

## Holy Cross Retreat



### Letter 202

29 December, 2023

Greetings,

### Christmas

We had a wonderful Christmas celebration. Unfortunately, the weather prevented us from being outside, but we had 250 people in the chapel many of whom expressed appreciation that the musicians (Fr Chris and Dominic Marasea) were close and the sound system was good. We had another 90 people in the Corbett room linked by Zoom thanks to Bro Tri) as well as another 40 people in the foyer and meditation chapel. Our postulants (Hai Thang and Cu'ong) sang a carol in Vietnamese and the following morning at 10.00am Mass they sang 'O Holy Night'.

We have found our lead singer next year to sing 'Silent Night'.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/G7N6EHVJEDI>

The community members spent a lot of time preparing the grounds beautifully for Christmas, especially the area 'under the trees' where we were going to celebrate Mass, but because we were inside, that work was unseen.

We would like to thank so many people for their expressions of support and appreciation by sending us a message, a card or a gift for the community. We really appreciate those gestures. Thank you very much.

### Holidays

This is holiday time for many people. **Joseph Dominic Tan (JD)**, **Tuan Paul (TP)** (a deacon appointed to Endeavour Hills and our three postulants, **Hai**, **Thang and Cu'ong** left on Wednesday for a holiday in Adelaide. JD and TP will be back on January 4<sup>th</sup> and the postulants will return on January 10<sup>th</sup>. **Erick** will also leave for Adelaide on Sunday and return with the postulants on January 10<sup>th</sup>. **Chris** began his holiday this week. Our two Indonesian brothers **Rafal** and **Budi** will head to Sydney on January 3<sup>rd</sup> for two week's holiday.

**Phi** returns on January 1<sup>st</sup> (his 36<sup>th</sup> birthday) and he and **Tri** resume their Clinical Pastoral Education course the following day.

The **Holy Cross Office** is closed until Monday January 8<sup>th</sup>.

Greetings to **Sr Brigid** CP who celebrated her birthday yesterday.

**Christmas Eve** (note Tri the camera man on the far right)



**This is the overflow in the Corbett room**



**Chris, Dominic and Joey**  
(Joseph sang a song in his own village language)



**Thang, Cu'ong and Hai (our postulants)**



**From the last 'Coffee Cart Sunday'**





Tim

Phena

Michael

John





Kay

Jenny

Carmel



Des

Les

Bernadette

Tri

Barb

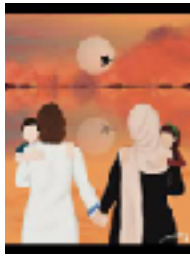
**A picture paints a thousand words**



**Vin Molloy (far left) and three other men aged 90 or more, are pictured here ready to tee off at Rossdale golf course in December.**

**Taking Sides by Irwin Keller**





*All peace begins when two parties are in dialogue with each other. The following poem, Taking Sides, by Rabbi Irwin Keller, captures the important role of anyone who provides a safe-space for opposing parties to converse, without condemnation. Listening with care and honest enquiry is where a spark for peace may commence in victims and antagonists alike.*

Today I am taking sides. I am taking the side of Peace.  
Peace, which I will not abandon,  
even when its voice is drowned out by hurt and hatred,  
bitterness of loss, cries of right and wrong.



I am taking the side of Peace  
whose name has barely been spoken  
in this winnerless war.  
I will hold Peace in my arms,  
and share my body's breath,  
lest Peace be added to the body count.

I will call for de-escalation even when I want nothing more than to get even.  
I will do it in the service of Peace.



I will make a clearing  
in the overgrown  
thicket of cause and effect  
so Peace can breathe  
for a minute and reach for the sky.  
I will do what I must to save the life of Peace.  
I will breathe through tears.

I will swallow pride.  
I will bite my tongue.  
I will offer love without testing for deservingness.



So don't ask me to wave a flag today  
unless it is the flag of Peace.  
Don't ask me to sing an anthem  
unless it is a song of Peace.  
Don't ask me to take sides  
unless it is the side of Peace.

### **Pope cautions his Curia**

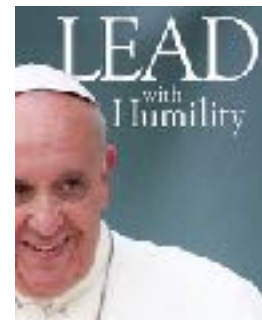
In his annual pre-Christmas address to the Roman Curia, Pope Francis invited leaders of the Church's central bureaucracy to adopt an attitude of "humility" and "listening" By Loup Besmond de Senville December 22, 2023

During the annual gathering Pope Francis gave each of his top aides a slim volume book that sums up the 87-year-old pope's



vision for what the Curia should be – *Holy, not Worldly. God's Grace Saves Us from Interior Corruption*. The book is a collection of texts that Francis has written over the years and by giving it to the Vatican officials, he obviously wanted to again hammer home the point he's made before -- that they need to be more humble.

Humility (linked to the sense of wonder) was also the theme of the more than 30-minute-long address the pope read to his aides who were gathered in the ornate Hall of Blessings above the porch of St. Peter's Basilica. We need to be "open to the mystery of the other, ready to receive with humility what he or she wants to tell us," Francis told the Curia officials. "Sometimes, even when speaking among ourselves, we risk being like ravenous wolves," he warned them, insisting that listening carefully is the only way to escape the position of believing we "already know or have understood what others are about to tell us".



In the same vein, Francis asked the prefects and secretaries of the Vatican dicasteries who were present, to implement discernment. "As an art of the spiritual life, it can free us from the danger of thinking that it is enough simply to apply rules, from the temptation to carry on, even in the life of the Curia, by simply repeating what we have always done," he said.



Faith "draws us out of our comfort zones". He spoke of a faith that "sends us on a journey", inviting us to reflect, rather than provide ready-made answers. "Sixty years after the Council, we are still debating the division between 'progressives' and 'conservatives,' but that is not the difference," Francis told the Curia officials.

"The real, central difference is between lovers and those who have lost that initial passion," he said. "Today we strive to kindle passion in those who have long since lost it," the pope added, before thanking the officials for their service to the Church.



"In our service here in the Curia, it is important to keep garing forward, to keep searching and growing in our understanding of the truth, overcoming the temptation to stand still and never leave the 'labyrinth' of our fears," Francis emphasized. "Fear, rigidity and monotony make for an immobility," he warned. "Discernment ought to help us, even in the work of the Curia, to be docile to the Holy Spirit, to choose procedures and make decisions based not on worldly criteria, or simply by applying rules, but in accordance with the Gospel."

### **Blessings allowed**



Vatican City (CNS) 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 -- A Catholic priest can bless a gay or other unmarried couple as long as it is not a formal liturgical blessing and does not give the impression that the Catholic Church is blessing the union as if it were a marriage, the Vatican doctrinal office said.



The request for a blessing can express and nurture "openness to the transcendence, mercy and closeness to God in a thousand concrete circumstances of life, which is no small thing in the world in which we live. It is a seed of the Holy Spirit that must be nurtured, not hindered," the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith said in a formal declaration published December 18<sup>th</sup> this year.

## **Blessings of Mercy**

Episcopal Guidance for the  
Implementation of Fiduciae Supplicans

The document, "[Fiducia Supplicans](#)" ("[Supplicating Trust](#)") was subtitled, "On the pastoral meaning of blessings," and was approved by Pope Francis during an audience with Cardinal Víctor

Manuel Fernández, dicastery prefect, Dec. 18. In his introductory note, Cardinal Fernández said questions about a priest blessing a LGBTQ+ or other unmarried couple had been sent to the doctrinal office repeatedly over the past few years.

The need for a fuller explanation of blessings became clear, he wrote, after Pope Francis responded to the "dubia" or questions of several cardinals in a letter released in early October. Cardinal Fernández said the declaration "remains firm on the traditional doctrine of the Church about marriage, not allowing any type of liturgical rite or blessing similar to a liturgical rite that can create confusion," but it also explores the "pastoral meaning of blessings" in a way that opens "the possibility of blessing couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church's perennial teaching on marriage."



The church "remains firm" in teaching that marriage can be contracted only between one woman and one man, he said, and continues to insist that "rites and prayers that could create confusion" about a marriage and another form of relationship "are inadmissible." But in Catholic tradition blessings go well beyond the formal ritual used in marriage and other sacraments.

"Blessings are among the most widespread and evolving sacramentals. Indeed, they lead us to grasp God's presence in all the events of life and remind us that, even in the use of created things, human beings are invited to seek God, to love him, and to serve him faithfully," the declaration said. That is why people, meals,

rosaries, homes, pets and myriad other things can be and are blessed on various occasions.

The new document said, Catholics should "avoid the risk of reducing the meaning of blessings" to their formal, liturgical use because that "would lead us to expect the same moral conditions for a simple blessing that are called for in the reception of the sacraments. Indeed, there is the danger that a pastoral gesture that is so beloved and widespread will be subjected to too many moral prerequisites, and overshadow the unconditional power of God's love that forms the basis for the gesture of blessing," it said.



The church, it said, should be grateful when people ask for a blessing and should see it as a sign that they know they need God's help. "When people ask for a blessing, an exhaustive moral analysis should not be placed as a precondition for conferring it. For, those seeking a blessing should not be required to have prior moral perfection," it said.

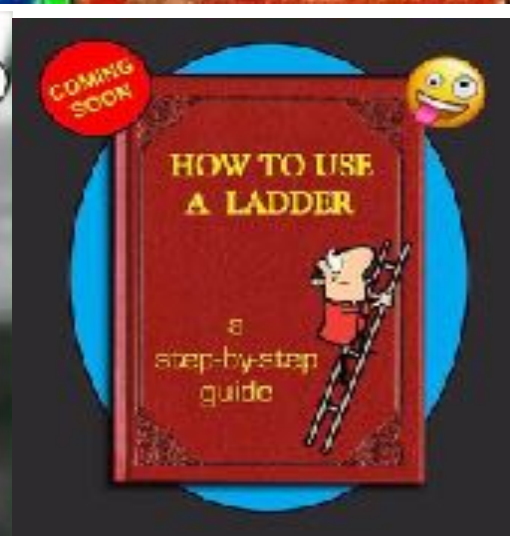


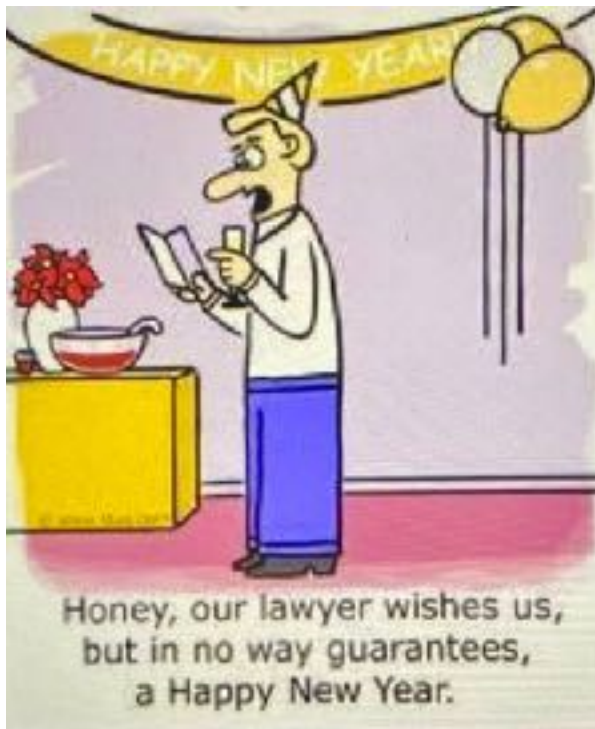
"It is not appropriate for a diocese, a bishops' conference" or other church structure to issue a formal blessing prayer or ritual for unwed couples. The blessing also should not be given "in concurrence" with a civil marriage ceremony to avoid appearing as a sort of church blessing of the civil union.

However, it said, a priest or deacon could "join in the prayer of those persons who, although in a union that cannot be compared in any way to a marriage, desire to entrust themselves to the Lord and his mercy, to invoke his help and to be guided to a greater understanding of his plan of love and of truth."

## Humour







- Q. What did the little champagne bottle call his father?      A. Pop.
- Q. What did the ghost say on New Year's Eve?      A. Happy boo year.
- Q. What does a caterpillar do on New Year's Eve?      A. Turns over a new leaf.
- Q. What was the Amityville Priest's resolution?      A. To exorcise more.
- Q. What is a New Year's resolution?  
 A. Something that goes in one year and out the other.
- Q. What do farmers give their wife's at midnight on New Year's Eve?  
 A. Hogs and kisses.



Q. What compliment did the glass give to the champagne on New Year's Eve?

A. You're so bubbly.

Q. Why did the man stand on one leg at midnight on New Year's Eve?

A. He wanted to start the year on the right foot

Q. Why did the man sprinkle sugar on his pillow on New Year's Eve?

A. He wanted to start the year with sweet dreams.

An iPhone and a firecracker were arrested on New Year's Eve. One was charged and the other was let off.

An optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in.

A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

### Prayers

We remember **John Hogan's sister (Julie)**, who died on Wednesday after an extremely brief diagnosis of pancreatic cancer.

We remember those whose anniversaries occur around this week, especially

**Maureen O'Brien** (31<sup>st</sup> December)

**Maureen Clare** (2<sup>nd</sup> January)      **Anne Magdalene** (3<sup>rd</sup> January)

We remember all others in our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially.

Maree Butler's brother, **Ian Burke** seems to be coming to his final days. Maree would appreciate our prayers. **Cathy Hardinge** is thankful for our prayers for her daughter Monique, son-in-law Zac and their newborn Leah, who are now out of hospital and making very promising progress, but **Monique** has many months of medical treatment ahead. **Peter Day** and his wife **Debbie Pichut** await the birth of their grandson in two week's time. The baby is progressing well. The doctors hope they can wait at least a week after birth before operating to remove the tumour he has. Please continue to keep the family in your prayers. It is much appreciated.



Marie Foale RSJ, Jeff Foale CP, Paul Geogeghan, Maree Bartoli, Pam Storey, Peter McNamara, Gerry Bond, Michael O'Callaghan Peter & Bernadette Owen, Phil Drew, Dawn Heffernan, Alexander Lim, Maeve Reardon, Greg Agosta, Bronwyn Burke, Helen McLean, Mary Hackett, Pam Gartland, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Errol Lovett, Patricia Keeghan, Kate and Mary Dunn,

Anne Jenkins, Chris O'Toole, Gerald Quinn CP and Peter and Debbie's unborn grandson

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

Brian