



# Passionist Family Group Movement Newsletter

November 2017

Father Tom McDonough CP, Provincial of the Passionist Congregation, with the support of his Provincial Council, has appointed an Interim Coordinating Team to coordinate the Passionist Family Group Movement (PFGM) throughout Australia.

**The appointment of the team follows the retirement due to ill health of Father Peter McGrath CP, Founder and Coordinating Director of the Movement.**

**The story of Father Peter's contribution to the Passionist Family Group Movement is well known and beyond summarising here, but the beginnings can be summarised as follows:**

Passionist Family Groups gradually formed after a weekend retreat for married couples in 1972 at the Parish of St Anthony in the Fields, Terrey Hills where Father Peter was Parish Priest. Those participating wanted to retain the bonds they experienced that weekend so a family BBQ followed and the idea of getting together more regularly developed.

A Family Group was born.

Following a second retreat, those participants also wanted to keep meeting and a second group was born. By 1981 there were 11 Family Groups in Terry Hills Parish.

Then, in 1982 Castle Hill Parish in Sydney asked to establish Family Groups and a Movement was beginning to form. This Movement needed some stated purpose and structure so aims were developed and leadership training introduced together with adult faith formation sessions.

Today, the Passionist Family Group Movement is operating in over 170 parishes in 23 Dioceses throughout Australia as well as in a few overseas countries, mainly New Zealand.

Father Tom has chosen a small team to help carry on the work of Father Peter. However, we are, by definition, different. The team is temporary in nature (as its name suggests) in that it has been appointed for two years and comprises four PFGM members, each with many years membership of Passionist Family Groups.



The team, pictured above from left to right, includes Russell Winterscheidt, Marion Stewart, Dennis Morris (Chair) and Frances Sullivan plus Father Brian Traynor CP who has been made available to the team as a resource and support person.

Frances lives in Melbourne and, together with her husband, Michael, has been a member of a Family Group in her parish of St Francis Xavier, Montmorency since 1995. Frances and Michael have been members of the State Team that manages the operation of the Movement in Victoria and Tasmania since 2013 and she is the contact person for their State Team.

Marion has been a member of a Family Group in her parish of St Anthony in the Fields, Sydney since 1982. Marion has been a volunteer worker for Father Peter in both his parish ministry and during his two terms as Provincial of the Passionist Congregation in Australia. She is also a member of Passionist Companions.

Russell and his wife Gwen are from Brisbane and have been members of a Family Group in their parish of St Mary Magdalene, Bardon since 1983 when they were instrumental in starting the first Family Group in Queensland. They were Directors of the Movement in Queensland from 1994 – 2014 and they have worked extensively with many Passionists establishing Family Groups throughout Queensland and northern NSW.

Dennis and his wife Mary have been members of a Family Group in their parish of St Matthew, Page, Canberra since 1989. They are Directors for the Movement in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn and members of Passionist Companions.

Father Brian has extensive experience as a priest in the Congregation of the Passion with one of his principal ministries throughout being to the Passionist Family Group Movement in both Australia and New Zealand. His support is vital and greatly appreciated.

The team has been given the task of reviewing the structure and management model of the Movement as well as coming up to speed with the extent of current operations and providing ongoing support to Directors and coordinators. Father Tom has suggested that the team may be able to provide some realistic recommendations by the end of 2017. Discussions to date suggest that this reporting date can be partially achieved, however, it may need some extension.

The team has invited Directors to a meeting in April 2018 at Holy Cross Monastery, Melbourne at which it will brief those present on its deliberations to date. It also hopes to extend the invitation to some other members in leadership roles within the movement.

The Interim Team looks forward to continuing the ministry of the Passionist Family Group Movement that has enriched the lives of so many families and parish communities. We ask for your prayerful and practical support.

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