

Holy Cross Retreat

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



Letter 239

6th September, 2024

Greetings everyone

Last week, I visited the Marist Brothers for a Eucharistic celebration, and one of them shared something intriguing that I believe Brian Traynor would also appreciate. The brother recounted that the saying "When the cat's away, the mice will play" was once directed at a leader who was about to leave. The leader replied, "When the cat's away, the cat has a bloody good time!" We hope Brian is having a "bloody good time" while he is away (forgive my French).

Rafael gives us gifts while waiting for IELTS exam results



"You don't have to wait until Christmas or birthdays to give a gift." Last Monday, Rafael asked to speak after our community evening prayer during dinner. He brought small bags and began to explain how he received the

Indonesian traditional shirts. He shared that Passionist benefactors in Indonesia wanted to send him a gift, but he told them he didn't need anything for himself—he would appreciate some shirts for his community instead. They sent enough shirts in various sizes for each of us, but none for him. How selfless! Rafael's English has improved significantly, but he is still waiting for his IELTS exam results. Once he passes, he will go to PNG for his mission, joining Budi.

Thank you for the gifts, Rafael. May God bless you (Matur nuwun. Berkah Dalem).



Joey is back

Joey arrived back in Melbourne yesterday after three months of traveling in the USA, begging for money to support Passionist Mission Projects for PNG. The photo was taken at St Therese of Carmel, the second last parish, before he completed the mission appeals at St Luke's Church.

Below is his reflection while at St Luke's.



"Finally it ends here at St. Luke Church, Foster City, CA! It seemed impossible at the beginning! With every step of the journey, there was discovery, growth, and a transformative experience within! The incredible hands of God was at work in all the experiences, the challenges, the travels and the connections with people! I am grateful to the people of the Church in the States! May God bless you all for your love, generosity, hospitality and friendship! Everyday I travelled, I had my rosary in one pocket, and my phone on the other! Yes, my Blessed Mother was with me all the way, and through her prayers I've done something that seemed impossible possible! Ironically, I finished at a church whose patron saint is St. Luke! The author of St. Luke's Gospel wrote the Acts of the Apostles! Which is about the spread and growth of the early Church, the mission to the gentiles, the evangelization of the gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth! A powerful reminder that this is not where the mission ends, but where it begins! Have a blessed week ahead!"

New Lounge Suite in the Dining Hall & New Manchester for the Community (Cecilia)

We are very grateful for the generous donation (anonymity requested) of a new lounge suite in the Dining Hall and new sheets/bedding and towels for the Community in residence. We have reflected on the warmth that the lounge suite brings to the Dining Hall, making it



cosier. It has a practical advantage also, enabling the staff to clear tables after dinner whilst any lingering guests can finish their coffees and conversation on the lounge. The manchester also has been such a welcome gift to the Community, keeping them warm and comfortable with fresher linens and towels. All an answer to a prayer!

Come Away Day Sept 4th (Brigid CP)



Our theme was journey with hope and we spent some reflective time connecting with the gift of the Earth and all of creation, touching into how the new life we see and experience around us is also stirring within us and asking the question of what in us is called to grow, or to renew or to flourish and who and what supports or hinders such growth.

Later in the morning, despite some strong breezes we ventured out into the sunshine for prayer from the four directions which was an opportunity to express our gratitude for creation, to acknowledge the gifts of the land which is now in the care of the Passionists. We gave thanks too for the ministry exercised at Holy Cross, one of hospitality which nurtures the spirits of the people who come for short or long visits. We finished our prayer outside with an Australian Blessing attributed to Elizabeth Pike, as follows

May you always stand tall as a tree

Be as strong as the rock Uluru,

Be as gentle as the morning mist

Hold the warmth of the sacred campfire
within you.

And may the Spirits of our Ancestors always
watch over you.

There was much sharing and we finished
with a celebration of the Eucharist

Our next and last Come Away for the year is on Tuesday November 26th



Passionist Companions (Brigid CP):

Please note a change of date: Our next companions gathering is on **October 22nd 2pm-4pm**. Passionist Companions is for those who are interested in coming to know more about Passionist Spirituality and anyone is welcome to come along without obligation.

Pianos & Organ For Sale

The Brigidine Sisters are disposing of some items from their Kildara Centre in Malvern. If anyone is interested in the following, please get in touch directly with Stephenie at the Brigidine Sisters, tel 9509 2132. Purchaser to arrange collection/removal from Malvern.

Vincent Baby Grand Piano – structurally sound though some scratches to wood surfaces. \$1,000 cash

Rich Lipp & Sohn Upright Piano – mahogany case in very good original condition, hand-crafted 1925/26. \$1,000 cash

Yamaha Electric Organ & Stool – good condition. \$200 cash

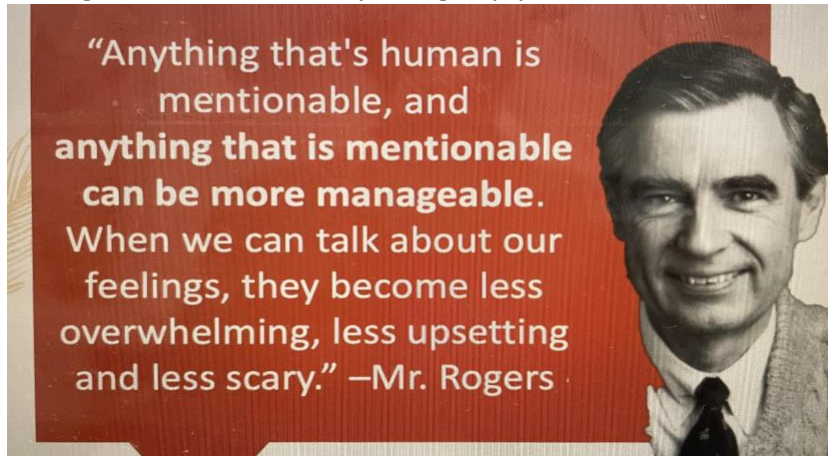


Rosary Beads on Sale in the Chapel (Cecilia)

Thank you to the person who has made some rosary beads available for sale in the Chapel. As Brian is away, we are not sure who that person is! Would you mind contacting Maryrose or Cecilia on 9846 6014 or financehcc@passionists.com as the last of the rosary beads are now sold and we have received some funds on your behalf.

Safeguarding Sunday (Tina)

Tina Minichilli, our safeguarding and risk management officer, kindly prepared the notice below in response to what the Church is asking of us this weekend and beyond. Before the notice, I've included a quote from my studies in psychology that I believe is fitting for this occasion. It encourages us to be more open about difficult feelings, especially when we are afraid or feeling shame. Opening up is the only way for healing to begin, even if it initially brings up painful memories.



“ Every Conversation Matters” A heading chosen to mark Safeguarding Sunday

The Catholic Church in Australia will mark Safeguarding Sunday 2024 the 8th September, at the conclusion of National Child Protection Week. We pray for those who have been abused, their families and supporters. Rebuilding trust and confidence in the Church requires constant work and vigilance. The Catholic Church of Australia recommit to cultural change that will help the Church be a place that builds and supports safe communities for all people.

We invite our Passionist Community to pray for those harmed by abuse directly and indirectly.

Prayer for Safeguarding Sunday 2024

Gracious God,

You love and care for all of your children, especially the smallest and most vulnerable.

We entrust to you the lives of children and adults at risk who have been sexually abused, neglected or exploited and whose trust and innocence has been destroyed.

Help us to hear their cries of pain and to take responsibility for those whose lives have been broken.

Help us to recognise the hurt felt by those wounded by abuse, and the failure to be heard.

We pray that with the help of your grace communities and families will find understanding and support, so that now and in the future, their wounds may be healed and they may find lasting peace.

Let your grace and love fall gently now upon our children and adults at risk, giving them the inner strength, peace and resilience to seek out assistance when required.

Help us all to listen with open hearts, so that when children and adults at risk speak, they are truly heard.

We ask this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Do it Now...Berton Braley (Brian)

This beautiful reflection was included in the booklet for Tony Tome's funeral

If with pleasure you are viewing
any work a man is doing,
If you like him or you love him, tell him now;
Don't withhold your approbation
till the parson makes oration
and he lies with snowy lilies on his brow;
No matter how you shout it
he won't really care about it;
He won't know how many teardrops you have shed;
If you think some praise is due him
now's the time to slip it to him,
For he cannot read his tombstone when he's dead.

More than fame and more than money
is the comment kind and sunny
And the hearty, warm approval of a friend.
For it gives to life a savour,
and it makes you stronger, braver,
And it gives you heart and spirit to the end;
If he earns your praise – bestow it,
if you like him let him know it,
Let the words of true encouragement be said;
Do not wait till life is over
and he's underneath the clover,
For he cannot read his tombstone when he's dead.

Contextual Theology 9 (Brian)

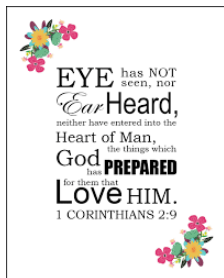
Continuing a summary of Sr Elizabeth Johnson's interview 'No one had to die for our sins'

Elizabeth Johnson suggests that “to believe in the resurrection is not to believe in a scientific miracle. It is to believe in God! It is an act of hope in the God who created you, along with everyone else and everything else. This God, our God, has the love and the power to recreate, even when death has taken away the only life we have known.



When we die we are not annihilated, because God is still there! There is more life. The disciples experienced this with the resurrection of Jesus, who they thought was gone forever. He was there with them wherever two or three gathered. He was there in the stranger who was hungry or thirsty. He was there in the Eucharist. God is there – here!

Paul uses a helpful metaphor (in 1 Corinthians 15) where he says that when you plant a seed what you get in the end in terms of grain, looks very different and in order for that seed to produce that grain, it had to die! The seed has to disintegrate and break open, and its interior has to put down roots and put up a shoot, and then you get this new thing. It's the same creature, but it's very transformed. When you plant the body when someone dies (that's his analogy), it undergoes transformation and what God brings to life, is transformed.



None of us has died and been able to come back and tell the rest of us about it. It's a future that's shrouded in darkness. As Paul says, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the hearts of people what God has prepared for those who love him.” We can't imagine what it's like not to be bound by time and space when we live in our bodies on this planet.

Images of light or the bursting forth of new life of flowers are good metaphors. Some people think of the caterpillar who spins a pupa, goes into that pupal stage, totally disintegrates, and then emerges as this butterfly. It's the same insect, but you would never know it. Completely different, not only in what it looks like but in what it can do. The butterfly can fly. The resurrection is like that!”



This highlights why we have to care for every life, recognizing God's love for all creation. It took the smallest insect, the largest animal and us, 13.8 billion years to get here. We can so easily decide to terminate the life of one of God's creatures, without that thought. Johnson says, "It is the experience of death and

resurrection that should alert us to the reality that in our common prayers, when we say 'us' in those prayers, the "us" is not just those gathered, not just Catholics and not just humans, but each and all living creatures.

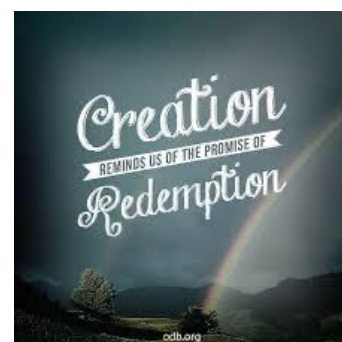
Johnson further suggests that "instead of the 'satisfaction or atonement theory' (where Jesus had to pay back for our sins) , we can see salvation in terms of accompaniment. Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us," or, as John in his gospel put it, "the Word was made flesh." Therefore, what we go through by way of suffering is not unknown to God. God, who created everything, chose to join the world's suffering, undergo it, and know what it means from the inside".



"The whole point of saying 'the Word became flesh' is to expand it beyond just humans. Flesh goes all through the Old Testament to describe everything that's alive, including animals, and even vegetation. When the Psalms talk about all flesh, they mean all living creatures.

The Word became flesh. What we're saying in theology today is "deep incarnation." The incarnation doesn't mean that the Word of God became human, but that the Word of God became flesh, which is a broader category identified with all of life that lives, is beautiful, and then suffers and dies. There's a whole lot of theology going on in the idea that God is with every creature that lives, suffers and dies!

Pope Francis puts this in *Laudato Si'*, too. Whether the creature only lives a few minutes or a long life, they belong to God, and God is with them. That's the accompaniment: the presence of God with all beings in their life and their death, with the hope that there is something more. There's nothing really radical in that idea. We just have to put it in this framework where all of creation is redeemed in Christ".



Moving from Johnson's reflections, we can recognise that the authors of the New Testament drew on their religious tradition to explain the meaning of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. It has been said that 'Mark's gospel is a passion story with an introduction'.



In its original version, there was no resurrection; it ended with the women fleeing from the open tomb. It took time for the various Christian communities to interpret the events surrounding Jesus' death, and as we have seen, that interpretation continued to

deepen and unfold, over two thousand years. With Augustine and Anselm, original sin and atonement came to be dominant in how Jesus' death was understood.

Our Christian worldview has been shaped by the Genesis creation story which tells that Adam and Eve's having being made in the image of God failed, and were banished to a life of drudgery. Most of us were taught that God's friendship with humans had been withdrawn or restricted, and the gates of heaven were locked until God relented then and allowed us to regain friendship by sending Jesus. This thinking extended to the idea that every person's soul had been waiting somewhere until Jesus opened the heavenly gates. Even then, admittance was not guaranteed. Mortal sin had to be avoided or else there was eternal damnation. Our aim in life was to avoid this. Our task was to save our souls from damnation and get to heaven.



Jesus did not bring that message that sinners had lost God's friendship. Rather, he urged people to recognise God as compassionate and celebrating that "there is more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than ninety-nine people who have no need of repentance". Every encounter with the weak, the sick or the sinner is filled with compassion and healing. It

is never conditional. Any harshness was reserved for hypocrites. Despite this, and so many compelling guarantees of God's compassion and forgiveness in the gospels, many people have not believed it. We need to recapture the message presented by the evangelists, that the cross was the supreme demonstration of God's love.

What Does The Bible Say About Natural Disasters?

The Biblical narrative recounts many disasters such as the great flood, the ten plagues in Egypt, the destruction of Sodom, defeats in battle and other sufferings that resulted in huge loss of life. It also tells of various punishments inflicted on the people, culminating in the ultimate punishment, the exile in Babylon. These events required an explanation. How was it, that a good and beautiful creation looked after by a loving creator, included all these realities, all this suffering? Such a question is little different from what has been asked throughout human history, and is still asked today.

During the Great Plague or Black Death in the fourteenth century when at least twenty-five million people died from the plague, preachers continually reminded people that the evil plague was a punishment for their sins. Modern day fundamentalists often preach that various natural disasters are a punishment sent from God for people's sins. Biblical literature records a similar explanation for people's suffering and the state of the world, but punishment was always followed by blessing!



The explanation for the state of the world, for a great deal of human suffering, extinction and death, when looking at life through the lens of evolution, is entirely different. These elements are interwoven with the unfolding of life through billions of years. Whereas in traditional Christianity, death has been considered a penalty for sin, in evolution, death is a biological necessity. New forms of order, such as the formation of stars from supernova explosions or such as emerged following the demise of the dinosaurs, can only come about when death gives way to a new form of life.



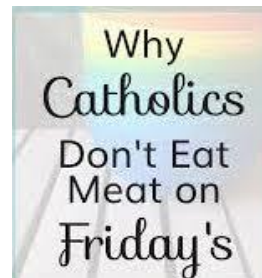
When considered this way, many people now question that Jesus came among us to atone or compensate for our sins or to open the gates of heaven that had been closed when Adam sinned. Evolution has established that death entered the world long before humans, but with the first human, Adam, death became a reality for the human family. Jesus broke through that truth with the transformation of resurrection.

During the Spanish Inquisition thousands of people were accused, tortured and condemned as heretics, because they challenged or would not accept some teachings of the Church.

THE SPANISH INQUISITION

Torture included breaking bones (without breaking the skin), roasting people over fires and screwing their tongues to the walls of their mouths to stop them speaking heresies. Strictly speaking, the Inquisitors themselves did not kill, they only convicted people! They handed over those they condemned to the secular authorities. The torturers burned them to death, but the Inquisitors claimed no blood was shed and they did not do the killing!

Apart from the cruel injustice that many suffered, one can only imagine the fear! That shocking regime has gone, but some of the piety that resulted from it lived on until recent times. The beliefs that went with this have changed a great deal among average Western believers and are continuing to do so. People who lived in fear that eating meat on Friday would expel them to hell for ever, unless they confessed, now wonder why so much fear and anxiety was allowed to build around such a trivial matter.



Living with the fear that we will inherit hell, cannot be the full context of how we understand salvation! In the Christian context, we are called to a full life that we can experience when we live 'in right relationship' with God, our neighbour and creation. Jesus said, "the kingdom of God is here, among you". We believe that

HERE
& NOW

Jesus shows us 'the way' to experience and live in that kingdom – here and now. We can assist the God-directed future to be enhanced with goodness rather than evil. Becoming united with Jesus and his people, 'saves me'

from a life that might otherwise be self-focused and empty.

Finding a more suitable religious and liturgical language will take time. Living as we do in an age that has accepted a totally different world view, we need to respect our tradition, but be able to express our belief in a way that is relevant to our contemporary culture. As quoted in this series, Catholic theologian John Haught In his book 'God After Darwin', claimed 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*".



The cross is a tangible identification of God with suffering. It may not be enough for some people to hope that God will bring good out of suffering, but to 'know' that God suffers with whoever suffers is not only a comfort, but a source of power. The belief that submission led to resurrection provides the cross with true power. The



meaning of Jesus' death is that the deepest love possible is filled with compassion, vulnerability and is ever ready to offer itself in self-sacrifice. Jesus' death also speaks, as did his life, about a different

meaning of power. Divine power is the power to love; to let go; to empower rather than to control. Just as Jesus made himself friend of the weak, the divine allows creation to find its painful way forward, and how painful it needs to be, not just as witness to suffering, but to be the suffering!

Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionists used often say 'the love of God is ingenious and as a mystic he came to believe that the Passion and Death of Jesus was the most overwhelming sign of God's love. Paul knew that God has the capacity to love so fully that this power (of love) recreates, even when death takes away the only life (of loved ones or ourselves) that we have known. This complete love, demonstrated in Jesus, was so powerful that it could even love enemies ('Father forgive them for they know not what they do'). Jesus died because the divine faithfulness loving him, impelled him to embrace the ultimate loss, his life - on a cross, because God is the God of life.



Humour

This week, we have a few brief and familiar chicken jokes. Well, that depends on the reader! Chickens seem to hold a special place in Africa; we love them, but we're not sure if they really like us. I wonder what they think of KFC! One of the jokes poses a question that I'll leave for you to research, as I don't know the answer either. Have a blessed weekend! 😊



What do you call a rooster who wakes you up at the same time every morning?



Prayers

We remember all the recently deceased, especially **Elizabeth Millay** and those whose anniversaries occur this week, especially

Brian Gleeson CP (6th September)

Joan O'Donnell (7th September) Official Benefactor

Ray Zammot (8th September) Son of Carmen and Vince

Francisco Trimboli (11th September)

John Gill (12nd September) Jenny's husband

Tony 'Brien (12nd September) Jeans' husband

Craig O'Loughlin (12nd September)

Kumar Fernando (12nd September)

**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, especially.

Sophia Chung, Zoe Chung, Michael O'Callaghan, Peter McNamara, Pam Storey, Lorraine Gill, Adrian Woon, Maree Bartoli, Ann Burke, Sandra Street,

Paul Darbyshire, Luke Norden, Carol Battistella, Monique Hardinge, Kaya Lenic, Robyn Burns, John Reardon, Alexander Lim, Agnes Mumburi, Peter & Bernadette Owen, Gerry Bond, Mary Dunn, , Bronwyn Burke, Greg Agosta Helen McLean, Phil Drew, 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

Erick & Brian