



This is the 300th Holy Cross newsletter. The first 'edition' was sent on March 20th, 2020 as we were about to go into COVID Lockdown.

How different our world is from that time. This is particularly true for so many who have had a loved one end their earthly life. Grief is ongoing, but we pray in the Preface for a Requiem Mass that "life is changed, not ended". We remember and give thanks for those who have left us, and we hope as a community, our actions and our prayers, help to provide hope and support for those left behind.

We acknowledged all those who have had a connection with Holy Cross and have passed away, at our 10.00am Mass last Sunday. Because we had photos of most of them, this was an emotional experience and it reminded us of beautiful people who were once among us.

Interestingly, in the first newsletter in 2020, we announced that Bro Jerome was about to return to have his health monitored and his first two weeks were to be spent in isolation. Jerome has spent this past week in hospital and we are hoping he can return home soon.

A photo was taken of the community, in May.



Jerome's health

Chris took Jerome to Knox hospital at 12.30am last Sunday. When it was decided to admit Jerome as a patient, Chris left at 4.00am. Despite a number of tests, the cause of Jerome's intense pain across the chest could not be diagnosed over the weekend, so further tests for his heart health and breathing were undertaken starting Monday and still going on. While Jerome is still there, Chris reports that he's looking much better and in good spirits.

Crocodile Dundee

On Sunday night the community shared a beer and pizza while watching the movie Crocodile Dundee. Our Vietnamese brothers enjoyed the Australian humour and dressed in suitable hats for the occasion. On Monday morning there were a few mumbled greetings "Giddy mate". "Ow yer goan", "That's not a knife" etc. Towards the end of the movie Donna and Glen Cooper from Adelaide arrived back from a meal with cousins. They headed back early on Monday morning.



REMINDERS

Christmas hampers

Beginning on November 16th, if you wish to bring either a complete hamper, or goods (food, toys etc) that would assist a poor family enjoy Christmas, we will ensure they are delivered to families in need. Thank you.

Come Away Day

Our next Come Away Day, and the last one for this year, is on Wednesday November 19th. Our theme as we anticipate Advent, is 'One Candle Lights the Way' which is an invitation to be and to carry the light. You are welcome to join us for a cuppa and the opportunity to greet other participants from 9.30am. The reflection day will begin at 10am and finish by 2.30pm. BYO lunch and a donation of \$30 is appreciated. Please feel free to invite a friend along to avail of the quiet, relaxing surroundings at Holy Cross, 207 Serpells Road, Templestowe. E-Mail Sr Brigid on bridget.m64@gmail.com so we have some idea of numbers for printing.

Sunday luncheon

The San Gabriele Association will be holding their last Sunday luncheon for this year on the 16th November at 12pm in the Holy Cross Centre Dining Room. You are invited to enjoy a great afternoon of food, fun and entertainment for only \$40per person. BYO drinks. Book your table early as bookings go quickly Please contact Bruno 0419503300 or Joe 0419369372

Broken Rosary Beads



If you have broken rosary beads in bedroom drawers, [Len Watson](#) would like to collect them and pass them on to a quadriplegic priest who enjoys creating new sets from the broken and old. Please bring them to Mass and put them in the box in the foyer, or drop them into the 207 box outside the front door at Holy Cross. Thank you.

Influence Is No Longer Enough (Religion in the age of algorithms)

Antonio Spadaro SJ.....October 8, 2025



Oxford, winter 2025. Beneath the baroque dome of the Sheldonian Theatre, the official ceremonial hall for the University of Oxford, where Arts and Sciences receive, from above, the Truth that dispels ignorance—two men, Biz Stone and Evan Sharp, cofounders of Twitter and Pinterest respectively, are talking about God - or rather, about the sacred.

The title of the event—*Reconnecting with the Sacred in a Technology-Driven World*—might have drawn a smirk from a rationalist of the last century, for whom technology was the ultimate proof of the eclipse of the divine.



And yet the hall was packed with students, young people raised on social networks and the Cloud, all listening intently. No longer as distracted spectators, but as pilgrims searching for orientation. The sacred, far from evaporating, has migrated elsewhere: into apps, forums, the invisible architecture of data. Technology is no longer just a tool; it has become a habitat. A mental, cultural, even spiritual context. It's not enough to use it to transmit a message: one has to understand it, interpret it, discern what happens to the soul as it passes through the machine. For centuries, people assumed that progress would drain humanity's religious sources dry. Instead, the opposite has happened.

Religiosity has not vanished; it has been reformulated. In Kyoto, a robot named Mindar delivers Buddhist sermons; in Germany, a Lutheran service was led by a chatbot; in Lucerne, Switzerland, a "digital Jesus" speaks in a hundred languages. These experiments are both fascinating and unsettling: What does it mean to entrust the mediation of the sacred to artificial intelligence? Can a machine console, forgive, or accompany? Or are these merely simulacra of religiosity, spiritual avatars stripped of mystery?

The questions are not marginal. If prayer becomes just an output generated by code, rather than a cry rising from within, faith risks dissolving into white noise. Spirituality, in every authentic tradition, rests on relationship—on irreducible otherness. It cannot be compressed into code or programmed as an interface. And yet religions cannot avoid the encounter. "The digital environment is not a parallel world or purely virtual," Pope Benedict XVI wrote as early as 2013, "but part of the daily experience of many people, especially the young." This was a conceptual turning point: the web is not an elsewhere, but a real relational environment inhabited by feelings, loneliness, wounds, and hopes.



The Gospel message—like every spiritual word—does not play out *outside* the network, but within it. Pope Francis put it with striking clarity in *Evangelii gaudium*: "Today, when the networks and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a 'mystique' of living together, of mingling and

encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage." This is why speaking of Christian faith in the digital realm no longer means "using social media well," as one might use a microphone or a printing press, but recognizing that the web is a theological space, a place where ultimate questions arise.



The network as a place of questions, of meaning. Perhaps this is why, according to recent market analyses, the word *influencer* is falling out of favour, replaced by *creator*. Why? Because mere influence is no longer enough.

Companies, media, and culture itself no longer seek only those who shift opinion, but those who create value, who generate stories, visions, and experiences. A creator is not just someone who “drives traffic.” They generate reality. They bring new imaginaries into the world. They don’t simply spread messages—they shape worldviews.

The true divide, then, is not between those with millions of followers and everyone else, but between those who produce content that merely “works” and those who ignite fires of new meaning. “Have the courage to dream new versions of the world,” Francis told artists. The exhortation applies equally to those inhabiting digital spaces: not to settle for repeating what has already been said, but to propose narratives capable of opening up the future, safeguarding complexity, resisting the aggressive simplification of platforms.

OPENING
THE FUTURE



Faith, as a living relationship, cannot be reduced to performance metrics. It does not arise from an editorial calendar, but from a fire that burns within. Sometimes even Catholic influencers fall into the trap of thinking a social-media post “works” if it’s muscular, or even sexy in its own way, with the posed appeal of a lifestyle shot. But there is no Catholic *physique du rôle*.

The point is not to gain attention by being ostentatiously attractive; that only neutralizes the very message one hopes, in good faith, to convey. A post, a video, a gesture becomes meaningful not because it goes viral, but because it conveys a truth that unsettles its audience. But hyper-personalization is a more insidious danger: The algorithm shows us only what resembles us, enclosing each of us in a bubble of like-minded opinions. Information becomes a mirror, not a window. Anyone who thinks differently ceases to be an interlocutor and becomes a threat. In this way, even religious communication can morph into an instrument of exclusion.



Francis, addressing Central American bishops, put it bluntly: “I am concerned that compassion has lost its centrality in the Church. Even Catholic media are losing it. There is stigma, condemnation, malice.” Without compassion, the Gospel risks becoming unrecognizable. In a similar vein, Pope Leo XIV, in his first address to journalists, urged a move beyond the “tower of Babel” of ideological and factional language: “Communication is not merely the transmission of information, but the creation of human and digital environments



HUMAN FRATERNITY
in a
DIVIDED WORLD

that become spaces for dialogue.” The challenge is not to build a loyal fanbase but to generate fraternity.

Meanwhile, as religions wrestle with their language, machines take on an unpredictable role. A decade ago, Yuval Noah Harari warned that in a world dominated by data, divinity risked being recognized in the processing of data itself. The algorithm as idol. Salvation as output. The Holy See, in its 2025



document *Antiqua et nova*, cautioned against a parallel danger: not the divinization of the machine, but the idolatry of the human bowing before its own creation. What is needed is a theology capable of preserving the opaque boundaries of the human—neither retreating into fear nor succumbing to fascination with the machine.

We need religious communities capable of reminding us that the human is not a function, and that truth is not an output. Salvation cannot be downloaded with a click. Religions, all of them, are not called to compete with big data; they are called to safeguard what cannot be measured—to remind us that not everything that counts can be counted. From this perspective, the task of religions today is a shared one. I have dreamed—and I choose my words carefully -of an interreligious synod on intelligence, where Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, and others gather to face the questions no algorithm will ever resolve: What is the human? What is suffering? What is hope?

Our human compassion binds us the
one to the other - not in pity or
patronizingly, but as human beings
who have learnt how to turn our
common suffering into hope for the
future.

— Nelson Mandela —

In a culture of artificial lights, flashes, and filters, what transforms is not what shines but what burns. Not what seduces but what guides. Genuine religious practice is the art of listening for what no machine will ever pronounce. And it is precisely for this reason that, in the age of artificial intelligence, we still so desperately need faith.

Antonio Spadaro, SJ, is secretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See and consultor to the Pontifical Secretariat for Communications.

God where it hurts

From 'Flashes of Light' Oct 28th.....William Grimm



As 17th-century Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō walked along the Fuji River on one such trek in 1684, he saw a three-year-old boy on the river bank who his parents had apparently abandoned. The child was crying in hunger, looking “as fragile as the flowers of bush-clover that scatter at the slightest stir of the autumn wind.”

Moved to pity, the poet gave the child his own meagre supply of food. Reflecting on the experience, he later wrote:

Who pitied monkeys for their cries,
What would he say, if he saw this child crying in the autumn wind?
How is it indeed that this child has been reduced to this state of utter misery?
Is it because of his mother who ignored him, or his father who abandoned him?
Alas, it seems to me that this child’s undeserved suffering has been caused by
something far greater and more massive
— by what one might call the irresistible will of heaven.
If it is so, child, you must raise your voice to heaven, and I must pass on,
leaving you behind.

From one child to many

That one boy’s cry still echoes today—in countless places where suffering is overlooked. His story is also the story of many whose unique biographies are shaped by anonymous pain, grief, and “utter misery.” In the Middle East, in Ukraine, in sub-Saharan Africa, in Haiti, in refugee boats in the Mediterranean and in the deserts of the southwest United States—in our own neighbourhoods and even in our own homes.



The cries we choose to hear

Too often, we are more concerned with what Bashō called “monkeys’ cries”—the distractions of nationalism, economics, status, stability, comfort, and security. These are the things that command our attention, while we ignore the real cries—the cries of children in the autumn wind.

Where is God in this?



When we reflect upon that boy on the riverbank, do we believe that God somehow willed or caused his plight? Some conclude that there is no God. Suffering, and for that matter, life itself, has no deeper meaning—it just is. Others may believe in a God who began creation but now remains distant and uninvolved. But perhaps Bashō gives us another way of understanding God.

In sharing his last morsel of food with the child, he entered the boy's hunger. This recalls the wisdom of the Catholic and Orthodox tradition, where Christ remains on the cross—God not escaping suffering, but entering into it. Not to remove the pain. That is not the message of the cross.

Where God waits

If we truly wish to know God, we must go - emotionally if not physically - to the riverbanks of the world, to the places where people suffer. That is where God is. If we really wish to be Godlike, we must be emotionally if not physically on the riverbanks of the world, the places where people suffer, because that is what God does. When we respond to the pain of others, then God is with us and we are like God.



Work in progress:

The wet weather this week prevented much outside work, and the 'A Team' were also a bit limited by the weather. The painting of the Tavern has been completed, and when the carpet is laid there will be an immediate difference.

JD's Doctoral Research: JD's doctoral research is based on the concept of resistance and resilience in the book of *Revelation* through the lens of communal trauma theory. At this stage he is working on a *master of philosophy* specialising in biblical theology as a pathway to the *doctoral degree*. His current focus is to complete a proposal for his research and the main chapter so that he can present these to the confirmation panel, early next year. He's busy in the books!

Erick's Master's Degree: Erick on the other hand, will complete his three-year *master's degree* in counselling - by Friday next week. He is grateful to have had this enriching opportunity and also looks forward to serve others with learned skills.

Pallottines: Brian returned late yesterday after facilitating the three-yearly Regional Assembly of the Pallottines Fathers

Humour



"You put a round thing on a spinning plate with a needle and then you play with buttons and knobs ... only old people know how to do it!"



My wife took up gardening...
I wonder what she's going to plant



My grandson made the mistake of telling me I was being overdramatic so I just changed the WiFi password. We'll see who's overdramatic in about 5 minutes.



Kevin was starting to think that maybe his mom wasn't coming back.



AS I WATCHED THE DOG CHASING HIS TAIL, I THOUGHT DOGS ARE EASILY AMUSED. THEN I REALIZED I WAS WATCHING THE DOG CHASE HIS TAIL.



- Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.
- What do you call a pig with laryngitis? Disgruntled.
- Why do bees stay in their hives during winter? Swarm.
- A commander walks into a bar and orders everyone around.
- I lost my job as a stage designer. I left without making a scene.
- How much did the pirate pay to get his ears pierced? A buccaneer.
- Joe lost his wife's audiobook, and now he'll never hear the end of it.
- Why is 'dark' spelled with a k and not c? Because you can't "c" in the dark.
- Why is it unwise to share your secrets with a clock? Well, time will tell.
- Scientists got together to study the effects of alcohol on a person's walk, and the result was staggering.
- I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows, and nuts. It was a rocky road.
- What do you say to comfort a friend who's struggling with grammar? There, their, they're.

Prayers

We remember those who have died recently especially ---- and those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially [Lawrence Brolly](#), [Jan Emilianowicz](#), [Shirley Fitzsimons](#), [Fr Leo Fitzpatrick CP](#), [Nancy Di Pietro](#), [Frank Galiardi](#), [Nell Donohue](#), [Lydia Chin](#), and [Evan Davies](#).

We pray that all who have died, 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 [Marist Brother Doug Walsh fms](#) who is in palliative



care. Also, [Pam Storey](#), [Noel Smyth](#), [Gerry Bond](#), [Anne Woon](#), [Fergus Ryan](#), [Denise Egan](#), [Joe & Nina Conti](#), [Nello Campomizzi](#), [Kate Lenic](#), [Anne Burke](#), [Maria Di Giantomasso](#), [Lesley Yang](#), [Dr Peter Heffernan](#), [Monic Sleeman](#), [Anthona Henderson](#), [Nancy Reynolds](#), [Caroline Meade](#), [Marilyn Cilmi](#), [Greg Agosta](#), [Peter Barry](#) [Caroline Hagedorn](#), [Rex & Jan Cambry](#), [Jeanelle Bergin](#), [Peter & Bernadette Owen](#), [Maureen Barns](#), [Fr Brendan Lane](#), [Alexander Lim](#), [Phil Drew](#), [Carol Battistella](#), [Graham Burke](#), [Luke Norden](#), [Zoe & Sophia Chung](#), [Pam Gartland](#), [Patricia Keeghan](#), [Doris Castro](#), [Rod Gorfine](#), [Julia Cantone](#), [Helen McLean](#), [Bro Jerome CP](#), [Fr Gerald Quinn CP](#), [Anne Jenkins](#) and [Errol Lovett](#).

Note

Please note that two of the above ([Monica](#) and [Anthona](#)) are [Kevin Hennessy's](#) sisters.

Please remember [Tri's father Hường](#), who was hospitalised on Wednesday with as yet undiagnosed lung pain and breathing difficulties.

Mass on line

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

God bless,

Brian