

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 193

27th October, 2023

Greetings



This week's newsletter is shorter ('hurrah' some will say) because I tested positive to COVID on Sunday morning, and for most of the week I haven't had much energy. Three other community members (JD, Thang and Cu'ong) were positive as well as my brother Paul who came over from New Zealand on Wednesday night for the PFG weekend and tested positive on Friday! All of them tested negative on

Wednesday. Joseph Liaia went over to Endeavour Hills to help out for two weeks and he and Tuan Paul both have had COVID this week. Kevin Hennessy went to Sydney for a week's work and was forced into isolation. There must be others who contracted COVID from the same source as us. Apologies to you. Our brothers, especially Phi and Tri have been remarkably diligent in 'caring for the sick'. I tested negative an hour ago.

Coffee Cart

The coffee cart was again a great success last Sunday, I am told. We offer sincere thanks to our generous provider last month and this month.

The National PFGM weekend

When you gather people with many years of generous and dedicated service towards others, it is always going to be a gathering blessed with warmth and goodwill. I was unable to be present for the final session, but we worked together to identify what we believe needs to be done and by whom in the short term over the next two years. The team is grateful to have Tina Minichilli as Coordinator. Paul was able to Zoom in for a session when he updated us about PFG's in New Zealand.

For your diary

Today Prayers for peace in Gaza (joining Pope Francis' call)

November 19th 10.00am Mass for all deceased relatives and friends of Holy Cross

November 19th 12.00pm BBQ (St Gabriel's)

Birthdays coming up

Sr Margaret Bentley on October 28th

John Traynor on October 31st (80)

Dennis Cogle on November 2nd

It's An Interconnected World

Margaret Wheatley

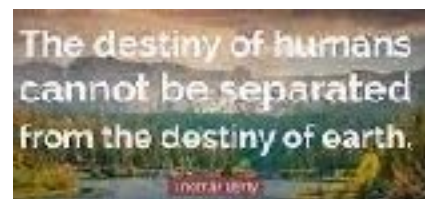


“The dense and tangled web of life—the interconnected nature of reality—now reveals itself on a daily basis. Since September 11th, think about how much you've learned about people, nations, and ways of life that previously you'd known nothing about. We've been learning how the lives of those far away affect our own.

We're beginning to realize that in order to live peacefully together on this planet, we need to be in new relationships, especially with those far-distant from us.

When my children were small, I had a refrigerator slogan that read: "If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." Perhaps that was my children's first lesson in systems thinking. We adults are learning this too. If others don't feel safe, we aren't safe. If others are struggling, we experience the consequence of their struggle.

If others are poor, no matter how wealthy we are, we experience the consequences of their impoverishment. Many great teachers have been trying to teach us this for thousands of years. Buddhism teaches that any one thing is here because of everything else. The great American naturalist, John Muir, commented that if we tug on any one part of the web of life, we get the whole web. But in spite of such timeless and ancient wisdom, we've been very slow to learn the lesson.



In fact, Western culture has spent decades drawing lines and boxes around interconnected phenomena. We've chunked the world into pieces rather than explored its webby nature. Think of all the lines and boundaries that exist: organizational charts, job descriptions, nation states, ethnic identities. These rigid boundaries have been a means to control people and events. The neat lines define what goes on inside each box, and the natural messiness of interconnectedness disappears—at least on paper.



We run the world by these boxes. People are rallied to war by reinforcing the box of national or ethnic identity. At work, people are told which box they occupy on an organization chart. If they step outside the box with a idea or criticism, they're punished or ignored. Over time, people seek the protection of their box. They know what is, and what is not their job.

I had a powerful experience with this self-protective work

attitude shortly after the first Anthrax incident. Anthrax first appeared in Palm Beach County, Florida.

A friend of mine is a judge at the Palm Beach courthouse. Her secretary noticed that someone else had been at her desk; papers were disturbed, things moved around.

Given the danger from Anthrax and other possible threats, the judge immediately called in building security. The security guard blandly told her that it was not his job to secure the secretary's office. "My job is to secure the judge's chambers, that's all." He could not be convinced otherwise. He knew his box, and remained oblivious to this new world where danger knows no boundaries.



But I do not fault this security guard. He, like so many of us, had been given this message by his supervisors. He, like so many of us, had learned to lie low, not make waves, do what you're told, and then use his job description as a way to avoid being blamed. Most organizations, because they manage by the boxes, have created millions of withdrawn, dependent, frightened, and cynical employees.

This is now a huge problem, because our safety and future depend upon whether each of us can step outside the boxes and participate intelligently in a complex world of interconnections. Here are a few hard truths about living and working within a complex system that I hope we can learn in time:

In a complex system, there is no such thing as simple cause and effect. There's no one person to blame, or to take the credit. We have yet to learn this. Watch how, in



any crisis or success, people immediately step up to assign blame or to take all the credit. Why has crime decreased over the past few years? Police say it's more police; judges say it's due to tougher sentences; parents say it's because of better parenting; teachers, economists, social workers, elected officials. . . Everyone believes it's because of their singular contribution. No

one wants to share the truth that it was everyone's contribution, interacting in inexplicable ways, that gave birth to the success.

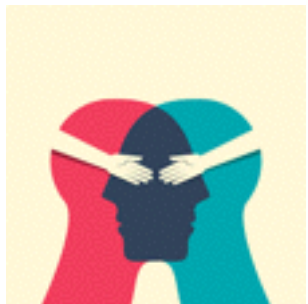
In order to incorporate this sensibility, we need to abandon the neat lines of cause and effect. And we need to notice the reality of a second fact about complex systems: **Focusing makes things fuzzier. The more we study a complex phenomenon, the more confused we are bound to become.**

Few of us like to feel confused, or be confronted by messiness. But interrelated phenomenon-Life-is very messy. The longer we study a system, the more complex it becomes. This is incredibly frustrating.



Our attempts at understanding (reading the reports, listening to different commentaries, thinking about the issue) only serve to drag us into further complexity. Instead of clarity, we experience only more uncertainty. What gave rise to modern terrorism? What will make airports more secure? What leads to smarter students? Safer communities?

I believe that our very survival depends upon us becoming better systems thinkers. How can we learn to see the systems we're participating in? How can we act intelligently when things remain fuzzy? Where do we intervene to change something when we can't determine a straightforward cause and effect relationship? What kinds of actions make sense when we're confused and confronted with increasing uncertainty?



Here are a few principles I've learned. **Start something, and see who notices it.**

It's only after we initiate something in a system that we see the threads that connect. Usually, someone we don't even know suddenly appears, either outraged or helpful. We didn't know there was any connection between us, but their response makes the connection clear. Now that they've identified themselves, we need to develop a relationship with them.

Whatever you initiate, expect unintended consequences.

Every effort to change a system creates these, because all the interactions can't be seen ahead of time. Probably the most visible example of unintended consequences, is what happens every time humans try to change the natural ecology of a place. Fertilizer is introduced to farm fields without noticing how rain water connects fields to oceans.

Over time, we've got bountiful crops, but fewer fish. I know one corporation that created a Museum of Unintended Consequences. They wanted to notice all the impacts of any organizational change effort. When we're willing to look at unintended consequences, they teach a great deal about how a system operates.



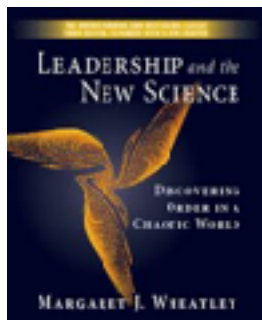
Reflect, often. If we take time to notice what just happened, we learn how the system operates. Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful. It's amazing to me how much we do, but how little time we spend reflecting on what we just did.

Seek out different interpretations. Run ideas by many different people, to see things through their unique perception. Everyone in a complex system has a slightly different interpretation. The more interpretations we gather, the easier it becomes to gain a sense of the whole.



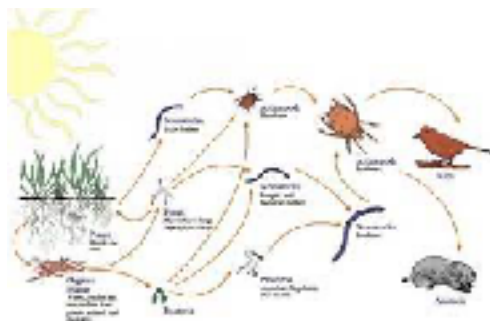
Look for insights to emerge out of messiness. Puzzling and messy situations often lead us to flee. Either we grab onto an easy answer, or decide to take actions that have no rational. But confusion can create the condition for intuitions and insights to appear, often when we least expect them. Once they appear, we can trust them and use them as the basis for action”.

Margaret Wheatley has been a popular writer and speaker specialising in promoting leadership styles that gained information from the interconnectedness of the natural world and the need to respond to the messiness of situations rather than on attempting order because in the natural world, order is brought about through chaos.



It is regarded as an unlikely fluke that the US national air-controller on September 11th 2001 was having his first day in that role! At 9.04am Ben Sliney banned any planes from taking off and every plane in the air to be landed. Over the next two hours 4,200 planes were grounded. There were no regulations outlining this procedure. Action needed to be taken and Sliney quickly consulted other experienced air-controllers and took action.

Margaret Wheatley highlights that the scientific search for the basic building blocks of life has revealed that there are none! The deeper physicists peer into the nature of reality, the only thing they find, is relationships. Even sub-atomic particles known as quarks, do not exist alone. Everything in the universe is composed of “bundles of potentiality” that require relationships. Our culture largely ignores this scientific fact. We build organizations and create idols out of sports or movie stars, based on the false idea that the individual is everything. On the other hand, the form of organization used throughout our planet, is the network —webs of interconnected, interdependent relationships.



People always reach out to those who will give them information, those who will be their allies, who offer them support or cheer them up. Charts, lines and boxes might look impressive, but they are imaginary. What is real is the networks of relationships.

Organisational issues are relational, not mechanical. Job descriptions, strategic plans, project deadlines etc are secondary to relationships. The mechanical approach does not work with humans, because humans are not machines! Humans want to be connected, to belong, to be together, to contribute to others.



We see people's best in times of crisis and difficulty. Then they drop everything as unimportant except the person in need. These basic human qualities are evident whenever there is a disaster or a crisis. Official agencies and governments struggle to get their act together, while families, neighbours and strangers rush in to provide assistance and comfort. In such moments, kindness is our normal response. We reach out to find one another. The human network just happens! Human kindness can only be seen and experienced in relationships. We can be human only together so we need to promote and maintain healthy relationships.



Let's be grateful for all the people we see at this very time, especially in Gaza, assisting injured and dying relatives, friends or neighbours, disregarding their own safety to respond to immediate need. Let's be grateful too for the people in our lives who reach out, maintain contact or pay particular care to us in times of need.

Our coffee cart at Holy Cross, is a way to celebrate these relationships and to give thanks that we belong to a strong community and to continue



extending our friendship so that newcomers always feel welcome.

Gaza's parish priest: Christians in Gaza will unite with Pope in prayer

Vatican news



Fr. Gabriel Romanelli has said that Christians today in Gaza will join in prayer for peace in the Holy Land, Fr. Gabriel his says his parishioners in Gaza appreciate Pope Francis' closeness and his frequent phone calls of support. Despite being fully involved in the Synod in Rome, "Pope Francis calls us almost every afternoon. He calls me, and if he doesn't reach me, he calls the parish. It's a great sign of generosity, of goodness. We know that he is close to the entire population, everyone without distinction."



The Holy Family Catholic Church has been turned into a sort of hope-filled refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, as over 700 people seek shelter in the parish amid constant bombings. "After the bombing four days ago that involved the Greek Orthodox church in Gaza, causing 18 deaths, many more Christian refugees have arrived in our parish," Fr. Gabriel said.

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pizzaballa OFM, has provided the precise coordinates of the church to the Israeli authorities to prevent an accidental airstrike hitting them. "All the nuns," explained Fr. Gabriel, "have decided to stay in the Holy Family parish to be with the refugees. The Israeli army has repeatedly asked us to leave the northern part of the Gaza Strip, saying we should go south, but that is also bombed."

Fr. Gabriel claimed that the parish has now become like the community of the early disciples of Jesus. The extraordinary thing is that Catholics and Orthodox all participate. "We do everything together; we pray and try to live in charity by sharing what we have." He said the community's most urgent need is prayer".



ASSOCIAZIONE SAN GABRIELE DELL'ADDOLORATA
MELBOURNE INC.

2023 BBQ
SUNDAY 19 NOVEMBER
12PM (NOON)

\$35.00 PER ADULT

MENU

Pasta
Followed by
Steak
Choice of sausage or hamburger
Bread and salad
&
Panettone

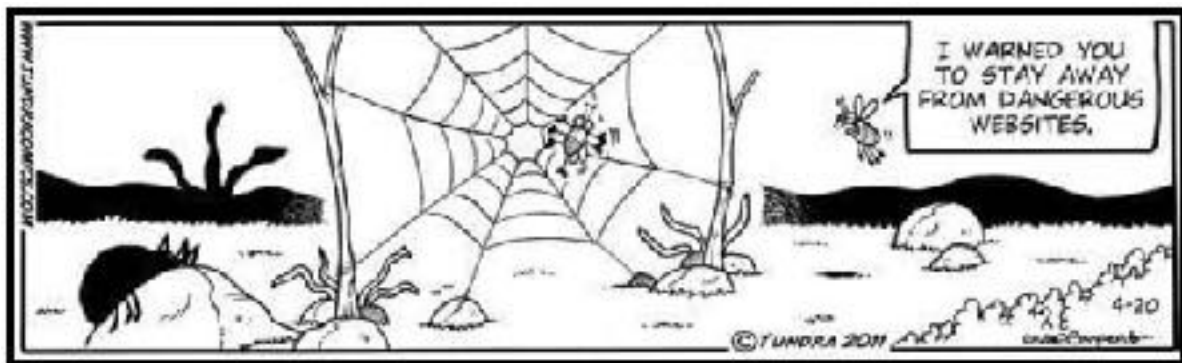
BYO Drinks & Chairs

Music by : T. D'amico Band

For more information, please call Bruno 0419 503 300

Humour

A is the brother of B. B is the brother of C. C is the father of D.
How is D related to A?



What do you call a fancy seafood meal?
So-fish-ticated.

What do you call a sad strawberry?
A blueberry.

Why did the banana go to the hospital?
He wasn't peeling well.

What do you call a pig that knows karate?
A pork chop.

Where do pancakes rise?
In the yeast.

What's orange and sounds like a parrot?
A carrot.

What do you call a fake noodle?
Impasta.



Historians in Ireland have discovered what they believe to be the headstone of the worlds oldest ever Irish man. He was 193 and his name was Miles from Dublin.



A is the brother of B. B is the brother of C. C is the father of D. So, how is D related to A? The answer is **A is D's uncle!**

Prayers

We those whose **anniversaries** are around this time and their families, especially:

Franca Valmorbida (Maurie's mother) 26th Oct

Helen Sprague (Tim Horlock's partner) and Irene O'Donnell (Marg Hogan's mother) 28th Oct

Francesco Di Giovine (Pia Scherianz' father) 29th Oct

Fleana De Prato (Alida Valmorbida's mother) 30th Oct,

Christina Moore (Mary Cogle's sister) Anthony Zaia, Mary Bird (Peter Cahill's sister and Sam Climin (Marilyn's husband) 1st Nov,

Tom Barry (Bev's husband and Maree's father) 3rd Nov,

We remember all of those in our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially Fr Jeff Foale CP, Pam Storey, Peter McNamara, Peter and Bernadette Owen, Alexander Lim, Maree Bartoli, Monica and Anthona Hennessy, Gerry Bond, Maeve



Reardon Lynda Chin, Bronwyn Burke, Phil Drew, Des Grisell, Michael O'Callaghan, Errol Lovett, Helen McLean, Greg Agosta, Angelo Vigilante, Mary Hackett, Pam Gartland, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Patricia Keeghan, Anne Jenkins, Mary and Kate Dunn, Chris O'Toole, Gerald Quinn CP

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

Brian