

# Family Groups



## PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP MOVEMENT

*A Ministry of the Passionists*

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021

*To our Passionist Family Group family.....*

*We pray that you are safe and well as the days grow longer.*

*At present, those of us in Covid 19 lockdown are beginning to experience greater, if limited, freedom to mix with our family, friends and communities while those not locked down are able to go about daily life relatively uninhibited.*

*Hopefully, the worst of this pandemic is behind us and may its shadow continue to diminish in order that we may resume our lives as God intended, that is, in full communion with each other.*

*In this Spring 2021 edition of our Newsletter, we note some particularly significant events: the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Passionist Congregation by St Paul of the Cross on 21 November 1721; the welcoming to the PFGM National Team of Brisbane-based, Celine Bowman (representing the Northern Regional Team); the passing of Jan Mullaly, a much-loved member of the Vic-Tas (Southern) Team for many years and, also, news of various Family Group activities.*

*Enjoy!*

*Take care,*

*Mary and Dennis, Frances and Michael, Gwen and Russell and Celine*

### PASSIONIST 300 YEARS JUBILEE



The Passionists have been engaged in living the spirit of Jubilee since November last year. There will be a celebration of the founding of the Congregation by Zoom on the weekend of November 20/21 this year. The Jubilee Year theme is **'Renewing Our Mission'** The Passionist Family Group Movement is a vital part of that mission. We are focusing on three areas:

**Gratitude:** Remembering the past with thanksgiving to God who has blessed us

**Prophecy:** Faithfully reading the signs of the times to find new ways to evangelize through the lens of Jesus' Passion

**Hope:** Discerning God's plans and promises for a meaningful future



Paul's founding charism can be symbolised for us in the large open hand in our Peace Garden at Holy Cross, Templestowe. The hand is strong and open. It is receptive for something not yet in its grasp. This is a reflection of Paul's experience in the room where he wrote the Passionist Rule in 1720. Paul envisaged wearing this sign when he wrote the Rule of Life, but had to wait twenty years to do so.

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Coordinators from Sale and Traralgon Parishes in Gippsland, **Victoria**, caught up over a meal together in August.



Members of St Joseph's FG in Hobart, **Tasmania**, gathered for a Home Mass in Sandy Bay, on Saturday 7th August 2021, followed by an afternoon tea. Mass was celebrated by Fr Justin Raj CP. He was accompanied by Fr Tom McDonough CP (photographer) and Fr Gerald Quinn CP. PP, Fr Peter Addicoat CP, was away from the parish, enjoying a break in Darwin, N.T.

## Passio Family Camp October 2021: Queensland

*by Celine Bowman*

The Passio Family Camp brought together *The Passionist Youth Retreat Team* and members of *Passionist Family Groups* – families and single teens & adults - with ages ranging from 6 to 70+.

In Queensland, we have been relatively free from Covid lockdowns, although a little scare in the days beforehand, did see a few families pull out. We were also blessed by perfect weather and a beautiful venue on Mount Tamborine.

The weekend included a variety of activities planned by the Youth Team: sport, craft, games, talent show, trivia, reflections, prayer, liturgy and plenty of chill-out time. Some activities were streamed into “young” adults (mostly 40’s to 70’s!!) facilitated by Jo and Tim McDade, and young people (teens and children), facilitated by the Youth Team. But much of the weekend was multi-generational, including mealtimes when, surprisingly perhaps, the different ages happily mixed at communal tables. We celebrated the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Passionists and our Northern Team Member, Russell Winterscheidt’s, 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Passio Family Camp was a celebration of connection and belonging – the coming together of folk from different Parishes and different generations with the common desire of creating a faith community – and was joyfully drawn together by the threads of our common appreciation of the Passionist charism. It was most assuredly a celebration of the aims and goals of the Passionist Family Group Movement!

There was much positive feedback from the participants. Below is the reflection from one participant:

**Pam:** “We loved how independent our boys (aged 6 & 8) could be over the weekend: to jump out of their sleeping bags, don their oversized “merchandise” (camp shirts) and head off to the dining room to fill their bowls with cereal that they never get at home.

*It was a joy to watch how easily and enthusiastically they engaged in every activity on offer - from weaving to playing footy, to participating in the talent show and creating a “memory scroll”. They did not want to leave and will carry the memories of a very anointed weekend with them for many years to come!*

*The Camp was a wonderful opportunity for the young and “young adults” to connect with each other and to be inspired by a group of young people who so ably and joyfully prepared for and led the children and youth. The sharing of stories was a great touchstone for the “young adults” and we will always have that time of listening and giving thanks for the ways in which St Paul of the Cross and the Passionist Charism have touched all of our lives in different but meaningful ways.*

*Photos from the Camp are on the next page...*





300  
years  
Jubilaeum



## Northern Passio Family Camp October 2021





## Welcome Celine Bowman to the National PFGM Team

### *Celine's PFGM story:*



When I found my way to The Passionist Fort Community at Oxley in 2001 it felt like a “coming home” – the return to a Passionist parish and into the PFGM.

I knew Fr Peter McGrath when I was a teenager in the 70's – he used to turn up at family occasions as best mates with my uncle, Fr Tony Egar CP. He was a big personality, the type you remember. As a teenager & young adult (pre PFGM) I was also heavily involved with my Passionist parish – St Paul of the Cross, Glen Osmond in Adelaide, locally known as “The Monastery”. When I had left home and become more interested in career and other passions, my parents joined the first Family Groups in that parish in the 80's.

After spending time living overseas, my musical interests brought me to Brisbane and, at a time when I was feeling a little lost and on my own, I went along to Mass at Bardon and discovered Passionist Family Groups there. So, in 1989, I first met Gwen and Russell Winterscheidt when I joined their Family Group. It was a short but formative time. At about that time I met my future husband and moved away from that area.

Ten years later, after having lived in various parts of Queensland, and with three young children, we found ourselves living in the Oxley area. I started attending Mass at St Joseph's in Corinda and found my way to reconnecting with Fr Peter and the PFGM at the big “Hearts on Fire” conference in Brisbane. After having little success with introducing Family Groups in that parish, I felt something drawing me to The Fort. I hadn't realised how I had missed the Passionist way, and, as before, it was like coming home!

The only next hurdle was that the one Family Group at The Fort was becoming a little large, so it became my challenge to start a new group. We are not a huge community, so there wasn't really a large existing pool of possibilities to call on. However, God led many families to The Fort over the next several years, and they became our Family Group ... and friends that are always there when needed.

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 am looking forward to the challenge of sharing my passion for Family Groups more widely as a representative of the Northern Team on the National PFGM Team.

### ***‘Our’ Fr Tom McDonough CP, Provincial Superior of the Passionists, has important role on the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia***



*Our Passionist friend, Father Tom McDonough CP, is one of the Chairpersons on the current Plenary Council.*

The chairperson's role is to guide the work of the Plenary Council and facilitate members' conversations when they gather as a full group. In accordance with the Plenary Council's Statutes and Regulatory Norms, the chairpersons were chosen from among the members and appointed for the duration of the celebration of the Plenary Council.

Plenary Council facilitator, Lana Turvey-Collins, said the chairpersons have taken part in formation and training workshops to collaboratively navigate the challenges inherent in chairing a gathering of 280 people and to ensure the best possible experience for all.

“They also form part of the Plenary Council Steering Committee, so that they have an ongoing role in shaping the agenda and program in response to the daily discernment and dialogue of the members. It is exciting to see these groups of committed, skilled and faith-filled people coming together,” said Lana.

*-from Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Media Blog September 2021*

### *Fr Tom's impressions from the first week of the Council:*

*“It was interesting last week at the Plenary Council. So much of what was being discussed and recommended concerning...what our parishes and Church should be, were exactly what the Passionist Family Groups have been doing these past 50 years.*

*PFGs are working within the parishes to make them and the Church all they should and could be. All that the Plenary Council recommended, Passionist Family Groups are already doing.”*

*Vale Janis (Jan) Mullaly: 5.10.1947 - 23.9.2021*

*A tribute by Maree & Bernard Metcalfe, former Directors of the PFGM in Victoria & Tasmania*



Jan, a proud citizen of Ballarat, was completely committed to her Catholic faith and to the ministry and the potential of Passionist Family Groups in parishes.

Soon after the PFGM began in our parish in 1992, we were invited to become regional contacts. We met Jan and her husband, Adrian, at Holy Cross in Templestowe, noting Adrian's quiet wisdom and Jan's passion and parish knowledge. Jan was a no-nonsense person, not intimidated by anyone. She had a strong faith and social conscience. As a persuasive speaker, Jan could inspire enthusiasm and commitment in others. Her parish roles gave her a wide circle of contacts and she was not afraid to explain her PFGM mission to the priests of the Ballarat diocese, nor to share her views with Passionists.

Over the many years in which Jan and Adrian were members of this state-wide group, they started Passionist Family Groups in more than 12 parishes and supported their leadership groups. They also raised two sons, held down responsible jobs, and continued to be active in their own parish of St Columba's, North Ballarat.

Around 2000, Jan and Adrian resigned from the VicTas Team because of Adrian's health. However, Jan missed it all and returned in 2008 but without Adrian who remained interested and as involved as he could be. After Adrian's death in 2012, Jan enjoyed travelling: one of her most memorable trips was to the Aeolian island of Salina where her ancestors originated.

Jan was diagnosed with two inoperable brain tumours early in 2021. She was surprised but always stoic and determined to do the best she could but her cancer was unrelenting. She had wonderful support from family and friends making it possible for her to stay in her home as long as she could. Finally, Jan moved to palliative care. The last short chat we had was along the lines of, "Well, I have a view of the garden, the staff are very kind and I am not in that bloody hospital". (Jan's career as a nurse had influenced her opinions.)

Jan had a great capacity to listen with full attention. She gathered people together who might be lonely or recently bereaved. Her door and her heart were always open. The phone was always on.

Rest in peace dear friend. You have been a fine example to so many others in your family, your work, your parish and in the Passionist Family Group Movement. It has been a privilege to share the journey and friendship with you.

Jan's Requiem Mass was celebrated by Fr Justin Driscoll at the Ballarat Cathedral. During his homily, Fr Justin praised Jan's wonderful contribution to the Passionist Family Group

***\*\*Please keep Jan in your prayers and all Family Group members, their family and friends who are unwell or have passed away***

***How have our Family Groups been in consecutive Covid dominated years?  
These comments from Parish PFGM Coordinators in Victoria give us some insights.  
(Victoria has endured the most days of lockdown of any jurisdiction in the world!):***



| Victorian Region      | Coordinators' Comments:   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Eastern Metropolitan  | Some groups used technology (Zoom, etc.) on a regular basis during Covid lockdowns; other groups went into hibernation. The Parish held an "Expo" to showcase all groups associated with the Parish (St Vinnie's, choir, etc.) and Family Groups was one group represented among a dozen or so. Two families joined and are allocated to join existing groups.  |
| Country: South west   | <i>Formal meetings very difficult. Leader gatherings basically social. Groups report that the Aged members' fear of Covid together with holidaying as reasons for fewer activities. I think there is still a value in persevering.</i>  |
| Country: Central west | The members in our groups meet occasionally for a meal out or barbecue but these are limited in this past year because of the age of the members and Covid lockdown. All do keep in touch for a chat, etc. by phone; lovely friendship is shared.   |
| Country: South West   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have greatly appreciated and widely disseminated the Mass links from Holy Cross during the pandemic.</li> <li>- Despite the pandemic, we have continued our monthly Family group activities whenever possible. All our members appreciate these.</li> <li>- Despite our lack of formal meetings, we are in regular contact with the Parish Family Group coordinators</li> <li>- We continue to grow the numbers of PFGM members in the Parish as we are very fortunate to have one multi-generational Group with lots of children, young parents, plus older couples and single members (widows). This provides a wonderful inspiration for all the members of that Group, particularly those with distant grandchildren. It also allows the exchange of some wisdom and parenting experience, plus encouragement and reassurance, from the older parents to the younger ones. Our other Group consists of older members; mostly retired couples and single members who also support each other.</li> </ul> |
| Eastern Metro         | Due to all the lockdowns. Most groups are only planning from month to month and/or are becoming very flexible in changing dates and venues!!  |





## SPRING...our season of hope

In its everyday use, the word 'hope' has lost its real meaning. Most often, when people say "I hope", they mean, "I wish." This common understanding of hope is based on the confidence of people in themselves; in their own talents, power and energy, and in the material resources at their disposal.

Instead, **Christian hope** is built on the realisation that while we do have gifts and talents, we also have weaknesses and we suffer the limitations of human nature, the many difficulties of human life, and the absolute necessity of God's grace.



For the first three centuries of the Church, the primary Christian symbol was not the cross, but the anchor. During those early centuries of persecution, Christians needed great hope, and the symbol of an **anchor** emerged from a text in the letter to the Hebrews, "Hope set before us...a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:18-19). The same letter says, "Faith is being certain of what we hope for."

## BRIAN'S BLOG

So, hope is our anchor. Jesus did not ask us to be 'successful'; he asked us to 'bear fruit that will last'. I think it is true that even after all these years, the potential for PFG's to provide that fruit, is underestimated and even untried. In any parish community there are people carrying a wide variety of burdens, and these are more easily carried when they are shared. We all need a Simon of Cyrene. We hope leaders keep this in the minds and hearts of group members. It is because we develop strong relationships that we can respond when help is needed.

In a Passionist Family Group we can be an anchor for those in need. We just have to truly stand in Jesus' place with and for them. When we share communion which is denied most people at the present time, we say *Amen* to "The body of Christ", and we then we eat it. We become what we eat! In that action we are called to hope and to make a difference no matter the challenge! Hope drives us to action, even in the darkest times. Hope clings to God's promise of a better future.

We cannot offer hope unless we ourselves, are anchored in hope. The often-used response, "Well. Let's hope so", is passive and suggests there is nothing we can do to affect change. But **we** are God's co-creators, and true hope impels us to work to make a difference. While it is true that without God we can do nothing, it is equally true that, without us, God can do nothing. We are God's hands, ears, feet and heart. With hope, we can, you can, bring life - Jesus' life, to others. The more hope fills our spirit, the stronger is Jesus, our anchor, securing our faith and love, our relationships.

That anchor allows you to make a difference. So, spring has arrived. Perhaps give your anchor a good polish and continue helping to change lives by being a beacon of hope.

Fr Brian Traynor CP

BLESSED ARE THE HOSPITAL  
WORKERS; THE AMBULANCE CREWS,  
THE DOCTORS, THE NURSES, THE CARE  
ASSISTANTS, AND THE CLEANERS



FOR THEY STAND BETWEEN US AND  
THE GRAVE, AND THE KINGDOM OF  
HEAVEN IS SURELY THEIRS

BLESSED ARE ALL DURING THIS TIME WHO HAVE PURE HEARTS;  
ALL WHO STILL HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE; ALL WHO  
WORK FOR PEACE AND WHO MODEL MERCY



MAY YOU KNOW COMFORT. MAY YOU KNOW CALM. AND MAY THE  
GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND  
THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE WITH US ALL. AMEN

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We pray for many things at this time including the health and safety of all during this pandemic. Also, we pray for the success of the current Australian Plenary Council that is part of a global movement of reform and renewal longed for by Catholics across the world... an opportunity for significant renewal in the Church in Australia.



In this world of ours, a world of change and challenge, one thing remains constant: we need each other to be the best that we can be.

As Passionist Family Group people, we can reach out to others around us to be a support in practical ways and also, to nourish our own spirit through our purposeful interactions. It is one of the ways in which we can live out our Faith and spirituality and keep the message of Jesus alive.

*In her Annual Report 2021, a PFGM Group Coordinator from the Geelong area wrote:*

*'Last year, Covid closed our meetings but we have kept in touch by phone and finally met in December for a Christmas celebration.*

*Our group has 9 members ranging in age from 79 to 98. Our PP says that God has given us the gift of Old Age!*

*Accordingly, our age-appropriate activity is a monthly dine-out lunch at venues with accessible parking, flat entry-ways and no steps anywhere. Space is needed for wheelies and walking sticks. Conversation is sometimes interrupted by the crashing of walking sticks falling off the backs of chairs to the floor. (Technology is needed to improve walking sticks in relation to gravity.)*

*Due to medical appointments, stints in hospital and Nursing Home lockdowns, full numbers at our gatherings are not frequent. In fact, at our July meeting only three members were free to attend. Nevertheless, we keep going, enjoying each other's friendship in the Lord and in his Church. With thanks and appreciation to the Passionist Family Group Movement.'*



The above Report with its engaging account of a Parish Family Group, made up of Seniors, is a testament to the longevity of the Passionist Family Group Movement and the support that its members have been to each other over many, many years.

*A number of Parishes started up Family Groups 35 or more years ago. They include:*

The **New South Wales** Parishes of: Terry Hills, Castle Hill, North Rocks, St Clair, Wagga Wagga-Koorinal, St Ives, Griffith, Ballina, Wagga Wagga Cathedral, Engadine, Young, Berala, Sawtell, Batemans Bay, Wagga Wagga South, Bungalow/Byron Bay, Albury

The **Queensland** Parishes of : Bardon, Goodna, Daisy Hill, Kingston, Rochedale, Indooroopilly

The **Victorian** Parishes of: Donvale, Diamond Creek, Doncaster East, Mount Evelyn

The **A.C.T.:** Parish of Kambah

The **South Australian** Parish of: Glen Osmond



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Passionist Family Group Movement  
Website: [www.pfgm.org](http://www.pfgm.org)

**Holy Cross Newsletter:** Fr Brian Traynor CP writes an interesting, informative & entertaining weekly Newsletter for the Holy Cross Centre's parishioners. It is shared with the Southern coordinators who often pass it on to their Family Group Coordinators. If you would like to receive a copy, please send your request to the Southern Team: [pfgm.victas@gmail.com](mailto:pfgm.victas@gmail.com)