

Family Groups

**PASSIONIST
FAMILY GROUP
MOVEMENT**



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A Ministry of the Passionists

WINTER 2024

Winter is a time when most of us like to stay indoors to keep warm. (Especially, Family Group people who live in the southern states!) Due to the cold weather, many of us feel disinclined to venture out to meet people or even to attend a Family Group function. Family Groups that formed many, many years ago are affected by the ageing of members. Therefore isolation, loneliness and mobility may be challenges to gathering. In those early days of Passionist Family Groups, members often gathered in each other's homes and this still works very well if the hosts are comfortable and have the space to invite in their fellow members.

Despite the difficulties and the challenges of winter, we encourage you to keep the monthly functions going. Also, try to reach out in-between functions for a coffee catch-up, to make a phone call for a chat or to do whatever is suitable for staying in touch, especially with members who have difficulty getting out and about. We never really know how this can brighten up someone's day!

Our Australian saint, Mary MacKillop said, "Never see a need without doing something about it." This is exactly how Family Group people can live the gospel!



Thank you all for your commitment and dedication to this ministry.

You may be encouraged by the stories of Family Group gatherings that are included in this Newsletter.

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

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NSW - Celebrating 40 Years of Friendship & Support

*Carroll/Munro Family Group
St Anthony's in the Fields, Terrey Hills*

Our Family Group began as the Carroll Family Group 40 years ago. Initially there were 10 Families and 2 Single ladies in the Group. Paul and Shirley were our Leaders and guides and welcomed everyone. The group expanded over the years until there were a total of 34 regularly attending our Monthly events. Diane and Ken Munro became Co Leaders and so the Group became the Carroll / Munro Family Group.

We had planning meetings and everyone had a say in the next year's activities offering to host dinners, picnics, walks etc. These sometimes chaotic meetings achieved varied and popular pursuits enthusiastically attended by all. Weekends away were very important and well attended for many years. Children from pre-schoolers to teenagers took part in the beginning but as they grew up this inevitably dwindled. All still have fond memories of when they were involved. Our Schedule always included a Home Mass celebrated by Fr Peter McGrath and by subsequent Passionist Priests, a great privilege for us.

St Anthony's at the time was a very vibrant Parish and bi-annually we had either a "Winter Madness Concert" or a Parish Fair. Our group were enthusiastic actors in both scenarios with several 'stars' emerging. It all helped to 'bond' us as a family.

On a more serious note we have always fulfilled the purpose of the Family Groups to support each other in times of trouble and sadness. Over the years, three teenage suicides were a terrible shock and a challenge to our capacity to offer support. However we did and hopefully made a difference, sharing the families' grief. Various illnesses were suffered and several deaths have come our way. Our group has now reduced to 4 couples and 6 singles most of advanced age and so we now meet monthly for a Lunch together.

I think this story illustrates how a Family Group has been an intrinsic part of all our lives and for many of us, half of our lifetime and counting.



Winter Cheer in Adelaide, South Australia



'A wonderful afternoon tea with the Hennessy Family Group at the truly lovely home of Mary Kennedy. Going 38 years now and still meeting ten times a year. As always much laughter, memories, stories and gratitude: an oasis of warmth in the freezing Adelaide winter.'

- Tom McDonough CP

Queensland - Holy Spirit Parish, Bray Park - celebrates 30 years

Holy Spirit Parish just north of Brisbane is ministered to by the Spiritan Missionary Order.*

On May 19 this year, about 50 Family Group members gathered at a local Tavern for a luncheon to celebrate 30 years of PFGM involvement in the parish's 50-year history. Back in May 1994, Parish Priest Fr Gerry Gogan and assistant priest Fr Paul Walch invited a Passionist team to speak at Sunday Masses with a sign-up weekend. Sixty-four families joined including 154 children and 13 singles. They were placed into five Family Groups.

Under the guidance of the extended archdiocesan PFGM community and its aims, the families readily took to the Movement with great energy and enthusiasm with an average of eight new families added each year for the next eleven years and a sixth group formed. Being young families, in the first nine years, five sports & fun days were arranged at the school grounds with a colour allocated to each group and a trophy awarded for the winning team at the end of the day. Such events as sack race, potato and spoon race and three-legged race brought plenty of fun and enjoyment.

Apart from yearly week-end camps and monthly functions, the Family Groups and individual members played a significant role in the life of the Parish, particularly in the first twenty years with the launch of a FG Cook Book, bush dances, Australia Day celebrations at the local dam, Parish Christmas dinners, Jubilee Year Pilgrimage, fund raising for the Spiritan missions, bike and kayak rides as well as celebrating births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and giving bereavement support.

Now, the parish is more multicultural with only two active Family Groups in the Parish but for the members of the groups that have closed, they remain lifelong friends. Fr Rogasian Msami, a priest in the parish for eleven years, attended the luncheon and shared how Family Groups helped him to become a part of the Australian culture after coming from a small village in Tanzania. Fr Edward Khaemba, newly appointed parish priest, also attended the 30-year celebration lunch.

The Movement came into the parish at an opportune time when there were many young families anxious to be involved in community building activities. Over the 30 years of the Holy Spirit's 50-year history, the Movement has contributed greatly to the life of the parish.

- *Laurence Conlan (Original coordinator) Laurie's wife, Helen, could not be present at the celebrations due to ill-health.*

Below in the cake cutting photo: L to R- Fr Rogasian Msami (retiring PP), Laurie Conlan of the initial coordinator couple, Joyce Power (oldest member) and Fr Edward Khaemba (new PP)



**The Spiritans, also called Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, form a missionary congregation particularly developed in Africa. Living mostly in international communities, the Spiritans strive to promote the Church's mission among the poorest, especially where the Church finds it difficult to find workers. Founded in France in 1703, the Congregation has 3000 professed/lay associate Spiritans, drawn from all continents to carry out their mission of evangelisation in over 60 countries.*

Glen Osmond, South Australia - Marielle Fitzgerald Family Group

We decided to join together as a Family Group in early 2023, after an information meeting held at the Monastery, Glen Osmond. This playground & BBQ lunch meet-up was our first social gathering this year, in the April school holidays. It was an opportunity for us to catch up, while also welcoming a few new families who have recently joined the Monastery. We chose George Street Reserve in Marion - a clean and tidy hidden gem secluded among residential houses, with good family-friendly facilities.

Our very international group comprises families who originally hail from horizons as diverse as Australia, Colombia, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and South Africa!

As my family will be leaving Australia at the end of July for an extended time of living, working and travelling overseas, the point of contact for our Passionist Family Group will now be the lovely, community-minded, energetic Quenby Alinskie.



St Anthony in the Fields Parish Celebrates 51 years of Passionist Family Groups

On Sunday, 5th of May, Terrey Hills Parish, New South Wales, celebrated the 51st birthday of the PFGM with almost 70 Family Group members in attendance. Not even the rain stopped the joy felt in the church and the kitchen afterwards.

We are honoured at St. Anthony's to be keeping the Spirit of Family Groups alive. We have an important and beautiful responsibility to keep the flame alight, as it was at our little 'tin-shed' church as Fr. Peter McGrath referred to back in 1972, where the Passionist Family Group Movement was born.

Mary Ingham, an original member of the Family Groups of 1972, cut the birthday cake.

-Barbara Lunnnon



Boyne Island / Tannum Sands - Queensland

Our Family Group is '**Bits & Peacers**' at Boyne Island /Tannum Sands. We formed fourteen years ago when Family Groups were first introduced to our area. I am very proud to say that we are the only group in the Gladstone region that has remained active. We have about twenty people who regularly attend our monthly activities; sometimes a few more. Several are the non-Catholic partners of regular church-goers and happily they come and enjoy our activities.

Perhaps the highlight of this year's activities was the annual cricket match when the *Aussies* played *The Rest of the World*. It was a great fun time at The Duck Pond, a local park close to the beach with a beautiful, tranquil pond complete with ducks swimming and other wildlife. We had our own rules applicable to the area, e.g. *In the water & out for 6*. Our

children/grandchildren did a great job and we called on their help to run for the oldies. Our Parish Priest, Fr Andrew, was one of the top scorers for the *Aussies* but even despite his expertise *The Rest of the World* won! It was a great, entertaining afternoon.

Our other monthly activities have included: Barefoot Bowls & Burger at the local bowls club, St Patrick's afternoon tea, a late afternoon BBQ at the beach, a camping weekend at Cania Gorge, Christmas in July and a Ladies' High Tea. Later in the year will be a card afternoon and Beach Party as our

Christmas break-up. In former years our camping weekend has included Sunday Mass at the local church which has a monthly Mass only.

I am so grateful for the formation of our local group as I'd been recently widowed and I was at a loss for social outings where it was only me. I was delighted to be included in such good company with a fun element in a safe environment which is what Family Groups are all about. Thank you for your part in keeping this wonderful movement still active.

- Cecily Burkett



A Joyful Weekend in Adelaide, South Australia

Please remember in your prayers Justin Durai Raj CP who made his Final Profession as a member of the Passionist Congregation on Saturday June 15 and Deacons Hồ Sỹ Đoàn, Đỗ Anh Tuấn (TP) and James Cong who were ordained priests the next day. Both these wonderful ceremonies took place in St Paul's Retreat at Glen Osmond in Adelaide.

-Denis Travers CP, Provincial



A number of parishioners from St Joseph's Hobart, where Justin lived and worked for some time, travelled to be present at Justin's Final Profession ceremony. This group included both the current and former Family Group coordinators and former Hobart Monastery Leader, Peter Addicoat CP



Dennis Lanham, Passionist Family Group Coordinator at St Joseph's in Hobart, was thrilled to be invited to read at Fr Justin's Final Profession ceremony.

Fr Justin CP professed his perpetual vows as a Passionist, meaning that the vows are now considered lifelong and permanently binding.

It IS a Family for All

It seems many PFG members give little thought to the fact that living Family Group life is living gospel life. Behind the picnics, dinners, fun activities and other (social) get togethers, is the reality that all of these activities are being shared with people who were once strangers.

Hardly anyone chose their Family Group. Members were allocated at random and twenty, thirty or forty years later they have truly become a family in the sense that Jesus would have invited them to be.

One stated aim of the PFGM is to build community in the parish and the network of families who have come to know and appreciate each other are doing that, and they are caring for members who are troubled or unwell, sharing good times, and including people who might otherwise have been excluded.

It is frustrating when people who don't belong suggest a Passionist Family Group is a social group. Even some individual groups settle for that narrow understanding of who they really are. There are forty meals recorded in the gospels at which Jesus was present, and some of his most significant encounters occurred on those occasions. Through him, social became truly religious. Outcasts were invited to join, people were healed, and everywhere there was a clear sense that anyone could belong – women, Samaritans, Syro-Phoenicians, children, blind, lame, tax-collectors. As Pope Francis would say, "Everyone, everyone, everyone".

So how about celebrating that our 'family for all' is one way of joining the discipleship of Jesus and along the road, we learn what that really means and what it calls us to. It is so much more than 'just social'.

- Brian Traynor CP

Jesus the Good Shepherd Parish, East Lake Mcquarie NSW

Our Family Group continues to gather mainly for lunches now, as this suits everyone. We like to celebrate our 'Zero' birthdays with a cake and card signed by everyone. In May this year we celebrated John Andrew's 80th and Julie Baines' 60th birthdays at Belmont 16' Sailing Club.



In March we attended the Premier's Gala Concert (Seniors' Concert) at the Aware Super Theatre at Darling Harbour in Sydney. We incorporated this concert with a three-night midweek getaway stay in Sydney. There were 18 of us and we had a great time with warm weather.

Our Family Groups started at St Francis Xavier, Belmont in February 1991 and many members are still part of our groups from that first beginning. We have two groups that both do their own planning and activities but support Parish functions whenever the opportunity comes around.

Our children have all grown up and now have families of their own. So, our groups have evolved and aged. It is

very different from when we first began with so many children involved. They were certainly fun times with all the activities we got up to. Lots of children were going to Mass in those days, especially our children in Family Groups. We had approximately 150 children in our 8 groups. Both adults and children made new friends in our Parish through interaction with our Family Groups.

Fr Peter McGrath and Mary Ingham would come to our Diocese every year for Leaders' meetings. Fr Peter, with his effervescent personality and 'you can do anything you put your mind to' attitude, was invigorating. Together with Mary's patience, love and encouragement, they were a great team.

Family Groups have evolved to enjoy more sedate-type gatherings. (However, we still have plenty of life left in us!) We share a feeling of belonging to our Parish Family and gratitude to Fr Peter for what he started and nurtured for so many years.

- John & Pauline McGrath

New Venue for our PFGM Pizza Night Function - Montmorency, Victoria

Many members in our Family Group have been through the process of downsizing in recent years and, as a result, we have fewer venues on offer for the ever popular "in home" activities. With this in mind we decided to run our June Pizza Night in the Parish House. Our Saturday evening activities usually begin at 7pm to accommodate those attending Mass, so it seemed obvious to invite the 6pm Mass congregation to join in the fun. Our members brought along desserts and beverages having no idea whether anyone would take up our offer. We were delighted when our numbers swelled to twice the original acceptances and a very lively evening of eating, drinking, chatter and laughter ensued. We had a moment or two of panic as to whether there would be enough wine but being well and truly familiar with the story of *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* (or maybe even *The Marriage Feast of Cana*) we should have had more faith.

Marie and Gerard Wood of St Francis Xavier - Montmorency Community of Risen Christ Parish



We remember in our prayers:



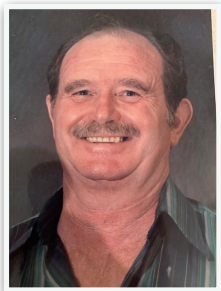
Carol Gweneth O'Reilly

Carol, who passed away on 16 May 2024 was the loving wife of Patrick. Together, Carol and Patrick were the Coordinators for many years of the Family Groups at the Sandringham Parish in Melbourne, Victoria. Our condolences to Patrick and family.



John Buchan - father of Trish Gurney. Trish, with her husband Roger, is a member of both the PFGM's National Coordinating Team and the PFGM's Southern Team (Victoria and Tasmania). Trish's dad died on May 15, 2024. Unfortunately, Trish was unable to be present at her father's funeral in England.

Here, Trish writes of her father's very interesting life:



'Dad was born in Bath, England on 16 April 1931 and died in Ashley, England on 15 May 2024.

As a young boy, Dad and his sister were sent to boarding school, as their parents had a dental surgery and lived in Bath, which was bombed during WW2.

From the age of 10, Dad helped out on a farm during his holidays. On one memorable occasion, he drove a tractor into Bath, with the police turning a blind eye! On another occasion he fell under the roller of the tractor but luckily landed in a furrow so was unharmed.

Dad was unable to follow his first dream of becoming a Vet but, instead, studied agronomy and agriculture before setting off to Northern Rhodesia as a 21 year old to manage a farm. This was far from any town. Dad was unable to speak any local languages but he learnt the common language used in Southern Africa and made himself popular by ministering to the locals' sick and wounded animals using supplies his dad and aunt had sent with him. He loved all animals and had no fear of any of them.

Dad then moved to the Copperbelt and undertook some of the more dangerous mining jobs to earn enough to buy a farm in Southern Rhodesia. He was motivated to do so as he had met Mum and hoped to marry. The two had fallen in love at their first meeting.

Unfortunately he was swindled, the victim of a conman. The farm that Dad had bought had no water! So, once again, he began a new pursuit - this time in insurance. He worked and studied and became General Manager of three provinces in Zimbabwe.

Dad was devastated when mum died in 1997 but a couple of years later he re-married and he and his new wife relocated to England after the situation in Zimbabwe had deteriorated. He had never wanted to return to the UK as he loved Africa.

Dad was hard-working, honest and fair. He believed in working for the community and he always supported charities, without wanting acknowledgement. This attitude earned him the respect and admiration of all those who knew him. Dad also had a great sense of humour (which saved us a few times when we three children got up to mischief!)

Money and power were never his gods as he had a deep faith, which he practised as an Anglican.'

- John Buchan's funeral was held at St Mary's Anglican Church in Chevely UK on June 17, 2024.



* Trish & Roger moved from Zimbabwe to settle in Australia in December 2003.

They joined a Family Group at Our Lady of the Pines Parish in Donvale and, more recently, have become valued members of the Southern & National PFGM Teams.

'What I often say about my work with grieving and bereaved people is that it's much more about transformation than about consolation.

There are other places you can go to feel better, but to me grief is not a problem to be solved or a malady to be cured. It's a sacred reality to be entered. For so many of us, there's an opening to our soul's innate birthright; I would even say, of our longing for God that often gets covered over by everyday life.... When we experience a profound loss, it strips us of those coverings ... granting us special access to a profound loving intimacy with the divine...'

- Richard Rohr

Thank you Mrs Prager



Many will be aware that Mrs Margarete Prager, who died on 4 March 2005, left a substantial bequest to the Passionist Family Group Movement in her Will.

Mrs Prager's generosity was particularly amazing because she was neither a member of our Movement nor, for that matter, was she Catholic.

Mrs Prager's generous bequest has greatly assisted in the administration of the Movement for the past 18 years; however, the liquid proceeds of the Prager Fund are diminishing, and we now have sufficient to finance our operation for only the next 2 – 3 years.

Prior to Mrs Prager's bequest the Movement was financed from parish contributions, the efforts of volunteers, donations from benefactors and contributions from the Holy Spirit Province of the Passionists.

Over time, parish contributions have diminished greatly, our volunteers have aged considerably, benefactors are virtually non-existent and the Province's finances are under increasing strain. Despite this, our Movement continues to function in well over 100 parishes throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Accordingly, the National Leadership Team has decided to open a bank account, specifically for the receipt of donations. It is hoped that others, like Mrs Prager, will wish to support the good work of our Movement in building parish communities, enabling parishioners to get to know and love each other as Jesus taught us and in giving example to our children.

Family Groups provide a nurturing environment that helps people get to know other members of their parish community and to support one another. Many people within Family Groups have witnessed and received blessings from the love and acceptance they have experienced within their Family Group.

You can donate either by using our banking details below or using your Debit/Credit Card online on our web site at www.pfgm.org and select **Support Us**. Every little donation will help!

The details of the account are as follows:

Account Name: Passionist Family Group Movement

BSB: 062-784

Account Number: 100012915

Contributions can be made via direct transfer or by cheque/money order etc.

Receipts will be provided for all donations; please provide appropriate details.

**Please note that the account is administered by the Holy Spirit Province of the Passionists and we are ineligible for Tax Deductable status.*

We invite and welcome contributions to our Passionist Family Group Newsletter.

Please send your news/articles and photos to the editor at:

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Our website: www.pfgm.org

A copy of this and previous PFGM Newsletters can be found on our website.