

**Holy Cross Retreat**

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



27th

December 2024

**Letter 254**



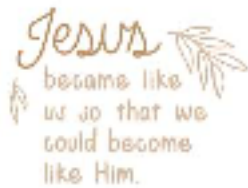
Warm greetings,

Warm thanks are extended to Erick for his excellent and dedicated work continuing the Holy Cross Newsletter over the many weeks I was away. I have returned in this final days leading up to Christmas, and we celebrate the last week of **Advent** this coming Sunday. We have focused on Hope Peace and Joy on the three previous Sundays. This coming Sunday, we focus on **Love**.

# love CHANGES Everything

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Some years ago I played the song “Love Changes Everything” during a parish mission session. Afterwards a woman complained to me, “*That song should not be used in church. It does not mention God even once*”. I replied, “*St John’s gospel tell us that Jesus said, “God is Love”*. After looking a bit stunned the woman walked away. The church has sometimes complicated gospel love by putting the emphasis on rules, on do’s and don’ts, whereas Jesus commanded us, “Love one another as I have loved you!” St Paul’s wrote “*If I can speak in tongues or use the language of angels, but if I don’t have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal*”( 1 Cor: 13.1).



That lady who spoke to me was like a noisy gong. She missed the whole point – that God is Love! Advent love reminds us that the Christmas God comes among us not as an overpowering and dominant warlord, but as a vulnerable, needy and helpless baby. This baby was born in a cattle trough, not in a palace. This baby, God-among-us, Emmanuel grew into the man Jesus, whose love knew no limits; the man of compassion and forgiveness assured us of our own human capacity to love; to be like him.

## Christmas Mass times

### Christmas Eve

**Carols:** 7.00pm (preceded by rehearsal starting around 6.15pm)

**Mass:** 7.30pm

Mass will be held outside (‘under the trees’) unless it is raining.

Parking will be available on the oval.

We do have chairs but It will help us if you can bring a chair.

Bringing mozzie spray might be a wise action, and a jacket.

There will be a collection box to help us meet the costs of hiring the musical equipment and printing extra copies of the Carols.

We live in an era where we must be aware of everyone's safety and we have been asked that if anyone brings a dog on Christmas Eve that it must be kept on a leash the entire time, and ensure that babies and small children are not unnecessarily frightened.

### Christmas Day

Mass (in the Holy Cross chapel): 10.00am

There is no Mass at Holy Cross on New Year's Day. The next Sunday Mass is 10.00am on Sunday January 5th.

### "If you look for Me at Christmas"



If you look for Me at Christmas, you won't need a special star - I'm no longer just in Bethlehem, I'm right there where you are.

You may not be aware of Me amid the celebrations - You'll have to look beyond the stores and the decorations.

But if you take a moment from your list of things to do, and listen to your heart you'll find I'm waiting there for

you.

You're the one I want to be with, you're the reason that I came, and you'll find Me in the stillness as I'm whispering your name.

Love,

Jesus (Author Unknown)

### Come Away Days (Review)



On Monday the 'Come Away' team held a review of their events throughout 2024. Feedback from participants was very positive and helpful in planning for the days next year which will be held on Wednesdays: March 5<sup>th</sup>, May 28<sup>th</sup>, June 25<sup>th</sup>, September 10<sup>th</sup> and November 19<sup>th</sup>.

The day's program provides opportunities for prayer, reflection, group sharing and Eucharist. It was agreed to extend the days by 30 minutes to conclude at 2.30pm. This will allow a little more time for silence and small group sharing. Brochures about the 2025 programme will be available in the back porch of the Chapel.

Sincere thanks to the team of Sr Brigid, Lien Thai, Pam Storey and Kay Lewis, with Erick and Joey assisting. Frank Burke has retired from assisting with logistics.

## YTU



**JD** completed his studies for the year and achieved a Master of Theology.

**Tri** completed his studies for the year. By mid-year 2025 he will have satisfied the requirements for a Bachelor of Theology degree and can expect to be ordained deacon around that time.

**Erick** has completed the second of a three year Trauma Counselling Course and next year will have university commitments again and two days of placement.

## Kevin Walsh



Kevin celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> ordination last weekend in Parramatta, Sydney. A year before his ordination, he was deacon at my ordination. Kevin decided to leave the Passionists and become a diocesan priest, but he has never really left the Passionists. Like several others such as my brother Paul, and Tim Horlock, Kevin followed a new vocational path, but never let go of the Passionist charism. He said he is known in

his diocese as Kev Walsh- the Passionist. In the photo above are his Passionist brothers who concelebrated the anniversary Mass (Kevin Hennessy, JD Tan, David King and Ron Davoren). Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv presided, and Mike Tuyen from our community was also present. We have been praying for more than two years for Kevin's sister, Gen who is a Sister of Charity. Kevin advised that Gen is now in remission, which is great news. Congratulations Kev on your long years of service.

## Some thank-yous



Every Sunday our chapel has freshly arranged flowers. This is a good time of year to thank **Joe and Anne Toscano** for providing the flowers, **Peter Norman** for collecting them every week from Kew, and the team of ladies who arrange them so beautifully. **Cathy Hardinge, Marisa Odorico, Kay Lewis, Bernadette Rigby, Barbara Ward, Carmen Zammit, Cathy Petrocco, Adriana Agosta, Joan French and Maria Minichilli. Carole Stretch**

**and Shirley Barnes** have retired from this assistance. Thank you so much for this gift to us.

Thanks also to **Carmen Zammit**, who keeps all of the altar linen washed and ironed.

Thanks to **Teresa Lim** who provided all of the altar cloths and covers we use. Teresa cleaned them and provided covers for when they are not in use.

Thanks to our readers, both on Sundays and on Saturday mornings for the recorded Mass: **John Barns, Gail Robins-Brown, Linda Bertram, Cathy Hardinge, Ray Lewis, Barbara Ward, Frank Burke, Frank Gianromasso, Alida Valmorbida, Des Rigby, Andrew Concannon, Kay Lewis, Marisa Odorico, Angela Senzo, Bro Jerome CP, Bro Tri CP and Tim Horlock** who also coordinates the roster and contacts the readers each week. **Des Thornton** recently relocated to Richmond with Marlene, but we might be fortunate to have him back now and again.

Thanks also to our communion ministers: **Milly Mazzei, Grace Kho, Joseph Kho, Tina Minichilli, Barbara Ward, Peter Norman, Cathy Hardinge, Laura Vasarelli, Linda Bertram, Marisa Micelotta, Marisa Odorico, Frank Burke, Angela Senzo, Kay Lewis, Bro Tri CP and Tim Horlock** who coordinates the roster and contacts the communion ministers each week.

A special thanks to **Tri** who prepares the Power Point every Sunday, selects the songs and provides the text of the readings. This has required a lot of time and effort.

Thanks to special employees, **Mayrose Abraham and Cecilia Rogers**, and our many other volunteers, not mentioned here. We frequently hear of people's experience of coming to Holy Cross and feeling very welcomed by those at Mass. This is a great and important gift, because a community should always be warm and welcoming, and each one of us can actively contribute to that experience.

Happy Birthday to retired 'A' Team member, **Noel Spinks** who reached 90 on Wednesday this week.

### **Joseph Liaia**



Just two days ago, Fr Denis had a conversation with Joey about expanding his pastoral skills where there is a need, in St Joseph's parish, Hobart. Joseph was sad to be leaving Holy Cross, but enthusiastic and good-willed in accepting this request in a true spirit of generosity and faithfulness to his vocation. He will continue to spend some weeks as he did this year, preaching overseas to raise funds for our needs in Papua New Guinea and Vietnam, and complete his Spirituality programme at 'Heart of Life'.

The community will miss Joey's warm and fraternal presence, and so will our wider Holy Cross family. He is a gift to any community and he will bring to his parish ministry, competence, care, compassion, sensitivity, warmth and joy, as well as the benefit of his spirituality studies. Joey is planning on leaving for Hobart on January 10<sup>th</sup>. We wish Joseph well, and thank him for his gift to us.

## Coffee Cart



The final **Coffee cart** Sunday for 2024 will be this coming Sunday. At least one person suggested it was too busy this close to Christmas, but Jesus famously said, "Could you not watch one hour with me?" While expressing our thanks to our generous donor who make the Coffee Cart possible, it would be nice to see people making the time to mix with with members of our Holy Cross family. A few small cakes or biscuits would be appreciated. Thank you.

*Time is too short for those who are enjoying, and too long for those who are waiting*

*Time is what we want most, but use worst*

*The way we spend our time defines who we are*

*It's not enough to be busy, so are the ants. The question is, what are we busy about?*

## Carpark and Ramp

The 'A' Team were here early yesterday to paint the new ramp, which will lead directly from the lower carpark when it is completed, to the HCC entrance which is at the join of both ramps. Further painting of the base of both ramps will be done later in January.

Here is some of the preliminary work being done by Frank Van den Boom, Peter Day and Ed Porad. Other members who assisted are not included in these photos.









When Vince has completed the excavating work, we will ask that Mass attendees use the carpark area closest to the chapel because it will be a shorter walk. This will be identified as [Carpark 1](#). The area that can be seen in the left photo below, and including all the new work) will be referred to as [Carpark 2](#) and groups using the retreat Centre will be asked to use this carpark. There will be no tickets issued for using the wrong carpark!

The remaining car park adjacent to where we will celebrate Christmas, will, with great imagination, be referred to as [Carpark 3](#)! This will be able to be used by anyone, especially on Sundays. We request people to not use the community carport for parking. Signage will be erected when this all becomes operational.

### Ramps



Ramps for disabled people to assist entry into public buildings are not a modern invention. The ancient Greeks constructed similar ramps of stone to help individuals who had trouble walking or climbing stairs, to access holy sites. Some of these are more than 2,300 years old and they are the oldest known evidence of architecture designed to meet the needs of the aged and disabled. At left is an image of the Greek Sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus, 60 kilometres south of Corinth.

## End sacramental blackmail and neo-clericalism

From 11th September 2012

*This report is twelve years old, when Pope Francis was Archbishop of Buenos Aires.*



The Bishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, has used strong language to criticise priests who refuse to baptise children born to single mothers. Almost apologising for the actions of some priests, Bergoglio recalled the story of a young unmarried mother who had the courage to bring her child into the world and who then “found herself on a pilgrimage, going from parish to parish, trying to find someone who would baptise her child.”

Vatican Insider reports that in his homily at the end of a Buenos Aires convention on urban pastoral care, Bergoglio called for an end to “sacramental blackmail” saying that “hijacking” of the sacraments is an expression of rigorous and hypocritical neo-clericalism.

“Sacraments are not a way for priests to affirm their own supremacy”, said the Cardinal. Rubbing the fragility and wounds of the faithful in their faces, or dampening the hopes and expectations of those who supposedly do not fulfil the ‘requirements’ in terms of doctrinal preparation, or moral status, is a pastorally misleading model which rejects the dynamics of Christ’s incarnation. Jesus did not preach his own politics: he accompanied others”, said Bergoglio.

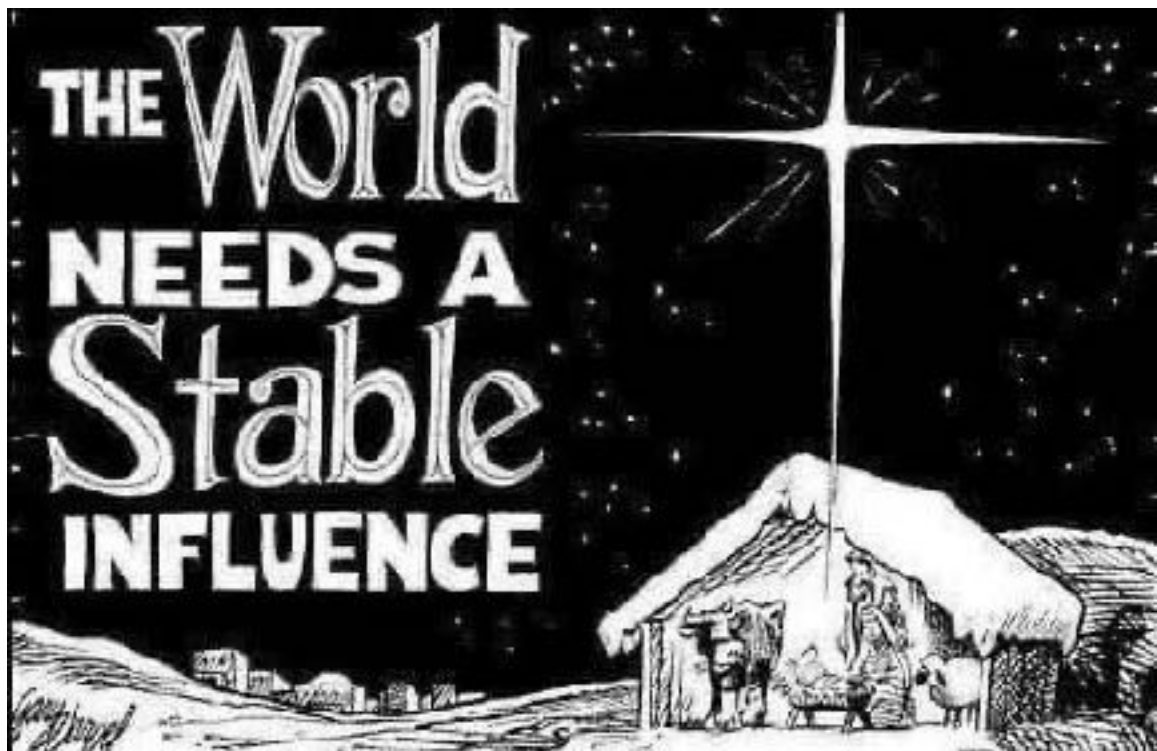


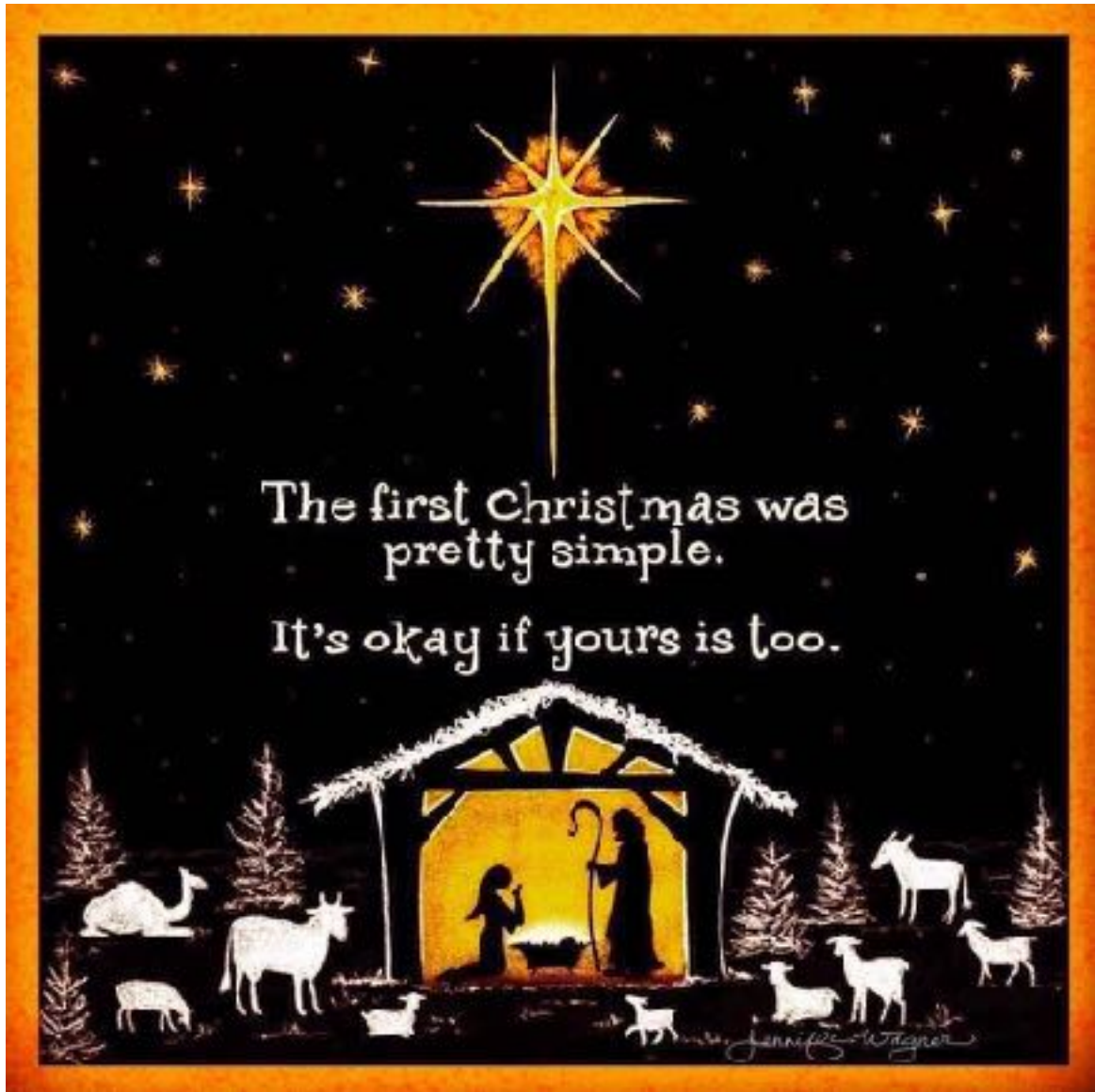
Priests who deny the sacraments to people because of their life circumstances are the “hypocrites of today”, and the “followers of the Pharisees”, the ones Jesus turned his back on. Emphasising that the Church is not an NGO or a proselyte of some multinational company”, Bergoglio said denying baptism to children born out of wedlock is a form of “pharisaic Gnosticism” that “drives people away from salvation”.





Mike, our newest member of the community has been busy in the garden and he created the crib (above) for the chapel.





### **Christmas Blessing**

*May there be harmony in all your relationships.*

*May sharp words, envious thoughts and hostile feelings be dissolved.*

*May you give and receive love generously.*

*May this love echo in your heart like the joy of church bells.*

*May each person who comes into your life be greeted as another Christ.*

*May the honour given to the Babe of Bethlehem be that which you extend to every guest who enters your presence.*

*May the hope of this sacred season settle in your mind.*

*May it be a fountain of courage for you.*

*May the wonder and awe that fills the eyes of children be awakened within you.*

*May it lead you to renewed awareness and appreciation of whatever you too easily take for granted.*

*May you daily open the gift of your life and be grateful for the hidden treasures it contains.*

*May the coming year be one of good health for you.*

*May you have energy and vitality.*

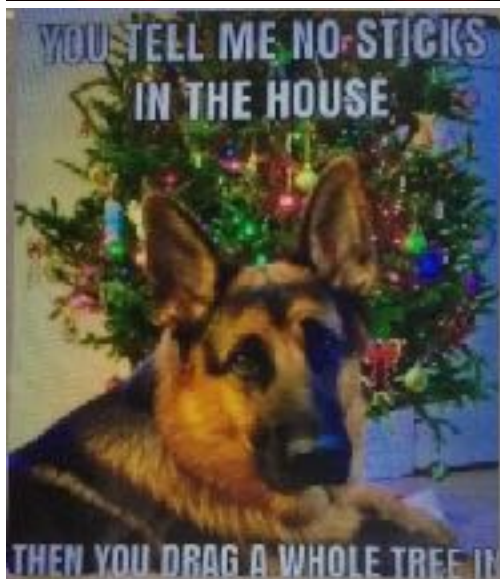
*May you be well in body, mind and spirit.*

*May you keep your eye on the Star within you and trust this presence to guide and direct you each day.*

*May you go often to the Bethlehem of your heart and visit the One who offers peace.*

*And may you bring this peace into our world. Amen*

### Humour





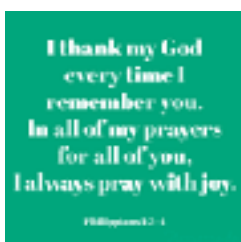
**Christmas is more than a time or a season; it is a way of living. To cherish peace and goodwill, to recognise God in the ordinary, to be generous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas**

### Christmas punnies

- Q Which cooking seasoning is the most festive?      A. Christmas Thyme!
- Q What do you call people with a fear of Santa Claus?      A. Claus- trophobic.
- Q Who deliveries Christmas presents to dogs?      A. Santa Paws
- Q Did Rudolph go to school?      A. No. He was Elf-taught.
- Q Which of Santa's reindeer is the best on his feet?      A. Dancer
- Q What did Adam say to his wife on Christmas?      A. It's finally Christmas, Eve!
- Q Why did the turkey join the band?      A. Because it had the drumsticks!
- Q Why was Santa's little helper depressed?      A. Because he had low elf esteem
- Q Why is Santa so good at karate?      A. Cause he's got a black belt.
- Q What's the name of Santa's cat?      A. Santa Claws!
- Q How did Mary and Joseph know Jesus' weight when he was born?  
A They had a weigh in a manger...
- Q What do you call an Elf that runs away from Santa's workshop?  
A Rebel without a Claus!

## Prayers

We remember those who will celebrate Christmas for the first time without a loved one who passed away this year. We remember those whose anniversaries occur around this time, especially, **Anna Cahill** (daughter of John and Sue) and **Jim Humphreys** (father of Barbara Ward).



### **We pray for all of our Holy Cross family who are unwell as well as all who care for them especially**

Maree Bartoli, Rod Gorfine, Bro Minh Toan CP, Peter Barry, Rex Cambry, Monica Sleeman (Fr Kevin's sister), Desley Reynolds, Sharon Williams, Carol Battistella, Paul Darbyshire, Doris Castro, Alexander Lim, Julia Cantone, Zoe Chung, and her "baby" daughter Sophia, Michael O'Callaghan, Mary Dunn, Gerry Bond, Peter McNamara, Pam Storey, Lorraine Gill, Adrian Woon, Sandra Street, Monique Hardinge, Bronwyn Burke, Luke Norden, John Reardon, Kaya Lenic, Peter & Bernadette Owen, Caroline Meade, Greg Agosta, Helen McLean, Pam Gartland, Anne Jenkins, Patricia Keeghan, Phil Drew, Errol Lovett, Chris O'Toole, and baby Alfred Theodore in London.

The **Mass link** for this Sunday will be sent on Saturday by Chris.

The community of Holy Cross extends thanks to for your love, support and encouragement during this year.

We wish you and your family a safe and blessed Christmas.

Brian, Jerome, Chris, Erick, Joey, JD, Mike and Tri

