

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 190

6th October, 2023

News from London

Peter and Debbie shared this wonderfully encouraging news

It has been a very long four week wait since the last scan. Yesterday we heard from David and Vicky that the growth that was very obvious in one lung has stopped growing and actually looks smaller compared to the previous scan. The doctor could not believe it and sent for a colleague to check it with him. It now looks like this baby boy will be able to go full term and the outcome is much more positive. Vicky is now 6 months pregnant.

We have every faith that this is a miracle and thank everyone who has said prayers for him. Please pass on our thanks to everyone at Holy Cross and the wider Holy Spirit Province community that have been praying for this new little family to be.

Reading the clock



It was an amusing exercise to explain to some of our students who are learning English, why we have 'daylight saving', how it works and what it would be like. It reminded one of our Vietnamese brothers that Irish comedian Dave Allen had given a very funny explanation to his young son, on how to read a clock. He used examples such as, "the little hand is the fat hand and it is first hand. It measures the hours; the big hand is the second hand and it measures the minutes and the third hand is the second hand!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QVPUIRGthI>



We are not sure what Erick, Phi, Hai, Cu'ong and Thang are doing in this photo, but given they are usually warm welcomers at Sunday Mass, maybe they were practicing!

John Deere



Our new mower arrived last week and Peter Norman provided an extensive lesson for several of the community members. These mowers are expensive but necessary because of the large area we have to mow. The oval alone took hours for Joseph to cut with this new mower. Our grounds are kept in great shape mainly by the students, as well as Erick, JD and Joseph and with Peter Norman's help.

Thanks to all who helped us to purchase this machine. May you appreciate its work.

The Synod



After two years of preparation, the Synod 'on Synodality' began in Rome on Wednesday this week. There are great expectations among many people who see this as an opportunity for the church to make some meaningful change for contemporary times. There are some others who fear that the Church will focus too much on change and too little on tradition.

If you want to have some simple practice at the communication style promoted for the Synod, you could stop yourself for a moment if you are expressing an opinion in a very definite way, and invite the person(s) to whom you are speaking for their point of view. As they speak, focus totally on her/him and listen carefully and openly to their point of view, without needing to jump in or disagree. This is respectful listening and sometimes it opens us to new insights. When this happens in a sacred space, God's voice can get a chance to be heard.

This Synod is unprecedented for three reasons.

1. It is a two year process involving the entire Church. It will finish in October 2024.
2. It offers the entire Church an experience of Synodality to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us here and now
3. It aims to make Synodality a way of being for every country, diocese and parish around the world so that each person can be an agent for listening, hearing and contributing to help us all 'journey together'. It is an invitation to have every voice (not just bishops) heard.



Pope promotes “safe space” for Synod participants

by Bishop Shane Mackinlay

Later this week, I will be one of 15 Australians and hundreds of people from around the world heading to Rome for the first assembly of what has become known as the “Synod on Synodality”. Next month’s assembly, and another to follow in October 2024, are the continuation of what has been dubbed “the world’s largest ever consultation”. When you consider that almost 120 bishops conferences from every part of the world gathered the thoughts of the People of God in their dioceses, that claim makes sense. This consultation has also been marked by an openness and transparency that hasn’t always been characteristic of Vatican processes. It is part of a wider awareness across the Church internationally of how much we can learn from good practices in other parts of society.

Much like the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, the Synod’s process reflects a conviction that by sharing the fruits of the community’s prayer, conversation and discernment, we can build a shared spiritual and emotional investment in what is being discussed, as well as having new opportunities to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.



As the Synod on Synodality prepares to open on October 4, there has been some discussion about how the openness and transparency that has been evident over the past three years might continue over the next few weeks. This is similar to issues that we grappled with during the Plenary Council journey.

After more than 220,000 people had shared their joys and their hopes, their griefs and their anxieties, we wanted to invite those people to continue their journey with the 275 members who would participate and vote in the Council’s two assemblies. At the same time, we wanted to create a protected space for Council members to engage in prayerful and deeply personal conversations, while still sharing the fruits of that discernment with the Australian people.



It wasn’t an easy balance to find, but daily updates through stories, photos and videos sought to capture the essence of the discussions and the spirit – and indeed the Spirit – that was present in those conversations. Council members were able to share their own experiences and their own views on the important topics that were on the agenda as they chose, but with an understanding that the views of others were theirs alone to share (or not).

At this stage, it appears that during next month’s assembly of the Synod on Synodality, the priority will be on ensuring that the confidentiality of the

“conversations in the Spirit” is protected, so that there can be a free exchange of people’s thoughts across the questions we will be praying with and reflecting upon.



Pope Francis, when asked recently about the upcoming assembly, said “There is one thing that we must safeguard, the synodal atmosphere. This is not a television show where you talk about everything. No. There is a religious moment; there is a moment of religious exchange.”

We know that our faith is one of the most deeply personal parts of our being. Sharing our innermost thoughts on such matters can be hard, and it is certainly important that any vulnerability in those moments is respected. It is in this context that Pope Francis and his collaborators are seeking to create a “safe space” for Synod participants during the assembly.



Paolo Ruffini, the prefect of the Vatican’s Dicastery for Communications, explained it this way: “Maintaining the confidentiality, the privacy, and, I would say, the sacredness of certain places for conversation in the Spirit, is part and parcel of the desire to make these moments a true opportunity for listening, discernment and prayer rooted in communion.”

To that end, some aspects of the Synod will be livestreamed and it’s expected there will be regular updates on the discussions that are taking place. As the Holy Father has reminded us, “the Synod is not a parliament”, and so the proceedings of the Synod will not be captured like the debate in Parliament. However, it is expected that a synthesis report on the first assembly will be published to guide ongoing discernment by the whole People of God in preparation for the second assembly next October.



With that in mind, we see the rationale for Pope Francis’ desire to safeguard the prayerful exchange of ideas during the assembly, while still promoting the participation of the whole People of God in the broader synod process. As we



Australian participants travel to Rome, we ask you to accompany us in prayer and to stay connected to this ongoing journey of renewal in Jesus Christ. For our part, we will do what we can to share our reflections on our experiences as part of this global exercise in synodality, both during the assembly and after we return to Australia later in the year.

The pope’s response to five cardinals

Five cardinals twice sent requests for doctrinal clarifications to Pope Francis in July. He replied the following day. The cardinals published their questions publically just two days prior to the Synod. Yesterday the Vatican published Pope Francis' response to the five cardinals who had not included the responses the Pope had given them. This demonstrates that for some people, the Synod is a battleground to defend traditional teaching.

Reporter Matthieu Lasserre offered this outline of the cardinal's strategy.

Cardinals Robert Sarah, Raymond Burke, Walter Brandmüller, Juan Sandoval Íñiguez and Joseph Zen, had demanded that Francis clarify several points: doctrinal developments depending on culture and time, the ordination of women, the blessing of homosexual couples, sacramental absolution, and synodality as a constitutive dimension of the Catholic Church.



Francis wrote, "Although you acknowledge that the supreme and full authority of the Church is exercised both by the pope by virtue of his office and by the college of bishops together with their head, the Roman Pontiff" – he said – "with these very questions, you manifest your need to participate, to freely express your opinion, and to collaborate, thereby requesting a form of 'synodality' in the exercise of my ministry."

Faced with the cardinals who are worried that Catholic doctrine could evolve with the times, the pope reaffirmed its "immutable" and "obligatory" character. But he pointed out that "cultural changes and new challenges in history do not modify Revelation but can stimulate us to express certain aspects of its overflowing richness better". He added that it is "inevitable that this can lead to a better expression of some past statements of the Magisterium".



In addressing the cardinals' concerns about offering a blessing for same-sex unions (which Synodal Path in Germany has called for), Francis reiterated that the Church only recognizes marriage between a man and a woman and that it "avoids any type of rite or sacramental that might contradict this conviction". However, he said "pastoral charity" should never be lacking. "Therefore, pastoral prudence must adequately discern whether there are forms of blessing, requested by one or more persons, that do not convey a mistaken concept of marriage," he said.



While the cardinals also raised doubts about the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, particularly on the subject of repentance, the pope gave them a rather dry response. "Repentance is necessary for the validity of sacramental absolution and implies a resolution not to sin," he said. "But there is no mathematics here, and once again I must remind you that the confessional is not a customs house."

On Monday October 2nd, the five cardinals published an open letter to Catholics revealing the dubia. "We judge it our duty to inform you, the faithful (can. 212 § 3), so that you may not be subject to confusion, error, and discouragement but rather may pray for the universal Church and, in particular, the Roman Pontiff, that the Gospel may be taught ever more clearly and followed ever more faithfully," they wrote. They said they issued the open letter "in view of various declarations of highly-placed prelates, pertaining to the celebration of the next Synod of Bishops, that are openly contrary to the constant doctrine and discipline of the Church". The letter was posted on Cardinal Burke's website in several languages.



The 75-year-old American later claimed that the initiative was not intended to "take a position against Pope Francis". In an interview with the National Catholic Register, he said: "It would be a great pity if the debate centres around the person of the pope instead of the most grave doctrinal and disciplinary questions posed by the imminent session of the Synod of Bishops."

Throughout Francis' pontificate, certain cardinals have several times exercised the right – supported by canon law – to issue dubia. Cardinals Burke and Brandmüller joined two other (since deceased) cardinals in 2016 in asking the pope to clarify certain passages in his apostolic exhortation *Amoris laetitia*, in particular regarding the access of divorced and remarried people to the sacraments.

To read the questions and Pope Francis' responses:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-10/pope-francis-responds-to-dubia-of-five-cardinals.html>

Professional Standards session

**PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS**

**Tuesday 17th October, Corbett Room, Holy Cross
2.00pm-3.00pm & cuppa**

Those who have a ministry with the Passionists are required to participate in annual in-service. **Please register with Tina: risk.manager@passionists.com**
If you cannot attend, alternative arrangements can be made with Tina.



Did you know this about bees?

- One of the first coins in the world had a bee symbol on them? A coin minted in Macedon between 412 BCE and 350 BCE had a bee on one side. [A](#)
- There are live enzymes in honey?
 - If there is contact with a metal spoon, these enzymes die?
(So the best way to eat honey is with wooden spoon, if you can't find one, use plastic).
- Honey contains a substance that helps your brain work better?
- Honey is one of the rare foods on earth that alone can sustain human life?
- One spoon of honey is enough to sustain human life for 24 hours?
- Propolis that bees produce is a strong natural antibiotics?
(But don't eat it if you are allergic to chrysanthemum)
- Honey has no expiration date?
- The bodies of great emperors of the world were buried in golden coffins and then covered with honey to prevent putrefaction?-
- The term "HONEY MOON" comes from the fact that newlyweds consumed honey for fertility after the wedding?
- A bee lives less than 40 days, visits at least 1000 flowers and produces less than a teaspoon of honey

For more information contact a local bee-keeper!



Food for thought

If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?

Do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune?
And what about Ba Ba Black sheep?

Why did you just try singing these songs?

Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?

Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting dead?

Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?

Humour

A doctor could not find a job in a hospital in his area , so he opened a clinic and put a sign outside that read:

"TREATMENT \$40 - IF NOT CURED GET BACK \$100."

An MP thought this was a great opportunity to earn \$100 and went to the clinic.

MP: "I have lost my sense of taste."

Doctor: "Nurse, bring medicine from box No. 22 and put 3 drops in patient's mouth."

MP: "Ugh. this is kerosene."

Doctor: "Congrats, your sense of taste is restored. Give me \$20 please."

The annoyed MP went back after a few days to recover his money.

MP: "I have lost my memory. I cannot remember anything."

Doctor: "Nurse, bring medicine from box no. 22 and put 3 drops in his mouth."

MP "This is kerosene. You gave this to me last time for restoring my taste."

Doctor: "Congrats. You have got your memory back. Give me \$20 please."

The fuming MP paid him, and then came back a week later determined to get back \$100.

MP: "My eyesight has become very weak I can't see at all."

Doctor: "Well, I don't have any medicine for that, so take this \$100."

MP (staring at the note): "But this is \$20, not \$100!"

Doctor: "Congrats, your eyesight is restored. Give me \$20 please"

- Why do they use sterilized needles for death by lethal injection?
- Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?
- Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?
- Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?
- Whose idea was it to put an 'S' in the word 'lisp'?
- Is there ever a day that mattresses are not on sale?
- Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hope that something new to eat will have materialized?
- Why is it that no plastic bag will open from the end on your first try?

- How do those dead bugs get into those enclosed light fixtures?
- Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?
- How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?
- The statistics on sanity is that one out of every four persons are suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends -- if they're okay, then it's you.

Prayers

We remember Sr Robyn Reynolds OLSH who died unexpectedly in Dublin last Friday night, while travelling to a sabbatical course from Melbourne.

We remember those whose **anniversaries** are around this time and their families, especially: Evan Davies and Aileen Dorrat (8th) John Sheehan (9th) Annette Mascitti (11th) Mario Spinosa (12th) Frank Mandile, Frank Nixon, Alethea Howard & Marietta Carapellotti (13th)



Jerome

Jerome has been in considerable pain and discomfort this week



We remember all others in our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially Peter Owen, Alexander Lim, Gerry Bond, Pam Storey, Maree Bartoli, Monica and Anthona Hennessy, Lynda Chin, Bronwyn Burke, Maeve Reardon, Des Grisell, Michael O'Callaghan, Bernadette Own, Helen McLean, Phil Drew, Greg Agosta, Angelo Vigilante, Mary Hackett, Peter McNamara, Pam Gartland, Sr Gen

Walsh RSC,

Patricia Keeghan, Errol Lovett, Anne Jenkins. Chris O'Toole, Mary and Kate Dunn, Gerald Quinn CP

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

Brian

*The Church is a field hospital after battle
 To be saints is not a privilege for a few but a vocation for everyone
 The confessional is not a customs house
 Communion is not a prize for the perfect, but a medicine for the weak*

Pope Francis