



## To live and love like the early Christians

### A reflection from Erick – 32 year old Passionist Priest in Sydney



We know many people have found Covid an incredibly difficult time. The separation from loved ones has been painful, challenges of job loss, wearing of masks, working from home and travel restriction's has impacted on our mental wellbeing. So what might we learn from a boy who was suddenly separated from his father, escaped from his village with his mother and three siblings and began a twelve year lockdown in a refugee camp, then given the chance to immigrate to Australia?

*For me to suffer is part of life, but to suffer alone is life threatening*

*"During my refugee experience I hardly suffered alone. That is because I had mum and my siblings. Even with family, I remember how scary life was, especially when we first began refugee life.*

*We slept under a tree with no tent for the first few weeks. All that mum had at the time was four boys, the eldest being 7 years of age and the youngest 9 months. I am second eldest and I was 5. I remember the sounds of angry and dangerous animals especially hyenas, at night. We were probably in their territory. Mum would try to hug all of us, with the youngest in the middle. While we sometimes managed to sleep, mum never slept. Those animals did take people's babies, and they still sounded hungry. If they came you could shout at them and chase them away -provided you were awake.*

*I look back and imagine how mum did it alone! Over time a lot of people, especially lonely orphans, gave up on refugee life. They either went back to Burundi (my country) to fight, with a high chance of dying, or they took their own lives! Other orphans were lucky to have families. In fact, some of them lived with us at different periods.*

*I feel grateful that I have always had a family. Eventually mum became more religious which meant our family was extended. It is there that I found a godfather for instance. Life became easier, not because suffering stopped, but because suffering became experienced alone less and less. The greatest and most helpful person I was introduced to, was Jesus. No matter where I am, I can always talk to him. While family and friends are important, sometimes suffering means that I am alone. At those times, my faith in Jesus is my rock.*

### From the National Team-

\* Notes on the topic of Interconnectedness, is available on the webpage under resources 2020. Take copies to your family group to share and discuss.

[www.passionistfamily.org.nz](http://www.passionistfamily.org.nz)

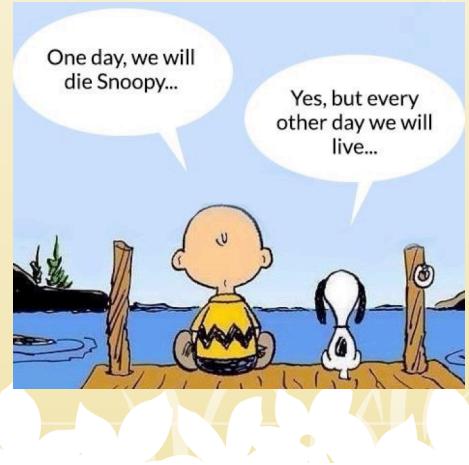
\* Paul Traynor is happy to work with a date that suits to visit regions to provide support and input. [passionistnz@gmail.com](mailto:passionistnz@gmail.com)

\* Family groups can meet staying within their regions Covid 19 recommended guidelines. Use zoom, phone trees, and buddy up with those living alone. Keep in touch.

\* Chris Monaghan CP Mass link. Chris is a Passionist Priest based in Melbourne. He lectures in Scripture, is a creative musician, photographer and writer. Chris is providing an online Mass each week and always has a good down to earth practical message. Join him on: [Vimeo.com](https://vimeo.com)

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## PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP MOVEMENT

The pandemic has certainly introduced some unusual ways of sufferings into our lives. We never thought we would be locked up without having done anything wrong. We are not able to see our loved ones, or even when we see them, we can't hug them.

The bright part for me is that I have technology. I can call mum and others in the family on a video and talk. I am challenged to have to talk about what is going on in me that is not good. I know that if I don't express it in one way or another, I am suffering alone and that is life threatening.

For me to suffer is part of life, but to suffer alone is life threatening.

St Paul of the Cross, saw that it was important to have companions. He did not want to establish a Congregation without companions. So my question to you is:

- Do you have family or close friends you can call companions?
- How much suffering has Covid19 or (other reasons) introduced into your life so far? Think of some examples.
- Have you been able to share suffering with your companions even if it means not being physically present with them? If not, what are you planning to do in order to deal with your suffering?

Since I have shared with you, I am happy for you to send me some of your thoughts about suffering this week, to [erick@passionists.com](mailto:erick@passionists.com) I would love to learn from your experience".

With Peace, Erick Niyiragira CP

### Commissioning

On Saturday evening the 8th of August Kaye-Maree Corkill was commissioned as the new Parish Coordinator for the Cathedral Parish in Wellington. Fr David Dowling prayed the commissioning prayer while Debbie Matheson (Lay Pastoral Leader) presented Kaye-Maree with the candle signifying her role in Passionist Family Group Ministry.



Fr David spoke about the enjoyment he gets from attending the group gatherings and how it has helped him to get to know Parishioners and recommended it to others. Thanks for the plug David!

We also wish to extend our thanks to Linda and Nicholas Burley for their tenure as Parish Coordinators and wish them well for the future.

### Thank you ...

To the following who have given generously of their time and gifts in roles serving the movement ...

Graeme and Carmin Conjin  
*(Tawa)*

Roger and Andrea Havell  
*(Wellington South)*

Nicholas and Linda Burley  
*(Cathedral Wellington)*

Brendon and Yvonne Wilson  
*(Nelson)*

Valda and Gavin Matthews  
*(Napier)*

### Welcome:

To those who recently have accepted roles serving the movement.

Kay-Maree Corkill  
*(Cathedral Wellington)*  
Sharon and Ian Husband  
*(Napier)*

The National Team met in New Plymouth recently. It was great to physically be with each other again.

We pray you are well and enjoying the freedom to be with others again too.

Speak gently...  
Love much...  
Give freely...

[passionistnz@gmail.com](mailto:passionistnz@gmail.com)

