

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 162

24th March, 2023

Greetings,

Milestones this week



Jack Brolly 90 (25th)



Brendan Connell 25th profession (27th) and 60th birthday (29th)



Pastor: 44 (29th)

26th Joe and Angela 35th wedding anniversary



By coincidence, Chris, Erick and myself turned up for lunch last Sunday with the same themed 'T' shirts in the same colour, 'advertising' 300 years since the founding of the Passionist Congregation.

Learning new things



On Tuesday just before midday, I heard a flock of kookaburras 'laughing' our loud. I had been meaning to check with our global expert "Doctor Google" about why kookaburras laugh. That turned out to be no surprise. It is a territorial 'statement'. But, the good doctor said, "if kookaburras laugh during the day it is a certainty, that it will rain". At 3.55pm it started raining and we received 6mm! So it only took me 76 years to learn that, so I guess that's why they say "you're never too old to learn".

Give him another parish



Joe Grayland is a theologian and a parish priest of the Diocese of Palmerston North, which has been without a Bishop for three years.

This article was published in NZ Cath News on Monday, March 20th, 2023

At a recent dinner with the Vicar General of an Australian diocese, he quipped, “to the parish priest who has everything, give him another parish.” The five priests seated with him laughed at this. But, as the conversation turned to the realities of our failing diocesan infrastructures, the tone became more serious. Two priests were managing three separate, cooperating parishes, three priests were managing two amalgamated parishes and the Vicar General had one parish. The six priests around the table were managing thirteen parishes with a total of thirty distinct communities between them, doing the work of ten previous parish priests.



Amalgamation

Amalgamation looks like the solution until you ask what problem it is trying to solve. The amalgamation of parishes is an attempt to solve the problem of institutional collapse in dioceses in three ways.

- amalgamation solves the problem of too few priests being available to provide sacramental ministry. It presumes that the parish structures are integral to pastoral life and amalgamation keeps the civil and canonical framework of parishes as a managerial structure that provides a living for a priest and income for a diocese.



As a diocese’s infrastructure of pastoral and sacramental life becomes untenable, the notion takes hold that the problem lies with the parishes when the problem lies in the episcopal mindset. Having solved the structural problem through amalgamation the newly blended parishes should function happily in this new future designed by others. However, the gloss of efficient pastoral functioning covers a multitude of unresolved issues, like

- the independence of established communities,
- the lines of communication between previous separate parish groups, and

- the stretch of the clergy who are expected to respond.



The amalgamation of parishes does not ultimately solve the larger organisational and theological questions amongst which are:

- who can preside at the Eucharist?
- are the laity part of the fabric of parish leadership, discernment and management?;
- are the liturgy, sacraments and priestly ministry just functional elements of diocesan structures?

Coming to the end of the present ‘organisational road’ begs the question of a new church and a new form of church leadership that isn’t restorationist but more deeply missionary.

Social and Cultural Elements of Change

The cultural factors also play a role in bringing about social change. Our social life depends upon our beliefs, ideas, values, customs, conventions, institutions and the like. When there is a change in these, it influences the social life.

Often the social and cultural dimensions implicit in ecclesial change are forgotten. Solving the structural problem using clerical and lay workarounds takes little or no regard for the anthropological (human) and social (cultural) dimensions of worship

and community. They often ask fewer people to do more to keep the boat afloat.

Keeping former parishes going with liturgies of Word and Communion on Sundays as a stop-gap for Mass seems a nice alternative. However, it reframes our understanding of the Church by undermining the centrality of the Eucharist. Eventually, the diocese reframes itself according to what it cannot provide.

Looking for answers among the dead



Many argue the real change will come with lay-parish leadership, lay-led liturgy, replacing the parish with the schools as the “new parish”, importing clergy and seminarians, ordaining married men, ordaining women, geriatric men and similar solutions. The answer might be found in some, or all, of these, but I am reminded of Christ’s response in Luke 9:56-62, “leave the dead to bury the dead”.

All these suggestions are deeply inauthentic because they do not address the substantive issue; the death of the local churches. Churches do die; historically, we have only to look at North Africa. The death of a local church—diocese or parish—is not a comforting experience. There is a deep sense of loss.

Coming to the end of the present ‘organisational road’ begs the question of a new ecclesiology and a new form of ecclesial leadership that isn’t restorationist but more deeply missionary. Pope Francis has offered a missiological vision similar to St Pope Paul IV’s in *Evangelii Nunciandi*: “The conditions of the society in which we live oblige all of us therefore to revise methods, to seek by every means to study how we can bring the Christian message to modern man.”



He acknowledged “the split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time” and that the ‘Gospel must be proclaimed by witness’. Function and structure play a role in this, but they shouldn’t drive the change because we are a theological community and theology immersed in life must lead us in the work of evangelisation and mission.

Downsizing and right-sizing

When people speak of downsizing, often they mean “right-sizing” the house and garden for their current and future needs. Finding the right size for today’s local church means relearning what it means to be a Missionary Church. The experience of change and diminution will continue; nothing can stop it at this point because the cultural changes influencing contemporary Catholicism are very strong. The Second Vatican Council sought to provide us with the tools we require to engage with the enormity of the change and reengage with the world as it has become.

What does a diocese or parish look like in the 21 century in a small, secular country like ours struggling to articulate its cultural self-understanding and not possessing a millennial-long shared language of religious institutionalisation? Integral to this consideration is the emerging new church that is already replacing the church of my consciousness. It will be different because it already is.



As the Church of my generation and older dies out a new Church may emerge and it will be different. Then again, without a suitably led ongoing discussion about what it means to be Church and what evangelisation and mission look like today, the church may indeed look very different.

**”This is not an era of change, but a change of era”
(Pope Francis)**

Fr Peter Gaughan CP

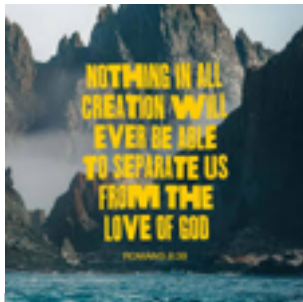
Peter died peacefully on March 15th. When told by his doctor a month six weeks earlier that this might be about the time of his passing, he commented to me “the idea of March is a bit to dramatic for me”.



Peter was a humble and gentle man, deeply spiritual and one who had learned the pain of suffering, having experienced major bouts of depression and episodes of near agoraphobia. There is no doubt that his greatest gift was himself. Yet, he did have outstanding gifts. He was a brilliant linguist. At one Passionist PASPAC meeting he was translating Italian, English, Bahasa Indonesian and Tok Pisin across a number of individuals. Peter created a learning course in the Indonesian language for our PNG men who were preparing to study in Irian Jaya as well as for Fr Joachim and Fr Graham (now deceased) who were to lecture in this new language. Despite insufficient time, not only did the men pass an exam he set, but they passed the next semester exams studying in their new language. When he was elected General of the Congregation, Joachim was able to ask Indonesian Fr Sabinus in his own language, if he accepted his election as a General Consultor.

Peter was born in New Zealand. He spent four years as a missionary in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. He spent time giving retreats in our retreat house in Hamilton, New Zealand and Glen Osmond, he was a formator Provincial Secretary. He had a brilliant sense of humour matched with deep sensitivity. He was the perfect person to accompany a dying patient, and exercised this gift several times with our Passionist brothers. Having always assured them of the overwhelming love of God and the reason not to be afraid so that they could let go, it was no surprise that his own death was marked by this peaceful confidence and joyful expectation of being joined with God. How beautiful that he could say, “I have lived my whole 83 years for this moment”.





A Dominican sister in Adelaide wrote down a portion of a homily Peter gave on Holy Thursday in 1980. *“All of the baptized have basically the same vocation - son or daughter of God - lived out in different ways. God loves me as He loves no-one else - I have a special place in His heart. I reflect His love in a unique way - I am irreplaceable – that gives me value; makes me important”*. That was Peter’s deepest conviction.



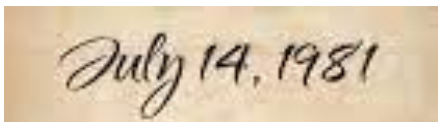
Back in 1981, Peter and I were part of an eleven strong contingent from Australia, invited to attend a course in Passionist History and Spirituality in Rome. When the course was complete, we were given the freedom to travel wherever we liked (within a reasonable budget) for three weeks before re-joining the whole group in Singapore for our final trip home. I was delighted that Peter and

I could team up for those three memorable weeks.

My only request when we discussed our plans, was that I wanted to go back to Monte Argentario (the site of the first Passionist residence) for five days before going anywhere else. I thought Peter might object, given this was five out of the 21 days we had. Peter said he would be delighted to spend time at Monte Argentario. I was able to spend time writing up notes from our course while it was still fresh.



Among the nice times we had, one particular night was memorable. We were in Parish. We had been warned not to seek accommodation at the Passionist residence because the small community had been besieged by visitors in recent days. We booked into a double room, and we retired reasonably early. Suddenly we were awaked by a series of loud bangs, which we soon identified as fireworks. Peter commented, “You don’t think that’s a welcome for us to Paris, do you?”



After some brief guessing and checking the date, we realised it was Bastille day. Peter suggested we had to celebrate appropriately, so we dressed and went out to find a pub. Peter had enough French to make

himself understood, but when the bartender looked puzzled at the ‘une grande biere’ request, I decided to assist with hand signals, to ensure he understood ‘grande’. That was a regrettable hand action because as we waited at the bar, the man moved a ladder and begin climbing the steps.



“What is he doing?” Peter asked. Admitting I didn’t know, I suggested he might be taking ‘grande’ very literally, because he soon brought down a huge glass – bigger than I had ever seen. He then retraced his steps up the ladder and brought down another huge glass. Peter said he didn’t know enough French to say “grande but not that grande!”

Peter was only a light drinker and he watched with disbelief as the man filled both glasses. When that was done, Peter asked if I would carry his glass to the table because it was too heavy for him! When we sat down, it was comical because Peter was short and I could not see him; his face was completely hidden by the glass of beer. He said, “When you get back to Australia, will you explain that we were sharing a beer in Paris, and I fell into my beer and drowned!”

We tried not to embarrass the bartender, but eventually we had to admit defeat and retire for the second time that day and I never helped Peter any more when he was translating!

Peter has now fully retired from this life and we give thanks for his faith, fun and friendship. His funeral will be celebrated on Monday March 27th. The link is:

[YOUTUBE CLICK HERE](#)

Easter

Looking ahead, these are the dates and times for liturgical events at Holy Cross

Palm Sunday (2nd April): **Mass:** 10.00am

Passion Play 1.30pm

Holy Thursday: (6th April): **Mass:** 7.30pm

Good Friday: (7th April): **Passion Play** 10.00am

Commemoration of the Passion: 3.00pm

Recorded Mass: Available Saturday afternoon

Easter Sunday: (9th April): **Dawn Mass:** 6.00am followed by breakfast (donation)

Sunday Mass: 10.00am

Note: **The Passion Play** will take place adjacent to the oval.

Entry down the community driveway.

The Friday afternoon liturgy will take place ‘among the trees’ (where we celebrate Christmas Eve (if the weather permits).

There will be no common ‘**Stations of the Cross**’ on Good Friday on account of the Passion Play, but individual copies of the Stations can be borrowed from the plastic bin in front of the garages, for use during Holy Week, or before the Passion Play begins.



Last week's riddles

1. Q: Pronounced as 1 letter, And written with 3, 2 letters there are, and 2 only in me. I'm double, I'm single, I'm black blue, and grey, I'm read from both ends, and the same either way. What am I? A: Eye
2. Q: Forward, I am heavy; backward, I am not. What am I? A: A ton
3. Q. What has hands but cannot clap. A. A clock
4. Q: Who makes it, has no need of it. Who buys it, has no use for it. Who uses it can neither see nor feel it. What is it? A: A coffin.
5. Q: They come out at night without being called, and are lost in the day without being stolen. What are they? A: Stars!

Humour

1. I never thought orthopaedic shoes would really work for me. But I stand corrected.
2. I wrote a book on how to fall down the stairs. It's a step by step guide.
3. My son was chewing on electric cords, so I had to ground him. it's ok though, he's doing better and conducting himself properly.
4. My friend claims that he accidentally glued himself to his autobiography, but I don't believe him. But that his story and he's sticking to it.
5. An armed man ran into a real estate and shouted. Nobody move.....
6. I asked the surgeon if I could administer my own anaesthetic. He said, sure. Go ahead! Knock yourself out!
7. I got into a fight today with 1,3,5,7 and 9. The odds were really against me.
8. "What is the matter with you son?"
"Typhoid fever, sergeant"

“That either kills you or makes you an idiot. I know. I’ve had it”

9. A married couple were asleep when the phone rang at 2am. The wife picked up the phone, listened for a moment and said, “How do I know, that’s 200 kilometres from here?” Then she hung up. The husband asked, “who was that?” The wife said, “I don’t know, some women wanting to know if the coast is clear!”

10. A man bought a parrot and brought him home, but the parrot started insulting him and got really nasty, so the man picked up the parrot and placed him in the freezer to teach him a lesson. He heard the parrot squawking for a few minutes, but all of a sudden the parrot went quiet. The man opened the freezer door. The parrot walked out, looked up at him and said. “I apologise for offending you, and I humbly ask your forgiveness”.

The man said, “well thank you, I forgive you”.

The parrot then said, “If you don’t mind me asking, what did the chicken do?”

11. A couple invited their parish priest for dinner. While they were in the kitchen, the priest asked their young son, “Ans what are we having for dinner tonight?” The young boy said “Goat”

The priest said, “Goat? Are you sure?”

“Yes’, the boy said, “Dad said we might as well have the old goat for dinner today as any other day”.

12. The minister was sick and another minister well known for his long sermons (so long that even Graeme could not believe it) was arranged to take his place. He was annoyed to find only ten people present, including the choir. He commented to the warden, “That was a very poor turn-out tonight. Were they not told I was coming?” “No”, said the warden. Word must have leaked out!!”

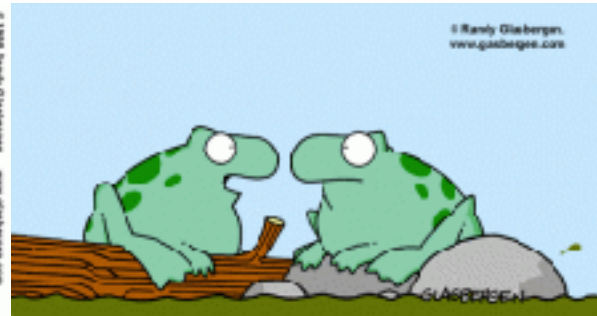


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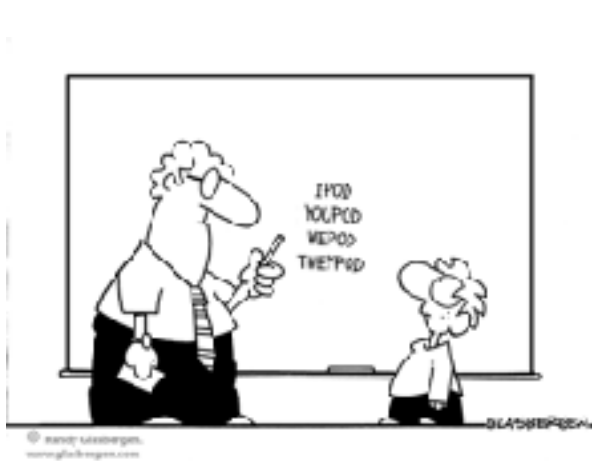
EVEN PASTOR EVENTUALLY CONCEDED THAT THIS PARTICULAR SERMON RAN ON MUCH TOO LONG



"Did you hear? They might make us wear uniforms to school next year!"



"Looks aren't everything. It's what's inside you that really matters. A biology teacher told me that."



Prayers

We remember those celebrating anniversaries, especially [Mary-Ellen Boulton](#) (March 24th, [Paul Norden](#) (son of Mary) (25th), [James Zammit](#) (1st April) and [Gina Alois](#) (2nd April)

**I thank my God
every time I
remember you.
In all of my prayers
for all of you,
I always pray with joy.**

Philippians 1:1-4

We also remember those in our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially:

Pam Storey, Michael Doyle, Maree Bartoli, Ted Hallam, Gerald & Margaret Wright, Bronwyn Burke, Joan and Michael O'Callaghan, Lynda Chin, Des Grisell, Gerry Bond, Cathy Petrocco's sister, Marissa, Peter Owen, Carol Battistella, Alexander Lim, Maeve Reardon, John Lazzari, Helen McLean, Greg Agosta, Errol Lovett, Peter DeMarzi, Chris O'Toole,

Angelo Vigilante, Paul Darbyshire, Pam Gartland, Jim Monaghan, Peter McNamara, Marg Casey Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Anne Jenkins, Mary Hackett, Patricia Keeghan, Mary and Kate Dunn.

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

Brian