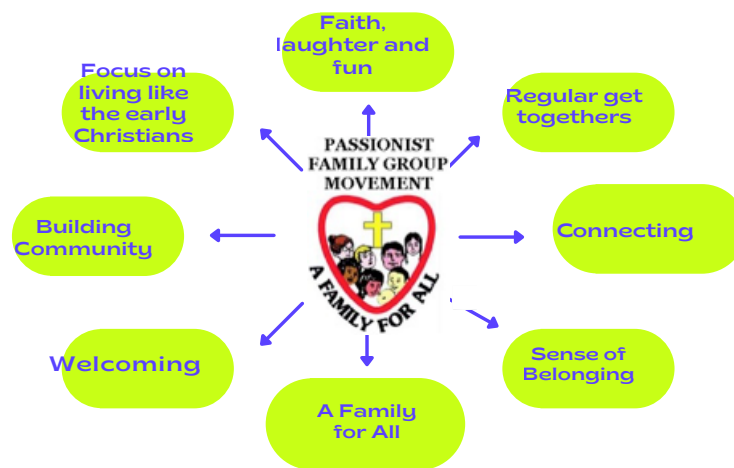


Passionist Family Groups Newsletter 2026



A Word of Reflection for the Third Sunday of Easter

Having journeyed through Easter, we are invited to begin anew as we take up the message and mission of Jesus. Understanding—and living—the Gospel often unfolds slowly. While we may assume there is ample time, experience reminds us that this is an illusion.

The miracles performed by the disciples affirm God's abiding presence and assure us that hope can emerge even amid hardship. We are reminded that the call to kindness and justice is ongoing. We may choose the comfort of familiarity and apparent certainty, or we may embrace the cross and its demands, continuing with compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, confident that God remains close to us.

The Gospel story of Emmaus highlights the importance of faith, listening, and honest reflection in times of loss and confusion. It challenges us to recognise that our expectations do not always align with God's purposes. In the breaking of the bread, we are reminded that our strength lies in belonging and connection—being open to those who are isolated, marginalised, or forgotten. God can work powerfully through us when we are willing to respond to what is asked of us.

Our world urgently needs compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. Seeds of hatred continue to fuel violence and misinformation, while the powerful often seek to protect their own interests at the expense of the vulnerable. As followers of Jesus, we are called to reach out in kindness and to share what we have. The table is not

reserved for a select few; like Christ's message, it is for all. This is the call of Matthew 25: *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me."*

St Paul reminds us that love is patient and kind, not self-seeking or resentful, but grounded in truth, hope, and perseverance. Inspired by this, we are called—like the women of the Gospel—to stand with Jesus, to seek, discover, honour, and share faith, and to support one another.

This is what we seek to do in and through our Passionist Family Groups. Leading is the responsibility of us all, seeking to build bridges to one another through care, concern, invitations and celebrations. Helping people know they are loved, appreciated and part of our Passionist Family.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus said, "We had hoped." We, too, experience times of trial, loneliness, grief, frustration, loss and heartache. This is the part of our experience of the 'passion'. We are called to live with trust in God, with hope each day, and to share it generously with others.

Have a good week - God go with you,

Paul



***Scripture reflection: Third Sunday of Easter
Year A, 19 April 2026.***

And their eyes were opened, and they recognised him



May your people exult forever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of Resurrection.

LECTIONARY READINGS

First reading: Acts 2:14, 22-33

Responsorial psalm: Ps 15(16):1-2, 5, 7-11

Second reading: 1 Peter 1:17-21

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

Link to readings: <https://universalis.com/Australia/20260410/mass.html>

The readings for this week are full of reminders of what Jesus' Resurrection has brought for us. Joy, wonder, glory, praise, and hope are all woven through each reading, inviting us to share again in the Eastertide celebration.

In the First Reading, Peter reminds the crowd that, despite the terrible injustice done to Jesus, God has shown victory over death and has raised Jesus to glory. With this comes the power of the Holy Spirit, now outpoured for us all. The Psalmist rejoices in the God who stands by and protects us from all dangers and will show us the path to everlasting happiness. In the Second Reading, we hear Peter again, speaking of how Jesus gave his life as a 'ransom' for our sins. Because of this, all who believe can have faith and hope in God.

We join two of Jesus's disciples in the Gospel on their journey to Emmaus, blind to the identity of the risen Lord as he walks with them. When Jesus reveals himself to them in the breaking of bread, they finally recognise him, just as he disappears from their sight.

Unlike the disciples, we have never seen Jesus himself – but because of the faith we have been given, we can see and recognise him in the people and situations around us. This week, let's pray for the wisdom and courage to respond wherever we see Jesus in others' needs.

Article of Interest:

Article from Fr Richard Rohr - Liberation from the Ego's Agenda

Father Richard considers how Jesus calls us to be liberated from the agendas of our inflated egos:

What was Jesus liberating us from? This probably won't seem too different from what we would now call the ego or the false self. As Jesus put it, "Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39). Buddhists tend to describe this process with much greater clarity, but Jesus didn't have access to psychological language. He just spoke in a straightforward way that his contemporaries could understand.

Scholarship today is discovering a much more radical and demanding Jesus than either Catholicism or Protestantism was ever ready for. We distorted the message so that it wasn't primarily about a transformation of the ego, but about freedom from the body self. We largely transferred everybody's guilt concerns toward the body. We concentrated on repressing and punishing the body, not giving the body too much pleasure, freedom, or delight. It's not that there aren't issues there, but the ego, in my opinion, has gotten away scot-free in the Western church. We allowed our egos to get out of control while being quite anxious to appear chaste, self-disciplined, and not too greedy.

Christianity has largely paid little attention to the real things Jesus talked about. Instead, we tend to be preoccupied with things that Jesus never talked about. But who can reform Christianity except Jesus?

Understanding Jesus's teachings on power is the key to reforming Christianity and other power structures:

Jesus tells his followers that they should never have what we would call dominative power. He calls it "lording it over others": "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them ... but not so with you" (Matthew 20:25–26). How did so many Christians come to believe that exercising power over others is what religion is all about? There's no indication that Jesus ever intended there to be a head church office somewhere, with upper, middle, and lower management. As a priest, I'm lower management—and even we expected the laity, the people in the pews, to be passive followers. This is so contrary to what Jesus taught and expected. He clearly gives people power by granting them *inner authority*.

Liberation from the ego self is liberation from the world of forms and images. Jesus's word for that was "mammon": "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). If we're playing the game of appearances, power, prestige, and possessions, Jesus says we cannot know God. That's pretty absolute! There's a correlation between our preoccupation with image and how much—or how little—we've experienced the inner life.

Jesus also liberates us from the ego self by his constant warnings against negativity and oppositional thinking. In general, his word for that liberation is *forgiveness*. Two-thirds of Jesus's teaching is directly or indirectly about forgiveness. To live appositionally is to be holding some degree of resentment or unhealed negative energy that we have not brought to the divine presence for transformation.

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 or Mobile: 021357933

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

Parish Visits: Holy Trinity, Kilbirnie; St Patrick's, Napier

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 or 0800 114 622

Email: prof.standards@nzcbc.org.nz

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
OF NEW ZEALAND
mauri tū, mauri ora

Prayer



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1.

1. **We pray for Pope Leo and thank him for his truth-telling regarding the war in the Middle East and elsewhere. His stance has been one of integrity, and his leadership provides a stark contrast to the quest for power and domination. Let us walk the path of peace with him.**
2. Let us take up the call of Pope Leo to foster a sense of belonging in our communities. Also to be united in Christ – united in Mission
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, Jocelyn Kev Bryant and family, Elizabeth, Tim Walsh and family, Debbie and Mike Cotter and family and friends; Christine and Derrick Scott; Paul, Deb and Nick Kelly, 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.*

8. 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