

Holy Cross Retreat

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



Letter 237

23rd August, 2024

Come Away Day

The next 'Come Away Day' of the year will be held at Holy Cross on Wednesday 4th September. The theme of the day is 'JOURNEY IN HOPE'. After the long winter break this is an opportunity to celebrate the re-birth of creation in Spring and to continue this re-birth in the flow of the Spirit's gifts into our lives. The day's program provides opportunities for prayer, reflection and group interaction in the beautiful grounds and facilities of Holy Cross. All are welcome. Just come as you are. BYO lunch. Registration is from 9.30am. The program concludes with a celebration of the Eucharist with a departure time of around 2pm

The cost of the day is \$25.00 or a donation according to your means. For any further details contact Sr Brigid cp on bridget.m64@gmail.com

Brochures about the 2024 Program are available in the back porch of the Chapel. Please put this Date in your Diary and consider inviting a friend along to share the Come Away Day experience.

Back on deck

A number of people expressed concern about **Jerome** last Sunday, but he is recovered after a nasty bug.

JD and **Tri** both have had reactions to the change in weather and been unwell. Both have recovered.

IELTS exam

International
English
Language
Testing
System

• A global standardised English language test designed to test the English language skills of non-native speakers who plan to study or work where English is the language of communication

Tomorrow, Rafael will sit for his IELTS exam. This is an approved test designed to assess English speaking and listening and is an essential part of his visa application to enter PNG. The test assesses four areas: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. Rafael is hoping to join his Indonesian brother, Budi, in Vanimo, PNG.

The Green Team last Sunday



Bianca Curcio, Chris, Angela Senzo

The miracle of DNA that we share



Missing Book

If anyone has accidentally picked up a book left in its Dymocks bag under a chair at the back of the Chapel on 11/8/24, could you please let us know (email: financehcc@passionists.com). The book is titled 'Bill the Bastard' by Roland Perry and is about a famous war horse. The owner's name - Mary Norden - is written in the book and she would be so grateful for its safe return.

The coming weeks

As mentioned last week, **Erick** will do an edited version of the newsletter for the next three months, and he will carry out the duties of community leader during that time while I am away.

Joseph (Joey) is due to return on September 5th, and it will be good to have him back home.

Coffee at **Melissas** (65 Parker Street, Templestowe) will be next Thursday 29th at 11.00am. Just turn up to catch up.

The **coffee cart** will be back next month (probably September 22nd). Erick will confirm that next week.

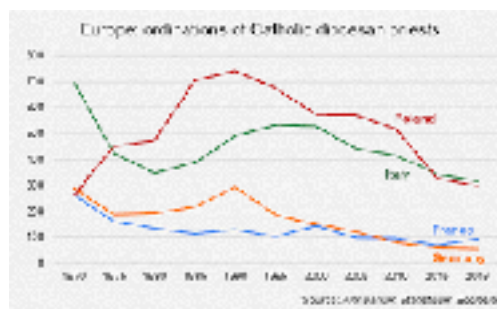
Dublin seminary has only one student



Fr Séamus McEntee, the vocations director for the Archdiocese of Dublin, confirmed that Holy Cross, the Dublin seminary has just one student, with a second man joining next month. The news comes amid Ireland's Catholic Church consolidating its six dioceses into three. It is the largest restructure in nearly 900 years.

As well as a shortage of priests, the consolidation comes amidst a declining number of practising Catholics and, with many priests nearing retirement combined with the significant lack of new seminarians, the future looks very different from what the country is used to.

Ireland has 2,100 priests serving an estimated 3.5 million Catholics, which is similar to Australia which has 2,900 priests for 5.2 million Catholics. New Zealand has 530 priests for 300,000 Catholics. Papua New Guinea has for 400 priests for 4,200,000 and Vietnam has 27,00 priests (and 2,600 seminarians) for 7,000,000 Catholics



In 2022, Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell said, “There are lay ministers, women and men, who are publicly recognised by the Church and appointed by the diocese to minister alongside priests and deacons in leading liturgies, supporting adult faith formation and accompanying families preparing for the sacraments. It is my pastoral responsibility as Bishop to do this – for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of the People of God” he said.



The Bishop of Clogher, Larry Duffy has only 44 priests serving 85 churches across 37 parishes and many of the priests are stretched thin, traveling between multiple locations. To help, the diocese has introduced a lay funeral ministry. The first group of 40 lay ministers, already trained, will lead funeral services in 12 parishes. These services will feature scripture readings, eulogies and prayers at the graveside.

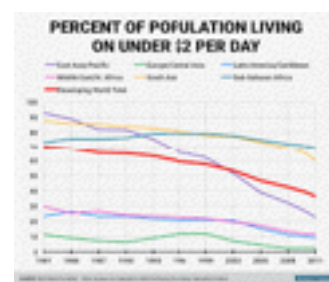
There are similar situations to Dublin in many Western dioceses, which affects smaller parish communities in particular. Such experiences have occurred before, for a variety of reasons.

Contextual Theology (7)

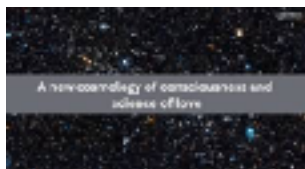


The early Christians saw in Jesus, 'the way' of life. This called them to radical service of others, to reject the misuse of power and status that lords over others, and seek instead, equality and inclusion as well as a commitment to take care of the poor and the weak. Jesus commissioned his followers to be a light for the world. They celebrated their commitment to this way of life by recalling the spirit of Jesus present among them and remembering the ongoing gift of his life, death and risen life.

Followers of Jesus face a radical challenge in understanding this same commitment for our times. While it is true that hundreds of millions of people have a better standard of life than fifty years ago, world wealth is scandalously unevenly distributed. The consumption of goods has led to worldwide poverty and widespread destruction of the planet. Over-activity and an endless deluge of information, has robbed people of the practice and benefits of contemplation.



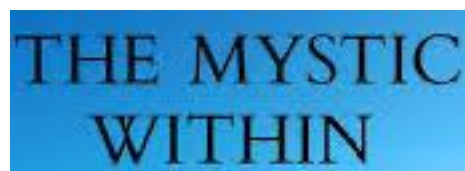
Technology including AI threatens to overtake human relationships, as a priority. Unless we see all life as drawn into communion, and each of us imbued with the sacred, what light will we shine on this world?



The new cosmology encourages a sense of connectedness not only with fellow humans but with all forms of life, together with a sense of awe, wonder and compassion. In 'The Mystique of the Earth' Thomas Berry CP highlights that humans are not spirits. He suggests the soul is the vital principle in a living organic body which all living beings share. *"Humans have an intelligent soul that is capable of reflecting on itself and on the deeper aspects of the universe. In this way, the universe knows itself in us"*.

Jesus used a number of images from nature. *"Look at the wild flowers and reflect on how they grow, I tell you not even Solomon in all his regalia, was arrayed like one of these"*.

(Matthew 6:30). Look at the birds; consider the mustard seed; a sower went out to sow seed; you know that a red sky at night means fine weather, and so on. This attentiveness to the world around us is an important aspect of our religious awareness. It calls out the mystic within us.



Our consumerist culture has destroyed ecosystems



and countless animals and earth systems. It has killed and degraded huge numbers of humans. Armies have killed, raped and plundered, often blindly following a heartless warrior leader, seeking to take what someone else possesses. The single shot rifle that created havoc has been replaced by weapons of mass destruction.

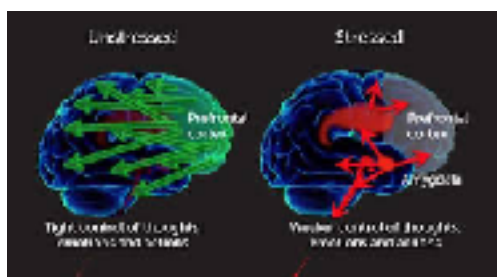
Now, not just individuals, but entire urban communities are caught up in warfare based on religious or cultural differences, blind to their intended communion. Advanced science has helped us understand that our most basic brain structures were shaped in the skulls of reptilian ancestors, who lived long before the dinosaurs. The cerebellum and brainstem, handle our involuntary breathing and muscle memory. They also contain the instinctual drives of eating, surviving and reproducing.

Our brain instinctively activates in times of danger to fight, flee or freeze. It also harbours territorial defensiveness and aggression. This reptilian brain came from even earlier times, when our ancestors lived in the sea. Unlike reptiles, humans and other mammals have a section of brain called the limbic section which is the source of our emotions. This system requires dreaming in order to remain healthy.

Without dreams, mammals die.

Seventy-five percent of the human brain is taken up by a neo-cortex developed from our primate relatives. This part of our brain talks to itself. It takes our mind away from the present and from one thought to the next, just as our primate ancestors did as they moved from tree to tree. It allows memories to be stored, rational thinking to operate, and it allows for symbolic language. Actions can be tested before choices are taken. It can also create anxiety about choices.

Choosing between multiple alternate drives, highlights that we do have a free will. We also have a pre-frontal cortex or frontal lobes which are linked to our sense of purpose or intention. This is unique to humans. Foresight, motivation and vision of one's goals are controlled by these lobes. This drive can be strong enough to help us choose beyond the mammalian and reptile choices of our brain and it is the home of self-awareness where physical survival systems are changed to subjective feelings. This part of our brain is also connected with those aspects which point to the future: hope, desire, longing and spiritual connectedness.



Who we are has been profoundly shaped by the environment of our ancestors. There is enough anatomical evidence, such as our tail bone and our complex oesophagus to know that we are not perfectly formed and that we carry some traits from our ancestors. No matter what family, society or culture, humans

Everyone has their demons and habits, think before you judge!

everywhere struggle to control some impulses or addictions and we think, feel and act in a way that can harm ourselves, others or our natural environment. Whatever our demons, they are the same or a variation of anyone else's demons!

Evolutionary brain science confirms that the reptilian drives for sustenance (food, safety and sex) are the most difficult urges to control. Sometimes people feel helpless, as if some powerful force has taken over. This urge comes from the reptilian brain. Although not aware of the



ancestor influence, but fully aware of the experience, Biblical language and subsequent theology has been alert to this drive referring to it as temptation, and crediting it to Satan or the Devil. It put the blame on Eve and Adam in the mythic story of the 'Fall'. John Calvin preached that the entire creation including humans, was in a degraded state and needed transformation. He said it would be different if we came from the stars! Now that we know that we do indeed come from the stars, how do we best express this desired transformation?

St Paul expressed the experience of being held back from transformation in a profoundly positive way when he wrote *"How is it that I find myself doing the things that I don't want to do, and not doing the things that I do want to do? Who will save me from myself?"* (Romans 7:22-24). Paul's answer was the loving compassion of



Jesus, which turned his weaknesses into strength. What Paul experienced in his everyday struggle was what the Genesis author, writing four hundred and fifty years earlier, also knew to be true. For some reason, we are always falling short of what we believe we could or should achieve.

When this affects our moral choices, and causes harm to others, a rupture occurs. The author of Genesis did not know what evolutionary science has learned about the impulses of our reptilian brain, but he did understand the reality of the behaviour. Our unwanted or sinful nature is a reality.

The author was also aware that it is within our capacity to make proper choices. The Genesis myth described the consequences of making the wrong choice; for choosing evil over good. The Genesis interpretation was that every child was born with this 'sinful inheritance'.



Biblical culture built strongly on the emotions of guilt and shame as a motivation for doing good. Being human meant being burdened by our unchosen nature. This has been spoken of in the Christian tradition as 'original sin'.

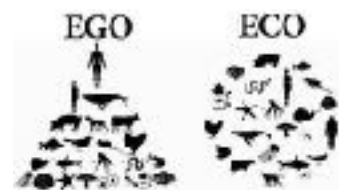
The religious demand for us to be perfect, has not been aware of our inherited struggles. Jesus though, knew this, as his retort to the wealthy young man indicated, *"Why do you call me good? Only God is good"*. (Mark 10:18). We will always struggle

to be true to our higher callings. Being aware of this can help us put, in place the personal and communal mechanisms that we need. At the same time, we must be conscious of those traps that put our reptilian urges at risk because they do not contribute towards the common good.



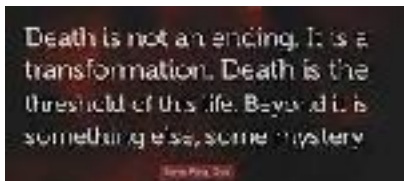
Aggression has led to wars with incredible loss of life, and depletion of earth's resources to achieve it. Young people, fuelled by alcohol or drugs, often replicate this aggressive and destructive behaviour. The lessons to learn are obvious and we have to learn them as individuals and communities.

For us to be who, what and where we are today, there are countless generations of species, including humans, that have made contributions and sacrifices. Standing on the threshold of a challenging future, we surely have to consider this so that we bequeath a better life for succeeding generations. This is the call to bring about the kingdom. Our species is a relational species. Our spirituality must include the life of our planet and all its species. Thomas Berry often said, *"We are a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects"*.



The universe is a whole ever-present creative event or energy in all things. How can two sticks create fire if there is no energy within or between them?

Different cultures shape their understanding of God. We cannot limit God's ever-present spirit working in other cultures and peoples. As the poem, *Desiderata* claims, *"No doubt the universe is unfolding as it should"*. What God wants is always

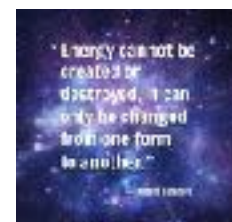


directed towards life, growth, love and unity. In the physical world, matter is never lost; it simply changes form. Death is a natural reality in an imperfect world, but death is not the end. Death is transformation. God weaves life creatively, as St Paul declares *"all things work together for good"*. (Romans 8:28).

The gospel calls us to recognise that the extent of our relationships knows no limits. This includes not just those closely related to us. It includes every person, because every person is related, as the evolutionary story clearly reveals.

Jesus pointed out that whether people act well or not, they still receive the gift the sun offers as well as the refreshing and sustaining rains. He recognised that the tiny mustard seed becomes a giant tree providing shades for birds who can rest in its branches. (Mark 4: 30-32)

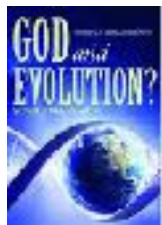
A paradox that evolutionary science has discovered, is that living systems require the continual breakdown of fixed order. In this



way, the natural world invites us to see God as not only just a source of order, as once would have been exclusively claimed of God, but as allowing novelty to develop and for the universe to participate in its own creation.



Subatomic particles do not have an independent, continuous existence, but come in and out of existence billions of times every second. This implies that Creation did not end in the past, but is continually flowing forth. God is more creating, than creator! Countless times every second, every subatomic particle in the entire universe is being re-created. God must think it is worth the effort! A principal contribution of Catholicism is its view of the universe as revelatory; as a direct revelation of God. One example of this is that all human activity as well as other life on earth is powered by the generosity of the sun. This is a sacrificial, ongoing event. The Catholic way of interpreting this event would be to see the sun as a revelation of God.



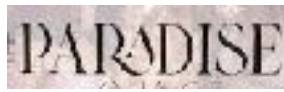
Theology needs to be both faithful to biblical sources and the data of science, and develop a way of thinking about God who creates through the evolutionary processes of random mutation and natural selection. In his book 'God After Darwin', Catholic theologian John Haught claims that evolutionary science has proven that the assumption of an original cosmic perfection '*spoiled*' by original sin is untenable. In this way, evolution has "*abolished the cosmological framework in which the ideas of reparation and atonement were expressed in spirituality*".



Former Adelaide priest Denis Edwards made it clear that God can no longer be thought of as a unipersonal being, such as an old man located up in the sky, over and above the universe, reaching into the universe to act at particular moments. "*The God of natural selection is the liberating, healing and inclusive God of Jesus. This suggests a God who freely accepts the limits of the process of emergence, a God who creates through the losses and gains of evolutionary history. It suggests a God engaged with creation, a God who respects process, who suffers with creation, a God whose on-going action is adventurously creative in and through the unfolding of evolutionary history*".

Process theology emerged in reaction to the unchanging nature of God promoted in classical theology and instead emphasises becoming and evolving, over being. The context for this theology is that the universe story is a story of God becoming present in and throughout emergent creation, and that this is testimony to God's self-giving. In this way, God is best imagined in terms of self-emptying, total giving, suffering love. This is what we acknowledge in the Passion, Cross and Resurrection

of Jesus and John Haught suggests this is central to a theology of evolution.



Haught suggests that it is necessary to acknowledge that the universe is not yet perfect and never was. 'Paradise' is located in the future, rather than the past! We are not seeking to reclaim something lost. Rather, for Haught, Jesus points forward to a future of promise and hope.



Humour

Secretary: "Doctor, the invisible man is at the reception desk. He says he has an appointment".

Doctor: Tell him I can't see him.

Employment interviewer: So you'd be starting off at \$20,000, but later on it can go up to \$40,000. Prospective employee Excellent, I'll start later on.

Why did the physics teacher break up with the biology teacher?
There was no chemistry.

A doctor asked his patient angrily. Why he sent his bill back, unopened.
The patient said Doctor, it was you who told me I must avoid any upsets and stress!

A man got hit in the head with a can of 7Up. He's ok though, it was a soft drink.

I asked my daughter if she'd seen the newspaper. She told me that newspapers are old school. She said that people use tablets nowadays and handed me her iPad. The fly didn't stand a chance.

I burnt 1500 calories yesterday. I left a cake in the oven for too long.

A boy asked a girl, "how much do you love me?" The girl looked him in the eyes. "Look up at the stars, that's how much I love you". The boy was confused. "But it's morning, there are no stars? The girl nodded, "exactly".

A husband said to his wife: °Do you know what our 6 year old son wants to be once he's big?°

His wife replied, °No°

Husband: °A garbage collector! And you know why?°

Wife: No, why?

Husband: °Because he thinks they only work on Tuesdays.°

Daddy read some bedtime stories to make little Johnny fall asleep. Half an hour later mummy opened the door quietly and asked: °And, is he asleep?°

Little Johnny answered. °Yes finally!°

Q. Why are there huge waiting times in the emergency rooms at all hospitals?

A. Because they're testing the theory that time heals all wounds.

Q. Mary, why did you put your teddy in the freezer?

A. I would like to have a polar bear.

Q. How do we know Moses wore a wig?

A. Sometimes he was seen with aaron, and sometimes without!

Q. When was the first cricket match?

A. When Peter stood up with the eleven and was bold!!!

A friend boasted he had the body of a Greek god. I had to explain where Buddha actually comes from

LAWYER: Now sir, I'm sure you are an intelligent and honest man--

WITNESS: Thank you. If I weren't under oath, I'd return the compliment.

ATTORNEY 1: Doctor , how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

WITNESS: All of them. The live ones object to much

ATTORNEY 2: How was your first marriage terminated?

WITNESS: By death..

ATTORNEY 2: And by whose death was it terminated?

WITNESS: Could you take a guess?

ATTORNEY 3: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNE 3: Did you check for blood pressure?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY 3: Did you check for breathing?
 WITNESS: No..
 ATTORNEY 3: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?
 WITNESS: No.
 ATTORNEY 3: How can you be so sure, Doctor?
 WITNESS: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.
 ATTORNEY 3: I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?
 WITNESS: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law.



Prayers

We remember all the recently deceased especially **Tony Tome**, whose funeral will be next Tuesday August 27th at OLOP Donvale at 10.00am.

We also remember those whose anniversaries occur this week, especially

Giovanni and Marianna DePetro

Phyllis Dixon (24th August)

Giuseppe Vigilante (26th August)

Maria Robson (27th August)

Tony Van der Haar (27th August)

Dorothy Van der Slurs (29th August)

John Bičk (30th August)

I thank my God each time I think
 of you!
 And when I pray for you,
 I pray with joy.

We also remember all others in our Holy Cross family who are unwell. There are a number who have asked not to be named, but we remember them as well as:

Lorraine Gill, Adrian Woon, Maree Bartoli,

Pam Storey, Ann Burke, Michael O'Callaghan, Sandra Street, Paul Darbyshire, Mary Dunn, Luke Norden, Carol Battistella, Monique Hardinge, Robyn Burns, John Reardon, Gerry Bond, Ann Burke, Peter & Bernadette Owen, Alexander Lim, Agnes Mumburi, Greg Agosta, Peter McNamara, Bronwyn Burke, Helen McLean, Phil Drew, Mary Hackett, Anne Jenkins, Pam Gartland, Patricia Keeghan, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Errol Lovett, 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

Thank you for the encouragement to continue the newsletter. It's primary aim is to keep people connected, and that's best done with some local news, some relevant news from elsewhere, some formative reflections, some humour and especially with requests for prayers for those named and unnamed, who need our support and encouragement in carrying their burden

I will see some of you at Mass this Sunday and look forward to seeing you and/or others or being in touch when I return from my sabbatical and presence at the General Chapter in Rome.

Brian



“Hello Brian. How are all those beautiful people at Holy Cross?”