

Holy Cross Retreat

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



Letter 288

15th August, 2025

Today is the Marian feast of the **Assumption**

Holy Cross Fundraising Event

Everyone who was there seemed to be really enjoying the occasion, last Saturday night. Unfortunately a few people were unable to attend at the last minute, because of illness. We hope they are on the road to recovery.

Our famed 'Journeyman' opened their bracket with a short but enticing harmonica piece from Frank Van den Boom. Dominic Marasea and Chris Monaghan joined in to blast out 'Proud Mary'. Later in the evening, Alida Valmorbida's daughter Alexandra, got the dance floor shaking with the aid of her two brothers Marcus and Lucas. We are grateful to all of them for their contribution to the night.

The number of donated items for silent auction was astounding, and the eight major items for live auction were very generously donated. Peter Day introduced the 'tick, tick, tick' call to auctioneering. An amusing moment came when JD won one of the \$1000 draws. After a brief dialogue, he turned down the award and in a redraw, Tim Horlock scored the big prize, with a promise to JD that his ticket purchase cost would be returned!

We extend our thanks to everyone who contributed so generously to the event by attending or donating. There were two bottles of wine on every table valued at \$2,500, which was generously donated. There were other examples of great generosity. Tina Minichilli (herself dynamic) led a dynamic Committee – Tim Horlock, Peter Day, Deb Pichut, Alida Valmorbida and Marissa Micelotta. John Hogan provided financial advice and oversight. They did an amazing lot of work and to them we are especially grateful. We will share the financial outcome in next week's newsletter and should know enough to share this at Mass this Sunday.

PFG weekend



Next weekend the National PFGM weekend will be held at Holy Cross with participants from Queensland, NSW, Canberra, Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria. Tina Minichilli is Australian National Coordinator and Paul Traynor is New Zealand national Coordinator. Paul will attend the meeting and the group will join us for Mass on Sunday.

Mike completed three weeks of 'supply' at St Brigid's Marrickville and last weekend he helped out in Hobart. He is back now and will focus on acquiring a driving licence.

Papal Audience: Prepare for the Passover of daily life.... by Kielce Gussie



At his General Audience on Wednesday August 6th, Pope Leo reflected on the word “prepare” and how each of us is invited to prepare for the Eucharist in life’s daily moments, by "removing what encumbers us, reducing our demands and ceasing to hold unrealistic expectations."

In Mark’s Gospel in preparation for the Passover, the twelve apostles ask Jesus a very practical question: “Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?” Pope Leo pointed out they were aware something important was going to happen, and in turn, they received a very symbolic answer from Jesus: “Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water.”



A man with a jar, a room already prepared, and an unknown host—everything has already been prepared ahead of time. Jesus already arranged everything for His disciples. This shows us, the Pope explained, that true love is “not the result of chance, but of a conscious choice.” Love demands preparation. Jesus’ decision to endure His passion is an example of this choice to lovely freely. Pope Leo stressed this should be a source of comfort for us: “knowing that the gift of his life stems from conscious intention, not a sudden impulse.”



Continuing the symbolism of the Gospel passage, the room which has already been prepared reveals that God paves the way for us. Before “we realize we need to be welcomed, the Lord has already prepared a space for us where we can recognize ourselves and feel we are His friends.” Each of us can find this space made particularly for each individual person in our hearts, which is simply waiting to be seen, filled, and loved.



Leo explained that love is “not the result of chance, but of a conscious choice.” Even though Jesus had already arranged everything for the Passover in the Gospel, he still asked the apostles to do their part. This, the Pope argued, can teach us an essential lesson for our spiritual life: “grace does not eliminate our freedom, but rather awakens it.”

The Grace Awakening

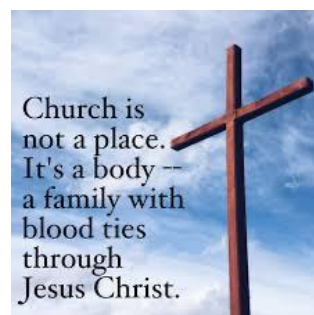
Leo reminded the pilgrims in St. Peter’s Square that we too have “a supper to prepare.” Beyond the liturgy, the Eucharist has a place in our daily lives. and we must leave room to experience the everything as a thanksgiving. To do this, the Pope urged everyone to remove the things in their lives that hold them back. But he also warned against confusing preparations with illusions or believing that being prepared means being deluded.



Illusions distract, while preparations guide us. Jesus gave us an example of this as He prepared “a communion supper” for His disciples throughout His ministry, even while they did not

understand, and one disciple was planning to betray Him.

We too are called to “prepare the Passover”. This does not only mean preparing for Mass but also for the moments of our daily life. This might mean being ready to take the first step or to listen more or to stop waiting for others to change. And when we decide to take on God’s call to prepare for communion with Him, we will not be alone, the Pope stressed. “We will discover we are surrounded by signs, encounters and words that guide us towards that room, spacious and already prepared, in which the mystery of an infinite love, sustaining us and always preceding us, is celebrated unceasingly.”



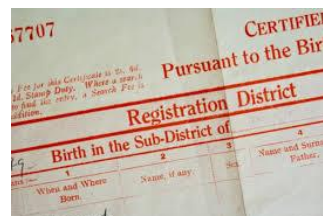
How old are you?



This question is not easily answered by our Vietnamese brothers. Traditionally, Vietnamese babies were considered one year old at birth and their age increased each year at TET (Lunar New Year). Only in June this year, did Vietnam scrap it’s ‘two child’ per family policy, first established in North Vietnam 1963. It is generally

accepted that the policy was more strictly enforced for government officials. After the reunification of North and South Vietnam in 1975, the policy was extended throughout the country and after 1983, families were required to limit their children to two children. Financial penalties were imposed but it was not strictly enforced. A significant cost of the one and two child policy is that the abortion rate in Vietnam is among the highest in the world at 2.5 per woman!

In where people could not read or write, there was interest in legal documentation. Registration of baptisms for church adherents was one way of maintaining a record of where and when a person was born. In many cultures registration of births was not considered important and birthdays were not celebrated. When this practice met the requirement for documents, in order to secure a passport, birth dates were often invented – including the year! As an example we celebrated Tri’s 33rd birthday on August 5th, but he assured us that really his 33rd birthday was in February 2024!



Posthuman identity

In the reflection over several weeks under the title 'Worldviews' I proposed Passionist cosmologist Thomas Berry's belief that the Worldview of the coming era



will need to be the **Environmental era**. If we fail, homo sapiens are likely to become extinct, and we may destroy most of the earth's species in the process.

Berry highlighted that the interpretation of the Biblical-Christian story was largely responsible for a culture within which a major disruption to all life forms has, was and will continue to occur. Berry died before Pope Francis issued his encyclical 'Laudato Si'. The encyclical combines spiritual reflection with practical action, inviting people of all and no belief to live in harmony with creation.

John Kleinsman, a member of our Passionist Formation Commission and a doctor of theology is Director of the Nathaniel Centre of Bioethics New Zealand. John suggests that "we are living in a time of increasing complexity, some would even say "chaos." Quantum technological advances are for the first time enabling us to envisage such possibilities as human cloning and designer organs, possibilities hitherto only dreamed of. In the light of these developments we are confronting questions and challenges never before faced by the human race".

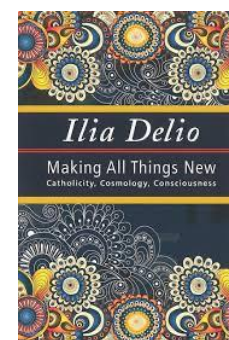


Google AI proposes that "posthuman identity is often described as "interstitial" because it exists in the spaces between established categories, particularly between human and non-human, and between different forms of being. It's a concept that challenges traditional notions of a fixed, autonomous human identity, suggesting instead that identity is fluid, relational, and

constantly evolving through interactions with technology, the environment, and other beings."



Over the next few weeks we can profit from the thought of various experts, and we will begin this week with an essay by Ilia Delio, an American Franciscan sister and professor of theologian who specialises in science and religion.



Why Christianity Is Uncomfortable (Ilia Delio, August 6, 2025) Part 1

In a recent conversation with a colleague, I was made aware that children born from



2023 onward will be AI children. They will never have known a world without being embedded in networks of artificial intelligence. They are the vanguard of what is now called “Generation AI.” Because they are entering a digitized world, they are already primed to think differently about

everything, including personal identity, religion, and spirituality.



Posthumanism is a term used to describe the new hyper-personal person who lives in the ongoing fluid spaces of information. Posthuman identity is interstitial and persistently creative. Online presence and biological existence form a seamless flow of information. My own experience of

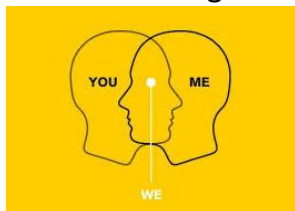
posthumans has been teaching undergraduates born between 2004 and 2007. They are deeply concerned for the earth and its well-being, for the poor, and for justice. Born into a digital world, they are wired into the world and are deeply concerned for the world.

Yet despite technology’s promise of interconnectedness, we remain divided. Technology has overcome distances, but it has not created closeness. In fact, interconnectedness reveals and deepens enormous social and cultural disparities.



Younger generations harbour the same spiritual hunger as their predecessors. While technology may promise to be the new religion—as Brett Robinson argues in *Appletopia*—it fails to provide the spiritual nourishment that marks the restless human heart. Central to this longing is the desire to belong meaningfully to the whole.

This summer I finished Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *‘Braiding Sweetgrass’*, a beautiful account of indigenous spirituality and culture. Kimmerer’s vision of reciprocal



relationship between human and nature speaks powerfully to contemporary spiritual hunger. She describes nature’s vitality, celebrates earth’s gifts, and emphasizes our need for reciprocity and limits. “Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal,” she writes, “it is not a question of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As we

work to heal the earth, the earth heals us... the earth gives to me daily and I must return the gift.”

Her teachings resonate with ancient wisdom: “Take only what you need. Take only that which is given. Never take more than half. Leave some for others... Share. Give



thanks for what you have been given... Sustain the ones who sustain you and the earth will last forever.” In our world grown deaf to earth’s cries, these words ring prophetic. “To be native to a place,” she reminds us, “we must learn to speak its language.”

Indigenous spirituality assumes earth as vital, spiritual wholeness—of which humans are merely part. All life has vitality; the divine spirit permeates every aspect of nature, weaving together sun, earth, human, and animal. Kimmerer mourns the harm caused to indigenous communities by Christian missionaries.

They travelled across America, dismissing native peoples and their cultures as

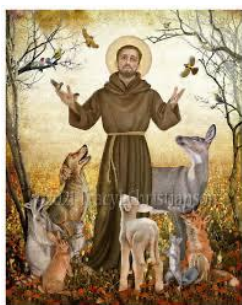


“pagan” and “barbarian.” Their insistence on confessional faith in a single true God devastated indigenous communities, severing their connection to ancestral lands and compelling them to abandon their sacred beliefs and traditions. While we now acknowledge the harm inflicted on indigenous peoples, we often fail to recognize that our treatment of native

communities paralleled our treatment of the earth itself.

In the name of monotheistic faith, Christians forcibly removed Native Americans from their territories and coerced them into baptism under threat of violence. The doctrine of one supreme God as Creator of all existence came at an enormous cost to both the land’s original inhabitants and the land that sustained them.

Christians proclaimed God as the sole Creator while insisting that the divine must not be conflated with creation, warning against idolatry. However, this Christian dismissal of animistic beliefs seems contradictory when considered alongside Christianity’s core tenet of incarnation.



Christians affirm that the life-giving God enters into and inhabits the very fabric of existence. This belief bears striking resemblance to indigenous spiritual traditions. Francis of Assisi perhaps embodied the first genuinely indigenous expression of Christianity, discovering the divine presence within the natural world—in trees, flowers, soil, and all that creates life’s beauty. I think Francis of Assisi was an indigenous Christian. I believe Jesus would have welcomed indigenous peoples with open arms. His

ministry was deeply rooted in the natural world, emphasizing God’s immediate presence and indwelling spirit, teaching that authentic community must emerge from within.

He related to God's intimacy in everything and everyone by loving the least and tending the poor. He touched earth's elements with reverence —rocks, dirt, water—as if the whole earth was pregnant with God. The suffering of indigenous peoples would have moved Jesus to tears.

Tomas Halik notes in *The Afternoon of Christianity* that early Christianity was not a religion in the ancient sense but rather a path of following Christ—one of the Jewish



sects of a messianic type, based on universalist prophetic ideas. The Lord was not merely a local God of one chosen nation but Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, ruler of all nations. Jesus was a prophet and mystic who initially felt called to Israel's lost sheep but wound up sending his apostles into all the world. Something erupted in Jesus, larger than the restoration of Israel.

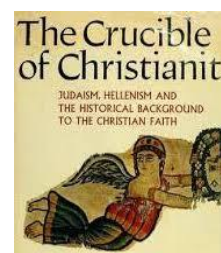
The apostle Paul initially shaped Christianity into a distinct form by liberating young Christianity from contemporary Judaism's confines and radicalizing Jesus to dispute rigid Mosaic law interpreters. He removed the obligation to become Jews, centring



the expression of faith in neighbourly love. As Paul conceived it, faith transcends all boundaries—all are equal in Christ, all are part of a new creation. By emancipating himself from Peter, James, and the

other early disciples of Jesus, and emphasizing faith as a new existence and freedom, Paul preserved emerging Christianity from becoming a legal religion, although legalism became a constant thread running through the history of the Church.

It was Paul who brought Christianity and Christian universalism to a world shaped by Hellenistic philosophy and Roman politics. However, the idea of a new Israel without borders eventually ran up against the limits of this culture of antiquity. Instead of an Israel without borders, the Church became a second Israel and a third religion, alongside Judaism and Hellenistic paganism.



It was not until the fourth century that Christianity was formally cast into the role of religion. This shift to formal religion called for the establishment of a canon of writings to legitimize it.

In short, Christianity shifted from a personal call to radical love (orthopraxis) to faith in a transcendent God and right teaching (orthodoxy). Halik states that as “the



Christian faith became increasingly embodied in philosophy, combining the Hebrew spirit with the spirit of Hellenistic thought, it acquired the form of

metaphysical Christian theology with different emphases in its Roman and Greek versions. Faith was increasingly understood as a teaching, as a doctrine.”

Halik asks if the fusion of faith with political power in the form of doctrine gradually brought about a weakening of the divine power that had so captivated the first disciples of Jesus. Was the novelty of Jesus distorted by transforming Christianity into a formal religion? Did the mixture of politics and religion put out the fire that Jesus sought to ignite? “I have come to cast fire upon the earth and how I wish it were ablaze already,” Jesus proclaimed (Luke 12:49).



Fire speaks of purification, destruction, melding, forging. If fire symbolizes Jesus’s primary mission, then Christianity should exist in the tension between creative transformation and purification—welcoming the refining fire that consumes whatever obstructs love while building communities of profound compassion. This tension reveals something fundamental about Christian faith: it extends far beyond comfort or maintaining the status quo, encompassing instead the active process of transformation.



Fire does not leave things unchanged. It either purifies precious metals, making them stronger and more beautiful, or it consumes what cannot withstand its heat. Living in this space of creative love means Christians must constantly discern what needs to be preserved and what needs to be released. Old prejudices, systems of oppression, and hardened hearts might need the destructive aspect of fire’s work. Meanwhile, justice, mercy, and compassion can emerge stronger through fire’s refining process. Authentic Christianity is neither static nor safe—it is the ongoing work of allowing the divine fire to shape both individuals and communities into something closer to the vision of a new earth and a new heaven, even when that transformation requires letting go of what we thought we needed to keep. Liturgy should be the celebration of fired-up lives, not merely a place of social engagement.

Coats

Helen Juravic wrote to share with and thank our Holy Cross family for the donated coats and winter warmth items. Mgr Frant Marriott in Bendigo, arranged for distribution of these items to farming families in Castlemaine, Echuca and Kerang. FastKonnnect transport collected another load last Monday for distribution to the homeless. Sincere thanks for these and the many sets of glasses that have been passed on, and for Helen’s marvellous work.

Words



Philosopher Charles Taylor has proposed that “Christians have been repeating many of the same words in the liturgy for millennia, such as when they recite the Creed, but they understand them differently from those in previous eras, and some do not understand them at all”.

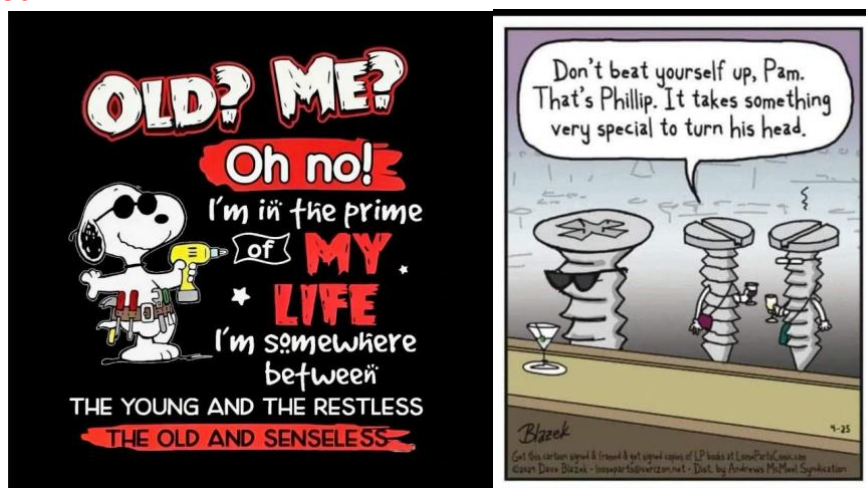
We sometimes overlook the reality of the changing meaning of words. This is especially true of words we read or hear from the Bible. A classic example would be ‘the fear of God’. The word ‘*yirah*’ means awe respect and reverence. True awe can leave a person ‘struck’ or overcome. Being overcome with God’s mercy, or God’s love or wondrous deeds can lead to a healthy ‘fear’ – filled with respect and the sense of ‘the’ sacred.. The word ‘terrific’, originally meant ‘terrifying’. We must expect that some words in prayers of creeds written long ago and in a different language from our own, will have changed in meaning and/or may mean less because we have a different scientific understanding of the world than when these words were first used.

Try this exercise:

Match the words 1–8 to their original meanings in A–H. Then, write the current meanings of the words.

1. silly	A. artwork
2. degree	B. an enemy
3. speed	C. clothes or material
4. unfriend	D. grateful or content
5. husband	E. a level or social rank
6. awful	F. frightening
7. artificial	G. the main man in a house or family
8. clout	H. success

Humour



Saint Brigid's cross



Saint Brigid's happy



She fell in love

She fell in love with a banker but he showed no interest.

She fell in love with an astronaut but he wanted space.

She fell in love with a gym trainer, but it didn't work out.

She fell in love with a librarian, but his time was always booked.

She fell in love with an electrician but for him there was no spark.

She fell in love with a cardiologist but he broke her heart.

She fell in love with a geologist, but the relationship was too rocky.

She fell in love with an economist but he couldn't supply her demands

She fell in love with a violinist but he said, "No strings attached."

She fell in love with the linguist but he left her speechless

She fell in love with a seismologist, but he was always finding fault.

She fell in love with a cook, but he left her on the back burner

She fell in love with a mathematician but she couldn't count on him.

She fell in love with a scuba diver--on the surface everything seemed to be fine, but deep down she knew something fishy was going on ...

She fell in love with a fisherman, but he wasn't a good catch.

She fell in love with a mason but they never built a strong foundation.
She fell in love with a teacher, but he had no class!
She fell in love with a tennis player but love meant nothing to him.
She fell in love with the magician but he kept turning tricks

Quips

- Nice to be here? At my age, it's nice to be anywhere (George Burns)
- Looking fifty is great - if you're sixty. (Joan Rivers)
- Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician. (Zsa Zsa Gabor)
- At my age, flowers scare me (Martin Scorsese)
- The older I get, the better my golf used to be. (Lee Trevino)
- Old age comes at a bad time (Ed Sullivan)
- I'm at the age where my back goes out more than I do (Phyllis Diller)

If you want to know how old a woman is, ask her sister in law (Zsa Zsa Gabor)

Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what happened.
(Stevie Wonder)

Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you are aboard, there is nothing you can do about it. (Golda Meir)

The older I get, the more clearly I remember things that never happened.
(Mark Twain)

You spend 90 percent of your adult life hoping for a long rest, and the last percent trying to convince the Lord you're not that tired. (Princess Grace)

Old people shouldn't eat health foods. They need all the preservatives they can get.
(Bob Hope)

Everything seems to slow with age - except the time it takes cake and ice cream to reach your hill. (Elizabeth Taylor)

A lot more people read the Bible as they get older. It dawned on me why. They're cramming for their final exam. (George Carlin)

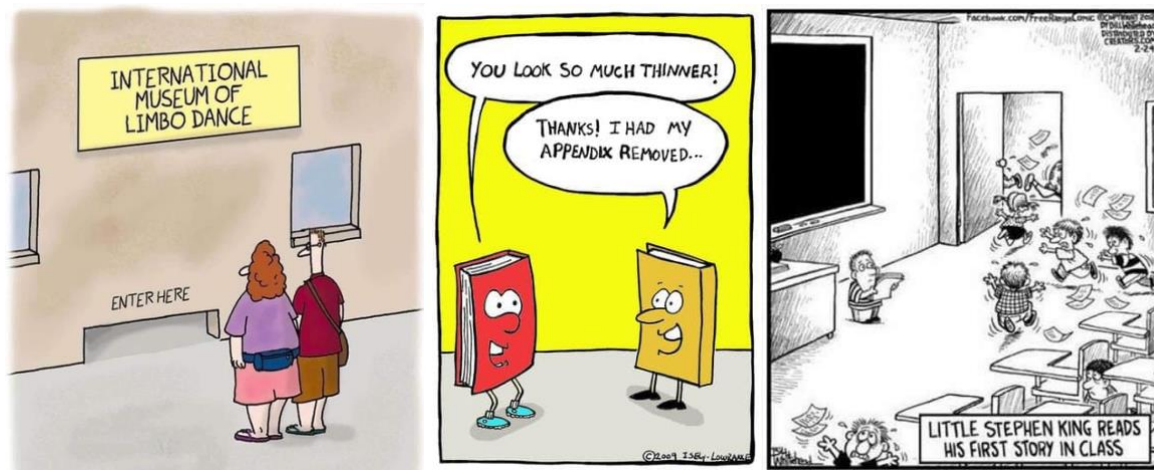
On a first aid course, the instructor asked, "What would you do if your child swallowed the front door key?"
An enthusiastic student said, "I'd climb through the window"

Words

Refer to the exercise on Page 10.

- 1 D – foolish, lack of good judgment
- 2 E – a unit of measurement, or an academic qualification
- 3 H – the rate of movement
- 4 B – to remove someone as a friend on social media
- 5 G – a man you are married to (some female couples also use ‘husband’)
- 6 F – very bad; terrible
- 7 A – fake or man-made
- 8 C – influence or power

What would a person from the 1900’s make of the terms selfie; A-game, the net, byte, Cancel culture, bot, woke, meme, troll, Whats App.....and so much more



Luke 12: 49–53 (Gospel this Sunday)

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were



already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!

Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth?

No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on, in

one house there will be five divided: three against two

and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.’

Prepare to spend time in prayer. Relax and gently breathe in God’s goodness and love. Let go of worries and concerns and allow yourself to simply be in God’s presence. Read the challenging text slowly. Imagine yourself being with the disciples, listening to Jesus saying these words. How does he seem to be? How does he look?

What do you make of Jesus' image of fire? Is it destructive or transformative?
"They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them."(Acts 2:3)

What kind of peace does Jesus bring? What peace are you seeking in your life? Is there any division or separation in your own heart? Ask for the spirit to free that division within you, your family, your community and especially Gaza, Ukraine and the wider world. Are there some forms of division I have to endure if I am to remain faithful to Jesus and his truth? Admit the pain, pray that you will be an instrument of peace, and end your brief prayer.

Joshua



Who is this boy? What is his name? Because the image is so similar to the famed Pieta, I want to call him Joshua – Jesus' name.

It is true that he is only one of so many thousands of children and adults who have lost their life or suffered terribly since that horrendous Hamas attack in October 2023.

There has been so much killing of innocent people, the holding of innocent hostages, the painful anxiety of their relatives, the murder of starving children seeking food, the destruction of homes and worksites, the lack of sanitation, the loss of dignity, the ruin of so many extended family relatives.

For what?

This woman holding Joshua calls out to us. She is holding him safely, but what is his future? And what of her quiet sorrow?

If all we can do is pray, then let us at least do that!

Surprised

Everyone wonders, 'How did he do that?'

Try this link and see if that's what you say afterwards...

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=S9zdHog1eXk&pp=ugUHEgVlbi1DQQ%3D%3D>

Communal Sacrament of the Sick
Holy Cross this Sunday, 10.00am.



There will be four priests. Each person who wishes to be anointed will first have hands laid on them (head) and then they will be anointed with oil on their forehead and hands.

Prayers

We remember **Pat Bond** who celebrates her 90th birthday on Tuesday August 19th. Her husband Gerry, has been in hospital for eight weeks. He hopes to move to rehab before this weekend.

We remember those who have died recently and those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially: **Tony Tome, Phyllis Dixon, Rosemary Sandham, Paolo Pinti Mary Corboy** (Joan O'Callaghan's mother) **Babs Cogle** (Dennis' mother) **Alma Hall**, We pray they have found joy in God's eternal presence.

Jerome had a setback and Chris took him to the urology department at Knox hospital on Thursday.

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



Anne Woon, Gerry Bond Pam Storey, Noel Smyth, Kate Lenic, Nello Campomizzi, Denise Egan, Peter Addicoat, Greg Agosta Peter Heffernan, Nancy Reynolds, Jeanelle Bergin, Anne Burke, Treenah Wadham, Marilyn Cilmi, Lesley Yang, Rex Cambry, Caroline Hagedorn, Stephanie Snow, Jenny Wullings, Phil Drew, Fr Brendan Lane, Peter Barry, Peter & Bernadette Owen, Doris Castro, Rod Gorfine, Maureen Barns, Patricia Keeghan, Alexander Lim, Carol Battistella, Graham Burke, Zoe & Sophia Chung, Pam Gartland, Luke Norden, Julia Cantone, Caroline Meade, Helen McLean, Bro Jerome, Anne Jenkins and Errol Lovett.

Mass on line

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

God bless,

Brian

At the fundraiser



Tina and Frank. He can't see but Frank can dance



Tri and Mary



Siobhan Larkin & co



Siobhan up close, Gavan Leonard & co