

## Holy Cross Retreat

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

Letter 266

14<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### Unwell

Please remember to keep **Bruno Petrocco** in your prayers. **Michael O'Callaghan** had bladder surgery yesterday. Also Teresa Lim's nephew, **Adrian Woon** has been given only 6-7 weeks of life, and they have two young children. **Fr Jeff Foale** was given a leave pass to attend Phi's ordination and now faces several weeks of rehab. **Francis Lôc**, is one of Tri's brothers-in-law living in Taiwan where he has contracted both Dengue Fever and Tuberculosis. Both **Dennis and Mary Cogle** had COVID two weeks ago and are feeling very fatigued and still not back in their own home.

### From the Come Away Day

#### The Knots Prayer

Lord, please untie the knots that are in my mind, my heart, and my life. Remove the have nots, the can nots and the do nots that I have in my mind. Erase the will nots, may nots, might nots that find a home in my heart. Release me from the could nots, would nots, and should nots that obstruct my life. And most of all, I ask that you remove from my mind my heart and my life all of the 'am nots' that I have allowed to hold me back, especially, the thought that I am not good enough. Amen

### Stations of the Cross



The community will pray the outside Stations of the Cross at **8 .00am on Friday March 21<sup>st</sup>** and Friday **April 4<sup>th</sup>**. You are most welcome to join us. Meet at our carport, please.

#### Stations of the Cross – Good Friday

We will return to Good Friday morning Stations in small groups now that the Passion Play will not be held here. We will operate in small groups every 10 minutes from 10.00am.

(10.00am, 10.10; 10.20; 10.30; 10.40; 10.50; 11.00)

### Passion Play

The Passion Play will be performed this year on Palm Sunday at 1.30pm and on Good Friday at 10.00am at: **Catholic Regional College - 380 Sydenham Road Sydenham**. There is plenty of free parking in the grounds, in the street and opposite the train station. Everyone is welcome to attend. The Director is seeking volunteers for particular parts. If you can help, please contact Gino on: 0422662451 or email: [surveysglobal@yahoo.com](mailto:surveysglobal@yahoo.com)



# THE 26th MELBOURNE PASSION PLAY



PALM SUNDAY & GOOD FRIDAY 2025



## RECRUITING ROMAN SOLDIERS



Students/Staff/Parents (male & female) of CRC Sydenham & CRC Nth Keilor & others in the surrounding lands are hereby summoned to enlist into the ranks of the mighty Roman 10th Legio Fretensis. If you do not enlist voluntarily, you will inevitably be conscripted.  
**JOIN NOW!**



Rehearsals & Performers at: Catholic Regional College, 380 Sydenham Road, Sydenham. The first grouping of this Legion will be on 17 November 2024 at 1.30 pm reporting to the military commander at the above mentioned location. All intending soldiers must attend.

To be considered suitable to serve mighty Caesar, you must contact CRC Sydenham office on 03 9361000 OR CRC Nth Keilor office on 03 93615900 OR the Military Commander on 0422662451

St Patrick's Day....Monday 17<sup>th</sup> (To be sure, to be sure)

## Passionists a good fit for Phi

Written by Jenny Brinkworth from Adelaide Archdiocese 'Southern Cross'



Fr Phi in the Sacred Garden at The Monastery prior to his ordination on March 8.

“His journey to the priesthood has not been as smooth as some but Cao Anh Phi’s perseverance and commitment was rewarded when he was ordained in Adelaide this month”.

A time of joy for the Passionists of Holy Spirit Province and the parish of St Paul of the Cross, his ordination by Archbishop Patrick O’Regan fittingly took place on March 8, the first Saturday of Lent. With the charism of the Passionists founded on the Passion and Death of Jesus, the timing of his ordination wasn’t lost on Phi as he spoke to *The Southern Cross* ahead of the big day.



“It’s very special,” he said. “As far as I know I’m the first Passionist priest from Vietnam to be ordained during Lent.” Equally special will be his first Thanksgiving Mass on March 15th in his home village of Buon Ho Town in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. More than 800 people are expected at the Mass. This will be followed by three weeks of celebrations with family, friends and fellow Passionists.



Since returning 10 months ago to The Monastery at Glen Osmond, where he spent a year in 2018, Fr Phi has endeared himself to the

local parishioners and the elderly house-bound Catholics he visits regularly.

His Superior and parish priest of Glen Osmond/Parkside, Fr Tom McDonough, described him as “a wonderful young man” who was full of energy and would make a “very beautiful priest”. “He’s never idle, he’s always proactive and full of fun – the people adore him already,” Fr McDonough said.

1988

The eldest of five children, Phi was born in 1988 and grew up in an impoverished rural community where many adults bore the scars of war. At the age of six he went to live with his aunt in Buon Ma Thuot City, making him “half country and half city boy”. He lived with his aunt’s family for nine years during which time he said he participated in “every catechism class”. “I mean the entire parish/diocese catechism program,” he said. “When I was 10, I became an altar boy for the cathedral parish of Ban Me Thuot Diocese for five years. Most of the time, along with my first cousin, we walked to the church around 4.30am since the Mass started at 5am.”



Despite his religious upbringing, he had no plans for a vocation when he moved to Saigon in 2004. Phi began studying electrical engineering at university and was working as an air conditioner repair person when he was introduced by another aunt, a nun of the Lover of Holy Cross of Dalat, to some priests from the Congregation of St John the Baptist.

He joined the order and was living with the Congregation in the Philippines when he chose to leave. “After three years I realised that my vocation did not belong to this Order, so I decided to leave, even though I was vested as a novice for a couple of months,” he said.

Fr Phi said he could tell his parents were disappointed, but the rigidity of the order “didn’t suit my personality”. After a week resting with his family he returned to Saigon and began working at his cousin’s coffee shop.

Knowing that Phi hadn’t given up on the idea of becoming a priest, his cousin introduced him to a Brother from the Passionist Congregation which was relatively new to Vietnam. Fr Phi said when he met the Brother, one of the first Vietnamese Passionists, he noticed he was wearing a polo top and asked if it would be okay for him to wear jeans in the seminary. The brother simply said ‘well look at me’. So at the age of 26 he joined the Passionists.



“Lucky me...I was accepted as a come-and-see student for some months before I was moved into the student community at the beginning of September 2014. The rest is history.”



After three years studying philosophy at the Jesuit seminary in Ho Chi Minh, he spent a year at the novitiate in Adelaide and then returned to Vietnam to study theology. At the beginning of his last year of studies Fr Tom organised for him to transfer to Melbourne where he completed his final year of theology at the Yarra Theological Union in Melbourne, while living with the Passionists at Templestowe.

Fr Phi said his path to priesthood was “full of challenges”. “There were times when I thought I was almost there, but God had other plans for me. I feel lucky because I received a lot of love and support throughout my vocation journey, especially when I stumbled.”

He is full of gratitude to Fr McDonough and Fr Brian Traynor CP, the Superior of the student house in Melbourne, for the way they looked after the seminarians and younger priests. “They have inspired me a lot along the way,” he said.



“Our culture in Vietnam is hierarchical, when you’ve been ordained you’re elevated, but when I came to Melbourne Fr Tom, who was the one who bought me out from Vietnam, and Fr Brian, they made me feel I am cared for. “They have taught me how to respect others with dignity, regardless of your age or gender.”

Asked what he was most looking forward to about being a priest, he said “I want to be a good person before becoming a good priest. Others see me as a priest one or two hours a day but most of the time I am a person, so I just want to be a good person,” he explained.

Fr Phi’s parents travelled to Adelaide, along with many friends and relatives from Vietnam and Melbourne, for the ordination. He will continue to serve at St Paul of the Cross for at least 12 months.

As many are aware, Phi’s grandmother Anna died in Vietnam early on Sunday morning. Phi and his uncle Thien SVD based here in Melbourne who is Anna’s son, were able to talk to her after the ordination on Saturday, which was a consolation when the sad news came on Sunday morning, a few short hours before Phi had to lead Mass for the first time, which he did remarkably well.

## Learning new awareness (Denis Travers CP, Provincial)

There is an interesting contrast in the post-resurrection episodes in John's gospel. In the case of Mary – Jesus says, 'Don't touch me' (or) 'Don't cling to me' (Jn 20:17), while in the case of Thomas (Jn 20:25), Jesus explicitly invites him to 'Reach out your hand and put it into my side'.



Theologically, we learn that both statements challenge these disciples—Mary is challenged to live a faith that can let Jesus go, and Thomas is challenged to live a faith without seeking empirical proof.

I hope this might be a good segue into a conversation about the degree of physical contact we exercise in pastoral settings. When are we invited into some form of contact, and when are we not? Indeed, in this age, when we are continually called to exercise ministry professionally and prudently, there is an ongoing need to reflect, consider, and review our behaviour at all times.



We are all aware of the recent news and continuing trial of the former Spanish Soccer Federation President who forced a kiss upon a player. In contrast to this behaviour, I have previously written about a teacher welcoming her children each morning as they enter the classroom. Near the doorway were 'symbols' – pictures of a handshake, a fist bump, a 'high five' and a hug. In each case, the child chooses one symbol, and the teacher responds according to the choice made by the child, e.g., shaking

hands if that image is chosen, giving a high five if that one is chosen, etc. The strong learning from the scene is that the child has the power to choose and to make known her or his preference. It is not the teacher, the one who is in a position of power – who gets to decide what will happen.

A classroom scene is not regularly our reality. Still, it might highlight some situations where we hold the power to determine how people are welcomed or engaged in various settings. We cannot presume to know how a person wants to be greeted or engaged with at a liturgy, or in a social or work setting.

I fully appreciate that some men are quite extroverted, while some are introverted, and subconsciously, we are motivated to act in public differently.

Nevertheless, we must be guided by public expectations and standards. We live in a new era — one that militates against 'over-familiarity' and requires more compliance in public forums. Indeed, many of the settings where we minister are usually regulated by very clear and legal standards for behaviour.



Schools, hospitals and nursing homes have defined policies around 'touching', and while these specifically address the duty of care to children and adults at risk, we must be very aware of settings where we, too, need to adhere to public expectations.



Offices, community areas open to our staff or to the public, Mass settings and church areas are all spaces where we need to be fully aware of our responsibilities and actions. The question always is: Whose need am I addressing now?

Common sense and prudence must accompany our fiduciary duty. We do not need to take away all necessary and appropriate physical expressions of support and/or comfort. However, not every person we see or greet needs to be physically 'welcomed' every time we see them. Getting the balance right is essential.



## Peanuts



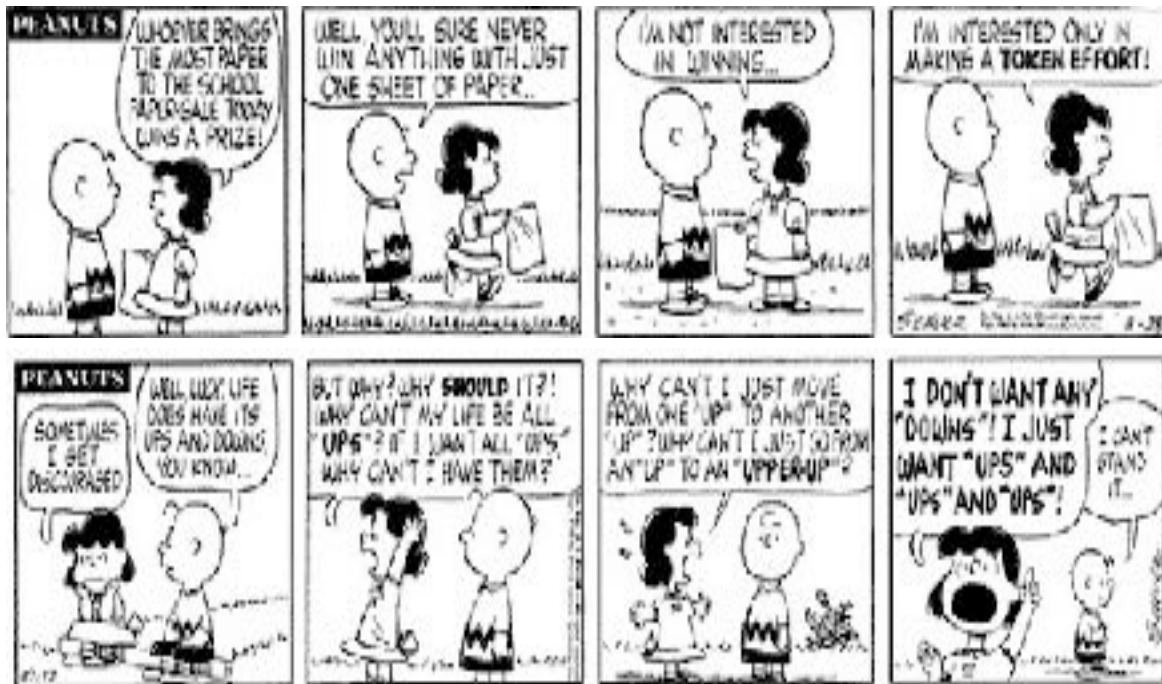
For fifty years, from 1950 until 2000 Charles Schulz drew 17,897 Peanuts comic strips. Life Magazine dubbed *Peanuts* the world's greatest comic strip of all time. The cartoons stopped with Schulz's death. I used the cartoons quite often when I was teaching catechetics in the 1970s, and I found in Robert Short's book, 'The gospel according to Peanuts' many examples of life's profound mysteries and discoveries, amid the humour. That book sold ten million copies.

Peanuts was not about the loveable aspects of being a child. It was more about the cruelties and hardships of being a child. Children including siblings, can be bullying, backstabbing and petty. Often their actions are irrational. Mostly, a child is lonely because of the rejections of other children. Sometimes they dislike, even hate someone for no reason other than - 'because.' They are learning about life's hard

One of my favourite strips is this one immediately below which was repeated a few times with variations:



lessons.



Charlie Brown is the main character. He is an average boy who is emotionally mature, gentle and considerate. He is often referred to as 'Good old Charlie Brown'. Very often things do not go his way and he seems to be a 'born loser'. Most of the other children regard him as an embarrassment and he is often mocked by them. He takes the frequent failures personally, but always finds renewed optimism and determination and never loses his kindness.





Linus Van Pelt is a younger brother to Lucy. He is Charlie Brown's blanket-carrying best friend; He is the most insecure (hence the blanket) but the smartest and most intellectual out of all the characters. He is a frequent philosopher, quoting Scriptural references and he is a theologian.

Lucy Van Pelt is Linus' older sister. She is a bossy, nasty and often torments Charlie Brown. She bullies Linus, and argues with Snoopy, but usually loses out to Snoopy. If there is a negative side to something, Lucy finds it.



Snoopy is Charlie Brown's pet dog and faithful companion, though Snoopy can never remember Charlie Brown's name!. He is intelligent, even wise, independent-minded and prone to daydreaming and fantasies. He often pretends to be 'word famous' but always fails. This is his mechanism for survival. Snoopy never speaks but his thoughts are clearly expressed in thought balloons.



Woodstock is Snoopy's best friend. He sometimes sleeps on top of Snoopy's nose. He is a small, yellow bird and speaks in a chirping language that only Snoopy and his other bird friends can understand. In some strips, Snoopy tells a joke to Woodstock and both laugh so hard they end up falling off the doghouse.



Schroeder is a piano-playing musical genius, devoted to Beethoven. He is catcher on Charlie Brown's baseball team but never throws the ball! He befriends Charlie Brown and tolerates his constant baseball failures. Lucy has a crush on Schroeder, but he never responds, wanting to be unattached, like his famous musical idol!

There are a number of other characters, seventy in all, each with their story to tell about being a human – and a child, but the characters above are the ones that appear most often. Some only appeared very briefly.







Humour



### LEXOPHILIA Part 2

- A girl said she recognised me from the vegetarian club, but I never met herbivore.
- When chemists die, they barium.
- I'm reading a book on anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.
- I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.
- I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.
- I got a job in a bakery because I kneaded the dough.

- Velcro- what a rip off.
- Don't worry about old age; it doesn't last.
- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.
- Broken pencils are pointless.
- I dropped out of communication class because of lousy Marx.
- All the toilets in the local police station have been stolen. The police have nothing to go on.
- Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

### What the circus can offer



A couple who worked in the circus went to an adoption agency. Social workers there raised doubts about their suitability. The couple produced photos of their 50 foot motorhome, which was equipped with a beautiful nursery. The social workers were still doubtful. "What about the education the child would receive?"

The couple replied, "We have already arranged for a full-time tutor who would teach the child all the usual subjects along with French, Mandarin and computer skills." The social workers expressed doubts about raising a child in a circus environment. "Our nanny is an expert in paediatric welfare and diet." The couple stated.

Finally, the social workers were satisfied. They asked the couple, "What age child are you hoping to adopt?". "It doesn't really matter" the man said, "as long as he fits in the cannon."

### Prayers

We remember those who have died recently as well as those whose anniversaries occur around this time, especially [Margaret Mangan](#), [Richard Wall](#), [Adrian Aloï](#), [Carmel Cochaud](#), [Margaret Excell](#), [Richard Hall](#), [Peter Gaughan CP](#), and for 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 [Bruno Petrocco](#), [Kata Lenic](#), [Adrian Woon](#), [Robyn Burns](#), [Fr Jeff Foale CP](#), [Bro Jerome](#), [Maureen Barns](#), [Michael Beuger](#), [Rod Gorfine](#), [Pam Storey](#), [Noel Smyth](#), [Bro Minh Toan CP](#), [Peter Barry](#), [Pam Gartland](#), [Desley Reynolds](#), [Zoe Chung](#) and her baby daughter [Sophia](#), [Rex Cambry](#), [Monica Sleeman](#), [Gerry Bond](#), [Paul Darbyshire](#), [Carol Battistella](#), [Alexander Lim](#), [Lorraine Gill](#), [Doris Castro](#), [Michael O'Callaghan](#), [Julia](#)

Cantone, Bronwyn Burke, Adrian Woon, Luke Norden, Peter Owen, Bernadette Owen,  
Judy Tellefson, Greg Agosta, Helen McLean, Caroline Meade, Patricia Keeghan,  
Phil Drew, Anne Jenkins, Errol Lovett, and baby Alfred Theodore in London.

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

Enjoy the weekend....my apology for being slow to respond to some emails  
(thankyou), and sorry for the extended reading in this week's newsletter

Brian

**Phi Cp and Tri CP!**

