

Family Groups

**PASSIONIST
FAMILY GROUP
MOVEMENT**



PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP MOVEMENT

A Ministry of the Passionists

SPRING 2025

To our Passionist Family Group Family...

Over the weekend of August 22–24, the Passionist Family Group Movement's National Team, together with PFGM Diocesan Coordinator representatives from each state, gathered at Holy Cross, Templestowe in Victoria for a National Conference. Especially, we welcomed Paul Traynor, PFGM National Coordinator of Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Bill & Carmel Cormick who were representing the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese for the first time. Brian Traynor CP facilitated our Conference which centred around the theme of Nurturing.

The weekend offered inspiring presentations from Paul Casey (Wollongong Diocese PFGM Coordinator), Paul Traynor and Brian Traynor CP, each sharing the many dimensions of nurturing. Their insights resonated deeply with all present, reinforcing the importance of care, connection, and renewal in our shared mission.

A warm sense of community filled the gathering, reflecting the years of dedication by those who have worked tirelessly to build and sustain parish life through the Passionist Family Group Movement. The conference began with a beautiful prayer led by Annette Guterres (Sydney Archdiocese). The prayer is printed below.

In 2025, the theme of nurturing continues to capture the heart of our Movement. It reminds us of our dual responsibility—not only to nurture others but also to nurture ourselves. By doing so, we ensure that our capacity to support and guide others remains strong and sustainable.

When we nurture, we offer kindness. And when we receive kindness, we are nurtured. This reciprocal gift is at the heart of the Passionist Family Group Movement and it is what continues to sustain us in our mission.

Thank you all for your continued gift of nurturing.

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

The Prayer composed and led by Annette Guterres at the National Conference

Dear Lord, we come before you as Family Group leaders inspired by the vision of our founder, Fr Peter McGrath CP. His wisdom guides us as we build faith communities that love one another because they know one another. We seek your nurturing presence to foster growth within us and in our groups. This growth is not built on numbers but by acts of love that nourish us all on our life's journey.

Grant us the strength to endure the trials we face and the resilience to rise above them with grace.

Nourish our souls with your boundless love and fill our hearts with purpose. May we find spiritual fulfilment in your care and may your wisdom guide our steps.

Help us to extend this love to those around us, fostering communities of compassion and support.

In your name, we pray for the courage to grow, the strength to endure and the love to nurture ourselves and others.

*St Anthony in the Fields Parish, Terry Hills NSW
Celebrates International Family Group Day*



All is well at the 'birthplace' of the PFGM which began at Terry Hills in 1973.

Parishioners gathered to remember International PFGM Day on May 4th, sharing lots of stories in the kitchen during our big morning tea. We had a good number attending, even with the very wet weather!

Watched keenly, were videos of FG events going back to the 1980s as they were shown on the big screen. They included our famous Winter Madness Concerts, plus more.

We remembered Paul and Shirley Carroll, Ian Marnoch, Wendy and Mike Matchett and our dear founder, Fr Peter McGrath. Four plants to commemorate them will be added to the Landcare gardens in the 'glade'.

-Barbara Lunnon

Thank you Fr Chris

Remember those tedious, restrictive Covid Lock-down days? During that trying time, Chris Monaghan CP celebrated and recorded each Sunday Mass to create a beautiful video that could be viewed by all and any of us who were restricted to our homes. His generosity in providing such beautiful celebrations was very much appreciated. Chris has continued to pre-record each Sunday's Mass to allow those who are unable to attend Mass locally to participate in his celebration of the Mass which he pre-records wherever he is in the world!*

In September on the 26th Sunday of the Year, his Mass came from Rome with this thought-provoking covering note:

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Rome! I have been here the last few days for a seminar on our Passionist Founder, St Paul of the Cross. I took the opportunity the day before the seminar started to visit the churches of St Peter's and St Mary Major's. As you enter and leave any of the major churches in this Jubilee year, you meet beggars, and that's confronting. Do you help or not, walk by or not? Our readings this weekend powerfully challenge us to reflect on how we see those in need and our commitment as their brothers and sisters.

Blessings, Chris CP

**See: chris.monaghan@passionists.com*

Our Lady of the Pines Parish Donvale, Victoria - 40th Anniversary



Our Lady of the Pines (OLOP), Donvale, was the first parish in Melbourne to establish Passionist Family Groups which were introduced there in 1985. On 21st September the OLOP Parish celebrated our 40th Anniversary. During the celebration Mass, Fr Toan PP, reiterated the value of Passionist Family Groups within our parish.

Pictured cutting the celebration cake are long term parishioners Trish Gurney (who with husband Roger are the Leaders of the PFGM in Victoria and Tasmania) and fellow parishioner Kathy Given, the OLOP Parish's Family Group coordinator. Family Group members performed various roles during the liturgy and then gathered to celebrate with morning tea. Trish commented that, "It was wonderful seeing people catch-up with past and present members, reminiscing over past times and catching up on family news."

** Pictured are Trish Gurney, Southern PFGM Team Leader & OLOP parishioner cutting the celebration cake with OLOP's PFGM Parish Coordinator, Kath Given*

A Community of Care - Does this describe Family Groups?

'Relationships of mutual concern are rooted in both love and trust. These are people whom we know will hold our hearts with care. We're prone to forgive them when they make mistakes and we hope they will do the same for us. We want to share with them our important moments, both the hardships and the joys. We thrive when we're together.'

Relationships of shared purpose...see every gathering as an opportunity for a deepening of connectivity. It invests in people as complicated, multi-facted, wounded, beautiful individuals, each one essential to the greater whole.

Communities of love and belonging are spaces where, even at our most vulnerable, we're still willing to show up and start walking, trusting that our community won't look away.'

-Richard Rohr

B R I A N' S B L O G

A NURTURING STAGE

At the national meeting of the PFGM in August ,there were presentations and discussions around the theme of 'nurturing' our Family Groups, whereas such a meeting in the 1990's would have been discussing how we could deal with expansion.

We agreed that there is some growing, but essentially, we are in a phase where the emphasis is on nurturing our relationships and attending to the flexible structures we have.

There are a number of factors that have led to the ageing of our Groups. The first, is that this reflects church attendance. Those that do join a Family Group are older rather than younger and they fill the gaps for those who have moved to a new area or to the greatly desired residence of heaven! There are a lot of Catholic students in our schools, but few are Mass goers. The younger families that do attend church, tend to be from cultures who have much to offer but most are not attracted to mix with parishioners from other cultures.

The role of the parish priest is critical in supporting the Movement. Where there is a vibrant community, the atmosphere is warm and outreaching. One of our aims is to create and sustain the parish community. The gospel calls for this, but some priests and even many young adults, seem to focus on individual faith and aspects of parish life rather than on building and sustaining relationships.

We agreed at the national gathering that we want to be connected by kindness. We want to encourage those who are involved, to keep nurturing their relationships by maintaining connections. With many members now in senior years there is a tendency to withdraw; to not go out as much, especially at night, and this leads to isolation and loneliness. A quick visit, a phone call or a note are simple ways of nurturing relationships among the older members.

We have always tried to encourage members to focus on the members of their Passionist Family Group, not the functions. The 'monthly' gatherings keep people connected and celebrate relationships. In that way, they highlight the relationships rather than the other way around. Some functions can be very enjoyable, but they may exclude some members because of cost, or not allow healthy interactions.

Maybe your group can discuss how you can best nurture your relationships and contribute that gift to the parish community.

St John the Evangelist Parish, Lambton NSW

A Tribute - Ellen McTaggart



In every Family Group, there are quiet pillars—people whose presence, warmth and unwavering support shape the spirit of the group. For our Family Group community Ellen and Ken McTaggart were just that as Coordinators at St John the Evangelist at Lambton.

Now in care, after the passing of her beloved husband Ken, Ellen has been a guiding light for decades. Together they brought grace, wisdom, and a deep sense of belonging to every gathering. Whether it was a Leaders' day, a parish meeting or simply lending a listening ear, Ellen and Ken would be there with kindness, humility and love.

They understood the heart of Family Groups: connection across generations, shared stories and the joy of walking through life together. Even as time moved on and as participation became more difficult, Ellen remained a voice of reflection and truth. She once said, "We all got too old to participate. Lots started passing away. We couldn't get younger people to join." Her words remind us of the importance of legacy—and the need to carry forward what was built with such care.

To Ellen and Ken: thank you for your years of dedication, your gentle leadership, and your enduring friendship. You've left an imprint on our hearts and on the very fabric of our parish. May we honour you not only with our words but by continuing the spirit of Family Groups—welcoming, supporting, and growing together.

With love Pauline & John McGrath - Coordinators of Jesus the Good Shepherd, East Lake Macquarie Parish and Coordinators of the PFGM Maitland, Newcastle Diocese

Millenium Family Group celebrates 25th Anniversary - South Australia

One Sunday afternoon in early July 2000, a group of families and friends interested in Family Groups met in the Sebastian Centre at the Passionist Monastery in Adelaide to find out more about the Passionist Family Group Movement. As a result, a new Passionist Family Group was born – *The Millennium Group*. Little did we know what an enjoyable time was in store for us as a Family Group in the years to follow.

This same Group has recently celebrated its 25th anniversary of being a Family Group. We happily celebrated with Kevin Hennessy CP, who was there at our inception in 2000, with a beautiful and intimate Mass at the Monastery. After our Silver Jubilee Mass we shared yet another beautiful meal and reflected on the many happy times and conversations we have enjoyed since 2000. We have celebrated our oneness, trust, love, support and friendship over the years and pray that God will continue to bless us with many more memorable years of being the Millennium Family Group.



*25 happy years
together!*

Jesus the Good Shepherd Parish, East Lake Macquarie NSW



Family Group at Premier's Gala Concert Darling Harbour in March, relaxing at our accommodation and dinner on our first night.



Happy Family Group gatherings with PFGM Parish Coordinators, Pauline & John McGrath, who are also the Diocesan Coordinators for Maitland/Newcastle



*Happy
Birthday!*



Celebrating John Andrew's 80th and Julie Baines' 60th birthdays



Group photo of our National PFGM State Leaders together with guest speakers Paul Traynor, New Zealand National Coordinator (kneeling), Paul Casey (front row) and our National mentor, Brian Traynor CP (standing 3rd left from banner)



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

Please send your news/articles and photos to the editor at:
pfgm.victas@gmail.com

**A copy of this Spring 2025 Newsletter and previous
PFGM Newsletters
can be found on our website: www.pfgm.org**