

Holy Cross Retreat

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

Letter 272

25th April, 2025

This has been quite some week with regards to the newsletter. We've had the celebration of the Triduum, followed immediately by the death of Pope Francis, and today we celebrate Anzac Day.

As I am beginning holidays tomorrow, I wanted to begin preparations for our 60th Jubilee of Holy Cross, which we will celebrate on May 25th, two days after I return. Beginning with a brief overview in this week's newsletter, and continuing over the next four weeks, with Erick as editor, there will be a brief history of the district and the founding of Holy Cross, as well as a highlighting of some significant developments over the sixty years.

For these reasons, the weekly newsletter is much larger than usual, although it includes a few pages of photos, and there is the Easter newsletter of the Cross and Passion sisters which is attached.

In some obituaries devoted to Pope Francis over the past few days, there has been criticism of him, that he has left a divided Church. This seems somewhat naive, considering that we are living in a polarised age, where conspiracy theories, fake news, social media, social influencers and soap box commentators combine to ensure there are extreme views held on any topic, within any community.

Such difference is more obvious now because organisations, leaders and even parents, do not have the same authority as was once the case. With regard to the church, difference has always been evident, and one of the hallmarks of a healthy community is how they appreciate difference. This is not something to be afraid of, or something we should try to eliminate. What we need, is an attitude of respect for others who have different views from our own.

We know the struggles St Paul had with the Jerusalem church, which was more strictly Jewish than his Gentile communities. The book of the Acts of the Apostles can remind us, that polarisation and difference have always been present, and the gospels remind us that Jesus lived with this tension as well.

What can hold us back, is an attitude that "it must be right because we have always done it this way". This is not the true value of tradition. Life evolves and we know from the history of evolution, that the species that adapt best, survive. Adapting to new circumstances requires us to reinterpret what we know, think and believe.

Our priorities and even some practices, might need to shift, as happens in a crisis – remember our changed practices during COVID-19!

Pope Francis joked that reforming the Roman Curia would take longer to achieve than cleaning the Egyptian Sphinx with a toothbrush! Behind the humour was a recognition that there are some forces in the church resistant to change. In nature, when a species fails to adapt, it suffers population loss and possible extinction!

As the grief for Pope Francis shifts into speculation about a new Pope, there will be questions concerning how the new leader might manage the extreme traditionalists and the extreme progressives. To be sure, both extremes are troublesome in every religion, and avoiding schism is a challenge that has not always been negotiated well.

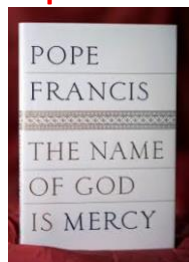
We are told that in the brief (three minute) opportunities the Cardinals had to speak to each other as a group before the last Conclave, Jorge Bergoglio said, ““I have the impression that Jesus has been locked inside the Church and he is standing at the door knocking. He is not knocking to get in. He wants to get out!” This impressed many cardinals, and in a sense it characterised his entire approach as Pope.

We have to be open to surprise and always there is disappointment for some at the election of a new Pope. Perhaps more than choosing someone they hope will satisfy everyone, the Cardinals will again choose someone who recognises that the Church is for the people, and that Jesus is still knocking – to get out!

Thank you for that vision, Francis. I treasure this photo.



Pope Francis RIP



Pope Francis On Sunday morning, March 17, 2013, Francis celebrated his first Mass as Pope in the Church of St. Anna, the only church within the Vatican that is open to the public. In the introduction to his book ‘The name of God is Mercy’, Andrea Tornelli wrote: “Francis delivered his homily off the cuff: *The message of Jesus is mercy. For me, and I say this with humility, it is the Lord’s strongest message.*

The Pontiff chose to comment on the excerpt from the Gospel of John that speaks of the adulteress, the woman whom the scribes and Pharisees were about to stone as prescribed by the Law of Moses. Jesus saved her life by calling upon whoever was without sin to cast the first stone. Everyone walked away. “Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin any more” (John 8:11).

Francis, referring to the scribes and Pharisees who had dragged the woman in front of the Nazarene to be stoned, said: “Sometimes we, too, like to reproach others, to condemn others.” The first and only step required to experience mercy, the Pope



added, is to acknowledge that we are in need of mercy. “Jesus comes for us, when we recognize that we are sinners.” All that’s necessary is not to imitate the Pharisee who stood in front of the altar and thanked God for not being a sinner “like other men.”

If we are like that Pharisee, if we think we are righteous, “we do not know the Lord’s heart, and we will never have the joy of feeling this mercy!” the new Bishop of Rome explained. Those who are in the habit of judging people from above, who are sure of their own righteousness, who are used to considering themselves just, good, and in the right, don’t feel the need to be embraced and forgiven. And there also are those who feel the need but think they are irredeemable because they have done too many bad things.



In this connection, Francis related a dialogue he had had with a man who, on being given this explanation of mercy, had answered: “Oh, Father, if you knew my life you wouldn’t talk to me like that! I have done some terrible things!” This was Francis’s reply: “Even better! Go to Jesus: he likes to hear about these things. He forgets, he has a special knack for forgetting. He forgets, he kisses you, he embraces you, and he says: ‘Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin anymore.’ That is the only advice he gives. The Lord never tires of forgiving: never! It is we who tire of asking him for forgiveness”.

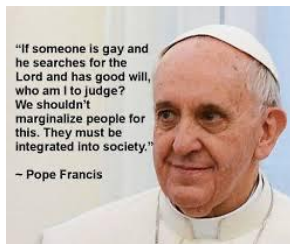
Andrea Tornelli was appointed in 2018, by Pope Francis as editorial manager of the Dicastery for Communication at the Vatican. The book ‘The Name of God is Mercy’ was published in 2016 and is the result of a number of conversations between Pope



Francis and Andrea Tornelli, who had sent various questions to Francis before each conversation. Tornelli explained that from that first homily he heard, there emerged the centrality of the message of mercy, which would characterize those first few years of Francis’s papacy. They were simple and profound words. This is the face of a Church that doesn’t reproach people for their fragility and their wounds but that treats them with the medicine of mercy.

Of course this will be the legacy of Pope Francis – his compassion, his commitment to mercy and his constant call for inclusion. Who belongs to the church, he asked: “everyone, everyone, everyone”

Tornelli continued in his introduction, “We live in a society that encourages us to discard the habit of recognizing and assuming our responsibilities: It is always others who make mistakes. It is always others who are immoral. It’s always someone else’s fault, never our own. And sometimes we even experience the return of a kind of clericalism, always intent on building borders, “regulating” the lives of people through imposed prerequisites and prohibitions that make our daily lives, already



difficult, even harder. An attitude of being always ready to condemn and much less willing to accept. Ready to judge but not to bow down with compassion for mankind’s sufferings. The message of mercy—the heart of that sort of unwritten “first encyclical,” which was contained in the new Pope’s brief homily—swept all those stereotypes away”.

The church now awaits a successor to Pope Francis. We can grateful to have lived at the same time is Francis, who has swept away stereotypes, and in so doing we have had a glimpse into the range of responses Jesus experienced. There were those,



freed by his loving gestures, including his cures. Others were inspired by his words. Some reassured him ‘to whom would go?’ The centurion (seeing how he died) came to believe. And there were those who were scandalised by his familiarity with God; by his keeping company with sinners and outcasts, and by his putting aside of some traditions. Some disliked his ‘off the cuff’

comments, while others found them life giving. So much of this can be said about Francis. He renewed our vocation as missionary disciples. He inspired us with hope.

May he rest in peace.



Stephen Amos meets Pope Francis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ocKTFo5598>



Easter

We received a lot of grateful comments for the Holy Week liturgies, and in particular, many people said they felt very moved by the live dramatization of the gospel on Good Friday, in which Erick had a central role.

Video of Good Friday: <https://youtube.com/live/slr1v4gUEbl?feature=share>

The dawn Mass on Easter Sunday, which Chris led, was always very special, but this time it included the baptism of a young family. We are extremely grateful for the St Gabriele community for providing breakfast, and it was great to see Bruno up and about and assisting Cathy in case she didn't know what to do!

The 10.00am Mass on Easter Sunday always attracts some people we rarely see, and that is always good.

For our part, we were and are grateful for the faith, love and support of our Holy Cross family. We are especially grateful for the assistance once again of the St Gabriel's Committee and friends, in making the Easter Sunday breakfast so efficient, and so enjoyable.

Holy Thursday – washing of hands ritual



Altar of repose



Good Friday 3.00pm...the team that acted out the final part of the Passion, with the central character, Erick (Jesus) not present for the photo.



Alida, Mike CP, OBrien CP, Joe, Peter & Jan

Good Friday: Veneration of the cross



Good Friday: Re-enactment of the gospel



Easter morning – Dawn Mass



Melanie (far right) and her daughter **Ruby**, were baptised, confirmed and received their first communion at the dawn Mass, and **Phoenix** was baptised.

The godparents were Michael and Lucy.

Erick did all the preparation with the family and conferred the sacraments.



The engine room – providing breakfast after the dawn Mass

Anzac Day



Following on so close to Easter, Anzac Day too, is a day of remembrance – a day to bring to the present a mixture of feelings: grief, sadness, gratitude and hope. As we think back to Gallipoli and later wars, we think of the grief that spread from the battlefield to the Australian and New Zealand families and rural settlements who lost sons, brothers, fathers and the hopes of small communities. We think, too, of the families to which soldiers returned, changed for the worse by their experience. We see beneath the honours of war, the hurt done to mind and spirit by war, and the cost to a rich humanity.

Many of those ANZACS who fought for their country, those who gave their lives, those who supported them and their families who waited for them to come home, prayed to God with hope and trust. So let us remember today.

Let us remember the tragic consequences of war, highlighted by the names on war memorial and the scars so many people carried or still carry through their lives. Let us remember with gratitude those who fought because their country called them. Let us remember the death and destruction that is left behind when people take up arms against each other.

Let us remember the wounds, physical, emotional or psychological - the scarring and trauma that remains an unwelcome friend of those caught up in conflict. Let us remember those who lost their lives as a result of hostilities.

Let us remember the lasting impact on people: on families; local communities; regions; countries and cultures in the aftermath of war.

Let us remember the peacemakers who have fought to prevent war and conflict.

Let us remember all people of goodwill living now in places of conflict risking their lives for the well-being of others.

Let us remember so that we may pay proper tribute to those who so selflessly gave everything, that we might have what we most value and celebrate today.

Let us remember with thanks those in our Passionist Family who served as ANZACS. May they be rewarded with peace.

Let us not forget yesterday or today. Let us remember.

Let us remember Lord of life, that your spirit of goodness might sustain us



God of love and liberty, we bring our thanks on this day for the peace and security we enjoy, won through the courage and devotion of those who gave their lives in time of war. We pray that their sacrifice may not be in vain, and that their spirit may live on in us and in generations to come. May the liberty, truth and justice which they sought to preserve, be seen and known in all the nations upon earth. This we pray in the name of the one who gave his life for the sake of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

In a field in France

Music and Lyrics: Garry Paige & John Vallins

Sung by: Kevin Johnson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvtHFL1UJg4>

Vin Molly

Vin celebrates his 92nd birthday today. Vin has been a crucial part of Holy Cross since starting as a founding member of the 'A Team'. He moved into our finance management more than 25 years ago, and still acts as an assistant in that area.

Cross and Passion sisters Easter newsletter

Please see this attached.

Community activities

YTU is have had a non-instruction period (no classes) for two weeks. Classes resume on Monday.

JD was away for a week for a supply in King Island. This will have given him the demanding opportunity to prepare for and lead all of the Easter ceremonies.

Mike has been continuing his English studies. He will sit an IELTS exam tomorrow (April 26th). Mike celebrated his 38th birthday on Easter Sunday. **He** will spend a month on supply in Hobart during most of May and early June.

Erick has had a break from university studies and school counselling, but returned to study and work on Tuesday.

Chris had a busy Lent, having done a number of talks and the weekly Lenten series of reflections. While a break from teaching classes has been welcome from a work load point of view, there is other upcoming work that he has to prepare for. He doubled up after leading the 6.30am liturgy on Easter Sunday, as community cook for lunch a few hours later.

John was very involved in the diverse preparations for the Easter liturgies.



OBrien celebrated his 48th birthday on Wednesday. He will move to Endeavour Hills early next month.

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

I am heading away for a holiday on Saturday, until May 23rd. Erick will act as leader in my absence.

Holy Cross: 60 years



We will celebrate 60 years since the opening of Holy Cross, on Sunday May 25th.

Mass: 10.00am

Coffee Cart:

BBQ

Official speech & video:

More details to be provided by mid-May in the newsletter

Some of the story

In June 1963, the Province purchased a little less than eleven acres (4.5 hectares) of land in Serpells Road, Templestowe for £20,000 (estimated to be worth \$705,000 in today's money). Melbourne was one of the centres of formation for seminarians, along with the Carmelites, Franciscans, Oblates, Sacred Heart, Redemptorists, and Christian Brothers. In 1965 in what was known as the seminary belt, there were over 300 male religious in training.

Stan Morgan was engaged as the architect. In early 1964 the Passionists had 29 students in Adelaide, 15 novices in Goulburn and 35 postulants in Sydney. The need for a new seminary was urgent. To fund the project, it was proposed to sell 24 acres of land at St Ives, Sydney but Ku-ring-gai Council opposed the sale. After much negotiating, five acres were sold for £31,000. Unfortunately the money was not available until mid-1965, so several loans were taken out, most of them at 5%, and a residence in St Kilda was sold for £25,000 in March 1965.

A. W Galvin won the successful tender to build Holy Cross for one £127,000, and preparation of the site began in May 1964. The builders left the site in June 1965. Our neighbours Marlene and Matt Walsh used to have a lovely view of the Dandenong range until late 1964!

At the time Holy Cross was being built, the area was on the verge of changing from orchards to one-acre or larger, properties. A local historian later wrote an article 'From Orchards to Ostentatia', although the mansions we now see in 'the Golden Mile', as Serpells Road is known, did not come, until the 1980's.

Fr Alphonsus Foley lived with the MSC sisters at Balwyn for a time, and the sisters stored much of the furniture from the St Kilda house, there. Alphonsus and Bro Gabriel Preston moved into what is now the garage-laundry area in July 1964. Our two Retreat Centre corridors are named after them (the first two residents). The building was not ready for occupation in early 1965, so the students and lecturers remained in cramped conditions at our community in Highton, Geelong. There they built beds, desks, cupboards, wardrobes and library furniture under the guidance of Jim Kerrigan. That furniture has survived until today. While bush fires raged at nearby Eltham on a very hot March 11th, 1965, the community relocated to Holy Cross. Classes began two days later on Saturday 13th March!

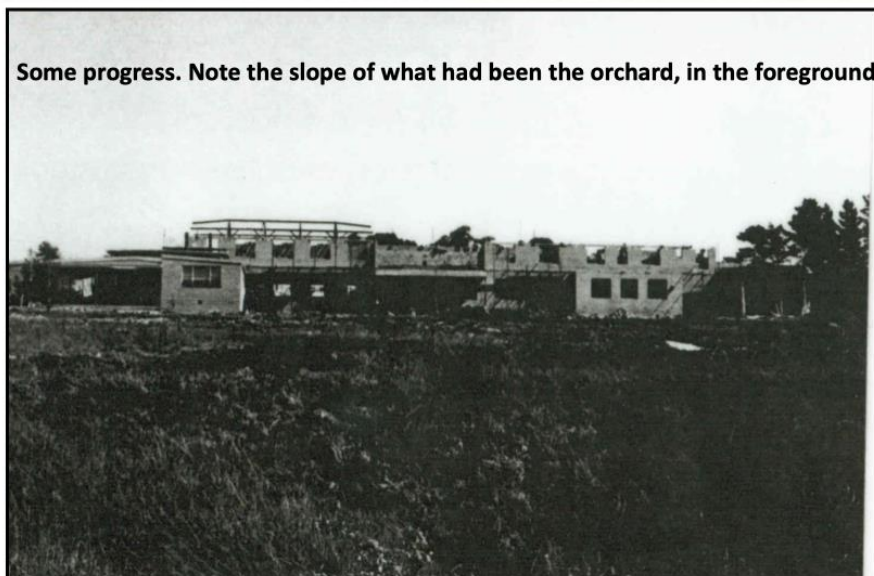
Only one wing of the house was complete at that time. The present laundry area served as a classroom, library and student recreation room, the present Chapter room served as the chapel and is where the first Mass was celebrated.

The senior community members in 1965 were: Frs Alphonsus Foley, Brendan Patterson, Greg Manly, Jerome Crowe, Victor Kennedy, Nicholas Crotty and Bro Gabriel Preston. Bro Francis Cummins and Philip Brosnan came later in 1965. The students were, Malachy Kirk, David Wilkie, Brian Mullins, Kevin Dance, Vianney Carey, Jim Kerrigan, Peter Salmon, Paul Mercieca, Jim Macklin, Gary Vidler, Miles Hannan, Aidan Kay, David Smith, Jim Maher, John Hanley and Walter McEntee. The official opening of Holy Cross was Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd 1965, and we are celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of that event this year.

We have been fortunate over the entire sixty years of our life here to have had many generous benefactors who have shared their time, their family, their faith, friendship and their financial resources with us and with one another. We celebrated the 50th anniversary in an appropriate way. For this occasion we will celebrate in a more simple way. There will be some more information about our history in instalment in the weekly newsletter over the next four weeks. These few photos show the beginning.....



Some progress. Note the slope of what had been the orchard, in the foreground



Looking up from the dam, the early stages of building can be noted, with the Tavern on the far left. In those days there was no oval. It was a steep fall from the building to the dam. The photo immediately below is of a similar scene with the building essentially completed. The students were located in the section on the right (now used as the Holy Cross Centre). At the far end (right) was the squash court (now used for storage)



This photo, with the essential construction completed, shows the chapel extending to the left



The original plan for the chapel was to accommodate the community, with the altar in the middle. The 'Prayer of the Church' (commonly referred to as 'The Office' in those days), was chanted, and the seating, included stalls from which the books containing the text, could be easily read while standing.

English

Linguistic humor: The English lesson

We'll begin with box, and the plural is boxes;
But the plural of ox should be oxen, not oxes.
Then one fowl is goose, but two are called geese,
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.

You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,
Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.
If the plural of man is always called men,
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?

The cow in the plural may be cows or kine,
But the plural of vow is vows, not vine.
I speak of my foot and show you my feet,
If I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?

If one is a tooth, and a whole set are teeth,
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?
If the singular is this and the plural is these,
Why shouldn't the plural of kiss be named kese?

Then one may be that, and three may be those,
Yet the plural of hat would never be hose;
We speak of a brother, and also of brethren,
But though we say mother, we never say methren.

The masculine pronouns are he, his and him,
But imagine the feminine she, shis, and shim!
So our English, I think, you all will agree,
Is the craziest language you ever did see.

I take it you already know
Of tough and bough and cough and dough?
Others may stumble, but not you,
On hiccough, thorough, slough, and through?

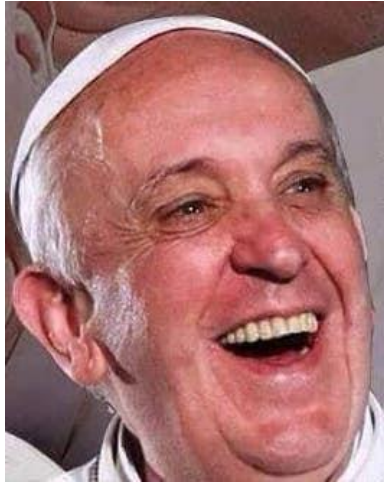
Tongue Twisters

- Sixth sick sheik's sheep sick
- Pad kid poured curd pulled cod

Betty Botta bought some butter;
"But," said she, "this butter's bitter!
If I put it in my batter
It will make my batter bitter.
But a bit o' better butter
Will but make my batter better."
Then she bought a bit o' butter
Better than the bitter butter,
Made her bitter batter better.
So 'twas better Betty Botta
Bought a bit o' better butter.

Learning new things

I have played golf on and off for sixty years, but it was only last week that I learned the origin of the word 'caddie' or even thought about it. Mary Queen of Scots spent much of her early adult years in France, where the French military cadets would carry her golf clubs. When Mary returned to Scotland she retained the custom of using cadets and they became known as caddies!



This little girl with Down syndrome got up from her seat during a papal audience and went towards Pope Francis during ministration.

The security guards quickly moved in to take her back to her mother.

The Pope stopped everyone and said to the girl, "come sit next to me." The girl then sat down near him and the Holy Father continued to preach while holding hands with the little girl.

Humour

Tri changed the character in this picture on the left, to himself



Would it kill the makers of avocados to put a different toy inside. 🙄 I have like 50 wooden balls...



Dad jokes

After dinner Bill's wife asked me if he could clear the table. He needed a run up, but he made it.

Tony had a dream that he was a muffler. He woke up exhausted.

Don't buy anything with Velcro. It's a total rip-off.

Bill ate a dictionary. It gave him the thesaurus throat I've ever had

Judy used to be addicted to the hokey-pokey. But she turned herself around

A father in Iraq gave his daughter a new bag. She said, "Thanks for the Baghdad".

Movie recommendation

'Gifted Hands' (Netflix)

To enjoy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ol4D-r-sHpQ>

Prayers

We remember those who have died recently, especially **Michael Prendergast**. He and his wife Pauline have been the Passionist Family Group Coordinators in Te Awakairangi (Hutt Valley, Wellington), New Zealand, for many years. They were visiting their son Kieran and his family in Melbourne when Michael had a severe asthma attack. He was admitted to Royal Melbourne hospital and discharged a few days later, but he was unable to return immediately to NZ because of his lung condition. Sadly, he developed double pneumonia and died in hospital on Tuesday.

We also remember those whose anniversaries occur around this time:

Nancy Hayward, Bud Thompson, Michelia Vigilanti, Merleine Gagliardi, Mary Maher, 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, Noel Smyth, Graham Burke, Fr Brendan Lane, Kata Lenic, Lesley Yang, Marilyn Climi, Gerry Bond, Peter Barry, , Maureen Barns, Rex Cambry, Carol Battistella, Lorraine Gill, Doris Castro, Zoe Chung and her daughter Sophia, Pam Gartland, Bro Jerome, Alexander Lim, 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

God bless

Brian