



community/

16th

February, 2024

Letter 209

Greetings,

Last week (Vietnamese New Year) was special for the six Vietnamese members of our community: **Joseph Dominic (JD), Phi, Tri, Hai, Thang and Cu'ong**

TET



JD and Tri wore traditional clothing for Mass last Sunday. After communion JD explained the similarities between Chinese New year and TET (Tet Nguyen Dan). Both traditions are occasions to honour ancestors so it is common to visit family graves.

Chinese New Year celebrates the new moon between January 21st and February 20th. Celebrations can last for 15 days. **TET** celebrates the arrival of spring in Vietnam (in January or February) by acknowledging the lunar new year. Celebrations last for seven days/ For both cultures it is a time to celebrate family. This means many people return to their hometowns over the week of TET.

Flower decoration forms a bit part of TET. **Phi** wanted to explain about lucky money (Li Xi) which he did by waving a red envelope. We don't know how many envelopes he received. The red colour of the envelope is critical to the luck one receives.



Phi received news yesterday that he will be ordained a deacon at Holy Cross at 7pm on Friday March 22nd.





Come Away Day

The first Come Away Day of the year will be held at Holy Cross on **Wednesday 28th February**. The theme of the day is *'Welcome the freshness of this new day'*.



The day's program provides opportunities for prayer, reflection and group interaction in the beautiful grounds and facilities of Holy Cross. All are welcome. Just come as you are. BYO lunch. Registration is from 9.30am.

The program concludes with a celebration of the Eucharist with a departure time of around 2pm. The cost of the day is \$25.00 or a donation according to your means. For any further details contact Sr Brigid cp on bridget.m64@gmail.com . Brochures about the 2024 Program are available in the Back Porch of the Chapel.

Lent



There are more than 140 mentions of 'forty' in the Bible. Some of the better known ones are: There were 'forty days and forty nights' of rain while Noah was in the ark. Moses spent forty days and forty nights on Mt Sinai. The Israelites wandered for forty years in the wilderness. Jesus fasted for forty days. Luke said there were forty days between Jesus' resurrection and ascension. It seems that 'forty' did not have a literal meaning, but a symbolic one, often associated with a period of preparation or trial. The church extended this idea by allocating forty days between Easter and Pentecost, and from Ash Wednesday through the season of Lent, until Holy Thursday. In fact, that period is 44 days, so again we have to bow to the symbolic meaning.

Lent is a time of preparation and renewal. We are invited to spend this time discerning what in our life needs renewal or repentance, and of course take steps to respond to what we discern.

The readings for Ash Wednesday highlight that our renewal has to be of the heart, not simply external activities. Pope Francis reminds us that we are missionary disciples, and by living this life with awareness, we become witnesses to Jesus and the life he calls us to imitate. The Lenten task is not to admire Jesus, but to grow in imitation of him.

St Gabriel's Festa

Gabriel Possenti CP is patron saint of youth, communication workers, messengers and postal workers! Gabriel died four days short of his 24th birthday in 1862. His feast day is February 27th and it is being celebrated at Holy Cross on Sunday 25th with an outdoor Mass at our St Gabriel shrine.



Two million pilgrims visit Gabriel's tomb every year at the St Gabriel sanctuary at the foot of Gran Sasso, in the Abruzzo region. The basilica holds 10,000 people. It is among the most popular Catholic shrines in Italy and throughout Europe.

Interestingly, Gabriel did not become the leader of the Passionists Congregation as two of his classmates did. He did not become a missionary, a teacher or an author. He did not even become a priest. He never visited Rome. His experience of Passionist life did not include the more famous communities of Monte Argentario or

Ordinary Sts John and Paul's and it took six months for notice of his death in isolated Isola to reach the generalate in Rome! He seemed to have been an insignificant student. However he was baptised in the same font as Francis of Assisi and named after him. When he was professed he became Gabriel.

However, when the Passionists tried to close the house at Isola where Gabriel had lived and to remove the bodies of those buried there, the people kept watch and would not let "their Gabriel" be taken from them. What seems to have attracted people to Gabriel was that he was humble, ordinary and prayerful. He shared with people his own devotion to our Lady of Sorrows. The popular intelligent party-going dancer of his youth had become a man totally committed to God and by doing the ordinary things in a faithful way, he became an inspiration and a means of grace to hundreds of thousands of people.



The festa on Feb 25th will begin with 10.30am Mass in the shrine. This will be followed by a procession, lunch, music and dancing and late in the afternoon there will be benediction. Lunch can be purchased.

Coffee Cart (Coffee after Mass)

There was a great turn up for Mass last Sunday, and a very friendly atmosphere continued over shared coffee. There were generous helpers again to set up marquees, the urn (for tea), home-made cakes and biscuits and safety bollards etc. Below Maurice Molan and John Hogan show their expertise at setting up a marquee.



Chris Andrew at Tim watching something!







Carpark

As explained to people at Mass last Sunday, we need to undertake some temporary repair of the main car park. When I say ‘we”, I mean Vince Celestino, who responded in his typically generous way to recommendations from our ‘A’ Team, and from Bruno. Vince has been working on the extension to the car park and relocation of the labyrinth, which has been hampered at times by wet weather, and and bouts of illness both he and his wife Mary have had in past weeks.



We are waiting to confirm whether tree roots near the carpark exit is to blame for the lifted sections of the concrete, or whether it was caused by water damage made worse by heavy trucks driving over that area. Clearly it had become a **safety hazard** for people walking in that area, so we have marked the area with bollards.

After some cutting of the concrete in the affected areas, Vince is planning to remove the concrete from the affected area, and use loose gravel to replace it. If it is necessary to re-concrete the area and it is affordable, we will do that later. We need to check out the cause so the damage is not repeated. Our arborist will remove some potentially dangerous branches from a number of trees, this week to ensure safety. It is beautiful to have so many trees on our property, but in the past three years tree safety has cost us just over \$15,000.



There are a couple of other issues with the carpark.

The original **markings** on the concreted area protrude too far from the parking area facing the building. We are looking at a way of erasing those markings. In the meantime, it will help

everyone, if cars facing the building are parked up against the yellow coloured wooden markers. This will make reversing far safer for people on both sides of the carpark.

We would like to **concrete** the gravelled area of the car park near the pathway to the chapel. This would be easier and safer for those with slight disabilities. We will investigate the cost and decide if it is possible.

Pope blasts 'hypocrisy' of those who bless businesses, but not gay couples

Vatican City — February 7, 2024

People who act shocked that a priest would bless a gay couple but have no problem with him blessing a crooked businessman are hypocrites, Pope Francis said. "The most serious sins are those that are disguised with a more 'angelic' appearance. No one is scandalized if I give a blessing to an entrepreneur who perhaps exploits people, which is a very serious sin. Whereas they are scandalized if I give it to a homosexual – this is hypocrisy," he told the Italian magazine *Crede*.



The interview was scheduled for publication Feb. 8, but Vatican News reported on some of its content the day before when the magazine issued a press release about the interview.

Pope Francis repeatedly has been asked about "Fiducia Supplicans" ("Supplicating Trust") on "the pastoral meaning of blessings," which was published by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith Dec. 18 and was approved by the pope. It allows for priests and other ministers to offer informal, non-liturgical blessings to gay couples and couples in "irregular" marriage situations as long as it is clear they are not blessing the couple's union. "We all have to respect each other. Everyone," the pope told *Crede*. "The heart of the document is welcome."



"I don't bless a 'homosexual marriage,' I bless two people who love each other, and I also ask them to pray for me," Pope Francis told Pauline Father Vincenzo Vitale, director of *Crede*. "Always in the confessional, when these situations come up, homosexual

people, remarried people, I always pray and always bless. The blessing should not be denied to anyone. Everyone, everyone, everyone.



Passion Play soldiers wanted

If you can assist as a Roman soldier in the annual Passion Play held at Holy Cross, please contact the Manager (Gino Gammaldi) at 0422 662 451 or email him at: surveysglobal@yahoo.com



British amateur photographer [Nima Sarikhani](#) captured this image of a young polar bear who made a bed for itself before drifting off to sleep near the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard, deep inside the Arctic Circle, around 800 kilometers) from the North Pole. The image was awarded first place in the 2023 Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award.



This image by Daniel Dencescu, a former winner of the award is one of four highly commended photos. It shows a murmuration of starlings swirling almost

magically into the shape of a giant bird on their way to their communal roosts above the city of Rome.

Murmurations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dedVszDI9aE>



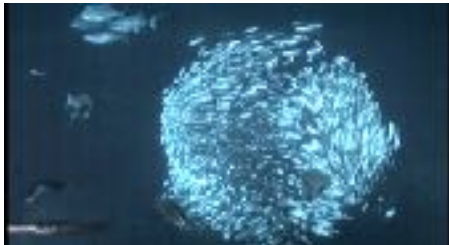
The name **murmuration** comes from the sound these huge flocks of European starlings (some as big as 750,000 birds) make, as they twist and swirl for an hour or so before sunset. No one knows which bird gives the signal, but they all suddenly cease swirling and drop down to their roost for the night. The displays attract and invite other starlings and it seems that the larger the flock, the safer it is for individual birds. They move as one.



Murmurations have no leader and follow no plan, but it seems each bird relies on seven neighbours to detect when to turn or twist.



Have you ever heard the advice, “don’t do in a large group, what you can do better in a small group”? Videos reveal that the birds are more spaced than appears, especially birds flying in front and behind, and it the seven side neighbours that provide each bird with the most help.



Large schools of fish can also form similar patterns as can some swarming insects including honeybees.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clgHEhziUxU>

Away – acting newsletter editor

On Tuesday I am heading to Singapore, Manila and Saigon for two weeks, for a series of meetings and conversations regarding the formation of our students in Vietnam. Denis Travers will also attend.



I’ll give **Erick** a bit of a start on next week’s newsletter, but he will be acting community leader and editor of the newsletter for the next two weeks.



Phi will be away from Monday for a ten day holiday in Sydney



Humour

Eating in the 50's.

For those of you who are old enough to remember, enjoy.

For the rest treat this as a history lesson!

Very surprising how time and memory has taken its toll.

Have things really changed this much in our time?

EATING IN THE UK IN THE FIFTIES consider that:

Pasta had not been invented.

Curry was a surname.

A takeaway was a mathematical problem.

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.

Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.

All crisps were plain ; the only choice we had was whether to put the salt on or not.

A Chinese chippy was a foreign carpenter.

Rice was a milk pudding, and never, ever part of our dinner.

A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.

Brown bread was something only poor people ate.

Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Coffee was Camp, and came in a bottle

Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

Only Heinz made beans.

Fish didn't have fingers in those days

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.

None of us had ever heard of yoghurt

Healthy food consisted of anything edible

People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.

Indian restaurants were only found in India.

Cooking outside was called camping

Seaweed was not a recognised food.

"Kebab" was not even a word never mind a food.

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold.

Prunes were medicinal.

Surprisingly muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed

Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we had only ever seen a picture of a real one.

Water came out of the tap, if someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it they would have become a laughing stock.

The one thing that we never ever had on our table in the fifties .. was elbows!

Someone said, "Nothing rhymes with orange." I said, "No, it doesn't."

The boy who completed the exam below could not believe he was not awarded 100%! Each answer was absolutely grammatically correct. The teacher did not share

the boy's sense of humour.

- Q. In which battle did Napoleon die? A. His last battle.
Q. River Ravi flows in which state? A. Liquid.
Q. What is the main reason for divorce? A. Marriage.
Q. What is the main reason for failure? A. Exams.
Q. What can you never eat before breakfast? A. Lunch and dinner.
Q. If you throw a red stone into the blue sea, what will it become? A. Wet.

- Q. Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?
A. At the bottom of the page.

- Q. How can a man go eight days without sleeping?
A No problem, he sleeps at night.

- Q. How can you lift an elephant with one hand?
A You will never find an elephant that has one hand.

- Q. If you had three apples and four oranges and four apples and three oranges in the other hand, what would you have? A. Very large hands.

- Q. If it took eight men ten hours to build a wall, how long would it take four men to build it? A. No time at all, the wall was already built.

- Q. How can you drop a raw egg onto a concrete floor without it cracking?
A. Anyway you want, concrete floors are very hard to crack.



Prayers

We remember those who have passed away recently and those whose anniversaries occur around this time, especially **Judith Edwards** (Feb 9th) **Rocco & Elisa Rapone** (18th Feb)

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



Tony Tome, Maree Bartoli, Pam Storey, Paul Geogeghan, Madelaine Brooks, Carol Battistella, Peter McNamara, Peter & Bernadette Owen, Alexander Lim, Michael O'Callaghan, Dawn Heffernan, Maeve & John Reardon, Monique Hardinge, Shirley Barnes, Bronwyn Burke, Gerry Bond, Helen McLean, Phil Drew, Mary Hackett, Pam Gartland, Patricia Keeghan, Errol Lovett, Greg Agosta, , Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Anne Jenkins, Kate & Mary Dunn, Chris O'Toole, Gary Perritt CP, Jeff Foale CP Gerald Quinn CP and baby Alfred Theodore in London.

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

Brian

PS.....

