

Holy Cross Retreat

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



Letter 244

11th October, 2024

Greetings everyone

Rafael's hidden talent revealed

While Rafael has been on holidays from ELSPM, he hasn't wasted any time. He's been doing a lot of work around the centre, mainly with Joey, and often cooking for the community. His hidden talent is being a 'master chef' of authentic Indonesian cuisine. Last week, he made a special Indonesian dish that was so good, many of us went back for seconds and thirds. Later, I found out the dish contained pork blood—JD even showed me a photo to prove it! During the meal, I kept wondering, "What is this amazing flavour?" After learning what it was, I wasn't sure how I would have felt at the time, but now I realise that sometimes it's not just about what we eat, but how it's prepared.



We truly appreciate Rafael's contributions to the community, and we'd also like to acknowledge Shirley Barns, who prepares evening meals for us on Mondays and Wednesdays, along with Terese Lim and others who pitch in occasionally. We are very grateful for their efforts, as the meals are something we thoroughly enjoy.

Although ELSPM has resumed, Rafael left on Monday for a week of 'approved leave' to experience another Passionist community. We hope he has a great time, even though we will miss his sense of service and care. His visa for the mission to PNG is still pending approval, and we continue to pray for it.

Chris on the coordinating committee in Rome while his birthday is pending...

Brian mentioned in an email that a Central Coordinating Committee (CCC) was elected this week to help guide the General Chapter process. The elected members are: Alessandro Follopi, who is Joachim's secretary; Chris Monaghan; Leonella Leidi, a canon lawyer; and Paul Francis Spencer, currently a parish priest in Dublin and well-known to Australians. We extend our congratulations to Chris for representing our region and, most importantly, our Holy Cross community.

You may also know that Chris will be celebrating his birthday next Wednesday, October 16th. We hope there will be a big party for him in Rome! In the photo in the right, we can see that he's continuing to nurture the spiritual community by celebrating the Eucharist for our online Mass. Thank you Chris, and **Happy Birthday!**



Brian has also shared a more detailed reflective report of what has been happening in Rome so far. We are grateful to Brian for taking the time to keep us updated. It must require a lot of effort to write and find appropriate images, which we truly appreciate. The images really enhance the experience of your updates. Jerome and I agreed that one of the most interesting points is on page 4 where Daniel responds with "I have not spoken before because in my culture I am not used to people speaking before they think!" Thank you Brian!

The General Chapter (Brian)



This photo was taken at the end of the PASPAC meeting prior to the pre-Chapter meeting.

Participating in an event like we are during this month has its challenges – more for some than others. There are 88 participants from many cultures and languages. Everything is translated (through headsets) into either Italian, Spanish or English. Fortunately the Spanish facilitators are mostly using English! This is certainly easier for those with English as a first language, and the majority of the men here do speak English as a first or second language.



The Chapter hall (aula) has been completely renovated in recent months. At the last General Chapter the configuration of the room is shown in this photo on the left. The officials and facilitators sat at the desk, and everyone else sat in rows. This made personal conversations very difficult.

With the emphasis on a ‘synodal’ style of meeting for this Chapter, which many religious congregations are now taking up, a decision was taken to renovate the space. The new way provides those meeting, with the opportunity of face-to-face conversations at round tables. Large screens provide a view of what is happening at a particular time, or for a text or video to be projected. The chairs are able to swivel, so a person can look to other sections of the aula that would otherwise not be in their sight. Each day the membership of the table remains the same, but their location in the aula changes.



Each table has translation headsets and microphones which can be switched on to speak. You can see Chris in the front left on the opening day. Already, we are told, several congregations have booked or requested a booking at St John and Paul’s, because of this new facility.

The process is slow, but that is needed because of the many diversities among us. In one exercise we listed 64! These were grouped under headings: Theologies and Spiritualities; Cultural; Mission and Community Life; Leadership; Moral, social and Ethical;



Psychological and Emotional; Generational and Technological; interpersonal and Relational.



We have Joseph from Japan with his translator Maria, and Lukas from Germany with his translator, Vincent. What is slow for us, is much slower and more demanding for them. Some members are confident extroverts, while others are shy or intimidated in such a large gathering. For perhaps 35 members, this is the first General Chapter they have attended. The three preliminary (pre-chapter) days were aimed at slowly allowing us to gather the confidence and to feel safe in expressing our views, not only with those at our table, but to the whole assembly.



At a previous Chapter it was noted by a participant after three days that there were young men present (as there are again this time), but that they had not expressed their opinions. The facilitator invited those who were young to respond to this. Daniel, from Korea amused everyone by saying, "I have not spoken before because in my culture I am not used to people speaking before they think!"

While the Chapter did not officially begin until Monday October 7th, the PASPAC members met on 2nd & 3rd, and the Pre-Chapter went from 4th-6th. From October 2nd we have no free day until October 13th and that day a few Aussie bishops who are in Rome for the General Synod, are coming here to Sts John and Paul's for lunch. Our timetable has been demanding because the first session is at 8.00am, with just one half hour break before lunch at 1.00pm. There is a break until 3.30pm, then two more sessions until Mass, and dinner at 8pm.

We have 'language' groups which met for the first time on Sunday. Of course many who belong to such a group have to use one of the three official languages (Italian, Spanish or English) which may be their second, third or even fourth language.



The pre-Chapter was an experiential process to highlight the need for us to actively listen to others and safely share our thoughts and feelings. It was 'learning by doing' and is obviously a more familiar process to some cultures than others. Gradually trust was created and a sense of brotherhood deepened. This will be important as we begin to discuss matters that are complex or controversial or about which there are divergent views.



The Chapter has four major themes: Belonging, Interior Life, New mission, Configurations.



On the first morning of the pre-Chapter we gathered in the Chapter Hall (aula) for the blessing of the renovated space. During this ritual, a biographical profile of Fr Harry Gielen, CP (1925-2013) from Belgium, was read. The Aula was dedicated to his memory. A life-size statue of the Founder relocated within the Aula was unveiled.



The Facilitators, Fr Yagor Abeledo, a Missionary of Africa and Mr. José Villoslada were introduced along with our spiritual adviser, Fr Kenneth Thesing of the Maryknoll Missionaries. In the first exercise, the Facilitators invited the Chapter members to enter into the meaning of 'blessing'. We were invited to express our thoughts about the word "blessing" which revealed interesting differences across cultures (e.g. in some African cultures only elders can bless, not be blessed). This was followed by a practical exercise, whereby Chapter members was invited to bless up to ten confreres. There was a wide variety of ways in how this was done.

The Chapter members were asked to reflect on and share about the blessing of being a member of this Chapter. This was followed by the video "The Blessing World edition 2024." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d48-qbcovVY>

Chapter members were invited to reflect on and share the following questions:



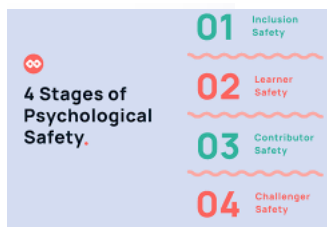
1. Can changes be a blessing?
2. Can we perceive blessings in difficult and unexpected situations?

Later there was an exercise about diversity. Each table was asked to identify ten areas marked by diversity that exist among the Chapter participants, especially those areas that often lead to division. In the subsequent sharing of the whole group, more than 64 examples were shared. These were divided into seven categories:



- Spiritual and theological
- Cultural and social
- Leadership, Governance, Mission, Community Life
- Moral, Social and Ethical
- Psychological and Emotional
- Interpersonal and Relational
- Generational Technological gaps

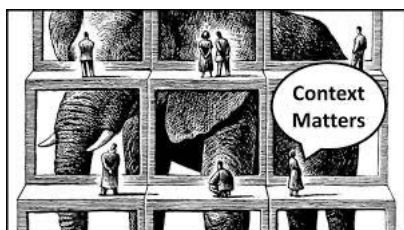
If we are to seriously seek a way forward for the Congregational, these differences need to be recognised rather than allowing a dominant culture mentality to prevail.



Because of this, the topic of psychological security was introduced. It is important that everyone feels free to speak and be heard. This is a fundamental element associated with living a healthy fraternal life (or home life) which aspires to foster respect, open sharing, combining active listening, comprehending, speaking, and contributing. There are four

stages of a “security” scale: inclusion, learning, contribution, and challenge. Each “stage” calls for a reflection on questions which must be faced in order to achieve a state of psychological security, and thus be able to face any critique responsibly. The goal of this process is to arrive at a better sense of belonging, which is a necessary at the local and Congregational level.

The Chapter was presented with a quote by Costante Broveto CP from the 1981 Passionist Spirituality course in Rome, which eleven of us from the Province attended. It is printed in No7, page 21 of the series. *“According to St. Paul of the Cross, the transformation in the Passion leads to the birth of a new man, in God. The cultural*



context into which he immersed his perceptions received them in a rather limited manner, moralistically, ascetically and devotionally. We, on the other hand, can avail ourselves of modern theological and pastoral progress in order to propose the Gospel of the Cross in a way which is faithful to his spirit and adapted to our

times.” While we would use inclusive language today and we have the benefit of much insight since 1981, this was still at that time, a most insightful reflection.

Soon after we spent some time sharing our responses to a quote from Javier Melloni, SJ and how it related to Paul of the Cross. *“The prophet points out and shouts what is missing. The mystic indicates what is already among us”.* (The Prophet speaks of what is not yet...while the mystic speaks of ‘already yes’). It was greed that both dimensions are necessary and were active for Paul.

Following a reflection on and sharing of personal experiences of exclusion, we were invited to take an ‘Emmaus walk’ for 30 minutes with a relatively unknown companion and share a personal experience of exclusion. On returning to the aula, there was shared discussion about this experience followed a table by table, summary. Much of this was profound,



by

and words like surprise, trust, openness, comfort and healing were commonly used to describe the experience.

All of this is a preparation for our invitation to consider 'weighty' matters so that we can speak honestly and listen respectfully to one another's views and seek a way of 'walking together' in a synodal way. While this is a very different approach for some members, it was agreed by most that we made a very good start.



In the first reflection of our retreat day (Monday 7th), led by Passionist Archbishop Luis Fernando Lisboa CP, I appreciated several of his insightful thoughts.

Accepting the cross cannot be self-punishment or a kind of masochism. When we suffer we become united to and in **solidarity** with so many people who suffer. Our suffering is a struggle against comfort and indifference. It is to renounce ourselves in order to **liberate** people. It is to overcome the **structures of pain** in order to give life. **Thus, Passion becomes mission-- to give life in death, to give strength in fragility, to give hope in suffering.**



Today was the feast of the Rosary, so Lui Fernando offered these reflections:

In his agony, perhaps Jesus was aware of the absurd suffering that would befall him. He did not turn back. The chalice is filled to the brim. He is willing to drink it to the last drop.

In being scourged, Jesus submitted to a painful procedure as if to denounce the search for comforts and satisfactions proper to humanity, culturally enthroned in our time.

In being mocked with a crown of thorns, He who told us to assume the last place, occupied it in a way that no one can occupy it How can we live the mission of being at the side of the last, of those whom the world reduces to nothing?

Question

How can we live the mission of being at the side of the last, of those whom the world reduces to nothing?



In introducing Luiz Fernando before the first session Joachim shared that Bishop Luiz had received a surprise phone call from Pope Francis in August 2020. At the time he was bishop of Pemba in Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique and he had been a consistent voice drawing attention to the worsening humanitarian situation in Cabo Delgado. The province discovered substantial gas reserves off its coast in 2010 and is now home to Africa's largest liquid natural gas attracting enormous investment for the extraction. A growing and relentless insurgency threaten the investments.

Pope Francis said he had been following events there with great concern and was constantly praying for the people. Bishop Lous told Francis that by referring to the humanitarian crisis and praying for Cabo Delgado on Easter Sunday in Rome, many people had taken notice of their plight and had reached out to help. He said: "Holy Father, you have placed Cabo Delgado on the world map."

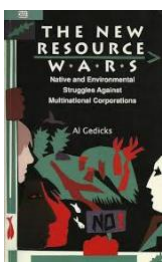


Bishop Luiz informed Pope Francis about the port town of Mocimboa da Praia that had been seized by Jihadist militants said to be linked to the so-called Islamic State (I.S.). The Cabo Delgado attacks have resulted in many deaths, conscription of many young



people and the displacement of thousands of ordinary villagers as a climate of fear encompasses the region. Vatican reports highlighted that Bishop Luiz had been outspoken in courageously speaking on behalf of the poor in Cabo Delgado. He had said publicly that the Government could do more to protect the people. For being the voice of the

voiceless, the Brazilian-born Bishop received criticism and even death threats from all manner of people. In 2021, Pope Francis suggested for his safety, Luiz relocate to his present role in in his home country, Brazil



Luiz wanted to share a few reflections about Africa. He said there are three things that mark Africa: Resources, Multinationals and War. Africa has many rich resources. 'People' are interested in these resources, but not in the people. 10,000,000 people have been displaced in the past decade, but this is not talked about by the media, compared with other wars. Many multinationals offer everything to the church to be silent, because the leaders like Luiz have opposed what they are doing because of its effect on the people. As an example, he said only 10% of the people in Africa

received COVID vaccines by the beginning of 2022. Rates have improved in many places more recently.

In his second reflection Fr Luiz Fernando began by highlighting how Luke states in his gospel the firm resolution Jesus too (“he set his face like flint”) to ‘set out’ for Jerusalem, aware as he was of the danger. Jesus’ saving mystery is carrying. As he takes up his cross, so as the Good Shepherd, he takes up and carries us. Humanity, all of us, are his heaviest cross.



Suddenly there was unexpected help. Someone (Simon) appeared, to carry the cross behind (with) Jesus. Whether forced or a free choice, it doesn't matter. Simon agreed to carry the cross. This is a concrete symbol of the disciple, the one who takes up his cross and follows behind Jesus, because thus is a consequence of following Jesus. To carry the cross is to ‘take up’; to assume the feelings and attitudes of Jesus. With him we take on the pains and hopes of humanity.

Luiz Fernando suggested that (again in Luke) by acknowledging and comforting the women of Jerusalem, Jesus leads us to consider the pain of so many women who carry the crosses of violence, hunger, discrimination, human trafficking, domestic violence, prejudice, forced migration, mutilation and the loss of children. We are not called to look at ourselves and complain about our failures and sorrows. Like Jesus, we are called to have courage and to be strong. Our mission is to carry the crosses of others' sorrows, even if our own cross weighs us down, the cross of life, of limitations, of defects and even of the sins we recognize in ourselves.



“We are more alone than ever in an increasingly massified world that promotes individual interests and weakens the communitarian dimension of life. Indeed, there are markets where individuals become mere consumers or bystanders. As a rule, the advance of this kind of globalism strengthens the identity of the more powerful, who can protect themselves, but it tends to diminish the identity of the weaker and poorer regions, making them more vulnerable and dependent. In this way, political life becomes increasingly fragile in the face of transnational economic powers that operate with the principle of “divide and conquer”. (Fratelli Tutti 12)

Being attentive to others frees us from ourselves. Our eyes must scan the multitude of people that surround us and detect the pains of those on whom our eyes rest. To carry humanity on one's shoulders is to stand with those who suffer any pain in order to fight for the life of all. To understand those who make mistakes, to make them discover life and to place their hope in Jesus. Union with Jesus gives us the strength to achieve this.

Questions

How can we live this mission concretely?

How did St. Paul of the Cross carry his cross and that of others?

The mystery of death



The Paschal celebration, which began at the Last Supper, is prolonged and made real on the cross. It becomes present in every Eucharist and continues in the sorrows of the lives of those who suffer, in every age. The same act of absolute love, of total self-giving, is perpetuated before us and sweeps us along like an enormous wave in order to live love in its entirety.

Through the cross we learn true love. "To progress in the love of God we know of no more sublime book than Jesus Christ Crucified" (St. Maximilian Kolbe). The Lord's Passover envelops us, resurrects us, gives us the gift of the Spirit and impels us towards the definitive day of the Lord's glorious coming.

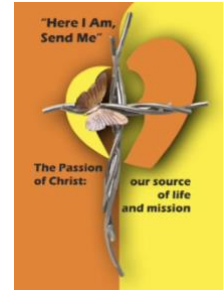


St. Paul invites us to have the same feelings as Christ (Phil 2:5). Jesus obviously felt terrible **physical pain** throughout his body, but his heart was filled with **compassion** which led him to the maximum expression of love. He **abandoned himself** to the torturers and into the hands of the Father. He extraordinarily **showed forgiveness**, which he had preached and taught. He **accepted the confession of the thief** crucified

with him. And perhaps the greatest suffering, **the abandonment by the Father**. In this experience he stands for all those who reject the loving presence of God.

*One of the soldiers **pierced his side** with a spear and immediately blood and water came out".* Blood and water flow from his open heart. Tearing open his heart, we understand that the Passion is to give oneself in love. Entering through the wound in the side of Jesus we find life in death, strength in fragility, hope in suffering.

We are on pilgrimage with the Church and the Congregation. We are never settled in history, which calls us to hope, not only in our present reality, but also in God's future. What Jesus did on the cross sustains our hope and assures us of what we still hope for. Jesus identified himself with all the crucified of all time. To live in hope is to struggle for life, full life - for all who suffer. In this way, the Passion becomes mission. We are sent to fulfil it.



Here I am Lord. Send me!

Individual / Personal Retreats at Holy Cross Centre in December & January (Mayrose & Cecilia)

December is not far away and is a busy time for most of us as we prepare to celebrate Christmas with family and friends. Amongst the busy-ness, we invite you to take time out for yourself...to check in with your heart, to reflect on your spiritual journey, and to listen to God's promptings. Holy Cross Centre in Templestowe offers you space for an individual retreat, providing accommodation with cooling/heating (some rooms with ensuites), self-catering, a small meditation room, Chapel, and beautiful grounds in which to wander. You can choose the length of your retreat and Spiritual Direction can also be arranged if desired (additional fee would apply). Dates in December and January are available as well as other times of the year. For more information, contact Mayrose on (03) 9846 6014 or email hcc@passionists.com

Thank you from our Furry Friends at RSPCA (Cecilia)

Thank you for all the donations of unwanted sheets, towels and blankets. These were taken to the RSPCA in Burwood last weekend where they were gratefully received. The RSPCA (Victoria branch) was founded over 150 years ago and continues to speak up for animals and those who care for them.



*We invite informal and professional
carers to join us for time out to*

REST
REFLECT
and
RENEW

Facilitators:

Karen Rolfe and Sr Brigid cp

THURSDAY 7 NOV

9.30AM - 1.00PM

Cost: \$30 - BYO Lunch

*Holy Cross Retreat Centre
207 Serpells Road, Templestowe*

*Reserve your place -
bridget.m64@gmail.com*

Humour (Brian)

I'm pleased to let you know that I have sourced all these jokes from Brian and other people. As you read them, please imagine Brian or someone else telling them, you will most likely find it funnier than when you think of me telling them.

I once submitted 10 puns to a joke competition. I really thought with that many, one was sure to be a winner. Sadly, no pun in ten did.

Why did the old man fall down the well? He couldn't see that well.

Dad: What is the difference between a piano, a tuna, and a pot of glue?

Me: I don't know.

Dad: You can tuna piano but you can't piano a tuna.

Me: What about the pot of glue?

Dad: I knew you'd get stuck on that.



Today at the bank, an old lady asked me to check her balance... So I pushed her over.

Grandpa, when he puts the car in reverse, says: "Ah, this takes me back."

I got an A on my origami assignment when I turned my paper into my teacher.



Q. How many storm troopers does it take to change a lightbulb?

A. None, because they are all on the dark side.

If your house is cold, just stand in the corner. It's always 90 degrees there.

Hi, I'm Cliff. Drop over sometime.

Prayers

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

Mario Spinosa - 12/10

Alethea Howard - 13/10

Frank Mandile - 13/10 - Father of Cathy Hardinge

Marietta Carapellotti - 13/10

Simon Owen - 14/10 - Son of Peter & Bernadette

Maurice Valmorbida - 14/10 - Husband of Alida

Nathan Lugg - 14/10

Mary Corkeron - 18/10

**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.

**Doris Castro, Julia Cantone, Caroline Meade,
Sophia Chung, Zoe Chung, Michael O'Callaghan,
Peter McNamara, Pam Storey, Lorraine Gill, Adrian**

Woon, Maree Bartoli, 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