



Passionist Family Group Movement - Victoria/Tasmania

- A Ministry of the Passionists

NEWSLETTER April, 2019

'From Strangers to Friends - Together We Belong'

Our Special Weekend began on Friday March 29, as Family Group people arrived from across Victoria and Tasmania. The warm and happy chatter over a relaxed dinner set the tone for a rewarding weekend experience with people reconnecting or meeting for the first time.

The Weekend's theme, 'From Strangers to Friends – Together we Belong' reflects what Family Groups are all about: members are welcomed into the group, often unknown to each other and, over time, they come to know each other, become friends, and...BELONG.

Attendees: There were 55 representatives from the following:

Cluster	Parishes represented	Apologies
Gippsland	Traralgon, Sale, Trafalgar	
Midlands	Echuca	Kennington
Goldfields	Ballarat Cathedral, Sebastopol	Daylesford, Ballarat North, Creswick
South West	Warrnambool East	Warrnambool
Bellarine		Colac, Queenscliff
Tasmania	Hobart and PP, Fr Peter Addicoat	
Central	Sandringham	Cheltenham, Ormond, Malvern East
Merri/Yarra Valley	Templestowe, Mill Park, Montmorency, Diamond Creek, Donvale, Doncaster East	Greensborough
Knox/Waverly	Glen Waverley North, Mt Waverley, Mulgrave, Ferntree Gully	Boronia, Endeavour Hills

We were delighted to be joined by Fr Peter Addicoat CP of Hobart

Cluster Meetings

After dinner, the gathering moved comfortably into three groups for our 'Cluster' meetings:

- With many of their coordinators and members present, the *Merri/Yarra Valley Cluster* met for the first time as a combined group, facilitated by Trish and Roger Gurney
- The other 'city' clusters (Central, Knox/Waverley) met and shared with Frances & Michael Sullivan.
- The 'country folk' gathered together with Alison & Tony Woolley and Gail & Hank Fiddelaers. Bursts of applause and laughter characterised this large group in response to much-appreciated sharing of their Family Group experiences.

It was generally agreed that these cluster gatherings were very successful and enjoyable as they provided a unique opportunity to gain insights into each other's FG experience.

SATURDAY, March 30 -

A DAY WITH FR BRIAN TRAYNOR CP

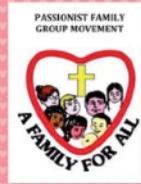
Fr Brian Traynor facilitated Saturday's program. He has had a long association with the PFGMovement, particularly in New Zealand. He knows well the challenges, joys and frustrations that Family Group coordinators and leaders may experience from time to time. His presentations gave insight, hope and the opportunity to share our thoughts and thus discuss strategies with renewed motivation. Across the day, Fr Brian spoke on three specific topics: Belonging, Ageing and Teams*.



Fr Brian meets Pope Francis in Rome 2018

BELONGING

Fr Brian's first session was about 'Belonging'. He began by sharing an observation about Family Groups made by Archbishop Pat Dunn of New Zealand, *that the PFGM 'appreciated the importance of belonging right from the start'*. To encourage us to ensure that people in our parishes belong, Fr Brian focused on Jesus as our role model. Jesus' many encounters were over meals: "the ultimate sign of belonging". (Family Groups know all about meals!)



*'From Strangers to Friends-
Together We Belong'*



**Southern PFGM's
Special Weekend
March 29-31, 2019**

"The Passionist Family Groups were created with the aim of helping parishioners to get to know one another and to create a sense of belonging. This needs to extend beyond individual PFG's, so that parishioners can meet more people, get connected and start to belong. It is no use blaming the parish priest or other parishioners if the PFG members themselves are not actively reaching out to welcome others. It would be valuable to reflect on our experiences so that we can deepen our commitment to creating a strong sense of belonging not only in our existing PFG's, but in our parishes from which our PFG's live and serve the community."

AGEING

In concluding his talk about Ageing, Fr Brian posed the following questions to consider: What do we need, to be our best self? Where do PFG's fit in? Our involvement in PFG's has been one of giving and receiving, of belonging, of companionship; a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood; acceptance, caring and being cared for; celebrating; practical Christian living. We have seen others grow older and become frailer, lose a spouse, face decisions about aged care, thrive during retirement, travel more than ever, volunteer in the parish or community and so much more.

Although most PFG's are comprised of members who have been together for more than 25 years, not everyone in a PFG is old or aged and some are new to your parish or to your group. How can the older support the younger? What can they expect if there are younger families in their group or in other PFG's?

During the weekend, Echuca's coordinator, Carmel MacKenzie, shared many of the Echuca FG members' autobiographies that she has collected and published. They provide extremely interesting reading.

There are other questions worth reflecting on and perhaps sharing at a PFG function:

1. Who is someone from your PFG you admire because of how they have aged?
2. Is there someone else you personally know whom you admire for the same reason?
3. What have you learned about ageing and living your life well?
4. How can our PFG's rejoice in ageing?
5. Does it matter if our PFG's are mostly 'old'?

TEAMS

In this presentation, Fr Brian outlined the history of our Movement's operation in New Zealand and Australia and the formation most recently of the National Coordinating Team (NCT): *"The NCT began their task by auditing the PFGM **throughout Australia**. They learned that some regions have no Coordinators; some parishes have no Coordinators and some groups have no leaders. Reconnecting with previous leaders has provided some renewed enthusiasm.*

There are common experiences about the difficulty of finding people for leadership roles and the general ageing of membership, but without workers (leaders) the task will be impossible at every level."

How can we invite people into team membership?

'The starting point is to understand and appreciate teamwork. We don't have to have a universal idea of teams, but we have to have a commitment to its value. Teams offer support, enjoyment and extra perspective to a task. After September 11th, 2001, the CIA commissioned a study to establish the effectiveness of analyst teams. The number one value was not individual gifts or coaching, but interactions of members within the teams!

It is helpful to recall that Jesus *"appointed 72 others who went before him visiting the towns where he himself was to visit"*. Jesus gave these missionaries clear instructions and he delegated authority to them. He sent them out in pairs – not to work alone.'

Fr Brian concluded his talk about Teams with the following 'food for thought:

There are some questions we can ask and share:

- *What can we learn from Jesus' strategy?*
- *What possibilities do you see for teamwork at the different levels?*
 - *The clusters*
 - *Local parishes*
 - *Individual PFG's*
- *What are the main challenges or obstacles to creating PFGM teams?*
- *What would be the best strategies for beginning to create teams?*
- *Is there enthusiasm for it or do we let the Movement die in some parishes and regions?*

**Copies of the complete texts of Fr Brian's presentations at our weekend have been sent by email to participants and to*

Our day concluded with Mass with Fr Brian as the celebrant. The final song, by Cary Landry, reflected well the feelings of all present that day:

***We are companions on the journey,
breaking bread and sharing life;
and in the love we bear is the hope we share
for we believe in the love of our God.***

***No longer strangers to each other,
no longer strangers in God's house
we are fed and we are nourished
by the strength of those who care.***



Our Weekend: 'From Strangers to Friends - Together We Belong'

Special thanks to:

- Fr Brian Traynor for his inspirational and engaging presentations and his time
- Judy Brophy, coordinator at Our Lady of the Pines Parish, Donvale, who helped to prepare the liturgy
- Cathy Hardinge, coordinator at St Kevin's Templestowe, who arranged for volunteer dish washers
- Fr Kevin Hennessy CP and Mayrose Abraham (office manager), Holy Cross Centre, for their wonderful hospitality
- All participants for their input and generous provision of pre-dinner snacks and delicious contributions for morning and afternoon teas
- The Southern (VicTas) Team members for their hard work, support and team work.

A NEW NAME

We are going to be using a new name...

SOUTHERN REGION

In order to achieve consistency across Australia for the Passionist Family Group Movement's Regions, we will begin calling ourselves the **Southern Region** and phasing out the previous *VicTas* title. Southern Region includes all PFGM parishes in Victoria and Tasmania. (The **Northern Region** refers to those PFGM parishes in Queensland and northern NSW and **Central Region** to those PFGM parishes in central and southern NSW and South Australia.)

Our best wishes to you and your families during this Holy Week as we prepare for the wonderful celebration of Easter.



We strongly recommend to you this excellent Passion Play being performed again on this coming GOOD FRIDAY at Holy Cross, Templestowe:

An invitation poster for the 23rd Annual Melbourne Passion Play. The text is centered and reads: "YOUR FREE INVITATION To attend the performance of the 23rd Annual Melbourne Passion Play at the Holy Cross Centre 207 Serpells Road, Templestowe, Melbourne, Victoria { PALM SUNDAY 14th April 2019 at 1:30pm } GOOD FRIDAY 19th April 2018 at 10:00am } ALL WELCOME". Below the text is a photograph of a group of people in red and white robes, likely the cast of the Passion Play. At the bottom, there is a note about parking and contact information for the Secretary (Dawn Quintal - 0411957164 or Gino Gammaldi - 0422662451) and the website www.passionplay.info.

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{ PALM SUNDAY 14th April 2019 at 1:30pm }
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ALL WELCOME

NOTE: Ample free parking; duration of performance 2.5 hours in the park. This is an event not to be missed. Bring your family and friends. For your own comfort, bring a rug, chair or bottled water. St. John Ambulance staff will be in attendance.

For more information visit our website at:
www.passionplay.info
or contact the Secretary (Dawn Quintal - 0411957164)
or contact the Secretary (Gino Gammaldi - 0422662451)

PFGM Southern Team:

*Frances & Michael Sullivan - Montmorency (Melbourne Metro)
Alison & Tony Woolley- Warrnambool (South West)
Trish & Roger Gurney- Donvale (Melbourne Metro)
Gail & Hank Fiddelaers - Trafalgar (Gippsland)*