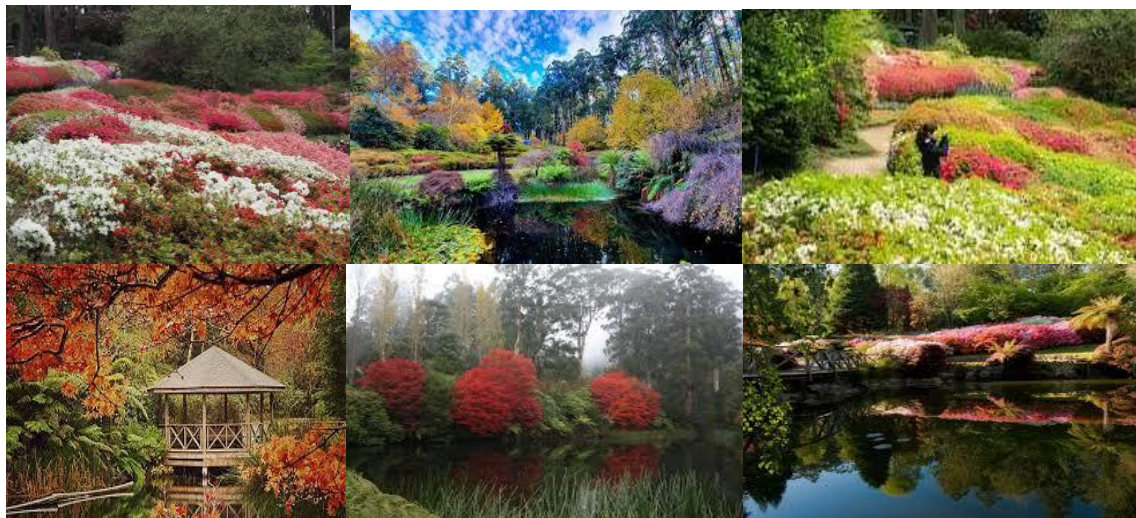




It is Spring



Last week, one of my sisters, Anne-Marie, two bothers (Paul and Peter) and myself spent some time in the botanical gardens in the Dandenong Ranges. It was a very windy day and the roar as the wind ripped through the high trees was incredible. Even though Spring had not begun officially, the rhododendrons are already spectacular. There are over 800 species world wide and 550 of them are in those gardens. When the azaleas come out, the gardens are even more beautiful – see below.



Coffee Cart

The Coffee Cart was great last Sunday, with a lot of people staying for a coffee and a chat. Thanks again to our generous donor.

Coffee Cart photos





Father's Day

This Sunday is Father's Day. We wish everyone who is a father, will experience the appreciation of their family for the role-model they are, for the love they give selflessly, for their faithfulness and for the time they give to their children. This prayer was composed by Michele Frankeni editor of 'Australian Catholics'

God our Father, we give thanks and praise for fathers, young and old.

We pray for young fathers who are newly embracing their role.

May they find courage and perseverance to balance work, family and faith in joy and sacrifice.

We pray for fathers around the world whose children are lost and suffering.

May they know God of compassion walks with them in their sorrow.

We pray for men who are not fathers

but who still mentor and guide us with fatherly advice.

We remember fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers

who are no longer with us, but who continue to live in our memory, having nourished us with their love.

Come Away Day (Wednesday 10th September, 2025)



The 'Come Away' days are held at Holy Cross Retreat, 207 Serpells, Road, Templestowe. The theme for our next day is '**Awakening to the New**'.

The day begins with a "cuppa" at 9.30am and the formal part starts at 10.00am. The day's programme provides opportunities for some input, prayer, group interaction and silent reflection in the beautiful grounds of Holy Cross. All are welcome. Just come as you are. BYO Lunch. Tea & coffee provided. You are invited to contribute \$30, or a donation according to your means. The day will end with the Eucharist and departure at 2.30pm. It is helpful to know the expected numbers so that we can have handouts ready, so please email Sr Brigid on bridget.m64@gmail.com

Carpet and Fire

This week we completed the steam cleaning of much of the carpet in the Centre and the community. In a few weeks' time it will be the widows that get a good clean, and in the third week of this month our Fire detection network needs upgrading, including the replacement of 46 detectors. This all part of having such a large building and the regular maintenance that is required. We have had a few false fire alarms and reached the limit whereby the cost of these events is waived.

Tap and Go Machines

At Mass last Sunday, Tim Horlock addressed issue of a Tap and Go machine for use at Holy Cross. This is what Tim said.



"A number of people have raised the issue at times this year about having a Tap and Go machine here at Holy Cross so that people can contribute on a Sunday. When this issue was first raised with Fr. Brian he replied with a very emphatic NO – it won't happen and will never happen. His reasoning was that the community did not want to be seen as asking for money, and that is the reason that there is no collection taken up - just a box where people can contribute if they wish, and if they choose not to, that is fine also.

With the recent fundraising event we purchased some machines so that people could pay for their event tickets, raffle tickets and auction items on the night, and the possibility of using those machines was raised again. When the idea of using them was raised with Brian again, his initial response was again No but after a robust discussion with a couple of people who pointed out the need for each Passionist community to find ways of generating income, he agreed to consult the professed community who reflected Brian's hesitation but agreed that it be considered and the Mass attenders be asked their opinion.



We live in a time when more and more people do not carry cash, and some people have expressed that they can't contribute on a Sunday for that reason. So we want to put it to you, the worshipping community, to see what you think. If the majority of people think it is a bad idea, then we will not proceed. The Coffee Cart is being held today so perhaps during that you might let Fr. Brian, Fr. Erick, John Hogan who is on the Passionist Finance Board and who recently audited our fundraising event, or myself know what you think.

There will still be the opportunity for people to use cash if they prefer, but it will just provide another option for those who wish to use them. Thank you!"

Each of us (Erick, Chris, John, Tim and myself) found an overwhelmingly positive agreement that a Tap and Go be introduced. The few with reservations only wanted assurance that they could still use the current method, which we affirmed will be the case. Some investigations will take place now as to the final details, and we will advise of those considerations. There is no rush!

PFG weekend...Nurturing

In last week's newsletter there was a summary of Paul Casey's reflections on **nurturing**. This is term we proposed best sums up the responsibility for all those involved with, supporting or guiding the Passionist Family Group Movement at this present time. The gift of nurturing is one we appreciate as givers or receivers. For those in pastoral or leadership roles, and for any of us who seek to animate or contribute to our Family Group or local community (e.g. Holy Cross), the reflection below that I shared last weekend, as well as Paul Casey's thoughts, may be helpful.

Nurturing the relationships we have: PFGM in 2025

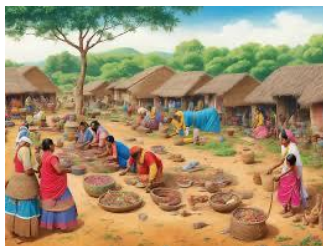


There are people in Terrey Hills parish, Sydney who have lived Passionist Family Group life for 50 years. Some of those members were young parents at the beginning, and many are now in their 80's. Life has changed so much in that time, and so have PFG's. Back thirty or forty years ago, nearly every group included our ideal 'grandparent to baby' dynamic. That is no longer the case.

Let's go back a little further. 74,000 years ago the Mt Toba eruption in Indonesia, resulted in as few as 3,000-10,000 humans surviving across the entire planet. The human family had to slowly re-establish and some estimates are that 40,000 years ago there were between one and six million humans. We know too that 42,000 years ago, there was a reversal and weakening of Earth's magnetic poles.

Why mention this? Australian social psychologist, Hugh McKay claims that the unique characteristic humans have for survival, was proven back at the time of the Laschamp event. The ozone layer was destroyed leading to increased cosmic radiation, ultraviolet light and violent weather patterns. It seems many species went extinct during this period which lasted six hundred years, and some humans found protection and safety in caves.

A group of archaeologists has suggested that it was because humans formed into mutually supportive communities, and adapted to life in caves, that they were able to survive this incredible event.



McKay claims humans are dependent on communities - families, neighbourhoods and friendship circles, to nurture us, sustain us and provide us with belonging.

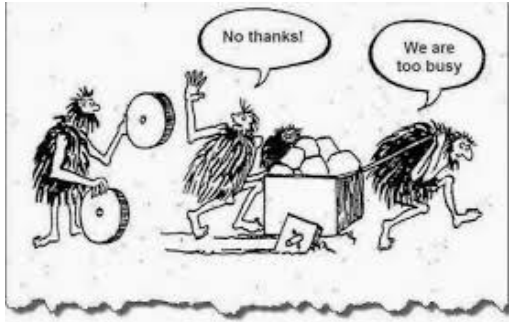
McKay likes to use the term **kindness** because it is the only form of human love that does not depend on affection. It is a response to a need, and it draws on our compassion – the quality that stands out most in Jesus’ life. Jesus chose to mix and meet with outcasts and invited them to share his table. His idea of solidarity included Samaritans and Roman soldiers. He healed the blind, the deaf, the crippled, the prostitutes and lepers. His fellowship included everyone – a family for all!



The closest word we have in English to the gospel description of Jesus’ action, is **compassion**. It is a feeling that wells up within us; it enables us to see others as sisters and brothers. Jesus’ vision was that people would live in true fellowship with all people, because each of us a child of God. St Paul would later write, “There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free person, male or female. You are all one in Jesus Christ(Gal 3:28)

If we are drawn together naturally because of our human story, and if we are called together because of our Christian identity, how is it that the number one health issue in Australia is social isolation? Instead of being closely interconnected, we are becoming increasingly fragmented and polarised, concerned about our independence and our differences. Recently the parents of one of our Vietnamese men visited Melbourne. They were amazed that they saw so few people on footpaths. Aided by high fences, this results in few interactions with neighbours.

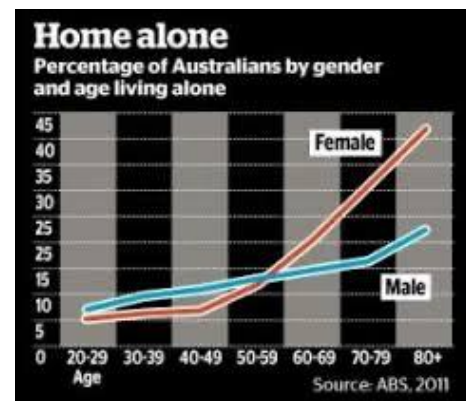




Everyone is busy! This is the enemy of social cohesion. People are connected through technology (e.g. social media) but that has led to a decline in community engagement and social isolation along with much behaviour associated with COVID-19. Many people go out less than they did, and they do not invite people to their home as frequently as they did. This is

even truer of older people who have less energy and who feel 'safe' at home. This is like the saying that ships are safe in a harbour, but that is not what ships are made for!

More people are working from home now, which has many benefits, but it leads to people being physically isolated. People are connected but lonely! Despite having so many modern comforts, 32% percent of Australian adults report feeling lonely.



Relationships is what people need yet, 25% of Australians over 50 live alone, and 25% of Kiwis over 60 live alone. Interestingly in the decade 50-59 only 10% of Kiwis live alone. 60% of homes in Australia have only one or two persons, 48% in NZ and only 12% in the Philippines. In Australia, 40% of women aged over 75 live alone, compared to 22% of men.



The practice of people meeting for a cuppa is changing. Estimates suggest that 1.3 million cups of coffee are consumed every day in Australia and 75% of cups of coffee sold, are drunk on site. At the same time, 65% of Australians own a coffee machine at home, and this is increasing at a high rate.

Pod coffee machines are the most popular (48%) but people are upgrading all the time to 'something better'. From a PFG point of view it would be encouraging to know that people are inviting people home to have a 'nice cup of coffee', but is that happening? If people retreat to their homes to have coffee alone, we will have lost a very valuable opportunity for small groups or individuals to get together. Social change has been dramatic and rapid these past twenty years.

Facebook went public in late 2006. The first iPhone appeared in June 2007. Increasingly, personal and public service encounters are disappearing, replaced by mechanisation. Trying to speak with a person about a transaction is impossible in some businesses. COVID-19 clearly affected many older people's confidence in socialising. These issues have increased loneliness.



Our social reality is reflected in local Catholic parishes in Australia and to a slightly lesser extent in New Zealand. Catholic parishes have changed dramatically over the past twenty years. The sexual abuse scandal has driven many people away, and in many parishes there are very few young families. Some parishes have closed and many others have amalgamated. This has caused a loss of personal relationships.



Hugh McKay says, "If we dare to dream of a better world, a better society – a better neighbourhood – a place where people are kinder, more compassionate, more tolerant, more inclusive, more respectful, less cynical, less violent, then there's only one way to make it happen. If enough of us live that way, it will become that way". I suggest our involvement with Passionist Family Groups is proof that we do dream of this. In her song 'Hands', Jewell sang, "In the end, only kindness matters." Maybe we should pay attention to that!

This change in dynamics has seen the demise of 'grandparent to baby' in PFG's. With so few children involved, the age profile of PFG's has increased significantly. The make-up of parishioners in both city and rural parishes is increasingly Asian, and in particular, Filipino and Indian. There are some parishes that have a high population of Vietnamese. Unfortunately, the majority of these parishioners are not attracted to PFG's, preferring mostly to mix with their own culture. We have never been successful in attracting many of these populations to PFG's, despite the value it would to them and to the parish.



The group that is increasingly dominant are those who are 60 years and older. Among these are couples and individuals who have belonged to a PFG for many years. In their younger days, these PFG members enjoyed many outdoor get-togethers and pot-luck evening dinners. Sky-diving is not as popular now! Sadly, neither are evening outings as attractive now.

The flexible relational structure that saw parish and group co-ordinators (leaders) take responsibility to animate local groups is no longer strong in many parishes with PFG's. Some no longer want that particular responsibility and that has to be respected. The various communication channels or chains that existed and were promoted enabled members to keep in touch, celebrate milestones, know something of each other's needs and enjoy the fellowship of a true family. Strangers had become friends and friends had become family.

Members had phone numbers and addresses posted on a kitchen wall. Chains of communication are now largely inactive. It is almost a contradiction in terms, to be in a Family Group and to be lonely, but the enthusiasm and effort that was once

obvious, is often missing. This is not the time to give up! The need is obvious. The opportunities are in front of us. The gospel calls us and we already have the relationships. Any relationship can deteriorate or break down. 40% of first marriages in Australia will break down and 60% of second marriages. What promised so much does not always eventuate. So it is with a PFG where motivation and effort are required.



This is not the place to offer a major diagnosis of the Church, but it is obvious that an influx of foreign clergy and an increasing percentage of parishioners from different cultures, has affected parish life in some areas. When a diocesan or local parish strategy gives insufficient priority to belonging to a community, a Movement such as the PFGM, will be affected.

Obviously too, Church language does not speak to modern society, sometimes because the Church is counter-cultural, but sometimes too because the Church struggles to be relevant in governance, liturgy and in its lack of community building.

The PFGM is not dynamic in the way it was thirty years ago, but PFG's still promise



as much and can be just as enriching and beneficial as they ever were. Some of the support structures are more difficult to manage and provide, but the nurturing of relationships is every member's opportunity and responsibility. There is nowhere in the gospel, a record of Jesus saying "Love one another unless you are old". We can expect he would have said, "Love one another, especially when you are old". Knowing he would not be alive to care

for his mother, he entrusted her to a new family, to his disciple, John.

We want to use the word 'nurture' to describe what might be our best understanding of what is needed. This does not mean we should neglect the missionary aspect of PFG life, but speaking to the few (who attend Church) rather than the many who might be attracted to PFG's is increasingly challenging.



This is more so the case, because of the endless safeguarding and risk management issues that can make natural community belonging, too structured.



Some, including Peter McGrath hoped that schools would be an avenue for a new wave of PFG membership, but school management is separated now from local parishes, and compliance demands suggest that this work, if it were possible, would have to be taken up by a younger generation. We would hope as every senior generation

does, that there is PFG life beyond us, and while remaining open to this possibility, our priority at this time is to care for and to nurture what we have.



Nurturing involves providing care, support, and encouragement to foster growth and development. Nurturing fosters kindness. We know that acts of kindness can boost happiness, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being for both the giver and the receiver. Social connections are vital for well-being at any age, but older adults are more vulnerable to loneliness and isolation due to factors

like retirement, loss of a partner or other loved ones, reduced mobility, poor health etc. Nurturing relationships involves creating opportunities for social interaction which improves quality of life.

An attitude and practice of nurturing can help older adults maintain a sense of purpose and meaning, which can protect them from depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline.



On July 13th this year, Pope Leo shared, "Imitating the example of Jesus, the Saviour of the world, we too are called to bring consolation and hope, above all to those who are experiencing discouragement and disappointment" We used to know what to do, and parish or group leaders offered prompts and arranged

get togethers. In advanced years this can be done naturally and informally, but get togethers will not happen without some effort and some organisation. We need to alert one another to the challenges of our times and we need to make an effort to reduce isolation and loneliness. This is an easy starting point for our Passionist Family Groups to consider. How can we be better nurturers?



Speed camera

A camera has been placed just past Holy Cross near Bali Hai Drive, and a sign underneath recommending a speed of 35kph before the road turns into Tuckers Road. Peter Norman made enquiries and has advised that the camera has been placed there by the State Government Department of Transport, to gather data re vehicle movements around schools. It seems not to be a speed camera but, the 40kph limit still applies.

Homily Humour

1. James prayed: "Lord how long is a million years to you?" He heard God reply, "It is only a second". Jamie prayed again, "Lord, how much is a million dollars to you?" He heard God reply, "It is but a dollar to me". Jamie prayed again, "Lord can I have a dollar?" He heard God say, "Just give me a second".

2. Advice offered a homilist. 'If after ten minutes you have not struck gold, stop boring'.

3. More advice: A homily should have a good opening, a good ending, and they should be as close together as possible"

4. A preacher who was renowned for his long and boring sermons, announced one Sunday that he was to be transferred and that it was Jesus' wish that he leave that same week. The choir rose and began to sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus".

5. Q. What does it usually mean when the homilist takes off his watch and puts it in the lectern? A. Nothing!

6. A priest started his homily by saying, "I am wearing this band-aid because I cut my chin while I was thinking about today's homily". An old man at the back was heard to say, "Hopefully next week he will think about his chin and cut the homily"

7. A priest was in the habit of reading every word of his long and tedious sermons. One member of the Congregation went to the lectern and removed one page at random from his written notes. Half way through the sermon, the priest read, "And Adam said to Eve..". He paused and said, "And Adam said to Eve....there seems to be a leaf missing"!

8. A newly deacon officiated at his first wedding. His supervisor had advised him, if at any point he forgot his words to quote something from scripture .The deacon forgot the blessing and panicked as he said, Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do".

9.

9. The preacher recounted the story of Adam and Eve

God - Adam, did you eat of the forbidden fruit that I commanded you not to eat?

Adam - Lord, Yes I did but it was the woman told me to eat it, it's her fault!

God - Eve, did you eat of the forbidden fruit?

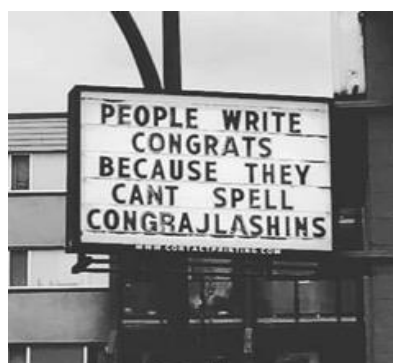
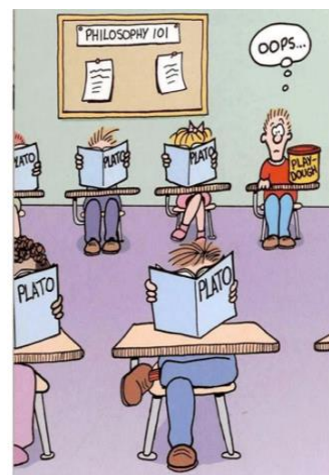
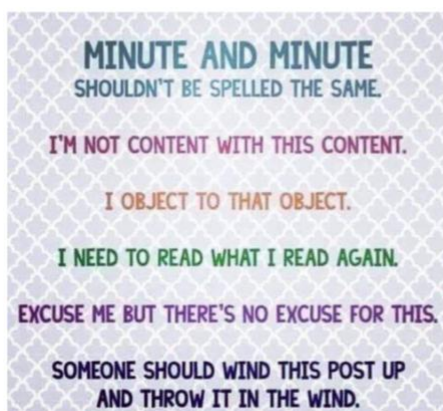
Eve - Yes Lord but the snake tricked me, convincing me that it was good

Lastly it was the snakes turn to confess, but he didn't have a leg to stand on!

10. A parish priest commissioned some changes to the parish church – new chairs, new altar, new presidents chair, new lectern, He went away on sabbatical and asked that the work be completed if possible, before her returned.

When he returned he met with the Joe, the architect, he was amazed that the church was empty except for the lectern! He was about to express his anger when Joe pushed a button and seating rose from the floor. Joe said, you don't have to have all the seats come up. If there are only 40 people present, push '40' and forty chairs will come up and all move to the front. "Brilliant said the priest. But what about the altar and chair? They work the same way. When they are needed, just push the button and they will come up. When they are not needed they disappear into the floor.

The priest was delighted to show the parishioners the new church, and when he had been preaching for ten minutes, the lectern disappeared into the floor!



**MY WIFE ASKED ME WHY I
SPOKE SO SOFTLY IN THE
HOUSE.
I SAID I WAS AFRAID
MARK ZUCKERBERG WAS
LISTENING!
SHE LAUGHED.
I LAUGHED.
ALEXA LAUGHED.
SIRI LAUGHED.**

**95% of electric
vehicles are still on
the road.
The remaining 5%
made it all the way
home.**



Prayers

We remember those who have died and especially those whose anniversaries occur at this time, especially [Brian Gleeson CP](#), [Joan O'Donnell](#), [Ray Zammit](#), [Frank Trimboli](#) and [Felicita Lupini Baggio & Angelo Baggio](#). We pray they have found joy in God's eternal presence.



We pray for members of our Holy Cross family who are coping with illness and all who care for them, especially

[Anne Woon](#), [Gerry Bond Pam Storey](#), [Noel Smyth](#), [Fergus Ryan](#), [Kate Lenic](#), [Maria Giantomasso](#), [Nello Campomizzi](#), [Denise Egan](#), [Lesley Yang](#), [Peter Addicoat](#), [Greg Agosta](#), [Dr Peter Heffernan](#), [Nancy Reynolds](#), [Caroline Meade](#), [Phil Drew](#), [Marilyn Cilmi](#), [Caroline Hagedorn](#), [Rex Cambry](#), [Jeanelle Bergin](#), [Peter Barry](#), [Maureen Barns](#), [Peter & Bernadette Owen](#), [Fr Brendan Lane](#), [Alexander Lim](#), [Carol Battistella](#), [Graham Burke](#), [Luke Norden](#), [Zoe & Sophia Chung](#), [Pam Gartland](#), [Anne Burke](#), [Doris Castro](#), [Rod Gorfine](#), [Patricia Keeghan](#), [Julia Cantone](#), [Helen McLean](#), [Bro Jerome](#), [Anne Jenkins](#) and [Errol Lovett](#).

Mass on line

Chris will send the link for Sunday Mass, on Saturday afternoon.

God bless,

Brian