

## Holy Cross Retreat

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

**Letter 271**

17<sup>th</sup> April, 2025



**Please note the times for the Easter liturgies**

**Holy Thursday:** April 17<sup>th</sup>: Mass at **7.30pm**

**Good Friday** April 18<sup>th</sup>: **Way of the Cross** (small groups)  
(10.00am, 10.10; 10.20; 10.30; 10.40; 10.50; 11.00)

You are welcome to pray the Stations at any of these times with a group and a leader. If you prefer a separate time, there are copies of prayers in a plastic box in front of the first garage door.

Please note the external Stations could be difficult for people who are unsteady on their feet, because of the slope of the ground in various places. One section is also a brief but steep climb. It is not advised to wear stiletto heels (men included!)

### **Solemn Commemoration of the Passion at 3.00pm**

(This will be held in the chapel, so please come early. There will be some extra stackable chairs added, but we want those who need an arm rest to be able to do so. There will be an overflow area in the Corbett people where people can follow the live-stream recording, participate in the Veneration of the Cross and receive Communion.

**The 3.00pm liturgy will be live-streamed. The link is:**

<https://youtube.com/live/slr1v4gUEbl?feature=share>

**Easter Sunday** April 20<sup>th</sup>: **Dawn Mass 6.30am** in the St Gabriel shrine  
This will be followed by breakfast in the dining room; a donation towards breakfast is requested please. Feel free to park on the oval.

**Easter Sunday** April 20<sup>th</sup>: Mass as usual, at 10.00am

## Good Friday reflection



Scientists have been able to use DNA from skeletons in London, to reveal secrets from the Black Death. In one case they were able to determine that a man had been breast-fed as a baby, had moved to London from another part of England, suffered bad tooth decay in his childhood, worked as a labourer, and died in early adulthood from bubonic plague!

The Black Death or plague, is thought to have killed at least 75 million people, including more than half of Britain's population, mostly within a two year period in the 14th century. There have been further outbreaks including a serious outbreak in the 17th century. Isolated cases still occur today. It is very difficult to imagine what it must have been like to have people in your family or work place, dropping dead, literally, all around you. How could you have hope? A popular belief at the time was *'This is the end of the world'*.

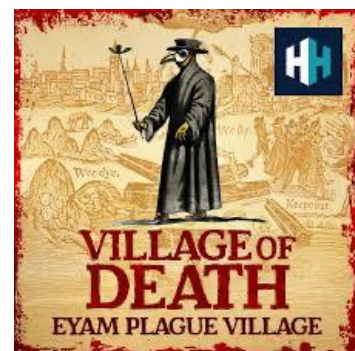


The plague affected popular piety and theology from that time, up to this day, especially because many preachers of the time suggested the plague was a punishment from God. Even today, many people think that a tragedy or serious sickness is a test sent by God or a punishment sent by God. Many preachers of the time recommended people buy indulgences to save them from punishment in the next life.



Since so many people saw little hope in this life, this must have seemed an attractive offer. It allowed people to buy time out of purgatory. This kind of thinking too, has lasted until today among many believers. In fact, the focus of faith has constantly and unfortunately been presented with an emphasis on 'the next life' rather than life on this earth and life 'now'..

There are some amazing stories of suffering during the plague. One story from the 1660's in England is amazing. Eyam in Derbyshire, was a small village with 360 residents. The plague came to the village when a parcel of cloth was sent from London to the village tailor, George Vicars. The cloth was damp and was hung out in front of the fire to dry, and without knowing it, this released plague infested fleas. George Vicars died a very painful death within three days.



At the time, no one knew that the plague was carried by infected rats and fleas, but as more villagers died in Eyam, three major decisions were taken to minimize infection at the suggestion of the Rector, William Mompessen.



The first, was the establishment of a boundary around the village, beyond which no Eyam resident, even if they appeared to be healthy, would pass. This was an act of great sacrifice, because it meant no one could escape the risk of contracting the plague. The decision was taken reflecting Christian values, in order to avoid

infecting people from other towns and villages. Authorities nearby, agreed to donate food and medical supplies, and money for any other goods was purified by the running water in the local well where the goods were left, or by leaving the coins in a bowl of vinegar.

A second decision was that those who died were to be buried as quickly as possible by family relatives near their homes, rather than in the village cemetery. One woman, Elizabeth Hancock buried her husband and six children near her home. They all died within a week of each other. Six of the eight members of the Sydall family died, and nine members of the Thorpe family died.



The rector's wife, Catherine Mompessen worked among plague victims and died of the plague, aged 28. In that same month seventy-seven others died. Fifty-six died the previous month. In two months, one third of the village died, and another third died within a year. In all, 267 of the 360 villagers died.

A third decision was to hold religious services outdoors rather than in the church to reduce the possibility of contamination. The personal courage and self-sacrifice taken by the residents prevented the plague from spreading to other villages, but most of them paid the ultimate price for their commitment. The rector wrote, *"Our town has become a Golgatha, the place of the skull. My ears never heard such miserable lamentations; my nose never smelled such horrid smells and my eyes never beheld such ghastly spectacles."*





Can you image the sorrow of the people of Eyam?  
Can you hear the screams and wails? Can you feel  
their suffering? Here, as the rector of Eyam  
described, is Calvary – the Passion.

We cannot imagine how many similar stories  
throughout history could be told, in every land, in  
every age, including our own! Every day we hear tragic stories of extreme and  
undeserved suffering.



In the Passion story, Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry Jesus' cross. Simon did not take it on willingly. There are many Simons in our world, forced to take up the cross of suffering or share in the pain that others experience. This does not just happen during a plague or in extreme situations of warfare, or in extreme circumstances of starvation, child prostitution and torture. Many of our community know and have known deep suffering. Many are partners caring for an aged or seriously ill spouse. Among the causes of suffering there has been mental illness, physical illness, abuse, the loss of a loved one, especially a child either before or after birth, dementia, cancer or another disease.

No family escapes suffering, pain or loss. In the case of Eyam the suffering was shared by the entire village, just as it is today in many cities, towns and villages, ravaged by war and violence. Pain and suffering happens in this world, in this life; in your life!



Many of the villagers of Eyam owed their life to the self-sacrificing gesture for the village to shut itself off from everyone else. That decision saved lives. This is the message of the cross. When we embrace pain, sorrow, suffering or loss, we come to know in a mysterious way, that it always leads to something new and life-giving. Always! All around us, nature reminds us that we cannot experience this newness without enduring the loss, as painful and as difficult as it is. Unless the caterpillar enters the cocoon, it will never fly.



In every sorrow, hardship or cruel act of violence, we are reminded through the cross, that our pain is also God's pain, and Good Friday reminds us, that no pain, no sorrow, nor torture, no suffering will ever conquer us.

The cross stands as the sign that our sorrow can become the healing scar that brings life to others. This is the gift Jesus offers each of us. On Good Friday especially, we acknowledge his death; but our deepest belief is that life wants to live! Jesus invited his disciples (and that includes us) to trust in him, that dying to self, leads to life. That is the message of Good Friday....we will no doubt sing that day..."Father, I put my life in your hands". We then have to actually do it!

### **Into the hands of God**

St Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionists, advised in many of his letters, that he had put himself in God's hands or he recommended this spiritual practice to others. This advice is reflected in extracts from various letters. Here are some examples:

*If God wishes me to get sick I will put myself into the hands of doctors, but even more so **into the hands of God** (28<sup>th</sup> June 1739)*

*So place yourself **in the hands of God** and all abandoned in him as a ship without oars or sails (29<sup>th</sup> July 1739)*

*We have abandoned everything **into the hands of God** so that he will dispose what will be done for his glory (19<sup>th</sup> November 1740)*

*I do not know where to turn. I will do what I can. I have put things **into the hands of God** (9<sup>th</sup> November 1748)*

*Let us put it **in the hands of God** and let him act for all will come out well  
25<sup>th</sup> March 1749*

*Oh how much I recommend to you deep resignation and total abandon **into the hands of God** by often making acts: 'May your will be done' (4<sup>th</sup> February 1755)*

*Concerning the fears you express. I give my poor opinion. Place yourself entirely **in the hands of God** (2<sup>nd</sup> February 1762)*

*Place yourself **in the hands of God**, abandon yourself entirely to him so that in everything and through everything his Holy Will may be done  
31<sup>st</sup> July 1762*

*Place everything **in the hands of God** for that is the best way. (17<sup>th</sup> November 1764)*

*Abandon all **into the hands of God** and wait in peace for whatever happens  
11<sup>th</sup> April 1770*

### Community activities

**YTU** is having a non-instruction period (no classes) for two weeks.

**JD** left on Tuesday for a supply in King Island. This will give him the demanding opportunity to prepare for and lead all of the Easter ceremonies for the first time.

**Mike** has been continuing his English studies. He will sit an IELTS exam on April 26<sup>th</sup> which will confirm his visa status and enable him to take up a pastoral appointment at a later time. He will spend a month on supply in Hobart during most of May and early June, and will celebrate Sunday Mass at Holy Cross for the first time, on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Jerome** is managing well despite discomfort, and apart from being a little critical of 'old age', he does not complain.

**Erick** is having a break from university studies and school counselling.

**Chris** has had a busy Lent, having done a number of talks and the weekly Lenten series of reflections. While a break from teaching classes is welcome from a work load point of view, there is other upcoming work that he has to prepare for.

**John** has completed his first term at YTU. He has enjoyed the classes, but is experiencing a real challenge in making the required adjustment to community life and the loss of opportunities he had as a school counsellor to be actively pastoral. after 25

**OBrien** will move to Endeavour Hills after the last weekend of the month. He's keen to 'get into it'.

There has been a of work going on this week to prepare for the Triduum liturgies, especially by those who are presiders. **Tri** has been preparing Power Point presentations for the liturgies and he will livestream the 3pm liturgy on Good Friday. **Erick** and a small crew have been preparing for the Good Friday liturgy, and there have been chairs stacked and moved (more of that is to come on Saturday and Sunday) and **John and Tri** are preparing the altar of repose.

**Peter Day** has generously done several shifts of mowing. There has also been some tidying up around the grounds.

### Washing machine

**Teresa Lim** is offering free a top load washing machine. Please advise if you are interested.

## Eggs

The next egg delivery day will be Easter Tuesday, April 22nd.

Please do not remove eggs from the community cool room, without advice.

## Movie recommendation

Thanks to Joe Curcio for his recommendation of 'Woodlawn' (on Netflix). It is based on a true story and is quite amazing.

## English

### Tongue Twisters

Mr. See owned a saw. And Mr. Soar owned a seesaw. Now, See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw before Soar saw See, which made Soar sore.

Had Soar seen See's saw before See sawed Soar's seesaw, See's saw would not have sawed Soar's seesaw.

So See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw, but it was sad to see Soar so sore just because See's saw sawed Soar's seesaw.

Silly Simon is shining Sally's shoes in the shoe shop. He smiles as he shines shoes because she shines Simon's shoes too

She sells seashells by the seashore

The sixth sick sheikh's sixth sheep's sick

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

A certain young fellow named Beebee, wished to marry a lady named Phoebe

"But," he said. "I must see what the minister's fee will be before Phoebe be Phoebe Beebee

If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, How many pickled peppers would Peter Piper pick?

I thought a thought, but the thought I thought wasn't the thought I thought I thought. If the thought I thought I thought had been the thought I thought, I wouldn't have thought so much.

Two versions...same words but different punctuation.

I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind and thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior.

I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind and thoughtful people who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior.

## Humour

A man complained: "You buried my grandmother in the wrong plot"  
Cemetery groundskeeper: "I'm very sorry; I've made a grave mistake".

An old lady saw an ad for burial plots, and thought to herself "that's the last thing I need"

According to a survey, people's number one fear is public speaking. Their number two fear is death. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than giving the eulogy!

Announcement: The man who created Autocorrect has died. Resturant In Peace

Tim bought 2 goldfish and named them 1 and 2. If 1 died, he'll still have 2.

**Q.** What is short, skinny and been dead in a wardrobe for two years?

**A.** The Hide and Seek Champion from 2023.

**Q.** What does a liar do after he dies? **A.** He lies still

**Q.** Why don't cannibals eat clowns? **A.** Because they taste funny

**Q.** Will glass coffins be a success? **A.** Remains to be seen!

**Q:** Why doesn't McDonald's serve escargot?

**A:** It's not fast food!

**Q:** Why did the butcher work extra hours at the shop?

**A:** To make ends meat

**Q:** Why couldn't the sesame seed leave the casino?

**A:** He was on a roll!

**Q:** Why did the dieter go to Bunnings?

**A:** He wanted to get thinner.

**Q.** The Italian chef had a terminal illness?

**A.** He pastaway.

**Q:** What do you call the king of vegetables?

**A:** Elvis Parsley.

**Q.** How much room should you give fungi to grow?

**A.** As mushroom as possible.

- A man went to a seafood restaurant, slipped and pulled a mussel.
- It was an emotional wedding. Even the cake was in tiers.
- You know what's hard to beat for breakfast? A boiled egg.
- Spending a lot of time at the coffee bar can cause a latte problems.
- A man threw a glass of milk at another man. How dairy!
- Most people find bananas a peeling.
- Becoming a vegetarian was a huge missed steak
- A butcher sat on his sausage machine and got behind in his orders!
- Why did the Easter egg hide? He was a little chicken.
- How does the Easter bunny stay fit? With regular EGGS-xercise.
- How does the Easter bunny keep his fur neat? With hare spray.



- Why do we paint Easter eggs? Because it's too hard to wrap them.
- What do you call a forgetful rabbit! A hare brain.
- What do you call a rabbit with fleas? Bugs Bunny!
- How does the Easter Bunny keep his coat so shinny? He uses hare conditioner!
- What do you get if cross a bunny with a spider? A hare-net!

## Prayers

We remember those who have died recently and we especially remember those whose anniversaries occur around this time, and for those who grieve them.

We remember all of our Holy Cross family who are unwell, and all who care of them, especially.....



Denise Egan, Treenah Wadham, Pam Storey, Kata Lenic, Fr Jeff Foale CP, Noel Smyth, Graham Burke, Fr Brendan Lane, Lesley Yang, Marilyn Climi, Bro Jerome, Peter Barry, Gerry Bond, Maureen Barns, Rex Cambry, Carol Battistella, Lorraine Gill, Doris Castro Zoe Chung and her daughter Sophia, Pam Gartland, Alexander Lim, Bro Minh Toan CP, Julia Cantone, Peter Owen,

Rod Gorfine, Bernadette Owen, Luke Norden, Greg Agosta, Bronwyn Burke, Helen McLean, Caroline Meade, Patricia Keeghan, Phil Drew, Anne Jenkins, Rod Smith, Errol Lovett, and young Alfred Theodore in London.

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

The community extends our hope for a blessed and peace-filled Easter season.

Brian

