Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 352

13th November 2026

Greetings,



A little later today I will be flying to Christchurch to connect with some of our key PFGM members in New Zealand and especially to meet with the Trustees of the Movement, and the national Coordinator who I happen to know well – Paul Traynor! It is fortunate that a former professed Kiwi Passionist brother, John Garrett and his wife Angela, resident in Surrey, England, will be in New Zealand for a holiday, so I look forward to seeing them early next week.

Come Away Day

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. The day's program provides opportunities for prayer, silent reflection and group interaction and 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.

Joseph – 38

On Tuesday night the community celebrated Joseph's birthday and as mentioned last week, he, Erick and JD are all 38 years of age. We celebrated with a cake – (see photos on the next page. There is some news that will be received with some sadness. Joseph has accepted a request from the Provincial to take up the role of formator, for the candidates in initial formation in PNG. This is very generous on his part, but he is very well suited and qualified for the role. Joseph will be a big loss to us at Holy Cross, but a big gain to Port Moresby. He will leave for this appointment in April next year, so he will be around for a while yet, although he will be attending his cousin's ordination later this month.. Our life calls us to accept legitimate and needed roles in the Province, and the need in PNG is great. Pat McIndoe will be 81 in May, and he has very generously continued the formation role over recent years.



In ‘Cocodile Dundee fashion he needed a real knife to cut the cake!



Another Birthday

Graeme Brennan begins his last year in the 80's on Monday November 16th. As with a few other of our Octogenarians, Graeme is still actively working so that he and Meryl (also working) can support worthwhile and needed projects in Nigeria.

Another Birthday

Chris Mithen who is residing in Nazareth House will celebrate his 94th birthday next Thursday, November 19th. He played and missed a few times on 93, but settled down again and is looking in excellent form! Happy Birthday and best wishes!

Christmas hampers

Already shops are 'advertising' Christmas which we know is in fact a time to remember the less fortunate, because the message of the angels was "peace on earth and good will to all". Creating peace and good will involves action. Because it does not just happen, we will arrange again with Vinnies, to distribute hampers or other goods that are donated through Holy Cross. Beginning this Sunday November 15th, if you wish to bring either a complete hamper, or goods (food, toys etc) that would assist a poor family enjoy Christmas, we will ensure they are delivered. Thank you very much. The hampers will be delivered to Donvale parish on Saturday December 5th, so we need them by then, please.



Christmas hampers have been a really big deal in St Anthony's parish, Terrey Hills which used to be under the pastoral leadership of the Passionists. This photo, taken in 1985 hides the altar from view because of the surrounding gifts that had been donated. The response from parishioners was, and still is, incredibly generous. It was one of the best Christian lessons the children of the parish could ever have learned.

Message from Luke Bulley



Hi everyone! Our Passionist Retreat Team turns 25 years old this year, and to celebrate, we're having our Team's End of Year Retreat at Holy Cross from the 4th - 6th of December! Each year, we have a Start of Year, Mid Year, and End of Year Retreat (very originally named), with our End of Year usually more celebratory in style, where we reflect on the year (in this case the 25 years), and explore what the next might offer. We'll all be at the 10.00am Sunday Mass that weekend (6th of December), and so you'll get to meet the whole Team together.



We are hoping that there might be some kind individuals who would be willing to help us with food over the weekend. There'll be 12 of us, and we'd love any and all food contributions for the Friday evening meal, as well as Saturday and Sunday lunches. If this is something you'd be able to contribute towards, we would be very appreciative! Please feel free to call or text me on 0411 108 868, or shoot me an email at luke.bulley@passionists.com.
Thank you, and looking forward to seeing you all soon!
Luke cp

Rub of the green



When I was eighteen, my father invited me to read a book on golf written by Jack Nicklaus. He suggested every time I saw the word 'golf' I should substitute the word 'life'. I found it very revealing, and one section that really hit home and has often since (either when playing golf, or living life), referred to 'the rub of the green'. In 2019 the term was deleted from the rules of golf, although another rule covers the situation where unpredictable circumstances lead to an act of good or bad luck that is not deserving of a penalty.
That rule does not cover every bit of good or bad luck in any round of golf. It is almost inevitable after any round, that players will be heard to say something like, "if only, on the sixth hole….."



This 'rub of the green' factor came to my mind when I saw a replay of a shot Rory McIlroy played just over a week ago in the first round of the Abu Dhabi Championship. He chipped a ball uphill towards the green, but the shot was too short and it rolled back down the hill into the exact same spot where Rory had played from, except now there was a deep divot and the ball settled down into it. The chances of that happening must have been thousands to one.



As it turned out, in his attempt to test the ground, he pressed a small piece of turf that did not spring back. That situation is deemed as 'improving the lie of the ball'. Rory later said it was definitely not his intention and was unsure whether it had happened, but he called a two shot penalty on himself, which meant he scored four over par on that hole. Was this bad luck? At the end of the tournament Rory finished in third place – four shots behind the leader!

A perspective on the question of whether an event is ‘good luck or bad luck’, is given in the a story of a Chinese farmer who used an old horse to till his fields. One day, the horse escaped into the hills. When the farmer’s neighbours sympathized with the old man over his bad luck, the farmer replied, “Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?”

A week later, the horse returned with a herd of horses from the hills. This time the neighbours congratulated the farmer on his good luck. His reply was **“**Good luck? Bad luck? Who knows?” When the farmer’s son was attempting to tame one of the wild horses, he fell off the horse and broke his leg. Everyone thought this was very bad luck. The farmer’s reaction: “Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?”



Some weeks later, the national army marched into the village and conscripted every able-bodied youth they found there. When they saw the farmer’s son with his broken leg, they let him off. Was that Good luck or Bad luck? Who knows!



There are so many sliding door moments where we are not aware that a different choice by someone else, or ourselves, or an event completely outside of anyone’s control creates an outcome that otherwise would not have happened.

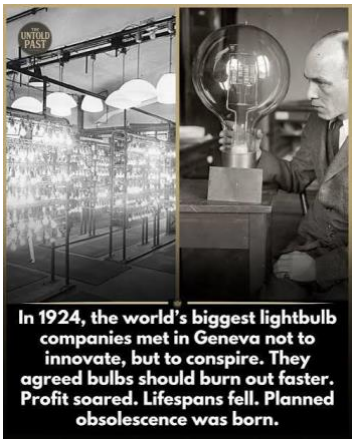
Sometimes this leads to escape, discovery or tragedy. It happens to everyone, and it happens often. What is our attitude to ‘the rub of the green’?

Planned obsolescence

An article on November 6, 2026 in ‘The Conversation’ Margherita Feleppa from the University of Wollongong highlighted the problems associated with planned obsolescence. She points out that modern devices like laptops and smartwatches are made of a combination of rare materials, toxic substances and flammable batteries, such as mercury and arsenic. When released into the environment, these toxic chemicals can pollute soil and waterways.



Despite that danger Australians produce almost three times the global average of electronic waste, known as e-waste. Humans generate 62 million tonnes of e-waste each year and Australians generate 588,000 tonnes annually, averaging 22kgs per person, which is three times the global average. It is estimated that less than a quarter of e-waste is recycled.



Cosimina Dannoritzer produced a documentary titled, 'The Light Bulb Conspiracy' in 2010, that focuses on the ever-shrinking lifespan of consumer products. The film reveals some of the strategies taken to ensure particular items do not last. Sub-titled 'The Untold story of Planned Obsolescence', the film demonstrates that the Shelby light bulb, in Livermore California, which is still working after 125 years, should be the norm! Other examples include the claim that originally all women's stocking were ladderless, and that many computer printers have chips inserted, to reduce their 'life'.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWJC5ieUAe4

Everybody at some level knows that the continual replacement of items is costly, but often, it is the extra features of a new model that entices them. Often the model that is selling has multiple follow up versions already in storage, but they are released, one at a time. This is the world in which we live and seek to find our meaning, and new generations are being initiated into this way of life.



Corporate executives represent the leadership of consumerist 'religion', and promote the careless plundering of the earth's finite resources, purely for financial g ain. For their reward, they are paid exorbitant salaries. One tragic aspect of this destruction is that so little of what is produced is either required, or used.

The vast majority of what is produced is trashed within a year of sale. Profit today depends on convincing people that the product they recently purchased, can already be improved upon. Interestingly, France was the first country to introduce and anti-waste law for a 'circular economy', which bans deliberate planned obsolescence The bill addresses repair, in order to limit waste by the unnecessary replacement of products.

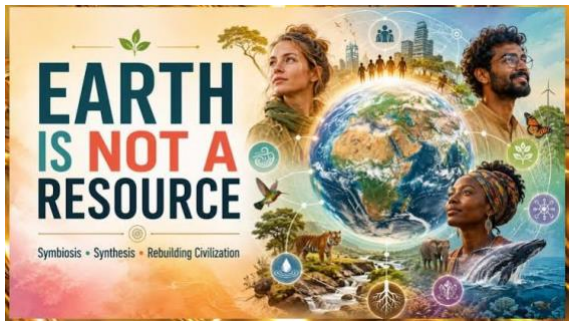
ANTI-WASTE LAW for a circular economy

Retailers have to be transparent about how long spare parts are available for, and spare parts will have to be available for a determined number of years, for some electronic products such as smartphones and laptops, as well as medical products. Products that are impossible to repair (e.g. because components are glued together) are banned, as is the incineration of used or unsold goods.

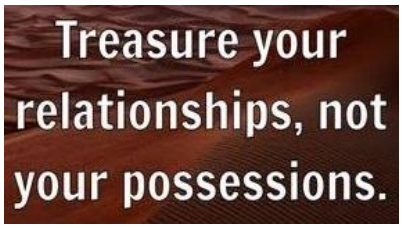


This action is in line with Passionist Thomas Berry's warning that simply promoting recycling is not a sufficient solution, because manufacturing continues to produce what can be recycled.

What has to happen is to return to the practice of 'repair rather than replace'. Making small modifications every year to the same product (e.g. mobile phones) has led to the incredible situation of 5,300,000,000 phones being thrown away in 2025. That number has been increasing every year. Having dedicated themselves to the acquisition of the desired objects, many people are trapped by them. They work harder to pay for what they have or will acquire, and yet find they are no happier for the effort they have made.



While we continue to chase these dreams, and overlook our spiritual connection with the universe around us, the multiple social problems of our age will continue.



Surrounded by an endless array of material possessions and artificial stimulation, many younger people they feel a need for more. This 'more' creates an ache, normally filled by human companionship and a sense of deep communion with the natural world. This has to be recaptured. The participants of the 'religion', involving modern consumers, either fail to see or they ignore the reality that their 'belief' is based on a view that the earth is a resource, rather than a vital and sacred component of our universe.

Earth is a small planet, within our galaxy. Every second, our sun which is our life supply system, burns four thousand million tons of energy which it transforms into light. It has been doing this for four and a half billion years. This gift of energy is a rich symbol of sacrifice because we benefit with every breath we take, and every piece of food we eat. Photosynthesis changes the sun's energy into plants that provide food. As the sun gives itself, and a part of it dies, earth receives its gift as life. Without it, we humans have no life, and when we open ourselves to this experience. we know that we too, find an urge to give ourselves to the well-being of others. The sun's story is our story, and it has infinitely more meaning than what consumerism offers.



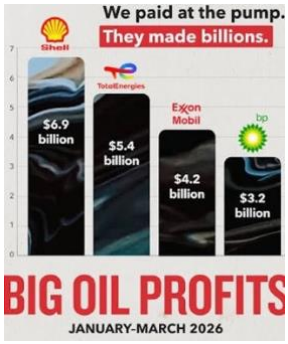




Modern shipping containers move goods around the globe in such staggering numbers that is has been estimated that a large ship delivering tee shirts to another country, adds no more than five cents to the cost of the shirt!

The consumerism story depends on a five-stage linear progression that takes finite resources from the earth, produces 'stuff' from them, distributes the stuff, often across the globe, consumes it, and then disposes of it. There is nothing of the heart in this process; no free gift. The stories of heroism that inspire us, are stories that echo the gift of the sun, whereas the stories of consumerism inevitably lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

When thinking about some of the effects of consumerism and the rise of big corporations, it is notable that many have far larger financial assets than most countries!



In recent memory, lead has been banned from petrol in western countries. Not long ago, lead was present in nearly every product (even in food cans and toothpaste tubes). Corporations, despite being aware of the severe poisoning of factory workers, which sometimes resulted in fatalities, continued to use lead.
Its promoter, Thomas Midgley also introduced chloro-fluorocarbons (CFC's) into refrigerators. Later this gas was used in air-conditioning and deodorants, which did untold damage to the ozone layer.

Debate about climate change and setting a low carbon emissions target, takes place today within the context of preserving the economy. Few serious attempts are made because each entity fears another will gain an **economic advantage**. The few undertaking new initiatives are often doing so because they see a financial advantage in new 'clean' technologies.

30% of school age children in the Congo are digging for coltan for use in devices like mobile phones and iPods, instead of attending school. For this hard labour, they earn their families less than A$2 per day! Profits go to the big companies. Annie Leonard in 'The Story of Stuff' points out that we have all had the experience at a 'Two Dollar' shop of asking ourselves 'how could they possibly make this product for that much?"

Leonard says we should remember that the purchaser is not paying for it. Those who have been exploited (people in under-developed countries) pay for it with their cheap labour and the pilfering of their natural resources.



The reality is that unless serious action is taken, there will be no economy! Many of the goods we purchase are good and necessary, many are not. Any time we 'throw out' goods we have to appreciate that there is no 'out'. Earth is our home and everything we dump from our home is there to stay. Every single material item we see, be it a chair, refrigerator, car, curtain, computer or other, has come from the earth.

Every unnecessary item we purchase poses a disposal issue and attempts at recycling are admirable and necessary, but they do not address the fundamental issues.



The critical issue is the preservation of resources, and this is the area we need to address and influence. We are more likely to take positive action if we truly recognise that preserving natural resources is what will sustain us as a human family. When someone threatens a member of our human family we do not hesitate to act. It is time to recognise that the human family is interdependent and that what we do to the earth, we do to ourselves!



When our focus is on accumulation as a means to achieve security and happiness, we can get distracted from what is important, and forget about what truly matters. Luke's gospel tells of an encounter with a man who asked Jesus to order his brother to give him half of the family inheritance.

Jesus refused to take on this task and then addressed the people warning *them "Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by accumulating possessions"* (Luke 12:15)

Luke continues with the story Jesus told of the man who tore down his old barns and built bigger ones so that he could then retire and have the time of his life. But that night he died, and who gets all those goods then? Jesus went on to say, "*Don't make a fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or if the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your inner life than the food you put in your stomach, and more to your outer appearance than the clothes you wear".* (Luke 12:22,23)



It is easy to overlook this message and think it applies only to rich people. In this age of 'affluence', perhaps we need to listen to Jesus' warning more carefully. The 'New Message' Biblical translation of this account has Jesus say, *"This is what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God."*

The 'stuff 'we collect does not bring spiritual peace. Attachment to things allows little room in the heart for the sacred. As Jesus reminds us, "*Your heart will always be where your riches are."*

A reflection for November…..Every minute

Every minute someone leaves this world behind. We are all in "the line" without knowing it. We never know how many people are before us. We cannot move to the back of the line. We cannot step out of the line. We cannot avoid the line. So while we wait in line. Make moments count. Make priorities. Make the time. Make your gifts known. Make a nobody feel like a somebody. Make your voice heard. Make the small things big. Make someone smile. Make the change. Make up. Make peace. Make sure to tell your people they are loved. Make sure to have no regrets. Make sure you are ready. Make sure you forgive. Make sure you help others. Make sure you are mindful. Make sure your compassion is bigger than your ego. Make sure you live a happy and fulfilling life. Love more ❤ Give more❤ (**Author unknown)**

November: remembering the deceased

Many people like to make **Mass offerings** during November, to have a Mass celebrated for a loved one. The community is happy to do that, and there is no need to include a stipend. Providing the name of the person is sufficient.

Mass for deceased relatives and friends

At the 10.00am Mass, which **Erick** will lead, we will celebrate and remember deceased relatives and friends of our Holy Cross community. There will be a Power Point and music presentation after communion. We thank Tim Horlock and Alida Valmorbida for the many hours they have spent updating this presentation. **Tri** is going to concelebrate the Mass because he visited and assisted a number of the recently deceased. You are invited to write the name on a piece of paper, of someone you want to remember and pray for, and then place it on the altar before Mass, on November 15th.

JD's brother's ordination

JD has a brother Thoai, a member of the Oblate Congregation who is living in community in Camberwell. Thoai will be ordained on Saturday, November 28th. On that same day, **Joseph's** cousin, Augustine Uloam MSC, is being ordained in Papua New Guinea.

Humour

1. Barry rang the local police station. “I’m calling to report my neighbour Wazza is hiding marijuana inside his firewood”. The next day police officers descended on Warren home. They searched the house and then went to the woodshed. Using axes, they busted open every piece of firewood, but could find no marijuana. They left. The next thing Wazza’s phone rang. “Hey Wazz, did the cops come?” “Yeah, they did” was the reply. Did they chop up your firewood?” “Yes they did” Warren replied. “Happy birthday mate, have a relaxing day”, Barry called down the phone.

2. A burglar entered a house he was intending to rob when all of a sudden a quiet voice said, “I can see you and so can Jesus”. The burglar looked around the room but could see no one so he started going through some draws when he heard the voice again, “I can see you and so can Jesus.”

The burglar jumped up and by the window he spotted a cage almost obscured by the curtains, and inside the cage was a parrot who piped up again, “I can see you and so can Jesus”. “So what”, said the burglar, “you’re only a parrot”. The parrot replied, “Maybe. But Jesus is a rottweiler!”

3. A USA farmer was in western Victoria for a holiday. He and a local grain grower got talking. The farmer showed him his wheat paddocks and the visitor said, “Pretty small eh? Ours are three or four times that size”.



Next the farmer showed him his cattle. The visitor said, “Our Longhorns would be twice the size of your Angus”. The conversation had nearly died when a mob of kangaroos hopped past.

“What the hell are they?” the visitor asked.
“Just our local grasshoppers” the farmer said casually!

4. Bill is obsessed with telling airport jokes. His doctor says it’s a terminal problem.
- Reading while sunbathing makes you well, red.
- Life without music would b flat.
- After my friend turned vegan it was like I’d never seen herbivore.
- The four seasons are all different, summer warmer than others.
- I used to suffer from soap addiction, but I’m clean now.
- She only made whiskey, but I loved her still.
- Forklift operators hate our puns, they find them unpalletable.
- What’s the best way to learn how to make ice cream? Go to sundae school.
- Why did the financial planner quit his job? He was losing interest.
- What happened to the cat that ate a ball of yarn? She had mittens.
- What kind of socks should you buy a bear? None. They prefer to go barefoot.

Phonetics.
One reason why spelling is difficult is that some words like coup and through sound like coo and threw but don't look like them.

Rough (like gruff) is spelled like tough (which rhymes with cuff), and while through is like threw, though is like low!

- Comb (like dome) and bomb (like gong) look similar, but sound different.
- A bow (like low) fires an arrow, but it can be (like row) - a ribbon.
- You dig a trough (like troff), you make a cough, and when insulted, you scoff.
- Drought is spelled like doubt and rout, but add an 'e' to route it it's like book.
- For some learners it does not make cents – or sense!

Prayers



We remember that those who have died recently, and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time, we especially remember…Ray Milton, Judy Milton, Bev Barry, Maria Vigilante (Celeste's mother), Pat Bowen (Sue Gessell's mother), Francis Ku (Anthony's father), Lidia Chin (Grace Kho's god-sister), Nancy Di Peitro (Francesca Spinosa's sister), Robert Isgro (Dominic and Lucy's son).

We also pray for all members of our Holy Cross family who are coping with illness including many not listed here, and all who care for them: We remember… Cathy Petrocco, Beth Scott, Max McMahon, Bruno Petrocco, Stephen Cougle, Pam Storey, Kay Lewis, Ray Lewis, Geoff Boult, Dawn Heffernan, Marie Spowart, Nada Atme, Paul Fitzgerald, Joan O'Callaghan, Christine Storey, Graham Burke, Teresa Lim, Peter Heffernan, Carol Battistella, Bernadette Owen, George Hall, George Ryan, David Chai, Lucia Isgro, Edward Atme, Rod Gorfine, Alexander Lim, Kate Lenic, Nina Conti, Luke Norden, Peter Barry, Pam Gartland, Anne Woon, Doris Castro, Denise Egan, Marilyn Cilmi, Julia Cantone, Anne Jenkins and Helen McLean.



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

Brian