

## Holy Cross Retreat

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



### Letter 231

July, 2024

11th

The newsletter is a day early this week because of the final profession tomorrow and the link provided for those who might want to follow the livestream.

### Provincial Visitation



As mentioned last week, Denis Travers has been visiting Holy Cross this week. This enables Denis to meet with each individual and discuss what he may need or desire in terms of ongoing community placement and ministry. Denis also met with the community to share the vision of the Province and to encourage us in our life and ministry.

#### Tri



Tri will make his final profession as a Passionist tomorrow at Holy Cross, 7.30pm. Unfortunately a second visa application by his parents for a visa was not successful. JD's parents were also unsuccessful. They wanted to be here for JD's brother final profession with the Oblates, which will be Friday 19th

The link for the live-stream of Tri's final profession is: [https://youtube.com/live/-f\\_iatuncPI?feature=share](https://youtube.com/live/-f_iatuncPI?feature=share)

### Tony Eggar



It has been nice, as always to have Tony here for a few days, including for Tri's final profession. Tony conducted Tri's pre-profession retreat. Tony celebrates his own milestone next week on July 18th – 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination. He has been a wonderful contributor to the life, mission and communities of the Province. Ad multos annos!

### Francis Xavier Chennampally CP

The photo below of Francis Xavier was taken at his installation as parish priest of Boroko, Port Moresby, having accepted a request to assist the Province in Papua New Guinea. Sad news arrived on Monday, of Francis' unexpected death by cardiac arrest. At the time he was Novice Master and Community Leader in Nilinbur, India.



Francis was a classmate of Giltus Mathias who is parish priest of St Brigid's, Marrickville. and was only 46 years of age. Francis was key to holding the Passionist community together when we were short of manpower in PNG. He was very creative and a hard worker

He managed an amazing project, to tile the carpark and entrance area to the church. Thousands of tiles were prepared, painted, coated in PNG colours and then laid. Much of the work was done by unemployed men



who appreciated the opportunity for some work. The photo above, shows the off site working area and below, the finished project.



## Joseph Liaia



**Joseph** is continuing his mission appeal ministry. Last weekend the parish in Pittsburg had **seven** masses. Joey was celebrant for three, spoke at the end of one other Mass and concelebrated the other three. That's certainly a fair weekend's work! After a day of recovery he took a seven hour bus trip to Indianapolis. He commented that the Passionist house (they call them Monasteries in the United States) and retreat centre in Pittsburgh is beautiful in terms of location and history.



It was the first Passionist house in the Congregation to be named after Paul of the Cross (in 1852). and it was there that buried the founders of the Eastern Province.

Our community in Glen Osmond is also named after Paul of the Cross (in 1895)

## Province Formation Commission



Our Province Formation Commission will meet tomorrow (Friday) and Saturday morning, here at Holy Cross. The Commission was revamped and newly appointed last year. **John Kleinsman** has been a member of the Commission since 2000. For all but two of those years, **Maria Kirkwood**



was also a member of the Commission. It is a most generous and valuable contribution they have made, adding their respective experience and expertise. We have struggled post COVID and as a result of the increased numbers of Vietnamese candidates, to meet as effectively and as easily as was once the case. We want to rectify that situation. John is a moral theologian, and Director of the Nathaniel Bioethics Centre in Wellington, New Zealand. The Centre has an excellent website with many valuable resources in the area of bioethics. <http://www.nathaniel.org.nz/>



**Lien Thai**, is another member of the Commission. Lien is a Holy Cross community member, a former refugee from Vietnam and a retired social worker. Lien's background and experience as well as the fact that she knows many of our Vietnamese men is a great benefit and contribution to the Committee.



**Pastor Mumburi** is parish priest and community leader in St Joseph's Hobart. He has been a formator in Tanzania and here at Holy Cross, and he qualified while in the community at Holy Cross as a spiritual director and supervisor. He is still telling jokes and trying to stay

awake during movies that are not high action!



**Paul Vuong** is formation co-ordinator in Vietnam and the Province representative on the PASPAC Formation Commission. He has been professed for ten years, and has been keenly engaged in spirituality and formation programmes to add these skills to his personal gifts and experience.

I am Co-ordinator of the Commission.

## Mowing



Last Friday our two new 'mowerists', Joe Curcio and Ivan Kolarik had a lesson from Peter Norman. It was a very cold morning – about 2 degrees and as you can see, quite foggy!

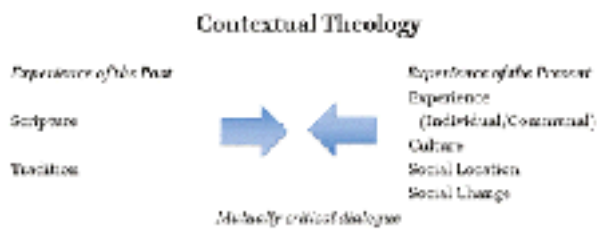
The machine in the photo is our older but they also had a lesson on the zero turn mower. The rain has made it difficult to find a day to do the mowing.



The photograph to the left shows Tri after he and Erick had driven around the property collecting branches and sticks that had fallen down recently. They present a problem for mowing. After strong winds, it is a common experience that there are fallen branches 'everywhere'

## Contextual Theology Part 1

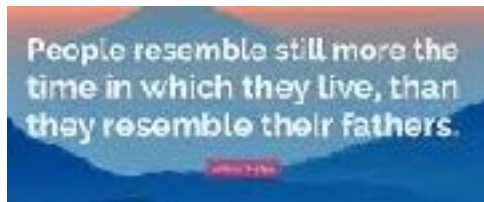
In last week's newsletter We reflected on 'The Last Judgment' painted by Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni, between 1495-1498. That was a very different time from today and a long time after Jesus spoke of the Last Judgment! The painting reflects something of Michelangelo's thinking at the time, rather than when Matthew's gospel was written or 2024.



In November last year, the Vatican announced that Pope Francis had approved new statutes for the Pontifical Theological Academy which called for a major push toward developing a “fundamentally contextual theology, capable of reading and interpreting the Gospel in the conditions in which men

and women live each day,”

Francis said that in a “synodal, missionary and outgoing church,” theologians must also dialogue with other sciences and with members of other religions and that helping Catholics have a deeper understanding of the faith will be possible only if theology grapples with their questions and concerns”. He added that “Promoting theology in the future cannot be limited to abstractly re-proposing formulas and patterns of the past.”



If people resemble the times they live in more than their parents, we should be finding ways to speak about what we know that wasn't known in earlier times, or what we always knew but understand differently in these times.

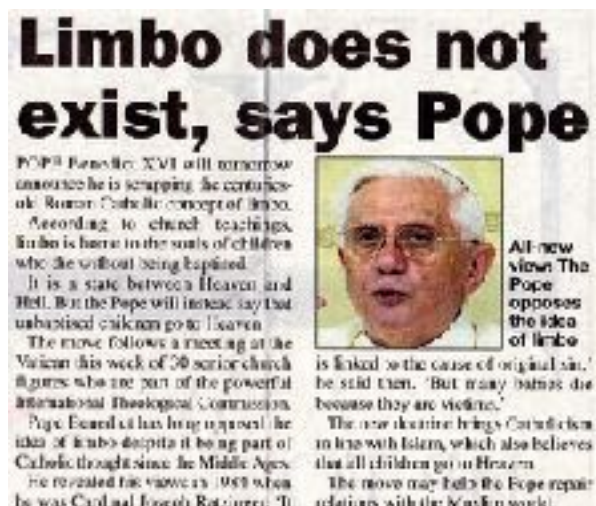
Ever since the gospels were written there has been an attempt to blame the Jewish people for the death of Jesus, even though crucifixion was clearly, a Roman punishment. But the early Christians were living under Roman occupation and oppression, so it wasn't wise to blame the Romans!



In different periods of history this gospel emphasis has led to cruel anti-semitic treatment, mainly for Jews, although the term 'semitic' refers to a set of languages belonging to an ethnic, cultural or racial group associated with peoples of the Middle East, that including Arabs, Jews, Akkadians, and Phoenicians.

We have seen a change in the emphasis given to limbo and purgatory in the past forty years and especially since Pope Benedict's 2007 ruling, and our understanding of hell and heaven has also changed.

In 1999, Pope John Paul 2<sup>nd</sup> said, “Heaven,





or the happiness in which we will find ourselves, is neither an abstraction nor a physical place in the clouds, but a personal relation [with God].....This final condition can be anticipated in a certain sense now on earth....Moreover, the pictures of Hell given to us in Sacred Scripture must be correctly interpreted. They express the total frustration and emptiness of a life without God. More than a place, Hell is the state of the one who freely and finally removes oneself from God, the source of life and joy”.

The painted images of hell and the sermons that struck fear into people’s hearts are virtually now a ‘thing of the past’. With what we have learned from evolution and cosmology it is necessary to find a language that more accurately expresses what we now know. Former Adelaide priest Denis Edwards, is one Australian theologian that did this. It is an ongoing challenge.

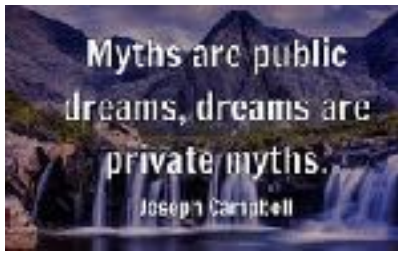
Living in a very rational thinking culture as we do, our younger generation in particular, have little appreciation of myth. Fortunately they are exposed to our first nations peoples’ creation myths, but the risk is that these myths are dismissed as irrelevant, despite explaining how a people became who they are, and who they have been for at least 60,000 years.

Ancient myths helped communities understand their experiences of fertility, birth, rain, sunshine, landscape, animals, plants and food and a lot more. These myths also explained how people could or should interact with the world around them. Successive generations modified these myths to better explain the existence, attitudes and customs they had inherited from their ancestors in the light of new learning.

This included appreciating why their neighbours had different stories, beliefs and customs from them. These stories often told of mighty characters or forces that explained these realities.

Humans are meaning makers. We seek to know where we come from, where we are going and what certain events ‘mean’. We are also story tellers and we know that when we tell stories or when we hear stories, the real truth is not in the actual events as they affected individuals, but in the ongoing meaning of the story for the people affected by them.





Myths help us to appreciate mystery, awe, and a connectedness with what is both deeply within and beyond us. Myths do not seek to tell history, nor objective truth. Adults tell children stories of talking animals and of Santa Claus and other characters who form a part of children's imaginary world. Rational minded people devour fictitious novels or watch

movies, happily aware that the story is not 'real'. Adults enjoy opera, dance, poetry and music and can, for a time, 'lose themselves' in the sheer enjoyment of these experiences.

Myths are created to give us insight into the deeper meaning of life, not to provide us with facts. We do need to learn to tell our stories differently. As chimneys have disappeared from homes, stories of Santa Claus entering people's homes have needed to change in their detail. Myths have to be told differently to bring out their truth in the light of present day circumstances. At the same time, ancient writings confirm that human nature has not changed much over the centuries.



If a group of people live in a barren landscape underneath a smouldering mountain, they will develop stories to explain their origins, their history, their customs and laws and their relationship with their surroundings. The

mountain would certainly feature in the stories, unlike another group living by the sea where no mountain has ever been seen. Stories emerge to describe the significance of particular features such as rock formations, the colours of birds and the nature of animals. We know from the accounts of various explorers what incredible reactions some peoples had when they first saw a white person! Obviously when

people encounter humans who look and sound radically different from themselves, they are likely to create stories that helps them explain these differences. Most cultures live with a sense that things are not as they are meant to be, or as they once were. There is a sense that something has been lost, and this something is idealised as harmonious, joy filled and connected with the sacred. Modern people often experience this when they 'go to the bush'. Here they appreciate the unhurriedness of city life, the open attractive landscape with its array of beauty and a sense of connectedness with other people as well as with nature.

Ancient myths made people more conscious of the spiritual dimension that surrounded them. In ways we are only beginning to comprehend, these early people already 'knew' of our dependence on the moon for the seasons and on the sun for life. They gazed at the stars in wonder, not knowing in our sense of knowing that being humans they were made of stardust, and they felt drawn to a relationship with the stars.



Humans first appeared in the Paleolithic, (or old stone) age, but they awakened to an entirely new way of life 10,000 years ago, during Neolithic village life, when language, religion, cosmology, arts, music and dance all began their development. During the Paleolithic period there is no evidence that people believed in a single supreme God. Such a belief seems to be less than 4,000 years old. Among late Paleolithic people, some certainly experienced an intense feeling of mysteriously



'knowing' something that is real but cannot be seen. Interestingly it was this, that early humans responded to before becoming concerned about creation stories or moral behavior. The early religious myths, rituals, worship and cave drawings, sought to connect with mysterious powers rather than literally explain people's origins. These practices are what we know as 'religion' and religion emerged as an integral part of the human

story, along with tools and fire.

Author Karen Armstrong writes about the Axial Age mentioned last week, "All the sages taught their disciples to look within themselves for truth and not to rely on the teaching of priests and other religious experts. Everything should be questioned, and old values must be subjected to critical scrutiny." This critical examination led to a more interior and ethical interpretation of their myths.



Because the gods had become remote, it was increasingly difficult to believe that gods and humans derived from the same source or could be experienced in such a human way. Rituals of sacrifice became more important than the gods to whom they were offered, highlighting the twin characteristics of myth: story and ritual. One without the other, weakens the power of the myth. To these twin dimensions, a third was added during the Axial age, that of correct ethical behaviour

displayed by compassion and justice.



It was during this Axial Age that the great Hebrew prophets challenged the long serving tradition of the Hebrews worshipping other gods beside the God of Israel. Now, they declared, this was the only God. The turning point for the people of Israel was the deportation of their people to Babylon in 586BCE. It was during this exile that the well-known creation story of Genesis was written. Here the people were



exposed to the famed Hanging Gardens, to massive temples and an advanced culture, but amidst this profound display of power, paganism lost its appeal for the people of Israel and they finally responded to the call of the prophets for a radical acceptance of 'their' one God.

One hundred and fifty years later, following years of calling for a more rational approach, Plato expressed his dislike for Greek tragedy because it was too emotional. Plato dismissed myth in preference for reason, although this had little impact on Greek religion at the time, which continued to featured sacrifice to the gods and the celebration of festivals for several more centuries. Greek thought has significantly influenced the response to myth by Christianity in particular.



This became obvious with the advent of the scientific age in the sixteenth century. When searching for ultimate meaning, Judaism and Islam recognized that mysticism, spirituality, ritual and prayer were vital adjuncts to philosophy. Within Western Christianity, many religious figures also promoted this attitude but they were small voices compared with those who had rediscovered the works of Plato and Aristotle.



The advent of modern Western civilization founded on technology, showed little concern for conserving the past. It was concerned with efficiency, and ensuring new ideas could provide economic or social benefit. The advances made led to political and social upheaval and intellectual thinking that saw no place for myth, and worse still, dismissed it as useless and false. The heroes of modernization were scientists or pragmatic inventors, and they had little interest in preserving mythical modes of thinking.

The more people possess in terms of comfort and technology, the more unhappy the general population seems to be, with the incidences of depression and general ill-

health higher than ever.



There is a story told of a tourist who complimented a fisherman on the quality of his fish how little time it took him to catch them. The tourist suggested that if he stayed longer, he could catch more fish. The fisherman explained that his small catch was sufficient to meet his needs and those of his family. When asked how he spent the remainder of his time, the fisherman

said that he did not need to rise early. He fished for a little time, played with his children, sat and talked with his wife, and in the evenings, he often visited friends in the village where they often talked and sang songs.

The tourist suggested that if the man started his day earlier he could fish longer and sell the extra fish. With the extra money he could buy a big boat, and as he caught more fish he could buy a second and a third, and so on until he had a fleet. “If you handle the transactions carefully”, the tourist advised him, “you could earn enough to move to a big city and have a big house. I might only take twenty years”. The fisherman asked what he would do then, and the tourist said “after you have made all that money you could retire, live in a tiny village near the coast, sleep late, play with your children, spend time with your wife and sing songs with your friends!”



Modern technology alone, is not enough to answer the needs of the human heart. Humans yearn for more than physical comfort and intellectual challenge. We search for the deeper meaning of life and how can this be experienced. Ancient myths sought to address these questions.



Some may not be totally adequate for today, but in their core, their truth is as meaningful as ever. Some are saying we need a new myth, or as Passionist Thomas Berry suggested, ‘a new story’. It will not be complete, but if it helps us to identify who we are, where we have come from, where we are going and why we are

here, it will offer something that modern religion is largely failing to do today. Interestingly, Karl Rahner suggested that religious people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century would have been “mystics (one who has experienced God for real) or nothing at all.”

*The devout Christian of the future will either be a 'mystic'—someone who has 'experienced something'—or will cease to be anything at all.*  
Karl Rahner

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### **Melissa Cakes Café Bar,**

65 Parker St, Lower Templestowe on Thursday July 25 at 10.30am. Just turn up and get to know some others a little better.

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### **Humour**

#### **From church bulletins**

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and the deterioration of some older ones.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication will follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday: 'I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours!'



## Congratulations



**Joachim Pham Quang Vinh**, will be ordained deacon on Saturday morning in Vietnam. Vinh and his brothers Peter Danh and Tuan Joseph (TJ) were at Holy Cross in 2019-2020, and their return to Vietnam was delayed by the COVID outbreak. Vinh was born in Bà Rịa - Vũng Tàu, in Đồng Nai province, in the Southeast region of Vietnam. It is wonderful to see men of Vinh's calibre who were here as postulants, being ordained (deacon) for ministry. We congratulate Vinh and assure him of our prayers.

## Prayers

We remember all the recently deceased especially **Francis Xavier Chennampally CP** and those whose anniversaries occur this week, especially, **Eileen McLoughlin** (13<sup>th</sup> July) **Maree Metcalfe** (19<sup>th</sup> July) **Marjorie Flew** (19<sup>th</sup> July)

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



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

Keeghan,

Anne Jenkins, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Errol Lovett, Shirley Barnes, 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