

## Holy Cross Retreat



### Letter 194

3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2023

Greetings,



Yesterday, **Phi** celebrated the wonderful experience of completing the last class of his theological studies. It has been many years of study! Over the past two months he has battled very painful RSI, but soldiered on with his classes and study. He now has two weeks to complete assignments and on November 13<sup>th</sup> he begins a 10-week CPR course based at the Austin hospital. CPE seeks to develop self-awareness and compassion in caregiving professionals and develop competence in assessment of person's spiritual need/resources. Personal reflection and evaluation of hands-on experiences enables participants to develop new awareness of their own humanity and the needs of those to whom they serve.

### COVID

A number of men in the Province have contracted COVID over the past two weeks (in Sydney, Endeavour Hills and Holy Cross). Thang and Cu'ong) got over it quickly, JD not so much and for the rest of us it has hung on this week.

### Birthday

Joseph Liaia celebrates his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday on Friday (November 10<sup>th</sup>). Joseph is helping out at Endeavour Hills, so we'll have to wait until the following week when Budi will celebrate his 31<sup>st</sup> birthday (on November 16<sup>th</sup>). Joseph joins Erick, JD and Phi all at age 35. They help our community maintain an average age of 43.6!

### For your diary

**November 19<sup>th</sup>** Mass for all deceased relatives and friends of Holy Cross  
12.00pm: St Gabriel's BBQ - \$35 and BYO drinks & chairs)

**November 25<sup>th</sup>** First day of Passionist Institute (10.50am-2.45pm)  
Holy Cross chapel

**November 26<sup>th</sup>** Coffee cart following 10.00am Mass  
Second day of Passionist Institute (1.25pm-5.30pm)  
BBQ & Drinks to follow

### Relocated cross and sign

Sincere thanks to our 'A' Team and to Vince Celestino and Bruno Petrocco for the work in relocating and then carefully repainting the sign and cross out the front of Holy Cross. The cross can be illuminated at night.



## All Soul's day



Many of us would remember visiting the church or school chapel and praying for the release of a person from purgatory. Six 'Our Fathers', six 'Hail Mary's' and six 'Glory Be's' was enough to secure one release, so why not keep praying those prayers that day!

Celebrating 'All Soul's' day following All Saints day, was begun by the Benedictine abbot of Cluny in France as an 11th century practice. He thought it important to pray for those who had died who were obviously not 'saints'! The theological underpinning of the feast that developed centred on the communion of saints and the acknowledgment of human frailty. No one is perfect. We are not saints yet!



Knowing that every human lacks perfection, our prayer today highlights the communion of humankind, living and deceased as we seek their full union with God, hopeful that others will in time continue such a hope and prayer for us. Of course life in God is a timeless mystery that we cannot understand. We understand yesterday, today and tomorrow, but resurrected life has

no time.

Of all the things we can expect to happen, death is certainly the most sure. At the same time it is not a normal party conversation! Some people avoid it, others only talk about it when they face their own death or that of a loved one. What we have learned about the evolving of life is relevant to this feast.



1. What we have learned, first though Charles Darwin, is that **humans had a common ancestor** with the primates. This is not the same thing as saying that we descended from apes. Rather, the apes we know today and the human family, both had a common ancestor.

2. Behind this truth is another wonderful truth – that **we are connected with all the life forms around us**. Not just apes, but birds, insects, rodents, plants and trees. DNA and genetic studies have allowed us to discover not just structural similarities in various life forms, but genetic similarities. This is true, even between humans and bacteria!



3. What has been even more astounding has been the discovery that all of the elements that make up life on earth, all the minerals and gases, are cooked up in the stars. **The common ancestor of everything on earth, human, animal or mineral, emerged in the**



stars.

4. **These elements were brought to life through the death of a star.** In its dying moments these chemicals, gases and minerals spewed out into the surrounding galaxy in a supernova explosion and began to form new life-giving combinations, among them, carbon, oxygen and water. Earth spun off from the sun so we are intimately connected with the sun.



5. That supernova event was the primal **death and resurrection event** and it is repeated throughout the entire creating process. This is related to the feast we celebrate today.

6. Scientists have learned that **everything in our universe dies.** Everything. They have also discovered that nothing is lost...that death does not mean loss. **Death leads to transformation;** to a different form of life; to something new. It is the Circle of Life.



7. This dying and being transformed is a reality at work already in us. One million cells in our bodies die every second of every day, and are replaced! Imagine then, over a year, how much of 'us' has died and been replaced, yet we are still ourselves, recognised by others and ourselves. The reality of who we are is a deep mystery that we believe lives on beyond death.

8. The church believes that we belong to a communion of saints or believers, and that is why we celebrate this feast of All Souls. **It is a feast of connectedness.** Ancient peoples have always believed in the connectedness and sacredness of all life forms, and that the connectedness of humans includes our ancestors and descendants. In Biblical Israel it was believed that a parent's sin continued for seven generations. The sin of illegitimacy was carried on for ten generations. They had this sense of connectedness with the generations before and after themselves. The discoveries of science endorse this belief. We now know that we are connected whether we speak of yesterday, today or tomorrow.



9. On All Soul's day we remember those who have lived and died on earth and now live on in a new and transformed way. Some that we remember are not known to us, but we are connected by our common humanity or our common faith. Some whom we remember were relatives or friends whom we loved deeply. Others shared faith and life in Holy Cross community or beyond it.

10. in praying for them and celebrating their life, we express our hope that they live in peace enfolded in God, and that one day we will join them in this new and

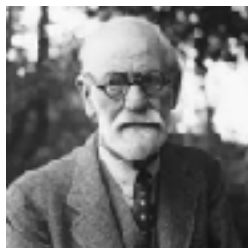
wonderful life, when we too find our place in the circle of life.

## Grief



November is traditionally a month for remembering our departing relatives and friends. As many of Mass community members of Holy Cross continue to age, we have to acknowledge the sad reality of loved ones who have died and the pain and consequence of that loss. We see obvious signs that we are growing closer to that reality for ourselves. Bereavement is something we become more familiar with as we age, and few of us have been spared the experience. We encounter friends and faith companions everywhere who suffer from the death of loved ones – sometimes after a long illness, sometimes at an advanced age or as the result of sudden illness, accident or something worse. Some have lost parents, spouses or children many years ago and have lived with that loss. Some are experts in loneliness. Everyone has a story.

We can benefit from some insights and sharing of the theory and experience of bereavement.



**Sigmund Freud** died in 1939. He is regarded as the founder of psychoanalysis, the area involving theories and techniques for treating mental disorders. Freud recommended that those mourning should cease from talking about or remembering the deceased. His attitude changed somewhat after his own daughter died! He came to believe that the intensity of sorrow would reduce, but there would never be a substitute for what was lost.

Freud based his theory around the idea that those who were grieving were searching for an attachment that had been lost, and the detachment they experienced led to some depression. He suggested that new attachments could be sought when the loss was accepted.



**Elizabeth Kubler Ross** died in 2004 and is famous for developing her five stages of dealing with grief which are not meant to be understood as progressive or linear, although many people have incorrectly understood her theory that way. These five stages are Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance. Denial is a positive coping mechanism to deal with the shock or unpleasantness of the situation. Anger is another positive coping mechanism seeking to avoid the immediate pain of the situation. Anger can be directed towards anyone – the deceased, the dying, a doctor, even God.

Bargaining is almost a last ditch stand to change the reality. Bargains can be made with doctors, spouses, even oneself, and of course God. Many people make all sorts of promises if what they face can 'go away'.

Acceptance, for Kubler-Ross occurs when the one grieving begins to come to terms with her or his loss and is able to make an effort to move on with life.



**Edward Bowlby** died in 2004. His own life experience created an interest in what became his 'attachment theory' through which he explained why emotions like anxiety, sadness (crying) and anger are often expressed in mourning. These occurred when attachments were broken.

Bowlby suggested four general phases of mourning that he described as: numbing, yearning and searching, disorganization and reorganization. Numbing which often includes emotional outbursts, provides temporary relief from the pain of loss and is related to feelings of disbelief that death has occurred. Yearning and searching is related to the reality of loss, so anger and frustration are common. These are close parallels with Kubler Ross' theory.

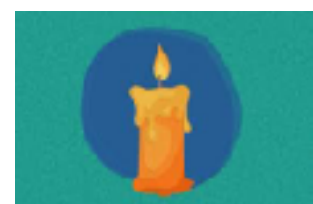
The disorganization phase occurs because the reality of the loss does bring turmoil, lack of concentration and sadness. Then gradual changes and reorganization occur as the bereaved begins to move on with life. This is similar to Kubler Ross' stage of acceptance. **These and other theories explain that grief involves a painful emotional adjustment which takes time and cannot be hurried along.**



Another theory has gained great support in recent years since the release of a book in 1996 by Dennis Klass, titled, 'Continuing Bonds'. The book suggested that these linear models, end in a detachment from the person we've lost and they deny the reality of how people actually grieve. The authors suggested instead of becoming detached from the deceased, it is healthier to create a new relationship with them.

In this way, grief is not about working through a linear process that ends with 'acceptance' or a 'new life', where you have moved on or compartmentalized your loved one's memory. Rather than assuming detachment as a normal grief response, 'continuing bonds' considers human attachment as being natural, even in death. This is not only normal and healthy, but an important part of grief because it allows a person to continuing to recognise ties to their loved ones.

There are countless normal and meaningful ways to maintain bonds. Ongoing rituals, visits to the cemetery, remembering advice a loved would have given' in a particular situation,



living life in a way a loved one have appreciated etc.



People often comment with expressions such as, “My mother is still with me, and I talk to her every day”. Céline Dion had her husband’s hand sculptured. Before going on stage she entwines her hand with his as a connection with his love and presence. He is always in her heart and mind There are many helpful and healthy ways such as this to continue bonds with a loved one.

Examples include

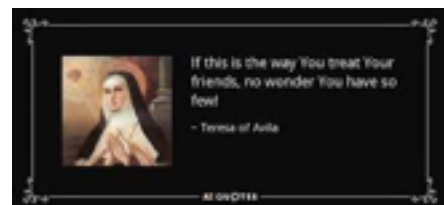
- Talking to a loved one
- Keeping photos around
- Ritualising special memories and milestones (e.g. wedding day).
- Visualizing a conversation and the advice that a loved one might have given
- Keeping meaningful items



Actions like this can allow a person to feel more free, and therefore should be celebrated. It allows a person to accept the reality of the changed relationship, but confirms that they do not have to shut out memories or forget the person. Those who begin new relationships often are torn about how to talk about their previous partner at the very time when they feel this presence so

strongly. A continuing bond does not mean that people live in the past. The reality of daily life is changed by the death of a partner, parent or child. The deceased is both present and absent. One cannot ignore this or the tension this can create in the bereavement process.

Faith is vital part of how people deal with grief. In the attachment models, as people deal with anger and bargaining, often God is their ‘target’! Some who have a strong everyday faith begin to question that faith and become angry with God. Our first reassurance should be to accept that God can deal with our heart! St Teresa of Avila is famous for her life of prayer. She recounted some words she spoke to God one day in prayer, ““I’m not surprised that you have so few friends, because you treat them so badly!”



It is natural to lose heart (faith) while experiencing grief. Being angry with God or blaming God when things go wrong can suggest God should make sure bad things do

not happen to me. The reality is that bad things happen every day. 165,000 people die on average, each day!

Most people work through these questions in their grief - but grief hurts. There might be no answer – just acceptance and trust.



Through our pain and grief we may come to recognise our own helplessness. We might also come to believe more strongly that God is not represented by power, but by compassion and love. That love whispers in the darkness: "all will be well, and all manner of things will be well" ('The Cloud of Unknowing')

Sometimes we don't know what to say to others about their loss. People often admit this. Some years ago when we were discussing this issue with a large group of Passionist Family Group leaders in Auckland. Eventually a Maori man, said, "You pakeka amaze me. You won't go to visit the spouse of someone who has died, even though you know him or her well. The reason is that you don't know what to say. It is easy. "Leave your head on the gate and go into the house with your heart!"

Many people have experienced their friends being uncomfortable and not knowing what to say to say them after the death of a loved one. Some groups of couples begin to leave the remaining spouse out of their get-togethers and this can create great hurt. Sometimes people will say, "I think she's got over it, because I saw her laughing yesterday". Grief does not work that way. It comes in waves.

The first rule about what people might say is that silence is far better than clichés! It is more important to be with people than to say anything. It is also important to let them tell their stories and share their memories, even if they repeat those stories several times. Healing is a process. It takes time and waiting doesn't fit into the 'instant' world of today, but we do have to wait in times of suffering. Any wound takes time to heal. We have to let the emotional healing have time to adjust. Our greatest lessons come from sorrow and pain.



Many times in our lives we are like those standing around the cross of Jesus. We are bystanders in the pain. At the centre may be a loved one or friend, and we join with others in silent vigil; often feeling helpless. At other times we carry the cross with and for others. In such times, we truly share the journey to Calvary. At other times like Simon of Cyrene, this is forced on us. Never more so, than when a beloved suffers pain or when tragedy strikes someone dear to us. We stand empty handed in the face of suffering.



Our belief is that there is (transformed) life beyond death. The caterpillar cannot become a butterfly without entering the dark and empty cocoon. But that darkness is not the end. Life seeks life. Our grief is an expression of the pain as we wait for that completion, and it is a vital gift we can give, if we can support others in this very difficult journey. We would hope that we at Holy Cross can do this for each other.

**Gratefulness : A Source of Strength** (By Dietrich Bonhoeffer)



This beautiful reflection was read at Maree Metcalfe's 's graveside by her daughter Eliza, on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2023

**First:**

Nothing can console us when we lose a beloved person and no one should try. We have to simply bear and survive it. That sounds hard but is in fact a great consolation: When the hole remains unfilled, we remain connected to it. It is wrong to say that God fills the gap, because he keeps it empty and so helps us to sustain our old communion, even through pain.

**Then:**

The more beautiful and fulfilling our memories, the harder the separation. But gratefulness transforms the agony of memory into quiet joy. We should avoid burrowing into our memories, just as we do not look at a precious gift continuously. Rather, we should save them for special hours, like a hidden treasure of which we are certain. Then a pervading joy and strength will flow from the past.

From *The Way of Gratitude. Readings for a Joyful Life*. Michael Leach et al, eds. Orbis Books, Maryknoll NY, 2017.

Reading 32, p 140–41, copyright © 2015 gratefulness.org, a Network for Grateful Living, Translated by Karin Murad

**On Death (Kahlil Gibran)**

Then Almitra spoke, saying, We would ask now of Death.  
And he said: You would know the secret of death.  
But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life?  
The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day  
cannot unveil the mystery of light.  
If you would indeed behold the spirit of death,  
open your heart wide unto the body of life.  
For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one.

In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond;  
And like seeds dreaming beneath the snow your heart dreams of spring.  
Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.

Your fear of death is but the trembling of the shepherd when he stands before the king whose hand is to be laid upon him in honour.

Is the shepherd not joyful beneath his trembling,  
that he shall wear the mark of the king?

Yet is he not more mindful of his trembling?

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun?

And what is it to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.

And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.

And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

### Intervention of Pope Francis at the 18th General Congregation of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops



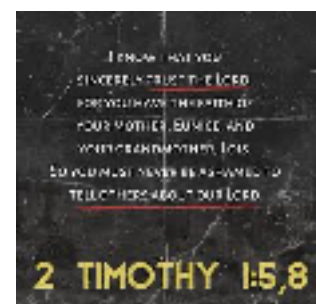
I like to think of the Church as God's faithful people, saint and sinner, a people convoked and called with the force of the beatitudes and of Matthew 25. Jesus, for His Church, did not take up any of the political schemes of his time: not the Pharisees, nor Sadducees, nor Essenes, nor Zealots. No "closed corporation"; He simply takes up the tradition of Israel: "You shall be My people and I will be your God".

I like to think of the Church as this simple and humble people who walk in the presence of the Lord (the faithful people of God). This is the religious meaning of our faithful people. And I say faithful people so as not to fall into the many ideological approaches and schemes with which the reality of the people of God is "reduced". Simply faithful people, or also, "God's holy faithful people" on the way, saint and sinner. And this is the Church.

One of the characteristics of this faithful people is its infallibility; yes, it is infallible *in* believing (LG 12). And I explain it like this: "When you want to know what Holy Mother Church believes, go to the Magisterium, because it is in charge of teaching it to you; but when you want to know how the Church believes, go to the faithful people".



The faithful people, the holy faithful people of God, have a soul, and because we can speak of the soul of a people we can speak of a hermeneutic, of a way of seeing reality, of a conscience. Our faithful people are conscious of their dignity, they baptize their children, they bury their dead. We members of the Hierarchy come from that people and we



have received the faith of that people, generally from our mothers and grandmothers, “your mother and grandmother” Paul tells Timothy, a faith handed down in a feminine dialect, like the mother of the Maccabees who spoke “in dialect” to her children.

And here I like to underline that, among God's holy and faithful people, the faith is transmitted in dialect, and usually in the feminine dialect. This is not only because the Church is Mother and it is precisely women who best reflect her; (the Church is woman) but also because it is women who know how to wait, who know how to discover the resources of the Church, of the faithful people, who risk beyond the limit, perhaps with fear but courageous, and in the light and shade of a day that is beginning.



They approach a tomb with the intuition (not yet hope) that there may be some life. The woman of God's holy and faithful people is a reflection of the Church. The Church is feminine, she is a wife, she is a mother.

When ministers go too far in their service and mistreat the people of God, they disfigure the face of the Church with macho and dictatorial attitudes (it is enough to recall the intervention of Sr. Liliana Franco \*). It is painful to find in some parish offices the “price list” of sacramental services in the manner of a supermarket. Either the Church is the faithful people of God on the way, saint and sinner, or it ends up being a company of various services. And when pastoral workers take this second path, the Church becomes the supermarket of salvation and the priests mere employees of a multinational corporation.



This is the great defeat to which clericalism leads us. And this is very sad and scandalous (it is enough to go to ecclesiastical tailor's shops in Rome to see the scandal of young priests trying on cassocks and hats or albs and lace-covered robes).

Clericalism is a whip, it is a scourge, it is a form of worldliness that defiles and damages the face of the Lord's bride; it enslaves God's holy and faithful people. And God's people, God's holy faithful people, go forward with patience and humility, enduring the scorn, mistreatment, and marginalization of institutionalized clericalism. And how naturally we speak of the princes of the Church, or of episcopal promotions as career advancement! The horrors of the world, the worldliness that mistreats God's holy and faithful people.

- <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/vatican/vatican-news/news/sr-liliana-franco-womens-path-church-full-scars> Sr. Liliana Franco

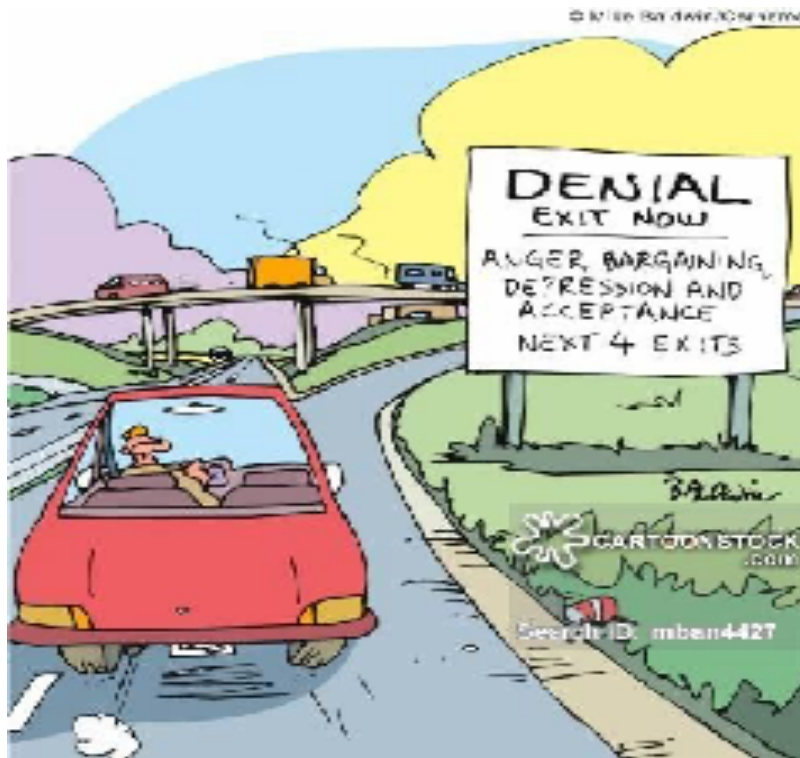
## Synod in Rome

A report on the Synod on Synodality has been issued. A summary of that report will be included in next week's newsletter.

## Humour







Q Have you heard the rumour about butter?

A Never mind, I shouldn't be spreading it.

Q what's the best place to grow flowers in school?

A. Kindergarten

Q Did you hear about the rancher who had 97 cows in his field?

A When he rounded them up, he had 100!

Q How does Darth Vader like his toast?

A On the dark side.

Q Yesterday I saw a guy spill all his Scrabble letters on the road.

A I asked him, what's the word on the street.

Q What kind of witch goes to the beach?

A A sandwich

Q. Why did the sauna go to the doctor?

A. It wasn't feeling so hot.

Q How much do dead batteries cost?

A There should be no charge.

Q What do pigs use in the shower?

A Hogwash.

### The Passionist Family Group National Team weekend (October 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>)



### Prayers

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

[Concetta Molinaro](#) (Frank's mother) 4<sup>th</sup> Nov

[Ellen Chapman](#) (Jan's mother) 5<sup>th</sup> Nov

[Andrew Bertram](#) (Linda's son) 6<sup>th</sup> Nov

[Philip McDonald](#) (Jan's husband) 7<sup>th</sup> Nov

Lawrence Brolly (Jack's brother) 8<sup>th</sup> Nov  
Jan Emillianowicz (John's wife) 10<sup>th</sup> Nov  
Leo Fitzpatrick CP (10<sup>th</sup> Nov)

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