

Family Groups



PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP MOVEMENT

A Ministry of the Passionists

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2020

To our Passionist Family Group family:

We hope and pray that this winter edition of our Newsletter finds each of you safe and well as we continue to live under the COVID-19 restrictions.

It has been over six months now since the virus first appeared and, while a substantial element of uncertainty continues to be a feature of our everyday lives, it is looking more and more as though we will continue to experience major limitations on how we live until a vaccine is developed and successfully tested. This could be as long as 12 months away.

Further, experience to date suggests that post COVID-19, our lifestyle will never be quite the same again. How this affects our lives as members of the Passionist Family Group Movement in the future remains to be seen.

For now, modern communications technology is a great help in 'keeping in touch' and thereby supporting one another.

That said, it is certainly no substitute for 'in person' contact such as exchanging a firm handshake or an embrace with those fellow parishioners who are family to us.

As difficult as the restrictions on our lifestyle are, it seems to us that the aims of our Movement are more relevant than ever at a time such as this.

As members of the National Coordinating Team (NCT) we are very much missing our visits to you, including those with our brother Passionists, Father Brian and Father Ray. Initially, we had great plans to visit a number of regions this year as in the past, however, these have been put on 'hold' for now given the pandemic.

Speaking of our Team, we ask that you spare a thought and a prayer for us as we continue in our ministry in support of each of you. Our appointment to the Team was renewed by Father Tom CP (Provincial) in February of this year and is for a further two-year term.

We know that the PFGM continues to touch the lives of numerous parishioners throughout the length and breadth of this wide, brown land of ours.

Blessings,

Mary, Dennis, Gwen, Russell, Frances and Michael

PFGM National Coordinating Team - NCT

A recent note to the NCT members from Fr Tom McDonough CP, Provincial of the Passionists:

'Thank you for the invitation to the Zoom meeting yesterday (July 13) and I am sorry to have missed it...

We share the concern for our poor Victorians, PFGM or not. It is a hard time for you there. In our various communities we are praying every day for the management and containment of the Corona Virus.

I hope, Dennis, you are getting around with a sprightly gait and no pain.*

Best wishes, through you, to all the PFGM groups and families.

Kind regards

Fr. Tom McDonough CP

* Our NCT Coordinator, Dennis Morris, underwent the replacement of both of his knees in May this year. He is now walking very well.

2020 - A very different Easter!



Hearty Congratulations to Annette Guterres

Annette and her husband Tony are Passionist Family Group Coordinators for New South Wales. In the 2020 New Year Honours list, Annette was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her services to veterans and their families:

Ex-Service Welfare.

- *Honorary Secretary, Bomber Command Association in Australia, since 2013*

- *Honorary Australian Coordinator, The International Bomber Command Centre, Lincoln UK, current.*

(From Holy Spirit Province Newsletter 18 April 2020)



The Wagga Catholic Diocese is mourning the loss of Fr Wilf Plunkett, OAM, who died on Sunday, 7th June aged 92 years.

For more than 50 years, he served the people as a priest across the Riverina area, including more than 30 years at the Sacred Heart Parish Koorringal in Wagga before he retired in 2007.

Fr Plunkett became aware of the Passionist Family Group Movement in 1984 and sent parishioners, Margaret and Paul Casey and others to Terry Hills to gather details. Their glowing reports encouraged Fr Plunkett to invite Fr Peter McGrath, Mary Ingham and their team to visit Koorringal to initiate Family Groups.

In his inimitable style, Fr Peter convinced many people of the importance of Family Groups. He would point out people who had attended the Mass and tell them they were going to be leaders! What an impact he had:

eight Groups were formed consisting of 14-16 families in each and, when Family Groups were officially commenced in 1985, over 600 people from the parish were involved. This was the first Family Group set-up outside of the Sydney area. Fr Wilf encouraged and supported the movement until his retirement. He would travel to say Mass for Groups on their weekends away and was a popular member of many groups. This dedication to the movement so impressed Fr Peter McGrath that he made Fr Wilf a patron of Family Groups.

'Plunk', as Fr Plunkett was lovingly nicked-named, became a member of the McAuliffe Group after he retired to Settlers Retirement Village. He attended most of the group's monthly gatherings and invited the members to important celebrations such as his 80th birthday and the 60th Jubilee of his ordination.

Fr Plunkett's welcoming nature made him an ideal priest. He mixed with, and was greatly respected by, all residents of the city of Wagga, at Settlers Village and the Diocese as a whole, no matter what a person's circumstance. Pope Francis says he wants his clergy, not just to be shepherds, but to smell like their sheep and that sums up Father Plunkett exactly: he was one of us, a very special person in the lives of the people of Wagga.

Fr Wilf's funeral was held at Sacred Heart Church, Koorringal on Friday 19th June, 2020 under Covid-19 restrictions, limiting the number of mourners in the church to fifty. However, afterwards, Fr Wilf's funeral procession was led by a piper; the bells of the Wagga Cathedral rang out and the city's Mayor paid homage dressed in his robes. Over a thousand students formed a guard of honour along Plunkett Drive, so named for their schools' founder.

- *Margaret and Ron McAuliffe: Coordinators, Sacred Heart Parish, Koorringal, Wagga Wagga*

RIP Fr Wilf Plunkett PP OAM - Wagga Catholic Diocese



Above: Fr Wilf at his Family Group's picnic at Wagga Beach on the Murrumbidgee River
Left: Fr Wilf with Koorringal Parish's Family Group Coordinators, Margaret & Ron McAuliffe, Mary Ingham & Fr Peter McGrath circa early 2000s

Thank you!



Fr Chris Monaghan CP at Holy Cross
in Melbourne, Victoria



Fr Dominic Samamba CP & Deacon Chris Roehrig at
St Brigid's Church in Marrickville, Sydney NSW



Fr Ray Sanchez CP at The Fort
in Brisbane, Queensland

In Gratitude for Sunday Masses during Covid Lock-downs

During the restrictions that have limited the number of people who can attend Mass (if any at all depending on which State you are in) our Passionist priests have stepped up and either pre-recorded their Sunday Masses or streamed them live. We thank them and all their technical assistants who have made remote participation in Sunday Masses possible. We have included just a few images above but we thank them all.

THANK YOU, also, to the many Parish Priests, who have also live-streamed their Sunday Masses. No doubt, this has been a huge learning-curve for all. Also, thank you to: their support teams who have facilitated the technology involved; the musicians and Ministers of the Word who have added to the liturgy; the sacristans; all those parishioners 'behind the scenes' who have 'deep-cleaned' their parish churches and many more.

What a boon* is ZOOM!

During the enforced COVID lockdowns, the use of Zoom as a communication tool has been an absolute boon to those who have wanted to keep in touch with a number of people simultaneously, e.g. family, Craft Group, Prayer Group, Tennis mates, Book Club and ... FAMILY GROUPS!

We are aware that many Family Groups have used ZOOM to keep in touch with their members and some have done this in novel ways, e.g. on-line games, BINGO, a cocktail evening and '2-minute testimonials' where members were invited to speak about themselves and their passions within a time limit.

The Southern Family Group Team has used Zoom to meet as a team and also to meet with their Parish Cluster coordinators.

This screen shot was taken recently during the Zoom meeting of Knox/Waverley Cluster Parish FG Coordinators.



**boon: a thing that is helpful or beneficial*

Northern Team Welcomes New Members

Gwen and Russell Winterscheidt have welcomed Celine and Mary-Anne to their Team which looks after Family Group parishes in the dioceses of Queensland and those in the NSW dioceses of Lismore and Armidale.

CELINE BOWMAN has had a long connection to the Passionists. Celine says, *"I knew Fr Peter McGrath as a teenager when he used to turn up at family occasions as best mates with my uncle, Fr Tom Egar CP."* In 1989 Celine joined the Family Group at The Fort in Oxley, home of the Passionist Community in Brisbane. Later, after marriage and 10 years living in other parts of Queensland, Celine and her family moved back to the Oxley area and to Masses at The Fort. Eventually, as the Family Group there had become very large, Celine initiated a new group that gradually increased in numbers over time.

Celine says, *"I feel strongly that the community connection forged by becoming part of a Family Group is one of the things that kept families coming to The Fort and makes it the vibrant and committed community that it is. I have been coordinator there for some years now and I am looking forward to the challenge of sharing my passion for Family Groups more widely now that I've joined the Northern Leadership Team."*



MARY-ANNE GLEN and her youngest son, Joseph, joined the Booval and Riverview Family Groups in 2014. Years before, Mary-Anne's family had belonged to a Family Group in the Leichardt Parish. Mary-Anne says, *"My husband and I have five children, with four being much older than Joseph. My husband, Michael, is an interstate truck driver. Joseph and I are often home on our own and I thought this is just what we need - an extended family. Our Family Group has been perfect - friends for Joseph and support and friendships for me."*



"See with the eyes of the heart"

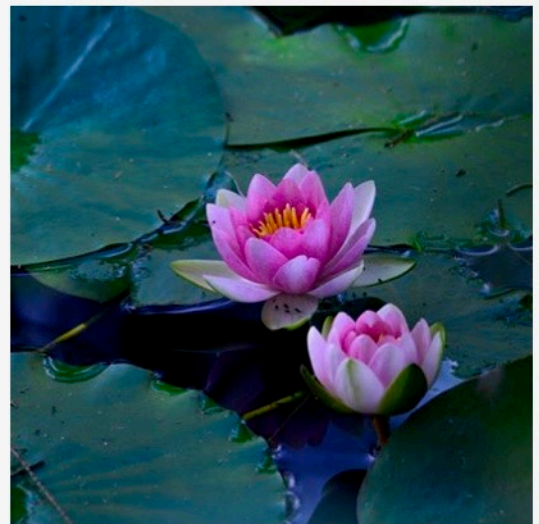
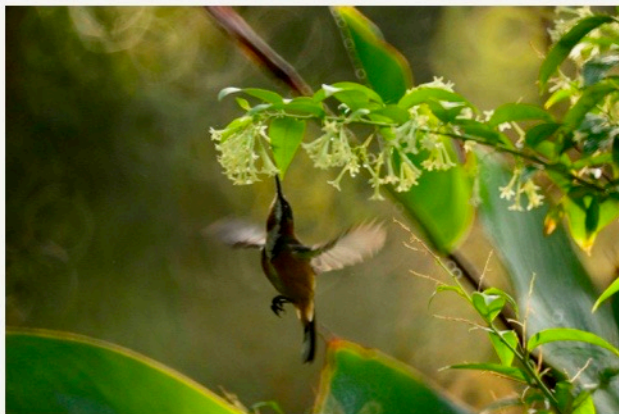
One of the profound messages of the story of 'The Little Prince', is the advice given by the fox, who said, "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye".

A number of people have appreciated the book of beautiful reflections written and illustrated with his own photographs, by **Chris Monaghan**, with that title, 'See with the eyes of the heart'. The book is

recommended as a perfect gift. An individual book sells for \$25, either direct from

* ~~Chris~~ or via Andrew Garrett publishing.

* Orders for this book by Fr Chris Monaghan CP can be made by contacting Frances of the Southern Team at pfgm.victas@gmail.com or phone 0457 68 58 35



BRIAN'S BLOG

"Belonging is more important than Getting Together" (Brian Traynor CP)



In the 'early days' of a new Passionist Family Group, regular (monthly) get togethers help the group members to get to know one another and to bond as a family. It is a disappointment when an established group considers these 'get togethers' as being more important than the 'belonging' to one another. The disappointment comes from the likelihood that in PFG's like this, the sense of belonging will be low and the relationships will have remained 'polite' or shallow.

If we didn't know this truth before, COVID-19 has highlighted it, especially in Victoria, where we will remain in lockdown for some time yet. If any Family Groups relied just on 'getting together' to remain close and concerned for one another, then some of the members of those groups will have already begun to forget about each other. Others will not have made any contact, waiting for different times.

But we have to live in our own times. We hear every day about the effects of isolation for older people living alone, or those in nursing homes or hospital who can have no visitors. There are so many families affected by unemployment, the loss of their business or the stress of home schooling. These realities are affecting the families in our Family Groups now!

I've heard people ask, "What can you do?" We know many groups have organised Zoom gatherings which is terrific, even if some members lack the technological knowhow to participate. Hopefully that does not mean – 'No zoom – No contact'. We have phones that enable us to speak or text. We are able to write and deliver or post notes.

Instead of the question, 'What can I do?' being accompanied by a shrug of our shoulders, we can encourage a creative response. Children could help the creativity! This kind of response only happens if we are committed to belonging – and to belong, we need to stay connected with each other.

"Self-absorption in all its forms kills compassion. When we focus on ourselves, our world contracts as our problems and preoccupations loom large. But when we focus on others, our world expands. Our own problems drift to the periphery of the mind and so seem smaller, and we increase our capacity for connection – or compassionate action." (Daniel Goleman)

We pray...

Please keep in your prayers all those in our Family Group Movement who are challenged by ill-health at this time. Some may have had operations, procedures and treatment deferred due to the pressure on the medical system of the Covid-19 crisis.

We pray especially for our NCT member, Russell Winterscheidt who has undergone surgery recently.

We pray for ourselves and all affected by C-19, especially: those separated from family members; those affected by under or unemployment; those with relatives and friends in aged-care; those who live alone; those parents and grandparents who have the care of children at this time, especially those who are managing home-schooling; those whose studies have been interrupted and negatively affected at this time.



Also, please pray for the Family Group coordinators and members who have died recently. They will be missed by their loved ones and by their fellow group members. We empathise with those of you who have wanted to attend funerals of your loved ones and friends but have been prevented from doing so due to the virus restrictions.