

Holy Cross Retreat

<https://holycrosscentre.com/community/>



Letter 246

25th October, 2024

Greetings everyone

St Paul of the Cross Feast Day



Some of us gathered on the evening of Friday, October 18th, to celebrate the feast of St. Paul of the Cross. The Passionist Companions also gathered on Tuesday, October 22nd, for a commemoration of the Feast. It would have been best if we all gathered to celebrate together, but hopefully next time. Sr. Brigid CP has shared the following reflection, which I thought we could all enjoy.

“The theme of the General Chapter is well known to you all: Here I am send me: the Passion of Christ, our source of life and mission. How does this theme stir you today? Joachim in his report spoke of the need to be inspired with a new enthusiasm to the fan

the ashes into fire, to stand ready and available ‘to go to the other side.’ I could stop now and ask where is the other side for you?

We are always in need of inspiration. However this is an invitation to leave the comfort zones and take the risks necessary always aware that the source of our strength is the

Cross and Passion of Christ. We know only too well that Paul of the Cross saw and experienced the Passion as the most overwhelming sign of God's love.

Joachim highlights how renewal of Passionist life and mission depends on three features: The connection between mission and community life; the connection between mission and charism and the need for continual discernment of our mission in light of the signs of the times.

In Brian's recent report he cites what the moderator proposed as seven attitudes important in dealing with the chapter agenda namely: Three of them struck me as particularly important: Collaboration-willingness to work together; Systemic Thinking-grasping the interdependence of issues; A holistic perspective-seeing the interconnectedness in all issues. This is not to dismiss the others!

I think if we see that everything is connected then it really matters what attitude I bring to any and every encounter, is it an attitude of love and willingness to serve or do we sometimes come with a little scepticism or even judgement?

All of this surely touches into and invites us to a deeper inner life, one that enabled St Paul of the Cross to keep alive the memory of the Passion and who remains an inspiration for us on this journey. A quote which always challenges and inspires me, perhaps because I grew up on the south west coast of Ireland where the Atlantic flows STRONGLY with many moods:

'The Passion of Jesus is a sea of sorrows but it is also an ocean of love. Ask the Lord to teach you to fish in this ocean. Dive into its depths. No matter how deep you go, you will never reach the bottom.' St Paul of the Cross

This is the journey of a lifetime!

Another quote is:

'Let us throw ourselves into the ocean of his goodness, where every failing will be cancelled and anxiety turned to love.' St Paul of the Cross – helps us to have a little self-compassion and also hints at how to exercise ministry with love and compassion.

One does need courage to enter the ocean, to trust its movements and yet have an awareness of its power. It calls for trust and on the journey we also know our need of companions as God's love is made manifest through relationship and accompaniment. We are called to accompany one another and to convey to one another by our actions that we really do believe that : *'The Passion of Christ is the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love.'*

Let us pray for the grace to walk together, accompanying one another with hope, mindful that we hold a treasure which is to be shared and lived fully so that our communities are schools of prayer, not so much in a pious sense as in the sense that our lives are God centred, and also schools of humanity in that we are conscious of one another's struggles and support one another in love and forgiveness.

May the Passion of Christ be always in our hearts!

This was a prayer prepared by Sr Joanne Fahey for the CP Sisters Leadership Team Meeting in Larne, Northern Ireland on the day when they were reflecting on Formation.

Think of what is most difficult to accomplish in your life at this moment.

THEN COME!

Come, walk on the water with me!

I'm in the mood for impossible things!

Let's heal the world today.

Let's touch everything we see and change it to gold And our hearts let change to flesh.

(Ezekiel 36:26) No more stones for us.

Let's look at everything that could be

And believe that it will be if we dare to walk on water... scared.

Come walk on the water with me!

I'm a little bit scared but I feel a beautiful

So scared and beautiful we'll go.

We'll be careful first... but not very...

Being careful is for the very scared.

The Kingdom of God is not found in being careful but in taking chances.

Come walk on the water with me!

Let's take the chance of staying up...of moving on...of being seen. I feel scared and beautiful

I'm in the mood for impossible things.

I feel scared because it's impossible

I feel beautiful because it is not impossible (Mark 9:24)

Come Walk on the Water with me!

It takes on a greater significance in light of Sr Joanne's sudden death on September 23rd May she rest in peace."

Chris will be back soon – in the meantime the bread slicer awaits



While Chris Monaghan has been away, a few people have taken turns operating the bread slicer, with mostly successful results. Chris is usually the specialist when it comes to using the bread slicer effectively. At times, we've been short on people, but we do our best to keep this ministry going. As you can see, last week we had only a few people working, but they were enjoying it. Rafael received the good news that his visa will be granted, so he may be

heading to PNG at any time now. Congratulations, Rafael.

Happy Birthday Ann Rabot

Last Monday, we celebrated Ann's birthday, though it was a week late. Some of the staff who were present brought a beautiful cake that matched the color of her outfit. We thank Ann for her ongoing role in our community, as she voluntarily comes in every Monday to assist with administrative tasks at the front office. Thank you, and Happy Birthday, Ann! A lot of important work has been done in this office, enabling our Passionist ministries to reach out to thousands of people.



The Coffee Cart

On Sunday, we had the coffee cart, and it was once again a great success thanks to a few individuals who arrived as early as 8:30 a.m. to set up, those who brought sweets, and an anonymous donor who made it all possible for us to enjoy connecting with one another. See the photos on the next few pages, kindly taken by Tina Minichili.





Dennis Cogle (Brian)



Holy Cross and the Passionists have had no better benefactor than Dennis Cogle. In particular, Denis laboured over a fantastic newsletter monthly newsletter for many years. In mentioning this, I am reminded of a time (reported by Denis Travers), when Denis was making a thankyou speech for a sector couple of the 'Teams' Movement. I can't recall the couple's name now, but we'll call them Tom and Joan.

Dennis began his speech by saying something like, "We are very grateful to Tom for all the hard work"... (interruption by Mary Cogle.."and Joan". Dennis continued..." Yes and Joan... and for such a long time, Tom has assisted..."(interruption by Mary .."and Joan"). Dennis continued, and once again after a minute or so, "So we are grateful to Tom for...(interruption by Mary .."and Joan". Dennis continued, "Yes, we are grateful to Tom and Joan". He finally got it right.

How helpful it would be for we professed Passionists to have someone like Mary! Dennis would certainly agree with that. They have been a most faithful couple, supporting each other, and I can hear Mary say..." and their children". Speaking of which, three months ago, their home in Warrandyte was inundated with water and effluent from a burst Council pipe. They had to move into short-term accommodation which has become long-term. Not surprisingly, they have had great support from their children, especially I suspect from their son Stephen, and their daughter Trish (Mary would add..."and Mark") who lives in Barwon Heads.

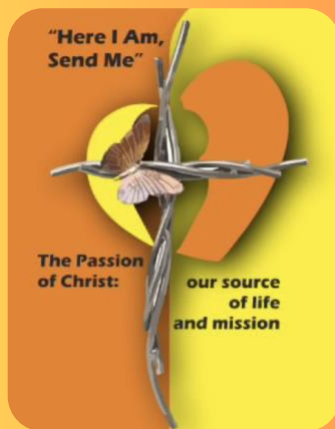
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We have not reported Denis' ill-health at his request, but this is the time to acknowledge that he has not been well for some time, which is why we've not seen him. Mary would add..." and Mary") for some time. The reason for acknowledgement in this newsletter is that Denis will celebrate his 90th birthday on November 2nd. We extend congratulations, thanks and best wishes to Dennis....and of course to Mary!

Happy Birthday Denis!



PASSIONIST INSTITUTE 2024 15-16 NOVEMBER



**SATURDAY
11AM - 2.45PM**

What it calls from us - Denis Travers

Reflections Younger CP - Luke Bulley

What do our companions think???

FURTHER DETAILS TO COME

*Including a detailed schedule for both days, along with zoom links.
Any questions or concerns contact Gerard - gerard.daly23@bigpond.com*

**SUNDAY
1.25 - 5.30PM**

General Chapter - what it calls from
us
Chris Monaghan
Brian Traynor

Reflection
Vietnam

Ritual - NZ Companions
*Those at Templestowe welcome to
join the Sunday BBQ*

Individual / Personal Retreats at Holy Cross Centre in December & January (Mayrose & Cecilia)

December is not far away and is a busy time for most of us as we prepare to celebrate Christmas with family and friends. Amongst the busy-ness, we invite you to take time out for yourself...to check in with your heart, to reflect on your spiritual journey, and to listen to God's promptings. Holy Cross Centre in Templestowe offers you space for an individual retreat, providing accommodation with cooling/heating (some rooms with ensuites), self-catering, a small meditation room, Chapel, and beautiful grounds in which to wander. You can choose the length of your retreat and Spiritual Direction can also be arranged if desired (additional fee would apply). Dates in December and January are available as well as other times of the year. For more information, contact Mayrose on (03) 9846 6014 or email hcc@passionists.com



Goodbye Roma – not yet (Brian)



Although we are here for another week, the Holy Spirit Province contingent (Joachim, Denis, Chris, Tue and myself) had a simple meal out not far from Sts John and Paul's. This was prompted by a little story Joachim told us from back in 2012 when he was Provincial and here attending the General Chapter. He and a couple of others shared a simple meal at a restaurant in sight of the

Colosseum. At one stage during that meal he said, "well I might as well enjoy this sight because it is the last time I'll be seeing the Colosseum". Some days later he was elected General, and has been in Rome for twelve years!

It will be really good to have Joachim back home. His time in the role as General has had serious affects on his health and he needs to take some time to nurse himself back to good health.

Old Rome



On Sunday morning I had a very long walk out and along Via Appia Antica. When I caught up with Chris at lunch time, he had biked out there and of course, gone a lot further. Spartacus was crucified on this road in 71C which connected Rome with Brindisi 480 kilometres away. On Sundays the road is traffic free and there are many families and friends enjoying a stroll or runners taking it

more seriously.

The weather has been very good during these past three weeks, with only a couple of days of rain, and warm temperatures (26 degrees on Monday 21st) but the remainder of the week has forecast rain. Nothing lasts forever and forecasts are not infallible. Some of the men went to Monte Argentario on Sunday. It is no wonder that St Paul of the Cross used the image of the sea or the ocean, so often.





Our facilitators have divided the work of the Chapter into three phases: Seeing (Week 1), Discerning (Week 2) and Acting (Week 3)

The plan for today (Week 3) is to divide us into the same working groups we had before and to take up all the material recommend from two separate groups and the Assembly feedback. The 4 main topics (Laity,

Belonging, Leadership and New Ministries. I have been in the New Ministries group, so our Monday timetable was:

Session 1 (8.30am-10.30am) Individual work.

Session 2 (11.00am-1.00pm) Discerning in our English-speaking discernment group

Session 3 (3.30pm-5.30pm) Merging with an Italian-speaking Group working on the same area.



We have been encouraged to learn from the past; draw on our Synodal experience; be mindful of our biases and communication limitations; empower our relationships and create life-giving synodal institutions and structures so as to develop recommendations that will guide the Congregation for the next 6 years.

The facilitators encouraged us to first spend 45 minutes reflecting and beginning to write in the present tense, reflecting on our personal experience, using these questions...

What is the issue you want to recommend? What do want to achieve? How is it to be done (what actions will be needed?)

Who...what level of leadership should address this (who is responsible?)

Why....what will be the meaning of the outcome?

When..what is the date for actions to be completed by?

Where what theme or area of concern does this name?

To Whom....who will be the beneficiaries?

Some are more able (language, experience etc) to do this than others. After about an hour on our own, we spent two hours in our discerning (common language group) about 'New Ministries'. Our common language group includes 5 Africans from four different



countries, 2 Filipinos, 2 from the United States and myself. So nearly all of the group have English as a second or third language. I felt like I was back at Holy Cross. Then in the afternoon we spent another two hours meeting our discerning group with a Spanish speaking group who were dealing with the same topic. It was a very tiring

day. After 8pm dinner, Denis, Chris, Jim Sweeny from Scotland and myself joined Joachim for about an hour and a quarter, just chatting over a drink.

CHAPTER PROPOSALS

On Tuesday we covered 24 proposals related to Inner Life (3), Belonging (9), Leadership (6) and New Ministries (6). These proposals had not been formulated in an official form, but were the result of two different language groups combining their material. So there were two groups covering each of the four areas. Some of the proposals overlap in content and recommendation so a write group was appointed in the morning to take all these proposals and merge content and recommendations where that is possible and make each proposal clear. Perhaps in the end we will have around 18 proposals.



Both Monday and Tuesday were very tiring days, so I didn't get out for a walk either day. It is a very demanding timetable and the last two days has required a lot of attentive listening. Fr Joseph, the Vice-Provincial from Japan was not well enough to lead a PASPAC Eucharist on Tuesday, so I was asked to do that.

Today, Wednesday we considered proposals related to our Configurations. This was another long and tiring day, starting at 8.00am and finishing with Mass at 6.15pm. Each morning we begin with 30 minutes of contemplative prayer which is organised by the different tables of six. No paper is required. This has been a vast improvement on previous Chapters when there have been so many words printed in booklets. It does seem to be the preferred mode for some cultures, to use many words, so we have appreciated the periods of silence in our morning prayer along with background music, and quotes from Scripture and from Paul of the Cross.



The proposals regarding Configurations finally recognised that having different models is OK. There is a need for catechesis about the goal of Configurations which were set up to create solidarity in the areas of finance, personnel and formation. The feedback has



been that very few of our religious know anything significant about the Configurations because most initiatives are taken at the executive level and are not communicated or do not knowingly impact on the average religious or other members of the Passionist Family. In our own group it was commonly believed that the three areas are not working effectively in determining solidarity.

There was no rain on Monday and Tuesday, but it rained on Wednesday. Thursday will be devoted to voting on all the proposals we've already seen. An expert writing group is working on them to be clear and accurate to the original idea.

This is generous work because they have to fit most of it to their free time although they were freed from their groups this morning to work on this for two hours. There is a lot of this extra work going on. Chris has been part of the Central Coordinating meeting (CCC) and they have had many meetings in what would have been their free time. The secretary of the Chapter, Massimo Parisi CP has a doctorate in Law and Theology and he has spent an incredible number of hours translating documents, summarising each day's work and many other tasks and ensuring they are made available in digital form each morning and at other times.



I mentioned three weeks ago another member of the community here Fr Marco Pasquale who designed the software system we are using, called Synago, that is extremely complex in what it achieves, but amazingly simple and efficient to use. Since we have been here, Marco has been working with Massimo to ensure every document is translated into all three major languages and sent directly to each one of the 79 of us and the translators. There is a daily agenda page and when I open it, there is advice of all the sessions for the day that includes "today at 11.30am you are in Group 2 meeting in the Consulta room". The document relevant for that meeting is attached". It is amazing!



So Thursday will be devoted to voting and on Friday morning we will meet Pope Francis. We re-gather on Friday and have some summary work on Saturday morning. We finish on Saturday with 11.30am Mass and lunch. Our Holy Spirit contingent (Joachim, Denis, Chris, Tue and myself) will have that 'farewell Roma' meal on Saturday night.

When I leave Rome on Tuesday I will continue with some sabbatical time which so far has been totally different from what I planned. I will be back at Holy Cross on Wednesday November 13th, in time for the Passionist Institute. Two weeks later I leave again for a meeting in Sydney and then some PFGM work in New Zealand until December 11th.

African Choir visiting Holy Cross this Sunday:



As mentioned in the last Letter, this Sunday 27th there will be an African choir visiting at 10am Mass. Some of the visitors are from Adelaide and others from Melbourne. We look forward to welcoming them.

Humour from Brian, Peter and Tom

This week our Jokes have come from Peter, Brian's brother and Brian. Some of the images are from Tom McDonough. Thank you for the jokes.



Why is "dark" spelled with a k and not a c?
Because you can't see in the dark.

Why is it unwise to share your secrets with a clock?
Well, time will tell.

When I told my contractor I didn't want carpeted steps, he just gave me a blank stare.

Bono and The Edge walk into a Dublin bar and the bartender says, "Oh no, not U2 again".

Prison is just one word to you, but for some people, it's a life sentence.

Scientists got together to study the effects of alcohol on a person's walk, and the result was staggering.

I'm trying to organise a hide and seek tournament, but good players are really hard to find.

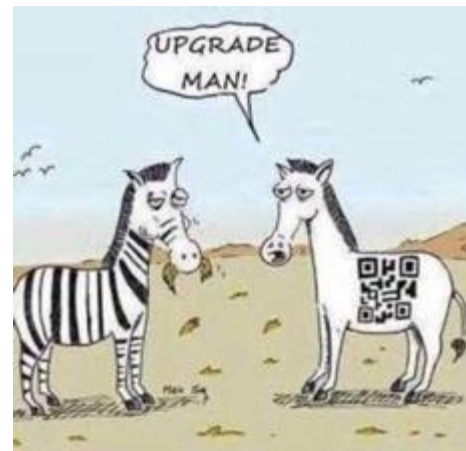
I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows and nuts. I won't lie, it was a rocky road.

What do you say to comfort a friend who's struggling with grammar? There, their, they're.

I went to the toy store and asked the assistant where the Schwarzenegger dolls were and he replied, "Aisle B, back".

What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture yourself.

I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.



Prayers

We remember all the recently deceased, and those whose anniversaries occur this week, especially

Franca Valmorbida - 26/10 - Mother of Maurice
Irene O'Donnell - 28/10 - Mother of Marg Hogan
Helen Sprague - 28/10 - Partner of Tim Horlock
Fleana De Prato - 30/10 - Mother of Alida Valmorbida
Mary Bird - 1/11 - Sister of Peter Cahill
Salvatore (Sam) Cilmi - 1/11 - Husband of Marilyn
Patricia McDonald - 1/11 - Sister of Peter Cahill
Christina Moore - 1/11 - Sister of Mary Cogle

**I thank my God each time I think
of you!
And when I pray for you,
I pray with joy.**

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

Desley Reynolds, Rex Cambry, Sharon Williams,
Doris Castro, Julia Cantone, Caroline Meade,
Sophia Chung, Zoe Chung, Michael O'Callaghan,
Peter McNamara, Pam Storey, Lorraine Gill, Adrian Woon, Maree Bartoli, Sandra Street, Paul Darbyshire, Luke Norden, Carol Battistella, Monique Hardinge, Kaya Lenic, Robyn Burns, John Reardon, Alexander Lim, Agnes Mumburi, Peter & Bernadette Owen, Gerry Bond, Mary Dunn, Bronwyn Burke, Greg Agosta Helen McLean, Phil Drew, Anne Jenkins, Pam Gartland, Patricia Keeghan, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Errol Lovett, Chris O'Toole and baby Alfred Theodore in London.

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

Thank you
Erick.