

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 157

17th February, 2023

Greetings,

Province Assembly



Our Assembly was a great gathering. There was a strong sense of unity, a sense of trust that allowed participants to honestly express their ideas, and a particularly strong sense of listening. We followed the synodal process which provided time to gather in small groups to read an outline and simple questions to discuss. There followed a time of individual sharing with no discussion; just each participant listening. Then participants were asked to share “What did you hear?” This was followed by some quiet time. Next was some discussion, and finally a check on what were the main points we heard that we would like to register. We also a few brief presentations: on the Passionist Youth Retreat Team; the Passionist Family Group Movement; Safeguarding and Risk Management; Finance and Province Legislation. We repeated listening process with the four areas we gathered to consider. Now there will be a similar gathering in Saigon and another in Sydney and from that should come some priorities and recommendations for our Chapter delegates to consider. Our thanks to many people who assured us we were/are in their prayers.

Come Away Day

The first Come Away Day of the year will be held at Holy Cross on **Tuesday 21st February**. The theme of the day is “Living from your heart.” The day’s program provides opportunities for prayer, reflection and group interaction in the beautiful grounds and facilities of Holy Cross. All are welcome. Just come as you are. BYO lunch. Registration is from 9.30am. The program concludes with a celebration of the Eucharist with a departure time of 2pm. The cost of the day is \$25.00 or a donation according to your means. For further details contact Frank Burke, burke.frank942@yahoo.com.au or 0407998781.

St Gabriel festa

The annual festa will be held on Sunday February 26th, the day before the feast of Passionist, St Gabriel. Mass will be at 10.30am. This will be preceded by the rosary and followed by the procession, lunch and musical entertainment. You are invited to come and share the day, including lunch (which can be purchased) and the entertainment.

Ash Wednesday



There will be a Mass at Holy Cross this Wednesday February 22nd at 9.15am. Pope Francis has spoken about this feast: “The first Lenten journey was from “dust to life” and the second Lenten journey is from “life to dust”. *We are the dust of the earth, upon which God has poured out his heaven, the dust that contains God's dreams. We are God's hope, God's treasure and glory.*

Ashes are therefore a reminder of the direction of our existence: a passage from dust to life. We are dust, earth, clay, but if we allow ourselves to be shaped by the hands of God, we become something wondrous. More often than not, though, especially at times of difficulty and loneliness, we only see our dust! But the Lord encourages us: in his eyes, our littleness is of infinite value. So let us take heart: we were born to be loved; we were born to be children of God.

The new fence around the carpark



Our thanks to those who helped advice and organise the erection of the new fence, especially [Bruno Petrocco](#), and in particular to [Vince Celestino](#) for his ongoing work on both sides of the fence. Please keep a metre from the fence when you park!

Commemoration of the Passion: Friday February 17th



St Paul of the Cross requested the Pope of the time (Pius 6th) to institute this feast on the Friday before Lent begins, as an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the joyful aspect of the Passion.

We know that Paul believed the Passion was the most overwhelming sign of God's love. So often in his time and in ours, the Passion is dramatic and the focus is on the horrible sufferings of Jesus and on the fact that the act of the cross was to pay for our sins.



In the very early days after Jesus' death, his followers did not talk about the cross. It was not the primary symbol of being a follower, as it is for us today. The cross was a scandal - and a failure. So the fish and the anchor were the principal symbols.

St Paul eventually realised that speaking logic and philosophy to potential Greek converts did not work. So he switched to what he called 'the scandal of the cross' – a crucified messiah, and he developed a motto; "We preach Christ and him crucified". Seventeen centuries later, Paul of the Cross would take up this motto for Passionists.

Most of us grew up with sermons and rituals that put the emphasis on the physical sufferings of Jesus and the belief that Jesus' death freed us from sin – yet we spent our whole life trying to avoid going to hell!



Many of our prayers reflect this. I am very happy to join in singing 'Salve Regina'. It is a favourite prayer of many people, but I struggle to pray it in English. When it gets to parts like... "*to thee do we cry poor banished children of Eve*", I can't say that. I don't believe we are that. Then we add, "*to thee do we send up our signs mourning and weeping in this valley of tears*". That's enough to send anyone into depression! *And wait, there's more..*" *after this our exile, show us....* Is this life an exile, or a wonderful gift to respond to the invitation to share in God's life.

Franciscan sister Ilia Delio is a Doctor of theology and science. She has said, "Jesus taught us that salvation is about whole-making and healing. It's not this grace of being rescued from a depraved, fallen world. It's the grace of love that heals us".

Delio continued, "I think that's what it means to be saved: to be



healed and to be whole and to be sent on our way to be whole-makers ourselves. If Catholicity has shrivelled in our current milieu, it's because it has shrunk into a legalistic set of propositions and rules”.

Jesus made us whole by inviting us into his life. This feast day, provides a special opportunity to give thanks for the self-giving of Jesus. We are thankful that Jesus showed us the Way by the way he lived and by the way that he died, that trusting in God will bring us to the truth that “all will be well”. What more could we want?

We have seen that pattern throughout our lives – many of our greatest lessons and blessings have come through sadness, pain, suffering and loss. That is the rhythm of life. We have been touched deeply by God’s grace, and our lens for giving thanks is that Jesus offered his life to bring about what God wanted. His death was cruel and unfair, but he did not walk away from it. It is for us the most overwhelming sign of God’s love, because Jesus saw it that way.



Antioch destroyed



Anne-Quitterie Jozeau reported in La Croix on Tuesday that Antioch (now called Antakya), the city where followers of Jesus were first called ‘Christians’ and where St Paul learned to be a Christian has been almost totally destroyed by the recent earthquake in Türkiye and Syria. 70% of the city has been razed to the ground.

Along with Rome and Alexandria, Antioch was one of the first patriarchates established in the first century. Saint Ignatius of Antioch, its third bishop, was the initiator. Antioch was a place where Greeks and Syrians lived side-by-side and it quickly became the centre of Hellenistic Christianity.

Paul settled in Antioch for several years and used it as the base for his apostolic travels throughout the Mediterranean region. There were seventeen cities named Antioch! The city where Paul lived and which has now largely been destroyed is 500 kilometres north of Jerusalem and 20 kilometres north of the Syrian border. There is a strong sense of ecumenism in the city, perhaps



doubt that will be an important strength as communities

mourn and seek ways to meet the challenges they face. Antioch's historic Jewish quarter, where the apostles lived and where the main stories in the New Testament took place, was spared by the earthquake. The tragedy of this far away event for us, at a minimum calls us to solidarity in prayer.

Women's Friendship Group Manningham



The craft arm of this group is in need of wool and buttons of all types, if you have either of these items that you won't use, please bring them along and donate them to this group. The work these women do is amazing. One woman aged 93 has been making clothing items for children in PNG and Fiji, for many years but now she needs wool. There is a coloured bag in the foyer at Holy Cross to collect items. Thank you.

Flashmob

A flash mob is a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform for a brief time, then quickly disperse. There have been some great performances surprising people in shopping malls or similar places. Here are a few examples:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJNp5UKRtbQ>

Carmina Burana We will rock you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRwdGuE1fKw>

We will rock you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6rInQ8yHVY>

Antwerp

Interesting

- The dot over a lowercase i and j is called a tittle
- The hashtag symbol is called an octothorp
- It has been claimed that you could draw a line for 56 kilometres with one pencil
- Rhythm is the longest English word without a vowel
- You can't hum while holding your nose
- bet you just tried it! (You need to breathe out)
- Only Liberia, Myanmar and the US do not use the metric system

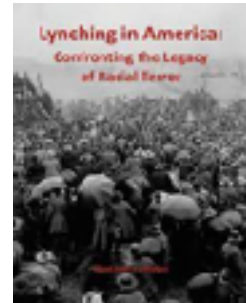
Media photos – sensationalism, reality and publicised horror



We get dulled by repetitive exposure to certain things. We have become used to sensational headlines in our newspapers, TV programmes or social media forums.

Media outlets learned long ago that people are strangely attracted by reporting events that are nothing short of horrific. Better still, they realised, graphic photographs attract curious attention.

Well into the 19th century, executions were holidays in many countries, and some schools let out their children so that could witness an execution! It was generally believed that witnessing such an 'event' would deter those watching from experiencing the same fate. There seems to have been a fascination among some people to join in attacks or become an audience at occasions such as spontaneous lynchings. Thousands 'observed' a Mass lynching in New Orleans, US in 1891.



Before photographs were included in newspapers, entire transcripts of murder trials were sometimes included, and by the 1840s, engraved illustrations changed the look of the news, and numerous papers found that pictures of accused murderers, and engraved reconstructions of actual killings, significantly improved circulation figures.

On March 1st 1920, the New York Times did not display a single photograph. By 1938 on an average day, there was a photo on every page.



The Pulitzer Prize is awarded in the United States for achievements in newspaper, magazine, online journalism, literature and musical composition. It was established by newspaper publicist John Pulitzer, in 1917. He left a sizable amount of money in his will for annual awards. The first Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph was a picture taken in 1941 in Detroit. It showed a group of strikers from the Ford Motor Company beating

a man who tried to cross the picket line.



Some of the photos that have won the Pulitzer prize have been extraordinary. Rocco Morabito, was driving along a road when he spotted an electrician hanging upside down on his safety belt, struck by 4,160 volts of electricity.

Rocco called an ambulance while another lineman climbed up and successfully rescued his colleague by performing mouth-to-mouth. Rocco was there to snap a photo of the scene.



The above photo became famous and was dubbed 'Flight to Safety'. It was taken in 1965 by Japanese photographer, Kyochi Sawada's and shows a South Vietnamese mother and her four children swimming across a river to escape a US bombing raid (Operation Piranha) on Qui Nhon.

Residents had been instructed to leave so that VietCong could be cleared from control of the village and surrounding area. Immediately after the photograph was taken, Sawada carried the children out of the water and onto the riverbank. Having been advised that he won the award some time later, Kyochi searched for the family and gave them half of the prize money.



This appealing image of a police officer and a two-year-old boy won the prize in 1958.

The officer had been explaining to the boy (Allen Weaver) not to get too close to the dragons, during a procession in Chinatown in Washington.

We often see now a touching story (with images) to end a

television broadcast. Such 'feel good' stories are popular and a pleasant change from some of the gruesome events that are recorded and photographed.

On December 4th, 1950, while driving around Pyongyang, Max Desfor noticed a bombed bridge that had hundreds of war refugees trying to make it across to the other side of the Taedong river. Max could barely press the shutter button because of the freezing temperatures.

Interestingly, later in life Desfor said that "The Korean War is labelled 'the Forgotten War', because American soldiers never got a parade when they got back, they never got relief, they never were cited for their effort for the work that was done. They were just completely forgotten".

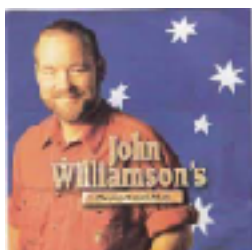


There are many graphic photos that won awards. They can be viewed on line, but it is not appropriate to reproduce them here, except it is worth, I think, reminding ourselves of this award-winning photo below.

South African photojournalist Kevin Carter, responded to a request for photographers to visit Southern Sudan in 1993, where 40% of the children were malnourished and adults were dying daily of starvation. It was difficult for aid agencies to secure funding without better publicity. Carter took the grim picture of a Sudanese child trying to crawl to a feeding centre in Ayod, while a vulture sat nearby.



Carter chased the bird away after taking the picture, and cried. He expressed his shock to a travelling companion, saying he could only think of his own young daughter, Megan. After the photograph was published, people reacted with outrage. Many asked why Carter hadn't picked the child up? In fact, journalists had been expressly instructed not to touch famine victims because of the risk of disease. But Carter was torn by regrets. He took his own life the following year, three months after he won the Pulitzer prize.



In his beautiful song, "Cootamundra Wattle", John Williamson sang, "Good news never made a paper sell". Now and again, a

good photograph might! Cultural writer Susan Sontag wrote an essay in 2003 and said, "There is shame and shock in looking at the close-up of a real horror. Perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering of this extreme order are those who could do something to alleviate it ... or those who could learn from it. The rest of us are voyeurs, whether or not we mean to be".

In 2004, I was fortunate to travel with my friends and PFGM co-workers, Lynn and Rob Hill. I soon learned that it was better for me to purchase a postcard than take my own photos, because the postcards were much better than anything I could shoot, and cheaper.

On a day out to Mallaig, Scotland, we saw the famous bridge (The Glenfinnan Viaduct) that features in the Harry Potter movies carrying the Hogwarts express. In the little township I saw through a shop window, a photo of the bridge with a train crossing it. I took a photo and it seemed to come out well.



That evening back at the Passionist community where we were staying, we were asked what we'd seen. I showed the Brothers my iPad with several photos. "Oh my gosh" one of them said. "I have never seen a train on that bridge!" Soon the others were keen to see the photo and they all agreed how lucky I'd been. "In years and years, I've never seen a train on that bridge" was the common sentiment. "What a fantastic moment for you", Augustine said.

Up until that time, I had not said that I actually saw the train on the bridge, but now it was time to confess. On the following page is the photo I took of the card through the shop window.



Are you observant?

Can you spot 6 differences in 90 seconds?



New Zealand



Following close on the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria, there has been incredible destruction caused by Cyclone Gabrielle in New Zealand. The prime minister described the damage as 'very traumatic'. Worst hit by the Cyclone has been Hawkes Bay on the central east coast of the North Island. It is home to vineyards and a variety of fruit and vegetable growers. The two main twin cities,

Hastings (50,000 people) and Napier (65,000 people) have been separated by destructive floods, and re-connection will be slow north of Wairoa and north of Gisborne owing to damaged roads and bridges. Much of the district may be without power for weeks, so communication will be difficult. At least seven people have lost their lives in the area and more deaths are expected to be reported. Some stories are horrific.



Quite a number of readers know Lynn and Rob Hill. They live near Hastings. They have two daughters with families who live in the district. I have holidayed with Lynn and Rob in Haumoana which is closer to Hastings. All are safe. We have Passionist Family Groups in Napier and Hastings, so we are anxious for everyone to be safe. Napier had its wettest year in 50 years and its second

highest on record, in 2022. The district had record rainfall in January and it has been raining continually throughout January. Auckland, 400 kms north, received 265mm in one day (January 27th). The Waikato and Bay of Plenty districts, north of Hawkes Bay have also received damaging rain, wind and flooding. (See photo of Napier on second last page)

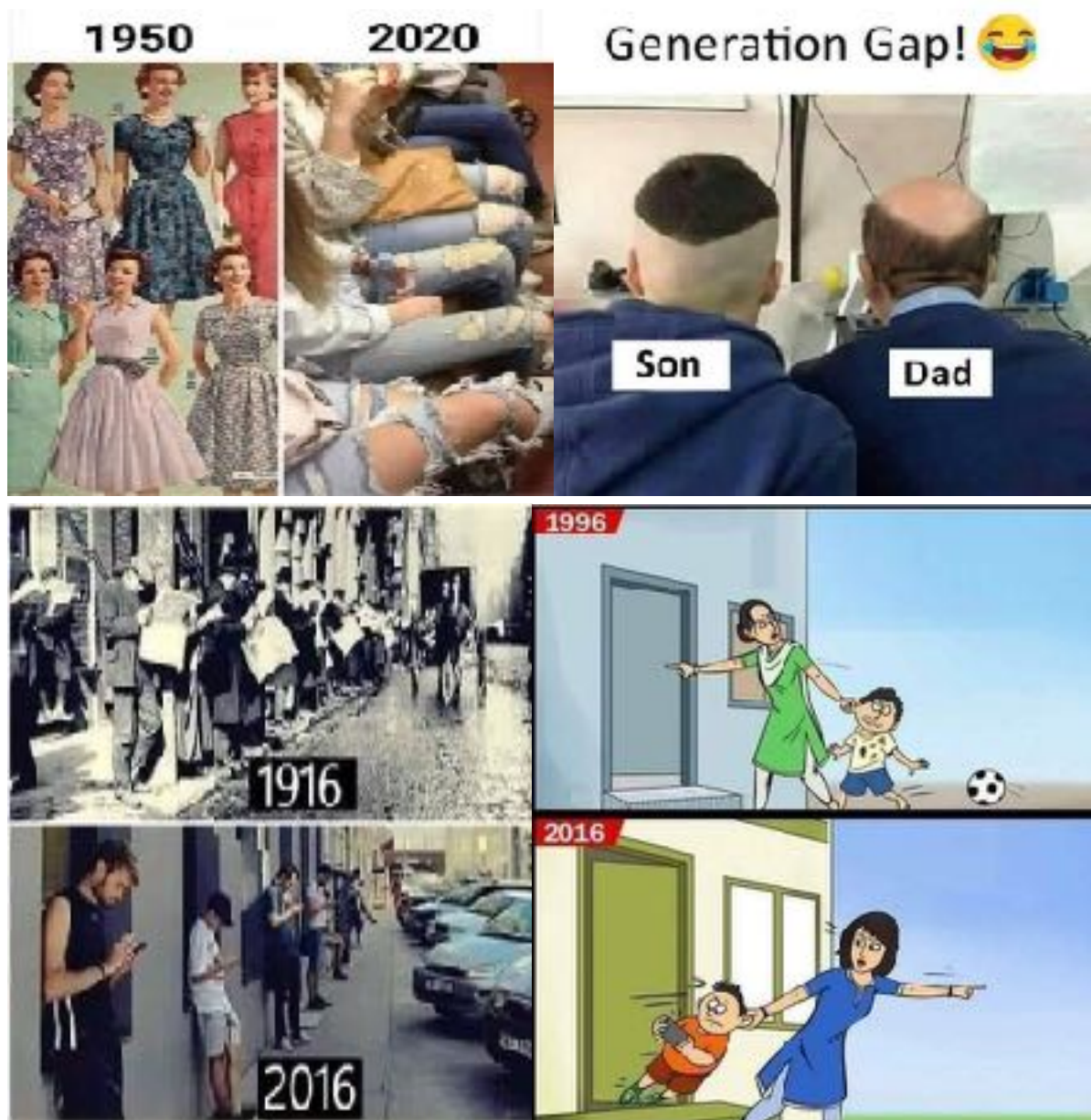
Kiwis are famous for their generosity and resilience in difficult times. They are going to need patience, cooperation and generosity in abundance. There will be months of cleaning up, and for many people, the destruction will have cost them their livelihood. Please keep them in your prayers

Marionettes

This video shows a beautiful 'moment'. It brings to mind Jesus' advice, "unless you become like a little child, you cannot enter the kingdom of God". Jesus was not

talking about 'you won't get into heaven', but you won't enter fully into heaven on earth. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7G78TaLWAq0>

Humour



1. "Did God make you, Grandfather?"

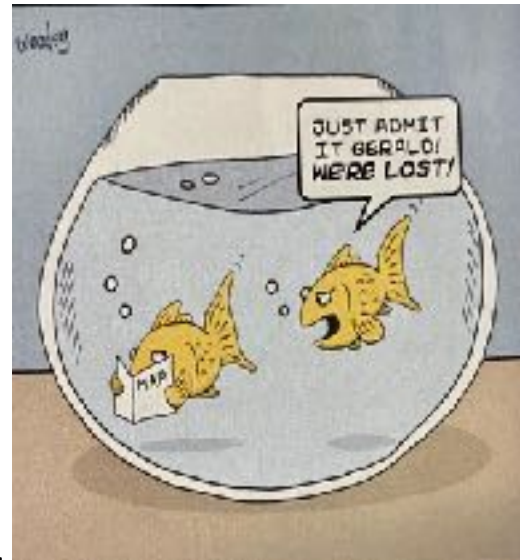
"Yes, God made me", the grandfather replied.

A few minutes later, the little girl asked him, "did God make me too?"

"Yes, he did", the grandfather replied.

For a few minutes, the little girl seemed to be studying her grandfather, as well as her own reflection in the mirror, while her grandfather wondered what was running through her little mind.

At last she spoke up. "You know, grandfather", she said, "God's doing a lot better job lately, isn't he?"



2. A man went to the doctor feeling a little unwell. The doctor checked him over and said, "sorry, I have some very bad news; you have Yellow 24, a really nasty virus. It's called Yellow 24 because it turns your blood yellow and you usually only have 24 hours to live. There's no cure so just go home and enjoy your final precious time on earth".

He trudged home to his wife and broke the news. Distraught, she asked him to go to bingo with her that evening as he'd never been there with her before. They arrived at bingo and with his first card he got four corners and won \$35. Then, with the same card he got a line and won \$320. Then he got a full house and won \$1000. Then the National Grid came up and he won that too getting \$380,000. The bingo caller got him up on stage and said: "Son, I've been calling bingo here for 20 years and I've never seen anyone win four corners, a line, a full house and the National Grid on the same card! You must be the luckiest man on Earth"!

"Lucky?" The man screamed! "Lucky? I'll have you know that I've got Yellow 24!" "It's incredible", said the bingo caller, "Yellow 24... ! You've won the raffle prize as well!"

3. An advertisement in the 'lost' section of a local newspaper stated: Lost, much loved friendly Bichon Frise dog. Brown with white spots. No tail. Right ear half missing – result of bullet wound. Recently castrated, Answers to the name 'Lucky'!

Pat La Manna RIP



Pat, arrived in Melbourne as a 16-year-old in 1948 with no formal schooling and no English. He went to work near Colac, picking potatoes and onions. But he wanted a job that would help him learn the language of his new land. An uncle found him a job in a fruit shop and soon he ran his own shop in West Preston. He expanded his business over the years and with his son's involvement, became Australia's largest banana wholesaler. He used his success to consistently help the less fortunate. In 2009 he was declared Senior Australian of the

Year. Pat funded the Passion Play which will be held again at Holy Cross this year. We salute a most generous man and Helen, his devoted wife of 73 years.

Peter Gaughan



Peter is a New Zealander. He has been a marvellous gift to our Province and to PASPAC. Among his gifts is teaching languages and he used this to assist a number of men to acquire Bahasa Indonesian. He has long held a deep spirituality and this has come even more to the fore as he embraces palliative care because of leukaemia. Peter is totally at peace and not only confident, but he is looking forward to joining the Father who he knows loves him so

overwhelmingly. No stranger to suffering, Peter would appreciate your prayers of thanks, for the life God gave him and the ongoing strength he needs for his final days.

Fr Brian Gleeson CP



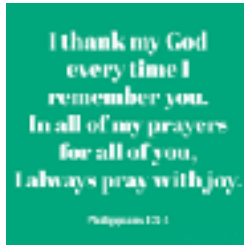
Brian has been transferred to rehab. Unfortunately the doctors are concerned (perhaps convinced) that Brian's heart may not be strong enough to survive surgery. After these several weeks in hospital, Brian faces further uncertainty and is grateful for your prayers. Brian (who is a Doctor of Theology) has for many years provided much appreciated weekly homilies through our Province webpage.

Sergio Mattioli

Two years ago we were praying for Sergio and he did make a good recovery from cancer. Sadly, the cancer has returned and he has come home from hospital. Our own community has been blessed by Sergio and Sylvania's generosity, and we ask that you keep them and their family in your prayers at this very difficult time.

Gerald and Margaret Wright

join



He

Gerald is Denis Travers' uncle, and back in 1992, Denis asked Gerald if he would come and do some volunteer work at Holy Cross. Gerald agreed and managed to convince Vin Molloy to him and in this way, our 'A' team began. Had three weeks in rehab, then three weeks in Cabrini and he returning to rehab. is now in his mid-90's and is suffering cancer. Margaret has had a long and painful bout of shingles and has been unable to visit Gerald recently because she has also had the flu! Please keep them in your prayers.



Joan and Michael O'Callaghan

Joan and Michael have been a bit 'in the wars' in recent months and they need more assistance and prayers.

A photo of Napier



Other prayers

We remember those who have died, and those whose anniversaries are around this time especially Tony De Blasio (25th Feb)

In remembering those who have died, let us remember those who have been left behind, especially wives who have shared a long life with deceased husbands.



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

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

It will be very hot here today in Melbourne....stay cool

Brian