Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 349

23rd October 2026

Greetings,

Chris





The community celebrated Chris' birthday on Friday night last week with a lovely cake donated by a member of the Holy Cross family, which was very much appreciated.

He received an appropriate T shirt!

Feast of Paul of the Cross



We had a very nice celebration on Sunday night. All six of the community were home. Kevin Hennessy joined us, as did Tuan Paul and Tri from Endeavour Hills and Tim and Tina. Unfortunately we forgot to take a photo before Kev, TP and Tri left. We spent some time in prayer and included a short quiz on Paul of the Cross, between main course and dessert. One question asked what was notable about the Pope who canonised Paul. Pope Pius 9th applied to join the Passionists but mainly because he suffered from epilepsy, he was advised to become a diocesan priest. He has served longer as Pope (32 years) than anyone else! Chris advised us that Pius bequeathed his library to the Passionists.

What was this intersection?



In the 1860s it was known as **Tully's Corner**. It had other names such as Tuckebaud, Lauer Gallus, Crofts and Beers corner, representing migrant families who built on that site. 'From the late 1800s to early 1900s it was known as **Serpell's Corner**, after Richard Serpell built a the two-story brick general store (seen in the photo) on the site. From the 1950s–1960s it became widely known as **White's Corner** after Mr. White of Mitcham rented and operated the corner (Dickins Food) store.

In 1963, **G.J. Coles & Co.** acquired the 9-acre site. The historic buildings and surrounding orchards were eventually demolished to make way for the construction of **Doncaster Shoppingtown,** which officially opened in 1969. The site across the road was a dairy where a horse and cart milk run operated, when Holy Cross first opened. In recent years, quite a number of apartments have been built there.



The Catholic Church and immigration: Towards a new "Humanae Vitae"?
Massimo Faggioli…..Sept 16th, 2026.

A spectre is haunting Catholicism: the spectre of another informal schism like the one following Paul VI's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and the Church's teaching on contraception. This time, it would be about immigration. On September 11, the *Washington Post* published an opinion piece titled "This issue is splitting the Catholic Church," by Nathan Pinkoski. The author is a senior fellow at the Centre for Renewing America (a right-leaning think tank founded in 2021. Pinkoski states that the Catholic bishops and the laity are drifting apart over immigration: "Lay Catholic support for a border wall is sharply at odds with the official views of the hierarchy."



He says that, given the current demographic trends (more conservative churchgoing laity ministered by a rising number of foreign-born clergy), this rift is destined to persist in the Catholic Church. In conclusion, he has a suggestion: "Catholic bishops hoping to strengthen the church's witness should consider talking about immigration in more pragmatic terms — encouraging voters to weigh the pros and cons for the countries and communities receiving migrants. That stance might help lower the political temperature and reduce dehumanizing rhetoric in a fractured nation and church."

The picture in Europe is not very different, once we take Tr ump and MAGA Catholicism out of the equation. But Pinkoski refers mostly to the USA in his article, where these days the issue has reached a new level. On September 10, it became public that Catholic theologian Chad Pecknold, since 2008, professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. (the university of the US Catholic bishops) joined the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as the principal director of public outreach for the Office of Public Engagement. Pecknold has repeatedly defended the Trump administration's immigration policies on theological grounds.

On February 4, professor Pecknold appeared at the Hungarian Embassy in the nation's capital for a panel on migration organized around a paper from Budapest's Axioma Centre and with participants from the U.S. State Department and the Heritage Foundation among others. Pecknold endorsed the paper, which said that although Christian teaching requires compassion toward refugees, rulers also have obligations to preserve security, public order and social cohesion. It added, "Mass deportations may be a legitimate response to mass migration."

Pecknold is a scholar of Saint Augustine, and it will be interesting to see how he relates with the most important "son of Augustine" in the Catholic Church today, Pope Leo XIV. Pecknold seems to be closer to US Vice President and fellow Catholic JD Vance, who at the Republican convention in Dallas (September 9-10) said that "We were tired of being called racists for noticing that our country was becoming dirtier and poorer" and in 2025 he invoked the concept of *ordo amoris* (the "order of love") to justify the Trump administration's immigration restrictions and mass deportations.



This case raises three issues. The first one is political. This contraposition between different American Catholic voices (like Pecknold and other "postliberal" figures on one side and the US bishops on the other side) is unlikely to prompt a reaction from Rome. It is in America that this issue is relevant in the framework of the relations between the US bishops and the federal government. Especially since the beginning of the second Trump administration and the election of Leo XIV in the first semester of 2025, the US bishops have raised their voice with a series of messages and actions that are opposing the anti-immigration and anti-immigrant policies of the federal government.



For example, the president of the USCCB, Archbishop Paul Coakley, has recently (September 8) sent a letter urging President Donald Trump to cease the deportation of "large numbers" of Haitian immigrants. One wonders what happens if the person at DHS to whom Coakley's letter is assigned for action turned out to be Catholic theologian Chad Pecknold, tenured professor at the university of the US bishops.

The more interesting political question is whether there is an emerging gap between what the pope and the American bishops are saying about immigration and what Catholic laity and younger priests believe. While many laity do support Trump on immigration, the younger clergy may not: they are more aware of what the future of the Church looks like. I doubt that young priests who want to say Mass in Latin think anti-immigration policy is the ecclesiastical hill they want to die on. Then, secondly, there is the theological question. Pecknold is one of those Catholics who does not see a contradiction between mass deportation of immigrants and Catholic teaching on immigration.



In a recently published book, *Mass Expulsion: The Politics of Forced Population Removal* (Oxford UP, 2026), Meghan Garrity explains when and where expulsion occurs, who is targeted, and what regimes are most likely to expel. Garrity identifies two overarching categories of mass expulsion—security and economic—and develops a typology of four corresponding types: counter-irredentist, counter-subversive, reprisal, and nativist.

From what we know of the post-liberal Catholic position on immigration, the



argument in favour of mass expulsion seems to be based on a mix of counter-subversive (the alleged political incompatibility of some immigrant groups with America's national interests and foreign policy), nativist (their inability to assimilate into what they think American culture and religion is about), and economic (the effects on the wages for native-born workers, fiscal burdens on public services, etc.).

The mix between these arguments is clearly at odds with Catholic doctrine on immigration. The question is whether and how this doctrine will be further developed, given that these arguments come from an internal dissent that has consequences that go far beyond the life of the Church.

> **We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people. We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement.**
>
> —United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



The third issue, related to the second, is canonical. Under the bylaws of Catholic University of America (CUA), the sitting archbishop of Washington automatically serves as the chancellor of the university. Cardinal Robert McElroy, archbishop of the nation's capital since March 2025, has made no secret of his very critical views of the immigration policies of the Trump administration and in some sense, there has been already a public rebuke of the substance of the matter.

CUA was already at the centre of a *cause célèbre* around the teaching of the Catholic Church about contraception. In 1986, American Catholic theologian Charles Curran (1934-) was removed from the faculty of the CUA as a dissident against the Catholic Church's moral teaching. In the July 25, 1986, letter to Curran, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) wrote: "the Congregation has confirmed its position that one who dissents from the Magisterium as you do is not suitable nor eligible to teach Catholic theology.



Consequently, it declines your compromise solution because of the organic unity of authentic Catholic theology, a unity which in its content and method is intimately bound to fidelity to the Church's Magisterium." Cardinal Ratzinger continued: "the faithful must accept not only the infallible Magisterium. They are to give the religious submission of intellect and will to the teaching which the supreme pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate on faith or morals when they exercise the authentic Magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim it with a definitive act."

Again, it remains to be seen how the Vatican will respond to the challenge coming from this new kind of dissent. Possibly a closer analogy is the case of Jesuit priest Robert Drinan (1920-2007), when he was an elected Congressman from Massachusetts and ran into trouble for his votes on issues contravening church teaching. The similarity with Pecknold is the intersection of dissent with actual government law and policy, something that never factored into the Curran case.



Another possible analogy – and a warning to integralist Catholics – might be the freedom that Catholic legal thinker and judge Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde (1930-2019) claimed when he accepted a position to the then West German Constitutional Court and knew he might be ruling on changes in the abortion law of the *Bundesrepublik* after the reunification with the German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

As a strong believer in academic freedom, I do not think that the case of Charles Curran should be a precedent to follow. Pecknold has the right to be wrong. Pecknold's rights here are further protected in that he has taken a leave of absence, which puts some distance from him and his status at CUA. On the other hand, professor Pecknold is bringing his dissent from the Catholic teaching on immigration far beyond the doors of the classroom or the pages of academic journals. This case raises, once again, the crucial issue of the existential effect of Church teaching on the lives of ordinary people – Catholics and non-Catholics.



"Post-liberal" Catholics like Pecknold never seem to have any care when their exclusory positions contradict the inclusivism of Jesus Christ and Saint Paul. They reconcile these with some philosophical or ethical sleight of hand, mixed in with what they claim is a political realism. Their take on Christianity is more a philosophical and legal argument than discipleship.

From the point of view of the historian, the first question is whether the current intra-Catholic dissent on the Church's teaching on immigration will amount to another series of cases similar to the ones caused by teaching on sexuality and life issues. *Humanae Vitae* landed on the rough terrain of 1960s sexual politics. The terrain of 2020s nationalist biopolitics is not less rough.

Handy?

With almost daily mention of AI (artificial intelligence) it is clearly true that we are living in an era of rapid technological development. Of course the adjective 'rapid' has been used to describe technological growth, ever since the industrial revolution,



which began in Britain around 1860 and spread to Europe and America in 1840. Wikipedia describes it as a *"transition that included going from hand production methods to machines; new chemical manufacturing and iron production processes; the increasing use of water power and steam power; the development of machine tools; and rise of the mechanised factory system. Output greatly increased, and the result was an unprecedented rise in population and population growth."*



It may come as a surprise that the human era involving Neanderthal and Early European modern humans up until the creation of the first villages around 8000 BCE, also proved to be a time of great advance, and the rapid technological development of humans over that time, stands in stark contrasted to the previous millions of years. The development was amazing. The period between 8000 BCE and 3000 BCE proved to be even more significant, and much of this depended upon a gift we take for granted every day; our human hand.



Humans, chimpanzees and monkeys can oppose the thumb to the index digit. However, only humans have the ability to rotate the small and ring fingers across the palm to meet the thumb while providing grip, grasp, and the capability of providing force, while rotating. The human thumb is longer and more distally placed, and intrinsic thumb muscles make up about 39% of total hand muscle mass compared to 24% in chimpanzees. The human hand is made up of twenty-seven bones, paired with a intricate network of muscles, tendons, and nerves that provide both powerful grip strength and precise dexterity. The human hand acts, knows, and speaks. The same hand that can hammer; thrust, grasp and crush can also thread a needle, play a piano and cut material with scissors.



It can ‘see’ in the dark and is incredibly sensitive. With one tap of the fingernail it can distinguish between paper, cloth, wood, plastic and steel, and between hot and cold. In this way, a human hand can question objects to determine what they are. It complements the voice by conveying feelings and emotions that lie beyond words: the hand touches, strokes and caresses, conveying affection and assisting with healing by massage or manipulation.

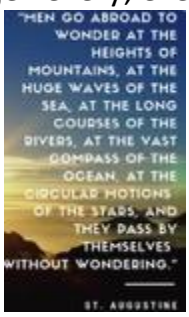


We work our fingers by the remote control of our brain. We have no muscles inside the fingers. The muscles which bend finger joints are located in the palm and up in the mid forearm, and are connected to the finger bones by tendons, which pull on and move the fingers, like the strings of a puppet. All of the great works that have led to the creation of culture have been possible because humans have had this use of their hands!



From brushing our teeth first thing in the morning to turning off the bedside lamp last thing at night, our human hand is indispensable, not just for everything we do, but for those artifacts with which we do them. Since early humans learned to rub sticks together with their hands to create fire, to the 30,000 year old stunning paintings in the Chauvet caves in south-eastern France to our daily typing email or text messages, human hands have made all of it and much more, possible.

Every home dwelling, temple or cathedral ever built, every piece of jewellery, every musical instrument and ultimately every robot that can build and assemble today, was created by human hands. Thankfully too, hands and fingers have enabled people to record what has become history. No doubt most of give little enough thought to this wonder that we put to good use every day. St Augustine observed, ‘While men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, the vast compass of the oceans, the circular motion of the stars... yet they pass by themselves without wondering’.



Our ‘opposable’ thumb has given us an ability that no other species possesses. The muscles which power our fingers are strong enough for some people to climb vertical surfaces supporting their entire weight at times by a few fingertips. To achieve this, the force generated by the muscles which bend the fingertips must be at least four times the pressure which is produced at the fingertips!

Coffee Cart



The **Coffee Cart** is back this Sunday, October 25th. If you are able to bring some cake or biscuits to share, that would be appreciated. We also appreciate the help of a few people before Mass, to set up for the post-Mass activity.

Anniversary details

The annual remembrance of Holy Cross deceased relatives will take place during 10.00am Mass on November 15th this year. We have photos and details of those we have been remembered in past years, but if you want to update the photo, or add a name, please email the details to Tim Horlock: horlocktim1@gmail.com

Garden – A Team

The main back garden was prepared (weed-free) by Joseph, so the A Team swung into gear last Friday and covered the garden with mulch. The roses are looking as beautiful as when Jerome looked after them. The lawns have been mown, so 'the place' is looking nice.



Come Away Day

The ***Come Away Day program*** is a long-time retreat and reflection ministry at Holy Cross. The last **Come Away Day** for 2026 will be held at Holy Cross on **WEDNESDAY November 18th.** The theme of the day is ***'RE- MEMBER with GRATITUDE'.*** As the end of another year approaches, we are invited to *re-member* significant people or events that have touched us or formed us, and all that this evokes in us physically, emotionally and spiritually. We are invited to share in Mary's prayer *'My soul magnifies the Lord …'* as we allow ourselves to cast a grateful gaze on parts of our story and recognize God at work.

We have an opportunity to rest, reflect and focus on the deeper meaning, changes, and movements of growth in our own life journey and how we respond with gratitude. The day's program provides opportunities for prayer, silent reflection and group interaction annd time in the beautiful grounds and facilities of Holy Cross.

Everyone is welcome. Just come as you are. **BYO lunch please**.
Registration is from 9.30am.

The program concludes with a celebration of the Eucharist and a departure time of **3pm.** The suggested cost is $30.00 or a donation according to your means.

Registration is helpful for planning purposes please. For any further details contact Sr Brigid cp on bridget.m64@gmail.com. We suggest you put this Date in your diary and invite a friend along to share the Come Away Day experience.
Everyone is welcome.

Humour

My hand got crushed by a pile of books. I only have my shelf to blame

I got a new pair of gloves today, but they're both 'lefts' which, on the one hand, is great, but on the other, it's just not right.

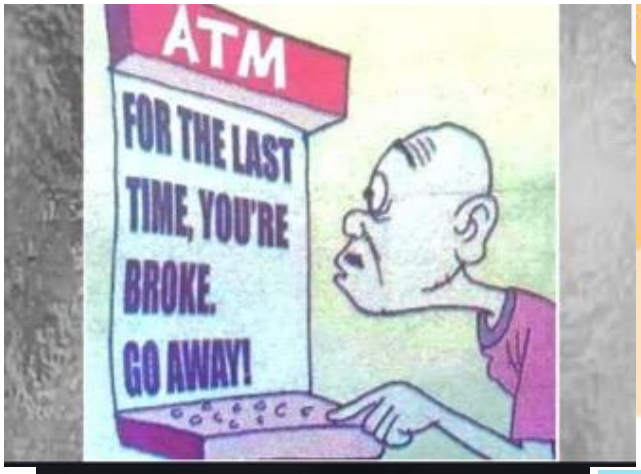
Q. Why should you never brush your teeth with your left hand?
A. Because a toothbrush works better.

Joe accidentally swallowed a handful of Scrabble tiles...
His next bowel movement could spell disaster.

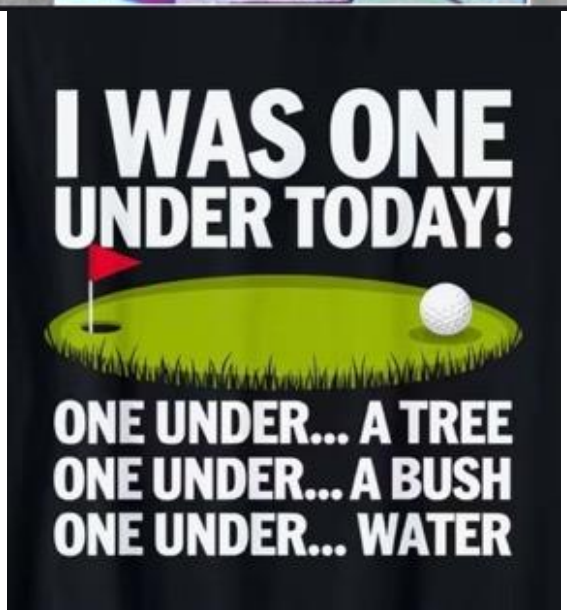
Two ants In a saucer were kicking around what to them was a small soccer ball. After a while one of the ants said, "George, you don't seem to be yourself today; there's no go in you." The other ant replied, "It's OK Bill, I saving my energy for tomorrow. I'm playing in the cup in the afternoon".













"I'm sure it is comfortable. But you really should use a golf cart like everyone else."

Senta Bilong Helpim

We have received some very generous donations for the Senta in Vanimo, PNG. We express thanks for assisting in this worthy cause.

Birthday

We spend special greetings to **Lynn Hill** in Napier, New Zealand , who celebrates her 80th birthday tomorrow, Saturday October 24th. The Passionist Family Group Movement in New Zealand stands in deep gratitude for her more than 25 years of service with her husband, Rob, as Directors of the Movement.

Prayers



We remember that those who have died recently and whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially Wladyslawa Kulpinska and Krystyna Kulpinska (mother and grandmother of Julita Venkataya), Helen Sprague and Franca Valmorbida.

We pray also 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… Bruno Pertocco, Cathy Petrocco, Ray Lewis, Kay Lewis, Dawn Heffernan, Kathy Shady, Nada Atme, Beth Scott, Max McMahon, Paul Fitzgerald, Pam Storey, Stephen Cougle, Joan O'Callaghan, Teresa Lim, Marie Spowart, Christine Storey, Bernadette Owen, Peter Heffernan, Carol Battistella, George Hall, Graham Burke, George Ryan, David Chai, Lucia Isgro, Fr. Brendan Lane, Edward Atme, Rod Gorfine, Nina Conti, Maureen Barns, Kate Lenic, Luke Norden, Peter Barry, Doris Castro, Alexander Lim, Anne Woon, Denise Egan, Marilyn Cilmi, Julia Cantone, Anne Jenkins Pam Gartland, and Helen McLean.



Chris will send the link for this Sunday's Mass on Saturday afternoon.

Brian

