



Seasons Greetings



What a Family Group can learn from the Camino?

A week ago Tracey completed seven hundred kilometres of the Camino. When I asked if she had done it alone, she said “Yes; however you never do it alone”. When I asked about the kind of people she met along the way, it was a small litany of people who spoke with her in a similar way.

“None of them engaged in the small talk that we usually get caught up in”. “Most of them asked simple but incredibly profound questions that either invited me to share quite deeply or to reflect more fully”. “Many of them freely shared about themselves; they often began by sharing why they were doing the Camino”.

“A professor volunteered that he had not undertaken the Camino for any spiritual search, but to test whether he could spend the time on his own, walk the distance he had decided on and face the questions that might arise”. He admitted he was challenged by each of these, but mostly by the questions and he spoke with Tracey about some of those questions. I commented to Tracey, “You met quite a few people”. Tracey replied, “Yes, but most importantly, I met myself”.

I reflected later that Tracey’s experience was similar to those with whom I shared a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2012. We were not interested in mundane or shallow conversation. We had a daily prayer that included the refrain, “May I remember that I am a pilgrim and not a tourist”.

Sadly, many people today live their life as ‘tourists’ and never open themselves to an experience such as Tracey had on the Camino. Most of us who have worked at promoting and supporting the Passionist Family Group Movement have hoped we could facilitate members moving from being tourists with one another to being pilgrims because a healthy Family Group can be like the people Tracey met on the Camino.

Unfortunately as we age it is easy to slip into a ‘comfort’ stage that no longer challenges us to grow or to share our real self, let alone to meet our real self. Married couples can become so comfortable that they no longer ask the simple but profound questions of one another and they fail to listen to the answers to those questions with a sense that this sharing is sacred.

Why can’t our Passionist Family Groups set out on a Camino of their hearts, by not just having monthly activities, but by consciously seeking to do together whatever will help a true sense of family to develop, so that they can trust each other more, share with each other more, enjoy time with each other more, and together discover the benefits of living life as pilgrims and not just tourists?

Brian Traynor CP



The Passionist sign is heart shaped to express the focus on love. On top of the heart is a cross, which signifies that this is the greatest sign of God’s love. Surrounding the cross are three protrusions signifying the Trinity. Inside the heart is written *Jesu* (Jesus’ name in Hebrew) *Xpi* (the beginning of the word *Christ*, in Greek,) and *Passio* the Latin for *Passion*. These represent the three main languages used in Jesus’ time and those used by Pontius Pilate in writing the sign he placed above Jesus head on the cross. Beneath these words are three nails representing those used to fix Jesus to the Cross.

The PFGM sign designed by laity in 1983 has a distinct Passionist flavour.

The cross is in the heart of our lives....



PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP MOVEMENT

Paul Traynor joins the National PFGM team

Many of you will know Paul Traynor, but some may not. Paul was born and raised in Australia. He was a Passionist for 21 years and of those a priest for 13 years. He has been involved in parish missions and youth retreats and Passionist Family Groups.

After leaving the Passionists he continued to be involved with family groups. His work has carried him into working with Young people at risk, alcohol and other drug management and advocacy. Then into teaching where he was also a lay chaplain/counsellor. Paul has qualifications in theology, philosophy, counselling and education.

He continues to work and support the Passionist Family Groups and is now an integral part of the National Team conducting formation and training opportunities, while still involving himself in opportunities to grow in his faith and personal development.

Paul is married to Clare and has two children Sam and Lucy. They reside in Greytown and are parishioners at Sacred Heart community.



Parish Banner

Does your Parish have a PFGM Banner? If not, txt Linda on 027 3546171.

Situations Vacant

We are looking for volunteers to join our Family Group Wellington and Palmerston North Diocesan Teams. Everyone knows there is no "I" in Teams. Teamwork supports you and the movement.

If you are a people person, then we need you!

For details contact Mary-Ellen Leen on 027 3336440 maryellenleen@icloud.com for Wellington and Linda Darbyshire 0273546171

paulandlinda.d@gmail.com for Palmerston North.

Pope Francis – 'Hope' our name for the future

Some time ago Pope Francis gave a TED talk in which he said:

"To Christians, the future does have a name, and its name is Hope. Feeling hopeful does not mean to be optimistically naive and ignore the human tragedy humanity is facing. Hope is the virtue of a heart that doesn't lock itself into darkness, that doesn't dwell on the past, does not simply get by on the present but is able to see a tomorrow." [ted.com/talks/pope_francis_why_the_only_future_worth_building_includes_everyone]

And: *"The future is, most of all, in the hands of those people who recognize the other as a 'you' and themselves as part of an 'us'.*

+ John Dew adds: Our question now is, "What do we do and how do we help one another move ahead in peace, unity and with kindness in our hearts? We don't judge others. We pray. We look for ways to support one another.

Gratitude

With much gratitude we look back over the past year. We give thanks for those who have supported their family group simply by turning up and being themselves, for Co-ordinators, Teams, Pastors, Priests, Bishops and PFGM Trustees for giving generously of their time and talents. For those no longer with us, who enriched our faith journey through family groups. Christmas brings family and friends together; it helps us appreciate the love in our lives we can often take for granted. May the Christ child fill your heart and home with many blessings.

Mary-Ellen & John, Paul & Linda, Paul Traynor



Christmas Giving

Giving families the Christmas experience without the cost. An opportunity for your Passionist Family Groups in December to help local Vinnies, Caritas or community initiatives or come up with an activity of your own. Sing, visit, provide goody bags, baking, or chocolates to the homebound.

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