

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 323

24th April, 2026

Greetings,

Brian left by bus to the Airport on Tuesday for his holiday until 26th of May. Prior to leaving he did quite a bit of work including preparing most of this newsletter and a lot of other jobs, making it easier for us left behind. I have indicated some of the parts of the letter he did before he left. We wish him a well-deserved rest. We pray that ‘the mice won’t play’ too much while ‘the cat is away’!

Peter Norman spent most of his last week focusing on transforming what was a



messy bush into a beautiful garden, at the back of the Monastery near the new carpark.

We thank him for his continuous work as well as that of the A-Team, who spend significant amount of time to make Holy Cross look beautiful and therefore welcoming.

A magpie chased out



On Wednesday, one of the ladies in the office (we won’t disclose who) had to chase a magpie out of the centre with a broom. It had wandered into the kitchen area, probably looking for Chris Monaghan, who feeds them regularly. This story is not intended to offend magpie supporters, but someone thought Carlton supporters might quietly enjoy it. Fr John Curtis, who was Superior at Holy Cross for a time before Kevin Hennessy (Brian’s predecessor), is a die-hard Magpie supporter. We

suspect that if he had been around, he would have warmly welcomed the magpie - not just into the kitchen, but also for a chat about how the footy season is going so far.

Coffee Cart

Last Sunday we had a simple but enjoyable coffee and tea gathering after Mass. The much-loved coffee cart everyone was looking forward to ran into some unexpected difficulties on the way to Holy Cross. Despite its absence, the team -particularly Tim and Tina, made instant coffee and tea available for anyone who wanted one. There were even leftovers! It was like the loaves and fishes! We thank those who arrived as early as an two hours before Mass to set up, and those who stayed afterward to clean up. We also thank our anonymous coffee cart benefactor, as well as those who brought delicious treats to share.



One Day Music

A number of people after Sunday mass commented on the video, “One Day” which was played in conclusion of the mass. Those who would like a copy of it that has subtitles, Brian found a link to share: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0U975U0180>

Farewell (Brian)

[Liz and Kevin Moylan](#) have advised us that they are relocating to Camberwell, so we are sad to farewell them. Liz says they will be back 'from time to time', which is great news. We thank them for their warm contribution to the Holy Cross family.

Also, [Maureen Charnley](#) has relocated to Kew. We have been very grateful to Maureen and to her now deceased husband Bernard for their contribution to Holy Cross.

**Think Trump v Leo is bad? It would have been worse under Pope Francis (Brian)
Philipppa Martyr Apr 15, 2026**

The American pope knows exactly who the US president is. He has the full cultural and emotional backstory needed to remain calm in the face of it. When the Donald



Trump-Pope Leo spat began, I am almost ashamed to say my first thought was one of relief that Pope Francis was no longer with us. I can only imagine the embarrassing personal name-calling, attempted one-upmanship, rash political and doctrinal statements later having to be walked back, and epic Latin American tantrums that would have emerged from the late pontiff.

As an American, Pope Leo has the full measure of the culture that produced Donald Trump. As a born and bred Argentinian who managed to remain Archbishop of Buenos Aires for 15 years without too many obvious problems, Francis hated the United States. He was dismissive and contemptuous of the vibrant Catholic scene there. He especially hated its most vigorous and rapidly growing sector – young religious and political conservatives, formed by active college ministries and gifted bishops, evangelists, and teachers.

It's now been a year since Francis answered a higher vocational call, and we've had a year to look at Pope Leo XIV in action. And what a year it's been. He's had plenty



on his plate both in and outside the Church he leads. So far, [he's shown himself to be a man of uncommon common sense](#). When he was first elected, I hoped that the early signs of his being Pope Nerd the First would be more fully realised. Leo had struck me as the kind of small and dweeby guy who had endured a lot of schoolyard bullying but had gone on to succeed and thrive despite it.

Bob Prevost was a maths wonk who joined a religious order in an era when religious vocations were at an all-time low. Then he was a physics teacher, and then a missionary bishop in one of the least fashionable parts of the world. All this tells us that he is a man guided by a completely different set of principles from most other people, especially those in the success-oriented United States. He measures life, success, love, politics, and the world by a different yardstick from both his predecessor Pope Francis and the 47th president of the United States. It also means that he is a far tougher little nerd than anyone realised, including his employees in the Roman curia.



Leo was born for such a time as this. His American origins are his greatest strength in the current situation. Donald Trump, for all his merits, is absolutely cast in the mould of the high school bully; the jock on the sports team; the loudmouth in the locker room. Pope Leo [knows exactly who this man is](#). He has the full cultural and emotional backstory needed to remain calm in the face of it. And that's even knowing that he might ultimately lose his lunch money (handsome donations to the Vatican from rich US Catholics) at the end of the process.

These are qualities that Pope Francis absolutely lacked. He didn't understand the United States at all, and certainly not the complex politics of its schoolyards and college campuses. As to the rightness and wrongness of what's going on in this spat: it's tangled and there's no easy soundbite that will untangle it all for you. Basically, both Trump and Leo are right. Trump is right about the danger posed to world peace by Iran, and Leo is right about the danger posed to world peace by war in general.



I'm sorry, folks, but the days of the Pope blessing the troops whom we happen to like are long gone, and that's a good thing. Swaggering threats about a future Avignon papacy are just that – nonsensical swagger from a State Department whose denizens wouldn't know the Avignon papacy if it bit them on the backside of their too-tight trousers. Leo's job is to Pope. He's doing exactly that. He has to speak the truth in and out of season, not according to the White House's talking points. This is all part of a bigger and longer conversation about the way in which Catholicism has partially fused, Borg-like, with American political conservatism since the 1980s.



Not everyone is happy about this, inside and outside the church. But it's going to take a long time to see how it pans out. The Catholic Church thinks and moves in centuries, not in a 24-hour media cycle – another thing which Leo understands far better than Francis ever did.

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Eggs Day:



This Coming Monday is eggs day. A reminder to put it your order.

Humour (Brian)

Joe appeared on 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire' and was halfway to the final prize. "Now", the host said, "for one million dollars, and remember you only have one phone a friend life-line left. Everything is riding on this last question.

Will you go for it?"

"Absolutely," said Joe.

"Which of the following birds does **NOT** build its own nest?"

a) Sparrow b) Thrush c) Magpie d) Cuckoo?"

Joe didn't have a clue, so he said, " I'll phone my friend, Frank"

Joe called and repeated the question. "Joe, that's easy", said Frank. "It's a cuckoo."

"Are you sure?" asked Joe.

"Of course I'm sure." Frank repeated

Joe hung up the phone and said, , "I'll go with cuckoo as my answer."

"Is that your final answer?" asked the host. "It is." Joe said.

There was a long, long pause and then the host screamed, "Cuckoo is the correct answer! Joe, you've won a million dollars!"

The next night, Joe invited Frank to the pub to buy him a drink. "Tell me, Frank?"

How did you know it was the Cuckoo that doesn't build its own nest?"

"Because", said Frank, "everyone knows the cuckoo lives in a clock!"

- What if there were no hypothetical questions?
- If someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill themselves, is it considered a hostage situation?
- Where do park rangers go to 'get away from it all'?
- What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?
- Would a fly without wings be called a walk?
- What was the best thing before sliced bread?
- One nice thing about egoists is they don't talk about other people.
- If one synchronised swimmer drowns, do the rest drown too?
- If you try to fail and succeed, which have you done?
- Whose cruel idea was it for the word 'lisp' to have an 's' in it?
- Why is there an expiry date on sour cream?
- Can an atheist get insurance against acts of god?

My parents taught me to be honest, but my teacher doesn't like it when I am.

Today, my teacher asked me to tell her what famous person I admired most. I told her, "*Colonel Sanders.*"

Guess where I am now!

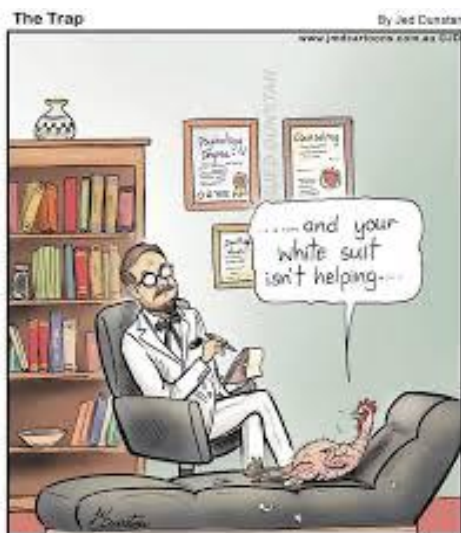
My favourite Animal (By Johnny)

Our teacher asked what my favourite animal was, and I said, "Fried chicken." She said I wasn't funny, but she couldn't have been right, because everyone else laughed! My parents told me to always tell the truth. I did. Fried chicken is my favourite animal.

I told my dad what happened, and he said my teacher was probably a member of an ethical group who love animals very much. I do, too. specially chicken, pork and beef. Anyway, my teacher sent me to the principal's office. I told him what happened, and he laughed, too. Then he told me not to do it again.



The next day in class my teacher asked me what my favourite live animal was. I told her it was chicken. She asked me why, so I told her it was because you could make them into fried chicken! She sent me back to the principal's office. He laughed, and told me not to do it again. I don't understand.

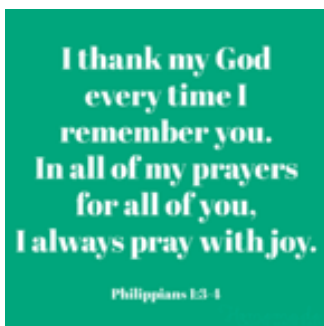




Birthday (Brian)

Vin Molloy celebrates his 93rd birthday tomorrow, on Anzac Day.

Prayers (Brian)



We remember those who have died recently as well as those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially [Terry Carrigg](#), [Merleine Gagliardi](#), [Bud Thompson](#) and [Michelina Vigilante](#), . We pray that all who have died, have found joy in God's ternal presence.

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

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



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

Brian and Erick