

Holy Cross Retreat

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



7th

February, 2025

Letter 261

Jerome



Jerome's condition, explained last week by Erick is unchanged. He is scheduled for surgery on Monday. Typically, he has managed great discomfort and inconvenience without complaint. Sadly, his sister (Mary James) who is living in Benalla and for whom we have been praying, was prescribed morphine relief late last week and on Sunday contracted COVID. Because of his inability to travel, he has been unable to say his final goodbye to her in person yet, but he has spoken with Mary on Zoom.

Holidays

JD returned from his holiday in Vietnam on Monday, and was able to participate in the Passion seminar mentioned below. He will be away again on parish supply from tomorrow until February 14th.

Tri is still at home with his family until February 17th.

Passion seminar



This week a number of our younger men gathered at Holy Cross to participate in a preaching seminar, from midday Tuesday to midday Thursday, led by **Chris Monaghan** and **Brendan Connell**. We are living in 'new times' and the challenge of communicating the message of the cross calls for creativity, biblical awareness and contemporary ways of 'preaching'. St Paul reminded us that the message of the cross is illogical for those who are spiritually dead (1 Cor 18).

Our founder, Paul of the Cross famously claimed that the Passion of Jesus is the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love, and that it should fall like gentle rain on hardened hearts. That is a clue to its importance, but how that is communicated requires an awareness of modern learning, the nature and culture of the audience and their circumstances, and an openness to read the signs of the times, including how we can best communicate such a deep matter of faith to the people of different ages, cultures and faith perspectives

Erick

Erick will soon resume his university studies in counselling. One of the requirements is practical experience or 'Placement'. Erick's placement which he began last week, is at Doncaster High on Wednesdays and Thursdays each week.

Come Away Day

The first 'Come Away Day' for 2025 will be on **Wednesday March 5th** and the team will meet on Monday February 10th to prepare for the day. March 5th is also **Ash Wednesday** and there will be a Mass that day at 9.30am at Holy Cross.

St Gabriel's festa

This year the St Gabriel's feast day celebration will be held on Sunday February 23rd. This will consist of Rosary (10.00am), Mass (10.30am) and Procession (11.30am). The bust and relic of St Gabriel will be available for veneration from Thursday 20th til Sunday 23rd, at Holy Cross.

A Team

Among other maintenance jobs, the A Team have painted the two ramps that lead to the Holy Cross Centre entrance and this week they installed a handrail outside our dining room, mainly with Jerome in mind, but as a safety issue.

Boroko, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

I returned from visiting our community in Boroko, Port Moresby on Saturday night. Life is quite different in Boroko, Port Moresby, though easily identifiable as Passionist life from the daily rhythm and interactions.



The power supply cannot be taken for granted, although there were only minor interruptions during my visit. Likewise, water has sometimes not been available, but was fine during my visit. Denis Travers was there two weeks earlier and he experienced both power outages and lack of water. The men have to take that for granted – it an inconvenience and a cost that our men have to live with.

One morning there was no power when I awoke at 6.00am. It turned out that more power had to be purchased, so one of the students (Jerome) went up the street after Mass, paid some money and received a code, to activate the power. I learned later that there are six units in the house that operate this way, so someone has to keep a keen eye on the level of power on each of those units available so that more can be purchased for the particular areas of the property.



Internet access is not always reliable, although I did not experience that often, so long as I went to a table on the back verandah. That was the only place I could access the internet. I was told that when Denis was here recently, he experienced days when there was no

water, and this only occurred once during my stay, but it is a common enough experience for the men here, and obviously highly inconvenient.



These things are not impossible to negotiate, but they remind us of what we take for granted in Australia, and what our men in PNG have to adapt to, especially those like Pat and John, who have volunteered to go there in their senior years. There are many day-to-day stories of a low level of reliability that most of us would find difficult to accept, not to mention the frequent presence of mozzies.



One big difference from my last time here is that the Koreans who lived next door have gone, and there are several families – at least six (plus quite a number of children and dogs) and normally six cars parked on the property. They create a lot of noise that we can hear, especially sitting outside late at night or in the morning with a boombox.



The school accommodation on the other side of our house has been demolished to make way for a sports field. Progress is slow, partly because John Curtis has requested engineering checks to avoid water overflows and the negative effects of deeply buried tree roots. At present it resembles the Roman Forum!

The traffic flow on Vai Vai Avenue outside our property before and after school, is amazing. The vehicles are mostly large four-wheel drive, which afford women here a higher degree of



safety, because car-jacking is not unknown. There are also a surprising number of taxis about.

Last Friday, John, John, Pat and I went to a coffee shop in Vision City, maybe four kilometres away. We had a lengthy discussion about how we can best assist in the formation of our candidates in PNG who are matured aged.

The traffic was incredible when we travelled, in both directions and we saw more than a fair share of aggressive driving! Since Sunday that was my only time out of the front gate.

We had two storms during the week which cooled and freshened the atmosphere, and quite frequently there was a nice breeze, perhaps more easily felt as the result of the removal of a few trees. Having had many warm January days in Melbourne this year, it was easier to adjust, though humid heat is quite different.



It was wonderful to see all the children at Mass on Sunday, because that is the opposite to our normal experience in Australia. It was also great to see how colourful the church looks, because of the bright clothing the people wear. They had a great band who formed the choir at the 9.45am Mass (as they do regularly), and as our men say, the parish is very fortunate to have a number of choirs.

My reason for going to PNG was to assist the students with sessions related to Professional Standards and our Charism. This was a good time, because they resume academic studies at the Catholic Theological Institute (CTI) next Monday. We had the session each morning Monday to Friday. There are two finally professed (Noel and Edward) who both spent time at Holy Cross some years ago, and three postulants (Billy, Jerome and Michael). It's hard to believe there is another Jerome in the Province! As has mostly been the case with PNG candidates, there are no extroverts among them, so things are quiet! A diocesan priest (Fr Paul) is living with the community and serving as hospital chaplain at the Moresby hospital.

It was very good to be with the brothers, and to spend some time with John Curtis and Pat McIndoe, and with John Auram when he returned on Wednesday, from a retreat he gave at Yule island (see below) which he said is truly beautiful, but extremely hot.



Unfortunately, John Auram was not there for the photo .

It goes without saying that John and Pat in particular deserve our thanks for undertaking their ministry in their senior years which involves more than the privations I have mentioned. John is in great demand in what is easily the biggest parish in our Province. They will be very difficult men to replace, and John will look forward to getting back to some surfboard riding.



Yule Island where John Auram gave his retreat is 160 kilometres north-west of Port Moresby on the south coast. The convent where he stayed has no power, so there are no fans (which are greatly appreciated in Boroko). John has tremendous admiration for the Sisters who live and work there. He did find it hard to find a spot with shade. I doubt Noel will visit Yule island, since there are venomous snakes there, including the highly dangerous, Black Papuan. John said “you have to keep a

lookout”.

Today, February 7th, Pat McIndoe (and Lex Keys) celebrate their **60 profession**

The Papua Guinean mainland is the second largest island in the world, after Greenland. Don't let DJT know! There are also 600 sub islands. PNG is divided into 22 Provinces, and it has more than 800 languages (each language reflecting a unique culture). They are gearing up to celebrate 50 years of independence (from Britain and then Australia) on 16th Sept 1975 and there are public signs about this celebration 'everywhere'.

The population of PNG is 11.8 million and it is estimated that 80%-85%, live in rural communities. Of these, most are subsistence farmers or those growing small cash



crops. Of this group living in rural communities, it is estimated that 40% live below the international poverty line. Owing to a lack of infrastructure in rural areas, access to essential services such as clean water, sanitation, electricity, healthcare, and education is often limited.

More seriously PNG is ranked 160th of 161 countries in terms of gender equality, especially in rural areas where traditional ways of life and cultural practices are predominant. Only ten women have ever been elected to National Parliament since Papua New Guinea gained independence.



Unfortunately Papua New Guinea has one of the highest rates of violence against women and girls in the world, so there are many challenges. One effect of these realities is that our men in Port Moresby live in a compound and have nothing like the freedom our men in Australia and Vietnam have. It is important that we keep them in our prayers.

John Houry – postulant



On Wednesday morning, John celebrated his initiation into life as a postulant. Postulancy is a formal commitment over a minimum of twelve months to enter into the life of the Congregation with a mutual desire on the part of the Congregation and the aspirant to know each other more deeply and to share in our life more fully.

Our Passionist Rite (No 88) says, *“Candidates will have a postulancy that will give them some experience of life in community. They will have the time to reflect on what their vocation means and demands, and to prepare adequately for their novitiate. They will have the opportunity for human and emotional growth, and for clarifying their ideas about the objectives of religious life”.*

We expect John to be with us as a postulant until he undertakes novitiate from mid-2026, and we look forward to his growth in our way of life.



JD, John's Dad (Tony), John, Denis, Brian, Erick, Mike
 Unfortunately Chris and Jerome were not around when the photo was taken

Penguin



On the plane returning from Port Moresby, I watched a movie titled, "My Penguin Friend". It is based on a true story of a Magellanic penguin (given the name Dindim) who was rescued by a fisherman, in 2011 after suffering from an oil spill in Ilha Grande, a beautiful island in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Once recovered, the penguin stayed with his new friend, and over five years, Dindim would spend eight months in his new home and for four months he would travel 8,000 kilometre trip to Patagonia, Argentina. Magellanic penguins have breeding colonies along parts of the coasts of Chile and Argentina and during the southern hemisphere winter they undertake this big swim to the coasts of southern and south-eastern Brazil in search of food.

Because he was tagged, it was possible to know of his long trips and it is presumed that when he was of breeding age in 2016, he may have stayed home with his new family, or he may have died.



In an interesting interview, the Producer of the movie, Jonathon Lim, was asked how his faith influenced the movie. He replied, *"My Christian faith is at the centre of everything I do across work and life. I became a Christian in my late twenties after graduating from medical school. It's been an amazing walk over the last couple decades. In fact, City Hill Arts is named after Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden." It's at the centre of everything I do. It's at the centre of the stories I*

want to tell.

Even if it's not a faith-based film, it's faith driven or faith influenced or faith friendly. I think a key theme in the movie is the power of love, kindness, and friendship to transform a broken family. And then there's this broader theme of how God calls us to be wise stewards of this beautiful planet and its inhabitants, including animals and, importantly, each other".

I thought this was a beautiful sentiment and confirmation about how a Christian should be – ““My Christian faith is at the centre of everything I do across work and life”.

Lessons from Penguins

<https://oceanwide-expeditions.com/blog/penguin-wisdom-life-lessons-from-our-favorite-flightless-birds>

A notice about requesting prayers

We try each week to collect by Wednesday, the names of those for whom we want to ask prayers. The list, along with the readings, is sent to the readers on or before Thursdays and it is included in the Power Point presentation, used first by Chris on Saturday morning for the recorded Mass, and then at Mass on Sunday.

If people leave it until Sunday just before Mass to advise us of people they would like us to pray for, we have to involve a number of people 'at the last minute'. Sometimes of course, this is unavoidable.

What we would prefer if possible, is that you advise the Office on 9846 6014 or advise Erick or myself by email, by Wednesday, of people you would like included in prayers (especially anniversaries). If you need to advise us on Sunday morning, please appreciate that we have to provide the names to the reader and to the person looking after the Power Point, so it helps to have names in writing.

Thankyou

Humour

1. A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Peter 5, and Paul 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'

Peter turned to his younger brother and said, "Paul you be Jesus!"

2. A man decided to go on a safari and took his faithful pet dog along for company. One day the dog started chasing butterflies and before long he got lost. Suddenly he noticed a leopard heading rapidly in his direction obviously intent on having a meal. The dog noticed some bones on the ground close by, and immediately

settled down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching cat. Just as the leopard was about to leap, the dog exclaimed loudly, "Wow that was a delicious leopard. I wonder if there are any more around?"

Hearing this the leopard halted his attack and slinked off into the trees. A monkey had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree, and figured he could put his knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the leopard. The dog saw him heading for the leopard and figured that something must be up.

The monkey caught up with the leopard, and told him what the dog had done. He struck a deal for his own protection. The leopard invited the monkey to hop on his back. The dog saw the leopard coming with the monkey on his back, and thinking quickly, he sat down with his back to his attackers pretending he hasn't seen them yet. Just when they got close enough to hear, the dog said, "I wonder where that monkey is. I can never trust him. I sent him off half an hour ago to bring me another leopard, and he's still not back!"

3. Mike was working in the produce section of Coles. A man came in and asked to buy half a head of lettuce. Mike told him that they only sold whole heads of lettuce, but the man replied that he did not need a whole head - just a half head. Mike said he would go ask his manager about the matter.

He said to his manager, "There's some idiot out there who wants to buy only a half a head of lettuce." As he finished saying this, Mike turned around to find the man standing right behind him, so he added, "and this gentleman wants to buy the other half." The manager okayed the deal and the man went on his way. Later the manager called to Mike and said, "You almost got yourself in a lot of trouble earlier, but I was impressed with the way you got yourself out of it. You think on your feet and we like that around here. Where are you from son?" Mike replied, "Vietnam sir."

"Oh really? Why did you leave Vietnam "asked the manager.

Mike replied, "They're all whores and Volley ball players over there."

"Really?" replied the manager, "My wife is from Vietnam!!"

Mike replied, "No kidding! Did she play for Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh?"

4. What's the different between a cat and a comma?

A cat has claws at the end of paws; A comma is a pause at the end of a clause.

5. What rhymes with orange

No it doesn't!

IF I HAD A DOLLAR FOR EVERY GIRL THAT FOUND ME UNATTRACTIVE, THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY FIND ME ATTRACTIVE.

Everyone told Sam not to sing

But Samsung anyway



Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like.



Ok fine, I'll go camping...

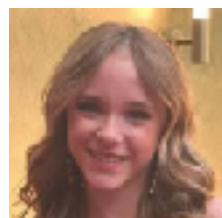


*My wife said to me,
"You've put on a lot of
weight."
I said, "I've had a lot on
my plate lately."*



So Daffy Duck and Elmer Fudd break into a distillery.
Daffy turns to Elmer and says: "Is this Whiskey?"
Elmer says: "Yeth but not as whiskey as wobbing a bank!!" 🤔🤔🤔

Emma Kok



Two weeks ago we shared the video link to Emma Kok singing with Andrew Rieu. Here is another beautiful performance of the song 'Father' by Demi Lovato that Ray Sanchez sent me.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXWBj7-edWU>

Prayers

We remember those who have died recently, as well as those whose anniversaries occur around this time, especially

Greg Manly CP

Geoffrey Morgan,

Kay Mithen,

and those who grieve for them.



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

Mary James (Dunn) Bro Jerome, Rod Gorfine, Noel Smyth, Bro Minh Toan CP, Peter Barry, Pam Gartland, Rex Cambry, Monica Sleeman, Desley Reynolds, Tony Brooks, Zoe Chung and her baby daughter Sophia, Carol Battistella, Gerry Bond, Sharon Williams, Alexander Lim, Paul Darbyshire, Doris Castro, Lorraine Gill, Michael O'Callaghan,

Julia Cantone, Bronwyn Burke, Pam Storey, Adrian Woon, Luke Norden, Bernadette Owen,

Peter Owen, Kaya Lenic, Greg Agosta, Caroline Meade, , Helen McLean, Phil Drew, Anne Jenkins, Patricia Keeghan, Errol Lovett, and baby Alfred Theodore in London.

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

Enjoy the weekend

Brian