

## Holy Cross Retreat

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



### Letter 279

13<sup>th</sup> June, 2025

#### Trí



Tomorrow, Trí's parents will arrive from Vietnam and they will be here with us for two weeks. Neither of them speak English and neither of them has ever travelled out of Vietnam before. In fact their flight from Hanoi, will be their first time in a plane! Despite the language challenges, it will be a great blessing for them to see where Trí is living, and for him to welcome them to Melbourne and in particular to Holy Cross.

Trí has spent this past week on retreat and next Saturday (June 21<sup>st</sup>), he will be ordained deacon here at Holy Cross at 11.00am. The link for the live stream recording is: <https://youtube.com/live/gkfpDgonUBk?feature=share>. The following day, we are excited to report, Phi will celebrate 10.00am Mass at Holy Cross for the first time, and Trí will serve as deacon for the first time. We hope you will show your support for these two fine men, with your presence on both occasions if possible. The ordination on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> and the Mass on Sunday will be followed by refreshments in the dining room.

Trí has now completed his academic qualifications for ministry and in the coming months, he will be involved in some youth ministry, social media research and in liturgical, sacramental and pastoral activities from Holy Cross.

#### John Khoury

We had a nice farewell dinner for John on Friday last week. He left for Sydney the following morning. John came with a fear of Melbourne's cold and with some concern about making friends. The way he spent the last week indicated he need not have worried about the latter, which is due to his own initiatives, and once the cold weather comes, the house here is warm, so he was very content, and will leave with a good impression of Melbourne.

#### HCC

This week we have had **Mind Medicine** using the Holy Cross Centre (until Sunday). Mind Medicine Australia is a charity that seeks to alleviate the suffering caused by mental illness in Australia, through expanding treatment options.

Last weekend we had **Jesus Youth** here. JY is an international movement built on the charismatic tradition that encourages young people to live a vibrant spirituality in the various aspects of their daily life. Our regular works in the Centre belong to Jesus Youth.

## Ecclesial Governance and Administration

This week four of our men, Justin Durai-Raj (Hobart), John Auram (Port Moresby) Joseph Doan (Marrickville, Sydney) and Paul Kien (Pooraka, Adelaide) have been involved in a workshop held at YTU, Box Hill. The opening prayer expressed something of the hopes for the workshop.



Blessed are you, Lord our God, Creator of all that exists. Source of life and growth, of peace and joy, we bless you for all your sons and daughters. The gifts of governance and administration are yours, and in your goodness, you share these gifts with people like us. Please give vision and wisdom to those engaged in governance; good judgement and courage to administrators; faith and a sense of justice to all who work in Church offices. Help us to remember that you share with us the power to govern and administer, and that the work we do is your work.

Give us the satisfaction and joy in the performance of this work. Bless us always with your presence, your insight, your compassion, that we will recognize and praise you as You really are: the Master of all that we are and do. Blessed are you, Lord God, who share with us the gifts of governance and administration. Amen.

## Jerome

Jerome's sister Monica, came to see Jerome on Saturday. Her eyesight is fading so she is relinquishing her driver's licence today. Jerome believes he will do the same either when his licence expires in September, or before then. Then enjoyed a good face-to-face catch up.



## Trinity Sunday

This Sunday is the feast of the Holy Trinity



Thanks to Fr Tiernan Doherty CP, we have a copy in our chapel, of the famed 'Trinity' icon by fifteenth century Russian painter and iconographer, Andrei Rublev. The original is housed in the monastery of St Sergius near Moscow.

The icon depicts the three angels whom Abraham encountered at Mamre where Abraham had set up his tent. He served the angels a meal which they shared under a tree, and the meal included a calf.

The tree in the background of the icon represents the tree; the famed Oak of Mamre (or Abraham) located near Hebron in the West Bank. As well as the Oak of Mambre in the background, there is Abraham's house and Mount Moriah, the site of Abraham's test of faith, when he is asked if he will sacrifice his son..

The three angels are sitting at a table and they form a full circle. There is the head of a calf in a cup on the table which two of the angels are blessing, but there is no movement. All three angels seem to be staring in contemplation but no one angel attracts the viewer's attention – it is the space they create that is the attraction. The lines of the angel's bodies. The cup is a symbol of Jesus' last supper.

The interconnectedness of the angels depicts the united and loving relationship love within the Trinity - God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



## The Spirit



Is this same type of contradiction in the Bible? Is it a mistake, a misstatement, or something? No, it is the command God has left to every believer called the doctrine of progressive sanctification.

Where there is life, there is always growth. Our new birth was just the beginning. God gave us all we need to live godly lives, but as his children we must apply ourselves by diligently using the "means of grace" he offers us...

Paul commands each of us to work out our own salvation in *Philippians 2:12-16*. The work "work out" is imperative in Greek, and means "struggle, work out, ferret out". We see what God wants us to be in His Word, and we tell Him, "YES, that is what I want, help me to do it!" Then we take purposeful, active steps to do it—and in doing so we find amazingly that He gives us the spiritual power and strength to change areas of our life that have stubbornly stayed the same for so long!

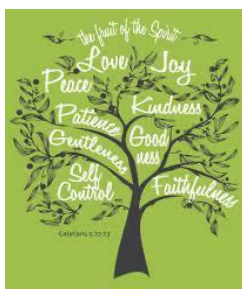
Every human shares in God's grace, and is free to accept or reject the offer to live in love and fellowship. Each of us is born with this offer, along with the attraction to selfishness and the possible misuse of natural tendencies. Each of us is shaped by the human environment into which we are born, including our genetic inheritance. We are called by the Spirit, to a destiny of love and compassion as exemplified by Jesus.

He revealed the nature of being truly human. He rejected the trappings of power and status and instead came as a servant and identified with the weak, the poor, the dispossessed and the oppressed. Jesus showed that people are called into a family relationship with their neighbour, regardless of who they are.



Every one of us, is led into mystery by a range of profound experiences of beauty, goodness, of awe. An everyday event can suddenly illuminate a sense of 'beyond'. A flower, an insect, a forest, a sunset, moonlight, a thunderstorm, the kindness of a friend are but a few of the multitude of experiences that can overwhelm us and allow us to appreciate that there is something wonderfully creative and loving at work in our world.

At other times, an experience of incompleteness can lead to a similar experience. Death, sadness, loneliness, isolation, pain, suffering can reassure us that without this loving and creative presence in our lives, we are without hope. Christians look to the experience of Jesus who was strengthened in his experience of abandonment. This is the source of healing hope when we find our own experiences so painful and difficult to bear.



This companioning presence that Jesus felt, has all sorts of names. Increasingly, people are suggesting we call this, 'the Spirit'. Of course, as soon as we use any description, especially one already rich in theological thought, we can lose the benefit of its power to capture our experience. In each of the four gospels, 'the Spirit' is connected to Jesus' sense of identity and mission.



The Spirit, is sometimes referred to as the ‘breath of God’. It leads, prompts, or drives Jesus to act. It is always present and creating. It is this same Spirit that empowered the emergence of the self-organising universe and all the creative ‘moments’ over the billions of years that life have led to the complex and diverse life forms, including humans.

Jesus followed the chaotic prompting of the Spirit. He rejected earthly power and sought to be humble. In his community no one is to lord it over others. He devoted himself to the weak and vulnerable, the outcasts and sinners. He was radically open to the Spirit, trusting its prompting, even to a premature death.



The Spirit breathed new life into Jesus’ body, his community of believers. They too are caught up in the breath of new life, his resurrection. This same Spirit remains active in prompting the believing community. It is a spirit that totally reverses the normal understanding of power. This is a vital lesson for us to appreciate.

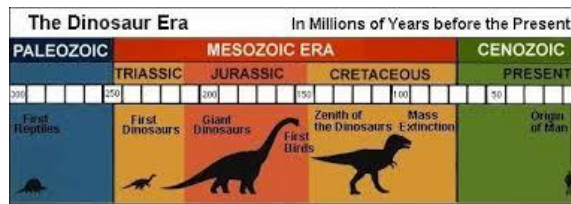
For over one hundred million years, the dinosaurs held supreme power but they became extinct. Humans have taken upon themselves to lord it over creation, but this cannot be the way of life. The great civilizations that held supreme power have gone. Every single one of them. All life is interconnected, and ‘Spirit’ breathes life into every species and every habitat. How will we live together? It will not happen if one is supreme over the others, and seeks to ‘use’ them, as humans are doing today with the earth’s resources.



It is a significant challenge to believe in the creator spirit, when faced with the reality of a cruel death or a genetic mutation that distorts a young baby. I have seen grotesque fetuses that never came to birth, and it was very confronting. It can be puzzling to witness the cruelty exhibited by some animals towards others, and more so by humans towards each other. It is hard to observe the cyclical nature of predator and prey in order to secure food, of which we humans are a part.



Such a challenge has been made even greater since we learned of the massive extinctions that have occurred especially over the past five hundred million years.



During the Permian extinction two hundred and fifty million years ago, ninety percent of all life disappeared! None of these species ever returned. Along with other great extinctions, the

presenting cause has always been climatic, though behind this has sometimes been an asteroid that slammed into earth or a huge volcanic eruption which created havoc on the earth's atmosphere or the oceans. The recent floods in Australia are contributing to this reality.

Before trying to understand the why of this, we need to acknowledge that such events always give rise to another form of life. The loss of life that a predator



causes, enables it to survive, at the expense of the other. Random mutations provide the novelty that allows species to adapt to new situations in the face of destruction. Each extinction has been replaced by a flowering of new and more diverse life forms. The Permian extinction paved the way for the dinosaurs to come into being, whereas the Cretaceous extinction

saw their demise and the entry of the primates and eventually humans.

Everything decays. Everything dies. Even our sun is dying. We have to be honest and say we cannot understand these happenings, except through the lens of the paradigm of Jesus' cross, and what his story tells us about life. We have to admit that the universe suffers, and every form of life shares in that suffering. That it has taken 13.7 billion years for humans to emerge, is itself beyond our comprehension.

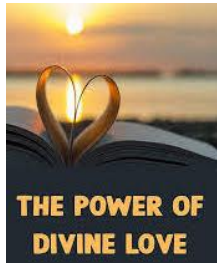


What we are learning from science is that chaos is a particular kind of pre-order, that seems 'built in' as a way of moving from one kind of order as it runs down, to something new. At the same time as chaos existing, there is immense order and precision, incredible detail and beauty. The meaning of Jesus' death is that the



deepest love is filled with compassion and is ever ready to offer itself in sacrifice and gift. It highlights God's sharing in the world's suffering, but also that there is an underlying promise of new life. The extinctions and mutations speak of this reality. Jesus' death also speaks, as did his life, about a different meaning of power. Divine power is the power to love; to let go; to empower, rather than to control.

Just as Jesus made himself friend of the weak, the divine allows creation to find its painful way forward, and how painful it must be not just to witness to the suffering, but to be the suffering!



The meeting of Jesus and Pilate was the clash of two ways of viewing power. Pilate stood for the might of Rome, prepared to crush any opponents. Jesus was prepared to be crushed in standing for truth, in proclaiming an equal place for the downtrodden. How differently those two powers are remembered today! Mark's gospel declared that the centurion standing by the cross, observing how Jesus died, declared "Indeed he was the Son of God". Here is a Roman centurion driven to faith by witnessing the ridicule of Jesus' defeat!

As a child listening to the Passion, I used to wonder why Jesus did not oblige, when I heard the taunting of the soldiers, "If you really are the Son of God, come down from the cross". Of course, such 'proof' of power would mean nothing. What does mean something, is when someone is prepared to die for another.

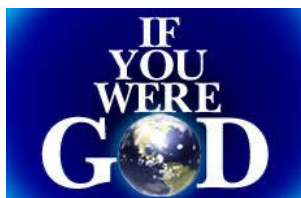


I recall overhearing a conversation between two girls in the foyer after the viewing of the movie, 'Molokai'. One girl was lamenting the stupidity of Damian allowing himself to contract leprosy. "There is so much more he could have done, if he'd have been more careful and not touched the lepers". The other girl retorted, "But that is the whole point. Fr Damian didn't hold back. He gave everything he had and they knew he loved and cared for them. He lost his life, but he gave it to them".



There is, within this experience a way, not so much of understanding, but believing in the creativity of the Spirit and the freedom with which life has been allowed to unfold. Scientists agree there seems to be a direction, and that no matter what happens, the dynamics (divine Spirit) is ever prompting, ever creating new life. This is the kernel of Christian belief. It is the 'way' to which followers of Jesus are called to live. It is a call to a radically different use of power.

theway



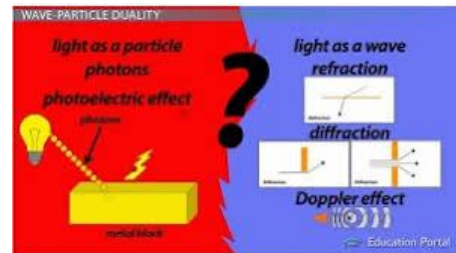
When we think of our own wisdom, what events would we stop if we were God? If we stopped a tidal wave, what else would we have to intervene to stop? On what basis would we decide to stop one thing and not another? If death is a way to make way for the new, then there has to be a way of dying. Would we want death to be identical for everyone, or calculated to take place at a uniform time. How would life survive and develop without replacement within species?



While for a brief period we hesitate over the mistakes a generation may make, we rejoice in their improved capacities and the certainty that their new energy will take life forward. How would we bring novelty about? What do we know of transformation? Have we not ourselves experienced some of our most profound learning about love, life and wisdom, from suffering? The cross is the sign for us that the creative God is present in the midst of our suffering and offers us promise, not despair.

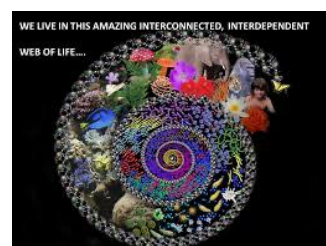


If the ways of life that we observe seem strange, then the quantum world confirms this! Light is both a wave and a particle. We wonder how that is possible. Quantum mechanics has established that once a particle interacts with another particle they remain in a fundamental relationship, regardless of their location. What has this to say to us about our world? The twinkling stars are in fact cosmic factories. The Milky Way galaxy is one hundred thousand light years across. One light year is 9.45 trillion kilometres!



This galaxy just one of at least one of billions of billions of galaxies in a universe where ninety-four percent of what is 'there' is unknown to us! It is impossible to apply our logic to what makes sense. It is beyond us. We are faced with mystery. Some choose to dismiss it as meaningless. We can make that choice or we can attempt to make sense of it, not understand it. Primitive people intuited the connectedness of life. This is something we need to rediscover.

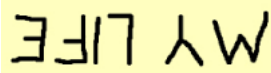
Life is one interconnected web and there is both incredible individualization and profound community, autonomy and relationship. A challenge for us today, is to contribute towards a healthy environment that enables each form of life to have its place, instead of humans misusing their power to dominate and control those species that are vulnerable. Obviously, this is a commitment Christians need to make, if they are to reflect Jesus who rejected the power that seeks to dominate and instead sought to create life for all, especially the weak.



We are in a liturgical season where we celebrate the Spirit of God. "The Spirit" it has been said, is the forgotten 'member' of the trinity. John 6:63 Jesus declares, "it is the spirit that gives life". May that life animate us, prod us forward and bring us together, witnessing to the God who seeks to draw all life into union.



## Reflection



Any of us can have our lives turned upside down at any moment. Sometimes what seems dramatic to us, may in fact be mild, compared with other people's experiences. Can we possibly imagine what it is like to be living in Gaza?

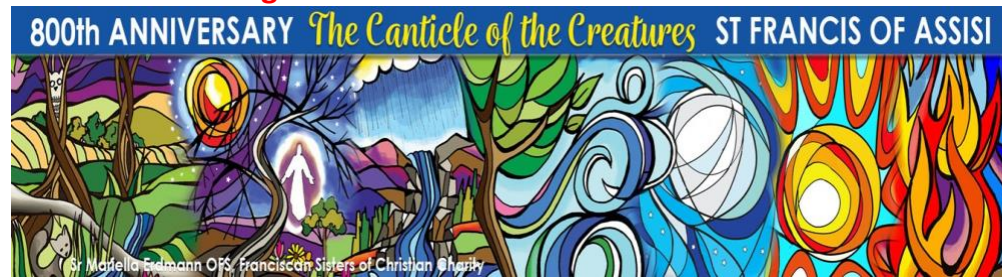
Imagining can lead to compassion, outreach and prayer. Too often, highly distressing news items flash across our screens and are gone. For those directly affected, there may be horror, destruction, chaos, grief and more. Despite our seeming inability to assist, we can stop for a time to reflect on the reality that we do share in the life of every living thing, because we share the same planet.

Often stories of destruction and suffering such as the recent flooding in New South Wales are followed by inspirational stories of compassion, resilience and generosity. By seeking to share for a moment in the pain, suffering and loss of others and their response to this, we can deepen our compassion and increase our capacity for love. An example would be to reflect on the radically different lives the people of Blatten in Switzerland face, after a glacier collapsed and buried their beautiful village on May 28<sup>th</sup>.



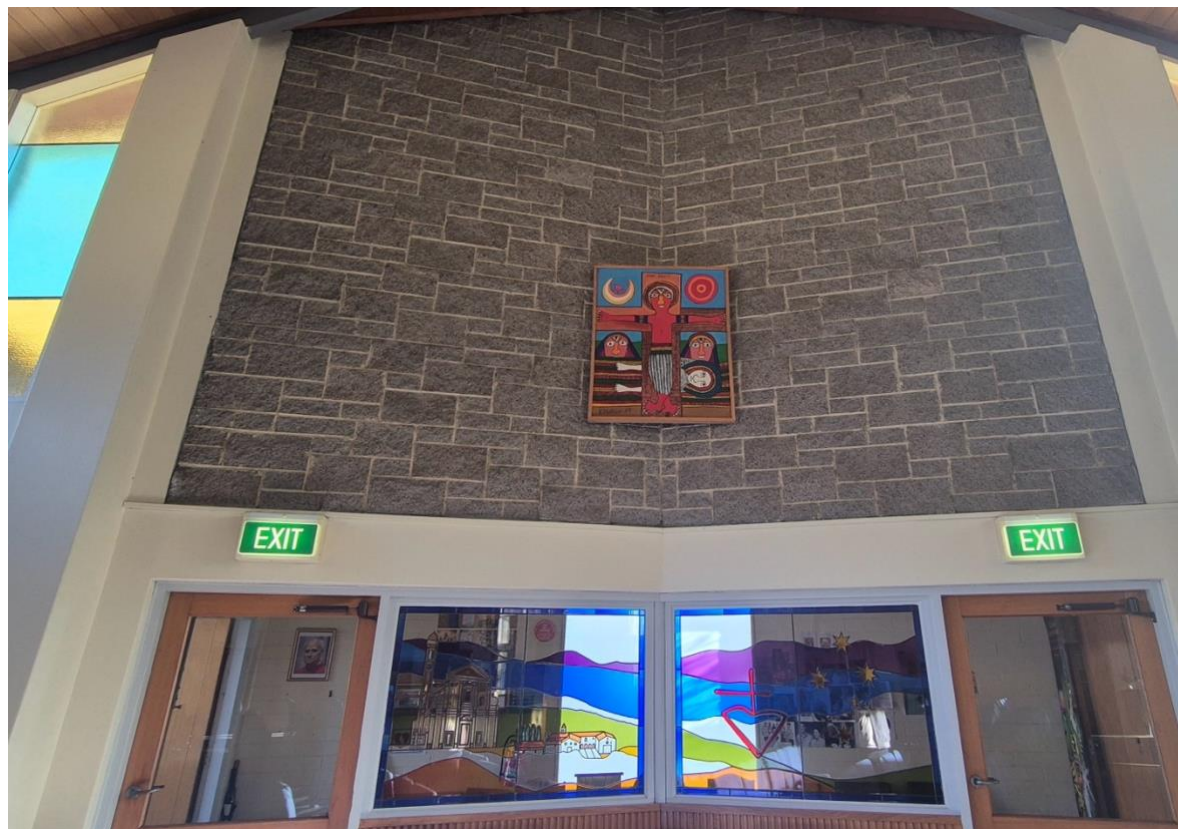


This **Franciscan logo** is beautiful



### The painting

Below, is a photo of the 'Jisas Krais' painting by PNG artist, Mathias Kauage. As reported a couple of weeks ago, it has been donated to us by the Pallotines who had displayed the painting in their retreat centre at Millgrove, which they have now left. Our incredible 'A Team' managed to erect the painting at the back of the chapel.



### Power Point on Sundays



We have received an offer of help from Peter Norman and Alida Valmorbida to assist with displaying the Power Point at Mass on Sundays. Gabriel Rao has offered to assist Tri in the preparation so this assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

## Visitors



Jose Matthew organised for a visiting Passionist (Sarj) to come with him for dinner on Tuesday night and stay the night, and owing to unforeseen circumstances, Jose was unable to come, and Sarj took up the option to stay the night with a former Passionist (Mackson) who offered to take him to the airport at 3.00am on Wednesday. Erick took the opportunity to take a photo with most of the community present and our four Passionist visitors participating in the Ecclesial Governance and Administration workshop at YTU. John Auram had come down from PNG, Doan had come from Marrickville, and Justin from Hobart. Kien is missing from the photo; he was catching up on some sleep (recovering from jetlag). Vinh (deacon) and Tuan Paul came over from Endeavour Hills, and Mike had just returned from his time in Hobart, during the afternoon, Chris was conducting a session in Endeavour Hills parish and Erick took the photo.

## Come Away Day June 25<sup>th</sup>

The theme of our next 'Come Away' is [Encountering the Spirit of Winter as a season of growth](#). Our day begins with a cuppa at 9.30am with the formal part of the day beginning at 10.00am. Please bring your own lunch. Tea and Coffee will be available. You are invited to contribute \$30 to support this ministry at Holy Cross. The day will end with Eucharist and departure at 2.30pm. It is helpful to know the expected numbers so that we can have handouts ready so please E-Mail Sr Brigid on [bridget.m64@gmail.com](mailto:bridget.m64@gmail.com). All are welcome.

## Humour

A pirate walked into a bar .and the bartender says, "Hey, I haven't seen you in a while. What happened, you look terrible!"

"Arrh – Not at all." the pirate replies, "I be fine." The bartender says, "But what about that wooden leg? You didn't have that before." "Arrh!," says the pirate, "We were in a battle at sea and a cannon ball hit me leg. But the surgeon fixed me up, and I be fine, really."



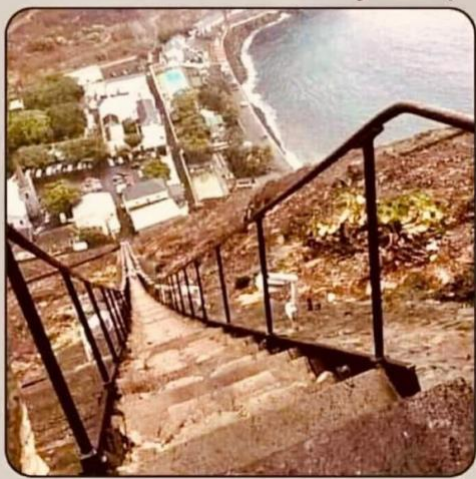
"Yeah," says the bartender, "But what about that hook? Last time I saw you, you had both hands."

"Aye," says the pirate, "We were in another battle and we boarded the enemy ship. I was in a sword fight and me hand was cut off. But the surgeon fixed me up with this hook, and I be feeling great, really." "Oh," says the bartender, "What about that eye patch? Last time you were in here you had both eyes."

"Arrh," says the pirate, "One day when I was swabbing me deck, some gulls were flying over the ship. I looked up, and one of them--arrgh, he, pooped--in me eye." "So?" replied the bartender, "what happened? You couldn't have lost an eye just from that!"

"Well," says the pirate, "'Twas me first day with the hook."

House for rent, 5 minutes from the beach. 8 seconds if you trip.



Where did Captain  
Hook get his hook?  
At a second hand store.

woman's day



### More of Murphy's Laws

1. Light travels faster than sound.  
This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
2. A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.
3. He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
4. A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
5. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
6. Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.
8. The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.
9. It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end-to-end, someone from Sydney would be stupid enough to try to pass them.
10. If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.
11. The things that come to those who wait, may be the things left by those who got there first.
12. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
13. Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.
14. God gave you toes as a device for finding furniture in the dark.
15. When you go into court, you are putting yourself in the hands of twelve people, who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty.

### More idiom

A little bit information can be dangerous

People who don't understand something but think they do, will like make mistakes

It can have a snowball effect

Events have momentum and build upon each other

A stitch in time saves nine

Fix the problem now or it will get worse later

An apple a day keeps the doctor away

Apples are good for your health

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

You can prevent a problem with little effort. Fixing it later is harder.

Calm before the storm

Something bad is coming, because it seems too calm right now

A bolt from the blue

Something happened without warning

- Burn bridges	Destroy relationships
- Come rain or shine	No matter what
- Curiosity killed the cat	Stop asking questions
- He doesn't cut the mustard	He's not capable of the task
- A snowball's chance in hell	No chance at all
- As right as rain	Perfect
- A storm in a teacup	Making a small situation, big
- Don't beat a dead horse	Move on, this subject is over
- Every dog has his day	Everyone eventually gets a chance

Familiarity breeds contempt      Seeing too much of someone can change our opinion of them. Maybe like Donald and Elon?

## Prayers

There are special mentions this week regarding those we have been praying for. The first is a message from grandparents Peter and Debbie concerning 'young Alfred'.

"**Young Alfred** ( Freddie) is now 17 months old. Before he was born (in London) he was diagnosed as having a growth in his lung that could have proved fatal before birth. Surgery was delayed following some improvement. He has finally had surgery to remove half a lung and we are very grateful for the many prayers from Holy Cross. Freddie is now a very happy and healthy toddler and giving us lots of pleasure from afar. We are going to England in late August to finally meet him".

The second, concerns **Pam Storey**. She was all ready to go to hospital for a big operation when she was told it was to be delayed for two weeks. Finally, she was admitted, and survived the nine hour surgery, with, I would guess, some close moments. Pam then spent ten difficult days in ICU and was transferred to a ward, only to be recalled for emergency surgery last Sunday at 3.00am. On Monday she was returned to a ward for prolonged recovery. It has been a torrid experience and it is not over yet, but the signs are encouraging. Pam is grateful for any prayers.

The third is that our finance manager **Cecilia** has a 99 year old mother, who is ailing, and it is a difficult time for Cecilia.

**We pray for** all who have died recently, especially **Paul Kelly**, the nephew of our former housekeeper, Joan O'Donnell, who died on Sunday, and Peter's Norman's sister-in-law (**Mary Norman**) who died on Tuesday morning, We also remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially:

**Carmel Coates, Attilio Constanzo, Leonarda Stangi** and **Irene Wilkins**, that they have found joy in God's eternal presence.





**We also pray for all of our Holy Cross family who are coping with illness and all who care for them, especially:**

Pam Storey, Noel Smyth, Peter Addicoat CP, Denise Egan, Caroline Hagedorn, Patrick Connell (Brendan's father), Nancy Reynolds, Kata Lenic, Treenah Wadham, Jenny Wullings, Jeanelle Bergin, Stephanie Snow, Lesley Yang, Rex Cambry, Fr Brendan Lane, Graham Burke, Maureen Barns, ,

Marilyn Cilimi, Gerry Bond, Carol Battistella, Peter Barry, Bronwyn Burke, Alexander Lim, Bernadette Owen, Zoe Chung and her daughter Sophia, Pam Gartland, Peter Owen, Patricia Keeghan, Doris Castro, Julia Cantone, Rod Gorfine, Luke Norden, Greg Agosta, Phil Drew, Helen McLean, Bro Jerome, Caroline Meade, Rod Smith, Anne Jenkins and Errol Lovett.

### **Mass on line**

Chris will send the link for Sunday Mass, on Saturday afternoon.

God bless

Brian