

## Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 311

30th January, 2026



### Chris' 50<sup>th</sup> profession



Last Saturday night, we celebrated Chris' 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his profession as a Passionist, and on Sunday the wider community celebrated with Chris at 10.00am Mass and afterwards with the Coffee Cart. We were delighted to have Phi and Phuc from Adelaide join is for the Sunday celebration.





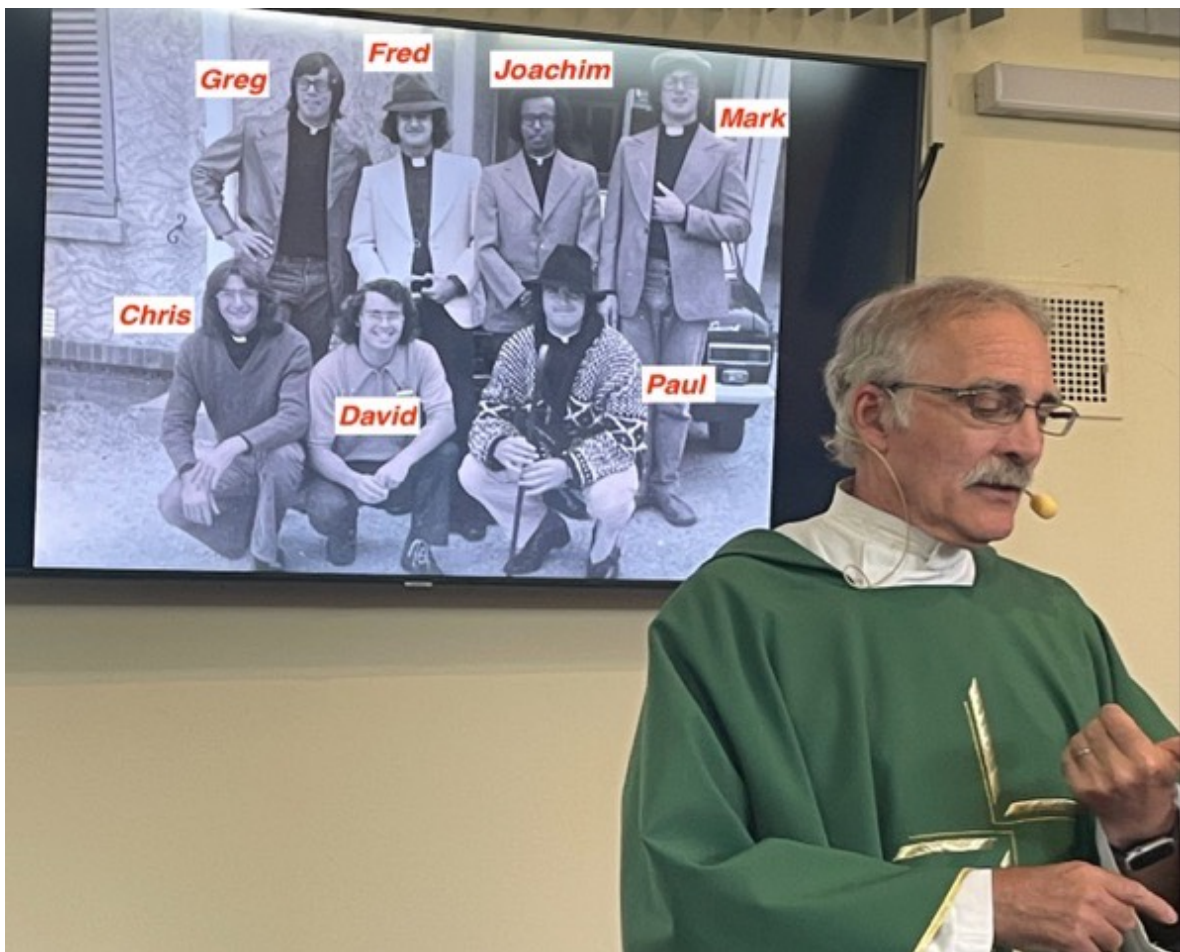












### The previous night



We shared on Sunday that for us, religious profession (as a Passionist) is our first vocation. We take vows for three years following a twelve month novitiate. Then depending on formation assessments and our own readiness, we renew our vows for life. If we are ordained as priests we become Passionist priests, so our prior commitment shapes how we live together in community and how we exercise ministry.





**A beautiful cake by Alida**



**Our regular cake cutting knife!**

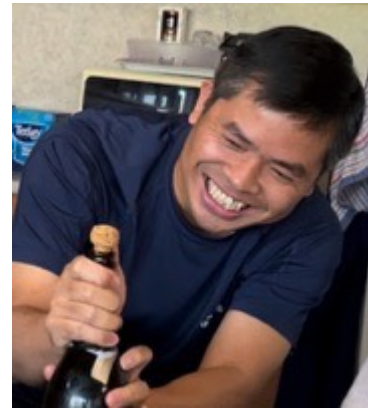
Another photo we received was of Peter Danh's graduation in Saigon, marking the completion of his theological studies. Peter was at Holy Cross as a postulant with Vinh and TJ in 2018-2019.



**Mike**



In the same week, Mike had two firsts. The main one was acquiring his licence with the regular guidance of Peter Norman. He is now a much more free man, and after his upcoming holiday back in Vietnam he will be able to be appointed by the



Provincial to a new community and ministry. The other first was that he had never before opened a bottle of champagne, and he did an excellent job!

### **'A' Team**

There was good attendance of the 'A' Team last Friday (John, Graeme, Ed, Peter, Des, Joe and Vince. They had a number of jobs to do as usual, including removal to the pyre of more branches from the fallen tree and relocation of the bollards until the carpark work is completed. [John Stretch](#) is having a knee replacement on Wednesday. We wish him well. [Peter Day](#) will be acting leader of the 'A' team during John's recovery.

### **Groundwork**

Last week Erick spent many hours mowing, whipper-snipping and edging and sweeping and gathering thousands of leave after the recent strong winds. All of that work made the back area of Holy Cross look spectacular.





## Bruno & Co



Last week we commented on Bruno, Vince and Frank's work on the bollards in the carpark. Later in the week, Bruno and his expert assistant installed a safety railing outside the rear door of the Tavern. Here (far left) is Bruno at work again!. He has also been watering the newly seeded lawn he planted near the developing BBQ area and seeding

grass on the slope from the carpark leading to the Shrine. His generous contribution is amazing considering the heat and his age (86 on Thursday ).

## Carpark



Vince was able to secure a huge amount of bitumen from the men surfacing Serpells Road, enabling the car park to have a very solid base. A few days last week he spent as many as seven hours working on spreading the bitumen. The two photos on the following page below show

a) some of the bitumen and

b) a panoramic view of the adjoining car parks.





### **Car park planning**

Our planning is that we (Vince) will dig around the extremities of where the fence will be. Then our electrician will lay cables and install the safety and security lights. Then the fence will be erected. Next will be the bollards to be placed inside the fence-line and finally line marking will be done to denote parking spaces.

### **Brazilian priest's hug (NCR Online)**



Fr Carlos Henrique Fernandes of the Diocese of Tubarão, in Santa Catarina state, was celebrating Mass on January 18 when, moments before giving Communion, he saw an elderly man coming to him. A long-time extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at the Church of St Francis of Assisi, the man, named Marcos, was attending Mass that day, along with his wife, but was not scheduled to help distribute Communion. During the celebration, he was called by a

relative and went out for a few minutes. When he came back into the church, he was visibly distressed.

"I was concluding the Eucharistic prayer when I saw him coming. I didn't know what was happening, but he was visibly shaken. I even feared he might be having a heart attack," Fr Fernandes told OSV News. The priest immediately interrupted the celebration and embraced Marcos for a long time, while the man continued to weep. "Some of the men of the community came to help him. They took him to a nearby room, made him sit and gave him some water," Fr Carlos said. Mass continued with the distribution of communion and Fr Carlos went to Marcos and give him Communion as well before he was taken home. At that moment, he was informed by the other men that Marcos had received dramatic news minutes before: his 20-year-old grandson, who lived in a nearby city, had taken his own life.



Fr Carlos later shared his reflections with the congregation, telling them that Marcos came to the pulpit in despair because he was longing for Jesus' presence and solace. A video of the event went viral the following week, with some posts reaching millions of views on social media. While the majority of viewers said they were deeply moved by the way the priest comforted Marco, some criticised the interruption of the Eucharistic prayer as a kind of desecration.

"I accept the diversity of opinions, but if something like that happened again, I would do the same. For me, faith manifests itself in our actions," Fr Fernandes said. "Failing to act at that moment would have been monstrous toward the elderly man. He needed me and needed Jesus in Communion," Fernandes declared, stressing that it's contradictory to love the invisible God, but don't pay attention to those in front of our eyes. A couple of days after the Mass, Fernandes was informed that Marcos was



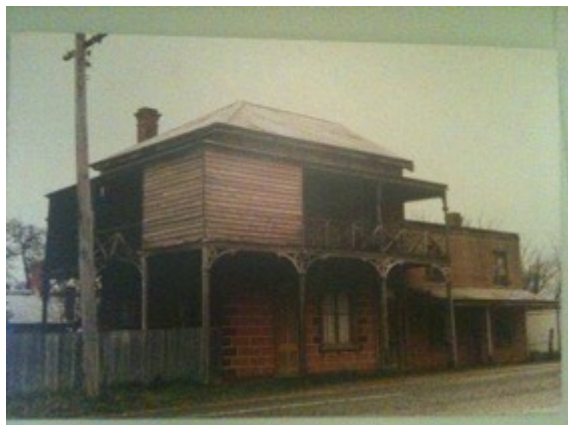
calm and more at peace with his loss. Faith, the priest argued, is central in that process. "With faith, there's a greater sense of lightness and purpose. Life can be very hard and priests must be side by side with the people," he said. "Like Pope Francis said, we must be shepherds with the smell of the sheep."

### Some local history



This photo shows the Upper Yarra Hotel pub (initially called 'The Bulleen') established in 1852 by Irish settler, David Bell. In 1872 it was extended and reopened by James Finn, and named Finn's hotel.

It was a popular stopping place for miners on the way to the Anderson's Creek goldfield. It closed in the 1920's following declining patronage and revised licensing regulations.



As the building aged, it became an attraction for artists and received a heritage classification. In 1966 it looked like the photo on the above left. The added building had been a 'beer shop'. One year later, in 1967, the pub burned down.

In the photo on the previous page, the intersection that the Holden has reached is Thompsons Road (across) and Foote Street ahead (and Templestowe Road behind. On

the far left corner of the intersection where the telegraph pole is visible, there is a now a BP station.

A newspaper reported in April 1967 that the Doncaster-Templestowe Council had ordered that Finns hotel be demolished and the Finn family occupants (descendants of James Finn) evicted, because the building was unsuitable for occupation.

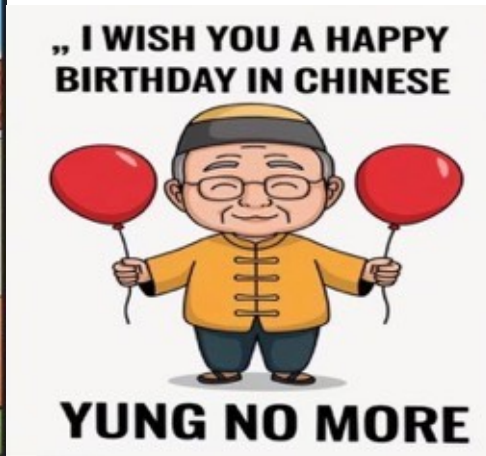
The Council wanted to develop parkland around the area of the hotel (now Finns Reserve) and they also wanted to widen Templestowe Road. The hotel was in the way of such development.

On 28<sup>th</sup> of May, the occupants left the building and it was mysteriously burned to the ground that same night! Several months later, the Council received a cheque for \$365.95 in full settlement of payment for the land on which Finn's hotel stood .



**Humour**





1. A rabbit walked into a pub and said to the barman, 'Can I have a pint of beer, and a Ham and Cheese Toastie?' The barman was amazed, but gave the rabbit a pint of beer and a ham and cheese toastie. The rabbit drank the beer, ate the toastie, waved and left.

The following night the rabbit returned and again asked for a pint of beer, and a Ham and Cheese Toastie. The barman was pleased to have extra drinkers in the pub, and (because word had got round), again he gave the rabbit a pint and the Toastie. The rabbit consumed them, waved and left. The next night, the pub was packed. In walked the rabbit who said, 'A pint of beer and a Ham and Cheese Toastie, please.' The crowd was hushed as the barman gave the rabbit his pint and toastie, and there was a burst of applause as the rabbit downed them.

The next night there was standing room only in the pub. Coaches had been laid on for the crowds of patrons attending. The barman was making more money in one week than he did all the previous year. In walked the rabbit who said, 'A pint of beer and a Ham and Cheese Toastie, please barman.' The barman said, 'I'm sorry rabbit, old mate, but we are right out of Ham and Cheese Toasties.' The rabbit looks aghast. The crowd has quietened to almost a whisper, when the barman cleared his throat nervously and said, 'We do have a very nice Cheese and Onion Toastie.

The rabbit looked him in the eye and said, 'Are you sure I will like it.' The crowd's bated breath was ear shatteringly silent. The barman said, 'Do you think that I would let down one of my best friends. I know you'll love it.' 'Ok,' says the rabbit, 'I'll have a pint of beer and a Cheese and Onion Toastie.' The pub erupted with glee as the rabbit quaffed the beer and guzzled the toastie. He waved to the crowd and leaft.... But he never returned!

One year later, in the now impoverished pub, the barman, (who had only served 4 drinks that night, called time. When he was cleaning up, he saw a small white form, floating above the bar. The barman says, 'Who are you? To which he was answered, 'I am the ghost of the rabbit that used to frequent your public house.' The barman

says, 'I remember you. You made me famous. You would come in every night and have a pint of beer and a Ham and Cheese Toastie. Masses of people came to see you and this place was famous.' The rabbit said, 'Yes I know.'

The barman said, 'I remember, on your last night we didn't have any Ham and Cheese Toasties. You had a Cheese and Onion one instead.' The rabbit said, 'Yes, you promised me that I would love it.' The barman said, 'You never came back, what happened?' 'I DIED', said the rabbit. 'NO!' said the barman. 'What from?' After a short pause, the rabbit said ...'Mixin-me-toasties!'



2. Two men arrive at the Pearly Gates at the same time, both expecting to be admitted to heaven. St. Peter asked the first man his name, where he is from, and what he did in life. The man answered that he was an ordinary man named John Smith and that he was a taxi driver in Melbourne. St. Peter looked through his book, smiled and gave the man a luxurious silken robe and a golden staff, and bid him welcome into heaven for his eternal reward.

St. Peter then asked the second man the same questions. He replied that his name was Thomas O'Malley, and that he was a Catholic priest also from Melbourne. St. Peter looked in his book, then then smiled and gave him a cotton robe and a wooden staff, and bid him enter into heaven for his eternal reward.

Father O'Malley said, Wait a minute! Why did that taxi driver get a silken robe and golden staff while I, a Catholic Priest and a man of God, got a cotton robe and wooden staff? St. Peter told him that the rewards in heaven are based on results, and while Father O'Malley preached, people slept, but while John Smith drove, people prayed!







### Long time friends – K!



**Kay Lewis** and **Kay Newcombe** met on their first day in Form One at Santa Maria, Northcote, seventy years ago. They have attended Collingwood football matches together for 66 years! Pretty incredible!

### Retreat for Passionists – Date claimer

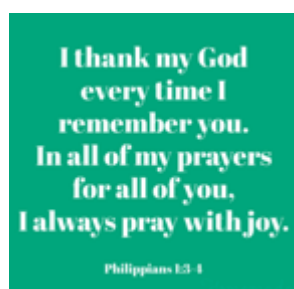
A retreat day is planned for **Saturday February 14<sup>th</sup>** (10.00am-6.00pm BYO BBQ). It will take place at Holy Cross and it is open to anyone within the Passionist Family (you share in, you are interested in, you belong to or you are attracted to the Passionist 'way').

This retreat is sponsored by our Passionist Companions, and the presenters will mostly be on the young side....Erick, Luke, Tri, Karen and Brigid (young at heart). There will be Mass at 5.00pm. There will be more details next week.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February.** World Day of the sick. Mass and Anointing at 9.30am

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February** Ash Wednesday Mass and blessing with Ashes at 9.30am

### Prayers



We remember those who have died recently especially as well as those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially **Helen Chai**, and **Kathleen Humphreys**, We pray that all who

have died, have found joy in God's eternal presence.

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

Monica Sleeman (Kevin Hennesy's sister), Kate Dunn (Bro Jerome's sister), Mary Cogle, Dennis Cogle, Pam Storey, Bronwyn Ure, David Chai, Lucia Isgro, Gladys Bardini, Marie Spowart, Nina Conti, Max McMahon, Maria Di Giantomasso, Fergus Ryan, Bob Hallam, , Lisa Iverach, Carol Battistella, Kate Lenic, Cate Sweeney, Greg Agosta, Denise Egan, Dr Peter Heffernan, Anne Burke, Nancy Reynolds, Luke Norden, Jeanelle Bergin, Phil Drew, Anne Woon, Caroline Hagedorn, Doris Castro, Gerry Bond, Marilyn Cilmi, Maureen Barns, Bernadette Owen, Alexander Lim, Caroline Meade, Rex and Jan Cambry, Patricia Keeghan, Graham Burke, Zoe & Sophia Chung, Rod Gorfine, Pam Gartland, Peter Barry, Julia Cantone, Helen McLean, Bro Jerome CP, Lesley Yang, Anne Jenkins, and Errol Lovett.



Chris will send the link for next Sunday's Mass, on Saturday

Brian

**Erick bringing Erick's birthday cake into the chapel**

