

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 324

1st May, 2026

Greetings, Happy New Month!

Mayrose featured in the provincial newsletter las week. We thought we would also share this photo and the caption. Mayrose reported saying that it was a wonderful celebration. The bride (not in this photo) had worked with Mayrose at Holy Cross some years back.

Mayrose Abraham from our Templestowe community last Friday. Here she was dressed up for a wedding she was attending in Sydney.

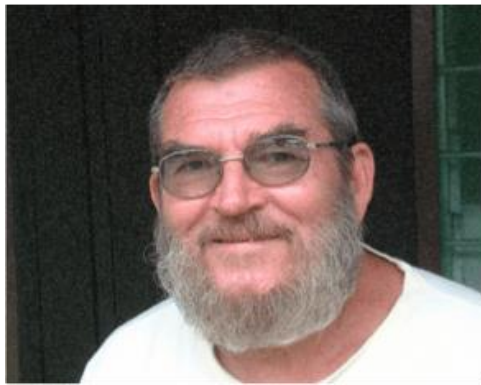


Bruno and Cathy



Talking about weddings, Bruno and Cathy Petrocco celebrated their 60th Wedding anniversary yesterday on 30th April. We congratulate them and wish them many more years of Love. We also thank them for their many years of service to our Holy Cross community, particularly through the St Gabriel's committee. Happy Anniversary!

Jerome's Missionary Stories – A



During the next four weeks we will be sharing Jerome's stories from his missionary experience in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The following are some of the script from an interview with him. Most of the images used below are not of Jerome but similar indication of what it was like for him. **You can also watch** this first part on Jerome's YouTube Channel as Tri kindly filmed and created the channel.

Click here to watch: https://youtu.be/ltkr_JO28mw?si=Tzks5MPGBEWnM1XX

You can also search on YouTube, the name 'Jerome's Missionary Stories'
Follow and subscribe to be notified when new stories are posted.



Jerome, how many places in PNG have you been on the missions?

*I've been in Vanimo mission, in about five or six different stations.
In the old days, we only had about five stations,
and I was always sent to the new station to set it up.
And then I'd move to another to set it up. So, I did a lot of the early work.
And the setting up, and all that.*

What year was that?

*About 1962. 1962 is a while back.
I was about 21 when I first went.*

What made you go to Papa New Guinea when you're 21?

*I was in the YCW (Young Christian Workers Movement)
And the Melbourne chaplain was Father Willie.
His brother was a Passionists from Papa New Guinea.
And I met him through his brother. And 6 weeks later I went to Papa New Guinea.
No mucking around!
I'd always had an interest in Papua Guinea from my father.
And it was something different.*

So, your father was there during the war?

*Yes. And he used to tell us stories of it.
He was stationed in what was the next diocese to Vanimo. That was the first
connection.
But this time through the chaplain of YCW.*

Was it normal for YCW members to go to places for missions?

*Oh, no! But it was there a few of us who went from the same parish. I think three of
us were in Papua New Guinea in different places. All from the same parish in
Melbourne.*



Where did you first land in Papa New Guinea?

*In Port Moresby. Terrible hot place. We didn't stay in Moresby long, we went and
then moved to Wewak and then moved to Vanimo.
I was supposed to go to Aitape but I went straight to Wewak then Vanimo
We were mainly under the Franciscans.
They were teaching the Passionists how to be missionaries.*

Wewak is closer to Vanimo than it is to Morsby.

There was a lot of fighting in Wewak. And it was very famous during the war. And that was the last they drove the Americans and the Australians drove the Japanese out of Wewak and they went to Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea.

What were your first impressions apart from the hot weather?

Hot weather; it was exciting!

I was a young person and the world was all before me and I was going to conquer the world. And I didn't. We failed in that one. But it was exciting. Exciting!

It was new. I was the only one in my family that had ever moved out.

Um, and most of the YCW I knew, none of the others wanted to leave Australia, but a couple of us wanted to disappear and try something new. It was good. I liked it. It was good and exciting. Something different. And very different.

At one station I was the only white person with different hair. I was very conscious that I had white skin; and I was the odd man out because everyone else had brown skin. And, there it was; different to Australia.

Very different to Australia which I liked. It's not that I was against Australia, but it was very boring, but yeah, by going to Papa New Guinea, I think I was fulfilling a dream after our father used to say every Sunday at lunch "when I was in New Guinea..." and after about 10 years, we got awfully sick and tired of his stories. So, yes, I went to find out whether his stories were true or not! Yeah. And then I had my stories.

Were there any challenges for you with the language?



I had to learn pigeon English which took me 3 weeks because it's basically English with I 'im' put on the end of every word kisim (bring), putim (put) but yeah, you had to understand the language but the hardest part was cultural understanding the difference in culture things which we considered as normal were abnormal and wrong in their society. So, you had to tread carefully to begin with. Now if you lived in the bush where sometimes you were the only white person there, you

learned very quickly.

I was lucky. I was stuck on my own quite a bit and therefore I learned quickly. Being with the people you learn quickly. Yes.

For the sake of the foundation of it all, how long 1962 did you come back and then join the Passionist?

Two years. I got permission because it was normally a three-year mission when you went to the mission. The lay missionaries were fairly new at that stage. I was the first to go with the Passionists.

And because I got to know the Passionists, I joined the Passionists because they were something I knew and I'd been working with them for a couple of years.

And there were some pretty interesting characters, one of them, James Coucher, is still alive. He was in Papa New Guinea when I went there as a junior brother. He was younger then but some of the older religious were there and they were impressive. And they impressed me, so I joined them.

But they say you go to Papa New Guinea, you go tropo and if you're tropo you do mad things. I went tropo did mad things and joined the Passionists. Being mad did help!

Obviously, you liked the work they were doing.



It was definitely hands on. And particularly when you were left on a station, you were the only foreigner in that area. You had to get to know the people very quickly.

Otherwise, you'd go completely mad.

And a lot of foreigners did not sit too well in Papa New Guinea and left

because they couldn't get close to people. The cultural changes were so great.

But being young, I was able to make the jump quite easily. Yeah.

And uh... that did help. Yeah. That's right.

We want to hear any first timer stories that any stories that you can share so that we get something real of your experience there.



Yes, I miss Papa New Guinea even though it's years since I've been there to work. But it's for a young person. Life in Papa New Guinea is not meant for an elderly. It's meant for young people.

Because it is it is very different to Australia when you're working in the bush.

On a mission station surrounded by trees and more trees. In the bush. Yeah.

Next week we will share part B.

Pope Leo wants peace—but what does that mean? (Brian)



Enzo Del Brocco CP (21st April 2026)

Enzo lived his childhood in the USA before his family moved to Italy. He became a Passionist in 1991 and holds Licentiate in Moral Theology, a Master Degree in Human Resources, a Certification in Catholic Bioethics and has a PhD in Healthcare Ethics. He served as secretary to the General and was Provincial of his Naples Province. He decided to return to the USA and spent some years in the challenging mission in Haiti. He is fluent in six languages and is president of Catholic Theological Union based in Chicago.

At a time when calls for peace are met with political hostility, the words of Pope Leo XIV resound with particular urgency. During the prayer vigil for peace at St. Peter's Basilica on April 11, he proclaimed: "Enough with the idolatry of self and money! Enough with the display of force! Enough with war! True strength is manifested in serving life."

Leo has insisted that he will continue to speak out against war because, as he said aboard a recent papal flight, "too many innocent people are being killed" and "someone has to stand up and say there's a better way." He also warned that "the message of the gospel is not meant to be abused in the way that some people are doing," reminding us that faith cannot be used to justify violence or division.



The question, then, presses itself with new urgency: What do we mean by peace? In a world marked by war, fragile ceasefires and deepening divisions, the word is invoked often, but not always understood.

As Pope Francis insists in *Fratelli Tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship), peace is the construction of fraternity. It is the decision to see the other not as an enemy to be neutralized, but as a brother or sister whose good is inseparable from my own. Peace begins when we no longer ask how to defeat the other, but how to seek what is good for them. Without this transformation, ceasefires remain temporary, hatred smolders like embers beneath the ashes, and at the first wind, violence returns.

From the beginning, humanity has lived in the shadow of violence. The biblical memory of Cain and Abel is not only the story of one murder; it unveils a wound that runs through every age. The human family has always been tempted to protect itself through domination, to answer humiliation with vengeance, and to imagine that security can be built on fear.

Yet against that ancient logic stands the word of Jesus Christ: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you"—a peace revealed not in power, but on the cross. For,

as Paul proclaims in Ephesians: “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”



The peace Christ gives is not the result of domination or victory over the other, but of self-giving love: a peace that reconciles, that forgives, that restores communion by bearing, rather than returning, violence. That kind of peace may seem naïve or idealistic today, especially when solutions to end wars appear distant and uncertain—when, after each escalation, we are told that it will not

last long, that order will soon be restored, and yet conflicts in many places drag on for years.

We easily dismiss the power of mercy and peace as insufficient, as incapable of guaranteeing solutions or restoring broken trust. And yet we continue to place our confidence in violence, as if it could secure the very peace it repeatedly destroys.

What a contradiction: To reject what heals and trust what wounds

If we begin to think that being peacemakers is unrealistic, or that the peace Christ offers is ineffective, then perhaps we do not fully believe in him. Like Peter during Jesus’ passion, we may still be tempted to believe that the sword offers a stronger and more decisive solution. On the one hand, it may seem scandalous to some that the Holy Father speaks of peace and the importance of dialogue. Yet the real scandal is that we are often satisfied with something far less, and that we continue to speak so easily the language of war—even invoking the name of God.



The gospel offers a harder path. In Luke 13:1–5, when Jesus is confronted with political bloodshed and public tragedy, he refuses the trap of easy blame. He does not deny guilt. He does not call evil good. But neither does he allow his listeners to reduce suffering to a simple contest between the innocent “us” and the guilty “them.” Instead, he says: Unless you change, unless you are converted, all of you are in danger. That is not a refusal of justice. It is a refusal of self-righteousness.

This is the point we most need today. Every conflict tempts us toward moral simplification. Each side tells a story in which its own violence is necessity and the other’s is barbarism. Yet terror against civilians is always evil. Collective punishment is always evil. Revenge dressed up as strategy remains revenge. When warfare exceeds the

limits of proportion and the protection of non-combatants, it multiplies the very hatreds it claims to resolve.

The Christian contribution to this moment is to defend moral clarity. It must say,



without hesitation, that no political cause, no national trauma, and no strategy can justify the destruction of innocent life. No political cause can justify the threat of large-scale devastation and the targeting of infrastructure essential to civilian life as protected under international law. Christians must also insist that peace cannot be built

through escalation and military force alone; even where self-defense is invoked, the temptation toward retaliation remains constant. For this reason, the path of diplomacy is not optional.

Yet diplomacy alone is not enough. Negotiations and agreements can pause violence, but cannot by themselves transform the fear, resentment, and injustice that sustain it. True peace demands that we confront the deeper structures that make violence seem inevitable. Those structures are found not only on battlefields, but in systems that humiliate entire peoples, in economies that normalize exclusion, and in political cultures that reward contempt. Before bombs fall, words prepare the ground—words that dehumanize and divide, words that diminish the value of others.

The Christian concern for every human being who bears the image of God is not an abstraction. Even in war, the dignity of every human person remains inviolable. The innocent can never be justified as targets. The child beneath the rubble is not a strategic detail. The refugee is not collateral reality. The civilian trapped by tyranny is not expendable, but a life to be protected and restored.

What does it mean to speak of peace now?

It means insisting that violence, far from resolving conflict, only deepens it. It means defending dialogue, even when it is slow and fragile. It means upholding international law, even when it is inconvenient. It means refusing the lie that some lives matter less than others. And it means asking not only how wars begin, but what sustains them.

Too often, conflicts are prolonged by systems of power and profit that benefit a few while many pay the price. Those sent to fight and die are told they do so for the sake of freedom, yet easily become instruments of interests not their own. The same

forces that fuel war frequently stand to gain from its aftermath, profiting from both destruction and reconstruction, as if violence itself were a cycle to be managed rather than a tragedy to be ended.

And it means something more personal. The call of Jesus Christ in moments of



catastrophe is for each of us. We are not innocent if our thinking is shaped by contempt, if our politics rely on dehumanization, or if we ignore the suffering of others. Conversion begins when we stop treating peace as someone else's responsibility.

Ceasefires without trust cannot endure. War may impose pauses or redraw maps, but it cannot heal the human future. That is why encounter, dialogue and diplomacy—despite their cost and difficulty—remain the only path worth pursuing. Yet even these require something deeper: the good will of those who seek not domination, but communion. Peace is inseparable from the will to recognize the other as a child of the one God, whose desire is that all may be one, as Jesus Christ prayed on the night he was betrayed.

Blessed are the peacemakers!

Happy Birthday Tina



Yesterday was Tina Minichilli's Birthday. We wish her an abundance of blessings on her birthday. We are grateful for the love and heart she pours out to our community together with Tim, making our Holy Cross community a special place to be. Happy Birthday Tina!



Maureen – Goodnews

Last week we mentioned that [Maureen Charnley](#) has relocated to Kew. The good news is that Maureen has not moved to Kew and that she continues to live happily in Templestowe. Please excuse our miscommunication.

Humour - sourced by Brian & Erick



1. A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.
2. A will is a dead giveaway.
3. Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.
4. A backward poet writes inverse.
5. In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, your Count votes.
6. A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.
7. If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.
8. With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.
9. Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft and I'll show you A-flat miner.
10. When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
11. The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.
12. A grenade fell onto a French kitchen floor – it was Linoleum Blownapart.
13. You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
14. Local Area Network in Australia : The LAN down under.
15. He broke into song because he couldn't find the key.
16. A calendar's days are numbered.
17. A lot of money is tainted: 'Taint yours, and 'taint mine.
18. A boiled egg is hard to beat.
19. He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
20. A plateau is a high form of flattery.
21. The short fortune teller escaped from prison: a small medium at large.
22. Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
23. When you've seen one shopping centre you've seen a mall.
24. If you jump off a Paris bridge, you are in Seine.
25. When she saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd dye.
26. Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
27. Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.
28. Acupuncture: a jab well done.
29. Marathon runners with bad shoes suffer the agony of de feet.
30. The roundest knight at king Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
31. Jock was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.

Early one morning, a husband and wife were arguing over who should get out of the warm bed to make the coffee. Finally, she folded her arms and said, "You have to make

the coffee. It's in the Bible! Her husband was shocked. "It is not! Show me!" Pulling out her Bible, the wife opened it to one of the New Testament books and declared, "It says right here — HEBREWS!"

God was talking to one of his angels and said, "Do you know what I have just done? I have just created 24 hours of alternating light and darkness on Earth. Isn't that good?" The angel said, "Yes, but what will you do now?" God said, "I think I'll call it a day."

During a Sunday school lesson, a child learned how God created humans. He became especially focused when the teacher explained how Eve was created from Adam's rib. Later in the week, the boy's mother saw him lying on the floor and asked him what was wrong. He replied: "Mom, I have a pain in my side—I think I'm getting a wife!"

Don't believe everything you see on social media.



I asked my MOM if I was adopted. She laughed and said, "Why would I choose you."



If you are lonely,

Turn off the lights and put on a horror movie... after a while it won't feel like you're alone anymore.



I don't know why some people hate lazy people.... I mean... they don't even do anything..



Jeremiah

Michele, the foster mother of little Jeremiah has requested prayers for Jeremiah's health which includes early signs of hearing impairment. Michele requested prayers through the Di Giantomasso family after having experienced some connection with Holy Cross when they came for Maria, Frank's mother's funeral last week. She particularly appreciated Joseph Liaia who gave Jeremiah a blessing on that day.



RIP Dorcas McGarry

We remember former Passionist Steve McGarry whose wife Dorcas passed away on April 26th after 33 years of marriage.

Prayers

I thank my God
every time I
remember you.
In all of my prayers
for all of you,
I always pray with joy.

Philippians 1:3-4

We remember those who have died recently especially [Dorcas McGarry](#) (Steve McGarry's wife) as well as those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially [John Ryan](#), [Antonio \(Tony\) Zandegu](#), [Merleine Gagliardi](#), [Mary Maher](#), [Frank Aloj](#), [Sylvia McHugh](#), [Quentin Dorrat](#), 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](#), [David Chai](#), [Fr Chris Mithen](#), [Paul Fitzgerald](#), [Pam Storey](#), [Joan O'Callaghan](#), [Bronwyn Ure](#), [Kate Dunn](#), [Lucia Isgro](#), [Marie Spowart](#), [Nina Conti](#), [Max McMahon](#), [Kate Lenic](#), [Cate Sweeney](#), [Carol Battistella](#), [Bob Hallam](#), [Lisa Iverach](#), [Anne Woon](#), [Gerry Bond](#), [Dr Peter Heffernan](#), [Greg Agosta](#), [Nancy Reynolds](#), [Luke Norden](#), [Jeanelle Bergin](#), [Caroline Hagedorn](#), [Bernadette Owen](#), [Doris Castro](#), [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](#), [Lesley Yang](#), [Anne Jenkins](#), [Julia Cantone](#), [Peter Barry](#), [Helen McLean](#), [Jeff Foale CP](#), [Errol Lovett](#), [Arthur Reuss](#), [Jeremiah](#).

SATURDAY
RECORDED MASS

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