

## Holy Cross Retreat



### Letter 192

19th October, 2023



Our next door neighbour Shirley Barnes tripped while boarding a ferry last Friday. Fortunately Teresa Lim (with a background in nursing) was with Shirley and they visited a medical clinic. An x-ray revealed a broken left wrist. As a result, Shirley will be a little out of action for six weeks. She will suffer a number of restrictions for a while, including being unable to drive. One way our community will notice this is that Shirley cooks our evening meal voluntarily twice a week. We wish Shirley minimal inconvenience and a speedy recovery.

## Professional Standards session

PROFESSIONAL  
STANDARDS

The annual session on Professional Standards' was led by Tim Horlock at Holy Cross On Tuesday. Our Risk Management Officer, Tina Minichilli maintains a register of those who have completed annual sessions and signed a Province Code of Conduct. It is a requirement in Victoria for all organisations that their employees, staff and volunteers undertake these sessions. Tina will be in contact to offer an online session and questionnaire for those who were unable to attend. Thank you to all those who have or who will undertake these sessions.

## Bro Jerome



Jerome has improved this week, although because his kidneys are not functioning well, there are otherwise helpful medications that he cannot take. He is walking slowly to reduce pain and philosophically sees all this as related to 'old age'. Yesterday he headed up to Benalla to spend three days with his sister Mary who is suffering from cancer.

## Melbourne Marathon



**Erick** finished fifth overall and was the third Victorian home in last Sunday's Melbourne marathon. He ran the 42.195 kms in 2 hours 21 minutes and 16 seconds, averaging 3.21 minutes per kilometre. This was eight and a half minutes faster than his last Melbourne marathon run which is a wonderful achievement. This photo displays the top three placegetters. We extend congratulations to Erick, the Victorian bronze medalist. Thanks again to all those who have been supporting him in his athletics.

## Pastor back



**Pastor** and his brother **Olaf** had planned some months ago to run in the marathon, but Olaf's registration application did not come through to him in time. He was able to register and compete in the 10 kilometre race. Pastor intended to run in the 21 kilometre race but an injured ankle prevented that. It was lovely having them both here for a few days. Olaf was very generous to the community, including gifting several of us with a Tanzanian tee shirt. As a sign of appreciation, Chris presented Olaf with an official supporters Kangaroos (North Melbourne) shirt.



## Robot cleaning



For someone not expecting it, a trip downstairs at night at Holy Cross can be a 'back to the future' experience with a friendly robot vacuum and mopping cleaner working away, while all else is quiet. This has the benefit of getting some important cleaning down when the area is not in use and when it would require someone working very late or very early hours.

## This weekend



This weekend (Oct 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>) the Passionist Family Group Movement is holding a weekend at Holy Cross for its national leadership team to gather information and ideas for the ongoing support and guidance of the thousands of individual groups throughout Australia (and New Zealand). The Movement is ageing, but the signs are clear that PFG's remain relevant and are an effective way of creating parish community and living faith in a practical way. These team members

will join us for 10.00am Sunday Mass.

### Chris' birthday



The community celebrated Chris' birthday in a low-key manner on Tuesday night. Instead of 68 candles we gave him one – and a mud cake! Our custom on a birthday is to provide a tee-shirt. These days we try to match the size to the person. There was a time when the right fit was purely accidental!

### Next Sunday....Coffee cart



Thanks to a generous provider, this Sunday following Mass we will again have the coffee cart here. We hope those attending Mass will wait around to mix and meet with others, while enjoying a coffee. At this stage the forecast is not promising but it will be on. Those who need to be dropped off near the chapel can be, but there will be no parking in the driveway near the chapel.

### For your diary

**November 19<sup>th</sup>** Mass for all deceased relatives and friends of Holy Cross

### Israel-Gaza conflict



There is a long history of conflict in this region as we know. The Bible tells us that Joshua conquered Canaan (Palestine) to take back the land promised to Abraham because the people had become corrupt, and had prevented Canaan from being a blessing to the world.

Joshua distributed the land among the twelve tribes. Canaan was the grandson of Noah and the son of Ham. The Israelites were descendants of Noah's son Shem.

Scholars agree that in fact instead of massive battles attributed to Joshua (which makes a good story) there was a gradual process of infiltration and peaceful acculturation that occurred over a period as long as two centuries, as people moved away from the sea to the more



fertile inland areas.

Most of the towns taken were military centres rather than civilian centres. One scholar, Ryan Butler suggested it was “like pulling down the Great Wall of China, not demolishing Beijing, or taking out the Pentagon, not New York City”. Chapter 20 of the book of Deuteronomy instructs the Israelites to offer terms of peace before a battle so there were signs of moral decency. The fact remains that there was invasion and innocent Canaanites were killed.



It is timely to remember that Jesus was born into a poor family and in a state oppressed by Romans.

Like Palestinians today, Jesus knew what it was like to be marginalised and outcast. He may not have experienced antisemitism like so many Jewish people have, but we know he was mocked and tortured. Jesus rejected violence as a means of establishing his kingdom. He crossed ethnic and cultural boundaries, including an encounter with a Canaanite woman, in his offer of acceptance and peace. His refusal of violence cost him a violent death but bequeathed a living promise of full life despite suffering, rejection and even death.

Where, then are we in October 2023?

### **The Hamas-Israeli War and the death of diplomacy**



*This brief reflection by Isabelle de Gaulmyn was published by La Croix on October 9, 2023. Isabella is a senior editor at La Croix and a former Vatican correspondent).*

It is not possible to place the State of Israel and an armed terrorist group "on the same level". One is a democratic country, albeit in crisis, while the other is a violent, clandestine and dictatorial organization. Hamas's attack on Israel, and its inhumane treatment of civilians, must be firmly condemned. But it is never wrong to ask why, and to see how years of prevarication, indifference and Israeli nationalist policy have led to this.

The aggression of Hamas (an Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement) seems to signal the final death of diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. Thirty years after the Oslo Accords, the colonization of the West Bank by Jewish settlers has reached a point of no return. And the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip has been brought to its knees under a blockade that's been in force since 2007.



Meanwhile, Hamas has refused any conciliation with

Israel and has adopted the stance of a radical and violent opposition. The Palestinian residents of Gaza are stuck in the middle, having no other prospect than to live in a territory with no future. Their young people are locked in an open-air prison and have little alternative to violent action.



The Hamas offensive is certainly a demonstration of strength by the terrorist group, which has shown that it can destabilize the mostly Jewish Israeli state. But there is no doubt that it will come at a high price, particularly for the people of Gaza.

Once the astonishment of the last few days has passed, we can only hope that the Israeli people understand the impasse into which their government's current policy is dragging them and their entire territory. Otherwise, it's hard to see how another bloodbath can be avoided...

### Understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

The history of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians that has been ongoing for more than half a century By La Croix International staff

October 10, 2023



The brutal and murderous military offensive by Hamas on October 7, and the uncompromising response by Israel has revived a conflict that has been ongoing for 70 years. Hamas is an acronym that stands for "Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya," which translates to "Islamic Resistance Movement" in English.

These are just a few key moments in a complex and ongoing conflict in the region:

**\*\*1917 - Balfour Declaration\*\*:** *The Balfour Declaration is issued by the British government, expressing support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.*



In the context of World War I and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the British government approached the Zionist movement, which aimed to establish a homeland for Jews in Palestine. On November 2, 1917, the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, pledged in a letter to "favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." This declaration would later be incorporated into the mandate granted to Britain in 1922 over the Palestinian territory.

**\*\*1947 - UN Partition Plan\*\***: *The United Nations approves a plan to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states with Jerusalem an international city.* During the British Mandate, Jewish immigration to Palestine accelerated due to persecutions and the extermination of Jews in Europe. By 1945, the Jewish community represented one-third of the territory's population. After World War II, Britain relinquished its mandate, and the issue of Jewish presence in Palestine was internationalized, with the administration of the territory entrusted to the UN.

#### 4. UN Partition Plan, 1947

- This map shows how the United Nations partitioned (divided) Palestine/Israel into two different countries.
- The city of Jerusalem was taken over by the United Nations.
- Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Palestine immediately attacked Israel after this was set up.

The United Nations divided Israel into a Palestinian region and an Israeli region. The UN took control of Jerusalem, the most important city

ADD THE BOX TO YOUR WORKSHEET



In 1947, the international organization recommended the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state (55% of the territory), an Arab state (45% of the territory), and an international administration zone corresponding to Jerusalem. Amid clashes between Jewish and Palestinian militias on the fringes of these borders, the State of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948, within the boundaries outlined

in the UN partition plan.

**\*\*1948 - Declaration of the State of Israel\*\***: *David Ben-Gurion declares the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. This triggers the Arab-Israeli War of 1948.*



Following the establishment of the State of Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt declared war on it. The Israeli armed forces quickly gained the upper hand and captured territory. Gaza came under the administration of Egypt, and the West Bank fell under the control of Transjordan (present-day Jordan).

Between 700,000 and 900,000 Palestinian refugees fled and settled in Gaza, the West Bank, or neighbouring Arab countries. For the Zionists, this first Arab-Israeli war represented a victorious war of independence. For Palestinians, the year 1948 remains the Nakba, the "catastrophe" that initiated the struggle for the right of return to their land.

**\*\*1967 - Six-Day War\*\***: *Israel wins a decisive victory in the Six-Day War, gaining control of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights.*

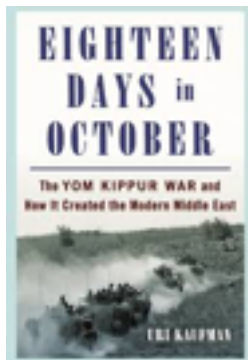
No peace process is underway between Israel and the Arab states as they do not recognize Israel as a state. The demand for an Arab Palestinian state continues, with the creation of Fatah in 1959, led by Yasser Arafat, and its paramilitary arm, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).



In 1967, political upheavals in the region led Israel to launch a lightning offensive against the Arab states. The Israeli army emerged victorious, conquering the territories of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Egyptian Sinai, and the Syrian Golan Heights. The UN adopted Resolution 242, which condemned Israel's acquisition of territory and demanded its withdrawal. The resolution also called on Arab states to recognize

the state of Israel.

**\*\*1973 - The Yom Kippur War\*\***: *Also known as the Ramadan War in Arabic. This war began on October 6, 1973, the day of the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur, and lasted until October 25, 1973.*



In 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated offensive in the Sinai and the Golan Heights during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, with the goal of regaining territories lost during the Six-Day War in 1967. Faced with the Israeli counteroffensive, Arab OPEC member states decided to reduce their oil exports until Israel withdrew from the territories occupied since 1967. In 1974, the UN recognized the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and the PLO became an observer member. At the same time, Palestinian resistance was established in Lebanon.

Amidst the war, Israel invaded the southern part of the country in 1978 and again in 1982, leading to the massacre of many Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

**\*\*1978 - Camp David Accords\*\***: *Israel and Egypt sign the Camp David Accords, leading to a peace treaty between the two countries in 1979.*



The 1978 Camp David Accords were the result of intensive negotiations held at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland, USA, from September 5 to September 17, 1978. The primary parties involved were Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who served as the mediator.



This led to the normalization of diplomatic relations between Israel and Egypt, with Egypt becoming the first Arab country to officially recognize Israel's existence. The Camp David Accords marked a significant step towards achieving peace in the Middle East but did not address the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict comprehensively.



The autonomy talks for Palestinians faced many challenges, and a final resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained elusive. Nevertheless, the Camp David Accords represented a diplomatic breakthrough in the region and led to Egypt's full recognition of Israel. The peace treaty has held since its signing, and Egypt and Israel have maintained diplomatic relations ever since.

**\*\*1987 - First Intifada\*\***: *This was a Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied territories, marked by widespread protests, civil disobedience, and violence.*

In December 1987, a revolt broke out in a Gaza camp and spread to the West Bank when a Israeli lorry ran into and killed four Palestinians This marked the beginning of the Intifada (uprising). These widely publicized clashes revived the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, while a faction of the Palestinian movement established its armed wing, Hamas, affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. On November 15, 1988, the Palestinian National Council declared a Palestinian state and formed a government.



**\*\*1993 - Oslo Accords\*\***: *Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) sign the Oslo Accords, marking the beginning of a peace process.*



The secret negotiations between the PLO and Israeli Prime Ministers led to the Oslo Accords on September 9, 1993, which established mutual recognition of Israel and the representativeness of the PLO. This declaration also provided for the autonomy of certain territories (Gaza and parts of the West Bank) for a period of five years, before the

establishment of a permanent status and the formation of a Palestinian authority in the autonomous territories. The West Bank was divided into three zones, under the full or partial control of the Palestinian Authority or the Israeli army. Hamas rejected these accords.



**\*\*2000 - Second Intifada\*\***: *The Second Intifada, a period of Palestinian uprising and violence, begins after the collapse of peace talks.*

The implementation of the Oslo Accords was also delayed due to opposition from Jewish settlers, amidst a backdrop of attacks between settlers and Palestinians.



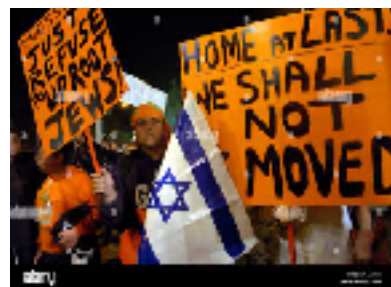
In 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by an opponent of the peace process. In September 2000, the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount (known as the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound for Muslims) triggered a new Palestinian uprising. Two years later, a separation barrier over 700 kilometres long was constructed in the West Bank, encroaching on

Palestinian land to incorporate Jewish settlements. Between 2000 and 2005, clashes between Palestinian militant organizations ( Hamas and Islamic Jihad) and Israeli forces resulted in the deaths of over 5,600 people, with more than three-quarters being Palestinians, according to an AFP tally.

**\*\*2005 - Gaza Disengagement Plan\*\***: *Israel unilaterally withdraws from the Gaza Strip, dismantling settlements and evacuating settlers.*

The 2005 Gaza Disengagement Plan, often referred to as the "Gaza Pullout" or "Hitnatkut," was a unilateral initiative by the Israeli government to evacuate all Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank. The plan was proposed by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and implemented between August and September 2005.

The Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank had been under Israeli military occupation since the Six-Day War in 1967. During this time, Israel established several Jewish settlements in these territories, which were a major point of contention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



The primary goal of the plan was to remove Israeli civilians and soldiers from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank, with the belief that this would enhance Israeli security and facilitate a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was also intended to improve Israel's international standing. The Gaza Disengagement Plan did not lead to a revival of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Instead, the conflict continued with periods of violence and sporadic negotiations.



The Gaza Strip remains a major point of contention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with Israel maintaining control over its borders, airspace, and maritime access, while Gaza remains under the de facto authority of Hamas.

Hamas wins the Palestinian legislative elections, leading to a political divide between the West Bank and Gaza.

**\*\*2014 - Gaza Conflict\*\***: *Israel and Hamas engage in a 50-day conflict in Gaza, resulting in significant casualties and destruction.*



The 2014 Gaza Conflict, also known as Operation Protective Edge, was a major military conflict between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The conflict lasted for 50 days, from July 8 to August 26, 2014, and resulted in significant casualties and damage on both sides.

The conflict had its roots in the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ongoing tensions between Israel and Hamas. Issues such as the Israeli blockade of Gaza, Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli communities, and the abduction and murder of three Israeli teenagers in June 2014 contributed to the escalation of hostilities. It began with a series of Israeli airstrikes on Gaza in response to rocket attacks launched by Palestinian militants from Gaza into Israeli territory.



On July 17, 2014, Israel launched a ground invasion of Gaza. This phase of the conflict led to intense fighting in populated areas and caused a significant number of civilian casualties. Israel cited the need to protect its citizens from rocket fire and to destroy Hamas tunnels used for smuggling and infiltration into Israel. The conflict resulted in a high number of casualties. According to various estimates, over 2,100 Palestinians were killed, including hundreds of children, and more than 10,000 were injured. On the Israeli side, 66 soldiers and 6 civilians were killed.

**\*\*2017 - Relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem\*\***: *In 2017, the United States moves its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.*



This decision was announced by then-U.S. President Donald Trump on December 6, 2017, and the embassy was officially opened on May 14, 2018. The move was highly controversial and marked a significant shift in U.S. policy towards the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict.

The relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem was seen as a recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, a move that had been a subject of dispute between Israelis and Palestinians for many years.

Palestinians also claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state. The decision was met with widespread international criticism and led to protests and clashes in the region.



Many countries, including the United Nations, had previously refrained from recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and maintained their embassies in Tel Aviv to avoid taking sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The U.S. decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem was seen as a departure from this neutral stance and

a significant policy shift. The move had long-term implications for the peace process in the Middle East and added to the complexities of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It remains a contentious and deeply divisive issue in the region and on the international stage.

**\*\*2023 - The incursion of Hamas into Israel and the massacre of civilians\*\*:** *Israeli army spokesperson denounces 'worst massacre of innocent civilians in Israel's history'.*



On the morning of October 7, 2023, Hamas armed forces launched a massive offensive on Israeli territory, attacking Israel on multiple fronts, a first since its creation. In less than three days, over 900 Israelis were killed, and 2,150 were injured, according to a statement from the Israeli military. On the Palestinian side, 687 people were killed, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health.

The Israeli military announced on October 9 that it had targeted "more than 500 targets" in Gaza overnight in an attempt to regain control from the fighters of the Islamist movement. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the Israeli military would attack Hamas with a force "like never before," and Israeli defense minister Yoav Gallant ordered a "complete siege" of Gaza, cutting the supply of electricity, food, water and fuel to the Palestinian enclave. According to the United Nations, more than 187,000 of Gaza's 2.3



million people have left their homes — the most since a 2014 air and ground offensive by Israel uprooted about 400,000.

### Comment

A number of people asked me about this conflict over the past week which is why I have included extensive material in this newsletter. I have visited Israel three times and the painful history is impossible fully understand or comprehend. Terrorist against civilians is an inhuman strategy, and sadly this has been repeated in this current war. It leaves no winners.



The poverty and sense of hopelessness among the young in Gaza is also impossible to comprehend. The Gaza strip is 41 kms long x 4-12 kms wide and has 2.2 million inhabitants. Imagine what it is like to live anywhere within that small area, let alone after aircraft raids destroy entire streets block by block. Imagine how fatigued the residents are after being continually bombed at night.

Medical experts say that each time their colleagues go to work, they don't know if they will see their homes or their

families again. What will unfold following the demand that one half of these residents move from the north to the south, when already the city is without power, food, water and fuel?

This week included the incredible loss of life and severe injuries for many more from a bombed hospital; Israel dropping 6,000 bombs in four days over an area of just 365 square kilometres; the US offering \$100 million in aid to Gaza and \$10 billion in aid to Israel. Hopefully some of what is included in all this reading can assist in understanding better why this situation has arisen - again!

### Patriarch offer himself in exchange for children



The Latin Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem has offered to be exchanged for children being held hostage in Gaza by Hamas. Source: Speaking to journalists via video conference on October 16<sup>th</sup> Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa was asked if he would be willing to offer himself in exchange to free the children hostages who were taken in Hamas' attack on Israel

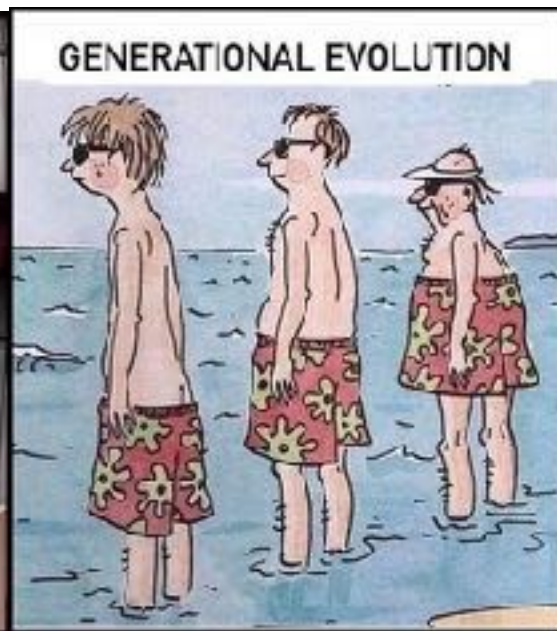


last week. The cardinal responded that he is willing to do anything to 'bring those children home'. "Am I ready for an exchange? Anything, if that can lead to freedom and bring those children home, no problem. There is an absolute availability on my part," the cardinal said. (*Catholic News Agency report*)

### Links to the Six Meditations by Timothy Radcliffe

I had responses from two people to say that they were unable to open one of the six meditations from the pre-Synod retreat. I have downloaded them, so if anyone wants the text, if you email me, I will send them.

### Humour



**If you boil a funny  
bone it becomes  
a laughing stock.  
That's humerus.**

**NURSE CAME IN AND  
SAID DOC, THERE'S A  
MAN IN THE WAITING  
ROOM WHO THINKS  
HE'S INVISIBLE, WHAT  
SHOULD I TELL HIM?  
THE DOCTOR SAID TELL  
HIM I CAN'T SEE HIM  
TODAY.**



*I couldn't resist. 😊*



### Prayers

We remember those whose **anniversaries** are around this time and their families.

We give thanks for successful surgery for Bruno Petrocoo, for Bro Jerome's improving health and we pray for Shirley Barnes' recovery.

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

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

Philippians 1:3

Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Des Grisell, Patricia Keeghan,  
Mary and Kate Dunn, Anne Jenkins, Chris O'Toole, Gerald Quinn CP

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

Brian

PS There is a lot of reading in this issue. There is an extra article I did not include, but have added as an attachment.