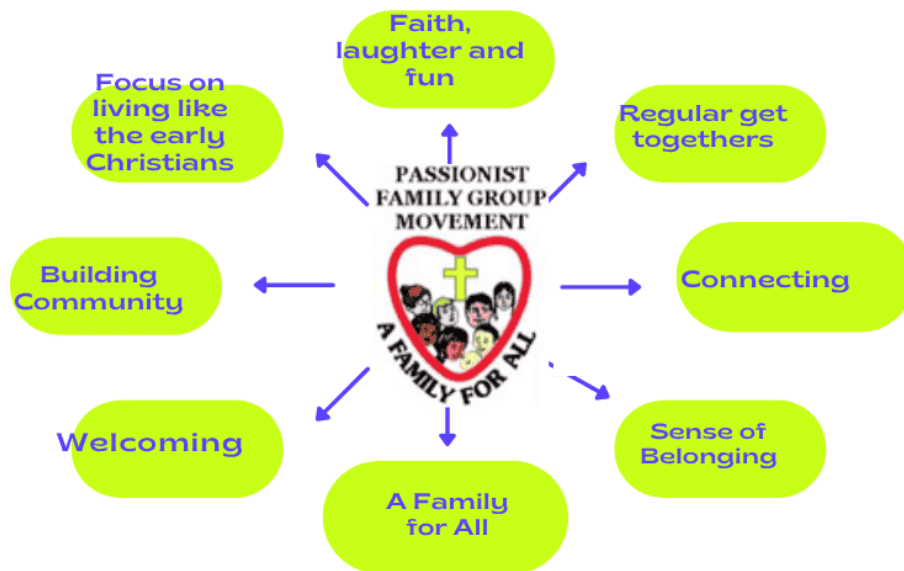


# Passionist Family Groups Newsletter 2026



## A Word of Reflection for the Second Sunday of Easter

The current war rhetoric has most of us wondering how this can be about good and righteousness. It is more about ego and the horrible consequences of seeking to crush another. There is no real winner, only the cries of a people who continue to lose their dignity, freedom and their homes.

The Easter message of mercy and peace is evident in this Sunday's readings. This is in stark contrast to the words of hatred, abuse and violence. Pope Leo has publicly stated. There is no place for war in the name of Jesus Christ, nor using prayers in this vain. It is flawed to suggest that a soldier picked up behind enemy lines is equivalent to the resurrection. Heroic, amazing and a blessing of success, but not the Resurrection.

The reading from Acts is a reminder of how we are called to be in community to support, nurture, and encourage one another. As a Christian community, we bear with one another, forgive one another, and pray for one another. The early Christians lived in fear

and persecution, and yet it was a sign of how we can live as Jesus did.

The gospel provides a wonderful point of reference for living in the heart and soul of the risen Jesus. It is Jesus who comes to the disciples as they are grieving and lost and gently gives them direction, awakens their faith, and alerts them once again to the mission.

We all have a bit of Thomas in us, and isn't faith springing forth from doubt? Our love, mercy, sharing, support, and faith in Jesus call us to doubt no longer but believe! To see that in and through our call to community, we bring others to Jesus, through our commitment, action and example of how to be people of 'peace'. What soothing words Jesus gives to the disciples when they are afraid - "Peace be with you".

We are asked to go out and make disciples, not through egos but through loving service and humility. To remember, we are people of the cross, and through Jesus we are called to follow in his footsteps, placing God as our centre and, through this trust, knowing that God, in Jesus, is with us.

At this post-resurrection time, we witness the power of his 'spirit' recreating in us the mind and heart of God. That we are called to end the hatred and seek the ways of peace and reconciliation.

These things take place in God's time, but we must participate through being for one another and giving an example through our common life together.

Now, we understand why the words "be not afraid" occur some 365 times in the bible. Let us live our faith not in ritual only but through faith and 'hesed', loving kindness! Ask our God for the courage to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

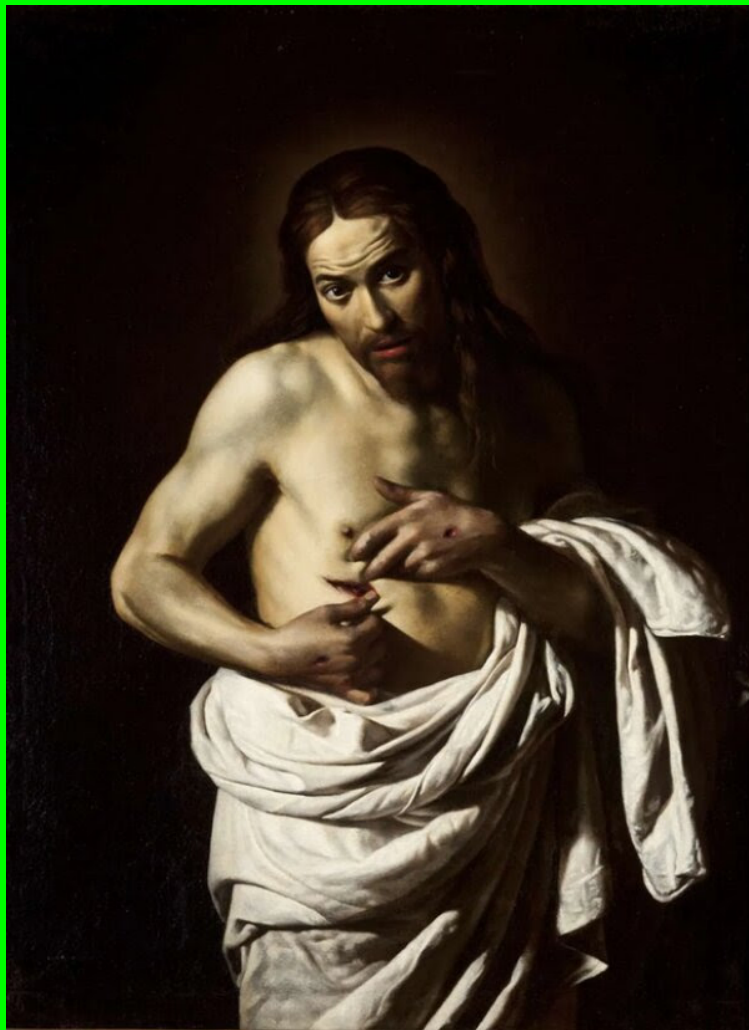
***Have a good week - God go with you,***

***Paul***



***Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) Year A, 12  
April 2026.***

***Peace be with you – Doubt no longer but believe***



*God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed.*

## **LECTIONARY READINGS**

**First reading:** Acts 2:42-47

**Responsorial psalm:** Ps 117(118):2-4, 13-15, 22-24

**Second reading:** 1 Peter 1:3-9

**Gospel:** John 20:19-31

### **[Link to readings – Click on link](#)**

<https://universalis.com//Australia/20260412/mass.html>

**Full of the joy of the Resurrection, the Sunday readings also stress the love and mercy the risen Lord has for all of his people. In the First Reading, we see the joy and enthusiasm of the young Church. The faithful are united in their belief, in their prayers and in the 'breaking of bread', as also in their care and attention to one another. The Easter Psalm is in tune with the theme of Divine Mercy. It is a song of thanksgiving to God whose 'mercy endures forever'. It also recalls the suffering of Jesus, who was raised up on Easter Sunday.**

**The Second Reading is similarly a type of hymn. It celebrates the new life that comes from the risen Jesus. We are born again to a living hope. Even in the trials and anxieties of the times we are living through, faith will always be enough.**

**In the Gospel, Jesus invests the disciples with the Holy Spirit. Thomas, who was absent from Jesus's first appearance to them, is challenged to believe. Thomas now professes his faith with the wonderful words, 'My Lord and my God!'**

**This week, as we continue to rejoice in the Lord's resurrection, may we also reach out to others with compassion and understanding.**

<https://youtu.be/n5gRgJhCue4> **The Garden - Kari Jobe**

## **Article of Interest**

### **Easter Sunday by Richard Rohr**

*Father Richard Rohr explains how the resurrection offers us hope, especially in challenging times:*

I often wonder why so much of human life seems so futile, so tragic, so short, and so sad. If Christ is risen, why do people die before they begin to truly live? Why has there been nonstop war? Why are so many people imprisoned unjustly? Why are the poor oppressed? Why do we destroy so many of our relationships? If Christ is risen, why is there so much suffering? What is God up to? It really doesn't make any logical sense. Is the resurrection something that just happened once, in his body, but not in ours?

I believe the resurrection of Christ indicates that the final judgment has already occurred. It's nothing we need to fear. It's nothing we need to avoid or deny. God's

final judgment is that God will have the last word! Easter reveals that there are no dead ends; ultimately, nothing will end in tragedy or crucifixion. Of course, we look around us, at history and at life in its daily moments, and it seems, “No, that isn’t true.” And yet, ever and again, here and there, more than we suspect, new life breaks through for those who are willing to see and to cooperate with this universal mystery of resurrection.

We’re so lucky in my part of the world that Easter coincides with springtime. If this applies to you, I hope you’re going out to see the leaves and flowers reborn after months of winter. I went out early this morning to see the Easter sunrise. Sure enough, the sun rose as it always does and peeked over the horizon, just between two mountains. It appeared not so much like a *sunrise* but as a *groundswell*. The light was coming *from* the earth. It was coming from the world we live in. It was coming not from the top, but from the bottom. It seemed to say that even all of this, which looks muddy and material, even all of this, which looks so ordinary and dying, will be reborn.

Easter is the feast of hope. This is the feast that says God will have the last word and that God’s final judgment is resurrection. God will turn all that we maim and destroy and hurt and punish into life and beauty.

What the resurrection reveals more than anything else is that *love is stronger than death*. Jesus walks the way of death with love, and what it becomes is not death but life. Surprise of surprises! It doesn’t fit any logical explanation. Yet this is the mystery: that nothing dies forever, and that all that has died will be reborn in love.

So, to be a Christian is to be inevitably and forever a person of hope. God in Christ is saying this is what will last: My life and my love will always and forever have the final word.

### **Arthur Dron and ‘The First Letter to the Corinthians’. Analysis by Lindsay Burgess, with Andriana Opryshko**

Bro David Leary OFK introduced some of us to Artur Dron and the beautiful and powerful poem he wrote in 2023 titled “The First Letter to the Corinthians” as a response to his experiences as a wounded combatant in Ukraine’s armed forces. The poem draws three direct quotations from **1 Corinthians 13**, a chapter frequently used in wedding ceremonies. However, the context and message of this chapter are not primarily about romantic love between two people. Instead, it provides a fuller insight into the life of an early Christian community and the strengths and weaknesses of this small group.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul explains that the root problem of this community is a lack of love and emphasises the necessity, character, and permanence of love. Dron selects three verses from 1 Corinthians 13 for his poem to reveal how these aspects of love are altered and take on new meaning in times of war. Dron has included this poem in a book that features the voices of people who can no longer speak for themselves, keeping alive their dreams, memories, and hopes for peace and freedom in Ukraine.

Often, soldiers are depicted in poetry as unbreakable heroes fighting for the idea of a strong, independent nation. Dron takes a different approach by personifying love and giving it the traits of a soldier. The figure of the soldier here is not glamorised. Their life is as fragile as anybody else's; they feel real human emotions. Dron's love is humane, compassionate, scared, wounded, and grieving. He explains that in wartime love must often adapt and be unconventional, yet demonstrates that, battered by war's brutality, love remains unconditional.

He reveals how the kind of love described by Saint Paul can be used to personify and represent every person who is putting themselves forward to fight for Ukraine. Dron develops the idea of love for Ukraine through vivid imagery that describes the senses he feels, hears, and sees while on the front lines. Love is personified in the image of a Ukrainian soldier and characterised in a multitude of ways, including having "gunshot wounds" or "bullet fragments lodged in them" and the gruesome, visceral, and sensory imagery of mice crawling "under [love's] field coat" and love "vomit[ing] long in the trees." Atypically, this "love" is not beautiful and harmonious.

Although trauma is not the poem's main point, Dron depicts some physical injuries, describing how "tourniquets squeeze love's legs, or it has no legs anymore." These mental and physical traumas will have to be addressed after the war through a long process of rehabilitation. Love not only helps on the battlefield, reminding soldiers of the reason they are fighting, but it is also the bond connecting the soldiers with "the most significant ones," their loved ones who will accompany them through their post-war rehabilitation. Dron's collection 'We Were Here' features poems sharing the stories of people he knows or knew. One of his main goals is to preserve their memory, to bear witness to their existence. "The First Letter to the Corinthians" is also about social memory, remembering, and honouring the dead. At the end of the poem, the figure of Love "passes to the living" from the soldier who dies on the battlefield. This alludes to the memory that lives in the writings, songs, and testimonies of those who knew them.

### **The First Letter to the Corinthians (Artur Dron)**

Love is patient. Love is kind.

It is not jealous, is not pompous.

Love is terrified like a beast

but it perseveres.

Love could give up and abandon it all

but it perseveres

Sometimes, love has gunshot wounds to  
its legs or bullet fragments lodged in them.

Tourniquets squeeze love's legs,  
or it has no legs anymore.

Then love's friends carry love.

Love digs trenches and lives in them.

It gnaws ice from the bottle cut in half  
when it gets thirsty at negative four.

Love takes up combat duty,

gets into position

with hernias, fevers, prostatitis,

with blast injuries,

asthmas and allergies,

with a high probability

of not making it back,

with thoughts about the most significant one.

It bears all things, believes all things,

hopes all things, endures all things!

Love can distinguish by ear

the shots of rocket launchers,

the strikes of mortar shells, and

the movement of tanks.

Love's eyes hurt when it stares into the

thermal imager for too long.

Love wakes up at night

when the mice in the dugout crawl  
under its field coat.

Sometimes, love vomits long in the  
trees after heavy combat.

Every now and then, it closes the eyes of its friends.

Love wraps them up in sleeping bags  
and carries them away.

Love never fails!

But where there are prophecies, they will cease;  
where there are tongues, they will be stilled;  
where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

For sometimes, the shelling is over,  
and friends close Love's eyes,  
wrap it up in a sleeping bag,  
and carry it away.

And then it passes to the living.

**Recital** by Ian McKellen

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DVKAIM2DPaD/>

## ***Formation (Adult Faith Education & Spirituality)***

***There will be Formations offered in 2026. The Theme is Nurturing and Nourishment.*** Hugh McKay prefers 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 with and meet outcasts, inviting them to share his table. His fellowship included everyone – a family for all! If you have a preference for when this could be in your parish or region, ***please advise me*** as soon as possible:

Email: [paulus663@gmail.com](mailto:paulus663@gmail.com) or Mobile: [021357933](tel:021357933)

**Formation Bookings: Dunedin Parishes** 13 & 14 June; **St Helliers** 26<sup>th</sup> July and 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; **East Coast Bays** 28<sup>th</sup> July 2026

## Parish Visits:

### Safeguarding: "Working Together for a Safe Church"

**Any complaints** should be directed through the National Office of Professional Standards (NOPS) or reported directly to the New Zealand Police or Oranga Tamariki.

Phone: [03 365 1993](tel:033651993) or [0800 114 622](tel:0800114622)

Email: [prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz](mailto:prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz)

[www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz](http://www.safeguarding.catholic.org.nz)



### Five Ways to Well Being

**Give**  
Your time,  
your words,  
your presence

**BE ACTIVE**  
DO WHAT YOU CAN,  
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,  
MOVE YOUR MOOD

**KEEP LEARNING**  
EMBRACE NEW EXPERIENCES,  
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,  
SURPRISE YOURSELF

**CONNECT**  
TALK & LISTEN,  
BE THERE,  
FEEL CONNECTED

**TAKE NOTICE**  
REMEMBER THE SIMPLE THINGS THAT GIVE YOU JOY

**FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING**  
INTRODUCE THESE FIVE SIMPLE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL FEEL THE BENEFITS.

Mental Health Foundation  
mauri tū, mauri ora

## Prayer



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1. Let us take up the call of Pope Leo to be concerned with creating and building a sense of belonging in our communities. Also to be united in Christ – united in Mission

2. We pray with thanks for Pope Leo XIV's call and challenge to all leaders, political and other, that they stop praying words of Violence and move to peaceful resolutions

3. We remember that God calls on us, as people of faith, to offer our voices to help those who have none.

4. Keep in mind all those who continue to struggle with mental health challenges, and their families who support them in their daily lives.

5. *Please remember Leonie Christian, Margaret and Graeme Armstrong, Elizabeth, Tim Walsh and family; Debbie and Mike Cotter and family and friends; Christine and Derrick Scott; Paul, Deb and Nick Kelly, Jocelyn Kev Bryant and family, Norma Bellamy and family and Lindsay Penman in your prayers*

6. *Also, please remember, Pat Carson, Graeme Matthews, Di Buckley, Adrian van de Pas and her son Robert, Tim Bartells & family, Linda Darbyshire and family in your prayer, Christine Geoghegan's daughter Kate and extended families, Pauline Prendergast, Robyn Burns (Hill)*

7. *Keep in mind all those who are struggling with decisions made by leaders that are causing harm, fear, injustice and separation of families.*

### **9. Your own intentions**

## Humour:

- What kind of shoes do frogs wear? **Open-toad sandals.**
- I just built an ATM that only gives out coins. I don't know why no one's thought of it before: **it just makes cents!**
- Did I ever tell you about the time I went mushroom foraging? **It's a story with a morel at the end.**
- What happened when two slices of bread went on a date? **It was loaf at first sight.**
- Why do crabs never volunteer? **Because they're shell-fish.**
  - I had a quiet game of tennis today. **There was no racket.**
  - What's a shark's favourite saying? **"Man overboard!"**
- What did one slice of bread say to the other before the race? **You're toast!**
- I poured some water over a duck's back yesterday. **I don't think he cared.**

• **Have a great week everyone.....**

*"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for me." — Matthew 25:40*

Attachments area

Preview YouTube video Kari Jobe - The Garden (Lyric Video) Preview  
YouTube video Kari Jobe - The Garden (Lyric Video)

