

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 333

3rd July, 2026

Greetings,

Community activities

A Team



It is easy to see from this photo how busy the A Team can be at times! From the left...[Vince Celestino](#) was welcomed back. Although he has not fully recovered from an episode of vertigo several weeks ago, he is making good progress.

[Maurice Molan](#), recently retired was rearing to get outside and prune the roses on what was a very cold morning. [Ed Poran](#) tried to get a word in now and again, but it was very difficult.

[John Stretch](#), the team leader was more subdued than usual, but keen to ensure arrangements are in place for the A Team mid-year BBQ on July 3rd. Vin Molloy was a welcome returnee for a cuppa. He was impressed at the work that was discussed!

[Graeme Newcomb](#) was able to ensure the major political issues of the day were debated, before attending the risk management issues of the day. [Joe Senzo](#) gave the thumbs up to the Socceroos before their game against Paraguay, and [JD](#) dressed up for that occasion.

[Peter Day](#) arrived a little after this photo was taken (by Erick) and he was disappointed that the major world problems had already been discussed. [Des Rigby](#) was also a little late because of other commitments. Des joined the beanie wearing brigade.

70 years ordained



On Tuesday June 30th, we celebrated Chris Mithen's 70th anniversary of ordination at Nazareth House, Camberwell, where he resides. He is only the fourth member of the Province to celebrate this milestone.

Chris was born in Melbourne in 1932 and grew up in Preston. He attended high school at St Pat's East Melbourne, with recently deceased, Gerry Bond. He entered the Passionists and was professed in January 1951 with Mark Nugent and Pat Cooper.

Chris has had a variety of ministries including retreats, missions and spiritual formation, especially for women religious. He served as novice master including among others, for myself! Chris engaged in parish supply ministry, served in Passionist parishes, and was parish priest of St Joseph's Hobart. He served as a Provincial Counsellor and as Provincial. In his senior years he developed a ministry with refugees, and learned Spanish to assist in this work.

He spoke with joy and gratitude about his vocation, which he first experienced as a call during a Passionist mission when he was in his last year of school. He is grateful for the care he receives at Nazareth House and he was grateful that his Good Samaritan sister Margaret, some of our Holy Cross community and residents of Nazareth House joined for the Eucharist celebration. We enjoyed a cosy morning tea afterwards.



From left to right

Denis Travers, Chris Mithen, JD Tan, Brian, Traynor Erick, Niriagira, Denis Andrew O'Carm, Jerome Dunn, Gerald Quinn, Kevin Hennessy, Chris Monaghan,

Note: Gerald is also a resident of Nazareth House.

Erick's birthday

Erick celebrated his 38th birthday on Wednesday. Our numbers have been a little down with Joseph and Tri away, but we managed to celebrate the occasion. Erick thought the photo on the left showed off his features much better!

Note: The cap reads 'Burundi'.



Coffee Cart



The **Coffee Cart** will be at Holy Cross after Mass this Sunday. If it is a bit cold, coffee can be taken into the dining room.

We would appreciate some BYO food to go with the coffee, please.

Underbool



Last week we featured a story related to the coffee cart at Underbool. Anne Brolly shared the photo below when nine friends visited the town in 2018 and were treated to generous country hospitality. Anne undertook her early schooling in Underbool! Silo art and the water tank (centre rear of the photo) are a feature of the town along with vibrant primary school mosaic murals

Other silo art locations and photos can be found at: <https://www.australiansiloarttrail.com/victorian-silo-art-locations>

Pope Leo and the logic governing the world.....June 26, 2026

Antonio Spadaro SJ



Pope Leo XIV visited the headquarters of the World Food Program in Rome on June 22. The address he delivered there was not only about hunger. It was about the world—and about the logic that now governs it. In recent days, we have watched the Pope take up forceful subjects, thereby revealing the global reach of his moral authority. He has become, by now, the one figure of reference on the great questions of this age, listened to nearly everywhere—even if his message is not always taken to heart.

Artificial intelligence, peace, the cooperation of peoples, the dignity of the person: all of it spoken into a fractured world. The through line is singular and unmistakable—the defence of the person against every attempt to reduce the person to an object, a number, or an instrument.

Standing before the officials of the United Nations agency, the Pope does not confine himself to denouncing hunger. He poses a crucial question:

What world order keeps producing the very crises it is then obliged to treat?



It is not enough to answer the emergency, he says. One must grasp why the system keeps generating the same problems. Always the same. The institutions established to safeguard the world's common good have grown weaker. The dialogue among peoples threatens to curdle into a disorderly contest—adversarial, ruled by mistrust.



Before the World Food Program, the analysis takes on a concrete face. Never has the world produced more food or wealth than it does today. And yet millions are left without bread. The same forces that drive growth, the Pope observes, often deepen exclusion. Leo takes up an insight from Pope

Francis: aid sits idle, held up by political decisions, ideologies, and customs barriers. Weapons do not. Weapons always travel.

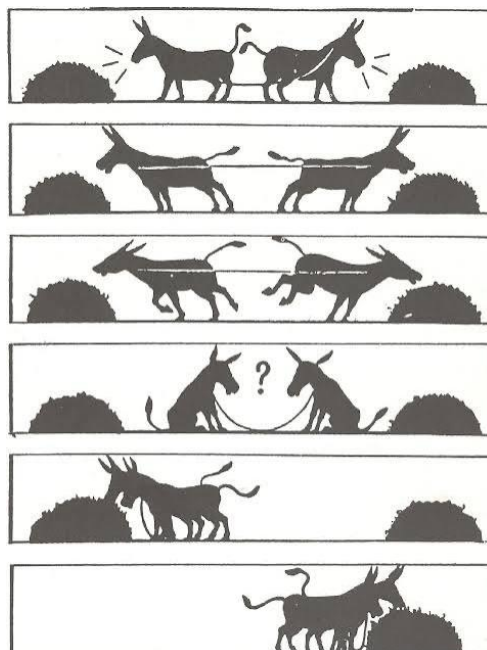
Conflicts, Leo says, are fed more readily than people. The phrasing is severe, and it lays bare a hierarchy of priorities that has been turned upside down. But there is a second danger, less visible and more subtle. The Pope calls it the bureaucratization of solidarity. When procedures count more than people, aid slows. And whoever fails to produce measurable value simply disappears. Becomes invisible. In this way, the Pope says, human life ends up being treated as a commodity.



This is why Leo insists on the role of local communities, of civil society, of religious bodies. In many corners of the world, he reminds us, the Church arrives where international institutions cannot. True fraternity is born of living relationships, not of bureaucracy—of a presence rooted in the ground

itself. And so we come to the heart of the message. Food security is part of everyone's security.

At a moment when politics speaks the language of competition and fear, Leo affirms that there is no shared future if the cooperation among peoples loses its credibility.



HOMILY FOR THE ORDINATION OF TRI (30th May, 2026)

HOLY CROSS CHAPEL, TEMPLESTOWE (Bishop Tinh Xuan Nguen)

(Jer 31:1-6; 1 Cor 13:1-13; Mt 25:31-46)

Tri, today the Church entrusts to you Christ's ministry in a special way, through the laying on of hands. And the word that holds everything together today is simple and powerful: LOVE. The readings that you chose help us see that love is not just a feeling – it is a way of living, a way of serving, and a way of giving yourself.

So as we talk about what priesthood means, we will also quietly ask ourselves as parishioners: "HOW DOES CHRISTIAN LOVE LOOK LIKE IN DAILY LIFE?"

1. "L" - LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE

You probably noticed that during the rite, you prostrate yourself. It is a strong symbol. It means: "I am not here to be the centre. God is". "And I also recognise: I need mercy".

That gesture says: "Here I am, Lord." It's humility, but it's also trust – trust in God, and trust that the saints and the Church are with you as you begin this ministry.

For you, Tri, love means laying down your life – not only at the big moments, but in the small daily decisions: choosing the good of others, even when it costs time, energy, or pride.

2. "O" - OBEDIENCE OF THE HEART

The second thing is obedience. But the Church does not present obedience as a cold command. It's obedience of the heart.

You promise to be obedient to your Ordinary (local bishop), and in that promise, you are really saying: "I want God's will." The bishop represents the local Church's mission and unity, so your obedience is meant TO SERVE THE PEOPLE, not control them.

And obedience begins with FRIENDSHIP – with God. The priest does not survive on duty alone. You need prayer, because prayer is how you STAY CLOSE to the One you serve. Then service becomes communion, not just management.

3. "V" - VOICE OF CHRIST

Next, you are asked about the ministry of the Word: "Are you resolved to preach the Gospel worthily and wisely?"

That question matters because people can tell when a speaker is sounding off "their own" opinions. But the priest is called to be the VOICE OF CHRIST – not the voice of self.

So listen attentively to Scripture, let it shape you, and allow it to inspire the way you live each day. Your words matter – but your life matters too. People will look for Christ in you. And here's a key point: preaching should not be a THEOLOGICAL show. It should help people move from the Word they hear to the PRESENCE OF CHRIST they celebrate.

4. "E"- EUCHARISTIC LIFE

Finally, Eucharist. The centre of priesthood is not simply activity, and not even only preaching. The centre is the MASS - the Eucharist.

During the ceremony, you receive with the paten and chalice. You hear a very direct message: "Know what you are doing, and imitate the mystery you celebrate." In plain words: what you celebrate is meant TO BECOME WHAT YOU ARE.

So a "Eucharistic life" means: giving your time, your energy, your attention – without keeping score. It means letting the Eucharist shape your mind and your heart, because without that, the ministry becomes hollow. A priest can only live his vocation well inside the mystery he serves: the Eucharist is where Christ's love becomes present – real love, given to people.

APPLICATION: What this means for clergy and lay people together

For Tri and for priests: love is a daily formation

- Laying down your life means refusing to treat people as "tasks."
- Obedience of the heart means listening and cooperating for the good of the Church
- Voice of Christ means preaching and teaching with clarity, so the people actually understand and are helped by what they hear.
- Eucharistic life means staying grounded in the Mass so the ministry comes from Christ, not just from effort.

For the lay faithful: you are not spectators

Even though Tri is ordained, the Church is not "divided" into two groups: priests who do ministry, and lay people who just receive.

All of us have been called to belong to Christ, and our life of faith should make the Church visible in the world. Your "YES" in baptism is real. You help the Church become the BODY OF CHRIST.

So when a priest is ordained, you can respond in very concrete ways:

- Pray for him
- Welcome him with respect and kindness
- Tell the truth in charity when something needs correction
- Support the Eucharist – by worshipping, coming often, and living what you celebrate.

Leaves Don't Drop (They Just Let Go) Carrie Newcomer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3c4mW9MRe-k>

The truth I learned when I was eight
My dad swam the length of Spirit Lake
Yeah and it must have been a million miles
This I knew was true

My mother sang while hangin' clothes
Her notes weren't perfect heaven knows
Yeah but heaven opened anyway
This I knew was true

'Cause leaves don't drop they just let go
And make a space for seeds to grow
And every season brings a change
A tree is what a seed contains
To die and live is life's refrain

I left her with some groceries
Said check the oil and call me please
And she said hey Ma I'll be just fine
This I knew was true (Refrain)

I've travelled through my history
From certainty to mystery
God speaks in rhyme in paradox
This I know is true
And finally when my life is through
And what I am, not what I do
'Cause it comes down to you and your next breath
This I know is true (Refrain)

Humour

The Senility Prayer

Grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway,
The good fortune to run into the ones I do,
And the eyesight to tell the difference.

Strange lingo....English

Why is break not rhymed with freak?
Will you tell me why it's true
We say sew but likewise, few?
And the maker of the verse, cannot rhyme his horse with worse?
Beard is not the same as heard while cord is different from word.

Cow is cow but low is low, shoe is never rhymed with foe.
Think of hose, dose, and lose, and think of goose and yet with choose.
Think of comb, tomb and bomb, doll and roll or home and some.
Since pay is rhymed with say, why not paid with said I pray?

Think of blood, food and good. Mould is not pronounced like could.
Wherefore done, but gone and lone - Is there any reason known?
To sum up all, it seems to me, sound and letters don't agree.

Written by Lord Cromer, published in the Spectator of August 9th, 1902

Eye Halve a Spelling Margo Roark.....Advice...read slowly....

It came with my pea sea, it plane lee marks four my revue
Miss steaks aye can knot sea.
Eye strike a key and type a word and weight four it to say
weather eye am wrong oar write; it shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid, it nose bee fore two long,
and eye can put the error rite; it's rare lea ever wrong.
Eye ran this poem wright threw it, your sure reel glad two no.
Its vary polished in it's weigh, my checker tolled me sew.

Sow ewe can sea why aye dew prays, such soft wear four pea seas,
and why eye mussed brake in two verse buy which eye hope too pleas.
A checker is a bless sing, it freeze yew lodes of thyme.
It helps me right awl stiles two reed, and aides me when I rime.

Each frays come posed up on my screen, eye trussed too bee a joule.
The checker pours o'er every word, to cheque sum spelling rule.
And now bee cause my spelling is checked with such grate flair,
Their are no fault's with in my cite, of nun eye am a ware.

Beecuz uv yoosing chequers hour spelling mite decline,
and if we're lacks oar have a laps, we wood bee maid too wine.
To rite with care is quite a feet, of witch won should be proud,
And wee mussed dew the best wee can, sew flaw's are knot aloud.

A funeral service was being held for a woman who has just passed away. At the end of the service, the pall bearers were carrying the casket out when they accidentally bumped into a wall, jarring the casket... They heard a faint moan. They opened the casket and found that the woman was actually alive! She lived for 10 more years and then died. Once again, a ceremony is held and at the end of it, the pall bearers were assembled. As they carried the casket towards the door, the husband cried out 'Watch out. Stay away from that wall!'.

Prayers



We remember that those who have died recently especially **Mary Cougle** whose beautiful funeral was celebrated yesterday so soon after her husband of 63 years, Dennis. Both were Official Benefactors of the Passionist Congregation. We also remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially **George Barnes** (Shirely's husband), **Gilbert Lim** (Grace Kho's father), **Alberto Ottaviani** and **Giuseppe Lantieri**.

We pray too for members of our Holy Cross family who are coping with illness including many not listed here, and all who care for them:

We especially remember **Sue and Kevin McMahon**. Sue is a daughter of **Kath Jorden** RIP. We are praying for her daughter **Beth Scott** who is suffering severe pain from a rare and aggressive cancer and she faces many tough weeks ahead of her. We are also praying for their great nephew, Max, who has already had eight months treatment, which must be so difficult for a four year old.

We remember...

Stephen Cougle, Paul Fitzgerald, Pam Storey, Dr Peter Heffernan, Fr Chris Mithen, Beth Scott (granddaughter of Sue McMahon) Max McMahon, Carol Battistella, Lucia Isgro, David Chai, Marie Spowart, Edward Atme, Greg Agosta, Jan Cambrey, Bernadette Owen, Bob Hallam, Nina Conti, Lisa Iverach, Anne Woon, Marilyn Cilmi, Luke Norden, Jeanelle Bergin, Caroline Hagedorn, Alexander Lim, Kate Lenic, Maureen Barns, Doris Castro, Denise Egan, Caroline Meade, Anne Burke, Phil Drew, Patricia Keeghan, Nancy Reynolds Graham Burke, Rod Gorfine, Pam Gartland, Peter Barry, Lesley Yang, Anne Jenkins. Julia Cantone, Kate Dunn, Helen McLean, and Errol Lovett.



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

Brian OBE

OBE was a favourite post nominal of Dennis Cougle after he turned 80!