

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 149



23rd December, 2022

Greetings,

Christmas



Christmas Carols will begin at 7.00pm and Mass at 7.30pm. This will be 'amid the trees'. You can drive down the community driveway and park on the oval. It will help if those who can bring a chair, do so, please and it would be wise to bring warm clothing and insect spray. Some people have mentioned they have allergic reactions to some of the trees where we now celebrate Christmas Eve Mass.

We moved from the oval because facing the setting sun (on the truck) was hot and unpleasant, and the band who were spending rehearsal time in the direct sun were

uncomfortable. Unfortunately, nothing is perfect. We apologise for those who suffer from allergies. There is seating available in the car park area away from the trees.

Mass on [Christmas Day](#) is at 10.00am in the chapel.

Holidays

[Erick](#) and the three postulants, [Thang](#), [DJ](#) and [Toan](#) are driving to Adelaide on Boxing Day for a holiday, based in our community at Glen Osmond. They will return on January 9th. [JD](#) is travelling with them but returning on January 1st and [Phi](#) is also travelling with the, but returning on January 13th. So from December 26th til January 9th there will be just Jerome, Chris, Tony and myself at home.

[The Office](#) too will be closed during this time, until January 12th.

Newsletter

Over the next month, the weekly newsletter will be a little streamlined.

Christmas Reflection

In 1994 two American Christian teachers accepted an invitation to conduct religious programmes in various Russian prisons and orphanages. They told several stories about their experience. One of these concerned one hundred young boys who had been abused and abandoned and were now housed in an orphanage.

It was near to Christmas when the teachers came to the orphanage so after telling the children some stories about Jesus, they explained the story that we have heard in tonight's gospel concerning Jesus' birth.

The teachers did not speak Russian, what they said had to be translated, and this meant the children were waiting keenly to hear the next part of the story. Unlike many of us who have heard the story so often, these young boys listened with amazement at the story of Mary and Joseph, the stable, the shepherds and Jesus' birth.

After telling the story, the teachers thought it would be a good idea to ask the boys to make a simple manger, so they distributed strips of paper and parts of old clothing to make a simple crib and a baby.

One of the teachers began to look at what had been made and she came across a six year old boy named Misha. The teacher was very surprised to see that there were two babies in Misha's manger. One baby was larger than the other. She asked one of the staff to find out why this had happened.

Misha retold the story of Jesus birth with complete accuracy including that Mary and Joseph had nowhere to stay, until he came to the part where Mary laid Jesus in the manger. He then made up his own ending to the story.

He said, "Mary put the baby Jesus in the manger and Jesus looked at me and asked me if I had a place to stay. I told Jesus I had no mamma and no papa so I have no place to stay. Then Jesus told me that I could stay with him and belong to his family. I wanted to stay with Jesus, but I had no gift to give him like the wise men. I asked Jesus, if we stayed in the manger together and I helped him be warm, would that be a gift? Jesus said 'Yes' - so that is me in the manger with Jesus and he said I could stay with him forever".

As he finished his story, Misha began to sob.

Tears ran down his cheek and his body shook. But he was not crying from sadness, but because he had found someone who would keep him safe and who he could stay with forever,

This is how the Christmas story should touch us – offering a message of love and belonging, of peace and good will to all people – to every person.

If Misha could understand the Christmas story so well after hearing it just once, and if he could find the true message of Jesus, may we do the same, and keep extending our sense of family as widely as possible, doing what we can to continue the true kingdom of God, offering peace and good will to all people.

A beautiful video reflection on Christmas

<https://youtu.be/x9dW5glcH9M>

Halleluiah surprise: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXh7JR9oKVE>

Ronan Keating for Air New Zealand

This is a different take on the song: 'Winter Wonderland'

<https://www.facebook.com/AirNewZealand.Australia/videos/summer-wonderland-karaoke/10153837877201572/>

From Conception to Birth

Given the focus on Jesus' birth at Christmas, it seems appropriate for those who have not seen it, to share this wonderful (shortened version) of the Ted.com talk. It has surprised many women, to learn just what happens to a developing baby in her/his mother's womb.

https://www.ted.com/talks/alexander_tsiaras_conception_to_birth_visualized?language=en



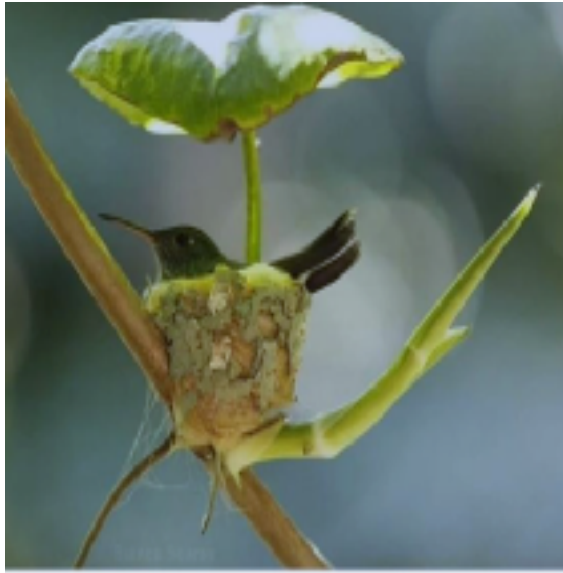
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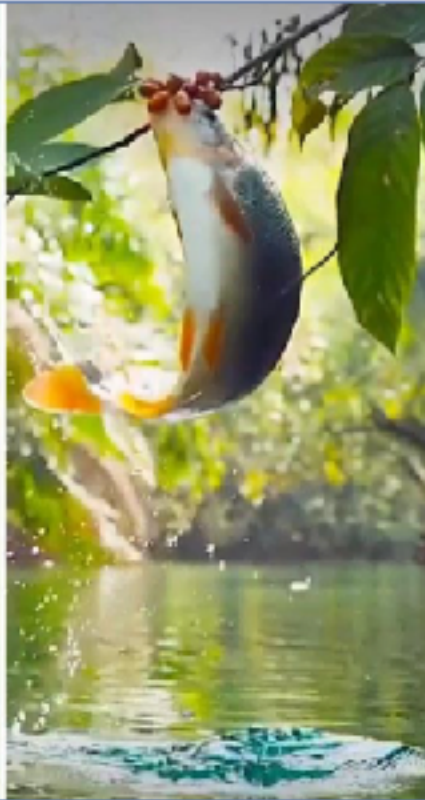
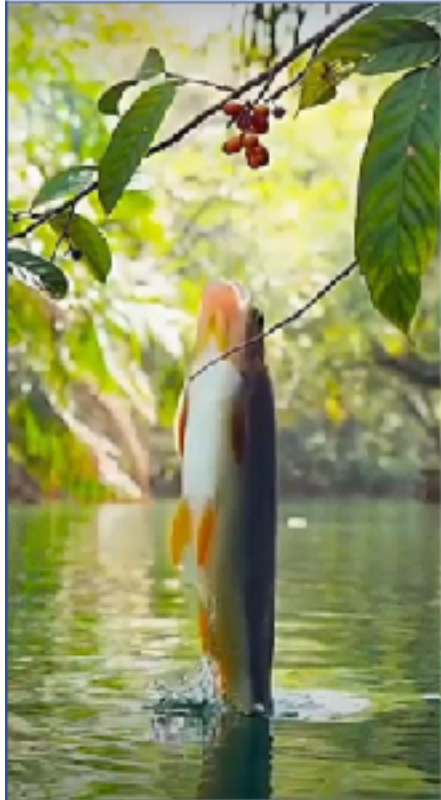


The beauty of nature









Clever fish!

Humour

1. Bert and Marie were married for a long time. Neighbours often heard them arguing and especially they would hear Bert threaten, "When I die, I will dig my way out of the grave and come back to haunt you". He eventually died at age 98 and some of Marie's neighbours were concerned for her. One asked her after the funeral, "Aren't you worried about his threat?"

No Marie" said, "I arranged that he was buried upside down. He can dig as much as he likes because I know he will never ask anyone for directions!"

2. Q. What did the wise men say after they offered their gifts of gold and frankincense? A. "Wait, there's myrrh"
2. Q. How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizzas?
A. One that's deep pan, crisp and even!
3. Q. What carol is heard in the desert? A. O camel ye faithful!
4. Two young priests in Sydney wearing their clerical collars on a tram. They began talking about their archbishop (Cardinal Gilroy). What they were saying was not complimentary. There were two old ladies sitting opposite them and after a while, one of them leaned forward and said, "Do you know who we are?" "No" said the priests. One lady added, "We are the Cardinal's sisters". One of the priests muttered, "Oh!" They waited for a while and when the tram was nearly at its next stop, one priest asked, "Do you know who we are?" The ladies shook their heads and one said, "No, we don't" "Good" the priest said. Then when the tram stopped, they got off!
5. Q What do you call an obnoxious reindeer? A Rude-Olph
6. Q Why did no one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay?
A Because they were two deer!
7. Q What do you call an elf that can dance? A Elfis.
8. Q How do you know when Santa is around? A You can always sense his presents.
9. Q What did Adam say the day before Christmas? A It's Christmas, Eve.
10. Q What do you call a broke Santa? A Saint Nickel-less.
11. Q What is a Christmas trees favourite candy? A Ornamints.
12. Q What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck? A. A Christmas quacker.

13. The three phases of man.
He believes in Santa. He doesn't believe in Santa. He is Santa (and possibly fat (If that is still allowed!))



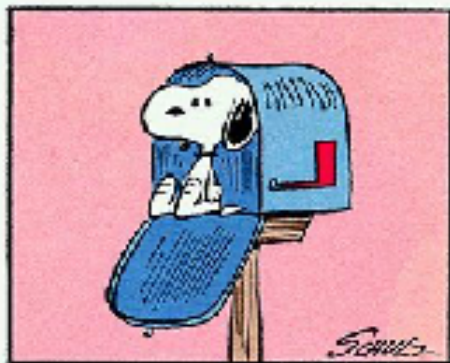
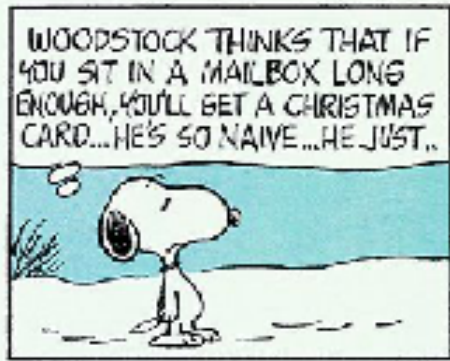
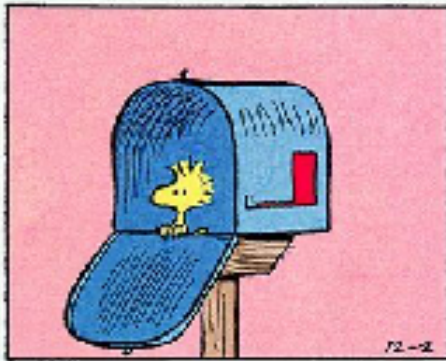




All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names.







The woodpecker might have to go.

Tony Simbel CP

Tony was ordained in May last year on his 32nd birthday. It was our hope that Tony would return to Holy Cross and celebrate 10.00am Mass for the community. It is

always a special experience for those who have seen and maybe coached a student through his formation years to have him return as an ordained minister. Tony has been appointed to Glen Osmond parish in Adelaide, but he has had a most frustrating year trying to renew his visa and resecure his IELTS score. Tony will celebrate Mass at Holy Cross on [Sunday January 8th](#), the fest of the Epiphany.

Remembering those who miss loved ones

Christmas brings a sharp pain for those who miss a loved one, especially a spouse or child. 'The first year' is especially difficult. May this poem bring some comfort.



If Christmas is hard, if you've lost someone dear.
Just look in your heart, and you'll know they're still here.
The stars in the sky, the light falling rain.
The magpies it seems, know of your pain.
If this is a time, when you're struggling through.
Just do what you can, for what matters, is you.
There's no need to be merry, there's no need to be bright.
Just do what you can, it will all be alright.

Source: @Toots Design

Prayers

We remember those who have died, especially Maree Spinks, and we remember those whose anniversaries occur around this time, especially Anna Cahill (Dec 24th, 2008), Grace Sheehan, Dec 28th 2012), Maureen O'Brien, Dec 31st 1989)



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

Chris will send the [Mass link](#) for Christmas Day by Saturday afternoon.



The Holy Cross community extends warm greetings, best wishes and Christmas peace. We thank you for your support from near and afar.



Have a wonderful Christmas.

(Left to right)

Brian , Tri, Chris, Phi, Toan, Thanh, Erick
DJ, Jerome, JD,