education. The loss of candidates has been a constant experience. The first priest ordained for Vanimo diocese was living back in his village within a year.



The first Passionist professions were in 1984. By 1993, five of the nine temporary professed had returned home. This has been a repeating reality not only for the Passionists, but other Congregations as well.

It was determined that our candidates should study at Bomana seminary in Port Moresby. Many members of the Congregation 'Handmaids of the Lord' had worked in PNG. In 1987 these Sisters offered the Passionists a house rent free, in exchange for chaplaincy services. The community accepted this generous arrangement and lived at Nazareth house, which enabled the students to attend classes at Bomana seminary. Even with this financial saving, formation costs constituted 50% of the Vicariate's budget. Mission appeals in the USA greatly subsidised the mission and there was a great partnership with religious sisters and lay volunteers.

A significant percentage of the Mission's funds was being spent on the formation of students, and by 1991, Kevin Hennessy who was Regional Vicar of the mission, proposed that the students move from the seminary in Port Moresby to a different formation system in Abepura in Irian Jaya. Some reports of the PNG seminary at that time were not good, whereas the formation programme in Abepura catered for an initial programme for seminarians and lay leaders (male and female).



The first four years are for all students and they acquire something akin to a BA in pastoral studies. Most then return to their diocese since they are not proceeding with studies for priesthood. Only the last two years were devoted exclusively to those seeking to be ordained priests. There were many advantages in this style of formation. The only real difficulty for our men was that the classes were given in Bahasa Indonesian.



Peter Gaughan had four years in Indonesia involved in the formation of Passionists students. He is a brilliant linguist and

he was charged with devising a language programme for the first group to go there in 1992, two priests (Joachim Rego and Graham Orwin) who were to go to Abepura as lecturers, and two students.

All passed the necessary exams with flying colours. In December that year, a rental property was offered close to the seminary by the Bishop of Japayapura. The move required the Passionists to provide a minimum of two seminary lecturers and when that became impossible in 1994, Joachim and the students returned to Port Moresby.

I visited STFT Abepura with Kevin Hennessy in 1992. At the time there were 114 students studying in preparation for pastoral ministry. The emphasis was heavily pastoral. STFT is more than a seminary.

Their aim is to educate the students (male and female) to be able to work pastorally with the local people, and for that reason the faculty are pleased that the students are keen to be involved in the life of the ordinary people nearby.



Unfortunately ill-health forced Graham Orwin to resign from STFT and the Passionists were unable to maintain the required commitment to have two lecturers at STFT. There was no option but to return in 1994 to Port Moresby.



In 1995 the Passionists were offered the large parish of Boroko which allowed the students to have on-site pastoral training. It has become a vibrant parish community

Since that time, the two communities have continued, although our presence in Vanimo has been greatly reduced. We had some Indonesian Passionists minister in Vanimo, and sadly two of those died from heart failure and cancer, despite being young. Fr Valensius has served in Vanimo for twenty years and is Vicar General of the diocese. The presence of Passionist sisters has been a blessing for our ministry there.

The hoped-for vocations that could have allowed us a better presence in Vanimo has not materialised, despite a number of men beginning the journey with us. Religious life is foreign to Melanesian culture.

We searching for what kind of Passionist life might be possible in PNG. Our presence in Port Moresby is still reliant on two Australian ex-pats at this time who have both served in PNG in the past and are now in their 70's.



We hope the story of our presence in PNG can continue to build on the selfless work in harsh and primitive conditions of those many men and women who have served there and the many lay volunteers who have contributed in a variety of ways to the mission of the Congregation since 1955.

Papua New

Guinea is referred to as the 'Land of the Unexpected'. It is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. There are over 800 active languages with different cultures and customs within each region. It is estimated that 80% of the 8 million population live in customary communities and almost half of the nation still lives without electricity and running water. It is thought that there are some communities in remote jungle areas that have not yet been 'discovered' by the wider world. On the other hand, Port Moresby is quickly becoming a modern city of 400,000 people.



Facts?

The "sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick" is believed to be the toughest tongue twister in the English language.

"The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" uses every letter in the English language.

Sudan (255) has more pyramids than any country in the world

Interesting? Blood types

Australia's blood types are becoming more positive, and that might change how some emergency transfusions are done

By science reporter [Belinda Smith](#)

More Australians have a positive blood type today compared to the mid-90's, according to new figures. Like eye colour, your blood type is inherited, and it refers to the presence or absence of certain molecules, called antigens, scattered over the surface of your red blood cells. When we see blood types written as, say, "O positive" or "AB negative", this provides information about two different blood group systems.



The A, B, O and AB part is dictated by what your parents pass on: your mother and your father each gave you an A, B or O version of the gene. A and B genes are dominant, while O is recessive. So if you get an A from your mother and an O from your father, your blood type is A. If you get an A and a B, your blood type is AB, and you have both A and B

antigens on your red blood cells. Type O blood has no A or B antigens. The positive or negative bit is shorthand for the presence or absence of an antigen called Rhesus D.

This is inherited from your parents. Each provides either a positive or negative version of the gene that decides whether the Rhesus D antigen is present on your red blood cells. If your blood type is negative, you have no Rhesus D antigens. Different combinations of the ABO and Rhesus D antigens gives eight main blood types. (Freepik: ibrandify) Different populations have different proportions of blood types, and as people move around, so too do their blood type genes.

For Australia, the number of people born overseas has increased steadily since the turn of the millennium, and is now almost 30%. Most are English immigrants, but those from China, India and South-East Asia have steadily increased over the past decade. "When you're getting these changes in our community, those are going to be reflected in blood types as well," Dr Hirani said. She has analysed data from more than 1.3 million people. "We've had such an influx of people from all around the world, but only one in five of our blood donors represents those communities."

A more diverse donor pool is important: not just to contribute to the Australian blood supply, but also to help people with rare blood types both here and overseas. Erica Wood, a transfusion medicine specialist and head of the Transfusion Research Unit at Monash University, says the new stats highlight ongoing challenges in O negative blood supply. "As Australia's population changes, the country's pool of blood donors should be representative of this -- but it has a way to go", Dr Hirani said.

Pope Francis fears self-righteous perfect Christians



A few months ago Pope Francis told a crowd at the Vatican that "the Lord does not expect us to be "perfect Christians," and he (the pope) is afraid when he sees righteous and self-assured Christians.

Francis said, “that the Lord would prefer us to seek him, to call on him or even, like Thomas, to protest, bringing him our needs and our unbelief.”

Thomas “represents all of us,” Francis says. “We too struggle at times like that disciple: How can we believe that Jesus is risen, that he accompanies us and is the Lord of our life without having seen him, without having touched him? “How can one believe in this? Why does the Lord not give us some clearer sign of his presence and love? Some sign that I can see better. “Here, we too are like Thomas, with the same doubts, the same reasoning.

“But we do not need to be ashamed of this. By telling us the story of Thomas, in fact, the Gospel tells us that the Lord is not looking for perfect Christians.

Attitudes of righteousness and self-assurance aren’t the way to go either, Francis warns. “I tell you: I am afraid when I see a Christian, some associations of Christians who believe themselves to be perfect.

“The Lord is not looking for perfect Christians; the Lord is not looking for Christians who never doubt and always flaunt a steadfast faith. When a Christian is like that, something isn’t right,” he says.

“No, the adventure of faith, as for Thomas, consists of lights and shadows. Otherwise, what kind of faith would that be? It knows times of comfort, zeal and enthusiasm, but also of weariness, confusion, doubt and darkness.



Crises are not sins, they are part of the journey, we should not fear them, Francis explained. He said in many cases they make us humble because they strip us of the idea that we are better than others.

“Crises help us to recognise that we are needy: they rekindle the need for God and thus enable us to return to the Lord, to touch his wounds, to experience his love anew as if it were the first time.”

Jubilee Icon



This Sunday the Passionist Jubilee icon will be in the chapel at Holy Cross. It has been travelling around the world and is now in our Province. There is a lot of symbolism in an icon.



In the centre frame **St Paul of the Cross** has taken St John's place, to signify his charism and invitation (symbolised by his left hand) for others to come to the cross as companions. Here life is to be found and God's overwhelming love experienced and to share this message with others. His right hand touches his heart where the Passionist sign is. This heart has become a living memorial of the Passion.

Mary and Paul are both standing on (new) green vegetation, a sign of a new community that will bring life to others. Above them are two lamenting angels. Below, the cross penetrates into the world of evil. Above the cross is the Passionist sign surrounded by God's hand of blessing together with the symbols of creation and ongoing life - the sun and moon.



On the top right hand side is a portrait of **St Gabriel Possenti** who died aged 24, before ordination. He is the inspiration for our own Italian sisters and brothers from the Abruzzi region who offer their faith, friendship and vitality, to us at Holy Cross. The skull is a symbol of

mortality. Gabriel is the patron saint of youth and of Passionist students.



Below Gabriel is a portrait of [Blessed Dominic Barberi](#), and Italian from Viterbo who realised Paul of the Cross' dream of Passionists preaching in England. Dominic won over many people by his simplicity and humility as well as his willingness to accept ridicule because he was an outsider. George Spencer CP was a Great-great-great uncle of Princess Diana and a great uncle of Winston Churchill. George was an Anglican priest and became a Passionist because of Dominic and took the name Ignatius. He has been declared 'Venerable' by Pope Francis. Famed Cardinal John Henry Newman became a Catholic because of Dominic's witness, learning and inspiration.



On the top left is another Italian [St Gemma Galgani](#) who was a lay Passionist, who died as age 25, similar to Gabriel, from TB. Although she never met Gabriel, she described him and his Passionist habit to her future director after a dream/vision she had and was inspired to live her life faithfully by his example. She has suffered the death of both parents and a brother while a teenager and suffered from extremely poor health. Gemma had the stigmata, was under the spiritual direction of a Passionist. She is buried in the grounds of the Passionist nuns in Lucca.



Below Gemma in the icon is [Blessed Isidore De Loor](#) who grew up on a farm in Belgium and became a Passionist Brother. He was referred to as 'Brother of the Will of God' from the time, four years after he entered that he developed cancer in his righteye and had to have it removed. During the Great war three years later he was the official porter (answering the front door) and he became renowned for his compassion and understanding of people. In 1916 cancer had taken its toll. Isidore was often seen with his head in his hands, barely able to endure the pain. He died that year at the age of 35 and he has shown the power of a 'hidden' life. He is the patron saint of cancer. Luke Bulley took Isidore as his devotional title at the time of his profession.

The icon will be passed over to Endeavour Hills early next week and will then travel around our Province before it is returned to Rome.

Humour



1. An Irish woman visited her husband in prison. Before leaving, she told the correction officer, "You shouldn't make my husband work like that. He's exhausted!"

The officer laughed and said, "are you kidding? He just eats and sleeps and stays in his cell".

The wife replied: "rubbish, he just told me he's been digging a tunnel for months!"

2. A girl wanted a pet spider for her birthday. So we went to the pet store and picked one out and the owner said, "that'll be \$200 please"

The girl's father said "\$200!! It'll be cheaper getting one off the web".

3. A student asked her teacher Student: "Teacher, would you punish me for something I didn't do? The teacher replied, "Of course not". "That's good" said the student, because I didn't do my homework!"

4. My brother is so good at sleeping he can do it with his eyes closed.

5. Joe told a chemistry joke, there was no reaction.

6. A man got hit in the head with a can of Coke. Thank goodness it was a soft drink.

7. What's the most terrifying word in nuclear physics? A. Oops!

8. Don't you hate it when someone answers their own questions? I do.

Congratulations

Grace and Joe Ko celebrate their 42nd wedding anniversary on September 18th

Video

This is a lovely video of connection between human and 'cat' and cat kids

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=GTsKh2sMLRo>

A 13 year old sings for her Dad

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

Prayers

We remember those deceased, especially John Gill. We also remember Abraham Lim (16th Sept) Michelle Reardon (21st Sept) Kevin Lee (23rd Sept) Margaret Bick (24th Sept) whose anniversaries are in the coming week.

Fr Jim Elmore CP is a member of our St Brigid's, Marrickville community. Jim has been undergoing chemotherapy. He has lost a lot of weight and was hospitalised on Wednesday at the RPA in Sydney. Upon admission he was discovered to have COVID so he will be isolated for two weeks and not allowed any visitors. Please remember Jim in your prayers



We pray for all of our Holy Cross family who are unwell especially Maree Bartoli, Carole Stretch, Maeve Reardon, Paul Darbyshire, Jim Monaghan, Mary Dunn, Barry Wong, John Reardon, Helen McLean, Gerry Bond, Peter Owen, Graham Hille, Dominic Isgro, Errol Lovett, Angelo Vigilante, Norm Heyhorn, Chris O'Toole, Pam Gartland, Lesley Yang, Peter DeMarzi, Anne Jenkins, Mary Corkoren, Greg Agosta Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Peter McNamara, Patricia Keeghan, Michael Doyle, Mary Coburn, Mary Hackett, Margaret

Wright, Kate Dunn,

Ray Sanchez CP and those who seek or need our prayers.

Among those we are remembering are Chris O'Toole, older brother of Tim O'Toole CP, Erroll Lovett who is not well enough to drive to Holy Cross now, and the wives of two of our former 'A' Team workers (Mary Hackett and Margaret Wright). Both are in advanced years and suffering continual pain.

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

Have a good weekend

Brian

This photo was taken at Holy Cross when phi tried on Luke's YTU jacket. You can see by the length, that it was just slightly too large for Phi!!!!

