

# Family Groups



PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP MOVEMENT NEWSLETTER  
MAY 2019

## National Conference – *Nurturing the Seeds*

*And so Fr. Peter's energy continues.* The Spirit hovered as the skilled and focused facilitator Phil Billington engaged with the National Leadership Teams.

Laughter, fine food, storytelling and listening make up the essence of Family Groups, and this Family Group experience is no exception. We began by sharing in small groups, then in bigger groups, and then in the entire group. This allowed each person to connect in an easy manner.

We focused on our Hopes for the Future and Looking at the Trends throughout the Ministry: What would we do differently if we could change one thing? One suggestion was that more Bishops and Parish Priests endorse the spirituality of the Movement. We worked hard and didn't even see the outside world for a day and a half!

We spent time looking at the traditional model of Church regarding congregation participation. That is, traditionally as a Church **we believed, then behaved, and lastly belonged**. The model Pope Francis is endorsing is that of the PFGM: **To Belong, to Believe and then to Behave**. Fr. Peter was certainly ahead of his time in recognising the need in us all and gathering small groups where we do indeed belong.

Since 2017 the PFGM has been led by the lay people supported by the Passionists. We listened to sociologist Michael McQueen share his sociological insights into Generation X, Y, and Millennials, and, of course, the good old Baby Boomers. However, he somehow omits the generation before the Baby Boomers! (Though I can assure you we will not be ignored!).

One area of importance is to especially consider the under 55s in that we need younger new members as part of a succession plan. Watch this space!

How blessed we have been. Gathered together in God's name; led by the capable Phil and Brian, connecting with each other, sharing stories, provided with excellent, healthy, delicious food plus wine, waited on by the Victorian Housemaids and chefs. We felt that we had shared in a new Family Group experience and communed together in a meaningful Mass with Fr Tom (while outside many people were gathering to perform the annual local Passion Play). We completed our goals for our Vision and Direction for the next three years. We met the challenge! Well done to you all.

Marg Casey

(An excerpt from National Conference  
– *Nurturing the Seeds* article –  
the full article can be found on the PFGM  
website [www.pfgm.org](http://www.pfgm.org))

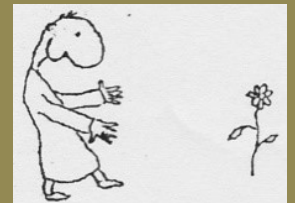


## Plant a Garden

If you persist in your effort to change the Institution by becoming part of its decision making, you will only break your heart and lose hope.

What you must do, is go around to the back and create a beautiful garden.

Someday they will look out the window and marvel at its beauty and its life.



Anne Thurston

Irish Lay Theologian

## Sharing Our Stories

We hear many stories from members of Family Groups as we travel to different places. People have a deep appreciation of what they have received from their Family Groups. Fred's story below is one of those stories.

We hope that in future Newsletters we can share more stories where strangers have become friends and friends have become brothers and sisters. "A Family for All".

### Celebrating Fred's 90 years

Fred turned 90 and his Wishart Family Group 'The Friends' gathered to celebrate at the Salisbury Hotel. What a wonderful occasion for an amazing man. Fred shared his experiences in his Family Group and how he loved the weekends away, the socialising and canoeing expeditions. He looked at all the people in the room and said, "these people are my family. They were with me when my dear wife Maureen passed away eight years ago, and they are still with me now."

This is a story that highlights what is happening in many Family Groups in Australia and overseas. Acts of kindness and love, people sharing and supporting each other and not to forget, having fun and enjoying one another. In the book, *The Joy of Love – A Family Perspective*, the author, Grainne Doherty reflects on Pope Francis' words from *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*). Grainne is a member of a Passionist Family Group in Dublin Ireland. She makes a powerful statement, "Family Groups are the living witness to church as a family".



### '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 and become friends, and...BELONG*



### Matters of the Heart

Sharing Your Story.....

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

*Why not share the above with your Family Group!*

### 2019 Calendar

#### June

- 15-16 Wagga Wagga- Brian Traynor CP
- 21-23 Alstonville -Our Lady of the Rosary (Lismore NSW) Ray Sanchez CP

#### August

- 4 - 5 Family Group Weekend (Brisbane)  
Venue - The Fort
- 10-11 Parramatta Diocese NSW - Ray Sanchez CP
- 24-25 To Be Announced QLD - Ray Sanchez CP

#### October

- 5 - 6 Maleny QLD Ray Sanchez CP
- 24-25 To Be Announced QLD - Ray Sanchez CP

#### November

- 10-11 Newcastle Maitland - Ray Sanchez CP
- 12 -13 Broken Bay Diocese -Ray Sanchez CP
- 14 -15 Sydney Archdiocese - Ray Sanchez CP
- 16-17 Wollongong Diocese -Ray Sanchez CP