

Family Groups

PASSIONIST
FAMILY GROUP
MOVEMENT



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A Ministry of the Passionists

SUMMER 2024/2025

To our Passionist Family Group Family:

We wish everyone a very Happy New Year! May 2025 be a year of continued activity, love and support within your Family Groups.

We have not long concluded our celebration of the birth of the Christ Child, the hope of the world, and a fresh start is born of hope! Now, the New Year provides the opportunity for all of us in our Passionist Family Groups to make a fresh start from both a personal as well as a PFGM perspective.

Paul Traynor expressed well this hope for 2025 in his New Year message to the Family Groups in New Zealand:

As we return to our communities, hopefully rested and affirmed through our time with family and friends, may we see that this New Year provides a door to walk through with a change of heart and attitude. We can re-evaluate our sense of 'family' and seek ways where our gifts can work for good. We can be like Jesus in changing water into wine by the movement of heart – from being about self to being for others. Each of us has gifts and each is invited to share those gifts to enhance the life and spirit of others around us.

We can be what Pope Francis is calling us to, in this Jubilee Year – Pilgrims of Hope!

We look forward to working with you all in 2025.



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

A Blessing for You

May you be blessed by God when you doubt yourself, when you are unsure about the decisions you've made or the direction in which you are going. May you be blessed with the grace to trust the God who partners with you and is working in you. This is the God who loves you and knows you as God's own work of art. This is the God who transforms even bad choices into gifts for those who are faithful. May the God of Self-Trust bless you.

-Maxine Shonk, OP

St Francis of Assisi Parish in Mill Park - Victoria (They love a party!)

The Mill Park Parish community celebrated the 32nd anniversary of the PFGM in their parish on November 19, 2024. Parish Priest, Fr Anthony Girolami, who is a wonderful supporter of our Movement, celebrated Mass which included a talk by Trish Gurney of the PFGM Southern Team. Mass was followed by a wonderful celebration in the hall. The festivities included singing, demonstrations of Taekwondo, Tai Chi, dancing and much more. There was an incredible selection of food brought by the attendees. Congratulations to Regina Huning and all the PFGM members at St Francis of Assisi Parish for a wonderful celebration of what the PFGM is all about: that is creating an inclusive, welcoming community.



Mill Park's Family Group members enjoy the festivities after Mass



PFGM Southern Team Leaders, Trish and Roger Gurney, are pictured here with Mill Park's Coordinator, Regina Huning

St Therese's Parish Kennington - Victoria: Celebrates 30 years!

A very happy event: several former Parish Priests happily gathered to concelebrate the Mass.

Concelebrated Mass with former PP Mgr Frank Marriott, Fr Joe Taylor and present PP Fr Jake Mudge and Fr Henry Onyirioha



Camperdown Victoria: Mt Leura Group celebrates 25 years

In September 2024, the Mt Leura Family Group enjoyed a happy gathering to celebrate their 25th Anniversary. Trish & Tony O'Leary cut the cake.



A Family Group Christmas Newsletter 2024: Sacred Heart Parish, Koorinal WAGGA WAGGA NSW

Dear Members

Well! Can that Larry and Therese throw a party! The Christmas Party held at their lovely home went off very well. Most of the entertainment was excellent and some, speaking for myself, mediocre but we all had lots of fun. The star of the show was Sister Mata who sang Silent Night in Tongan, and everyone joined in the Christmas Carols lead by Mata. She then prayerfully sang Mother Aubert's beautiful, reflective and prayerful song.



Jeanette and Kevin performed "There's a hole in the bucket" to much applause. Chris Miller read colourful poems by Dorothea McKellar including the well known 'My Country'. I could see those present reciting the verse etched deep in their memories from school days!



Ron and Fr Andrew told some funny "Little Johnny" jokes and Patrick read some amusing tales about priests and some of their antics. Kate recited the fastest poem I have ever heard. From his well-constructed Lectern, Larry read some very amusing and spot on anecdotes about the outback by his favourite poets, Marko Glicisi and Murray Hartim.



This morning, I visited Joan in Calvary- I was delighted to find her in very good form. Clots in her legs are of concern but, other than that, she was sitting up very spritely wanting to hear all the news about the Party. She sends much love and Christmas tidings to you all. Joan* is going back to Settlers tomorrow and hopes to get somewhere back to normal.



Again, wishing you all a very Happy and Holy Christmas. Prayers for good health to all those who are not well. - Ron and Marg



*Sadly Joan has since passed away - RIP (See Page 8)

Passionist Priest, Fransiskus Nong Budi meets the Pope in Vanimo, Papua New Guinea



Passionist priest, Budi, meets Pope Francis

On Sunday afternoon, October 8 2024, Pope Francis travelled to the remote Papuan city of Vanimo to thank the missionaries there for their incredible work and to tell the faithful they are a vital and vibrant part of the Church. Vanimo is a remote town in Sandaun Province on the border with Indonesia. In the weekly Holy Cross (Templestowe) Newsletter, Fr Erick wrote: *‘Budi, who left Melbourne in September, recently arrived in Vanimo just days before the Pope’s visit. In reflecting on the significance of meeting the Pope, Budi described it as “an extraordinary blessing” for him. Budi’s other name, Fransiskus (Francis) happens to be the same name as the Pope. When I spoke with Budi on the phone, he said he was planning to speak to the Pope in Italian. ‘Ciao il mio nome è Francesco’: “Hello my name is Francis.”*

Further reflections from Fr Budi:

“A Passionist nun commented to me that God had provided me with the opportunity to carry out this mission. Her words made me feel that my mission was blessed.

I feel happy with this experience as I realise that this missionary journey was pioneered by earlier missionaries. The Australian Passionists, along with the Franciscans, paved the way for us to keep the ‘mission flame’ alive in Vanimo.

I also reflected that, in welcoming the Pope’s visit, many things were staged to look good and beautiful. The authenticity of life is often hidden. Why don’t people dare to be themselves? Welcoming an honoured guest is indeed necessary, but it should not go so far as to cover up the realities of everyday life. As happened in Timor Leste, People’s settlements were demolished for the continuity of the event welcoming the Pope.

On the night that the Pope left Vanimo, a disabled child, who seemed not to have bathed for several days, came to the Passionist community. The child had come from the mountains to attend the Pope’s visit but was left behind by his friends. His presence reminded me that Jesus is present in everyone, especially those who suffer. This reflection led me to conclude that while meeting the Pope is a valuable experience, accepting and treating the little ones with the same love is the most important thing.”

B R I A N , S B L O G



The terrifying fires in Los Angeles have brought the world closer in terms of people offering their support and condolences. This happens especially between people who are connected.

In my own family (of eleven siblings) we have cousins living in Los Angeles. One cousin (Carole) visited Sydney recently and she and one of my sisters (Anne-Marie) keep regular communication. Carole has had to leave her home in Brentwood, which fortunately at this stage, is unaffected, except for the fear of looting. The other two cousins are safe. Several of our family have written to Carole and I thought one section of a message my brother Paul sent, was very interesting and relevant for all of us involved in Passionist Family Groups.

Paul wrote to Carole, “Please pass on my best wishes to your family and assure them that they are, like you, being held in thought and prayer. Our hearts go out to all those who are doing it tough in California due to this devastation. Our thoughts are also with Dawn and her family, and likewise, Michele. It seems strange that we don’t contact each other (Anne-Marie being the exception) but we are aware that we are family.” Then, something like this happens and we reach out. We remember, and through care and concern we become ‘family’.

At the heart of all we do with our Passionist Family Group – whatever function we attend, a gathering we organise or a phone call we make, we are building connections that create family. The depth of our relationships can sometimes become dormant, but it is the reality of what we are creating that enables us to pull together and support each other in times of need, celebrate when there are appropriate occasions and at monthly gatherings, appreciate the reality that we belong. We love and are loved.

At the centre of all this is the person of Jesus encouraging us to see we are sisters and brothers – or cousins. When the time is right or the need is real, we are there for one another. The old Benson and Hedges ad used to say, “When only the best will do: and isn’t that all the time?”

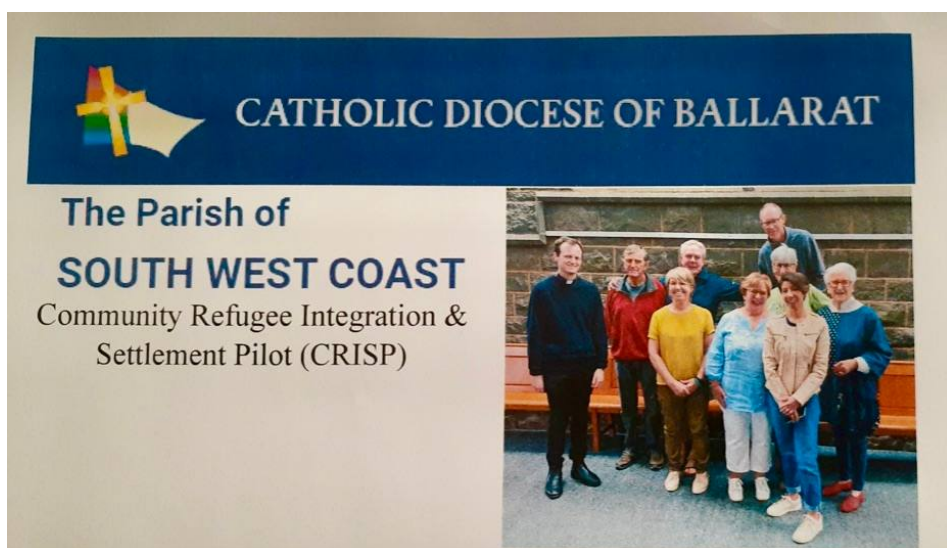
-Brian Traynor CP

St Joseph's, Warrnambool Family Groups Support Refugees through a new CRISP Program - Victoria

The **Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP)** is a new program that provides twelve months of support to allow a refugee family to settle into a new community. The support is provided by Community Support Groups (CSG) that receive training for the task from the relevant Federal Government agency. The CSG also needs to secure donations and raise funds to provide the refugee family with all the necessities to set up a family home. The first pilot scheme in Warrnambool has been successfully completed with a refugee family happily settled into the local community. The Community Support Group is now looking to settle a second refugee family.

Members of the *St Joseph's Family Groups* decided to support the CSG in its efforts to raise funds for the proposed second refugee family. The CSG chose to run a movie night at the local cinema. The movie night is an initiative of the local cinema to support local **Not For Profit** organisations with their fundraising efforts. The cinema will arrange to put on an appropriate movie and the NFP manages the sale of the tickets, keeping a share of the proceeds. The NFP is given exclusive use of a section of the cinema complex allowing the fund-raisers to run supplementary fundraising activities such as raffles and lucky door prizes.

- *Chris & Jane Thomson (St Joseph's PFGM Parish Coordinators)*



TASMANIA - Good news for St Joseph's, Hobart parishioners...and their Family Group!



The Passionist Provincial and his council have elected a new Community Leader for St Joseph's in Hobart. Fr Justin Durai Raj CP has accepted the position, returning to St Joseph's in January, 2025 to take up this role. Fr Justin has also been recommended to the Archbishop, as the new Parish Priest. Well known to so many of this community, the news will certainly come as a welcome surprise. Fr Justin spent his postulancy and noviciate in Hobart due to the COVID lockdowns in place in 2020 and 2021 and has spent the last 18 months in Adelaide. A number of the Hobart PFGM members, now his friends, attended Fr Justin's Passionist Ordination ceremony in Adelaide last year.

Parish Family Group Leaders' Meeting Warrnambool, Victoria



A gathering for a lunch time meeting of the Family Group Leaders from OLHC church community in East Warrnambool in August 2024. There are seven groups, and the leaders manage to get together regularly throughout the year. Their FGs have been operating for over 35 years.

Living in Intercultural Communities

Many of our churches now have communities comprised of members from a variety of cultural backgrounds. In November 2024, the Passionists' Provincial, Denis Travers*, made the following comment in his Provincial Newsletter:

'To live interculturally is to live in a way that recognises the good in each culture, that seeks to understand and appreciate differences, that listens and learns to recognise or at least tolerate the deeply held, and often unconsciously determinative, beliefs and expectations we each have.'

He urges deep listening and the recognition of each others' gifts. May we be open to welcoming people from all cultural backgrounds into our Family Groups.

* As Provincial, Fr Travers is responsible for the wellbeing of members and the life and mission of the Province comprising Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia.

Recalling a very pleasant encounter with Australia's New Cardinal

In October 2024, Pope Francis chose the Melbourne-based Bishop, Mykola Bychok of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, for the College of Cardinals, marking the first time since the death of Cardinal George Pell that there has been an Australian-based cardinal.

Cardinal Bychok, from the Ukraine, relocated to Australia in 2020 after he was appointed as a Bishop by Pope Francis. He became a Cardinal officially on December 8, 2024 when the Pope held a consistory for the creation of new cardinals. At 44, Cardinal Bychok was the youngest of the 21 cardinals-elect announced by Pope Francis.

Earlier in 2024, Southern PFGM Team Coordinators, Michael and Frances Sullivan, were delighted to meet the then Bishop Bychok who approached them for a chat when they were attending the Melbourne Archbishop's Patrick Oration in March. The Cardinal was outgoing, pleasant and easy to chat with. Understandably, Cardinal Bychok expressed sadness about the war in his home country, Ukraine, with concern that his family members there remain safe.



New Cardinal Mykola Bychok, head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Eparchy of Sts. Peter and Paul of Melbourne, Australia, processes into St. Peter's Basilica to celebrate Mass with Pope Francis at the Vatican Dec. 8, 2024, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The Mass included the newest members of the College of Cardinals, whom the pope elevated Dec. 7. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)



Let us not tire of preaching love, for this is the force that will overcome the world. Even if we see waves of violence coming to drown out the fire of Christian love, love must win out. It is the only thing that can.

—Óscar Romero

Renewal Weekend at Mary Help of Christians Parish - Sawtell NSW

In late October, 2024, an uplifting and inspiring Renewal Weekend was led by Father Ray Sanchez, along with Leanne and Shane Hyland at Sawtell and included three wonderful Masses. The weekend's main goal was to inspire and engage young families in the parish community. Sarah de Byl, a dedicated teacher and mother, enthusiastically stepped up to lead a new Family Group. She and Tony Jacobs shared their heartfelt stories during Mass, which deeply resonated with parishioners. One very moving moment came when an unexpected speaker shared a deeply emotional testimony. He spoke about how the Church and Family Groups had been a pillar of strength during his daughter's chemotherapy journey. His touching words brought many in the congregation to tears, reminding everyone of the deep support and connection that the Church community offers during times of challenge.

Post-Mass Community Connection: To top off the weekend, a vibrant BBQ and morning tea were served where Father Ray gave an inspiring talk on "The Future of the Church." Father Ray spoke with enthusiasm and hope about how the Church is in a time of transition, both spiritually and socially. He challenged everyone to embrace the changes ahead, stressing that the Church's future success will be shaped by how we face the challenges of this evolving time. ***The role of Family Groups, he emphasized, is vital in this transformation: many parishioners found his words inspiring and energising.***

Combined Passionist Family Group Event in Port Macquarie - NSW

*In August 2024, Family Group members from all over Port Macquarie, Laurieton, Wauchope, Kempsey, and Sawtell were invited to our first Mid North Coast Family Group Event. We came together for a joyous **Combined Family Groups Event** at St Agnes Village, Tenison Woods Centre! What an amazing time we had!*

*We kicked off the day by learning how to play the fun and easy card game **Crazy Whist** and spent hours laughing and enjoying each other's company. It was the perfect mix of friendly competition and lots of fun!*

Reconnecting with fellow members of the Family Groups was such a heartwarming experience. There was so much joy in the air as we all shared stories, made new memories, and, of course, laughed a lot!

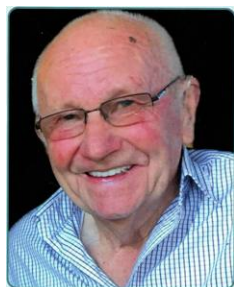
-Leanne Hyland



Vale and thank you to these two wonderful men from country Victoria who have been invaluable members and leaders within their Parish Family Groups



Keith Nieuwenhuizen together with his wife, Veronica Stewart of Sale Cathedral Parish, in Gippsland, Victoria coordinated the Family Groups there for many years. Keith passed away on September 9, 2024 with Veronica at his side.



Tom Grantham, a farmer, and his wife Maureen have been the support Coordinators at St Mary's Parish in Rutherglen, Victoria. Tom passed away on October 14, 2024. Tom and Maureen had enjoyed travelling until ill-health began to take its toll.

RIP Joan Taylor, member of the Koorinal Family Group in New South Wales

Joan spent her final evening at her Family Group's Christmas celebration (See page 3)

From Leader, Margaret McAuliffe:
I realised that Joan who lived about 20km away in Settlers, was turning 93 on December 26th. Joan was thrilled to be invited and we decided to extend the invitation to all members and thirteen came. Joan had a wonderful time chatting with everyone and admiring our garden. She left in high spirits, and we were all shocked to learn that she passed away that same evening. We're grateful that she died happy and suddenly, without any pain or hospitalisation.

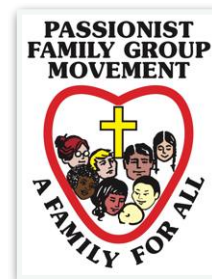
- Rest in peace Joan.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

Thank you for your support of the Passionist Family Group Movement. Your donation allows us to assist the many Family Groups throughout Australia.

Family Groups provide a nurturing environment to help 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 that they have experienced within their Family Group.

You can donate either by using our banking details below or click [here](#) to donate with your debit/credit card. If you are reading a printed copy of the newsletter then go to our web site at www.pfgm.org and select **Support Us**



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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:
pfgm.victas@gmail.com

A copy of this Summer 2024/5 Newsletter and previous PFGM Newsletters can be found on our website:
www.pfgm.org