

Family Groups



PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP MOVEMENT

A Ministry of the Passionists

SUMMER 2022/2023

To our Passionist Family Group Movement Family...

Happy New Year to you all from the National Coordinating Team!

As we welcome 2023 and begin a new year, we can look back at 2022 and acknowledge the gift of Family Groups and the opportunities where we were able to meet face to face, gather as a group in person, reunite with families, celebrate anniversaries and "Re-connect".

The new PFGM National Coordinating Team gathered at Holy Cross, Templestowe in early December. Paul Traynor, New Zealand's PFGM National Coordinator, joined us also. The weekend was a great success and a wonderful opportunity for us to gather as a team to thank the retiring members and to plan the year ahead. Fr Brian Traynor CP led us through a session on 'Belonging' and then a session on 'Decline'. We then discussed, debated, reflected and shared our direction and plans for the year ahead. Our main goal is to reconnect in person whenever possible and to re-energise Family Groups.

In 2023, we look forward to celebrating the **50th Anniversary** of the formation of the first Passionist Family Group. Our deceased founder, Fr Peter McGrath CP, while pastor at St Anthony in the Fields Parish, Terrey Hills NSW, perceived that there was a need to create a sense of community. With community comes a sense of family and belonging which then becomes an extended family – "A Family for All". He raised awareness of the need for friendship, support and love in the Parish community. With the support of lay members of the Parish past & present, the Passionist Family Group Movement came to life, spread across the country and continues to this day.....

St Anthony of the Fields will celebrate this golden anniversary on **May 7th 2023** and we invite all Family Groups to celebrate this milestone in your own parish communities at a time that best suits you.


Blessings

Trish, Roger, Russell, Celine, Mary, Tina, Frances and Fr Brian CP



The PFGM National Coordinating Team 2023

Back: Tina Minichilli (National Coordinator), Russell Winterscheidt (Tech support), Fr Brian Traynor CP, Roger Gurney (Southern Team), Celine Bowman (Northern Team)
Front: Frances Sullivan (National Newsletter), Mary Morris (Central Team), Trish Gurney (Southern Team)



Join us to celebrate
50 years


**PASSIONIST
FAMILY GROUP
MOVEMENT**

A FAMILY FOR ALL

*Passionist Family Groups first began in 1973
at St Anthony in the Fields, Terrey Hills NSW*

07 MAY 2023

**We invite each family group to plan for a
celebration on or around the date of 7th May to
mark 50 years of Passionist Family Groups.**



THANK YOU, DENNIS!



Dennis Morris's retirement and contribution to the Passionist Family Group Movement were marked with a special presentation at the NCT's weekend in December 2022. He is pictured above at the relaxed, after-dinner sing-along with Fr Chris Monaghan CP, Celine Bowman (Qld) and new PFGM National Coordinator, Tina Minichilli.

The National Coordinating Team's Weekend gathering at Holy Cross Retreat at Templestowe, Victoria, in December 2022 provided an ideal opportunity to acknowledge and thank Dennis Morris as he retired from the Passionist Family Group Movement (PFGM)'s National Coordinating Team. The inaugural Team was formed just prior to the death of the PFGM's founder, Fr Peter McGrath CP in 2018.

Since then, Dennis worked tirelessly and was supported by his wife, Mary, and especially, by Fr Brian Traynor CP, who provided the much-appreciated guidance and advice as new policies and administrative procedures were developed and put into place. Dennis's ever-smiling and affable demeanour masked the many challenges that this huge job entailed. Thank you and well done, Dennis! Also thanked were retiring members Gwen Winterscheidt and Michael Sullivan who had contributed greatly to the Team over those years.

St Mary's Parish Colac VICTORIA : 30th Anniversary celebrations - October 30, 2022

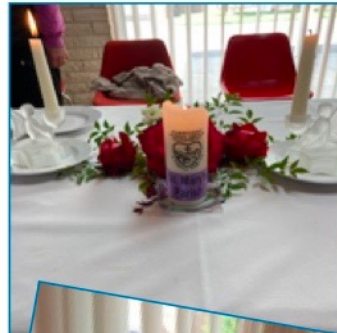
Alison and Tony Woolley of the PFGM Southern Team joined the current and former Colac Family Group members at Sunday morning Mass with Fr Kevin Arundell as Celebrant. Fr Kevin initiated the PFGM in Colac in March 1992 and it was important to members that he could be part of their celebration so that they could acknowledge his vision of 30 years ago.

Family Group members took part in all aspects of the liturgy including a welcome by Coordinator Linda Morgan-Davis and the PFGM candle was lit by Les Croft (who had travelled from Torquay) to acknowledge his role as a former leader. In true Family Group style and hospitality, the morning was completed with an impressive morning tea enjoyed by a large crowd who gathered and took the opportunity to catch up.

Linda acknowledged, especially, Pat and Brian Gleeson who, for much of that 30 years, were co-ordinators and 'had kept everyone on track'.

In her welcome address, Linda stated, "With loneliness and isolation so prevalent in our society, there is a genuine need for people to know and support each other.

Family Groups create an extended family atmosphere within the community and are open to everyone – it's never too late to join; and I invite you to join us for a cuppa after Mass today."



Above left:
The Colac PFGM
celebration candle

Above:
Tony & Alison Woolley with
Colac PFGM Parish
Coordinator Linda Morgan-
Davis & Fr Pater Arundell who
initiated the Colac Family
Groups



Left: Pat & Brian Gleeson
who were coordinators for
much of Colac's
30 years

FAITH by Melissa Coburn

Catholic culture was once one of big families, seemingly chaotic to an outsider's view but possessed of a rowdy joy by those within it.

With more than enough players for any game, playing at the local park quickly attracted other local children who would slip easily into the throng to chase or field.

Large families filling entire pews were once commonplace at Catholic Mass. Nowadays, however, many of the most dedicated parishioners are older.

Mass was central to Sundays. Families wore their best clothes, filled entire pews and kept siblings in check with a stern glance or subtle hand squeeze. Parents took unsettled babies to what was known as the "crying room", with glass windows from which Mass could still be viewed while crying toddlers were inaudible to the rest of the congregation.



The time after Mass was for catching up with friends in the community. Parish picnics and dances were opportunities for families to spend time together. Parents from the Catholic primary school became lifelong friends, providing comfort to each other in difficult times.

Easter ceremonies commemorating the death and resurrection of Christ were a sorrowful reminder of the suffering of Christ and also of hope in seeming disaster. Christmas Masses were always packed.

A lesser-known celebration was the crowning of Mary in May, when children were selected to place a circlet of flowers on the head of a statue of Mary, a lasting example of the courage and strength of a woman from early times. The elders hold up the Catholic community now. They volunteer for reading at Mass and to take communion to the sick. Many are grey-haired and fragile, some on walking frames, but they have a determination that is enviable. They are there at Mass come rain or shine.

I am here, too, sitting in a quiet pew with my family. The setting sun blazes through the windows, bathing me in its golden light and warming my hair. It's not always easy to get to Mass, but I come anyway.

I am here because in the Mass the world stops for an hour and I open my mind to the presence of God and to the deep peace that He offers.

I'm here because Christ asked us to remember him in the breaking of the bread, and I am trying to keep faith with his small request.

I am here because this is my clan and my culture, and its traditions matter to me.

**Melissa Coburn is a Melbourne writer.
The Age: October 30, 2022**

A 'Merri' Merry Christmas



A number of the Coordinators from Parishes in the Merri/Yarra Valley Cluster in metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria celebrated Christmas together in December, 2022 at the home of the Cathy & Rod Hardinge whose dog, Amber (a Scottish Deer Hound/Greyhound cross), joined in as well.



Fireworks lit up the sky above the Passionists' church in Marrickville, Sydney when people gathered for their Christmas Mass.



PFGM Southern Weekend: 'A great time was had by all...'

Celebrating & Nurturing what FGs Offer: a Family for All

In mid-November 2022, the Southern Passionist Family Group coordinators and members who gathered at Holy Cross Retreat, Templestowe enjoyed a wonderful, refreshing and happy time in glorious weather. The weekend provided opportunities for much happy chatter and sharing of experiences.

Fr Brian Traynor CP set a gentle pace with his presentation which generated much valuable interaction and reassurance as we reflected on our experiences of Family Groups and where we can best use our time and energy. Late on Saturday afternoon, we gathered to celebrate Mass with the beautiful Holy Cross gardens providing a perfect backdrop. Afterwards, we moved to the balcony to enjoy pre-dinner refreshments and happy chatter.



This photo was taken after the late Saturday afternoon Mass: a number of the Weekend's participants had to leave before this photo was taken due to other commitments. Fr Brian is peeping around the banner.

On Saturday evening, retired Team members Rob and Judy Lewis joined us for dinner to help acknowledge and thank our retiring Southern Team members, *Alison and Tony Woolley of Warrnambool* who, for seventeen years, have been caring for the Family Group members in the south-west of Victoria. Here Tony & Alison are pictured on the left receiving their presentation from current Team Members Michael & Frances Sullivan.



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The PFGM National Team welcomed Tony Biviano, Chief Executive Officer of Majellan Media, to give a brief presentation at our Weekend in December. Tony highlighted the many benefits to families of the Majellan publications, all of which are geared towards supporting families and that give many great, practical suggestions to help families be the best they can be. Check their website and perhaps consider the subscription offer to share with your young families.

FAMILY GROUP RENEWAL – St Anthony's parish, Kingscliff NSW



On the 15/16 October 2022, Celine Bowman and Fr Ray Sanchez visited our parish of St Anthony's in Kingscliff, NSW, for a 'Family Group Renewal' weekend. Celine arrived on Saturday afternoon to meet up with the group leaders of our four existing Family Groups. Two of these groups began their journey with the very first Family Group weekend over thirty years ago! The other two started in 2019 with a Family Group Renewal.



Fr Ray Sanchez celebrated the three Masses in our parish that weekend and shared with us the experience of a fellow who, through belonging to a Family Group, was profoundly moved by the heartfelt love he was shown by the members of his Group at a time of difficulty. His words, along with those of parishioners who shared their experiences of being a Family Group member, sparked a great response with 24 enrolment forms submitted!

We enjoyed morning tea after our Sunday Masses at Sts Mary and Ambrose church Pottsville, and St Anthony's church, Kingscliff followed by a thought-provoking presentation by Fr Ray on 'The Church, Community and Family Groups'.

The Renewal has generated two new Groups with another one hoping to begin early in 2023. We are so grateful to Celine and Fr Ray for their time and dedication because we know first-hand the positive impact that the Movement has on a community as a whole, but especially on those individuals who experience belonging and love through their involvement in their Family Group.

Catherine Holliday - Pastoral Assistant



St Francis of Assisi Parish, Mill Park VICTORIA - 30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

St Francis of Assisi Parish in Mill Park, Victoria, celebrated 30 years of Family Groups in October 2022

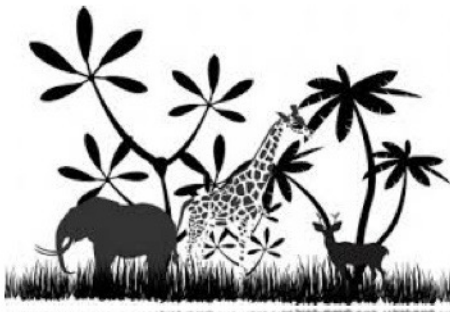


The new PFGM Coordinator at Mill Park, Regina Huning, pulled out all stops to ensure that the Mill Park Parish's 30th Anniversary of Family Groups was a wonderful celebration. The Saturday evening began with a beautiful Mass celebrated by the Parish Priest, Fr Anthony Girolami. The music was provided by a well-rehearsed and talented choir. Afterwards, the Parish's Family Group members and others who were interested, were invited to a magnificent dinner in the Parish hall where

Above: Helen & Alfons Glatzel cut the cake while Parish Coordinator, Regina Huning (in red) watches.

Afterwards, Regina reported that a new Family Group of six families with children from the school has been formed.

families were entertained by various music groups and the children and the young-at-heart joined in a variety of games plus dancing. Also invited were Parish PFGM coordinators from neighbouring parishes and those who attended had a wonderful time. The 30th Anniversary Cake was cut by long-time coordinators, Helen and Alfons Glatzel, who had retired from the coordination role after many, many years of dedicated service to the Movement.



A Giraffe's View

In my office I have a timber giraffe which is as tall as the four-drawer filing cabinet at which it gazes. What a view of things, a giraffe has! Being the tallest animal, it might be thought that it has the best view, however I have seen giraffes in Kruger Park, South Africa, and despite their height, they disappear quickly into landscape and cannot be seen. The trees hide them because the trees are taller.

Sometimes we can think we are like a giraffe – that we have the best view, the best understanding of things. I have also seen monkeys in Kruger Park warn animals, including giraffes, of nearby danger – a pride of lions. Very quickly, birds joined the monkeys in warning sounds. How? Because the birds are much higher than the giraffes or the monkeys, and they have a better view of the overall picture.

It is good for us to be alerted by those with a better view than us. It might be that they have better knowledge or understanding, less bias and more open-minded, less fear and more hope, less sense of restriction and more love.

As we start a new year, it might be worth listening to the voices that call us forward instead of those that hold us back. It could be worth stretching our necks to get a better perspective, or flapping our 'wings' to get a better picture.

Our Passionist Family Groups offer fellowship, belonging and fun. They offer us a down-to-earth way of living our faith so that we can be disciples of Jesus, looking after those less fortunate, sharing with those who have become shut-ins and witnessing to a way of belonging that includes everyone and anyone – a Family for All!

Let's not cool our heels but step out with deliberate intent to ensure our Family Group is up and running – and be a voice that is positive, helpful and friendly. In this way we can offer a better perspective to others and make Family Group life happen.

Brian Traynor CP



Vale Dr Michael Page of Warrnambool, Victoria (RIP 17 December 2022)

Mike Page was a much admired and loved doctor in Warrnambool and an active, hard-working Passionist Family Group member who, for many years with his wife, Mary, was part of the PFGM Team in Victoria when many parishes were embracing the Movement and setting up their Parish Family Groups.

We hold in our prayers all our loved ones who have passed away recently.



- * Contributions to our National Newsletter are welcome, especially news of your Family Group events that you and your members have enjoyed. Photos always complement a good story!
- * Please send contributions to the editor, Frances, at pfgm.victas@gmail.com

For more about the Passionist Family Group Movement:

Website (Australia): www.pfgm.org

Website (New Zealand): www.passionistfamily.org.nz