



Greetings,

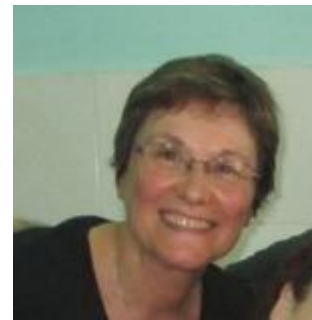
Fundraiser for Children living with Epidermolysis Bullosa

Note: This reflection details some information and images that are distressing



Last Saturday's fundraiser was an eye-opener for many of us, since few had ever heard of the disease 'Epidermolysis Bullosa'. Certainly, our admiration for Milly Mazzei is greater because we have a much better appreciation for what she has been doing through her volunteer work in Vietnam for sixteen years. Milly worked as a housekeeper at Holy Cross many years ago, and I recall her resigning because she wanted to take up nursing. What a great decision that was.

We are indebted to Tina Minichilli for the encouraging support she instigated for this year's fund-raiser, and also to Milly's husband, Tony and the many generous people from Holy Cross who responded to the invitation to support the event on Saturday that raised \$9,578. Donations can still be made and cash is the most helpful way of doing this. Holy Cross, with Mayrose Abraham's full support, hosted the occasion and that enabled us to have the space necessary to meet, the ability to display a video, to be able to amplify the voice of those who spoke, and to provide tea and coffee to accompany the many cakes that were provided by those who attended.



Beyond the basic logistics and the response, there was a deeply moving



appreciation of the devastation this illness causes. Milly explained that it is an inherited disease and usually shows up in infants or young children. Most of those infected in poorer countries like Vietnam, do not live beyond their teens. Epidermolysis bullosa has no cure, and treatment focuses on caring for blisters and preventing new ones. Children with EB are sometimes referred to as butterfly children because their skin is as fragile as a butterfly's wings!.

Blistering skin can become infected by bacteria. If bacteria from an infection enters the bloodstream and spreads throughout the body, sepsis can spread rapidly and lead to shock and organ failure.

There are different forms of the disease and severe forms can bind fingers or toes together and cause unusual bending of the joints. Blisters in the mouth can cause great discomfort especially when eating or even breathing, and lead to malnutrition and anaemia. Tooth decay and mouth blisters are common.

The principal treatment for EB is good wound treatment and nutrition. Milly has, for all these years, travelled to Vietnam at her own (and Tony's) expense to assist in providing this care for as many young children as she can. This has required bandages and dressings for wounds, ointments and pain relief medication. It has become more difficult to transport these from Australia because of government restrictions in both countries, and this has forced Milly to purchase wound dressings and various medicines, in Vietnam.



In one video presentation we watched, it was a challenge to comprehend how Simone Baird, whose daughter Eliza, died of kidney failure in 2018, just before her eighteenth birthday from EB, could spend 3-4 hours three times a week, carefully removing and rebandaging Liz's blistered body. The extreme distress this involved for mother and daughter is hard to comprehend.

When Eliza was born she had no skin on one foot. Her knee, shin and foot was raw. She also had little skin on the back of her hands and her tongue was affected. The paediatrician said to Simone, "If I didn't know any better, I would have said that you tipped boiling water over your baby". For the first six months, Eliza continually screamed. Her skin blistered and peeled at the slightest touch, like third-degree burns. 'She suffered at times from corneal abrasions so her eyes would be her closed for three five days at a time in a darkened room due to a tear on her cornea.'



to



Eliza's mobility was affected. She required bandages and dressings all over her body every day of her life and she could not wear normal clothes or undergarments because even the seams on the inside of the clothes would blister her skin. Simone marvelled at how her daughter bore this awful discomfort and we too must marvel at Eliza, at her parents, and her mother, Simone, in particular.

Simone said people with severe EB often need quite strong pain relief, which can be hard to access through local general practice. Eliza was on methadone and antibiotics. Simone said that “living with EB changed our life, it changed who we are, but in order to have Eliza with us I wouldn’t change it for the world.”



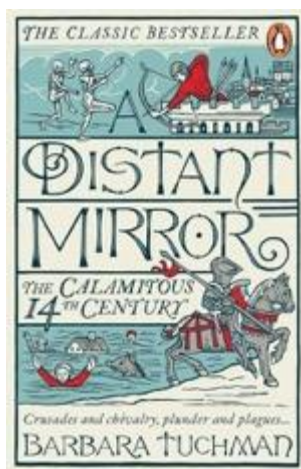
Interestingly, the experience last Saturday moved a few people to reflect on the meaning of severe suffering and the challenge it is to faith, that young children have to live with this very cruel disease. There is no ready-made or comforting answer to such a question, so it is not uncommon for people to ask, “Why does God allow this?” Such a question leads us to ask more fundamental questions like, “Where is God?” or “What God do we believe it?”

Elie Wiesel, the Jewish writer faced that question in a most traumatic moment. He was in Auschwitz, the infamous Nazi concentration camp. Wiesel in his book ‘Night’ recounted that the SS hanged two Jewish men and a youth, in front to the whole camp. *“The men died quickly, but the death of the youth lasted half an hour. Where is God? Where is He? someone asked behind me. As the youth still hung in the torment in the noose, after a long time, I heard the man call again, “Where is God, now?” And I heard a voice inside myself answer. “Where is He? He is here. He is hanging on the gallows.”*



Clearly too, when we are faced with profound suffering, there is a powerful force for good that emerges at such times. Milly represents it. She knows that her husband Tony and so many others assisting her volunteer work are alleviating the suffering of

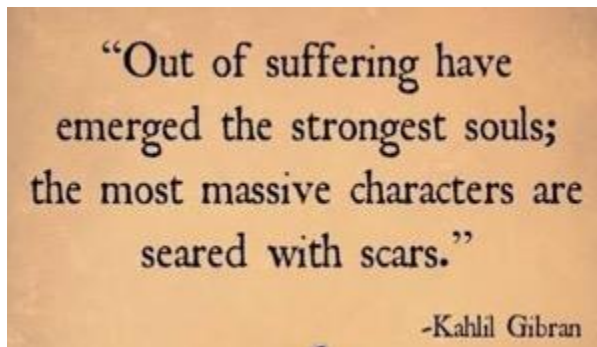
children with EB, and this is the presence and action of divine love at work among us.



It has been suggested by some scholars that the book of Job which deals with the mystery of suffering, is the greatest book ever written. It is well worth a reflective reading.

The famous book, ‘A Distant Mirror’ by Barbara Tuchman, details the incredible suffering caused by the bubonic plague – the ‘Black Death’. 50% of people in Europe died between 1346-1353, and in some towns and villages everyone perished. Maybe as many 200,000,000 worldwide died. Just over a

week ago we had the Nepal catastrophe. These events are a challenge to faith, but the primary symbol under which we gather, is Jesus nailed to a cross!



Hopefully we can continue to support Milly and her work in Vietnam, which is at times traumatic and emotionally draining. It is also a large financial cost. As a community gathered around the Passionist charism, this experience has been an opportunity to deepen our spirituality and contemplate the place of suffering in our world and in our lives.

In his book, 'Legacy of the Heart – The spiritual advantages of a Painful Childhood' Wayne Muller says. "Some people once brought a blind man to Jesus and asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' They all wanted to know why this terrible curse had fallen on this man. And Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him.' He told them not to look for why the suffering came but to listen for what the suffering could teach them. Jesus taught that our pain is not punishment, it is no one's fault. When we seek to blame, we distract ourselves from an exquisite opportunity to pay attention, to see even in this pain a place of grace, a moment of spiritual promise and healing."

Community news

Erick took a few days to overcome the jetlag from his recent travels. He is now appreciating the opportunity to practice the counselling skills he has learned two days each week until the end of October. **Joseph** is looking forward to a semester break so that he can undertake some physical work in the increasing sunshine hours of spring. **JD** is a research student, so he is required to meet with his supervisor and supervision panel to officially upgrade or confirm his degree status going forward. He is preparing material to meet with the panel this coming week.

Chris has been in Vietnam this week and returns tomorrow (Saturday). He attended the final profession on Monday of Cau, Toan and Phuc who lived at Holy Cross as postulants. Other who travelled there from my reckoning were Joachim, Denis, Tom, Luke Peter Gardiner, Rafael and Budi from Indonesia via Vaimo and John Auram, Noel Selbo and Edward Wairoa from ONG together with Peter Danh and TJ from NZ. And Chris Aitaken from the Philippines

Chris and most of these others attended the first Province Assembly which took place in Saigon from Tuesday 1st-Thursday 3rd September, The second Assembly will be held next week at Holy Cross. Thirty-two Members of the Province will attend the second Assembly. Below is a photo taken after the final profession of Cau, Toan and Phuc.



Chris made two visits before he left for Vietnam to an apiarist's delight – a property in Teasdale, past Geelong, which has more than twenty hives. The first visit was for reconnaissance, and the second, was a 'collector' visit.

The owner who is Barbara Ward's brother-in-law, is sadly suffering ill health and unable to continue his bee-keeping. He generously gave two hives to Chris who took space cadet **Joseph** (see the photo) with him to collect the hives. They needed to be suited up because they were not alone in the car on the way home – they had 50,000 bees on board. These are now happily ensconced inside the fence that protects the dam, and Chris is looking forward to being able to supply a few people with honey in the coming months.

Early last Friday, **Joe Curcio** was out cleaning the tiles outside the chapel, as he has done before. We are so grateful for the contribution so many make to make the grounds look so good.



Peter Norman spent considerable hours this week doing the edging of the eighty metre path at the back of the building, as well as weeding some gardens. Each week **Anne and Joe Toscano** provide us with flowers for the chapel. **Peter Norman**

collects them and **a group of ladies** arrange them in vases. Also each week, **Carmen Zammit** looks after all the sacristy linen (washing and ironing). **Alida Valmorbida** arranges the power point for Sunday Mass each week, including the selection of songs, and providing the readings in printed format.



Six members of the **'A Team'** completed the unpacking and assembling to the eight picnic tables that are situated in what will now be referred to as 'Cougles Corner' adjacent to the La Velle room and the squash court. **Dennis and Mary Cougles** were long time benefactors of the Congregation and wonderful supporters of Holy Cross. They donated the funds that provided these tables (and the umbrellas that are still to come). Their son Stephen who is on our prayer list, facilitated the process of enabling these funds to be transferred. We are very grateful to the Cougles family.

'Cougles Corner'



Each week **Sr Brigid** composes our Prayers of Intercession. Our **Mass readers and communion ministers** are very generous, especially those who come on Saturday mornings. **Peter Day**, a member of the 'A Team' is here most Mondays as well as Fridays attending to various maintenance issues. **John Stretch** has done call outs like this for many years. Of special note too is **Tim Horlock's** contribution which everyone acknowledges and appreciates.

There are other people who help us and we are extremely grateful to each of them. Our employed staff led by **Mayrose** (Centre manager) and **Cecilia** (Finance Office) are wonderful, and their constant efforts to improve the facilities are recognised and appreciated. August was a quiet month for bookings but September will be very different.

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 aided by Spring sunshine and the facilities of Holy Cross, will assist the programme in providing an opportunity for helpful input, group interaction, prayer, silent reflection and Mass and anointing.

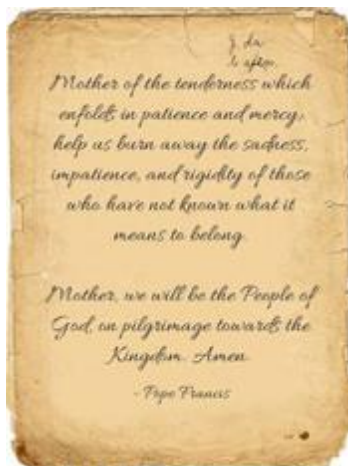
Anyone and everyone is welcome...just '**Come as you are**'.

Registration is from 9.30am in the Holy Cross dining room. The programme concludes with Eucharist and 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.

Words of encouragement

Pope Francis offered words of encouragement in November 2013 in his Apostolic Exhortation, 'The Joy of the Gospel'. There are many laity who are in a position to encourage family members and friends with this instruction.



"Pastors and the lay faithful who accompany their brothers and sisters in faith or on a journey of openness to God must always re-member what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches quite clearly: 'Imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors'. Consequently, without detracting from the evangelical ideal, they need to accompany with mercy and patience the eventual stages of personal growth as these progressively occur.

I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy which spurs us on to do our best. A small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties". (Evangelii Gaudium, IV 44)

Tap and Go

Many months ago the issue of the option of an easier facility for making donations to Holy Cross was discussed. Personally, I was reluctant, but I conceded the facility of a 'tap and go' machine would not add any pressure on people to contribute, but it will offer a more convenient option, which some people had requested. It has been a complicated process to introduce and we are grateful to Cecilia our finance officer for the time and effort she has invested in making this option possible. We will not re-introduce the 'take up' collection which we removed during COVID.



The option of depositing cash in a box near the door will remain, and we want feedback as to the best location for the 'tap and go' terminal since the foyer is narrow and we do not want to create a traffic jam near the front door. Tim Horlock spoke at Mass last week about the reason for introducing this option and how it might best operate. A few clear instructions might be helpful.

Religious items



Mayrose and Cecilia have arranged a small glass cabinet i(see above) n the chapel foyer, with items that some people may wish to purchase. Some of these are Passionist related items. Various others (e.g. candles) will be added in time.

Kangaroos

Last week I observed a group of kangaroos hopping across the landscape at quite a speed. This got me asking a few questions such as how fast can kangaroos travel by hopping (apparently it is up to 40kph), how far can they travel, and the answer is 'a long way', how tall are they, (they can grow to two metres) but importantly, how did they come to hop rather than walk.

A report from 'Science Advisor' by Alex Fox informs that scientists have long wondered when the kangaroo's distinctive leap first appeared. But ancient kangaroo skeletons are so rare that the hop's origin has remained a mystery. Now, newly discovered 20-million-year-old fossils reveal kangaroo ancestors got their hop on some 10 million years earlier than previously thought.



Before ancient kangaroos started to hop, they got by clinging to tree branches and plucking fruit from the canopies of a lush, wetter Australia. Hopping is thought to have emerged as this possum-like ancestor transitioned to life on the ground some 10 million years ago, after a dramatic climatic shift dried out the land down under.

Researchers reason that the simultaneous expansion of grasslands and deserts drove the evolution of the hop—an efficient way to quickly cover the long distances from food source to food source.

When one of the study authors was sifting through a pile of fossil fragments recovered from northwest Queensland in Australia, he discovered one of the world's oldest kangaroo fossils. To find out how this ancient kangaroo moved, he and colleagues analysed the shape and size of fossilized toe and ankle bones. They then used that information to estimate the creature's range of motion.



When the scientists compared it to those of living kangaroos, some of which also climb, they found similarities to modern species adapted for both hopping and climbing. This extinct animal, not yet named, could move in a variety of ways,



including hopping, climbing and walking, researchers reported in *Royal Society Open Science*. These results push back the origin of hopping to at least 20 million years ago—and suggest the climatic changes that reshaped the Australian landscape 10 million years later may have simply provided ideal conditions for hoppers to prosper.

Kangaroos evolved for efficiency. Their legs are basically biological pogo sticks designed to preserve the maximum amount of energy from one jump to the next, storing the downwards force in the last jump in spring like tendons and using it to propel them upwards (in the next jump). Kangaroos only use up half the energy of humans per kilogram of bodyweight and distance travelled.

Kangaroo's cannot move their hind legs individually and like Emus, they find it difficult to walk backwards. Both animals were chosen for the Australian emblem in 1908, and 'going forward' is reflected in our anthem 'Advance Australia Fair'.

English poet and translator Charles Cotton seems to have been the earliest



known source of the expression '*hopping mad*' is in the late 1600s. Since Charles was not familiar with Australia, he must have observed this in practice in humans, rather than in kangaroos! It seems to normally refer to a person being so angry that he/she is unable to sit still.

It is not true that one breed of kangaroo is born with blue and white stripes!

To build Claude, Anthropic needed to destroy millions of books

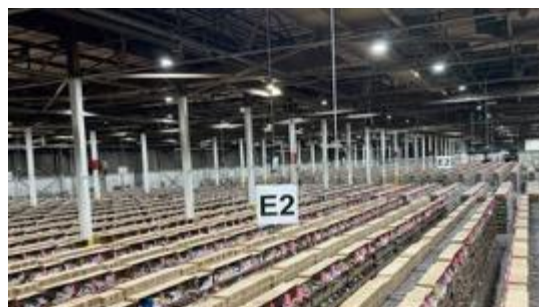
Binoy Kampmark 20th August, 2026.



Last month, an investigation by *404 Media* reported on the purchasing habits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) companies regarding old books (immediately, the issue of age crops up), identifying ISBNdb, the world's largest book data base, as a seminal figure in the field. The company, according to its own description, 'gathers data from various public sources like libraries and merchants to compile a vast collection of unique book data searchable by ISBN, title, author or publisher.'

At present, it boasts 111,978,817 searchable books and offers clients somewhere between 1,000 and 1 million books per engagement. Older print publications are advertised as the purer sort, uncontaminated by the presence of generative-AI. 'Print books from the pre-LLM era are structurally guaranteed to be free of this contamination,' states an article published by the company.

It remains unclear whether ISBNdb's client list includes many of the destructive scanning persuasion, though the company is not oblivious to the problem. ISBNdb by no means has a monopoly in this field.



The Canadian company Zoom Books specialises in acquiring non-fiction and academic titles from the 1970s in bulk. These are then stored in German warehouses prior to their transport to the United States and Canada. It is there that AI companies then go to work scanning and destroying the hard copies. The practice struck Thomas Koch, press spokesperson for the German Publishers and Booksellers Association, as abominable not only because of its destructive dimension to the physical book, but also because of the violation of copyright arising from feeding LLMs ‘without consent and without payment.’

Anthropic secretly bought millions of books, sliced off the spines, scanned every page to train its AI, then shredded what remained – all under a codename: "Project Panama."

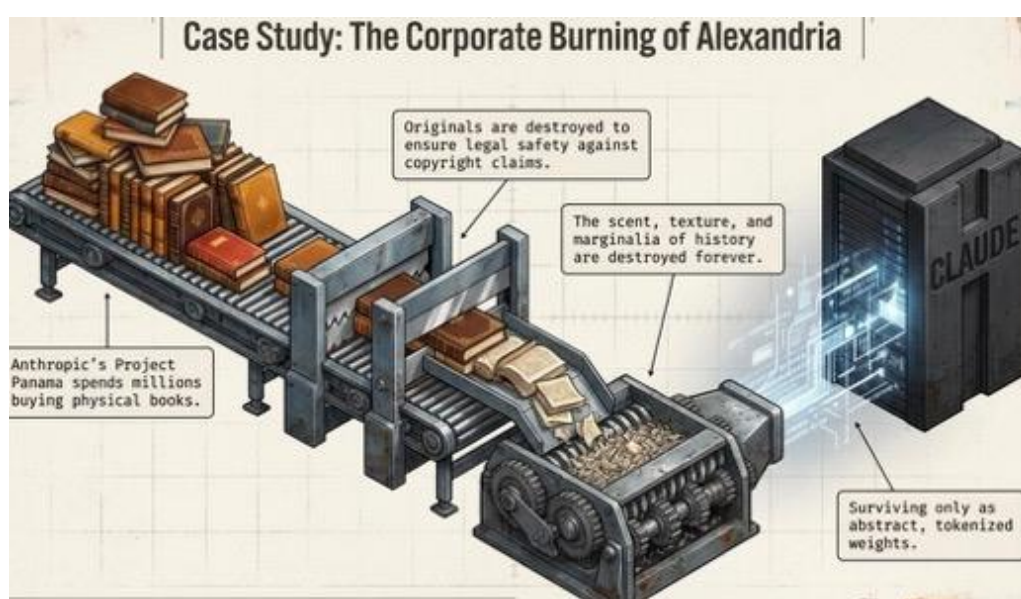
Anthropic’s activities came to light in documents filed in the Northern District of California case *Bartz v Anthropic PBC*, involving the authors Andrea Bartz, Charles Graeber and Kirk Wallace Johnson, all of whom alleged

copyright infringement by the company.

Of keen interest was the role of ‘Project Panama’, led by Tom Turvey, a former employee of Google and a central figure behind the creation of Google Books. The project, as the court order details, was intended to create ‘a central library of “all the books in the world” to retain “forever.”’



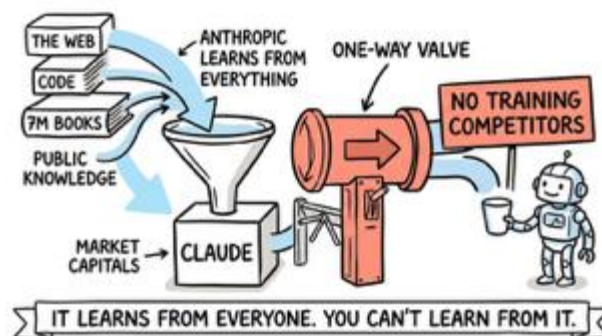
The AI firm could then mine the quarry for “various sets and subsets of digitized books to train various large language models under development to power its AI services.”



The destructive terminus for the scanned books was revealed in an internal memorandum from April 13, 2024. Authored by Turvey, it is unequivocal: ‘Project Panama is our effort to destructively scan all of the books in the world.’ The memorandum encourages company employees to use discretion when discussing the project. ‘Why use a codename? We use “soft codename” because we don’t want to be known that we are working on this. This document is available to all Anthropic employees, but you should avoid talking about it in public areas and the fact that we are working on this should not be shared with anyone outside Anthropic.’

Instead of seeking individual agreements with publishers to license copies for training AI, a process scoffingly dismissed as “legal/practice/business slog”, the team led by Turvey ‘emailed major book distributors and retailers about bulk purchasing their print copies for the AI firm’s “research library”.’ Millions of dollars were expended on printed books, even those in used condition.

Retained service providers then went about their work: stripping the books of their bindings, adjusting the pages to size and digitising the copies. ‘Each print copy book resulted in a PDF copy containing images of the scanned pages with machine-readable text (including front and back cover scans for softcover books).’ Paper originals were discarded.



Not content with seeking hard copies, Anthropic also sought copies aplenty from the pirate-vendor market, including five million copies from LibGen (five million copies), two million items from Pirate Library Mirror (2 million) and Books 3 (approximately 183,000).

This orgy of physical destruction did not particularly interest Judge William Alsup. Of primary concern was whether copyright violations had taken place. Regarding the

Anthropic Agrees to Pay Authors at Least \$1.5 Billion in AI Copyright Settlement

Anthropic will pay at least \$3,000 for each copyrighted work that it pirated. The company downloaded unauthorized copies of books in early efforts to gather training data for its AI tools.

- created ‘research library’, Judge Alsup found no issue with Anthropic’s conversion of each book copy’s format from print to digital. ‘Anthropic purchased its print copies fair and square.’ Insofar as the purchase and scanning of hard-copy books was concerned, the company’s LLMs failed to reproduce ‘to the public a given work’s creative elements, nor even one author’s identifiable expressive style’. C

laude, the primary model in question, ‘outputted grammar, composition, and style that the underlying LLM distilled from thousands of works.’ But copyright did not cover “‘method[s] of operation, concept[s], [or] principle[s]” “illustrated” [] or embodied in [a] work.’ The use of copyrighted works to train LLMs to generate the new text was ‘quintessentially transformative.’

The authors who filed the action had some joy regarding the pirated copies. ‘The person who copies the textbook from a pirate site has infringed already, full stop.’ Anthropic’s claim that using copies for a central library was a case of fair use was untenable.

The court further rejected the company’s contention ‘that the use of copies for a central library can be excused as fair use merely because some will eventually be used to train LLMs.’



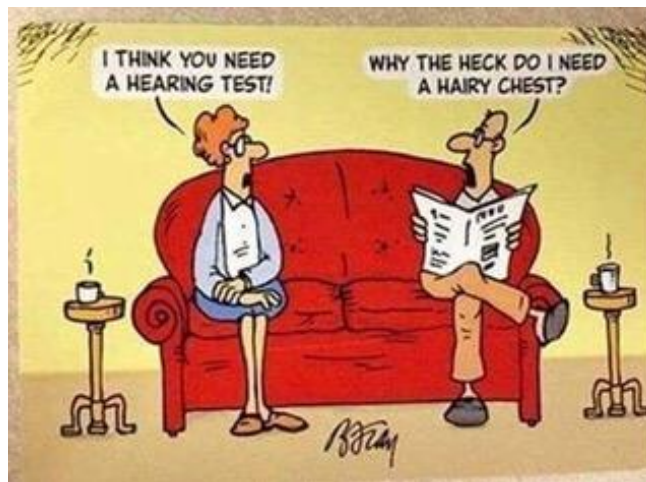
The judgment is apocalyptic for those who believe in the sensuality of knowledge gained through a physical book. With characteristic bluntness, Mike Masnick of *Techdirt* identified the essence of the case. Alsup had ‘essentially created a roadmap that validates legitimate AI training while drawing clear lines around what

THE FUTURE OF WRITING IS NOT AUTHORS VS AI. IT IS AUTHORS LEARNING HOW TO USE AI WITHOUT LOSING THEIR AUTHENTIC VOICE.

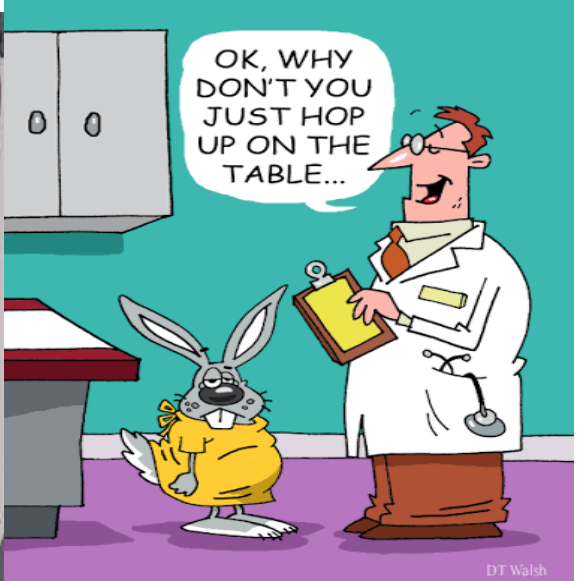
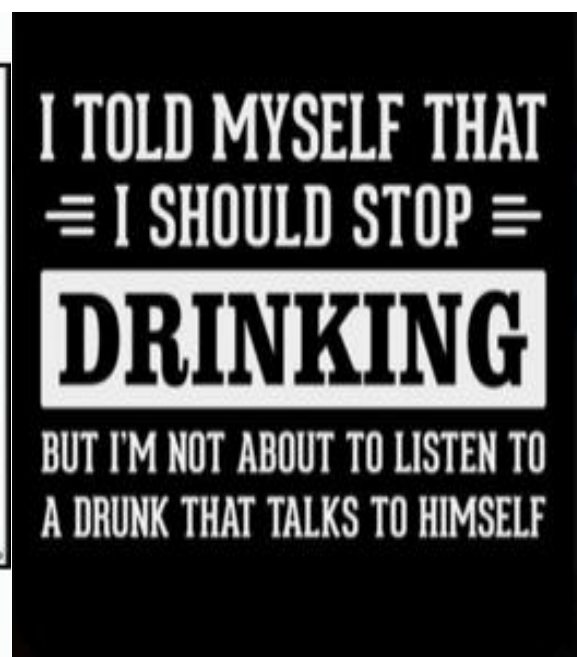
crosses into infringement.’ Unfortunately, it gives free rein to companies to pursue generative AI development, a process that will, in time, transform the author not into an enlightened producer of knowledge but a beholden consumer, ever at the mercy of Claude and others of its ilk.

Humour





"I don't want to worry you, but the guy who delivered the pizza was your financial planner."





A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Peter 5, and Paul 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'

Peter turned to his younger brother and said, "Paul, you be Jesus!"

Province Assembly



Following a first Province Assembly in Saigon, Vietnam this week, thirty-two professed Passionists will gather at Holy Cross this week to explore our life and mission, mindful that every four years we hold a Provincial Chapter to make decisions around the issues we face, and elect a Provincial and Council to respond to the initiatives mandated or advised by the Chapter. The next Chapter will be held in July 2027 and its theme which will be picked up in the Assembly, is 'Towards a New Horizon'.

Prayers



We remember that those who have died recently. We also remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially: [Mario Minichilli](#), [Bill Molinaro](#), and [Ray Zammit](#)

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](#), [Pam Storey](#), [Christine Storey](#), [Teresa Lim](#), [Graham Burke](#), [Peter Heffernan](#), [Dawn Herrefrnan](#), [David Chai](#), [Lucia Isgro](#), [Bernadette Owen](#), [Nada Atme](#), [Kate Lenic](#), [Nina Conti](#), [Carol Battistella](#), [Max McMahon](#), [Beth Scott](#), [Fr. Brendan Lane](#), [Edward Atme](#), [Rod Gorfine](#), [Maureen Barns](#), [Luke Norden](#), [Denise Egan](#), [Caroline Hagedorn](#), [Alexander Lim](#), [Marilyn Cilmi](#), [Julia Cantone](#), [Pam Gartland](#), [Anne Woon](#), [Anne Jenkins](#) and [Helen McLean](#).



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

I will be away this weekend until late Sunday afternoon. Chris will return on Saturday, and our Passionist brothers will begin to arrive (the first will be on Saturday) on Monday for our Province Assembly.

Have a good weekend

Brian



Cầu

Toàn

Phúc



SOME PHOTOS FROM THE ASSEMBLY CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IN SAIGON



From this week's Provincial Bulletin

Last week, **Sr Margaret Bentley**, **Sr Rosana** and **Mona El Khoury** had the opportunity to attend the **8th ACMRO Conference** in Sydney.

A reflection from Mona El Khoury below:

The conference focused on how we, as a nation, can be more proactive in welcoming and supporting immigrants.

The theme was **"Encounter, Listen and Engage."**

Key speakers presented very well the plight of immigrants and the many challenges they encounter in their migration to an unknown country, whether due to war, displacement or other traumas that have forced them to leave their homeland.

The conference also touched on the experiences of migrants who, upon returning to their country of birth, can find that they no longer feel that they belong. These experiences highlighted the complexity of migration and the lasting impact it can have on individuals and families.

Attendees were predominantly priests, nuns and Bishops, many of whom were themselves immigrants to Australia. Their personal experiences and perspectives added a valuable and meaningful dimension to the discussions.

Although the conference did not specifically address visa processes or migration laws, it was an eye-opening experience that provided a greater understanding of the real-life traumas and challenges experienced by immigrants.

There was a general consensus that current immigration laws are very restrictive and can create significant challenges for those seeking to establish a new life in Australia.

Overall, it was a very well-presented and insightful conference. I am very grateful for **Fr Denis'** initiative for allowing us to attend. Below is an image from the day.

