

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 320

2nd April , 2026

Greetings,

This newsletter is being sent a day early because tomorrow is Good Friday. As mentioned last week, **Joseph** will be assisting our community in Hobart with the Easter liturgies. **Erick** will be celebrating Easter Sunday with the African community at Melton. **JD** will be celebrating Easter Sunday with two Vietnamese parish communities. and **Tri** will be helping out at Heidelberg parish.

Holy Week

These are the days and times for liturgies at Holy Cross during Holy Week.

Palm Sunday 29th March: 10.00am Mass and **Coffee Cart**

Holy Thursday: 2nd April: 7.30pm Remembrance of the Last Supper

Good Friday 3rd April: 9.00am & 10.30am: Stations in the grounds
3.00pm: Commemoration of the Passion

Easter Sunday 5th April 6.00am: Dawn Mass in the Shrine and Breakfast
10.00am: Easter Mass

We will put extra chairs in the chapel for Good Friday, but you are advised to come early.

Come Away Day



Our Come Away Day on March 25th, the first of the year, with nineteen participants, was a very gentle day. We began by simply slowing down with some quiet music to take us deep into ourselves in preparation for a process meditation to help us be in touch with and grateful for our bodies. People enjoyed quiet reflective time in the grounds which were beautiful in the sunshine. In small groups we had very animated conversation and sharing after which we reflected on the **call to life** as it came to Mary and Joseph and as it comes to each one of us.

We had time to ponder the disturbances which came in the life of a young couple Mary and Joseph and on our own moments of disturbance which have called us and sometimes changed the direction of our lives. After lunch we had our prayerful candle-lighting leading into the celebration of the Eucharist when everyone shared a word or a prayer from the heart. There was a real sense of gratitude by the end of the day.



Our next come away day is **June 24th** . By then we will be in another season and hopefully closer to peace in the Middle East and all the other areas experiencing conflicts.

Thank you to our faithful 'Come Away' planning team and to the community at Holy Cross for sharing the space.

Coffee Cart

There was a good number of people and a lively spirit at Mass last Sunday and at the sharing of coffee afterwards.





Graduation

We didn't have photos last week, but now we have a good photo of Tri receiving his Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Ministry degree at St Paul's cathedral. At the same ceremony, Chris attended in his capacity of President of YTU, and can be seen here wearing his doctoral attire in the photo.



Last year we acknowledged JD being awarded a Masters of Theology Degree. He had previously been awarded a Bachelor of Mechatronics Technology and Bachelor of Theology and in February this year he was awarded a Graduate Diploma in Divinity. This does not mean he has become a fourth member of the Trinity! ‘Divinity’ is an academic discipline focused on the study of theology, ministry, scripture, and philosophy. It involves the study of sacred texts, Christian tradition, and practical ministry. The Diploma allows JD to continue further specialist studies as he is doing with the intention of being awarded a PhD.



Arthur Dron and ‘The First Letter to the Corinthians’.

Analysis by Lindsay Burgess, with Andriana Opryshko



Bro David Leary OFK introduced some of us to Artur Dron and the beautiful and powerful poem he wrote in 2023 titled (“The First Letter to the Corinthians”) as a response to his experiences as a wounded combatant in Ukraine’s armed forces. The poem pulls three direct quotations from [1 Corinthians 13](#), a Bible chapter that is frequently used in wedding ceremonies. However, the context and message of this chapter are not primarily about romantic love between two people. Instead, it provides a fuller insight

into the life of an early Christian community and the strengths and weaknesses of this small group.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul explains that the root problem of this community is a lack of love and emphasizes the necessity, character, and permanence of love. Dron chooses each of the three verses from 1 Corinthians 13 in his poem to reveal how these aspects of love are altered and take on new meaning in times of war. Dron has included this poem in a book that attempts to feature the voices of people who can no longer speak for themselves, to keep alive their dreams and memories, and their hopes for peace and freedom for Ukraine.



Often soldiers are depicted in poetry as unbreakable heroes fighting for the idea of a strong independent nation. Dron takes a different approach by personifying love

If we don't
risk being hurt,
we cannot give
unconditional love.
Unconditional love
gives others the
right to hurt us.

and giving it traits of the soldier. The figure of the soldier here is not glamorized. Their life is as fragile as anybody else's; they feel real human emotions. Dron's love is humane, compassionate, scared, wounded, and grieving. He explains that often in wartime, love must adapt and be unconventional, but also demonstrates that, battered by the brutality of war, love is unconditional.

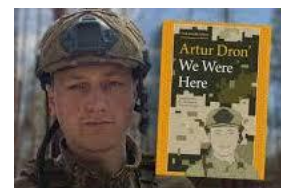
He reveals how the kind of love described by Saint Paul can be used to personify and represent every person who is putting themselves forward to fight for Ukraine. Dron develops the idea of love for Ukraine through vivid imagery describing the senses he feels, hears, and sees while he is on the front lines. Love is personified in the image of a Ukrainian soldier and characterized in a multitude of ways, including having "gunshot wounds" or "bullet fragments lodged in them" and the gruesome, visceral, and sensory imagery of mice crawling "under [love's] field coat" and love "vomit[ing] long in the trees." Atypically, this "love" is not beautiful and harmonious.

Although trauma is not the poem's main point, Dron depicts some physical injuries describing how "tourniquets squeeze love's legs, or it has no legs anymore." These mental and physical traumas will have to be addressed after the war through a long



process of rehabilitation. Love not only helps on the battlefield, reminding soldiers of the reason they are fighting, but it is also the bond connecting the soldiers with "the most significant ones," their loved ones who will accompany them through their post-war rehabilitation.

Dron's collection '*We Were Here*' features poems sharing the stories of people he knows or knew. One of his main goals is to preserve their memory, to bear witness to their existence. "The First Letter to the Corinthians" is also about social memory, remembering, and honouring the dead. At the end of the poem, the figure of Love "passes to the living" from the soldier who dies on the battlefield. This alludes to the memory that lives in the writings, songs, and testimonies of those who knew them.



The First Letter to the Corinthians (Artur Dron)

Love is patient. Love is kind.
It is not jealous, is not pompous.
Love is terrified like a beast
but it perseveres.
Love could give up and abandon it all
but it perseveres
Sometimes, love has gunshot wounds to
its legs or bullet fragments lodged in them.
Tourniquets squeeze love's legs,
or it has no legs anymore.
Then love's friends carry love.

Love digs trenches and lives in them.
It gnaws ice from the bottle cut in half
when it gets thirsty at negative four.
Love takes up combat duty,
gets into position
with hernias, fevers, prostatitis,
with blast injuries,
asthmas and allergies,
with a high probability
of not making it back,
with thoughts about the most significant one.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things!

Love can distinguish by ear
the shots of rocket launchers,
the strikes of mortar shells, and
the movement of tanks.
Love's eyes hurt when it stares into the
thermal imager for too long.
Love wakes up at night
when the mice in the dugout crawl
under its field coat.
Sometimes, love vomits long in the
trees after heavy combat.
Every now and then, it closes the eyes of its friends.
Love wraps them up in sleeping bags
and carries them away.
Love never fails!

But where there are prophecies, they will cease;
where there are tongues, they will be stilled;
where there is knowledge, it will pass away.
For sometimes, the shelling is over,
and friends close Love's eyes,
wrap it up in a sleeping bag,
and carry it away.

And then it passes to the living.

Recital by Ian McKellen

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DVKAiM2DPaD/>

Pope calls heads of bishops' conferences to Rome for summit on family Justin McLellan

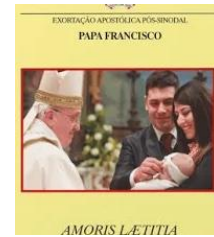


Pope Leo XIV has called the presidents of the world's bishops' conferences to Rome for an October 2026 summit aimed at assessing how the Catholic Church engages with families in a rapidly changing world. Announcing the gathering Leo said the meeting would seek "a synodal discernment on the steps to be taken in order to proclaim the Gospel to families today, in light of 'Amoris Laetitia' and taking into account what is currently being done in the local Churches."

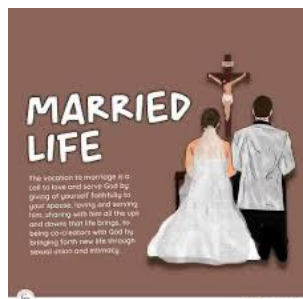
Amoris Laetitia emerged from two synods on the family in 2014 and 2015; it drew c controversy for seemingly opening the door for Catholics in "irregular" situations, such as people who have divorced and civilly remarried, to receive Communion. The 2016 document articulated the possibility that in "an objective situation of sin — which may not be subjectively culpable, or fully such — a person can be living in God's grace, can love and can also grow in the life of grace and charity, while receiving the Church's help to this end" (AL, 305). A footnote for that section of the document stated that, "In certain cases, this can include the help of the sacraments."

Some took the document to mean that, in a shift in church teaching, Catholics in irregular unions could be admitted to Communion and receive absolution in confession so long as "they desire to change their situation but cannot carry out their desire." In response, four cardinals wrote a letter openly questioning the pope on whether "absolute moral norms" that prohibit evil acts still existed after the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*.

Francis publicly wrote to a group of Argentine bishops that their guidance on the document, which said that *Amoris Laetitia* "opens the possibility of access to the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist" for some cases of people in irregular unions, "explains precisely the meaning" of the document's chapter on accompanying people in such situations.



In his message, Leo issued his stamp of approval on the divisive document, writing that *Amoris Laetitia* "offers valuable teachings that we must continue to examine today" for strengthening family love and affirmed the need for "new pastoral methods" to accompany families. "Our era is marked by rapid changes which make it necessary, even more than ten years ago, to give particular pastoral attention to families, to whom the Lord entrusts the task of participating in the Church's mission of proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel," Leo wrote.



"There are, in fact, places and circumstances in which the Church 'can become the salt of the earth' only through the lay faithful and, in particular, through families," he continued. "For this reason, the Church's commitment in this area must be renewed and deepened, so that those whom the Lord calls to marriage and family life can, in Christ, fully live out their conjugal love, and that young people may feel attracted, within the Church, to the beauty of the vocation to marriage."

The pope said that to convey the value of the family to young people, "we must learn to evoke the beauty of the vocation to marriage precisely in the recognition of fragility. We must also support families, especially those suffering from the many forms of poverty and violence present in contemporary society," he wrote. Leo's decision to call the heads of the world's bishops' conferences to Rome falls in line with the collaborative style the pope has charted so far in his pontificate.



In January, he called for regular meetings of cardinals in Rome to discuss the priorities of the church. The pope has not yet called for a Synod of Bishops but has repeatedly called for the church to advance in synodality — the catch-all term promoted by Francis for creating a more participatory church. Francis' first synod focused on family life, and took place more than a year and a half into his pontificate in October 2014.

Marriage Got Better—So Why Is It Disappearing? (Patrick Brown) (edited)



Marriages today are more egalitarian and confer ever-greater advantages relative to staying single. But fewer people are getting married in the first place; U.S. adults today are less likely to be married than at any point in recorded history, and the trend away from marriage shows no sign of stopping. Initially, that might seem like a paradox. Individual marriages have become stronger, yet the institution of marriage as a whole has never been weaker. But there's a simple explanation: Largely as a result of our rising level of wealth and stability, marriage isn't dying, but it is developing layers. One result of this is that the people who could benefit most from marriage's social and economic benefits are the least likely to have strong marriages.

For many years, marriage provided an important economic function for women whose earning power was constrained by law and custom. Women's rights, economic opportunities, and educational pathways have expanded, and our society has grown wealthier. Women looking at a male as a potential mate today expect more than in past years. Desirable skills in a partner have less to do with earnings and wages and more to do with social and interpersonal skills.

And men, particularly those who are on the bottom half of the income spectrum or without a college degree, are unable to adjust to the fact that the bar over which a man becomes "marriageable" continues to rise.

We might borrow a concept from economics to illustrate this a little more clearly. In



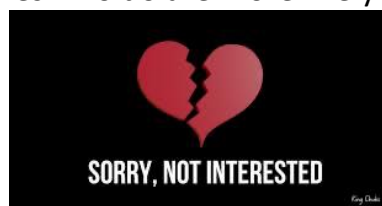
labour markets, economists refer to a given worker's "reservation wage"—the amount below which a certain job just isn't worth it. As societies get wealthier, a given worker's reservation wage goes up—there's a reason back-breaking, low-paying jobs tend to be filled by immigrants rather than native workers. For most of American history, the bar for a "reservation boyfriend" was pretty low. The question was less whether to marry than who to marry, and the pool was, on the whole, fairly limited. Men and women met at church, or barn raisings, or high school. You can't fully understand the "you can't live with 'em, you can't live without 'em" ethos from outside the context of early marriage and limited pathways to divorce.

Technology progressed, values changed, society liberalized. Marriage used to offer a "bundle" of goods—companionship, sex, old-age security, the ability to have children, some measure of social standing.



Overt societal pressure to get married before having sex, living together, buying a house, or having a child is a thing of the past. In the words of Johns Hopkins sociologist Andrew Cherlin, marriage is a “capstone” to a successful young adulthood, rather than the “cornerstone” on which young couples once built a life together. For women, the average age at first marriage has risen from 22 to 28.5 over the past four decades.

We can see this shift any number of ways: Weddings themselves have become more expensive affairs than the church basement receptions of yesteryear. Divorce rates have fallen, both because fewer people marry and the ones who do are more likely to be college-educated and economically stable. No longer is the dominant model of family life one in which one spouse (typically male) is the primary economic earner and the other largely focuses on the home front; today’s marriages are more likely to be a partnership of equals.



Marriage has become, to borrow from economics, a “luxury good” —something you are more likely to consume as your wealth and social status increase.

Marriage rates remain fairly healthy among Americans with a bachelor’s degree. “Most college-educated women are still getting married, even if the process of finding a spouse is less enjoyable than it once was,” wrote Daniel Cox of the American Enterprise Institute, last year. “It’s not only that college-educated women are able to find partners, but they also tend to be quite satisfied with the ones they get.”



In 1980, 9% of women in their 40s with a bachelor's degree or more had never married. In 2023, that fraction had bumped up to just under 15%. For women with a high school degree or less, marriage rates plummeted. One in 20 non-college women in their 40s had never married in 1980; in 2023, it was 25%. Instead of “settling” like generations before them, working-class women are now able to expand their professional and personal options—and are willing to delay or forgo marriage if nothing better comes along. The cultural and economic dynamics of marriage have changed because the “reservation wage” for women looking for men has gone up.



I like to argue that men at the lower end of the income distribution are doing worse than their forefathers, but that’s not precisely true.

In a gender-egalitarian labour market, “marriageability” may now be measured less in how much you take home in pay than in the attitude you bring home with you.

The worth of a prospective man in marriage is increasingly less about his relative earning power as a provider and more about the kind of partner and parent he might be. 25% of young men use weed, and a good many are acting out violent scripts they learned from pornography or they are gambling their weekly earnings. Educated men have broadly—not universally!—been able to pivot into a marriage market that selects for interpersonal skills, dependability, and emotional intelligence. Blue-collar and working-class men haven’t.



It's hard not to see some of the masculinist strains on the right as a way of trying to restore some of the hierarchy they see as natural. Women depended on men, economically, for most of human history, so some see resurrecting that state, whether through explicit discrimination in the labour market or implicit subsidies for male-coded industry, as the pathway to restoring marriage. But women are able to be pickier because society as a whole has gotten richer; they are able to marry not for necessity or societal default, but for partnership.



Not even the most punitive tariff regime can restore a healthy dating culture. When my organization, the Ethics and Public Policy Centre, in collaboration with YouGov, asked women ages 18-45 what the biggest challenge in the contemporary dating scene was, the top answer was “meeting someone interested in more than casual hookups” and “meeting someone who treats me with kindness and appreciation,” far ahead of “meeting someone who is financially stable.”

As it turns out, you can, in fact, live without them, and many are doing so. But on a societal scale, fewer marriages means fewer kids and more loneliness: more degrees of freedom today but fewer visitors in a nursing home tomorrow.



Some may innovate new forms of family, or family-like relationships, to fill the gap. But for many, marriage provides the surest route to intimate companionship and the construction of a joint lifelong project. And that institution is becoming increasingly unattainable.

For marriage to become more achievable, young people will need to be formed to be more marriageable.

That will mean shifting from merely singing marriage's praises to examining the legal and cultural changes that have made men less "marriageable" —not in an economic sense, but in a cultural one.

We have to have positive male role models.

How you think about regulating potentially addictive substances—be it drugs or sports gambling or porn—will be different if one prioritizes the long-term best interests of young men, whose brains may still be developing, than if one takes the hypothetical standpoint of consenting adults making fully-informed choices. We need institutions capable of providing men the role models and scripts they need to form a preference for the slow-fuse benefits of family life over the immediate high of opiates, electronic and otherwise.

The days in which everyone, to a first approximation, married, are gone, and with them the "take my wife ... please!" era of humour. Today, marriage is optional, and increasingly scarce, not because the demand for committed companionship has plummeted but because what we demand from the institution itself has gone up. In an increasingly wealthy society, marriage has never required less economically, yet never required more personally, and those who could benefit most from marriage's benefits seem least able to adapt.

Many of us want to be married... far fewer want to create a *marriage*.
DR. JENNIFER

Humour....Some testimonies....



I was at the checkout last week and the cashier rang up my total: \$46.64. I handed her a \$50 note. She smiled, handed me \$46.64 back. I said, "Excuse me, I think you gave me too much change." She gave me a confident look and said, "Thank you sir. I graduated with honours. I know how to count." So naturally... I left the store with \$46.64 and an honorary maths degree. They walk among us!



A lady was at a café where they had a Buy-One-Get-One-Free coupon for a 'Grande 'Latte. She showed the coupon to the barista, who glanced at the chalkboard which read: "Today only — Buy One, Get One Free!" The squinted, nodded wisely, and said, "Oh! That means they're both free" and handed the lady two lattes — for zero dollars. She walked out of there feeling like she had just robbed a coffee bank with a coupon. They walk among us!



At the airport, Bill couldn't find my luggage, so I went to the Lost Baggage counter. The lady there smiled and said, "Don't worry, sir. I'm a trained professional." Then she asked, "Has your plane landed yet?" Bill blinked and said, "No, we're still in the air, circling the terminal. I thought I'd come stretch my legs." They walk among us!

😂 One sunny afternoon, Tony was walking on the beach with friends when one of them shouted, “Look at that dead bird!” Another friend instantly looked up in the sky and asked, “Where?” We just stared at them in silence! They walk among us!

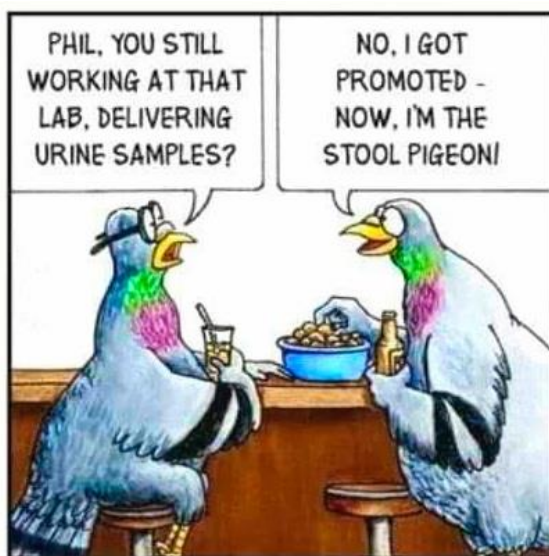
😂 A friend once asked a real estate agent which direction was north, because, he said, “I don’t want the sun waking me up every morning.” The agent blinked and said, “Does the sun rise in the north?” When he explained it rises in the east — and has for a few billion years — she sighed and said, “Oh, I don’t keep up with that kind of stuff.” They walk among us!

😂 A tech support person received a call: “Hey, what hours is your 24-hour helpline open?” He said, “Uh... 24 hours a day, sir.” The caller then asked, “Is that Eastern or Pacific time?” The tech person said, “Let’s go with Pacific.” and hung up before his brain melted. They walk among us!

😂 A lady bought one of an emergency seat-belt cutters - a tool meant to save your life if you’re trapped in a car. She has kept it in the boot!. It’s there for easy access in case of an emergency. They walk among us!

😂 At the liquor store a woman bought two cases of beer. Each was advertised as “10% off”. The cashier proudly announced, “Two cases? That’s 20% off!” The woman paid, and left. The cashier may not have mastered in maths, but he made her night. They walk among us!

😂 At a pizza shop, a man ordered a small pizza to go. The cook asked, “Would you like it cut into four slices or six?” The man thought hard and said, “Better make it four — I’m not hungry enough for six.” They walk among us!



Birthdays

On Tuesday, [Tim Horlock](#) reached 67 – pensioner age.

Today, Thursday 2nd April, [Mina Stanghi](#) celebrated her birthday

On April 8th, [Kevin Winterburn](#) reaches a young 80!

Prayers



We remember those who have died recently, especially [Christo Thomas](#) who is a cousin of Finnix who works here at Holy Cross. Finnix has flown to India. We also remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially [Gwen O'Shannessy](#) and [Ron Chapman](#), 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:

[Fergus Ryan](#), [Mary Cogle](#), [Dennis Cogle](#), [Stephen Cogle](#), [Joan O'Callaghan](#), [Fr Chris Mithen](#), [Pam Storey](#), [Vince Celestino](#), [Bronwyn Ure](#), [Kate Dunn](#), [David Chai](#), [Lucia Isgro](#), [Marie Spowart](#), [Nina Conti](#), [Max McMahon](#), [Maria Di Giantomasso](#), [Cate Sweeney](#), [Carol Battistella](#), [Bob Hallam](#), [Lisa Iverach](#), [Anne Woon](#), [Kate Lenic](#), [Dr Peter Heffernan](#), [Greg Agosta](#), [Nancy Reynolds](#), [Luke Norden](#), [Jeanelle Bergin](#), [Caroline Hagedorn](#), [Bernadette Owen](#), [Doris Castro](#), [Gerry Bond](#), [Marilyn Cilmi](#), [Maureen Barns](#), [Denise Egan](#), [Alexander Lim](#), [Caroline Meade](#), [Rex & Jan Cambrey](#), [Anne Burke](#), [Phil Drew](#), [Patricia Keeghan](#), [Zoe & Sophia Chung](#), [Graham Burke](#), [Rod Gorfine](#), [Pam Gartland](#), [Peter Barry](#), [Lesley Yang](#), [Anne Jenkins](#). [Julia Cantone](#), [Helen McLean](#), [Jerome CP](#), [Jeff Foale CP](#) and [Errol Lovett](#).



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

Brian

The Holy Cross community extends our warm greetings and prayers for Easter

