

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 166

23rd April, 2023

Greetings,

Nguyen Bao Toan



Toan lived with us at Holy Cross since September last year until two weeks ago while engaged in English language studies at ELSPM. Through a process of discernment he acknowledged that while he loved Passionist life, this was not his future. He returned home to his family who live just over an hour from Saigon. Sadly on Tuesday, around 9.30pm, his parents last saw him on his laptop computer and then discovered Toan had lay down on his bed where he died.

Toan demonstrated to us great generosity and care for others and a genuine willingness to help at all times. Various visitors commented on his bright nature and generosity. In particular he was magnificent in his care of his brothers when they had COVID. He was particularly attentive to prayer and his spiritual life. He would have been 27 on April 26th, so it is a sad premature end to his life which he so conscientiously wanted to devote to God. The entire community, but especially his Vietnamese brothers at Holy Cross have been deeply affected by his sudden death. Fr Dien in Vietnam has been supporting Toan's family. His body was brought home from the hospital to be in his parent's home. Dien is ensuring that Toan has a proper 'Passionist' burial, beginning with a blessing of the body and coffin on Wednesday afternoon. May he rest in peace.

Acknowledgement

Vin Molloy a founding member of our 'A Team' who still helps out now and again with special finance and IT tasks, celebrates his **90th birthday** on **Sunday 25th**.

Michael O'Callaghan turns **92** today, **Friday 23rd**

Rose Cincotta has been with us as finance officer three years today.

Bruno Petrocco is headed back to Italy for a month today

John Stretch is having knee surgery on **Monday 26th**.

Erick has been on retreat this week and returns on Sunday

On Wednesday next week (26th April), you are invited to a session with our Passionist Companions with **Tim Horlock** as guest speaker. Tim will be sharing something of his funeral ministry and how Passionist spirituality helps him carry out this important and challenging work.



Last Sunday I celebrated the weekend Masses at Montmerency and Eltham. Following the 10.00am Sunday Mass at Eltham, a significant number of parishioners stayed for a cup of coffee, encouraged by the fact that there is a high quality machine at the rear of the church and an area where people can sit and talk. There is a roster of people who bring cakes each week. While there are some challenges, I wonder whether we would be interested in investing in something similar?

Anzac Day



Last year I was invited to lead the prayers at the Templestowe War Memorial on Anzac Day, and the invitation has been renewed for 2023. This is an important day in our culture when we remember the ultimate sacrifices made by so many young men and women. Just as in our Eucharist we pray not to forget the death and resurrection of Jesus, so on Anzac Day we commit to not forgetting the gift so many made that we still benefit from today.

In Jesus' day, a shepherd's work was very personal. A good shepherd could say, "I know my sheep. I look after them". Shepherds did not walk behind their small flock, but in front of them. Because the sheep felt safe with their shepherd, they followed his directions when he spoke to them. He slept outside with them so they would not get attacked by wolves. This shepherd Jesus spoke about was totally devoted to his sheep, and Jesus used this image to tell us about how God loves, protects and cares for each of us. It is a wonderful comforting image.

In the days before radio and television it was quite common for a community of people to invite professional orators and actors to read well-known selections from literature and poetry, usually in the town hall. A well-known actor was invited to a town hall to recite some of his favourite readings, and he let it be known that after he had recited a few of his own he would invite people to request readings they would like to hear. If he knew them he would recite them. If he didn't, he hoped they would have a printed copy he could read for them.

On this occasion an old man who had a walking stick, asked if the actor could read Psalm 23 from his well-read Bible. The actor thought he'd have a bit of fun with him said he would be happy to read the psalm on one condition...that the old man would read it too, after him. The old man was reluctant but he agreed.

The actor began, "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. He continued to the very end. "Only goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord all my days." The actor read the passage very well and the audience responded with great applause.

Then it was the old man's turn. His voice was frail, but he did not read from the book. When he reached the end he said in a whisper, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord all my days," The audience was silent. The actor smiled at the old man and said to the audience. "The difference, friends, between the two readings, is this: I was able to read the psalm, but he loves the Shepherd."

Next Tuesday when we celebrate Anzac Day our love for the Shepherd should impel us to share our life with and for others. It is a time to acknowledge the generosity of spirit that men and women have shown in times of conflict. That same spirit should mark our daily lives so that we too are like to good shepherd

There are people we can reach out to every day in ordinary ways, with ordinary needs. Some others have great needs. Do we see them? Do we hear them? Do we recognize what they need physically and emotionally when they return to the safety of sheep pen? Would we leave them to the wolves and bandits?

Let our love for the Shepherd guide us so that the Anzac spirit is not something that belongs to the past and only to a period of armed conflict, but may the willingness to sacrifice and look after those in our care, remain proof that we love the Shepherd.

Changes in Milan Archdiocese



'The Pillar' reports that amid plunging numbers of seminary candidates, Milan Archbishop Mario Delpini has approved a major overhaul of seminary formation in the Archdiocese. The archbishop published a seven-page document outlining the changes to begin in September this year on a three year trial. The Archbishop noted a significant drop in the number of new entrants to priestly formation over the past ten years.

The formation period consists of two years focused on spirituality and four years dedicated to theology. Under the new plan, seminarians will study at a single location rather than separate sites for the two-year and four-year periods. As part of the reforms, seminarians will spend their third year living in small groups in parishes while attending daily classes at the seminary. They will also be connected with families that will offer them support.



In addition, seminarians in the Milan archdiocese previously wore clerical dress from the start of their third year. Now, they will wear it from their ordination as deacons at the beginning of their sixth and final year.

Milan is 87% Catholic and the archdiocese has around 2,000 diocesan priests, 800 male religious, and more than 6,000 female religious. Its 1,107 parishes serve an overall population of more than 5.4 million people. There were a total of 150 seminarians in 2013-14 which had reduced to 78 in 2022-23. There were 24 new admissions in 2017, 11 in 2021, and only 6 in 2022.

Only 6

According to seminary rector Fr Enrico Castagna, the primary motivation for the changes was the “reduced number of admissions compared to the past. To the primary and compelling reason are added others: experiences lived in recent years (including during the pandemic), various perplexities in the face of some steps of the path, opinions that emerged in diverse meetings with priests and laity convinced us of the need for a broader rethink,” he said.



The Archbishop Delpini stressed that “the main motivation guiding any choice referring to the seminary is and will remain to foster, accompany and instruct some young people in the archdiocese in discernment and docility to the Spirit.”



The red paperclip



On 12 July 2005 Canadian Kyle MacDonald began trading his way to a house. He used a weblog to advise readers of his intention, and people began to follow his trading through the internet. On that first day he managed to trade his starting item, a large red paper clip, for a fish pen in Vancouver. The fish pen was swapped for a ceramic door knob and the door knob was swapped for an outdoor camping stove!

Next, the stove was swapped in New York for an electric 1000W Honda EX generator which in turn was swapped for a Neon Bar sign and a beer keg. The bar sign and keg were swapped for a snowmobile and the snowmobile was exchanged for a ski vacation which in turn was swapped for a van. The van was swapped for a recording contract and that recording contract was traded way for one year’s free rent in an apartment in Arizona.

Humour

A band of squirrels had become quite a problem, so the Presbyterian church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist church the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water-slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week

The Lutheran church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide.

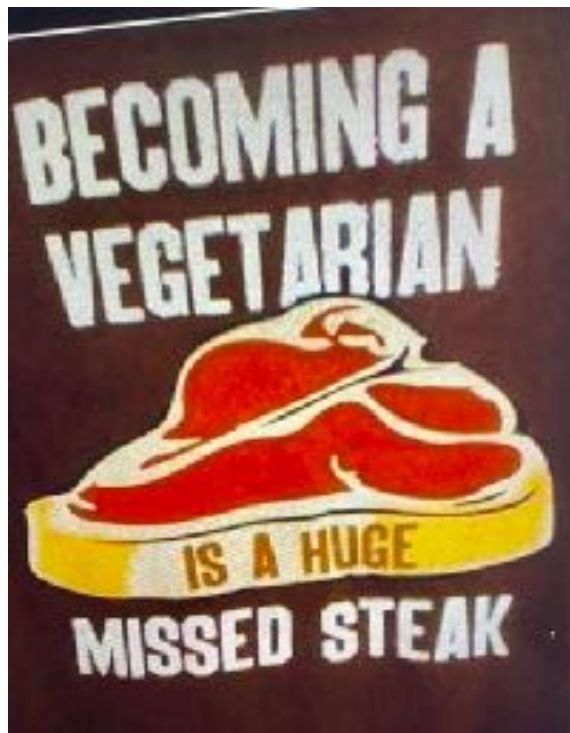
The Episcopalians tried a much more unique path by setting out pans of whiskey around their church in an effort to kill the squirrels with alcohol. They sadly learned how much damage a band of drunk squirrels can do.

The Catholic church came up with a very creative strategy! They baptized all the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now they see them only at Christmas and Easter.

Not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.



A man went to a funeral and asked the widow: "Mind if I say a word?" She said: "Please do." The man cleared his throat and said: "Plethora." The widow replied: "Thanks, that means a lot." A friend than asked, Mind if I say a word?" She said: "Please do." The man cleared his throat and said: "Bargain." The widow replied: "Thanks, that means a great deal."



Once you understand why the pizza is made round, Packed in a square box, And eaten as a triangle.. Then you will understand women



Q Why was the fraction apprehensive about marrying the decimal?

A Because he would have to convert.

Q Why did the student get upset when his teacher called him average?

A It was a mean thing to say.

Q Why was the maths book depressed? A It had a lot of problems.

Q What do you call a sleepwalking nun? A A Roamin' Catholic.

Q Why was the equal sign so humble?

A Because she knew she wasn't greater than or less than anyone else.

Q What do you call the number 7 and the number 3 when they go out on a date?

A The odd couple, though 7 is in her prime.

Q. People are making end of the world jokes like there's no tomorrow.

A. I've always had an irrational fear of speed bumps but I'm slowly getting over it.

I've finally told my suitcase there will be no holiday this year. Now I'm dealing with the emotional baggage.

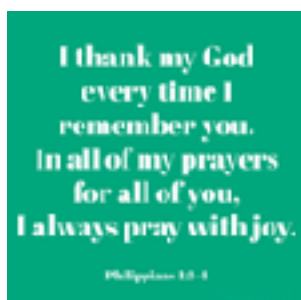
A girl said she recognised me from her vegetarian club but I'd never met herbivore.

If you're not supposed to eat at night, why is there a light bulb in the refrigerator?

Prayers

We remember [Toan](#), who passed away suddenly on Tuesday night. We also remember [Joseph Cantone](#) who died last Sunday following a stroke (on Easter Sunday) and his family. [Kevin Hennessy](#) will celebrate his funeral at St Kevin's next Thursday.

We give thanks again for [Michael Doyle's](#) life. The special tributes from so many people but especially his family and old school students, were inspiring. We remember those acknowledging anniversaries at this time, especially [Nancy Hayward](#) (April 25th)



We also remember those in our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially Pam Storey, Maree Bartoli, Ted Hallam, Bronwyn Burke, Gerald & Margaret Wright, Michael O'Callaghan, Lynda Chin, Gerry Bond, Alexander Lim, Cathy Petrocco's sister, Marissa, Maeve & John Reardon, John Lazzari, Des Grisell, Peter Owen, Helen McLean, Greg Agosta, Errol Lovett, Peter DeMarzi, Chris O'Toole, Angelo Vigilante, Pam Gartland, Jim Monaghan,

Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Peter McNamara, Marg Casey, Mary Hackett, Patricia Keeghan, Anne Jenkins, Mary and Kate Dunn.

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

Brian