

## Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 337

31st July, 2026



Greetings,

I had an unexpected experience on my visit to Vietnam. When I got to Tullamarine airport I opened my bag and realised I had left my computer at home!



So for seven days there were no emails sent or received, and that made for a very different way for me to spend my 'spare' time, which I came to really appreciate. I did not hear or read any world news or see or hear news from Australia until the sixth day I was away, and that news was not only minimal but nothing different or important.

I was a bit concerned that some people would wonder why I had not been in contact, but I couldn't do anything about that, so I did more reading than usual and more relaxing. Of course the four days of meetings were intense and immensely beneficial, but I wasn't rushing to my computer during breaks or starting the day with a news check, and I enjoyed that different experience. Hopefully I can retain some of that 'practice' now that things are back to normal.



Our meeting was for our formation team in Saigon who had just completed a formation seminar in Malang, Indonesia, but they participated fully with our programme. We have three formators in Vietnam (Vuong, Francis Xavier and Kiet), who are doing an excellent job, growing in competence all the time, and remaining committed to a demanding role. They are supported by Tue who has formation experience and is a member of the Provincial Council and Dien who is leader of St Paul's community in Saigon that has senior students. Denis Travers and myself participated, and David Leary OFM was our presenter and facilitator.

Last Friday morning four Vietnamese men, having completed their period of Aspirancy, were inducted into postulancy at St Paul's, Saigon. This is a twelve-month period of preparation for novitiate.



### **The chapel chairs**

The feedback on Sunday was very positive about the new arrangement for the chairs, which was suggested to me by John Curtis (it feels better for community; I don't have to strain to see the lectern; I can see the screen now etc.

### **Community news**

**Chris** returned from his demanding but enjoyable presenting role in Indonesia. There is a rumour that he nearly lost his voice singing karaoke! Chris immediately resumed commitments at YTU, which includes teaching two evening classes.

**Erick** also returned from the Conference in Indonesia and while he was able to do some running there, he was also able to do a lot of dancing to assist with his general fitness! Erick is leaving for a three week holiday today.

**Joseph** returned from his holiday back home and resumed his spirituality studies at 'Heart of Life' on Monday. While visiting family in Madang, PNG he celebrated Mass in a parish who had not had a Mass for six months. Joseph helped out in Rabaul and in Port Moresby – so it was not all holidays for him!

**JD** has been continuing his studies and his weekend apostolic ministry.

**Jerome** has been carrying on happily "Still alive", he chants.

**Tri** celebrated Mass again last Sunday and was farewelled with touching words from Tim Horlock and from Chris. Tri moved to Endeavour Hills yesterday and this marks the beginning of a new ministry for him and a new community, but there is no denying our sadness. He will be greatly missed for so many reasons. We had a nice farewell on Tuesday night – and with a great meal cooked by Erick’s brother Leon, we enjoyed a ‘last supper’ on Wednesday night.



Tri came to Holy Cross as a postulant in mid-2019. As a result of COVID, instead of spending twelve months in Adelaide, he spent seven months of that time at Holy Cross, when the novitiate was relocated here. He returned from Adelaide to continue his studies, and combined this with school chaplaincy and some ministry with the Passionist Retreat team. He completed a Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Ministry degrees and a three-month Clinical Pastoral Experience (CPE) programme. As a deacon he added pastoral visiting, IT ministry and opportunities for sacramental ministry, especially, preaching, in which he has excelled.

He has demonstrated a gift for community life by being continually present, generous in household and other chores including cooking, cleaning, mowing the lawns, undertaking shopping and other errands. He has also been a hair-dresser! He has been a lively communicator, always keen to learn and to share. We send him with our blessing and encouragement, and he knows he will always be welcome at Holy Cross. Tri celebrates his 34<sup>th</sup> birthday on August 5<sup>th</sup>., one day after Kevin Hennessy celebrates his 76<sup>th</sup> birthday. We celebrated his birthday on Tuesday night.

### The “Just War” and the Recent Popes

Antonio Spadaro SJ (July 22, 2026)



The Catholic Church now completely rejects “just war” theory, declaring all armed conflict outdated in favour of disarmed diplomacy. The category of the “just war”—born with Augustine, systematized by Aquinas—was, for centuries, the Christian conscience’s attempt to subject violence to moral criteria. The magisterium of the recent popes has progressively eroded its ground, down to Leo XIV’s explicit move beyond it.



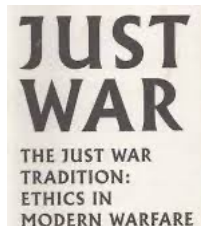
The change began in the atomic era. **Pius XII** restricted the licit recourse to arms to defence alone. As early as 1944, in his Christmas radio message, in fact, he had declared “now out of date” the theory of war as “an apt and proportionate means of

solving international conflicts.” It was “out of date” in Pius XII and “outdated” in Leo XIV: the same word nearly eighty years apart.

**John XXIII**, in “Pacem in Terris” (1963), declared it *alienum a ratione*—foreign to reason—to imagine that, in the nuclear age, war could serve as an instrument of justice. The Council, in “Gaudium et Spes,” called for war to be evaluated “with an entirely new attitude” and condemned total war as a crime against God and against man himself.

PASTORAL CONSTITUTION  
ON THE CHURCH IN THE  
MODERN WORLD  
(Gaudium et Spes)

**John Paul II** carried this line down into history: his “[never again war](#)” rang out against the Gulf War and, later, against the intervention in Iraq, while “Centesimus Annus” had already called war a “self-destruction of mankind.”



**Benedict XVI**, more sober in tone, had staked out the position while still a cardinal: asked about the war in Iraq (in an interview with *Zenit*, in May 2003), he observed that modern weapons strike far beyond combatants, and that “today we should be asking ourselves if it is still licit to admit the very existence of a ‘just war.’”

With **Francis**, the doubt becomes a verdict. In “Fratelli Tutti” (No. 258), he writes that it is “very difficult” to invoke rational criteria elaborated in other centuries to speak of a possible “just war,” and he closes with an imperative: “[Never again war!](#)” In a footnote, he adds that Augustine “forged a concept of ‘just war’ that we no longer uphold.” This is not merely the diagnosis of a “world war fought piecemeal”; it is doctrinal development: at Hiroshima, in 2019, he declared immoral not only the use but the very possession of nuclear weapons. And to Patriarch Kirill, in March of 2022, with Ukraine under invasion, Francis said that one can no longer speak, as was once done, of “holy war” or “just war.”



“Just War theory has too often been used to justify any kind of war”  
~ Pope Leo XIV

Leo XIV takes a further step. In the encyclical “Magnifica Humanitas,” he denounces a “paradigm shift”: the rehabilitation of war as an ordinary instrument of international politics, even as the ethical principles that once limited its use erode. In this context, he writes, “without prejudice to the right to legitimate defence in the strictest sense,” that the theory of the just war, “too often used to

justify any kind of war,” is “now outdated.” Humanity has more effective instruments at its disposal: dialogue, diplomacy, forgiveness.

And he extends the argument to the newest frontier—artificial intelligence applied to weapons, which removes the lethal decision from the reach of conscience. His programmatic formula, proclaimed from the loggia on the day of his election, is a peace that is “disarmed and disarming.”

Not a rupture but maturation: Tradition deepening its self-understanding. From “Pacem in Terris” to “Magnifica Humanitas,” the Church has never ceased to recognize the right to self-defence; it has ceased to lend war the comfort of an adjective.

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### Some anonymous quotes

"Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart."

"The difference between an amusement park and life is, at the amusement park you pay up front then choose the rides. In life, you choose the rides then you pay the price. So be careful of the rides you choose...and with whom."

"Resentments are like stray cats: if you don't feed them, they go away."

"Without memory, there is no healing. Without forgiveness, there is no future."

"In order to change the way we feel we need to change our attitude."

"We are shaped by our past; we do not have to be prisoners of it"

"If we really want to do something we will find a way to do it"

"We gain confidence by becoming competent"

"If you choose the behaviour, accept the consequences"

"There is only one way to coast, and that is downhill."

"I can't do God's will my way."

"Our business is doing God's business. As long as we do God's business, whatever happens to us is none of our business. That's God's business."

## A story of two men



Many years ago, Al Capone virtually owned Chicago. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. He was notorious for enmeshing the windy city in everything from bootlegged booze and prostitution to murder.

Capone had a lawyer nicknamed "Easy Eddie." He was Capone's lawyer for a good reason. Eddie was very good! In fact, Eddie's skill at legal manouvering kept Capone out of jail for a long time.

To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well.

Not only was the money big, but Eddie got special dividends, as well. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago City block. Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocity that went on around him.

Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object.

And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things he couldn't give his son; he couldn't pass on a good name or a good example.



One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Easy Eddie wanted to rectify wrongs he had done.

He decided he would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Al "Scarface" Capone, clean up his tarnished name, and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this, he would have to testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great. So, he testified.

Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago Street. But in his eyes, he had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer, at the greatest price he could ever pay. Police removed from his pockets a rosary, a crucifix,



a religious medallion, and a poem clipped from a magazine.

The poem read:

*"The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour. Now is the only time you own. Live, love, toil with a will. Place no faith in time. For the clock may soon be still."*



World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lieutenant Commander Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific.

One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship.

His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet.

As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold; a squadron of Japanese aircraft was speeding its way toward the American fleet.

The American fighters were gone on a sortie, and the fleet was all but defenceless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only

one thing to do. He had to somehow divert them from the fleet. Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 calibre's blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another.



Butch wove in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until all his ammunition was finally spent. Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the planes, trying to clip a wing or tail in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible, rendering them unfit to fly. Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and

his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier. Upon arrival, he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the gun-camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had, in fact, destroyed five enemy aircraft.

This took place on February 20, 1942 , and for that action Butch became the Navy's first Ace of W.W.II, and the first Naval Aviator to win the Congressional Medal of



Honour. A year later Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His home town would not allow the memory of this WW II hero to fade, and today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man.

Butch O'Hare was "Easy Eddie's" son.

### Thank you letter

Dear friends of the Passionists at Holy Cross,  
I still have so many wonderful memories as I reflect on the privilege of ministering with you and for you at Holy Cross for over ten years, and of course the Collingwood Premiership during that time!! I am sorry that I had such limited opportunities to visit you over the past six and a half years (having been appointed to Port Moresby), but was most grateful to Fr. Brian for making it possible for Fr. Tiernan and myself to celebrate our 50th Jubilee of Ordination a few weeks ago.

Thanks to Brian, the Liturgy and Music Committee and choir, the Passionist Community and wider Holy Cross Community, for making our Jubilee a very special and affirming liturgy and to continue the celebrations afterwards with the St. Gabriel's Dinner. Our thanks to Bruno Petrocco, Joe Curcio (President) and the St. Gabriel's Committee for all their organisation in preparing such a lively celebration and wonderful home cooked Italian meal. We were both very touched by your presence, your gifts and your great love and support.

Since returning to Australia at the end of April, I have been getting some much-needed rest and attending medical check-ups, catching up with my family and planning with parishes in Arlington, Buffalo and New Orleans to preach appeals in the United States in support of our mission in Papua New Guinea. I leave next week and return in time for the AFL and NRL grand finals!!

When people ask me about my time in Papua New Guinea, I take immense pride in telling them of the deep faith that so many of the people live each day amid the challenges and struggles of life in Port Moresby. Despite the political, social, economic and family difficulties they face, they reflect an extraordinary faith in the Lord and a deep trust in Mary, our Mother. It will be a privilege to share with the people of the United States the story of their great faith, resilience, and joy in the Lord. My greatest challenge will be fitting in so many stories and experiences into a Sunday homily!

Be assured that you remain in our thoughts and prayers, along with Fr. Brian and the Passionist Community. Wishing your God's peace, and blessing from Tiernan and myself.



John Curtis CP

Tiernan Doherty CP

### Homelessness week

Homelessness Week is a national annual event in Australia that aims to raise awareness of the impact of homelessness and the solutions needed to end it. This year, Homelessness Week takes place from the 3rd-9th of August.

Homelessness is about people like us, who come to the city to work but cannot find accommodation, about ageing people forced from their rented accommodation by rapidly rising rents, about couples and families who live in tents or in their vehicles, about students who come to the city to study but return home because they cannot find a place to live, about middle-aged people who move back with their elderly parents. We can imagine ourselves as homeless.



Not having a home means more than just lacking shelter; it means being deprived of security, stability, privacy, and a sense of belonging. Homelessness undermines the ability to exercise many fundamental human rights and often traps individuals and families in cycles of exclusion and poverty.

### **About Doors by Ian McMillan**

It's not much to ask. Just a door to lock.

A door that won't break when someone kicks it.  
Door with a keyhole.



Respond to that knock....Or not. My choice.  
It's broke so let's fix it:  
The world, I mean. Not the door.  
That's ok.  
It's my door, to my room. Look: here's the key.



The world, though. That's different.  
Somewhere to stay is what we all need.  
Somewhere to be me  
And not just someone you blithely ignore  
When you see me sleeping on the street.  
Let's begin with this.  
A door. Just a door  
To start with. A door.  
Food. Then light and heat.  
The world must respond to this simple truth:  
Let's all have a door.  
Let's all have a roof

### **Humour**

Ever since Austin was a child, he had a fear someone or something was lurking under his bed at night. So, he finally went to a psychiatrist and told him about his problem. "Every time I go to bed I think there's somebody under it," Austin explained. "I'm scared. I think I'm going crazy."

The psychiatrist listened carefully, then said, "Just put yourself in my hands for one year. Come and talk to me three times a week and we should be able to get rid of those fears."

"How much do you charge?" asked Austin.

"\$180 per visit," replied the psychiatrist.

Austin said, "I'll think about it and if I feel it's needed I will come back to you,"  
Six months later the psychiatrist bumped into Austin on the street. "Why didn't you come to see me about those fears you were having?" inquired the psychiatrist.

"Well", Austin explained, "\$180 dollars a visit three times a week for a year is a huge amount of money! So, when I went to the local pub one day after seeing you, the bartender said he could cure for only \$20," "

"Is that so!" said the slightly annoyed psychiatrist. "How, may I ask, did a bartender cure you?"

"He told me to cut the legs off the bed. No-one can fit under there now!"

Teacher: Why are you late?      Student: Class started before I got here.

Teacher: Maria, go to the map and find North America.      Maria: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Now class, who discovered North America?      Class: Maria.

Teacher: John, why are you doing your multiplication on the floor?

John: Because you told me to do it without using tables sir.

Teacher: Glen, how do you spell crocodile?      Glen: KROKODIAL

Teacher: No, that's wrong.

Glen: Maybe it is wrong sir, but you asked me how I spell it.

Teacher: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?      Donald: HIJKLMNO.

Teacher: What are you talking about?      Donald: Yesterday you told us it's H to O.

Teacher: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago.      Winnie: Me!

Teacher: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

Louie: Because George still had the axe in his hand.

Teacher: Simon, tell me honestly, do you say prayers before eating?

Simon: No sir, I don't have to. My mum is a good cook.

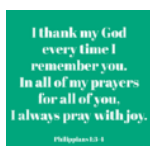
Teacher: Clyde, your composition on "My Dog" is exactly the same as your brother's composition. Did you copy his?

Clyde: No, sir. It's the same dog.

Teacher: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

Harold: A teacher.

## Prayers



We remember that those who have died recently especially We also

remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially  
[John Bick \(Maree Metcalfe's brother\)](#), [Don Bertram \(Linda's husband\)](#)  
[Anne Weir \(Grace Sheehan's sister\)](#)

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 remember...

[Marie Spowart](#), [Cathy Shady](#), [Doris Castro](#), [Stephen Cogle](#), [Paul Fitzgerald](#),  
[Nada Atme](#), [Dr Peter Heffernan](#), [Pam Storey](#), [Chris Mithen CP](#), [David Chai](#), [Lucia Isgro](#),  
[Nina Conti](#), [Carol Battistella](#), [Max McMahon](#), [Greg Turney](#), [Beth Scott](#), [Jan Cambrey](#),  
[Kate Lenic](#), [Fr. Brendan Lane](#), [Edward Atme](#), [Lisa Iverach](#), [Bernadette Owen](#),  
[Rod Gorfine](#), [Anne Woon](#), [Luke Norden](#), [Jeanelle Bergin](#), [Denise Egan](#), [Bob Hallam](#),  
[Nicki Di Giantomasso](#), [Caroline Hagedorn](#), [Maureen Barns](#), [Alexander Lim](#), [Phil Drew](#),  
[Marilyn Cilmi](#), [Nancy Reynolds](#), [Caroline Meade](#), [Patricia Keeghan](#), [Julia Cantone](#),  
[Graham Burke](#), [Pam Gartland](#), [Peter Barry](#), [Anne Jenkins](#), [Errol Lovett](#), [Frank Conti](#),  
[Helen McLean](#).



[Chris](#) will record this Sunday's Mass and send the link on Saturday.

Brian