

## Holy Cross Retreat


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



**Letter 289**

22nd August, 2025

### Holy Cross Fundraiser

John Hogan shared the financial outcome of the Fundraiser at Mass last Sunday,  which was far in excess of what he expected when he was first asked to 'audit' the finances. John announced that the event raised \$36,000 for the community. During this week a member of the Holy Cross family wishing to remain anonymous, very generously said "I would like to round it up to \$40,000!" We are deeply grateful for this, and for everyone's contribution to the financial as well as the spiritual and fellowship aspects of our life together.

There are three projects that we will proceed with. One is for a good **quality speakers in the foyer of the chapel** (quoted to cost around \$3,000). A significant part of the cost was determined by the distance of the speaker from the sound system. These were installed on Wednesday.

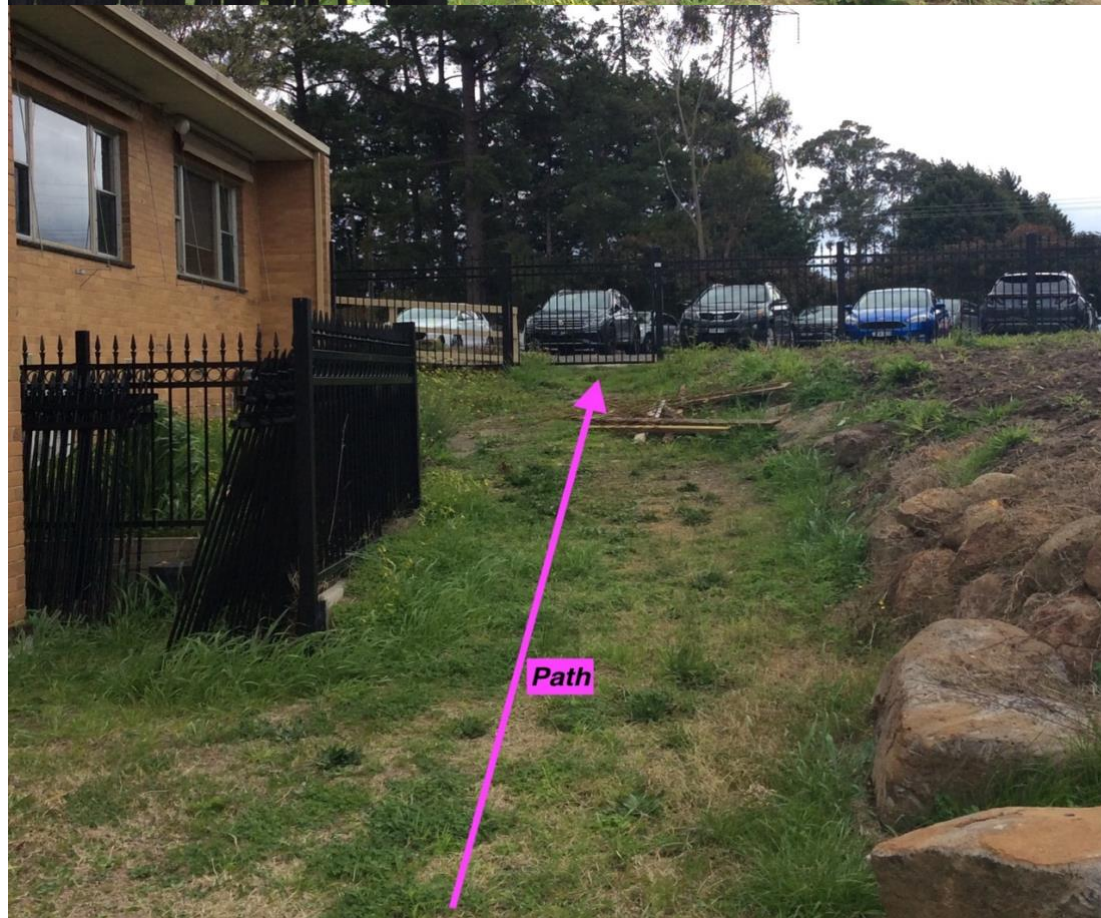
The major expense will be the upgrading of 'The Tavern'. This separate building originally included two garages which are now our laundry and workshop. It then developed into a student recreation area (we had nearly fifty students back in 1968!). Later it was converted into a two bedroom 'unit', with a lounge and kitchen, and it has been used for many years as an accommodation spill-over, especially for families of our community who visit and other professed Passionists and ministers, such as members of the Passionist Retreat Team. The Provincial Council has often met there. Brigid and Karen hold the record for the longest occupancy. Thanks to COVID and Brigid's inability to get to Vietnam, they lived in the Tavern for two years.



There has been no upgrade of the Tavern for many years. The whole area needs repainting, and new carpet is needed. The kitchen cupboards are inadequate. The lighting and soft furnishings need replacement as does some of the furniture. We will seek to expand the size of the skylight and purchase a divan. Our 'A Team' is going to co-ordinate this work, during October.

The third area is associated with the Holy Cross Centre. We hope to be able to help the Centre with the costs of the area outside of the La Velle room at the extreme end of the building. A concrete path will provide access from the carpark to the shrine and Vince is working to complete the carpark and create a significant grassed area on the side of the fence bordering the carpark where we could put some table-and-chair settings with outdoor umbrellas. We did consider a deck coming off the LaVelle room wall, but have decided against that largely because of expense.

We will consider a concreted area at the base of the external wall with an outdoor sink and BBQ. This will provide a facility for groups using that end of the building to have a BBQ with an attractive outlook. Peter Norman, our grounds coordinator suggests some Japanese magnolias along the fenceline and two water tanks against the La Velle room wall. No doubt as we proceed, other ideas will advance. (See photos below)







### 1968 Fundraiser....a bit of history

In November 1967, Box Hill St Vincent de Paul President Pat Fewster, learned from some Passionist students who were attending St Vincent De Paul meetings, that there was a need for some fundraising at Holy Cross. The grounds were totally undeveloped and the house was a bare building. Pat asked his two sisters Judy Milton and Mary Bennett to come to his home and talk about the situation. Judy and Mary learned that curtains was one thing totally lacking and it was decided that a fund-raising project to provide curtains, should be held the following year.



A Committee was established: Brendan Patterson was community leader. He and five students and ten lay people were nominated, including Judy and Ray Milton, George and Mary Bennett, Pat Day (still receiving the weekly newsletter) and her husband Adrian. In 1968 following Tony Egar came to Holy Cross as a Formation Director and I was newly professed. We were added to the Committee, along with Rod and Berna Munday, and Kathy Walker.

After approaching shops, warehouses and businesses for donations, the Committee held a BBQ in the grounds at the back of the building. Fete stalls covered the back lawn and a corral was established in the centre of the lawn where food was served. Hundreds of people attended and it was a huge success, especially 'socially'. Like our Veneto Club fundraiser, there was a very special feel among those who attended.





Fundraisers became annual events and great social gatherings: BBQ, Dinner Dances, Theatre Nights, Raffles etc. The Committee Members changed. Stan and Betty Wells joined and Stan suggested that there was enough talent among the students to host an Entertainment nights. While some of the priests were initially hesitant, these became annual events, where great camaraderie developed.

There is no suggestion that we will hold another Fundraiser in the near future, but some have suggested a dinner dance in 2026. We are thankful for everyone's generosity. We will see another example of that when we resume the monthly coffee cart on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Providing for such gatherings, means so much to all of us.

### PFG weekend



This weekend the National PFGM gathering 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.

The state of the Movement today reflects the changed and changing reality of the local Church. Older members, fewer families with children, amalgamated parishes etc has led to a loss of community in many parishes. At the same time, there are still thousands of people involved in PFG's who have developed a strong sense of belonging and fellowship. This weekend we want to focus on 'nurturing' as a critical focus of our effort to continue the mission that is now 50 years strong. We are keen to ensure that we continue to care for one another and help individuals, groups and communities grow in every way with the vision of creating 'a Family for All'.

### A social pilgrimage

Our Endeavour Hills Passionist Companions are setting out on (another) little social pilgrimage and want to invite you! They are very supportive of us at Holy Cross.

Next Saturday, **30th August**, we will gather at the **Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre, 362 Albert Street, East Melbourne**. Sr Rita Malavisi will give a short talk followed by a guided tour of the museum, offering the chance to explore the inspiring life of St Mary MacKillop—our very own Australian saint. The pilgrimage will run from **10.15am–1.00pm**, meeting in the courtyard. There will not be a lot of walking, so those with limited mobility are most welcome. Afterwards, we will share lunch together, so please bring a plate to contribute. All are warmly invited to come along for this special time of companionship, story, and reflection. If you have any questions please reach out to Sr Karen ([karenlea24@gmail.com](mailto:karenlea24@gmail.com))

**Using our gifts:** Pope Leo 14<sup>th</sup> .....10<sup>th</sup> August, 2025 (Zenit news)

In Luke's Gospel Jesus invites us to consider how we will invest the treasure that is our life (cf. Lk 12:32-48). He says: "Sell your possessions and give alms" (v. 33). He exhorts us not to keep to ourselves the gifts that God has given us, but use them generously for the good of others, especially those most in need of our help.



It is not simply a matter of sharing the material goods we have, but putting our skills, time, love, presence and compassion at the service of others. In short, everything in God's plan that makes each of us a priceless and unrepeatable good, a living and breathing asset, must be cultivated and invested in order to grow. Otherwise, these gifts dry up and diminish in value, or they end up being taken away by those, who like thieves, snatch them up as something simply to be consumed.

The gift of God that we are is not made to be used in such a manner. We need space, freedom and relationships in order to come to fulfilment and express ourselves. We need love, which alone transforms and ennobles every aspect of our existence, making us more and more like God. It is not by chance that Jesus pronounces these words while he is on the road to Jerusalem, where he will offer himself on the cross for our salvation. The works of mercy are the most secure and profitable bank where we can entrust the treasure of our existence, because there, as the Gospel teaches us, with "two small copper coins" even the poor widow becomes the richest person in the world (cf. Mk 12:41-44).



**Meditation on isolation:** a catechesis by Pope Leo XIV  
July 30, 2025 (Zenit news)..... on the case of the deaf-mute

This time in which we live needs healing. Our world is marked by a climate of

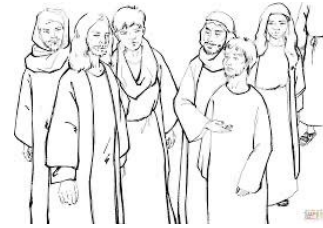


violence and hatred that demeans human dignity. We live in a society that is becoming ill due to a kind of «bulimia» of social media connections: we are hyperconnected, bombarded by images, sometimes false or distorted. We are overwhelmed by countless messages that stir within us a storm of contradictory emotions.

In this scenario, it is possible that within us arises the desire to turn everything off. We may come to prefer not to feel anything anymore. Even our words risk being misunderstood, and we may be tempted to close ourselves in silence, into a lack of communication where, despite our closeness, we are no longer able to say to one another the most simple and profound things.



In this regard, I would like to reflect on a passage from the Gospel of Mark that presents us with a man who cannot speak or hear (cf. Mk 7:31–37). Just as it can sometimes happen to us, perhaps this man chose not to speak anymore because he did not feel understood; he chose to shut off every voice because he had been disappointed and wounded by what he had heard. In fact, it is not he who goes to Jesus to be healed, but others bring him. One may think that the people who take him to the Master are concerned about his isolation.



The Christian community, however, has also seen in these people an image of the Church, which accompanies each person to Jesus so that they may listen to His word. The episode takes place in pagan territory, so we are in a context where other voices tend to drown out God's voice. Jesus' behaviour may initially seem strange, because He takes this person aside (v. 33a). In this way, He seems to emphasize his isolation, but on closer look, it helps us to understand what lies behind the silence and closure of this man, as if Jesus had perceived his need for intimacy and closeness.



Before anything else, Jesus offers him silent closeness, through gestures that speak of a profound encounter: He touches this man's ears and tongue (cf. v. 33b). Jesus does not use many words; He says only what is necessary in that moment: "Be opened!" (v. 34). Mark uses the word in Aramaic—Eph'phatha—as though to let us hear, almost "in person" its sound and breath. This simple and beautiful word contains the invitation that Jesus addresses to this man who had stopped listening and speaking.



It is as if Jesus were saying to him: "Be opened to this world that frightens you! Be opened to the relationships that have disappointed you! Be opened to the life you have given up facing!". Closing in on oneself, in fact, is never a solution. After the encounter with Jesus, that person not only begins to speak again, but he does so "plainly" (v. 35). This adverb, inserted by the Evangelist, seems to suggest something deeper about the reasons for his silence. Perhaps this man had stopped speaking because he felt he was saying things the wrong way, perhaps he felt inadequate. All of us experience what it means to be misunderstood, to feel that we are not truly heard. All of us need to ask the Lord to heal our way of communicating, not only so that we may be more effective, but also so that we may avoid wounding others with our words. To begin speaking correctly again is the start of a journey, it is not yet the destination.

In fact, Jesus forbids that man from talking about what has happened to him (cf. v. 36). To truly know Jesus, one must complete a journey; one must remain with Him and also pass through His Passion. When we have seen Him humiliated and suffering, when we have experienced the saving power of His Cross, then we can say that we have truly come to know Him. There are no shortcuts to becoming disciples of Jesus.



Dear brothers and sisters, let us ask the Lord that we may learn to communicate with honesty and prudence. Let us pray for all those who have been wounded by the words of others. Let us pray for the Church, that she may never fail in her mission to lead people to Jesus, so that they may hear His Word, be healed by it, and in turn become bearers of His message of salvation.

### Begin with listening



Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ has reflected on his years as a missionary and educator in Japan. Although thoroughly trained in theology and ministry, he found himself unprepared for the cultural context in which he was to proclaim the Gospel. He had to find a new language — not just Japanese, but a fresh way of expressing and embodying faith. He had to re-learn how to listen, to understand what the Gospel could mean within a different worldview.

Then, after fifteen years in Japan, Hollerich returned to Luxembourg, but the Luxembourg of his childhood had changed. The Catholic village culture of the 1960s had disappeared. Once again, he had to learn how to speak the Gospel into a new cultural moment. “I could not have been a teacher,” he said, “without first listening to my students.” His point is critical. Mission today begins not with preaching but with listening. The Gospel is eternal, but its language must be renewed for every generation and culture. Congregations are ageing, volunteers have vanished, and clergy numbers are falling. Even with support from overseas priests, mission must engage the lives of people who are busy and stretched.



Mission is not a return to the past but a call to creativity, courage, and hope, and with clarity about what we believe and compassion for those we have the privilege to live among and serve. With our nets cast out the other side of the boat, this is **the beginning of a new conversation**. (John 21:6). (*Sean Hall is a theologian and priest serving in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle in North East England.*)

## Why Christianity Is Uncomfortable (Ilia Delio, August 6, 2025) Part 2

The conclusion to Part 1 was:



*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.*

Will Herberg showed in *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* that most people attend Church or temple primarily for social gathering. This is not entirely negative but Christian liturgy should ignite the heart and mind. Does liturgy empower Christian life to imagine, create, surrender through love's energies? Or does it obsess over dogmatic rightness? Do the symbols of water, bread, wine, and cross draw us together toward something greater and more compelling than the present reality? Are we being formed with a consciousness of radical love?



Halik notes that Jesus was not a priest but a layperson. His prophetic words about temple destruction and priestly corruption cost his life. Jesus did not make the circle of his twelve friends into priests, in the sense of the temple religion of Israel.

He wanted them to follow his example, striving to be least and servants of all. Jesus established no hierarchy or holy government as a ruling class among God's people. He empowered his disciples to be provocative in contrast to the powers of the world and religious-political manipulation. Jesus grounded his faithful disciples in a spirit of kenosis, agapic love: "If you try to save your life, you will lose it, but if you lose your life for the Gospel's sake, you will find it" (Matt 16:25). His teachings were daring, bold, possibly dangerous, and yet it is this new spirit of love that Jesus sought to ignite.



The crisis of contemporary Christianity is not merely about Church structures or metaphysics but about faith itself. What is weakening is not only the power of the Church to control and discipline the life of faith, but also the link between the language used in expressing the faith and the way it is lived. There is a widening gulf between what the Church proclaims and how it proclaims it on one hand, and the ideas and opinions of the faithful on the other.

Charles Taylor points out 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 and some do not understand them at all.

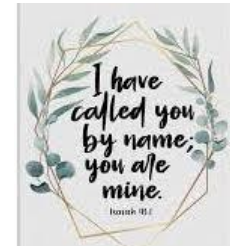




Many of these texts were created as part of a picture of the world that is very remote from our own. This is why the Latin Mass is disturbing. It is nostalgic Catholicism focused on transcendence and mystery. But Catholicism without Christianity is dangerous. Christianity began as a movement, but today evolution invites us to see that Christianity *is* movement—

happening, becoming, still unfinished because it journeys toward eschatological fulfilment, what Teilhard called Omega.

Christianity means being born again repeatedly; it is about ongoing transformation. Its main task is not doctrine, moral rightness, or belief in one true God. God is true wherever love exists, and love is deeply personal, expressed uniquely by each person. Christianity concerns the personal call of God and our response to that call: “I have called you by name and you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1).



Each person is called to inner transformation, to continually renew our minds and hearts, to constantly strive to see the world and one another with new eyes. To be a Christian is to fall in love over and over, living through the failures of love, enduring in love,

suffering in love, and trusting that love will prevail through every storm, darkness, and destruction. The Christian sees life as one long act of death and resurrection strengthened by God’s unconditional love.

Christ did not offer doctrine but a journey, where we continually learn to transform our human lives—our way of being human, including all relationships to ourselves, others, nature, society, and God. Jesus’s teaching is an ongoing learning and listening process, inviting us to realize that life is unstable, unpredictable, spontaneous, and creative. The antithesis to the message of Jesus is absolutism, fundamentalism, and moral righteousness. Jesus’s message is simple: let go, let God, and trust the Spirit within.



The Christian message has never been more necessary than it is today. We are invited to create the world from the inside to the outside, to create the world in love. How do we know if Christianity is fulfilling its mission? I think nature can provide a lesson, for a tree does nothing more than be a tree, and in being a tree, it gives glory to God. Similarly, we must constantly ask if Christianity is deepening our humanity by firing up our hearts for a greater love. If love for another humanizes us, then Christianity will succeed when we become fully human—ultrahuman. Then we will no longer have to talk about religion or God, for God will be all in all.



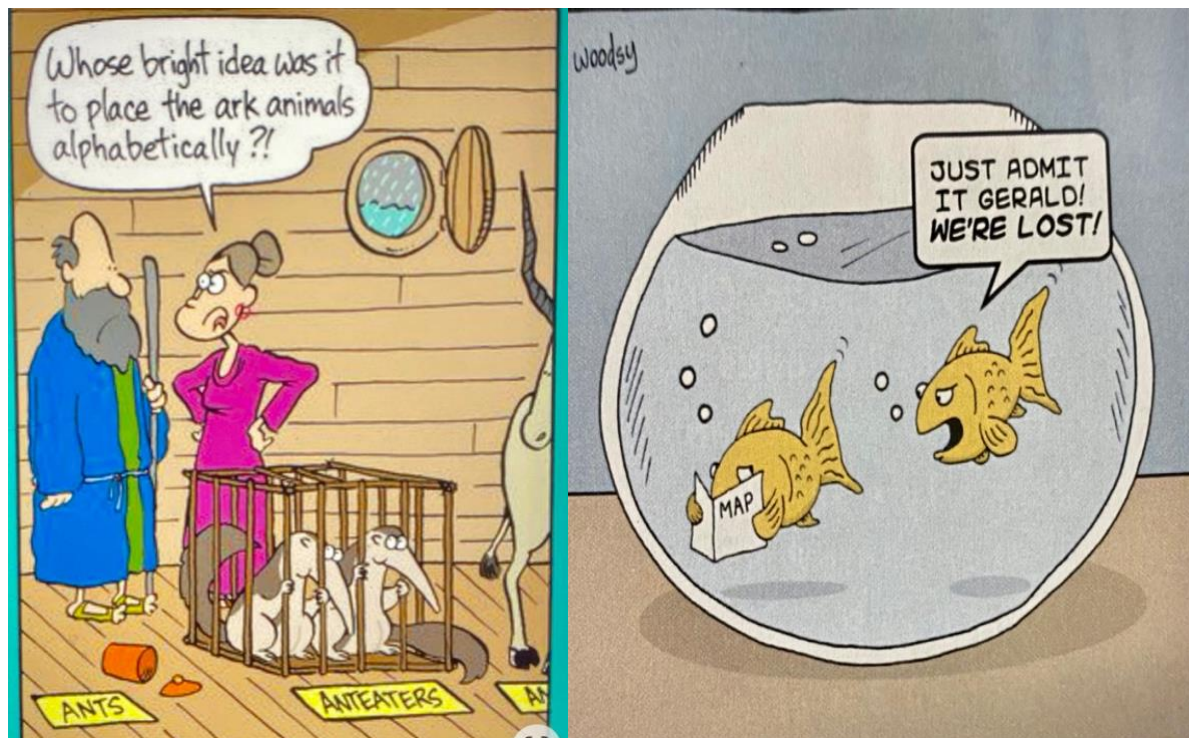
## Humour

1. The hospital patient was worried. He asked, "Doctor are you sure it's pneumonia? I've heard of people being diagnosed of pneumonia, but they end up dying of something else! "Don't worry' said the doctor. "When I treat a patient for pneumonia, they die of pneumonia!"

2. A man said to his doctor, "I think I have delusions. I keep thinking I am a shopping bag". The doctor examined him and said, 'There's nothing to worry about. There is a virus going around and you are the carrier".







Three 'recent' graduates from YTU and formation at Holy Cross



### **Coffee Cart...next Sunday, August 31<sup>st</sup>**

Ross will be back, with his coffee van, thanks to our generous benefactor, after 10.00am Mass next Sunday.

Everyone is welcome.

### **Lost and found**



A scarf was found in the carpark on Sunday.

Please see or contact Tim Horlock

**Jerome** was in hospital for just one day and was home again last Friday. He is managing well under the watchful eye of nurse Monna Han! His niece (driver) her husband and Jerome's sister Monica, visited their sister Kate, in Benalla on Thursday. What a beautiful day for it.

**Sr Anne Cunningham CP** was hospitalised recently but she has returned home and seems to be fine.

### **Prayers**

We remember those who have died especially **Treenah Wadham** who died on Thursday. She is a close friend of Kay Lewis. We also remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially

**Dorothy Lee, Tony Van der Haar, Maria Robson, Dorothy Vandersluys,** and **Giuseppe Vigilante**

We pray they have found joy in God's eternal presence.



**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, Caroline Meade, Phil Drew, Marilyn Cilmi, Rex Cambry, Jeanelle Bergin, Caroline Hagedorn,**

**Lesley Yang, Peter Barry, Peter & Bernadette Owen, Anne Burke, Maureen Barns, Fr Brendan Lane, Alexander Lim, Carol Battistella, Graham Burke, Rod Gorfine, Zoe & Sophia Chung, Pam Gartland, Luke Norden, Doris Castro, Patricia Keeghan, Julia Cantone, 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

PS