

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 145



25th November, 2022

Greetings,

Advent

This Sunday we begin a new liturgical year (Year A). The weekly gospel reading will be from Matthew. Advent is a season of joy, during which we are called to prepare our hearts as if for the arrival of Jesus into our lives for the first time.

The advent wreath helps us to focus on 'staying awake' through the deepening of four virtues over the four weeks of Advent – hope, peace, joy and love. In the first week we focus on HOPE. What we hope for is not what we wish for. We might wish for the weather to be good or for COVID infections to cease. Hope is different. It is an expectation built on trust. This is why people can still hope when all hope appears to be gone. St Paul wrote from his experience, *"suffering creates perseverance, perseverance creates character and character creates hope"*. (Romans 5:3-5)

No doubt you have heard the story of the boy who had a reputation for always being hopeful. His parents tested him one Christmas. They took him to an area of the barn piled to the ceiling with horse manure. The boy yelled in delight and began digging out the manure with his bare hands. 'What are you're doing?' his father asked. The boy replied, 'With all this manure, there's got to be a pony in here somewhere!'"

What does God hope for us? That we can live life to the full, and despite whatever obstacles may come our way, that we be beacons of hope for others. Can we have the same hope for ourselves as God has for us?

Spiritual Leadership



Last Monday, Erick graduated from the one-year Spiritual Leadership programme conducted by 'Heart of Life'. Erick took up this programme when he was transferred early this year, from the busy role of parish priest at St Brigid's Marrickville, to formator of our postulants at Holy Cross.

Displaying his versatility, Erick is competing in the 'Run for the Young' charity raiser marathon this Sunday. The run follows the Lilydale to Warburton rail trail.

John Qi



John was born in northern China in 1989. He has one younger sister and his parents conduct a furniture and decorations shop. After leaving school John undertook six years seminary formation but realised he wanted to live in a community. He had never heard of the Passionists but a friend introduced him and he was able to have a 'Come and See' experience. The Passionists in China belong to the 'Korean' Province and he was advised that he would need to learn Korean, and undertake his novitiate there as a solo novice. He was not keen on this and was unsure how to proceed when a new Provincial advised him that he could join the Passionist novitiate in Adelaide, Australia.

John arrived in Melbourne in February 2019 and undertook a year of English language studies at YTU. He then completed his twelve month novitiate and was professed at Holy Cross in September 2020. Because he had already completed the necessary theological studies, John has been engaged in a Masters degree in theology which he has just completed. He has not yet learned of the results of his third subject, but he has scored a High Distinction in the other two courses. From learning English in 2019 to securing HD's in post graduate studies in 2022, is pretty amazing!

John will leave Holy Cross this Sunday and travel to Korea where he will spend 3-4 months before returning to a Passionist community in China, where he can catch up with John Lin and become involved in pastoral activities. The Holy Cross community is very fond of John and appreciative of his generosity, dedication, skills and faith. He has displayed a deep commitment to his vocation and been a great contributor to community life. One example of this is the excellent Power Point presentations he has regularly prepared for Sunday Mass. He acquired a licence this year thanks to generous help from Peter Norman and Joe Senzo, and typically, he has been most generous in carrying out many tasks for others that require a vehicle.

We wish John well and send him home with our fond blessings.

Come Away Day



Our final Come Away Day this year at Holy Cross will be held on **Wednesday 30th November**. The theme of the day is "**Welcoming the light.**" This is a great way to get into the spirit of the Advent season. To notice afresh the people and places where we gave or received light this year in all sorts of surprising ways. All are welcome. Just come as you are. Cost is \$25.00 or a donation. For further details contact Frank Burke 0407998781 or

burke.frank942@yahoo.com.au

A humbler Church (by Robert Mickens)



Most people around the world, including most Catholics, probably don't know that Pope Francis made a trip September to the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan in Central Asia. He was there for a religion summit alongside more than 80 other faith leaders representing the various strains of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Shintoism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism.

The Jesuit pope's visit may very well be remembered many years from now as one of the more significant of his pontificate, no matter how Catholicism develops or changes. Francis has been helping his Church become much more welcoming and inclusive, less judgmental and doctrinaire, and more accepting, respectful and neighbourly towards people of other faiths, without trying to convert them.



If the Church continues evolving in this way as a humbler, less-sectarian community of believers over the coming decades, then his Kazakhstan trip will be seen as having played a supporting role in that effort. But if his eventual successor as Bishop of Rome decides to halt the "ecclesiastical perestroika" Francis has set in motion and is able to successfully reverse directions, the 2022 papal visit to Kazakhstan will be remembered for something else — the time when a pope signalled that Catholicism was just one more among the world's many other religions.



Bishop Schneider, who is close to the Priestly Society of Pius X (Lefebvrist) and has said that certain texts from the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) are erroneous, was horrified that Pope Francis participated in the VII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Nur-Sultan. He said the pope risked confusing people, leading them to think that the Catholic Church belongs to "a supermarket of religions" where "everyone is there and you can choose what you want". One of my colleagues has assured me that Bishop Schneider is a "very holy man", although it's not clear how he deduced this. Certainly, the bishop demonstrates outward signs of piety and religiosity. And his devotion to liturgical ritualism is well-known, especially among his fellow adherents of the Old Latin Mass.

We must presume that Schneider and those Catholics who share his views are acting in good faith when they seek to protect the Church and its doctrines. But they do so by enforcing rules, rigid liturgical formulas and purity codes. Their type of Church is exclusionary, judgmental and sectarian. They sincerely believe Catholicism is the only true religion and, thus, it has no need of dialogue with other faiths, the false religions.

Pope Francis, however, disagrees. And he said so while in Kazakhstan. "We also need others, all others: our Christian sisters and brothers of other confessions, those who hold other religious beliefs than our own, all men and women of goodwill," the pope said during a meeting with the members of the country's tiny Catholic community — including Bishop Schneider. "May we realize, in a spirit of humility, that only together, in dialogue and mutual acceptance, can we truly achieve something good for the benefit of all," Francis said. "Without dialogue there is ignorance or war"

All men and women of good will are bound by the task of pursuing peace.

"The pope said it's important for people of different faiths to "talk a little and get to know one another" better, pointing out that "so many times these misunderstood 'religious' wars" we've seen throughout history were the result of people not knowing each other well enough. "The path of interreligious dialogue is a shared path to peace and for peace; as such, it is necessary and irrevocable,"



WE ARE ONE HUMAN FAMILY

"The bottom line, for Francis, is that differences — even differences of religious belief — do not change the fact that we belong to one human family; that we are all brothers and sisters who are children of the same Creator-God. This is the

message he has been preaching since the beginning of his pontificate in 2013. And ever since the coronavirus pandemic broke out he's been doubling down on that message by pointing out that we share a common fate or destiny — that is, we are all in the same boat.



His two encyclicals -- *Laudato si'* in 2015 and *Fratelli tutti* in 2020 — spell this out beautifully, demonstrating how this is not some New Age spiritual gobbledygook, but is actually rooted in the scriptures and the perennial tradition. Fraternal encounter and dialogue: the only path in these dark times.

He concluded his address, "May we firmly maintain our own identities, open to the courage of otherness and to fraternal encounter," Francis said. "Only in this way, along this path, and in these dark times in which we live, will we be able to radiate the light of our Creator."

PROVINCE HISTORY: 11. VIETNAM (Part 2)

In March 2014, Tom McDonough, the Provincial, wrote to the PASPAC leaders. He referred to a recent letter from the General, Fr Joachim regarding PASPAC solidarity with the Vietnamese Mission, and invited dialogue about how we might give expression to our solidarity with that Mission, through governance and canonical support, personnel and finances. Tom named the fears, concerns and accusations that he had heard about.



Tom wrote, "We know the next 10 years are crucial to shaping the future of a Passionist presence in our Province. The key premise to our discerning **is that** given we will be so dependent on our sisters and brothers in Asia Pacific, how can we in the coming ten years contribute to our configuration?"



"We do not have young religious, but we do have long experience, formation resources, and developed ministries, trained religious, financial resources. We have wise and older religious in whom the Passionist spirit has grown and matured, men who have so much to offer young developing Provinces. We also have our particular Holy Spirit way of living the Passionist Charism summed up in "The Passionist Heart", the vision statement of our Province, alongside the Constitutions.

Our attitude is very far from "we have it all, know it all and can do it all better than you".

Tom listed some reasons why we wanted to contribute to the Vietnam mission. The presence and contribution of Jeff Foale; the strong presence of Vietnamese in our parishes and his own experience in Vietnam back in 2004; the experience of the international novitiate and the bonds already made with those Vietnamese candidates; Fr Chris Monaghan's semester of teaching in Saigon; Fr Peter Gardiner's immersion experiences for college students in Vietnam as well as genuine concern to help Vietnam become a Vicariate.



At the PASPAC meeting in South Korea seven months later, in October 2014, the PASPAC Executive Council agreed to formally advise the Superior General to ask the Province of

the Holy Spirit (SPIR) to assume responsibility for the Vietnam Mission and affirmed that the Configuration would continue to act in solidarity to support the Mission and its future development.

This request was confirmed by the General Council shortly afterwards. The communication from Rome stated: *“In the late 1700s, the country that is today Vietnam was divided into two kingdoms: the North, with its capital Hanoi, and the South, with its capital in Hue. Advisers to the young king of the south decreed that Christians would be persecuted.*



So many Christians in the south fled to the LaVang forest. Each day they gathered under a tree to pray the Rosary in honour of the Blessed Mother. One day Mary, surrounded by two angels and bearing the Child Jesus in her arms, appeared to them for the first time, assuring them that their prayers would be heard and promising them her protection and relief from their afflictions. Other apparitions followed”.

**REQUEST
APPROVED**

“The Superior General, with Consent of his Council, approves the request from the Executive Committee of the Configuration of PASPAC - that the responsibility for the mission in Vietnam be transferred from the Superior General and General Council to the Province of the Holy Spirit (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea). The decree affecting this change is issued today - November 22nd - the Feast day of Our Lady of LaVang. However, the decree will not take effect until March 25th, 2015 (the Feast of the Annunciation)”



The General Council meeting took note that while SPIR Province was to assume the responsibility for the Mission in Vietnam (LAVA), the members of PASPAC Configuration would continue to support the mission through action for solidarity in the areas of personnel, formation and finance.

As Provincial, Tom noted on the occasion of the fusion that this would lead to Holy Spirit becoming a different Province, “When our PASPAC Configuration decided on

how our various Provinces would combine, we decided our future was best served not by all becoming just one big Province, but by valuing our various diversity of cultures in a living solidarity.

So too we are committed to valuing and enhancing the rich diversity of cultures, or differing ways of living, ministering and praying within our new Province". At that time, in March 2015, Holy Spirit Province was comprised of 53 senior professed



members, 2 professed students and one from China/Korea studying in Melbourne at YTU. There were 8 brothers from India, the Philippines and Indonesia assisting us in a temporary capacity. There were 7 postulants and 3 aspirants. Vietnam had 4 senior professed members, 8 professed students, 6 postulants, 12 philosophy and pre-philosophy students, and 8 aspirants. This meant the Province had 106 members from four countries with

many cultures and various PASPAC brothers, comprising ten different nationalities living in 11 different communities.



In the years since Vietnam joined the Province, a primary focus has been to provide suitable formation for the many candidates who have joined. [Fr Willie Estrada](#) from the Philippines, [Fr Richard Thompson](#) from USA/ Korea and [Bro Larry Finn](#) from Canada/Korea, have made a significant contribution in that time by serving as Novice Director in the

PASPAC novitiate in Adelaide. Larry resumed this role in Saigon in August 2022 following a twelve-month hiatus. Each novice master has been assisted by a young priest from PASPAC. In 2022 for the first time, the assistant was Vietnamese.

As the PASPAC formators (Augustine, Orven, Jasmine, Thomas) were recalled to their own Province for important ministries back home, the day-to-day responsibility for providing formation in Vietnam rested increasingly with young Vietnamese religious who have bravely risen to the occasion. Tuệ and Tuấn, ordained in 2017 undertook a seven-month formation programme in Australia. Tuệ served as a member of the Province Formation Commission from 2019 until September 2022. Three others began a two-year part-time programme in Spiritual Direction in early 2022.

The task for the formators was made increasingly challenging during the COVID pandemic (2019-2021) when the normal face-to-face assistance from Australia was not possible. Added to the challenge was the reality that we had to ask men who were barely ordained to take up this most important ministry which would normally be exercised by a person with considerable experience and wisdom. Pope John 23rd advised "See everything, overlook a great deal and correct only a little". Young formators can be tempted to see their role as disciplinary, yet the candidates are mature aged adults who do not need continual correction, nor continual supervision.



As the candidates have completed their formation, the challenge has been to find suitable pastoral placements during their term as deacons and new priests, since the Passionists do not yet have their own parish in Vietnam. Some men undertook part of their diaconate in Australia, but that became impossible during the 2020-2022 COVID years. It is planned to resume that practice in 2023.



Given the age profile of the Province, it is clear that at some time in the future, Vietnam will become 'the centre' of the Province. Various steps will need to be taken to get to that stage and it is essential that our Vietnamese candidates are well trained and prepared for professional ministry. Key persons must receive adequate and full training to equip them for the future because it is on their shoulders that Vietnamese Passionist life and mission will be built. It would be a serious mistake for them to want to do this too soon. Other challenges include establishing communities, especially outside of Saigon, The likely location initially will be in Vinh diocese, in the north-central part of the country.

In November 2022 there were already 13 ordained Vietnamese Passionists and two deacons. There were 3 finally professed, 9 temporary professed, 9 novices, 3 postulants studying English in Melbourne and a number of aspirants studying at university. The Province has been blessed by the new energy Vietnam has contributed and in turn Vietnam has benefited from the generous assistance of PASPAC personnel and the leadership, experience and financial contribution from Australia.



Most of all, the contribution of Jeff Foale deserves to be saluted.

Fr Chris Mithen

Thank you to those who came to share time with Chris on the occasion of his 90th birthday, and for Chris himself for making the effort. It is a significant milestone and it was wonderful to see Chris and Gerry Bond, his old schoolmate from the 1940's here together.

Another 90 year old

Congratulations and best wishes to Dominic Isgro. His birthday is today.

Shadow sculpture



Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.
(Nelson Mandela)

There is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it. (Amanda Gorman)

Humour

1. Mr. See owned a saw. And Mr. Soar owned a seesaw. Now, See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw before Soar saw See, which made Soar sore. Had Soar seen See's saw before See sawed Soar's seesaw, See's saw would not have sawed Soar's seesaw. So See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw. But it was sad to see Soar so sore just because See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw.

2. Silly Simon is shining Sally's shoes in the shoe shop. He smiles as he shines shoes because she shines Simon's shoes too

3. A certain young fellow named Beebee ished to marry a lady named Phoebe. "But," he said. "I must see what the minister's fee will be before Phoebe be Phoebe Beebee

4. The sixth sick sheikh's sixth sheep's sick

5. Barry rang the local police station. "I'm calling to report my neighbour Wazza is hiding marijuana inside his firewood".

The next day police officers descended on Warren home. They searched the house and then went to the woodshed. Using axes, they busted open every piece of firewood, but could find no marijuana. They left.

The next thing Wazza's phone rang. "Hey Wazz, did the cops come?" "Yeah, they did" was the reply. Did they chop up your firewood?" "Yes they did" Warren replied. "Happy birthday mate" Barry called down the phone.



When King Charles III is crowned next May, a Hindu Prime Minister will leave 10 Downing Street with his Indian wife to attend the ceremony. The Muslim Mayor of London will already be at Westminster Abbey. Security will be headed up by the Home Secretary, a Buddhist. The only white holder of a great office of state, Jeremy Hunt, will arrive with his Chinese wife. And the Chief Rabbi will walk from Clarence House, having stayed the night as the guest of the King and Queen Consort. It will be a perfect scene of modern Britain.

Perhaps the smallest cow you will ever see!

Tangmalangmaloo by John O'Brien (Mgs Patrick Hartigan)



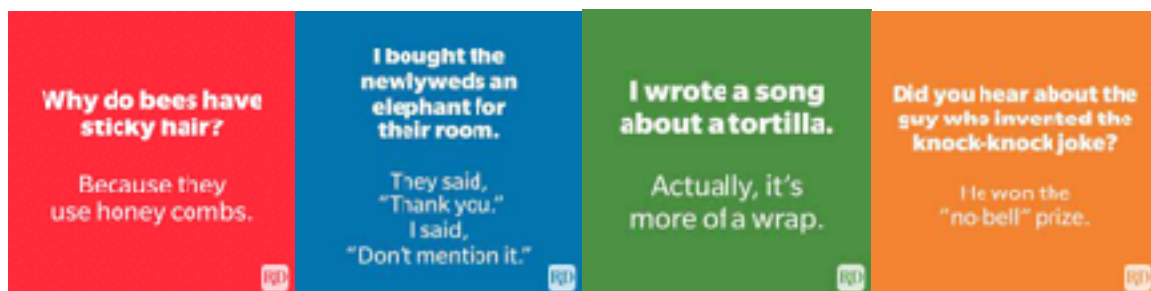
The bishop sat in lordly state and purple cap sublime,
And galvanized the old bush church at Confirmation time;
And all the kids were mustered up from fifty miles around,
With Sunday clothes, and staring eyes, and ignorance profound.
Now was it fate, or was it grace, whereby they yarded too
An overgrown two-storey lad from Tangmalangmaloo?

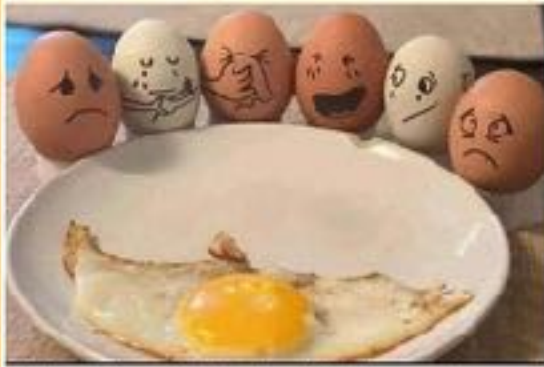
A hefty son of virgin soil, where nature has had her fling,
And grows the trefoil three feet high and mats it in the spring;
Where mighty hills uplift their heads to pierce the welkin's rim,
And trees sprout up a hundred feet before they shoot a limb;
There everything is big and grand, and men are giants too –
But Christian Knowledge wilts, alas, at Tangmalangmaloo.

The bishop summed the youngsters up, as bishops only can;
He cast a searching glance around, then fixed upon his man.
But glum and dumb and undismayed through every bout he sat;
He seemed to think that he was there, but wasn't sure of that.
The bishop gave a scornful look, as bishops sometimes do,
And glared right through the pagan in from Tangmalangmaloo.

'Come, tell me, boy,' his lordship said, in crushing tones severe,
'Come, tell me why is Christmas Day the greatest of the year?
'How is it that around the world we celebrate that day
'And send a name upon a card to those who're far away?
'Why is it wandering ones return with smiles and greetings, too?
A squall of knowledge hit the lad from Tangmalangmaloo.

He gave a lurch which set a-shake the vases on the shelf,
He knocked the benches all askew, up-ending of himself.
And oh, how pleased his lordship was, and how he smiled to say,
'That's good, my boy. Come, tell me now; and what is Christmas Day?
The ready answer bared a fact no bishop ever knew –
'It's the day before the races out at Tangmalangmaloo!





He died last fry day. Thank God he wasn't beaten. Don't worry, he went over easy. He's now on the sunny side. He's definitely in a better plate.

sourced by www.funny.com

**THE OLDER I GET, THE MORE I HAVE
IN COMMON WITH COMPUTERS.
WE BOTH START OUT WITH LOTS OF
MEMORY AND DRIVE, THEN WE BECOME
OUTDATED, CRASH
UNEXPECTEDLY,
AND EVENTUALLY
HAVE TO
HAVE OUR
PARTS
REPLACED!**





"Microsoft support?
My windows won't open"



Prayers

We those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Helen Denis (26th Nov) Barney Cogle (Nov 30th)



We pray for all of our Holy Cross family who are unwell especially Maree Bartoli, Maeve Reardon, Michael Doyle, Lydia Chin, Paul Darbyshire Jim Molan, John Lazzari, Alexander Lim, Des Grisell, Denise Glasgow, Gerry Bond, Helen McLean, Peter Owen, Greg Agosta, Dominic Isgro, Errol Lovett, Lesley Yang, Marg Casey, Norm Heyhorn, Chris O'Toole, Angelo Vigilante, Jim Monaghan, Peter DeMarzi, Anne Jenkins, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Pam Gartland, Peter McNamara, Patricia Keeghan, Mary Hackett, Margaret Wright, Mary and Kate Dunn, 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

