

Holy Cross Retreat

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



Letter 252

6th December, 2024

Greetings everyone,

Let's begin this week's letter with **Mike's story**:

My full name is Nguyễn Huy Tuyên (Mike). I was born on April 20, 1987, at Xuan son ward, Do Luong district, Nghe An province, the middle of Viet Nam. There are four seasons. This is a favorable condition for socio-economic development in general and tourism in particular. The best time to visit Nghe An Province is none other than the summer. People flock to Cua Lo Beach to soak up some sun and hit the beaches. The temperatures usually run from 30°C, sometimes hit more than 40°C and there's very little rainfall. But it will be cooler near the sea as the waves will wash away the hot in your body.

I have a big family with six members. Namely my lovely father, mother. I have two sisters and a brother. I am the third in my family. My sister's name is Ngan. She is 43 years old. She is a housewife. My brother's name is Ha. He is 41 years old. He is an electrician, and my younger sister's name is Giang. She is a designer. She is 34 years old. My father is a farmer and soldier retired. My Father is a good person. Look after his family, take care and work hard for the family. He is a listener person, understanding, sympathy, openness. Once a week, I make a call and talk with him. I was happy to talk with him and so does he. He takes care of and works hard for his family. My father did most of the disciplining, and make most of the decisions as I was growing up. He told to me what happened



and explained what was right or wrong and shown me later on did not do that. He has worked for a long time in the rice field and he is my biggest role model in life. My mother is a housewife. She is nice and she is good at cooking, understanding, she is a good take care in my family. She died in the year 2018. I am a human being after my Mum died, I am still feeling grieved, but God is always there with me, companion with me, encourage, give me the strength to over this situation. "I love you, Lord! my strength." (Psalm 18: 2).

I am thirty-eight years old, and I am a religious at The Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ in Ho Chi Minh city. My major is mechanics. Now I live at Templestowe, Melbourne, Australia. I began looking for a vocation in the Passionist Congregation in Viet Nam in 2008, I felt very happy within my heart. I went to Saint Paul's for class to learn about these topics, Spiritual life, Community life, Sacred Scripture, English, and Personality from Fathers. I went there to meet many Vietnamese brothers from other provinces.

Spiritual life deepens within me a love for Jesus Christ. The three most important concepts that form the basis of spiritual understanding:

- 1) The understanding of myself and how I view myself in relation to the world;
- 2) The understanding of the source of the supreme and my relationship with God;
- 3) The understanding of the law of cause and effect, or karma.

I thought that every step by step always opened my heart and mind to a more mature understanding of my life, my mission, my relations with myself God, and humankind. At every moment, I have to decide to trust the voice that says: "You created every part of me; you put me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139: 13) I believe that my life has many challenges. I will always trust in Jesus and the community life gives me a new heart, a new spirit, a new mind, and a new body this helps me to grow up in my life so that and I can live together with other people and also with my God.

Our life of prayer, communal, and individual, draw us to live in communion with the Most Holy Trinity. In prayer, we respond to the loving initiative of the Father. Led by the Holy Spirit, we unite ourselves with the Person of Christ, especially in the Paschal Mystery of His suffering, death, and resurrection. (constitution, 39) In any worry, I look at Jesus, on the Cross discover his answer, for the anxiety. In temptation: Use it without delay, as a reminder to choose and praise the Lord. In daily prayer: speak with Jesus Christ. Put in the presence of the Lord, talk to him sad and happy in my daily life as a Father and friend. That is what I would write. It will just mean that I've had all in my life!

I wish I can write that! I want my life to become praise of God! And I want to whistle hard when it ends....just like people do at the end of a great movie.

My life is a journey, I just keep going on and thanks God for everything, because everything is good.

Community Leaders meeting in North Sydney (Brian)



From Sunday night Nov 24th til mid-afternoon Tuesday, Nov 26th all but one of our community leaders together with Denis Travers, gathered at Mary McKillop Place, North Sydney to share ideas, feelings and strategies for the task we face. Paul Vuong is engaged in a formation programme in Saigon, so he was unable to join us. We were brilliantly led by Franciscan (and part Passionist) Bro David Leary, who was able to

facilitate our learning rather than lecture us.

We had three men who are new to the role, so it was a good opportunity to acknowledge the challenges, which vary according to the size of a particular community, the variety of cultures, the engagement and support of our Passionist laity and the multiple tasks that some leaders have. David strongly emphasised the need for appropriate self-care and for leaders to balance being 'home', being with the community and managing external ministry.

Recognising the call of the recent General Chapter for leadership formation, this gathering will be an annual event and there will be other 'leaders' within the Province assisted in their role, and it will be an element of the formation for our professed candidates.

Christmas Eve Outside (Brian)

From a sample of responses regarding the issue of where to hold Christmas Eve Carols and Mass, the opinions are around 50-50. However, one comment deserves our recognition. It was suggested to Brian that whatever option we prefer, the outside option allows us to reach out, because many people who only come at Christmas, feel more 'comfortable' outside and for some this includes family members.

There was a suggestion made that we use the St Gabriel's shrine, but at the time we are gathered most people would be looking into the setting sun, and without any shade.

Since we want to be welcoming and inclusive, the community proposes that we plan for an outside celebration and that if the weather is threatening, we will change plans and set up inside, as we did last year. The music team usually rehearse Carols from around 6.30pm, but Carols will officially start at 7.00pm and Mass at 7.30pm.

PFG's (Brian)

The Passionist Family Group Movement was established in New Zealand in 1988. After ten years there were 105 parishes with PFG's involving 25,000 people and 1800 leaders (mostly married couples) who were provided with leadership and spirituality formation every year. Twenty professed Passionists assisted over the first twenty years there, but Lynn and Rob Hill were appointed Directors in 1991 and served for 25 years. Dozens of regional teams of Passionist laity assisted in setting up and supporting new parishes, and meeting regularly with the PFG's leaders in various regions or in their own parishes. This same activity and development was occurring across Australia, where the PFGM began (in Terrey Hills, NSW in 1973).

This weekend Brian is meeting with the Trustees of the PFGM in Aotearoa, and his brother Paul who is National Director of the PFGM in NZ. This is a time to review and plan, especially for the next three years. Brian will return to Holy Cross on Wednesday next week.

Eggs News (Ann)



The last eggs day for this year is Monday, 16 December. After a short break, eggs will then resume on Monday, 20 January 2025.

MSG Mass for Schools (1980's)



Archivists showed one of my friends the other day this image on the left- it's from a Melbourne newsletter in the 1980s. We thought it might be amusing for the Holy Cross newsletter especially that I always need a space filler while we wait for Brian's return.

Holy Cross Front Entrance gets a Living Facelift (Cecilia)



Thank you to Peter Norman, who oversees Holy Cross's garden maintenance. Our front entrance has been transformed with new plants. Potted ferns have been placed beside the front door and we look forward to them thriving there in the shady position. The raised bed opposite the front door has also had an upgrade with 'weeping' purple hardenbergias planted there.

All are called to peace especially during this Advent (Vatican News)



Kielce Gussie wrote the article below, sharing Pope Francis' invitation to peace. I have added some images. I'm sure you already have the article, but it won't hurt to read it again in the Holy Cross Newsletter. I find the topic on peace so important and often I feel that we can always do more to help our world, even if it means the only thing we have to offer is a consistent prayer.

Pope: 'Pursuit of peace is responsibility of all'



Reflecting on the upcoming Christmas season, Pope Francis warns that if "desensitization and indifference to the horrors of war prevail, all of humanity is defeated."

"I hope that the glimmer of peace that has emerged can lead to a ceasefire on all other fronts," Pope Francis stated after praying the Angelus on December 1. He was referring to the ceasefire agreement reached between Hezbollah in Lebanon and Israel to end 13 months of fighting.



Building upon this, the Pope also challenged the Lebanese people to elect a president. “As soon as possible,” he encouraged, “so that institutions can return to normal functioning, proceed with the necessary reforms, and ensure the country remains an example of peaceful coexistence among different religions.”

However, both Israel and Hezbollah accuse the other of breaching the ceasefire agreement, as there have been reports the Israeli air force struck a Hezbollah facility one day after the ceasefire was signed.

‘War offends God’

Pope Francis continued to express his concern for other areas of the world in conflict, including Gaza, Syria, and Ukraine. He shared his deep concern for the release of Israeli hostages and petitioned once again that “humanitarian aid to the exhausted Palestinian population” be available.

Speaking of the approaching winter season, the Pope remembered “martyred Ukraine” in the midst of a conflict that has been raging for almost three years. He



called the combination of war and cold temperatures “tragic” and underscored that for the millions of displaced people, winter will be difficult. Pope Francis renewed his challenge to the international community “and to every man and woman of good will, to do everything possible to stop this war and to promote dialogue, fraternity, and reconciliation.”

Peace is not the responsibility of a few

With the start of Advent and the countdown to Christmas beginning, the Pope called to renew efforts to provide aid and hope to those living in war-torn countries. “The pursuit of peace is not the responsibility of a few but of all,” he stated, because if “desensitization and indifference to the horrors of war prevail, all of humanity is defeated.”

A milestone in South America



The Pope also commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Argentina and Chile, which was signed on November 29, 1984. With Pope John Paul II, the Holy See's mediation led to a descalation of a territorial dispute between the two countries. Pope Francis used this as an example that when "we renounce the use of arms and engage in dialogue, we are on the right path."

Source: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-12/pope-francis-angelus-peace-war-ukraine-syria-lebanon.html>

Enjoy Some Humour sourced through Peter Traynor

Why does a round pizza come in a square box?

What disease did the cured ham actually have?

How is it that we put a man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?

Why is it that people say they 'sleep like a baby' when babies wake up every two hours?

If a deaf person has to go to court, is it still called a hearing?

Why are you in a movie, but not ON TV?

Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?

Why is bra singular and panties plural.

Can a hearse carrying a corpse drive in the carpool lane?

If the professor on Gilligan's Island can make a radio out of a coconut shell, why can he fix a hole in a boat?

Why do doctors leave the room while you change? They are going to see you naked anyway.

Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They're both dogs!

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?

If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from Morgan's?

Do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star have the same song?

Why did you just try singing the two songs above?

Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out of the window?

Prayers

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

Margaret Hogan (wife of John) - 7/12, Frank Jordan (father of Sue McMahan) - 11/12, Rosa Mandile (mother of Cathy Hardinge) - 11/12.

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

We also remember those in our Holy Cross family who are unwell, especially: Bro Minh Toan CP, Peter Barry, Monica Sleeman (Fr Kevin's sister), Desley Reynolds, Rex Cambry, Sharon Williams, Doris Castro, Julia Cantone, Caroline Meade, Sophia 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, John Reardon, Alexander Lim, 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



Photo of the current advent wreath taken by Tri at Holy Cross Chapel. The wreath was kindly donated by Pam Storey.