

PFGM: Teams (2019)

The future of the PFGM depends on our ability to create effective teams sharing leadership responsibilities at every level (National, Diocesan, Regional, Parish, Individual Family Group).

For many years, the PFGM has operated in three main areas: Australia, New Zealand and England. PFG's have been established also in Ireland, Wales and USA. While these countries retain a connection with the Movement in Australia, Australia and New Zealand are the concern and responsibility of the Holy Spirit Province of the Passionists.

Australian structure

Fr Peter McGrath CP was the founder and Coordinating Director of the PFGM. Barbara Lunnon was his secretary. They had their home base and office in Sydney. The Movement expanded to most capital cities before or during 1985 and eventually there were State Directors throughout Australia for Queensland, NSW, Canberra-Goulburn, South Australia and Victoria-Tasmania. Originally all of the Directors were Passionist priests. Gradually the Director role was taken on by laity who met annually with the NZ Directors for support and planning

Various regions within and outside of the capital cities had Coordinators looking after a group or cluster of parishes. Regional Coordinators were encouraged to meet together regularly. This was of great assistance to the Directors.

New Zealand

The PFG was established in New Zealand in 1988 and by 1991 Rob and Lynn Hill began to exercise the role of National Directors, which they continued to do for 25 years. During the final ten years local diocesan directors were appointed and Lynn and Rob focused on providing active support for these five diocesan Director couples throughout NZ. Because the PFGM in New Zealand is charitable trust, Lynn and Rob also took on the financial and administrative duties this required allowing the local Directors to focus on the pastoral aspect of their role.

With Lynn and Rob's retirement in 2017, two couples, Linda and Paul Darbyshire and Mary-Ellen and John Leen, took on the role of National Directors and agreed to work as a team.

At the same time a contracted accountant took over the full financial responsibilities of the Movement.

During the annual meeting in April 2019 it was decided to cease using the title 'Directors' and instead refer either to the National Coordinating Team (NCT) or the Diocesan Coordinating Team (DCT). This reflects the reality that there are teams operating at this level of the Movement and that as the Movement has matured the emphasis today is on coordinating rather than directing.

Australia and New Zealand became separated in their administration but linked through the annual Director meetings. In 2003, the term coordinator was introduced throughout New Zealand in response to a general dislike of the term 'leader' and to encourage a mentality of working with others.

There was also an ongoing effort to ensure the demands of various roles were manageable so that teams were preferred to single couples and terms for leadership were introduced throughout NZ for all roles. This was later endorsed and became common in some parts of Australia for most roles.

Over the years there has been strong emphasis in New Zealand on the regional teams supporting and guiding parish coordinators. While this has also been the aim in Australia it has been strongest in Victoria.

Also in New Zealand there has been a gradual working towards reducing the role of individual Diocesan Director couples and instead developing a team involving Regional Coordinators. Teamwork at every level has been recognised as a priority.

Since 1988 there has been a weekend and in latter years a day or half-day's formation programme in every region or diocese. This has been conducted by a professed or formerly professed Passionist. Brian Traynor has served as a member of the Directing team since 1988.

Changing structure in Australia

With the decline in Peter McGrath's health since 2015 and his passing in March 2018, the structure of the Movement in Australia needed to change. What became obvious is that the load had to be shared and support and encouragement is needed. Hence the need for teams!

The Provincial of the Passionists appointed an interim team of four members in June 2017 with Brian Traynor CP as advisor. Dennis Morris from Canberra was appointed Coordinator of the team. One of the original team members resigned as the result of having other commitments.

Victoria has developed a strong support structure based around a team approach that includes clusters of parish coordinators who gather for support. It was important that a member of that team served on the NCT and better that it was a couple, rather than one individual.

National Coordinating Team (NCT)

In 2017 the Provincial appointed an Australian National Coordinating Team (NCT) of three couples and a professed Passionist as advisor, ensuring the members could provide good support for one another and the team. The three couples are Gwen and Russell Winterscheidt from Brisbane, Frances and Michael Sullivan from Melbourne and Mary and Dennis Morris from Canberra. Dennis Morris is Coordinator of the NCT.

They are in the process of creating three teams: Northern (Queensland and Northern NSW), Central (Sydney, NSW, Canberra and Adelaide) and an extension to the already existing team of Melbourne, Victoria and Tasmania.

The NCT began their task by auditing the PFGM throughout Australia. They learned that some areas and many parishes have been neglected or have lost contact with a representative of the Movement.. Some regions have no Coordinators; some parishes have no Coordinators and some groups have no leaders. Reconnecting with previous leaders has provided some renewed enthusiasm.

There are common experiences about the difficulty of finding people for leadership roles and the general ageing of membership, but without workers (leaders) the task will be impossible at every level.

Auckland diocese

The PFGM began in East Coast Bays parish on July 2nd, 1988. 16 parishes had been established with PFG's within five years and reached their highpoint with 20 parishes with 150 groups by the time the tenth anniversary was celebrated. With amalgamations, withdrawals and relaunches there are currently 7 parishes involved. Following John and Rosie Crawford's retirement as Directors for Auckland in 2018, a new team has been appointed in 2019. It is comprised of Colin and Lindsay Brand, Penny Hudson and Libbie Giddey.

Hamilton diocese

The Movement began in Hamilton diocese in Paeroa parish in June 1988. 19 parishes in the Hamilton diocese have been involved in the PFGM since then.

In 1998 there were 12 parishes, (Taumarunui had already withdrawn in 1995). A further 6 parishes have started since 1998, and with amalgamations, withdrawals and relaunches there are currently 9 parishes representing a total of 31 groups.

The Hamilton Diocese is coordinated by a team of three couples. Frances and Clive Bleaken (Team Coordinators). Wilma and Don Schimanski in the Waikato area and Ellen and Paul Gavin in the Bay of Plenty region.

The reduction in the number of groups is due to a number of factors including

- The ageing of members involving death, transfer to nursing homes etc
- The movement of people out of a parish to another area
- The lack of available leadership
- A decision taken by a parish priest

Palmerston North diocese

The movement began in the Palmerston North Region when Whanganui joined in October 1988. 27 parishes within the diocese have been involved in the PFGM since then, including 2 Baptist, 1 Anglican and 1 Presbyterian parish.

In 1998 there were 23 Parishes (162 groups) West Baptist NP and Waitara had withdrawn by then. A further 2 parishes have joined since 1998 and with amalgamations, withdrawals and relaunches there are currently 10 Parishes representing a total of 38 groups.

The Palmerston North Diocese is coordinated by a Diocesan team: Paul and Linda Darbyshire (Team and National Coordinators) with Jenny Poskitt and Stuart Doidge in Palmerston North and Norma Bellamy in the Hawkes Bay region. Both Palmerston Nth and Hawkes Bay need more team members.

Wellington Archdiocese

PFG's began in the Wellington diocese in 1998.

18 parishes have been involved in the diocese since then.

In 1998 there were 18 parishes with 169 groups

In 2008 there were 14 parishes with 109 groups

With amalgamations, withdrawals and relaunches there are currently 18 parishes representing a total of 83 groups.

The reduction in the number of groups is due to a number of factors:

- The ageing of members involving death, transfer to nursing homes etc
- The movement of people out of a parish to another area
- The lack of available leadership

- Amalgamation – lack of communication
- A lack of support by parish priest

PFG's are coordinated in the diocese by a team of three couples John and Mary Ellen Leen (Team and National Coordinators); Terry and Heather O'Brien, Kevin and Jocelyn Bryant.

Christchurch diocese

The Movement began in the Christchurch Diocese in 1992. By 1998 there were 19 parishes with 159 groups. From 2000 on the number of groups in parishes started to decline. Groups in some parishes were amalgamated or folded.

From 2002 a further 8 parishes started PFG's. Out of those 8 parishes only 4 remain active. West Coast-Hokitika started in 2015 and had two great years, then parish numbers declined below 100 people and they withdrew from the Movement in 2018. Presently there are 9 parishes with a total of 38 groups.

The Christchurch Diocese has been coordinated by Directors Murray and Aileen Straight and in the past year regionally supported by Pamela and Bob Arthurs, Joanna and Kelvin McGirr.

From April 2019, Pamela and Bob, Jo and Kelvin have formed a diocesan coordinating team and are looking for another couple to help them.

Dunedin Diocese

19/09/1993 St Bernadette's Forbury Parish were the first parish to launch PFG's in the Dunedin Diocese. By 1998 there were 13 parishes with a total of 82 groups. From 1999-2018 several parishes withdrew from the movement.

In 2019 there are 3 Parishes with a total of 12 groups – 2 parishes in Dunedin and 1 in Invercargill, Jan and Colin McLeod are the contact for Dunedin. Dot Wilson and Neill Rumble are the contact for Invercargill. Murray and Aileen Street will continue to assist these couples.

Formation in Australia

In many regions, formation days ceased many years ago. This means there have been few opportunities to reflect on the inspiration or state of 'health' of PFG's in various regions. The reality is that the situation is critical. The NCT is hoping that the aims and goals of the PFGM can continue to inspire people to belong and that some members will be willing to facilitate this.

We do want to call on people – to invite them into shared leadership for an initial term, but we do not want role to be a burden. Working in teams is one strategy to avoid the role becoming a burden. Teams can make the task enjoyable because of the fellowship involved. At the same time it must be seen as a ministry and a response to a need.

Formation in New Zealand

Formation days have not ceased in Aotearoa since we began in 1988. For many years we conducted full weekends for group coordinators and a separate full weekend for parish coordinators. Almost every second year we held a Regional Coordinators weekend and every year we held a weekend for Directors. This was a huge commitment for many people, since some were also regularly involved in the setting up of PFG's in new parishes.

Gradually we reduced and then ceased the parish coordinator weekends and instead encouraged their own get togethers two or three times a year. We reduced the regularity of Regional Coordinator weekends and eventually they became overnight or single day gatherings.

As people became more 'time poor' and began to age, many found the accommodation at our venues uncomfortable. Formation days replaced weekends and this enabled some regions to have separate days in separate locations. Although there have been a variety of alternatives, in recent years these days have been either 9.30am-1.00pm sessions followed by lunch or extending until 4.00pm. Increasingly, formation days are approximately four hour sessions, either in the morning or starting in the afternoon.

Although the numbers who attend are relatively low in some areas, these days are important for the inspiration and encouragement of those who choose to attend. Whereas once the focus was once on skills and leadership, now it is more on spirituality and topics related to the aims and goals of PFG's.

Power Point presentations and handouts are provided for those who attend formation days and it has always been hoped that the material would be passed on to others who did not attend. (See summary from Page 6)

How can we invite people into team membership?

The starting point is to understand and appreciate teamwork. We don't have to have a universal idea of teams, but we have to have a commitment

to its value. Teams offer support, enjoyment and extra perspective to a task. After September 11th, 2001, the CIA commissioned a study to establish the effectiveness of analyst teams. The number one value was not individual gifts or coaching, but interactions of members within the teams!

It is helpful to recall that Jesus “*appointed 72 others who went before him visiting the towns where he himself was to visit*”. Jesus gave these missionaries clear instructions and he delegated authority to them. He sent them out in pairs – not to work alone.

There are some questions we can ask and share.

- What can we learn from Jesus’ strategy?
- What possibilities do you see for teamwork at the different levels?
 - The diocese?
 - Local parishes
 - Individual PFG’s
- What are the main challenges or obstacles to creating PFGM teams?
- What would be the best strategies for beginning to create teams?
- Is there enthusiasm for it or do we let the Movement die in some parishes and regions?

Brian Traynor CP

Below are listed the topics for the PFGM formation days held in New Zealand since 1989. Many of the handouts are extensive and are posted on the NZ PFGM website ‘Resources’ section.

NZ PFGM Formation since 1989

1989

Dealing with Conflict

Grief

Wounded Ministry

Jean Vanier: Community is appreciating difference

Burnout

Stages of Group Growth

1990

Group Sharing (What our group has been doing)
Passionist Spirituality & FG's
What Loving Neighbour Means
Jesus of Nazareth: Who is he?
Packy Rowe: God of the Ordinary

1991

Opening ourselves to others
The Paralytic Man and his community of friends
'Right Here Right Now' Being Jesus today
Christian Friendship: 'Only the heart sees rightly'
Spirituality for the Ordinary Person

1992

Creative Listening / Communication
Conflict / Confrontation
Listening / Attending at leader meetings

1993

How do you find Jesus in Belonging to the Church
Family Groups and St Paul's Communities. What they Share
Faith and Community: How to Live it: How to Make it Happen

1994

Effective Learning
Stages of Development in a Group
Giving Effective Feed Back
How to Involve People in a Group
What if this Happened in your Group?
Problem Solving
Group Size for Various Tasks
Jesus as a Leader

1995:

Auckland Convention (Multiple workshops)
John Cooney
Spirituality of FGs and Why Passionist
How Healthy Families Deal with Crisis

1996

Getting in touch with Prejudice
Proactive/ Reactive
Open & Closed Systems
PFG Vision
Ministry...what we learn from Jesus

1997

The Vision of Jesus
(4 gospel portraits; religious culture of the time; Jesus & discipleship)
The Emerging Church
(International, diocesan, parish; BECs, the parish of the future)
The PFGM Story (history & Now)
What is happening in your PFG?
Comfort or Mission. Finding the right balance

1998

Telling Our Story
What makes a good PFG?
Story telling...how to tell a story
Sharing Stories about our PFG
Gospel Story...sharing the significance

1999

Pauline Communities...the early Church, and us today
(Each parish took on a Pauline community)

2000

Current PFG issues and challenges
Open Space sharing of these issues
4 personality types (Driver, Analytical, Expressive, Harmonious)

2001

Leadership reflections and learning
How groups and organisations 'work'
Chaos Theory

2002

Why a Passionist Movement?
Overview of Passionist spirituality
Solitude
Sorrow & Suffering (the Passion)
The Living Memory

2003

Explaining a PFG
The PFG aims & the early Christians (Acts)
Community: the love of difference
God (as community), the Family & PFG's

2004 (Basin and Towel)

What has happened to spirituality?
Spirituality in PFG's
God in the ordinary

2004 (Parish Coordinators weekend)

What is the parish coordinator role?
Group dynamics
Conducting a meeting
Issues and concerns
Jesus our faith centre

2005 (The Potter)

What I bring to leadership and what I need?
What makes leadership difficult?
Relationships
Shaping a PFG

2006 (The Silver box)

Family
Generation X & Y
The Church today (parish clustering challenges)
Sport and the church – what we can learn

2007 (The red paperclip)

5,000 people....community
Jesus' vision
What is a PFG?
Paul and PFG's

2008

Music and the heart – bringing joy to PFG's

PFG's as a sign of hope

Learning from science

- Bringing people into the web
- Leaders are weavers
- How can we respond to climate change?

2009

Paul's churches

Comparison of what Paul did and PFG's

Paul's communities * our parish PFG's

2010

What's right with the world!

What's right with our PFG and celebrating this

How was Jesus a good leader?

Exercising leadership well

2011

Developing relationships with the whole earth community

Our changing worldview

Why our worldview is different

The task of our times

2012

Why the Passionist in 'PFG'?

Appreciating culture

How to involve people

Promoting PFG's

Grief and Loss

2013

Who am I? Understanding ourselves

Sharing and learning about our PFG ministry

How do we 'do' ministry? (Learning from Jesus)

2014

Hospitality & PFG's

Pope Francis pastoral emphasis

Evangelizing & PFG's

2015

A History of God

The challenges faith faces today

Thomas Berry & The Christian Future

2016

Times have changed: Some challenges of today's world

The changing New Zealand church

The Church in these times

Finding Contemplative Moments

2017

Modern Marriage

Ageing

Conscience and Amoris Laetitia

2018

Community and PFG's

What's happening in your PFG?

Understanding Grief and Bereavement

2019

Belonging

Teams