

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 137



29th September, 2022

Greetings,



This Sunday, Mass will be at 10.00am as usual, but you'll miss out on one hour's sleep to get here.

You have to move clocks forward one hour.

Grand Final

Michael Doyle was all dressed up, as were other family members, in expectation of a great game and a Swans victory, but the best excitement was pre-game, unfortunately. Still it's great to see such enthusiasm and hope being expressed.

Rumours that **Kevin Hennessy** has entered a retirement home are not correct. He was just identifying with the Geelong players who had been prematurely referred to as 'old'. You can be sure that he will have a Premiership poster attached to his door for the next 20 years!



Carmel Cole, has been a Passionist Companion and with her deceased husband Don, an official benefactor of the Congregation. Carmel went close to Connie Cloran at Marrickville for continues years of playing the organ at Mass each Sunday. Carmel played at the Fort, Oxley, for nearly 60 years. Carmel's health declined recently and she passed away quietly early on Thursday morning. She and Don made an enormous contribution to the Passionists in Brisbane. May she rest in Peace.

Jim Elmore CP

Jim has extended his thanks to all members of the Passionist family for their prayers and their support. He is most grateful. Although he has been in isolation because of COVID, some members of his family received permission to visit recently. Having ended compulsory isolation Jim is in the process of being transferred to a more general ward at RPA. His condition remains serious.

Retreat



The Passionist Companions from Holy Cross and Endeavour Hills will participate in a retreat at Holy Cross, from 10.00am until 4.30pm followed by Mass and an early dinner, on Saturday October 22nd. An invitation is extended to anyone who is interested to join us. The theme of the retreat will be “The Passion and Laudato Si’. To register, please contact the Office at

Holy Cross: 98466014

The retreat will begin with a cuppa from 9.15am, ready for a start at 10.00am and will be led by Sr Brigid and myself. There will be a simple soup and bread lunch, and a shared BYO BBQ starting around 5.45pm.

Institute



To celebrate the Centenary of Holy Spirit Province, there will be a weekend Passionist Institute (Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st) in late November. This will take place across all four countries of the Province (Vietnam, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Australia).

The session times in Melbourne will be Saturday 9.45am-1.10pm and on Sunday, 1.30pm-5.30pm. On Saturday there will be two main 35 minute presentations. The first by Jeff Foale who has been living with the Passionists for 76 of the 100 years we have been a Province. Jeff will share some of his insights and learnings from the history of the Province, from his perspective and experience. Erick Niyiragira, from a much younger perspective will share what he sees as the way forward in the light of our history.

On Sunday, our brothers in Vietnam will share what they see as the future of Vietnam in the light of our Province history and what they can learn from the history as they continue the journey in their 35 minute session and Tom McDonough will share what he sees as the signs of ‘the journeying continuing’ from his perspective as Provincial and in the light of the four yearly Provincial Chapter next July.

There will time for small group discussions in person and online, and rituals and times of prayer. Please mark these dates in your diary.

New Zealand

On Friday I am travelling to New Zealand to visit several regions and reconnect with key personnel involved in the Passionist family Group Movement. I will be away until October 14th.

Young and old reflect on life as Catholic priests in 2022

(Belinda Sanders- with some editing)

Becoming a Catholic priest would not rate as a palatable career choice for most young men these days. But as Australia's youngest priest, 24-year-old Father Nathan Webb is challenging the stereotype about the priesthood. "If I go to schools and ask what a priest is, they answer, 'It's an old man in a white dress who reads out of a book on Sundays.'"



Nathan Webb is one of 12 children who grew up in a Catholic family in Toowoomba. After years of dedicated study, he was ordained in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba earlier this year. He admits the job so far has been a bit of a roller-coaster. "It's strange to say, but I really like funerals," he says seriously. "I'm

happy to hold death and be honest about it. Baptisms are nice as well, but I've done everything from kicking a soccer ball with school children to sitting with a family at the end of their loved one's life. "It's an adventure."

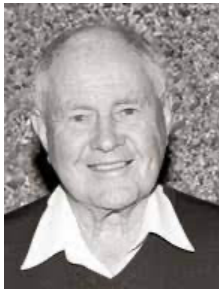
Australia, like other countries, has a critical shortage of priests, so Father Nathan believes his youth is a strength in a job dominated by older men. "I'm just a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed 24-year-old, what would I know about life?" he says. "I've spent years studying to give myself the best shot at ministry, but I am not going to claim to have all the answers."



Serving God seems to be in the blood of this strict Catholic family, with one of his 11 siblings a nun and another a Capuchin monk. Father Nathan remembers first thinking about the priesthood when he was just five years old, but it was a decision that was cemented many years later. "When I hit my teens, I thought Mum

and Dad want me to do this so maybe I don't because who wants to do what their parents think they should do?" he says. "I went to TAFE and did gardening. I loved it. I can walk around and say weird facts. "I went to uni and did music and then English Literature and Business Law, but in all that I thought this is not quite where I am meant to be."

Still, Father Nathan knows the sacrifices that come with choosing a life of celibacy. "I didn't enter it naively. I think that is part of it to offer something and rely on God," he says. "I also give other people knowledge that there is hope and peace in life without a significant other. I'm still OK without a partner. "There is a difference between being alone and being lonely."



While Father Nathan's journey is in its infancy, senior Toowoomba priest Hal Ranger has witnessed 64 years of change within the Roman Catholic Church. Father Hal Ranger has been a Catholic priest for 64 years. He may not be Australia's oldest Catholic priest but, at 87, he has his own ideas about where the church fits into the modern world. At St Patrick's Cathedral, where he is Associate Pastor, Father Hal leads mass, or "meetings of the team" as he calls it. "The game is out there in the world," he said. "You get the team together to kind of re-align yourself with the spirit of the team, listen to the word of God and talk about it a bit. "Then you go out the door to live that out, in the nitty-gritty of the real world."



Father Hal puts his reluctance to retire down to a meeting many years ago with Belgian Cardinal Joseph Carijn, who was 88 when he said to him, "If you've got the health and the energy and a bit of adrenaline, then why not?". Like Father Nathan, the seeds of Father Hal's faith were planted as a young child. He remembers his mother taking a job at Toowoomba's Willowburn Mental Asylum to work with "the broken, isolated people the rest of the world didn't want anything to do with". Father Hal says being there for the "battling people looking for meaning in their life" became a theme in his life, but also pitted him against the Catholic Church's rigid traditions.

"There were times I seriously thought about how I can really live meaningfully and peacefully and with energy in the system, so I rebelled a bit against it," he says. "But I was never tempted to throw the whole baby out with the bath water."



Father Hal believes the biggest barrier between the church and the people it wants to connect with are the churches themselves. "This will come across as a bit of a heresy, but I think the building that we're sitting in and other church buildings and the institution, that the church has kind of got itself locked into, is almost foreign to the gospel," he said. "I really don't think Jesus, if he were here today, would be building churches. "If there is value in gathering big groups of people, then use the town hall. Once you build something like this, I think it gives a message of being cut off from the rest of the world."

Despite his frustrations sometimes, Father Hal is adamant the Catholic Church is "more flexible than probably 20 per cent of Catholics would like it to be". "They're resistant to that because it's exciting, but it's also scary to move outside clear parameters and treat every person and every situation on its merits," he says. "But like all freedom, it's worth having."

7. Province History: Experimentation & Adjustment (1980-1997) Part 3

In August 1968, the encyclical 'Humane Vitae' was issued. This proved a hallmark event not only in the life of the Church, but in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and within our Province. Bitter debate broke out when Holy Cross based Passionist theologian Fr Nicholas (Nick) Crotty wrote two public front-page newspaper articles for 'The Australian' explaining why he could not accept the encyclical,



The reputation of the Passionists suffered a blow among the clergy, and many of our own older men who had fought so hard to build a good reputation after finally being allowed into Melbourne Archdiocese were unforgiving, and believed 'nothing good could come out of Templestowe'. This attitude remained for several years, but we who were at Holy Cross considered ourselves blessed to have such a great faculty.

Following Nick Crotty's unfortunate resignation, the Rector of the Templestowe community announced his departure from the priesthood. Soon afterwards the



Rector of the Geelong community made a similar announcement. As many as eleven students left the community that year and there was a sense of chaos. The assistant student director, twenty-eight year old Tony Egar was given responsibility for the students and leadership of the community, and his contribution at such a challenging time was extraordinary.

It was determined that it was a financial necessity for the students to engage in in paid employment, the equivalent of one day each week and during holiday time. This was seen to have the double advantage of providing much needed income while giving future ministers a first-hand knowledge of people and the world in which they live and work. Each student was also involved in a weekly apostolate.



Over the next few years large classes of students continued to arrive, but there was a significant departure rate. Some newly ordained priests also left. In 1971 the novitiate was transferred from Goulburn to Glen Osmond. Three years later, and only thirteen years after a wing was added to the Mary's Mount Goulburn building, the property was sold.

By the beginning of the 1970's, adult faith education and youth retreat ministry had become popular. When the juniorate was closed at St Ives in 1972, new students went directly to Templestowe. By now those who had been studying with religious of other Orders such as the MSC's, Carmelites and Redemptorists, joined the Yarra Theological Union. For the first time students could earn a degree in Theology.





A significant number of candidates came from New South Wales during this era and it was decided in 1968 to field a Rugby team in the Victorian competition. The team included players from the MSC's. Their sloping oval was the 'Brothers' home ground, where instead of a post-match beer, a cup of tea was provided for players and companions from both teams! The Brothers wore a black and red jersey and the team was fortunate to add Franciscan students.

The Brothers created a significant source of unity during those difficult years, with several non-players providing keen support.

Owing to the inability of the English Passionists to send extra men, care for New Zealand was transferred to the Australian Province in 1966. Three New Zealanders had been professed the previous year. By the end of 1966 the Province had communities in Brisbane, Sydney (Marrickville and St Ives), Victoria (Templestowe and Geelong), Hobart, Adelaide, New Zealand and the New Guinea mission.

The community at St Ives became increasingly involved in youth 'camps' and adult education ministries. Parish missions had declined. Some priests did not want 'old style' missions of the post-Vatican 2 era. Others did not know what they wanted. Within a few years, as requests became fewer, many older men withdrew from this ministry and joined a growing number of men who were finding their own ministry.

In 1972, the Passionists were invited to supply at the very small church at Terrey Hills, Sydney. Before long, this parish church attracted many people who had completed adult faith education programmes at St Ives and were looking for a 'different' parish. Although it was several years before it became a parish, Terrey Hills immediately began attracting large numbers of people and in 1973 under the leadership of Peter McGrath, the first 'Family Group' began at Terrey Hills.



From sharing meals in silence, attending choir several times a day, wearing the religious habit, taking discipline and practising various mortifications and an array of other practices, suddenly there was a different way to live religious life. For some this brought uncertainty and confusion.



In 1973, the Province acquired two new properties. The first was a holiday house at Dee Why in Sydney which was funded by the sale of another property donated to the Province. The second property was at Mt Mercer near Geelong. This property allowed for an extension to the St Gabriel's cattle agistment programme coordinated by Bro Mark Wells, which had been created to

fund student formation.

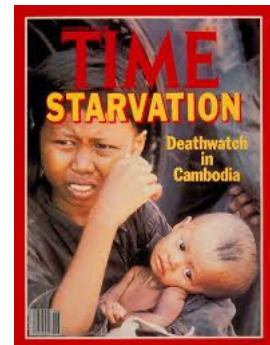
St Ives underwent changes in 1977 with the transfer of the Provincial administration and four personnel from Marrickville, and the conversion of the student dormitory to the novitiate. At the same time a demountable house serving as a pastoral centre was added as a parish facility in Glen Osmond in 1977.

The Provincial administration decided to provide special accommodation for the older men who might want or need to retire. This was achieved in the form of an extension added to the Marrickville building in 1977.



In 1979 in response to the Cambodian refugee crisis, the Glen Osmond Community asked Jeff Foale if they could welcome refugees into the retreat house. Jeff had been looking for just such an opening, waiting for others to make the first move. He agreed to organize it. The community sent a delegation, consisting of Marcellus Claeys and Jeff Foale, to Sydney to meet the Provincial Council, which enthusiastically supported the initiative.

Jeff very quickly organized what became known as the Monastery Refugee Project. By the end in 1984 the Glen Osmond Community had welcomed over eleven hundred and fifty refugees from Cambodia and helped them settle. Served by dozens of volunteers these people were provided with a positive start for their new life in Australia. For Jeff, this enterprise was a small part of a broad involvement in all aspects of advocacy for refugees and helping them to resettle. His involvement spanned the whole of Australia and reached out to refugee camps and to the United Nations in Geneva.



PARISH MISSION!

As the decade drew to a close, a new type of parish mission began to emerge with an emphasis on faith education rather than 'popular devotion' and the abandonment of 'fire and brimstone sermons. Overhead projectors were used to assist in learning along with role-plays and 'new' church music and a booklet was printed and published with summary of the mission sessions. This ministry was to expand through the 1980's.

Humour

1. A man suffered a serious heart attack while shopping in a store. The store clerk called 000 when he saw him collapse to the floor. The paramedics rushed the man to the nearest hospital where he had emergency open heart bypass surgery.

He awakened from the surgery to find himself in the care of nuns at the Catholic Hospital. One nun was seated next to his bed holding a clipboard loaded with several forms, and a pen. She asked him how he was going to pay for his treatment.

"Do you have health insurance?" she asked. He replied in a raspy voice, "No health insurance." The nun asked, "Do you have money in the bank?" He replied, "No money in the bank." Do you have a relative who could help you with the payments?" asked the nun. He said, "I only have a spinster sister, and she is a nun."

The nun became agitated and said firmly, "Nuns are not spinsters! Nuns are married to God." The patient replied, "That's perfect. Send the bill to my brother-in-law."

2. Fr Bill died and was waiting at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him was a man dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket and jeans. St Peter addressed this cool guy. "Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to Heaven?"

The guy replied, "I'm John, a retired airline pilot from Melbourne. St Peter consulted his list, smiled and said to the pilot, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom". The pilot went through the pearly gates into Heaven, with his robe and staff.

"Next", St Peter said. "I'm Fr John, parish priest of St Veronica's for the past 43 years". St Peter consulted his list and said, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom" Fr John said, ".Just a minute. That man in front of me was a pilot and he got a silken robe and golden staff and I only got cotton and wood. How could this be?"

"Up here- we go by results", St Peter said. "Down there, when you preached - people slept. When he flew, people prayed".

My children love my mother and I tell my children: "That is not the same woman I grew up with, that is an old woman trying to get into heaven now."

For your information, I would like to ask a question - Samuel Goldwyn.

3. A man with a bucket of live fish was approached by a National Parkes ranger who asked the man, "May I see your fishing license please?"

"No sir, replied the man, I don't need a license, as these are my pet fish. Whenever I go for a walk I take them with to the lake and let them swim there a little, then I whistle for them to come back inside the bucket and we go home".

"Do you think that I'm an idiot, says the ranger?"

"No, of course not. I'm telling you, these are my pet fish" said the man.

"Ok then prove it. Let's go to the lake now and see if you are telling the truth", said the ranger. So they went to the lake and the man released the fish into the lake.

After a couple of moments the ranger said, "Come on then whistle!"

"Why would I whistle, said the man?"

"To recall the fish", said the ranger.

"What fish?", said the man.

when you don't want to be
recognized so you go indognito



Birthdays



Jerome celebrated his 83rd birthday on Tuesday, one day late, because he was in hospital overnight on his birthday.

He was fit enough to receive the customary birthday gift (a shirt) that for a change, fits him! Jerome is looking forward to spending far more time in the garden as the weather improves.



Thang (one of the three Vietnamese postulants) will celebrate his 28th birthday on Tuesday, the feast of St Francis. Thang is from Vinh Phuc Province in Northern Vietnam, 55 kilometres north-west of Hanoi. Thang has a degree in Informatics which is described as studying the intersection of people, information, and technology systems, harnessing the power and possibility of digital technology to transform data and information into knowledge that people use every day.

Prayers

We remember those recently deceased Carmel Cole, Brett Daly and John Gill, and those whose anniversaries are in the coming week.

We have been praying for Mary Corkoren who has now contracted shingles which is very painful. She must isolate for a month. "How much can one person take?" is what some of us feel about Mary, God bless her." There are a few people in particular who prefer not to be on the 'sick list', but for whom the Passionist community remembers in prayer.



We remember all of our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially Jim Elmore CP, Jim Molan, Maree Bartoli, Maeve and John Reardon, Paul Darbyshire, Jim Monaghan, Mary Dunn, Barry Wong, Helen McLean, Peter Owen, Denise Glasgow, Graham Hille, Dominic Isgro, Errol Lovett, Angelo Vigilante, Norm Heyhorn, Chris O'Toole, Gerry Bond, 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, Marg Casey, Jim Elmore, 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