

Holy Cross Retreat



Letter 341

28th August, 2026

Greetings,

Fundraiser – This Saturday



Supporting Children Living with EB

In support of the work of much loved Holy Cross personality,
Milly Mazzei

Event Details



DATE: Saturday, 29th August 2026

LOCATION: Dining Room, Holy Cross.
207 Serpells Road, Templestowe 3106.

COST: \$25 per person Raffle prizes to be won

TIME: 2pm – 5pm.... a glass of bubbly on arrival

GUEST SPEAKER: 3PM

Simone Baird – National Family Coordinator for Debra Australia

♥ ABOUT MILLY'S WORK

For more than 16 years, Milly Mazzei has dedicated herself to supporting vulnerable children in Vietnam. Her journey began in the South, partnering with Helping Orphans Worldwide (HOW) to assist orphans and individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, full-blown AIDS, tuberculosis, and other serious health challenges. Her work later expanded to northern Vietnam through the charity Niem Tin, where she encountered the profound challenges faced by children living with Epidermolysis (epi-der-mahl-uh-sis) Bullosa — a rare genetic and, painful disease that causes the skin to be so fragile that even the slightest touch will separate and tear the layers of the skin. and life-limiting skin condition. Often in Vietnam, these children are left to fend for themselves. HOW helps. Milly and her friend, Jane have helped transform basic support into an annual program of care, education, and empowerment for EB families.



Your support will help provide essential medical supplies, treatment, and compassionate care for these children. **If you cannot attend, you can donate.**

Tina M: 0439 034 116

Email: tinam@ozfam.com.au

Milly M: 0431 212 738

Email: millymazzei@hotmail.com

Every dollar makes a difference — let's make a BIG difference!

Community news



Erick returned just after midnight on Friday, from the two family weddings in Africa. The trip was full of experiences and memories and he was delighted to be back in Burundi, his country of birth, and glad to be speaking his first language. Erick left (or rather, escaped) when he was five and found refuge in adjacent Tanzania where he spent twelve years.

He visited there for the second wedding, and was able to use his second language, Swahili. He didn't need to speak French!

Erick said he was struck by how many people walk everywhere (mainly because they cannot afford a vehicle, let alone the fuel). Being African, they don't walk fast – ambling is sufficient. The adjacent countries have fuel, but Burundi's resources are scarce. In the city, rickshaws and taxi motor bikes have been banned. While this has reduced the number of accidents it has affected the income of many poor people.



A news report suggests Burundi's persistent fuel shortage is increasingly disrupting the transport of people and goods, driving up fares, encouraging illicit fuel trading and contributing to deadly road accidents, as the country

continues to grapple with a crisis that has lasted for several years. The crisis is now five years long and has been linked in part to a shortage of foreign currency needed to import fuel, as well as other essential goods and medicines.

Although the President has pledged to find a solution to the fuel shortage, public transport and daily life is affected across the country. Hundreds of public transport buses form long queues at fuel stations in Bujumbura, the country's economic capital. Many wait for hours without receiving fuel. There are long queues of passengers at bus terminals and in residential neighbourhoods. Many commuters spend hours waiting, often uncertain whether a bus will arrive or whether they will be able to reach their destinations.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWo2HFXAd9w>

The family undertook one trip of 200 kilometres in a taxi and that took nine hours, because the condition of the road was so poor that the driver limited his speed to a maximum of 30kph, but for many periods, 10kph was all that was possible.

Perspective is everything. Ever found yourself complaining about traffic or about waiting in a queue?



Erick commented that in Bujumbura which has a metropolitan population of 1,400,000 people, there is not a single set of traffic lights. Erick loved the fact that there he was always surrounded by people. "They don't demand or ask anything – they are just there". His brother Leon advised him that when he arrived in Burundi's airport, he not let on that he can speak English. He followed that advice and at one stage he heard one official say to another in English "Come on, this guy can't understand us, so we'll nothing out of him."

Added to the delays and long trips, on his way home, the flight from Ethiopia landed in Singapore at 4.00pm and the 'connecting' flight to Australia was at 8.00am the next day! In the community we joke about Erick responding 'maybe later' to some invitations. His flight to Australia from Singapore, was certainly 'later'. From this week until the end of October, each week Erick will be engaged as school counsellor at St John's, Dandenong and to save some travelling time and fuel, he will stay overnight on Monday's with our community in Endeavour Hills.

Jerome's 60th profession anniversary



We had a lovely night to celebrate this significant milestone, beginning with Mass at 5.30pm and followed by a Chinese 'take-away' meal. While we had Sr Brigid with us, Tim and Tina, and Brendan from Endeavour Hills, we had apologies from Kevin Hennessy, from Tri, Tuan Paul and from Luke.



We had **Phuc** here that night as he spent the week here on retreat, prior to his final profession in Saigon on August 31st. Phuc has been professed for five years so he is only 55 years behind Jerome and we thought it good to have a photo of them

These photos show aspects of the celebration.



Joseph has two weeks more of intensive classes and 'extra' activities for his 'Heart of Life' spirituality programme, before a semester break.

JD is working away on his studies. It requires a lot of self-discipline to keep reading and writing, meeting with his supervisor, without attending classes. As a balance, he appreciates the variety of weekend Mass supplies he undertakes.

Chris will travel to Vietnam next Sunday to attend the final profession on Monday of



three men who undertook postulancy here in 2019 and remained here for more than half of their novitiate, because of COVID.

Cau, Toan and Phuc are classmates of Tri. This photograph was taken in

July 2019 when they began their postulancy. It has been a long journey of eleven years that has included Aspirancy (and a university degree), Postulancy, Novitiate, Temporary profession including theological studies, pastoral experience and a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programme. Chris will attend the first Province Assembly which is taking place in Saigon from Tuesday 1st-Thursday 3rd September, in Saigon. The second Assembly will be held the following week at Holy Cross. Members of the Province will attend one of the Assemblies.

Come Away Day

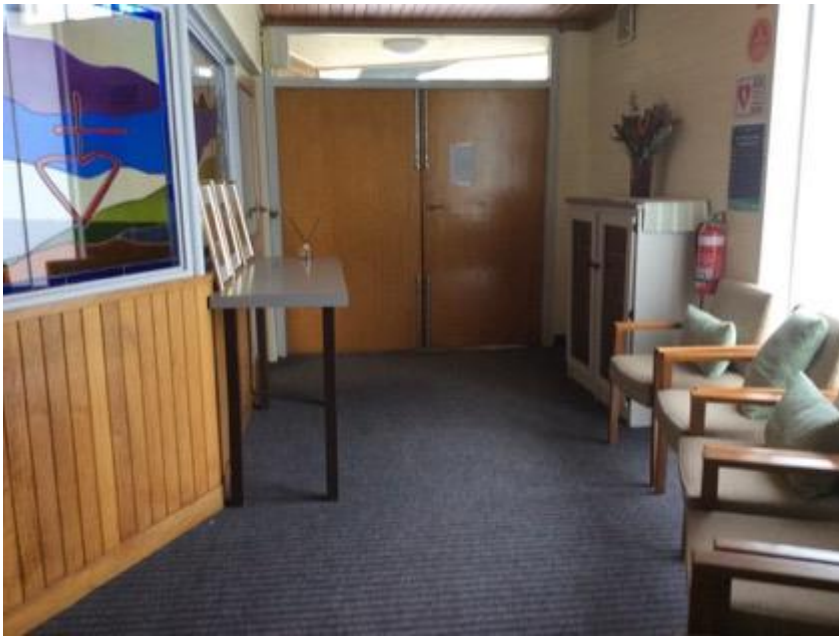


The next **Come Away Day** for 2026 will be held at Holy Cross on **WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16th**. The theme of the day is '**COME TO THE WATERS ...**' and participants we are invited to celebrate the coming of Spring and all that this evokes in us physically, emotionally and spiritually. The beautiful grounds and facilities of Holy Cross will assist the programme in providing an opportunity for helpful input, group interaction, prayer, silent reflection and Mass and anointing.

Anyone and everyone is welcome...just 'Come as you are'.

Registration is from 9.30am in the Holy Cross dining room. The programme concludes with Eucharist with a departure time by **3pm**. If you plan to come registration is helpful for planning purposes such as photocopying resources. The suggested cost is \$30.00 or a donation according to your means. Please BYO lunch. For any further details please contact Sr Brigid CP: bridget.m64@gmail.com Please consider inviting a friend along to share the Come Away Day experience.

Chapel foyer



Mayrose and her staff have been making small improvements around the Holy Cross Centre, adding various items that are relevant to Passionist spirituality as well as adding effective lighting. Peter Day repainted the chapel foyer, and Mayrose and her team have installed a small cabinet that will house various items

that some people will be interested in (a piety stall without the piety!). Six comfortable chairs have been included. We hope to be able to improve the power supply for the 'hand' fountain feature created by Bro Toan (mentioned above) and for times when we need power outside, as well as to provide some heating in the foyer for occasions when it is needed. Three portraits in matching frames will be installed (Pope Leo, Fr Giuseppe Adobati CP (our General) and St Paul of the Cross (our founder) and the portraits of deceased friends of Holy Cross will be replaced on the wall with more uniform portraits.

Chapter room



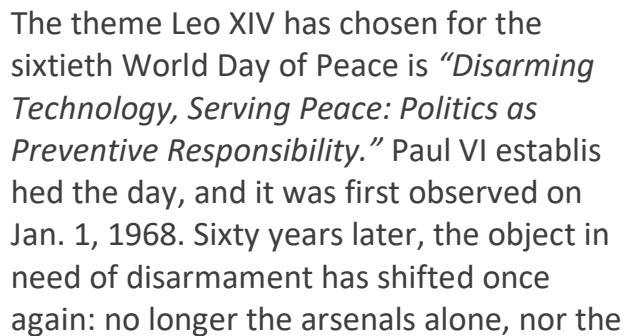
One of the rooms at Holy Cross was used for many years by the senior community for their 'recreation'.



Wisely, it was quite separate from where the students recreated! Official community meetings including those that are called Local Chapters, were held in this room. In recent years it has been used for small groups using the Holy Cross Centre, and it is referred to as the Chapter room.

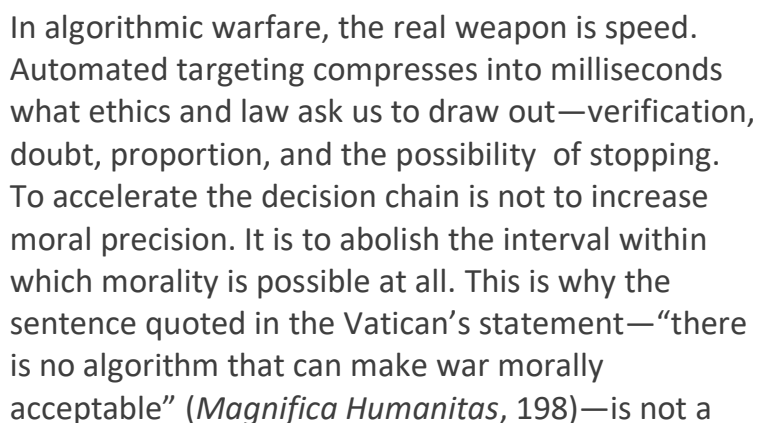
Last week the old chairs were replaced, and it is a notable improvement. The chairs match those used in the chapel so a few extra chairs were ordered to allow them to be used in the chapel when not required for the Chapter room.

Antoio Spadaro SJ.....August 13th, 2026



The continuity with last year's Message — *Peace Be with You All: Toward a Disarmed and Disarming Peace* — is plain enough, but the grammatical shift says more than most commentary will. There, *disarmed* was an adjective attached to *peace*: the quality of a style, an interior form. Here, 'to disarm' returns as a transitive verb, and it has been given a specific object. It is the verb that has governed this pontificate since May 12, 2025, when Leo XIV told a journalists' audience, "Let us disarm words, and we will help to disarm the earth." Words, then hearts, and now machines.

One common misunderstanding should be cleared up. To disarm technology is not to disarm humans in the face of technology, nor is it to refuse technology. *Magnifica Humanitas* explicitly rejected any paralyzing fear of what is new; the encyclical's title is an act of confidence in humanity, not an elegy (a lament of loss). To disarm technology means to strip it of a single presumption: that it, rather may decide instead of us, and above all, that it may decide faster than a human can judge.



7

A system may well reduce statistical error; it cannot bear guilt. A machine has no wounds and no remorse. Responsibility cannot be delegated; it can only be abdicated, leaving a vacancy in which the victim finds no one left to answer for what



happened. Here lies the legal core of the appeal.

International humanitarian law —distinction, proportionality, and precaution—presupposes a subject capable of accountability. Autonomous weapons systems do not violate a particular rule; they dissolve the subject that every rule presupposes (see *Magnifica Humanitas*, 197). The question is

not one of technical regulation but of the anthropology of law. How is law present in cultures? How is this manifested?

The most demanding phrase is : politics as preventive responsibility. The century opened with the doctrine of preventive war—strike first, so as not to be struck.

Preventative

Now, the adjective ‘preventive’ is taken from war and restored to (preventive) responsibility. The reduction of people to pawns is exactly what automation makes

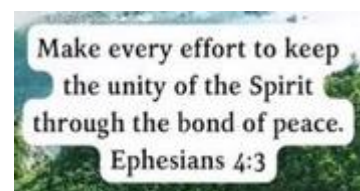
easier, because a pawn is a variable and a face is not. To ‘prevent’ no longer means anticipating the blow, it means anticipating the answer: to shoulder what has not yet happened, while it is still reversible.

When the power to act in a long lasting manner exceeds the power to foresee, ethics can no longer arrive after the fact. This is not the caution of the timid; it is the only realism available.



And it takes up, with some precision, the formula Leo XIV has set against: if you want peace, prepare institutions of peace. Governance before deployment, not after the accident. The addressee is named with care: those “called to act in the political sphere.” The indication is realistic rather than moralizing. The encyclical had already noted that technological power no longer resides primarily in states but in a handful of private transnational actors commanding resources greater than those of many governments (*Magnifica Humanitas*, 95), with subsidiarity effectively turned upside down.

Hence the appeal for “shared agreements”: the only response proportionate to a supranational power is a legal architecture that is equally supranational. Leo, like Francis in *Fratelli Tutti*, is not advocating a generic pacifism. He is asking that politics once again become the place where the last word is spoken, rather than the place where choices made upstream by those who design the systems are ratified downstream.



Finally, there is a theological reason running through all of this, and it is worth making explicit. Peace is not the silence of weapons; it is the presence of bonds.



The machine excels on the chessboard—calculation, position, optimization, advantage—and for precisely that reason, it fails on the living, intricate fabric of international relations. Playing chess is one thing; working the threads of a weave is another. On the fabric, there is nothing to win: one interlaces, mends, and recognizes. A system can optimize an objective; it cannot reconcile two histories. It can calculate risk; it cannot forgive. As mentioned, the reduction of people to pawns is exactly what automation makes easier, because a pawn is a variable and a face is not.

Paul VI established the observance. In 1964, speaking at the Jesuit automation centre of the Aloisianum Institute, he said that “the mechanical brain comes to the aid of the spiritual brain,” and the effort to instil in mechanical instruments the reflection of spiritual functions is “raised to a service that touches the sacred.” The fear of our own moment is the exact inverse of that confidence: that the spiritual brain will be instilled with the reflection of mechanical instruments. John XXIII, in *Pacem in Terris*, had already made clear that reducing armaments is impossible unless “the spirits themselves are dismantled” as well. Integral disarmament was never merely material.



The 2027 theme will add a third level to that demand, one that did not exist in 1963: the apparatus. Yet none of the three disarmaments—of words, of hearts, of



machines—is a technical problem. All three are political problems, which is to say, human ones, and therefore spiritual. Leo 14th's theme already contains a basic conviction: to serve peace, in this moment, means first of all not letting a machine serve it in our place.

Agency and Adaptation (An incomplete article published by Quillette)

Tristan S Rapp (edited) 25th June, 2026



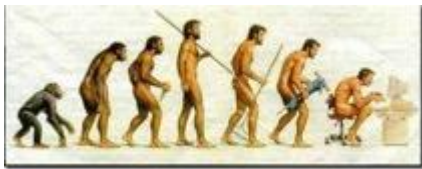
Pictured is a Bajau freediver hunting on the coral reefs of Alor Island, Indonesia. The Bajau people, who have lived maritime lives for over a millennium, show genetic adaptations to diving including enlarged spleens and enhanced diving reflexes, that are among the most striking examples of recent human evolution.

Although Charles Darwin's famous book *'On the Origin of Species'* did not pluck the notion of evolutionary change out of nowhere, nor was Darwin's contribution as singular as mostly it has been presented, its publication was, nevertheless, a watershed moment. The book helped to fuel a cultural and intellectual firestorm, which has been burning ever since.



There have been fierce debates about the heritability and variability of human intelligence and questions about the ethical meaning of conditions such as Down syndrome, to our present-day arguments over the relationship between personal identity and physiological reality. Despite all of this, a critical issue remains: the question of our existence as fundamentally embodied, biological creatures.

Though Darwin wrote of 'The Descent of Man' we are by now perhaps more



inclined to think of 'man's' Ascent because the evolutionary process is not one from which we have now emerged as a 'final product'. There has been a thought that evolution produced our ancestors, but then let go, leaving humans to chart their futures

entirely through cultural development and human innovation—processes of the mind, not the brute body. It is a flattering fable, but a fable all the same.

That we humans should be adept at modifying our environment is neither a new nor controversial notion, even if the full scope of our impact reaching back into far antiquity was not always truly grasped. The converse notion, however—that our environments should have modified, and should continue to modify, us —is far less often discussed. To study selection, adaptation, and evolutionary change in other species is one thing; observing it in our own species is rather different.

It makes the gap between human and beast feel troublingly slight; it is a reminder that, for all that our minds may apprehend the deeper recesses of the cosmos, our bodies are very much animal.



Genomic research into the basic biological nature of humans has been ongoing for some decades. The greatest milestone to date—one of the greatest in all the sciences—was the Human Genome Project which, from its launch in 1990 to its culmination in 2003, successfully mapped the entire set of human DNA. With respect to the investigation of ongoing

evolution, however, great difficulties have persisted until much more recently. Detecting signs of evolutionary selection in human populations has historically proved difficult. Even in more recent decades, with our rapidly expanding body of genetic data, the nature of directional selection renders it difficult to identify.



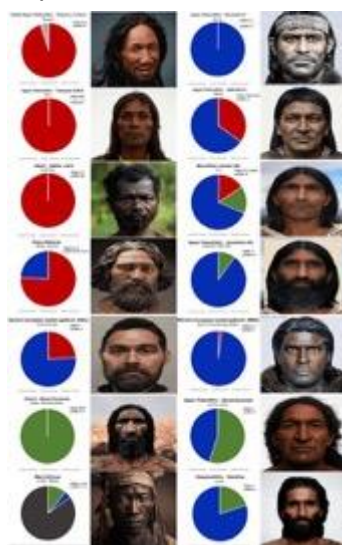
Perhaps the single biggest issue is the polygenic nature of many - that is to say, numerous key traits determining both appearance and lifestyle are determined by the contributions of multiple independent genes across many locations in the genome, rather than single, easily identifiable genes.

This, in turn, means that meaningful changes of form and fitness may often be caused by a multitude of minor shifts across many locations, none of which are individually striking, and the totality of which can be exceedingly difficult to distinguish from the background “noise” of ordinary genetic drift across generations.

However, work has been done in this area. Some traits are genetically simpler and, thus, easier to measure than others, and methods for studying polygenic complexes are advancing. A major study by David Reich and his colleagues, published in ‘Nature’ in April this year, is the largest and most thoroughgoing investigation of directional selection across human history to date. Looking at a dataset of over 15,000 West Eurasian people from whom DNA data could be extracted, and spanning a period of some 18,000 years, the study applied a novel methodology which has provided a hitherto-unmatched insight into the recent evolutionary history of our species (at least in one part of the world).



The study finds ample evidence of evolutionary selection across West Eurasian populations, often (though not always) in ways seemingly comporting with prior suspicions. We each receive two alleles for every gene – one from each of our



biological parents (e.g. eye colour). Reich’s study suggests there has been a decline in darker skin tones and corresponding selection for alleles associated with fairer skin, increasing selection for alleles correlated with higher intelligence, for reduced body fat and waist circumference.

All these changes may in fact be adaptive responses to the same lifestyle shift amongst ancient West Eurasians, from an existence of hunting and gathering towards one marked by sedentism and agriculture: as people settled, the lightening of their skin may have compensated for increasingly Vitamin D–poor diets, whilst greater intelligence would intuitively be favoured in complexifying societies.



Even the physiological changes may have been responses to the change from a hunting lifestyle: for decades, the 'thrifty gene hypothesis' has been employed to explain many genetic tendencies towards obesity, diabetes, and other metabolic issues as carry-overs from past adaptations that were useful in the

long eras of the distant past when good nutrition was not so easy or reliable.

Humour

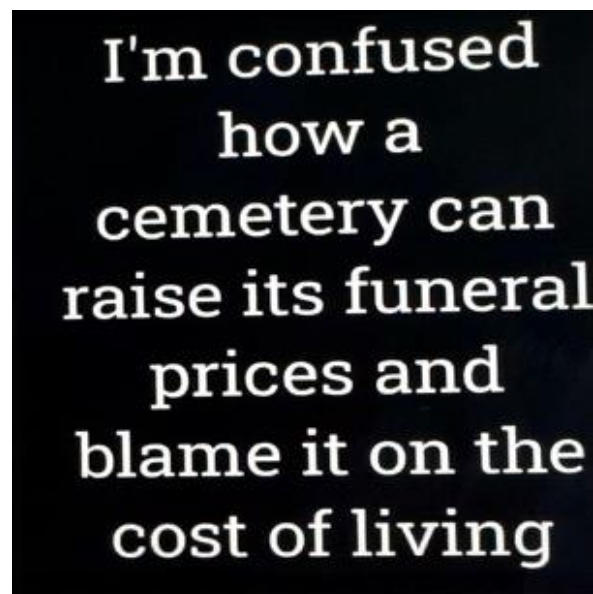
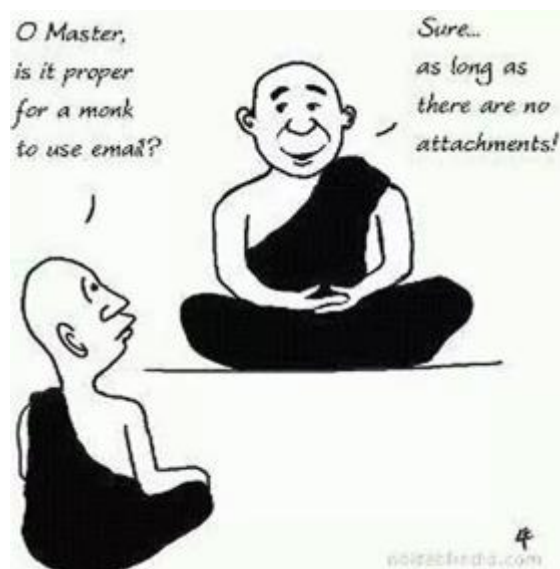
A young man decided to join an enclosed monastic Order where it was only allowed to say two words every ten years. After ten years had passed in the monastery the abbot summoned him and said 'You've been with us for 10 years. What two words would you like to say.'

The now monk replied 'I'm hungry', so the abbot organised for an extra ration be given to him each day.

After twenty years the abbot called him in again and asked 'What two words would you like to say?' The monk replied with 'Too cold', so the abbot organised for him to get another blanket.

After 30 years the abbot called him in and said 'What two words would you like to say'. The monk replied with 'I'm leaving'.

The abbot said 'I'm not surprised. You've done nothing but complain ever since you've been here'.



The graduate with a Science degree asked, "Why does it work?"
The graduate with an Engineering degree asked, "How does it work?"
The graduate with a Commerce degree asked, "How much will it cost?"
The graduate with an Arts degree asked, "Do you want fries with that?"

An elderly man told her doctor that he felt like a deck of cards. The doctor said, "Could you sit over there please, and I'll deal with you later."

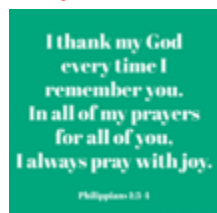
An elderly woman told her doctor that she had ringing in her ears and asked what she should do. The doctor advised: "Don't answer it."

Many years ago Joe went to the doctor and said urgently, "Doctor - my son just swallowed a roll of film!" The doctor calmly replied, "Let's just wait and see what develops."

Feast of Holy Cross - Monday 14th September

There will be Mass at Holy Cross this day at 10.00am. All welcome, for Mass and a cuppa afterwards in the dining room.

Prayers



We remember that those who have died recently especially We also remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially: [Lauren Williams](#), [Elizabeth Pillay](#), and [John Bick](#)

We pray 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](#), [Kathy Shady](#), [Doris Castro](#), [Stephen Cogle](#), [Paul Fitzgerald](#), [Joan O'Callaghan](#), [Nada Atme](#), [Graham Burke](#), [Peter Heffernan](#), [Pam Storey](#), [David Chai](#), [Lucia Isgro](#), [Kate Lenic](#), [Nina Conti](#), [Carol Battistella](#), [Max McMahon](#), [Beth Scott](#), [Fr. Brendan Lane](#), [Edward Atme](#), [Bernadette Owen](#), [Rod Gorfine](#), [Maureen Barns](#), [Luke Norden](#), [Denise Egan](#), [Caroline Hagedorn](#), [Alexander Lim](#), [Marilyn Cilmi](#), [Bob Hallam](#), [Julia Cantone](#), [Pam Gartland](#), [Anne Woon](#), [Anne Jenkins](#) and [Helen McLean](#).



Chris will record this Sunday's Mass and send the link by Saturday afternoon.

Brian