

# Lismore Passionist Family Group Report

By: Gwen and Russell Winterscheidt

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This report is of our visit to the Lismore Diocese in August 2018.

We started our time with a visit with Bishop Greg Homeming on the 17<sup>th</sup> August. The next 10 days we visited ten Family Group Parishes. Our new role, on the National Coordinating Team, is to nurture and support Family Group Parishes in seven Northern Dioceses in Australia. Lismore, fortunately for us, comes under our umbrella once more. Rather than have just communication via phone or email we preferred to come and visit. We are very thankful for the love and friendship extended to the both of us. The first part of the trip we were pleased to travel with Jeanelle and Denis Bergin who are an integral part of the Northern Leadership Team.

Visit with Bishop Greg Homeming O.C.D.

Jeanelle and Denis Bergin along with Russell and Gwen visited Bishop Greg at Lismore. Bishop Greg had a sound understanding of the Passionist Family Groups. He made many points about the Lismore Diocese and the Church and how the Passionist Family Groups support people in their faith today. He commented that one of the reasons the Passionist Family Group Movement has survived over the last 30 year, is that the Movement has been rooted in the Passionist Spirituality and remains under the guidance of the Passionist Order. Bishop Greg also spoke of the importance of the lay people being responsible for the Leadership of the Family Groups in their parishes as well as working with their Parish Priests and the wider Passionist Family Group Coordinating Team. *"How wonderful to see the people caring for one another in their communities"* said Bishop Greg. On leaving we knew we had Bishop Greg's blessing to carry on our mission to support the Passionist Family Group Parishes in the Lismore Diocese.

## **Our aims for visiting the Family Group Parishes.**

To reconnect with the Family Group people and build on our relationships.

To inform people of the new structure that was being implemented to support and nurture the Passionist Family Groups in Australia.

To work together with parishes to help build on and promote the Family Group Aims.

When we visited each parish we highlighted the following questions?

- ✚ Why did you join a Family Group?
- ✚ Why are you still in your Family Group?
- ✚ What have you enjoyed doing in your Family Group?
- ✚ Have you experienced or witnessed people supporting one another.

The responses from each parish had similar themes.

## Summary of Responses







People joined the Passionist Family Group Movement because they wanted to get to know others in their parish community. Many people were new to the parish and found this an easy way to get to know others. Others accepted invitations from their Parish Priest or from other parishioners to join.



Friendship, support, love and a sense of being in an extended family and part of the wider community were the main reason people are still in their Family Group. Some people commented that from being in a Family Group they are now involved in other aspects of parish life.

There were many stories of the fun people have had in their groups. Weekends away and various activities ranging from men's cooking nights to casserole evening's and coffee and chat after Mass were just a few of the outings.

There have been times when the Family Groups are labelled as the Parish BBQ or Social Groups. We would add that members are people living out the Gospel message "To Love One Another". We can relate to the beatitudes in today's world:

-  *I was lonely and you visited me.*
-  *I was sick and you came and took me to the doctors.*
-  *My children had no grandparents close by. You came to their Confirmation and supported them and my family.*
-  *My wife died and the Family Group supported me and looked after all the funeral and wake arrangements.*
-  *My husband had aggressive cancer. For a year we were unsure of the outcome. You walked with us and supported us in prayer.*
-  *I was new to the parish. You invited me to join. You became my family.*

This is the grass root spirituality of Family Groups.

We were inspired, encouraged and energised by meeting with everyone in the Lismore Diocese. We have many fond memories of our time together. Thank You.

Until we meet again,

May God hold you in the palm of His Hands.

Gwen and Russell Winterscheidt

We are also attaching the document "*The Commission Ritual for Leaders and Family Group members*" which was discussed at several parishes. This is a very good ritual to highlight the ministry within the parish community that Family Group Leadership is. It also enables each member of Family Groups to recommit to the Aims and Goals of the Passionist Family Group Movement.

## Parishes Visits in order of visits:

Date 2018	Parish	Parish Priest	Coordinators	Groups
17 August	<i>Sacred Heart Parish</i> Murwillumbah	Fr Anthony Lemon	Philomena and Tony Zambelli	6
19 August	<i>Our lady of the Rosary</i> Alstonville	Fr Max Gow	Stephanie and Tim Limbert	5
21 August	<i>St Augustine's</i> Coffs Harbour	Fr Peter Padsungay	Mary and Leon Walsh	5
22 August	<i>Our Lady Help of Christians</i> Sawtell	Fr Michael Alcock	Carolyn Tumminello Parish Worker	5
25 <sup>th</sup> August	Uniting Church Port Macquarie	Rev Malcolm Hausler	Glenis Proberts	6
25 <sup>th</sup> August	<i>Our Lady of Lourdes</i> Wauchope	Fr. Felix Ekeh	Robyn and Ken Mackay	2
26 August	<i>St. Agnes</i> Port Macquarie	Fr. Paul Gooley	Jane and Bruce Johnson	6
26 August	<i>St Peter the Fisherman</i> Laurieton/Camden Haven	Fr. Michael Rohan	Pat and Laurie Sewell	2
27 August	<i>All Saints</i> Kempsey (The Macleay Valley)	Fr. James Foster	Robyn and Douglas Magennis	4
28 August	<i>St Mary's</i> Maclean/ Yamba	Fr Nicolas Maurice	Anne & Greg Gallagher	2

Future Visits: Kingscliff and Kyogle

## Photo Gallery

### **Alstonville**

Many Group members attended a Workshop held after 8.30 Mass. There was a wonderful spirit of companionship and love in the room as they shared their stories.





## Photo Gallery continued

### Sawtell

Carolyn Tumminello held a morning tea at her home and invited members from the Family Groups. It was heartening to see many people keen to keep the spirit of the Family Groups alive in Sawtell.



### Port Macquarie

Jane and Bruce organised a meeting with the Leaders of the 6 Family Groups. At the discussion a working group was set up to explore having Ray Sanchez visit Port Macquarie in 2019.

### Camden Haven / Laurieton

Pat and Laurie invited members of the two Family Groups to their home on Sunday afternoon. There were many stories of love and support shared during the afternoon. The food was scrumptious too.



### Kempsey

Fr James organised a lovely Family Group Mass and encouraged the members that belonging to the Passionist Family Group Movement they are living the Gospel message. A true Family Group supper was provided by members bringing a plate to share.