

Holy Cross Retreat

Letter 153



20th January, 2023

Greetings,

Tết



Tết means 'festival' in Vietnamese language. It is most commonly short for Tết Nguyên Đán (Lunar New Year) which is one of the most important celebrations in Vietnamese culture. Tết Nguyên Đán, means "Festival of the First Day of the Year". and it celebrates the arrival of spring based on the Vietnamese calendar.

Tết is generally celebrated on the same day as Chinese New Year (also called the Spring Festival), but the one-hour time difference between the two countries means the new moon occurs on different days.

Tết is a national holiday usually spread over 3-9 days, and this year will run from Friday January 20th to Thursday January 26th. It is customary for Vietnamese people to return to their families for the festival holiday if that is possible.



Millions of migrant workers from major cities and industrial hubs return to their homes for family reunions. it is a time to remember ancestors and to set aside the troubles of the past year and hope for a better and happier upcoming year. Our own community house in Saigon is typically deserved at this time of the year as the men return to their families.



The most traditional food for this festival is Banh Tet which is tightly packed sticky rice with meat or bean fillings wrapped in *dong* or banana leaves.

There are many beliefs in Vietnamese (and Chinese) culture around Tết that are related to expecting something new, warding off evil spirits and avoiding bad luck. One custom is to offer 'lucky money' in a red envelope, especially to children and to elders to show respect and appreciation. The giving is accompanied by the desire for the receiver to have 'good luck', symbolised by the red colour of the envelope.





It is customary for 'spring cleaning' to take place on the days before Tết and that has been happening this week.



Phi has been very actively cleaning the kitchen and recreating rooms, and our postulants and Tony have been active in the grounds. Their efforts in the front garden would make Pastor very proud.



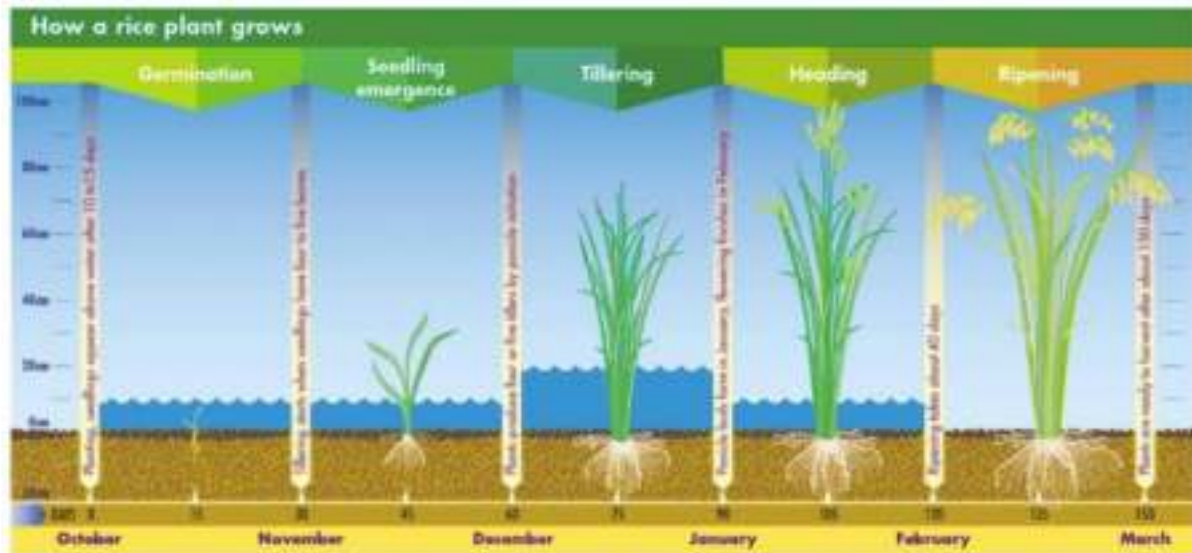
Although Tri is home with his family this year for Tết, it is not possible for the other five Vietnamese men in our community at Holy Cross to return home to Vietnam. It is customary to stay home and not visit the day before Tết so we will share a Vietnamese meal on Saturday night. Sunday will see them connecting with Vietnamese relatives or friends and maybe passing over a red envelope to an elder? What a pity for Chris that he will be away!

Rice

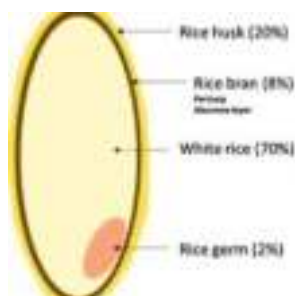


Rice is the main source of nourishment for more than half the world's population. It was first cultivated in Asia, in a broad arc stretching from eastern India through to Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, northern Vietnam and southern China. Rice grains discovered at an excavation in South Korea in 2003 were 15,000 years old – 3,000 years earlier than the previously accepted date for the origin of rice cultivation in China around 12,000 years ago. Vietnam supplies 50% of the global rice supply and Australian rice is exported to over 50 countries including the Middle East, Japan and Hong Kong and up to 40 million people across the globe eat Australian rice every day.

Rice is a cereal and related to wheat, oats and barley. It completes its entire life cycle within six months, from planting to harvesting. It is also semi-aquatic, so it can grow partly on land and partly submerged in water.



Rice plants start their life as individual grains sown in irrigated fields that have been formed to maximise water productivity. They grow to become green, grassy plants about 60-100 cm tall. Each plant contains many heads full of rice grains that turn golden indicating the plant is ready to harvest. The rice grain is made of three main layers - the hull or husk, the bran and germ, and the inside kernel, or endosperm.



The rice hull or husk is a hard, protective outer layer that is not edible. The hull is removed when the grain is milled. Underneath the hull is the bran and germ layer, which is a thin layer of skin which holds it all together. This layer gives brown rice its colour. White rice is just brown rice with the bran and germ layer removed. The endosperm is the inside of the rice grain, which is hard and white and contains lots of starch. This brief video explains the process: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxAEiHCErSA>



Everywhere rice is grown today, consideration is being given to conserving water and Australian rice growers use 50% less water than the global average. They recycle all of their water and use the moisture left in the soil after harvest to plant another grain crop. Most Australian rice farms use laser-guided land levelling techniques to prepare the ground for production. This allows the farmers to have precise control over the flow of water on and off the paddock.



Such modern technology is not affordable for simple and poor farmers, such as Tri's parents who live in Yên Thành, in the north central coast of Vietnam, 270 kilometres south of Hanoi.

Immediately left is Tri's mother, Hue, and to the right, is Tri, getting ready to help out.



The photo to the left is of Tri's mother and one of his six siblings, who is a religious sister (also, like him, back home on holidays). They are planting rice. This requires maintaining required spacing distances at the right depth in the soil. The spacing is about 20-30 centimetres (done in triangles or in a grid structure); the depth is just a few centimetres in the soil.

Farmers put the rice seedlings in by pushing it down with their thumb. It is not surprising that lower back pain is a common experience for rice farmers, because prolonged stooping and repetitive twisting is involved in the planting process.

Denis Travers: 50th profession



On Saturday 21st January, Denis will celebrate his 50th anniversary of profession. Denis was born in Adelaide, and undertook his formation at Holy Cross. He was ordained in 1977 at age 24. Three years later he was elected to the Provincial Council. The confidence in Denis has been born out in his subsequent ministries and appointments. He has served as Novice Master, Community Leader, Parish Priest, Provincial Consultor, Provincial (8 years) and General Consultor (12 years stationed in Rome).

Denis qualified with a Masters in Spirituality and this has been the major thrust of his Passionist life, whether it be in those Province roles, as a parish priest, or in retreat and spiritual direction ministry. As Provincial (1999-2007), Denis introduced Passionist Companions to the Province, again using his deep Passionist spirituality to enhance our charism among the Passionist Family. Denis has also been a long time chaplain of the 'Teams' Movement (Equipes Notre Dame) for marriage spirituality.

This occasion gives us cause to express thanks, appreciation and admiration for fifty years of faithful Passionist life. Denis has lived and ministered at Holy Cross, so on behalf of those he served, befriended and lived with, we extend congratulations.

Bro Stan Tyler

Stan's funeral was conducted on Wednesday this week, in Glen Osmond, Adelaide and he was buried in the Monastery grounds. May he rest in peace.



Some summary reactions to COVID

The Allergists were in favour of scratching it, but the Dermatologists advised not to make any rash moves.

The Gastroenterologist's had a gut feeling about it, but the Neurologists thought the officials had a lot of nerve.

Meanwhile, Obstetricians felt certain everyone was labouring under a misconception, while the Ophthalmologists considered the idea shortsighted.

Pathologists yelled, "Over my dead body!" while the Pediatricians said, "Oh, grow up!"

The Psychiatrists thought the whole idea was madness, while the Radiologists could see right through it.

Surgeons decided to wash their hands of the whole thing and the Interns claimed it would indeed be a bitter pill to swallow.

The Plastic Surgeons reckoned that this approach would "put a whole new face on the matter" and the Podiatrists thought it was "a step forward"

Anesthesiologists thought the whole idea was a gas, and the Cardiologists didn't have the heart to say no.

The Proctologists thought they were always at the butt end of any decision and refused to have the final word.

So who won out?



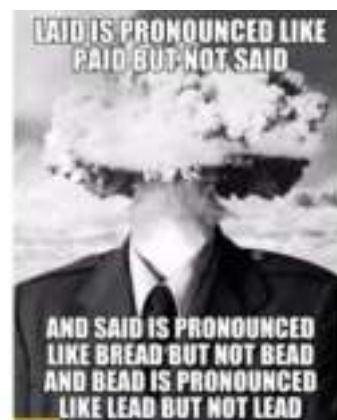
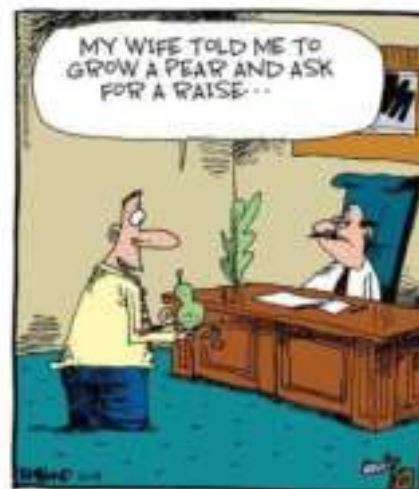
Humour



WHAT DO YOU CALL AN ALLIGATOR IN A VEST?



AN INVESTIGATOR.





I accidentally swallowed some Scrabble tiles and now I'm experiencing constant vowel movements. The next trip to the bathroom could spell disaster.

ENGLISH IS THE ONLY LANGUAGE WHERE YOU DRIVE IN PARKWAYS AND PARK IN DRIVEWAYS.	THE WORD QUEUE IS JUST A Q FOLLOWED BY FOUR SILENT LETTERS.
IT'S ALSO THE ONLY LANGUAGE WHERE YOU RECITE IN A PLAY AND PLAY IN A RECITAL.	JAIL AND PRISON ARE SYNONYMS. BUT JAILER AND PRISONER ARE ANTONYMS.
YOUR FINGERS HAVE FINGERTIPS BUT YOUR TOES DON'T HAVE TOETIPS.	WHEN YOU TRANSPORT SOMETHING BY CAR, IT'S CALLED A SHIPMENT . BUT WHEN YOU TRANSPORT SOMETHING BY SHIP, IT'S CALLED CARGO .
YET, YOU CAN TIPTOE BUT NOT TIPFINGER .	

A truck loaded with Vicks VapoRub overturned on the highway today. There was no congestion for 8 hours.

How would you like to be learning English?

Quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig. Writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth

beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese?

You can make amends but not one amend. You comb through annals of history but you can't scan one annal. If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it? If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If vegetarians eat vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? If you wrote a letter, perhaps you bote your tongue?

People recite at a play and play at a recital? They ship by truck and send cargo by ship? We have noses that run and feet that smell? We park on driveways and drive on parkways? A slim chance and a fat chance are the same, and a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? Overlook and oversee are opposite, but quite a few and quite a lot are alike?



Instructions for a do- it-yourself home security system.

A) Place a pair of men's used work boots size 14-16 on your front porch, along with a copy of *Guns & Ammo* magazine.

B) Leave a note on the door that reads: "Hey Blue, gone for more ammo and beer. Don't

mess with the pit bulls; they attacked the postman this morning and messed him up real bad. Anyway, I locked all four of 'em in the house. Better wait outside.

Cheers, Wacka."

2. After enduring a freezing winter in Hobart, Bill departed for a holiday on the Gold Coast where he was to meet his wife the next day after her business trip. Unfortunately, there was a mix-up at the boarding gate, and Bill had to wait for a later flight. He tried to appeal to a supervisor but was told the airline was not responsible and there was no use complaining.

Upon arrival at the hotel the next day, he discovered the Gold Coast was having a heatwave, and its weather was almost as uncomfortably hot as Hobart's was cold. The receptionist gave him a message that his wife would arrive as planned. He could hardly wait to get to the pool area to cool off, and quickly sent his wife an email, but in his haste he made an error in the email address.

His message went to an elderly woman whose husband had died the day before. When the grieving widow opened her email, she took one look at the monitor, let out an anguished scream, and fell to the floor dead. Her family rushed to her room where they saw this message on the screen:

My dearest wife, Departed yesterday as you know. Just now got checked in. Some confusion at the gate. Appeal was denied. Received confirmation of your arrival tomorrow.

— Your loving husband.

PS — You won't believe how hot it is here

3. 1. A woman due to give birth started having vigorous contractions at home. Her frantic husband rang triple-0 and shouted, "My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only two minutes apart!"

"Is this her first child?" asks the operator.

"No!" he shouted. "This is her husband!"

4. A taxi driver reached the pearly gates. St. Peter looked him up in his Big Book and told him to pick up a gold staff and a silk robe and proceed into Heaven. Next in line was a preacher. St. Peter looked him up in his Big Book, furrowed his brow and said, "OK, we'll let you in, but take that cloth robe and wooden staff." The preacher was shocked and replied, "But I am a man of the cloth. You gave that taxi driver a gold staff and a silk robe. Surely I rate higher than a cabbie!" St. Peter responded matter-of-factly, "This is Heaven and up here, we are interested in results. When you preached, people slept. When he drove his taxi, people prayed."

A picture paints a thousand words

This old photo is about as good an image of Joy that you could ever see.





Congratulations

Grace and Joe Kho look in fine form at their sons marriage to Lynn in Maylasia last weekend. The outfits are most stylish and attractive

Frank Bartoli celebrates his 74th birthday today, January 20th

Maree Bartoli will celebrate her 71st birthday on January 26th



Chris

We wish Chris safe travels to Scotland. The latest forecast for Friday in nearby Elgin is -1 min – 3 max! He will send the **Mass link** tomorrow.

Please remember in your prayer **Fr Chris Mithen CP**. Chris has been in Box Hill hospital for a week. Also **Fr Brian Gleeson CP** has been in hospital a little longer and was transferred from Dandenong hospital to Clayton.



We also remember those who have died, especially Jim Molan, admired and praised in the media this week. He is loved brother to Maurice from our Holy Cross community.

We also remember those whose anniversaries are in this coming week Viv Rabot, and Mary Bortolotto (Jan 22nd), Marie Mears (Jan 25th), and George Bennett (Jan 26th)

We pray also for all of our Holy Cross family who are unwell especially Cathy Petrocco's sister, Marissa, Maree Bartoli, Michael Doyle, Maeve Reardon, Paul Darbyshire Bernard Charnley, John Lazzari, Jenny Wullings, Lynda Chin, Alexander Lim, Des Grisell, Gerry Bond, Helen McLean, Peter Owen, Greg Agosta, Dominic Isgro, Errol Lovett, Peter DeMarzi, Norm Heyhorn, Chris O'Toole, Angelo Vigilante, Pam Gartland, Jim Monaghan, Anne Jenkins, Sr Gen Walsh RSC, Peter McNamara, Marg Casey, Patricia Keeghan, Mary Hackett, Margaret Wright, Mary and Kate Dunn.

God bless,
Brian