

Passionist Family Group Newsletter for 3 May, 2026



Reflection for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Our readings invite us to recognise some simple yet foundational truths: wherever growth occurs, we are called to adapt and adjust while remaining faithful to the call of Jesus. In the reading from Acts, what stands out is mission—a mission of service. It is not about those who claim to possess the truth and set themselves apart, proclaiming that they are the chosen ones. Rather, it is through humble acts of support and care for one another that we are reminded we are followers of Jesus.

In the Gospel, we also hear the comforting words of *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me” (Jn 14:1)*. We learn from Jesus that prayer and service were central to his commitment to follow the Father’s will. This is the path of humility and service: the way he lived and the way he died. His focus remained on what he was called to do and to be. His every action shows us what flows from trust, while also reminding us that the way of love is never easy.

In our Passionist Family Groups, it can be easy to leave the work of supporting and encouraging others to someone else. We may become reluctant to take up any role in coordinating our groups. Parenting offers a helpful reminder: we give life, support, love, and encouragement; we watch our children grow through life’s ups and downs; and we learn to let them go, confident that they remain held in and through our love. The call to service is not unlike parenting: it does not simply stop. If we understand that our contribution helps free others to serve, then why would we not seek to assist and help?

We know the values of these groups and the vision of being a family for all. So let us reach out, looking for ways to encounter and include others, while continuing to support our family and friends. We are not an exclusive club, but an extended family marked by our shared humanity. Let our humanity not diminish our desire to be like Jesus, and to call people out of darkness into

light—a light that shines where people act with forgiveness, kindness, and genuine welcome.

William Barclay, a Scripture scholar, offers a thought that is particularly relevant to our communities today. Reflecting on our first reading—where seven leaders are appointed to support the growing early Church—he writes: *“It is interesting to note that the first office bearers to be appointed were chosen not to talk but to serve.”*

So let us not be discouraged. Let us trust that God will guide and lead us, so that we may become more like him in all things, as we seek the path of love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness.



God go with you, Warm regards,

Paul

Belong, Behave, Believe



Passionist Family Groups – The challenge of ‘Belonging’.

The most interesting thing about those who shared belonging with Jesus, is that they included social and religious outcasts. Whenever he went to a village, the sick were brought to him for healing. *“At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them”.* (Luke 4:40). While this became the hallmark of his ministry, we have to question whether in recent times and for several centuries, ‘seeking out the lost’ was almost the reverse of common church practice.

Jesus continually spoke about the kingdom or reign of God and he continually invited people to belong to this all-inclusive family. What is telling in the light of later Church practice, is that the requirements for belonging were minimal.

Scripture reflection: Fifth Sunday of Easter Year A, 3 May 2026.

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone



Almighty ever-living God, constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us, that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism may, under your protective care, bear much fruit and come to the joys of life eternal.

LECTIONARY READINGS

First reading: Acts 6:1-7

Responsorial psalm: Ps 32(33):1-2, 4-5, 18-19

Second reading: 1 Peter 2:4-9

Gospel: John 14:1-12

Link to readings - <http://universalis.com//Australia/20260503/mass.html>

As we continue to live through this joyful Eastertide, the readings this week show us the new Christians attempting to organise their community. After prayer and discernment, they solve the dispute between the Hebrews and the Hellenists and appoint seven leaders. (First Reading)

The **Psalm** celebrates in song the word of the Lord, who is merciful and loves justice and right. The **Second Reading** seeks to reassure us. We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood and a holy nation. Christ is the cornerstone of the building, and all Christians its living stones.

The **Gospel** comes from the Last Supper discourse, where Jesus prepares his friends for his departure. Thomas and Philip find it hard to follow his words, but they will never be alone, for Jesus will be alongside them. He is the way, the truth and the life.

This week, we pray for all who are unable to accept Jesus as the cornerstone of their life. As we go about our own lives in the coming days, we might use the response to the psalm:
'May your merciful love be upon me, as I hope in you, O Lord'

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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

Formation (Adult Faith Education & Spirituality)

The Theme for this year’s Formations 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!

PJ Harding defines nurturing as what fills your cup, whether that is laughter, fresh air, good food or time with loved ones. In Passionist Family Groups our reaching out and being family to each other brings joy, understanding, service, care and support. It’s not just about ‘me’ but the welfare and nourishment we can give to each other through our love, concern and compassion. This nurturing leads to nourishment of the heart.

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Formation Bookings: Dunedin Parishes 13 & 14 June; St Hellier’s 26th July and 35th Anniversary; East Coast Bays 28th July 2026. Christchurch parishes August 9th

Prayer



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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. We pray to be like Jesus, spending ourselves in the service of others- welcoming, guiding and leading people through care, compassion and forgiveness.
3. 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

4. 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.

1. *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:

- I was going to tell a joke about the layoffs, **but sadly none of them work.**
- What's the hardest tea to swallow? **Reality.**
- Why did the employee at the calendar company get fired? **He took a day off.**
- I was raised as an only child. **It drove my sister nuts.**
- Never date a tennis player. **Love means nothing to them.**
- You don't need a parachute to go sky-diving. **You need one to go sky-diving twice.**
- It's not easy being a mom. **Otherwise, dads would do it.**
- My dog just ate a \$100 bill. **I guess he has expensive taste.**
- The guy who stole my diary went missing. **My thoughts are with his family.**
- What did the cow say to the leather chair? **"Hi, Mom!"**
- I'd love to have kids one day. **But that's as long as I can handle them.**
- Hard work pays off later. **Laziness pays off now.**

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

