

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 172

2nd June 2023

Greetings,

Welcome to June! We are halfway through 2023, Christmas is in 6 months! If I'm getting that wrong it has to do with my poor mathematical skills. Brian Traynor will be returning soon but do not hold your breath just yet -we all miss him, it's not just you! Soon after he arrives, he will have to go away from Holy Cross again for about 10 days, for meetings and other ministries. He has provided a lot of materials for this newsletter for which I am hugely grateful but would not like to take credit. Any thankyou's send to Brian as he puts a lot of work into this. I admire such exceptional work.

Holy Cross Record for Fewer Dishes

Last week Phi cooked a delicious community meal with the least amount of dishes to wash afterward. It was agreed by everyone including Jerome and Chris, that this was yet the record for as long as we could all remember. Phi, you can cook again, obviously the community loves food and less washing up. I wonder how many of you, reading this, prefer less washing up or enjoy doing dishes. We wait to see who breaks the Holy Cross record next, and when.



COME AWAY DAYS AT HOLY CROSS

The Come Away Days program continues at Holy Cross on **Tuesday 13 June**. The theme of the day is, "*Seeking and Finding*." The day's program provides opportunities for prayer, reflection and fellowship in the peaceful grounds and facilities of Holy Cross. All are welcome. BYO lunch. Registration is from 9.30am. The day concludes at 2pm with a celebration of the Eucharist. For further details contact Frank Burke, burke.frank942@yahoo.com.au or 0407998781.



Paul's churches and Passionist Family Groups (Part 2) -Brian Traynor

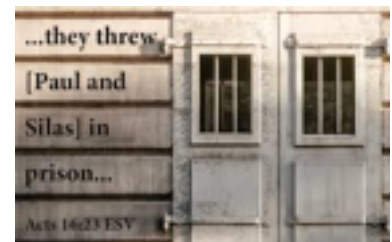


Paul, Silas and Timothy travelled west into what was then called Asia and came to Troas on the Aegean Sea about 650 kms west of Iconium. They decided next to take their news to Europe, beginning in Philippi, an important Roman city in Macedonia, 250 kilometres north west of Troas. The Jewish community here was very small. A woman named Lydia, who was impressed by Paul, was baptised, along with her family, and she insisted the missionaries move into her home, which became their church.

Paul's method was to go to the synagogues in a new town, first. Since it is estimated that there were 5,000,000 Jews living outside Israel at this time, and they formed 10%-15% of the population in most cities, it was natural to seek out 'one's own', through the synagogue. The cities were densely populated and privacy was minimal. This meant that that household neighbours soon heard or saw anything unusual that was happening. Paul gave attention to households as a method of conversion, and in most cases he was able to stay with 'a household'. Not surprisingly, he recommended hospitality as a primary Christian virtue

In Philippi, Paul was imprisoned because he silenced a possessed girl who was a money maker for those promoting icons to pagan gods. While imprisoned, Paul's jailer and family were baptised. Paul then travelled 100 kilometres south to Thessalonika (now Salonica) which was a large commercial city. He made a number of converts within a few weeks, and once again this roused hostility among the Jews.

Because of this he headed 70 kilometres south to Beroea. He found the Jews there more open minded and there were many converts, but the opposition he had met in Thessalonika followed him to Beroea and he fled again, this time finishing up, almost by accident in Athens 250 kilometres south.



Paul was astounded by the idolatrous nature of Athens. He took to street corners and market places to debate with people. Some philosophers invited him to speak to them. After an unsuccessful attempt to explain his message in philosophical terms and with no Jewish converts and only a handful of Greek

converts, he left for Corinth 30 kilometres south.



Corinth was a thriving trade and port city with a large number of immigrants and a large population of Jews. It was notorious for its immorality. Founding the Church there was to be Paul's most difficult, but greatest achievement. He changed his message here to the 'stupidity of the cross'.

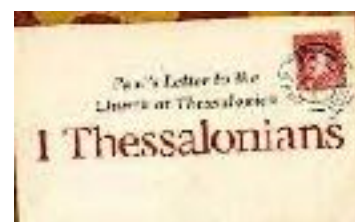
Paul was despondent when he arrived, but fortunately he made friends with Aquila and his wife Priscilla. They were later to travel with him to Ephesus where they became renowned for their home of hospitality. They shared Paul's tent-making profession and he lodged with them. They told Paul of the church in Rome, where they had come from. This enabled him to write to the Romans before visiting there.

After the Jews in Corinth turned against him, Paul declared that he was now free to go to the Gentiles, since the Jews had rejected him. He moved into a new abode with Justus, who lived next door to the synagogue! Paul preached for a further eighteen months and many came to believe in Jesus, including the synagogue president. He then travelled by sea to Ephesus 400 kilometres east. He took Aquila and Priscilla with him and they remained there. He promised to return and set out almost 1000 kilometres east by sea to Caesarea. From there he went up to Jerusalem to greet the church, and then he went back to Antioch. The amount of travelling Paul did is incredible.



Paul had sent Timothy to Thessalonika from Athens, because he was concerned for his converts there. Timothy gave a positive report to Paul in Corinth and it was from there that Paul wrote his first letter to the church in Thessalonika.

A few months later Timothy gave Paul a second encouraging report, despite admitting difficulties. This is clearly expressed in Paul's letters, together with words of instruction that had been requested, and suggestions probably resulting from Timothy's observations. These letters are the first writings of the New Testament.





This same style of sending helpers and writing letters is mirrored by the visits made by Fr Peter McGrath and various Passionists, Directors and Regional Co-ordinators in the early years of the PFGM in each region. These were opportunities to explain the nature of PFG's and assist with difficulties during early growth. During the founding years of the various Family Groups, there were many gatherings of leaders, and prior to emails and cell phones, many letters were written to parish Co-ordinators and group leaders. Reports on progress were shared at regular meetings of those responsible for establishing the Passionist Family Groups.

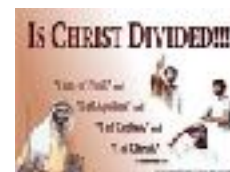
Paul did the same thing, although he did not have the advantage of modern forms of travel or instant communication. He did not stay in Antioch for long after his last trip. He made a systematic visit of Galatia and Phrygia, giving encouragement to the churches he had founded, rather than starting new ones. His journey ended in Ephesus, where he stayed for several years with Aquila and Priscilla. Ephesus was a city that rivalled Antioch for prominence in the Eastern Mediterranean, so it was important for Paul to establish a church there. The city was decadent. Magic was rife. Artemis, the many breasted fertility goddess and her temple were central to life in Ephesus. People from all over the central part of modern day eastern Turkey (called 'Asia' in Acts), visited Ephesus and would have been able to learn about the Gospel.



The silversmiths made their trade from making images of Artemis, and Paul became a serious threat to their trade, with a lessening demand for their wares. The threat of trouble led him to undertake another journey to consolidate the churches he had founded. Paul set out with a band of co-workers to Troas and then Philippi where he met up with Luke and Titus. Apollo, a Jew from Alexandria had arrived in Ephesus before Paul had. He was very gifted but did not know the full truth of the message so he was corrected by Aquila and Priscilla. His enthusiasm in Corinth had led to factions. Some were 'for Paul', others 'for Apollo', others 'for Peter'.



The threat of division caused Paul great anxiety and he wrote firmly to the Corinthians from Ephesus, to avoid this. Titus reported to him that things were



going well in Corinth. Leaving Philippi, Paul spent three months visiting the churches that he had established some years previously in Greece. Paul arrived in Corinth. On the point of departure for Syria, Paul learned of a Jewish plot against him. This led him to travel north, returning the way he had come, reaching Philippi and sailing for Troas. It was here that the famous incident of the man falling asleep and dropping from the window ledge occurred. From Troas, Paul went by road to Assos. He knew if he went to Ephesus he might not reach Jerusalem in time for Passover, so he stayed at Miletus and summoned the church leaders from Ephesus (100 kilometres north) to meet him there. His departure from there was filled with sadness as he warned them they would never see him again (Acts 20:19-38). From Miletus Paul sailed to Rhodes and to Patara. They found there a ship bound for Phoenicia. On their way they sighted Cyprus but sailed on to Tyre in Syria where they spent a week.

His departure from Tyre recreated a similar scene to that at Miletus. They spent a day with the community at Ptolemais and went to Caesarea, where they stayed with Philip the deacon. Paul was warned not to return to Jerusalem which at this time was filled with violence that was to lead to its destruction in AD70. The country was in economic decline, lawlessness flourished and there was heavy taxation. Famine added to the misery of the people. There was political division, largely separating the pro-Roman wealthy from the poor.



Paul had been given the same advice at Miletus and Tyre, but explained that he had to go to Jerusalem. He received a warm welcome from the church there and met with James and the elders where he gave an account of the work he had accomplished. They suggested Paul undergo a ritual to help disarm his critics about his non-observance of Jewish law. Paul agreed to this. This exercise finished in a riot when Paul was mistaken for an Egyptian who had led a revolt

against the Romans. Paul was taken prisoner. But there was confusion as to why he was on trial. He was brought before the Sanhedrin. Here Paul created greater confusion by causing the Sadducees and Pharisees to begin arguing among themselves about the resurrection. Amid this near riot he was taken away, and following his request to have his case heard in Rome because he was a Roman citizen, he was taken away to Caesarea.

To be continued next week

Humour

Answering machine

After much dialogue and disagreement among staff and parents at a high school in California, a false message was put on the internet about the staff having voted unanimously to record on their school telephone answering machine. Such a suggestion was never made, but below is the message that could have been posted.

Hello! You have reached the automated answering service of your school. In order to assist you in connecting to the right staff member, please listen to all the options before making a selection:

- To lie about why your child is absent - Press 1
- To make excuses for why your child did not do his work - Press 2
- To complain about what we do - Press 3
- To swear at staff members - Press 4
- To ask why you didn't get information that was already enclosed in your newsletter and several flyers mailed to you - Press 5
- If you want us to raise your child - Press 6
- If you want to reach out and touch, slap or hit someone - Press 7
- To request another teacher, for the third time this year - Press 8
- To complain about bus transportation - Press 9
- To complain about school lunches - Press 0

If you realize this is the real world and your child must be accountable and responsible for his/her own behaviour, class work, homework and that it's not the teachers' fault for your child's lack of effort: Hang up and have a nice day!
If you want this in another language, move to a country that speaks it.

"The trouble with quotes on the Internet is that it's difficult to determine whether or not they are genuine".

~~~Abraham Lincoln

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Why are skeletons so calm?  
Because nothing gets under their skin.

What did Mars ask Saturn?  
"Hey, can you give me a ring some time?"

Why can't you trust an atom?  
Because they make up everything.

Why shouldn't you make fun of a paleontologist?  
Because you will get Jurasskicked.

How did the chemist feel about oxygen and potassium hanging out?      A. OK.

If you want to be inspired....enjoy this clip sent to us by someone:

Type on YouTube: INSPIRATIONAL dancer Musa Motha gets FIRST EVER GROUP GOLDEN BUZZER! | Auditions | BGT 2023

Or Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=6qonkpkK018>

This Sunday we celebrate Trinity Sunday.



## Prayers

We remember those who have died, especially Gerald Wright, as well as those whose anniversaries are around this time and their families, especially **John Michael Smith** (7<sup>th</sup> June), and **John Chubb** (8<sup>th</sup> June).



We also remember those in our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially Denis Bergin (in palliative care), Fr Gerard Quin CP, Pam Storey, Maree Bartoli, Bronwyn Burke & Margaret Wright, Michael O'Callaghan, Lynda Chin, Gerry Bond, Cathy Petrocco's sister, Marissa, Alexander Lim, Maeve Reardon, John Lazzari, Des Grisell, Peter Owen, Helen McLean, Greg Agosta, Errol Lovett, Chris O'Toole, Angelo Vigilante, Pam Gartland, Jim Monaghan, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Peter McNamara, Marg Casey, Mary Hackett, Patricia Keeghan, Anne Jenkins, Jerome, Mary and Kate Dunn.

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

*With Peace,  
Erick & Brian*