



## Holy Cross Retreat

<https://holycrosscentre.com/community/>



28th

June, 2024

## Letter 229

### Property Consultation

We had two very helpful meetings last week, which helped clarify some things and included many suggestions that could help with the better functioning of Holy Cross and contribute to our income stream.



What became apparent was that we need information about the zoning for Holy Cross and whether changes can be made to the present zoning. By the time of our second meeting we became aware that the site is zoned in such a way that it would be possible to build something like an aged care facility or a medical centre. However, the advice we received was that these options, especially aged care, are not profitable. It was suggested that residential housing zoning would be a better option.

Understandably, there is a strong hope that for the foreseeable future we can retain the facilities that make Holy Cross an attractive and welcoming home for so many people, including those who use our Conference facilities.

The point was made that if the Province sees a need to raise a significant amount of money, that amount does not need to come from one site. At the same time, the considered opinion was that the most suitable first step would be to sell the land between the community driveway and the houses on our south eastern boundary. This is the area where we have celebrated Christmas and Good Friday. To benefit the most from such a sale, rezoning would be advisable.



By the time of our second meeting, a very generous donor had advised that a professional town planner and designer had agreed to look at the site in July. That will be a huge step in the right direction providing some answers to unanswered questions, especially because Fr Denis, our Provincial will be at Holy Cross at that time.



A lot of dialogue has to take place. Province wide consultation began this week with Zoom meetings on Wednesday and Thursday occurring across the Province. No decisions will be taken until our Provincial Council and Provincial Finance Committee has adequate information and a lot more further feedback is considered.

Because of this, perhaps what proved helpful was the many suggestions we received that could assist us in the short and long term future of Holy Cross. What is undeniable is that so many people, our employees, donors and many volunteers have enabled us to maintain the property and put it to good use. There is a keenness for us to improve.

We were asked if we have work for more volunteers, and clearly the answer is 'yes'. The response to strengthening our 'A Team' has been magnificent and to see eight men here last Friday was so encouraging. We already have two offers to assist with mowing and with Bro Jerome less able to manage the gardens he has so wonderfully cared for, we were asked if some women (and men) might be willing to assist with gardening. If there are interested persons they could meet with Peter Norman to consider the best way this can be done.



As and when more relevant information comes to us, we will keep you informed.

## Ideas



The Coffee Cart has been very popular and it has been generously funded. We have also had an increased number of people who have baked 'goodies' to share. Given the cold winter weather we are giving the coffee cart a break probably until late August. There is some dialogue going on as to the best way to continue this popular practice and keep it being funded.

Another suggestion is to issue a standing invitation to meet once a month (e.g. on a Thursday morning) at a local coffee shop. There are some investigations being made as to where and when.

An annual car-boot sale was also suggested as a fundraiser

At our second meeting there was a suggestion that we consider a 'tap and go' machine at the back of the chapel, because so many people do not carry cash. We have been reluctant to introduce that, so we don't



turn the temple into a market place. We are very grateful for people's generosity and we don't like focusing on money, but I agreed to canvas the idea. At the same time, some people still use cheques and it has been requested that they be made out to 'Passionist Community', please.

### Fr Chris Mithen



We remember **Chris Mithen CP** who celebrates his 68<sup>th</sup> ordination on Monday June 30<sup>th</sup>. It is a remarkable milestone. Only last week a comment was made that we don't have anyone who can tell a joke at Mass as well as Chris could, although **Erick** who will celebrate his 36<sup>th</sup> birthday the following day, is trying his best! Chris was community leader at Holy Cross back in the 1970's and a long-time resident with his classmate Mark Nugent from 2004 til 2013.

### Budi and Raphael

Both YTU and ELSPM are having a mid-year break. **Budi** has already succeeded in achieving a satisfactory IELTS score which enables him to travel to PNG to take up missionary life in Vanimo, when the PNG government awards him a visa. **Raphael** hopes to be in the same position in about 5-6 weeks.

### Tuan Paul



**Tuan Paul** was ordained in Adelaide on June 16<sup>th</sup> and last Monday he was successful in his driving test. On Wednesday he returned to Vietnam to celebrate a series of Masses and spend some time with his family. While he is home he will be celebrant at one of his brother's wedding. We have mentioned before our gratitude to Peter Norman and Joe Senzo for the many hours they have spent assisting our men with driving lessons. We thank them again for their

assistance because living at Endeavour Hills without a licence has been very difficult for TP, both pastorally and socially.

### Tri



**Tri** returned to Holy Cross on Tuesday. He had been in Adelaide for the ordination of Cong, Doan and TP and Justin's final profession. He then he made a retreat under the guidance of Tony Egar CP. He will be able to return to the computer for Sunday Mass (thank you to Peter Norman for helping out), and he will prepare for his final profession as a Passionist on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

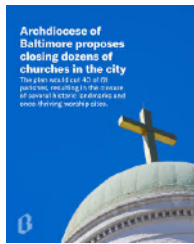
### News from Baltimore Archdiocese.....parish closures



Baltimore, USA was in the news in late March, when a container ship struck the city's iconic bridge, resulting in six

deaths and the partial collapse of the bridge. The Archdiocesan proposed plan to deal with declining Mass attendance is also newsworthy. Baltimore is the oldest diocese in the United States and is predominantly African American. Catholics make up 16% of the population and operate in 144 parishes. The Archbishop said that while it would never happen, the fact is that the Cathedral could hold the entire number of city people who attend Mass on a Sunday.

### Reducing the number of Catholic parishes (Mark Pattison)



Facing declining membership and church attendance, the Archdiocese is seeking to convince Catholics that its plan to cut two-thirds of its **city parishes** will strengthen its presence. Following a two-year study a plan has been proposed that recommends cutting the number of city parishes by two-thirds, from 61 to 21. The number of worship spaces would be similarly sliced, from 59 to 23. Auxiliary Bishop Bruce Lewandowski said, "This is difficult. It's heart-wrenching. But

we're at a pivotal moment in the city church. We need to do this. We need to do this because our church membership is getting older, and we're not replacing ourselves," he added.

The Baltimore "Seek the City to Come" website highlights that there has been a 38% population drop in Baltimore since 1950; city-parish church attendance has fallen from 20% in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic, to 9% in 2022.



Catholic strongholds across the U.S. East Coast and Midwest: highways stretch to undeveloped suburbs and housing discrimination confines most Black Americans to segregated slums —unless they are displaced by those very highways. This is accompanied by urban rioting, subsequent "white flight" from the cities, job relocations to predominantly white suburban areas, and a resulting disinvestment in urban centers and their downtowns. Dwindling priestly vocations has not helped.

As recently as 2011, the Official Catholic Directory – the annual compendium of U.S. Church life – listed 99 parishes in "Metropolitan Baltimore." But upon closer examination, 35 parishes were listed as having either closed, merged, or located in suburban Baltimore County, leaving 64 in the city of Baltimore, including "paired" and "twinned" parishes sharing priests and staff.



The 61 parishes considered for possible downsizing in Baltimore Archdiocese also includes some in Baltimore County. The final decisions of Baltimore Archbishop William Lori will be made sometime in June, according to archdiocesan spokesperson Christian Kendzierski.

From there, it would take roughly a year to implement shutdowns and mergers.

Meanwhile, the archdiocese filed for bankruptcy protection last September in response to a new Maryland law that extended the timeframe for sex abuse victims to file lawsuits against their abusers. Baltimore is not the first U.S. diocese to seek protection under federal bankruptcy law, nor is it likely to be the last. However, Kendzierski said, the proceeds from the sale of any excess buildings and properties won't be used to compensate victims. Under canon law, according to Kendzierski, when parishes merge, the sale price of the property of the closed parish goes into the account of the surviving parish.



Kendzierski said a similar process had previously been conducted in the archdiocese's western counties, nestled between the states of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. It represents a stunning change of fortune for a diocese once synonymous with the pre-Vatican II "Baltimore Catechism," (Who made me? God made me...) Now, Baltimore will face a more difficult challenge in persuading both Catholics and local residents that the Church's presence in the city will emerge stronger from this shake-up than it was before.

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### **Good news for smaller parishes**

**Christine Schenk (National Catholic Reporter)**

I was surprised recently to learn that Rome's Dicastery for the Clergy supported appeals oppose St Louis Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski's decision to merge their parishes. It is significant that the Vatican disputed the archdiocese's demographic projections and especially the parish of St Richard which they ruled is "large enough to be a viable community," including 374 registered parishioners under 49-years-old "in their prime earning years." A July 2020 Vatican instruction specifically said a bishop should not merge a parish or sell a church because of "the lack of clergy, demographic decline or the grave financial state of the diocese.



Even so, it is rare to see the Dicastery for the Clergy defend the viability of one smaller parish, let alone three of them. The rulings are good news for smaller — yet viable and vibrant — parishes that may pursue recourse in the future.

Cleveland's massive parish downsizing saw first-hand how destructive the indiscriminate closing of smaller viable parishes can be — both to the faith of Catholics and to the well-being of the poorer neighbourhoods they serve. 29 churches were closed and 41 were directed to merge with one or more churches, creating 18 new parishes. The result was 52 fewer parishes in 16 months

#### Vatican response


A Vatican panel has ruled that Cleveland Bishop Richard Lennon must restore parishes immediately unless he closes them. 13 churches in the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. The 13 parishes had submitted the appeals, arguing that some weren't parishes. Now, the Bishop can either accept the panel's findings or within 60 days, appeal to the Vatican's highest court.



I rejoiced when 12 Cleveland parishes won their merger appeals and the bishop was forced to reopen them after being closed for two or more years. Because of the creative contribution of Sr Kate Kuentler to new jurisprudence, Catholics now have a shot at due process when their bishop makes misguided decisions to merge their viable parishes and close their churches. It is deeply gratifying to see Sister Kate's pioneering work bearing fruit.

In May 2023, after an 18 month planning process, the Archdiocese of St Louis announced it would reduce the number of parishes from 178 to 135. Catholics opposed to restructuring had begun organizing months earlier. It is encouraging to have those jurisprudential developments implemented and honoured to respect the rights of the faithful in saving their parishes and churches."

The merging or closing of parishes has been happening for some time, and while in some cases there might be no other option, two opposing visions make these decisions critical. Is the principal priority to have a priest available to celebrate Mass (other sacraments seem to figure less now in this viewpoint) or does the local community have a need and a right to assemble together and find ways to celebrate their faith?



### Safety



A few of us were concerned about a large branch high up, overhanging the driveway near the entrance to the main carpark.

We arranged for our arborist to come out on Wednesday and remove the potentially unsafe limb, which required special equipment and a worker tied high up to the tree.

Please look out for anything that might be unsafe and report it to Tina Minichilli or Graeme Newcomb our Safety officers. Mind you being so observant is expensive!

### Humour



An animal rescuer, homeless shelter director, volunteer paediatrician, and ice cream machine repairman are waiting at the Pearly Gates. The animal rescuer meets Saint Peter who reviews her resume of thousands of animals she's saved. Shaking his head, he announces: "Denied."

Next is the homeless shelter director. Saint Peter looks over his resume, nods slightly, but still announces: "Denied."

The volunteer paediatrician, getting nervous, decides to let the ice cream machine repairman go next. Saint Peter glances at his resume and without hesitation: "Granted!" And the man walks through.

Now very confused, the paediatrician said, "How is it that a woman who dedicates her life to saving defenseless animals and a man who has helped the lives of tens of thousands of people are both denied entry into heaven, but a regular old ice cream machine repairman gets in?"

"Simple," explained Saint Peter, "We have a McDonald's."

### **Paperless?**

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

### **Quick dressing**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLj0CXOIWXE>



**If your volunteering goes well then we may be able to offer you an unpaid internship, and THAT could lead to a 'zero hours' contract!**



What do you call a volunteer bricklayer?  
A freemason.

I love volunteering at the AIDS clinic.  
Everybody is so positive.

I volunteer part time as a jousting at the  
renaissance fair.  
I'm a free lancer.

I joined a volunteer group to help stab victims  
Didn't have a sharp knife, so I had my work cut out for me

I love volunteering so much..  
I'd do it for free



A retired man who volunteered to entertain patients went to a hospital and began playing the piano. He told some jokes and sang some funny songs for those in attendance. When he finished he said, in farewell, "I hope you get better." One elderly gentleman replied, "I hope you get better, too."

I once worked at a cheap pizza shop to get by. I kneaded the dough.

My friends and I have named our band 'Duvet'. It's a cover band.

I lost my girlfriend's audiobook, and now I'll never hear the end of it.

Why is 'dark' spelled with a k and not c? Because you can't see in the dark.

Why is it unwise to share your secrets with a clock? Well, time will tell.

When I told my contractor I didn't want carpeted steps, they gave me a blank stare.

Bono and The Edge walk into a Dublin bar and the bartender says, "Oh no, not U2 again."

Prison is just one word to you, but for some people, it's a whole sentence.

Scientists got together to study the effects of alcohol on a person's walk, and the result was staggering.

I'm trying to organize a hide and seek tournament, but good players are really hard to find.

I love bacon. Sometimes I eat it twice a day. It takes my mind off the terrible chest pains I keep getting.

### **Stairs to nowhere**



This is not a common sight in Australia, and you have to wonder what are these people waiting for?

Would you like to be waiting there for a jetliner to park right up to those stairs, or has a plane just left without them?

## Prayers

We celebrated last Sunday, with thanks the 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of **Graeme and Merrill Brennan** (on June 20<sup>th</sup>). Graeme's cousin, Sr Loretta Brennan CSB secured a Papal award for the wonderful support they have given to the education of many young religious women and others through Tangaza College, now university, in Nairobi, Kenya. Graeme gives all the credit to Loretta for her outstanding work in Kenya. We at Holy Cross are also grateful for the quiet humble financial support from Graeme and Merrill over many years.

Prayers for ongoing good health and blessings for **Fr Chris Mithen** on the 68<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination this Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June. Also for **Luke Bulley** who's 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary is tomorrow, June 29<sup>th</sup>.

We remember all the recently deceased especially **Roland Cheah** (cousin of Grace Ko who died yesterday, and those whose anniversaries occur this week, especially, **Gemma Scapin** (28<sup>th</sup> June), **Francesco Curcio and Brenda Roberts** (29<sup>th</sup> June), **Gwladys Bourke** (Maree Butler's mother - 1<sup>st</sup> July) and **Giuseppe Lantieri** (2<sup>nd</sup> July),

We also remember all others in our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially.



Lorraine Gill, Adrian Woon, Ann Burke, Margaret Enriquez, Luke Norden, Maree Bartoli, Tony Tome, Paul Darbyshire, Mary Dunn, Robyn Burns, Carol Battistella, Monique Hardinge, John & Maeve Reardon, Pam Storey, Gerry Bond, Ann Burke, Peter & Bernadette Owen, Alexander Lim, Michael O'Callaghan, Peter McNamara, Greg Agosta, Bronwyn Burke, Helen McLean, Phil Drew, Pam Gartland, Patricia Keeghan, Anne Jenkins, Errol

Lovett, Shirley Barnes, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Chris O'Toole and baby Alfred Theodore in London.

The **Mass link** for this Sunday will be sent on Saturday afternoon by Chris.

Thank you

Brian