



# ***Holy Cross Passionist-Family Newsletter***

January / February 2016

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***Happy New Year... Happy Easter - by Fr Kevin Hennessy CP.***

I know that you will be amazed that I'm already wishing you, "Happy Easter".

Time is already flying and I hope that you are not entering your 60s as I am. I feel like Christmas is just around the corner as Holy Cross opens another year of its life. There have been a few, like Tim Horlock and myself, who have constantly kept Holy Cross alive over the December/January period. The Christmas Eve Mass was a highlight with about 1750 celebrating Christmas Mass in our backyard.

Now that we are coming to the end of January, **Fr Chris Monaghan CP** has returned half his size, after a bike ride from Mount Cook to Timaru to Christchurch. **Fr Brian Traynor CP** and **Fr Jose Mathew CP** will arrive back in the next week and, as some of you know, Fr Brian has been at Passionist meetings at Malung, **Indonesia**. The Passionists in Indonesia is the fastest growing group in our congregation as new men join up to follow the spirit of Paul of the Cross. Fr Jose briefly met up with Maeve Riordan and Teresa Lim as the two women journeyed on a retreat in India.

**Br Jerome CP**, who has just returned from **PNG** where we now have 11 students, will return again in the coming week to assist the new, inexperienced team in training our students. Jerome, of course, has 43 years PNG experience. Not bad for a 76 year old man to return to a city that is so hot after no rain for a long time! We welcome back our students who have been on pastoral placement and on holidays. The academic year at the University of Divinity begins next month for the four students.

The English Language School (ELSPM) began on 27 January with seven students. We welcome to our Holy Cross community two students - **Fr Paulos Jasmin CP** (Indonesia) and **Fr Zaher** (Syria). Both are already English speakers but desire to do further English studies for at least 6 months at ELSPM. By the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, we hope to have 30 students in the school. In time, another eight Passionists from PNG, Vietnam and Africa will be coming to study English.

**Maree Butler**, as you all know, has a 'broken wing' after surgery. She is returning next week to run the Holy Cross Centre which is heavily booked for 2016. The Come Away days begin in February. Please find the list of dates in this newsletter. We welcome back all of you who support us, pray with us and are volunteers who enable the Holy Cross Centre to continue much longer than we thought possible. Please God, we can continue over many decades to keep Holy Cross going as a place of spirituality and support. We could not do that without your support. Let's have a great 2016 and celebrate the life that we have!

***Fr Kevin CP.***

## **Congratulations Brother Frank Hennessy.**

In the Australia Day Awards this week, Bro. Frank (*Fr Kevin's brother*) received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to Education and to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**POSTAGE:** With the cost increasing to \$1, we are keen to reduce the number of Newsletters that are posted. When postage was 50 cents, we posted over 200. We now send 163 electronically & post 103. If you currently receive the Newsletter by mail and would be happy to receive it by email, please advise me: [d.cougle@bigpond.com](mailto:d.cougle@bigpond.com)

## ***The Passionists in Vietnam, Part 2 – by Fr Brian Traynor CP.***

*(Following the admission of Vietnam to the Holy Spirit Province, Fr Brian Traynor CP in his role as Formation Coordinator visited the Passionist Community in Ho Chi Minh City and our December Newsletter reported on that visit. This second part, also based on extracts from Fr Brian's diary, includes a report on the St Francis Shelter, one of the Missions for which a Fundraiser was conducted at Holy Cross last November.)*

Passionist life in Vietnam began about 12 years ago and in that time and still now there has been adjustment and change, and amazing efforts made to house and feed an ever growing number of candidates all whom share a room either with one, three or five others. At the Gabriel's Residence, there is a large community of seventeen men of whom fourteen are students. In late December they will be joined by the two newly ordained deacons (**Thanh and Truc** were ordained Deacons at **Holy Cross** on November 21<sup>st</sup>). By July 2016, some of the present six novices will return to St Gabriel's to continue theological studies.

**Frs Tom Anamattathil and Jeff Foale** took me to 'The Francis Shelter' which is about an hour's drive from St Gabriel's in Dong Noi Province. **Bay** (By) one of the philosophy students also came with us. He visits every weekend (staying over on Saturday nights) as his apostolate, and he has also spent two months there on pastoral placement. How can one describe the Shelter and then the experience? To start with, a look at this brief video will give you some idea of the Shelter: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJVMNAC6z3Y>

The Shelter was founded 17 years ago by a former St John of God Brother, Bui Van Chau, to provide care for abandoned disabled children and adults. There are no employed staff. A few volunteers are full time and live in at the facility and those that we met are inspiring. Chau has spoken with Fr Jeff to express his desire that the Passionists might take over the running of the Shelter. Prior examination would need to be given to the legal and financial implications of running such an institute in a communist country with volunteer staff who may not have the required qualifications. Chau has upgraded and extended the facilities and Jeff says he is an amazing man. Mr Chu Van Nham whom we met and who seems always to have a ready smile, acts as manager when Chau is away.

There appears to be a need for an upgrade to comply with some modern standards of WH&S and that together with other issues would make it an expensive operation, but what a wonderful service it provides. In the video above the volunteers seem to be so happy displaying big smiles and that is exactly what we experienced. They are modern day saints, working for the lowest of people with total dedication, care and joy. **Pope Francis** would be proud of them! A longer clip comprised mostly of pictures with no spoken words can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HFxLxMAimM>

To highlight the work of these 'modern day saints', it is worth recounting something of **Bay's** experience. He said when he first came, he was scared, and especially he could not stand the stench when it came to washing some of the patients which is done in a bathroom with a hose like spray. Many of the patients need to wear nappies which have to be changed regularly, and he had to get used to doing that too. A good number of patients including very young children, are permanently restrained, tied hands and feet to their bed, except for when they are showered. This is to prevent them from causing harm to themselves. In all, Bay said, there are 87 patients.

Over time, **Bay** got used to the less pleasant side of things and now thinks little of it. He started to find he missed the patients when he went home and looked forward to seeing them the following week. It says a great deal about him that he has taken on this volunteering work as his regular pastoral experience and spent a prolonged period living on site and working there. Most, if not all of the Passionist students have visited and engaged with the patients, helping to feed them and spend time with them. They also hosted them last Christmas as St Gabriel's and that obviously involved a lot of extra volunteers to get them there.

Bui Truong Tho is 72, he was found abandoned on the road after a motor accident. The Good Samaritan who 'found' him saved his life knew of the Shelter and brought him there where he regained motor skills, but like many patients there, his memory or brain has been affected. In some cases, like his, the family would not know where he is. In most cases, the patients have been abandoned by family.

I noticed a man walking awkwardly up the stairs holding a cup of tea in one hand. He had suffered a stroke. One of the permanent volunteers **Niem**, also noticed and she moved toward him, took the cup, held his arm and guided him safely up the stairs. With a beautiful smile she returned his cup to him. Perhaps the saddest boy I saw was aged around 7. He is severely restrained and **Bay** told me that there is only one male volunteer who has formed a bond with him and will always receive food from him. For the others trying to feed him, he kicks & bucks viciously; without the physical restraint he wears he would continually bash his head against his bed or the wall.

There is a girl aged 5 who was found abandoned after 2 days. She seems very happy, but she is an orphan. There are many teenage and young adults who cannot speak and some who cannot hear either. Many have suffered this kind of physical damage from motor bike accidents. One man is blind. Some have other physical disabilities. They are divided into separate rooms, much like a hospital ward: with young female & male children, older teenagers and young adult males, and in a separate room, females of a similar age. In another room there are adult males who have serious disabilities and they are locked in with a padlock cell door, when there is no one visiting or assisting them. They could be a danger to themselves and possibly to others if they leave their room. There is another group of men (some women also) who suffer from a disability such as a stroke, who are able to interact with other patients and assist as co-volunteers. I could only feel overwhelming gratitude that there are people willing to undertake such caring ministry to '**les miserables**'; and as Bay so aptly put it, '**you have to spend time here as well as in the chapel**'.

*(Thank you Fr Brian for this informative and moving story, albeit abbreviated, about the Passionists involvement in Vietnam. We continue to pray for our Passionist Family, including all in our Community in Ho Chi Ming City and particularly, those dedicated Volunteers). Donations for the education of Passionists in Vietnam or for the Francis Shelter may be made through the Passionist Provincial Office.*

## **Holy Cross, Austria – from Denis Travers CP.**

The train sped across the Austrian landscape at **235kms per hour**, slowing occasionally to a more manageable 160kms to negotiate sections of the track before speeding up again.

Our journey had begun in **Munich Germany**, and now we were hurling across a constantly changing series of scenes - at one moment countryside with its neatly ordered farms, at other times we were skirting **the Danube** and often we were within sight of snow-capped mountains. We were on our way to the station nearest Heiligenkreuz (**Holy Cross**) - the site of an **11th century** monastery situated in the **Vienna Woods** about 40kms from **Vienna**, and home to the **Cistercian Monks** for the past **900 years**. This Abbey is not only home to the monks themselves, but is the centre of a wide pastoral district with some twenty or so parishes attached and which are also the responsibility of the monks. Within this Abbey too is a smaller seminary for students of various orders and diocese across Austria; Passionist students also study here and thus my visit was to see their seminary and meet with one of our men based there.

**Heiligenkreuz is the second-oldest Cistercian monastery in the world and the oldest continuously active and inhabited one**, and I am told it has never had as many monks living there as in this present time. If my memory serves me well there are about 160 monks there today.

The monastery is recognised as one of the most beautiful medieval monasteries in the world. It was founded in **1133** by St. Leopold III of the House of Babenberg. Leopold's son, Otto, had been sent to Paris for an international education and whilst there came in contact with Cistercian monks and soon decided to enter a Cistercian monastery. He then asked his father in Austria to build a similar monastery for Lower Austria.

The Emperor not only built the monastery, but gave to it sufficient lands around to ensure that it was self-sufficient for food and that there was enough woodland to provide fuel for fires and building materials.

Today the monastery still sustains itself from the income of its lands - although some of this land has now been turned to a highly successful venture in grape production and wine manufacturing. The other regular and reliable source of income is the harvesting of wood which is then on sold for making briquettes for furnaces and other logs for households and their winter warmth. The monastery is also very popular as a tourist destination and in the summer months up to a thousand buses will visit each day! To cater for such numbers the monastery also features a restaurant with seating for hundreds and a delicious, traditional Austrian menu too!

Many come to see the monastery church with its stained glass windows and fine wood carvings. (One brother worked in the sacristy for 30 years to complete the fine wood based designs and carvings that decorate the room). A notable feature of the stained glass windows is their lack of symbols or other forms - they are simple and plain designs all intended to distract the monks as little as possible and so not to disturb their prayers and meditation!

Till next time, your foreign correspondent, **Denis CP.**

## ***Celebrating the Feast of Passionist Saint, St Gabriele at Holy Cross, Templestowe.***

**Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>**

**This is an important and joyous, annual celebration at Holy Cross.**

**You are all welcome to join this special celebration at the St Gabriele Shrine in lovely grounds of Holy Cross.**

As usual, there will be a huge Marquée with seating for more than 800 people in front of the Shrine but if you wish, you are welcome to bring your own chair (and use it later for the picnic !).

### **Principal Celebrant:**

#### ***Padre Mario Madonna CP***

From San Gabriele Monastery (Isola Del Gransasso, Italy )

### **Concelebrants:**

**Fr Kevin Hennessy CP and Fr Chris Monaghan CP**

### **Program:**

**10am:** Recital of the Rosary;

**10.30:** Holy Mass.

**2pm:** Musical entertainment.

**4pm:** Return of Statues to the Chapel & Benediction.

***St Anthony's Choir (Hawthorn) will provide musical accompaniment for the Mass under the marquee on the oval. A ceremonial procession will follow with the Statues of St Paul of the Cross and St Gabriele, led by members of the Associazioni San Gabriele, children in costume and the Bellini Band.***

***The Organising Committee of the Association of Saint Gabriele extends a warm welcome to everyone to attend this special celebration of the Feast of Passionist Saint Gabriele and to stay afterwards for a picnic lunch in the beautiful, extensive gardens of the Passionist Monastery. Porchetta, gnocchi, salsicce, panini, cafe, also gelati available all day. BYO drinks. (As usual, Porchetta will also be available to purchase and take home - \$35 kilo - it's always a sell-out.)***

**NOTE:** This Invitation applies to everyone. If you have not previously joined in this celebration, you are especially welcome to attend the Mass, the Procession and stay for (an extended!) lunch in the beautiful gardens of Holy Cross.

**OR** if you prefer to attend the **10.30 Mass in the Chapel** you are warmly invited to join the procession after Mass and stay for the picnic – bring the family and friends. A good time is assured!



## Passionists' Birthdays:

Fr Peter Gardiner CP – January 12<sup>th</sup>  
Fr Paul Mercieca CP – January 13<sup>th</sup>  
Fr Lex Keys CP – January 19<sup>th</sup>  
Fr Tom McDonough – January 21<sup>st</sup>  
Fr Phil Smith CP – February 1<sup>st</sup>  
Fr Gary Perritt CP – February 12<sup>th</sup>

## Anniversaries in January/February:

On Australia Day, January 26, **Fr Brian Gleeson CP** celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Passionist Profession. Congratulations Fr Brian – God bless.

Frs Ron Davoren CP, Ray Brain CP and Phil Smith CP all celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Profession on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Fr John Pearce CP** (28.2.1976) **Fr David King CP** (17.2.1990) and **Fr Pat McIndoe CP** (23.01.1971) celebrate the anniversaries of their Ordination.

And 48 years ago on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, **Brian Traynor CP** and **Peter Addicoat CP** made their Passionist Profession – **Fr Chris Mithen CP** (who made his Profession on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1951) was their Novice Master, while 43 years ago, on January 21<sup>st</sup>, former Passionist Provincial now based in Rome, **Fr Denis Travers CP**, made his Profession.

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, **Br Erick Niyiragira CP** celebrates the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Passionist Profession and on the following day, **Br Erick CP** will celebrate the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of his Final Profession.

## Feast of St Gabriele:

While this year at Holy Cross we celebrate the Feast of Saint Gabriele on the 21<sup>st</sup>, his actual Feast Day is February 27<sup>th</sup>. He is patron of Abruzzo (Italy) and co-patron of youth. Born in Assisi in 1838 with the baptismal name of Francis, he entered the Passionist novitiate on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1856.

Gabriele died at the early age of 24 in a religious house built by St Francis of Assisi. Both were rich young men who had the capacity to give up everything to follow Jesus. To some, Gabriele's early death may seem like a life wasted; his family and friends were fearful that he did not have the physical strength for the toughness of Passionist life, as it was in those days. Their fears were realised when Gabriele was struck down with tuberculosis and died.

However, God had other tasks for Gabriele, tasks that continue today. His sanctuary in Gran Sasso welcomes over 2 million pilgrims each year. St Gabriele, please pray for our youth, may they be blessed with your courage, insight and love of Our Lord.

### **TUESDAY MORNING COMMUNITY MASSES**

at Holy Cross

Resume for 2016, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8.30am

## Holy Cross News:

The year commenced on a very quiet note with all the Passionists but one away on leave or working elsewhere, leaving **Fr Kevin CP** in charge! (**Maree Butler** was still on leave following her shoulder operation).

We are told **Br Jerome CP** was the first to return home (from PNG), although he was keeping a low profile. Come the weekend of January 23/24, **Br Tony Simbel CP** had returned from PNG where he spent most of his time working with **Fr Kevin Dance CP**. It sounded like Tony was on what we call a 'busman's holiday' but he said he had learned a lot.

**Br John Lim CP** also returned that same weekend. He said he spent most of his holiday time in China and he really enjoyed catching up with family and friends. On the following day, Monday, both John and Tony went to Brisbane for a Retreat at 'The Fort' – as the Passionist residence on Fort Road, Oxley is commonly known.

**Fr Chris Monaghan CP** had also returned at that time, having spent his holiday cycling on outback tracks in some very scenic areas on the south island of New Zealand. No doubt we will see some of his excellent photographs taken on the trip when he works them into his homilies.

On January 26, **Fr Zaher** from Syria arrived to take up residence at Holy Cross for about 6 months. Although he speaks very good English, he will be attending the ELSPM to advance his language skills. **Welcome to Holy Cross Fr Zaher.**

On the following day, **Fr Jasmin CP PhD** arrived from Indonesia. He also will be staying at Holy Cross for some months while he advances his study of English at the ELSPM. **Fr Brian Traynor CP** met **Fr Jasmin** last November in Vietnam where he was studying English and Vietnam at the same time, and as Fr Brian said, 'doing very well in both languages!' **Welcome to Holy Cross, Fr Jasmin.**

### **'Come Away Retreat Day'**

First for 2015

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February.**

9.30am – 3pm.

Then: Note your diary with these dates:

March 21, April 20, May 23, June 16, July 25,  
August 24, September 15, October 27 and Nov. 24.

End-of-the-Month

### **Passionist-Family Mass**

- the 479<sup>th</sup> since 1968 -

**February 28<sup>th</sup>, 10.30am**

Celebrant: Fr Chris Monaghan CP

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

*'Jesus said: the water I will give you will be  
the spring of eternal life.'*

### **LENTEN PROGRAM AT HOLY CROSS**

\*Ash Wednesday: February 10<sup>th</sup>, 8.30am,  
Mass & Blessing of the Ashes.

\*Mass and Reflection – Every Tuesday - 8.30am