

Passionist Family Group Newsletter – 30 August 2026



Reflection:

Like so many others in recent times, I have succumbed to this wretched flu. I have lain low and kept warm, but nothing has erased the cough, which means the night hours are now marked by broken sleep.

It got me thinking about what happens in times of threat and extreme danger, when silence is paramount and we have people who are very unwell? I found myself asking: what would I do if my constant coughing put others at risk? Would they need to leave me behind and move to a safer place while they still could? Or would I take off in the opposite direction to protect them?

All sounds a bit dramatic. But in reality, none of these choices would be easy, and each would leave everyone with increased fear and concern. Sometimes life's choices do that to us. They leave us lingering at the fork in the road, uncertain and hesitant about what may lie ahead or what our options might be. In times like these, the choices are harder; and so it is for so many people across our world.

In our readings, Jeremiah first shows us what can happen when following his call, leads to rejection, isolation, and frustration. Yet, deep within him remains a conviction: his passion continues to drive his call to open the road for others, despite the setbacks.

We see something similar in Paul, who continues to reach out to his early communities with the same conviction: we are not alone; God is here. He urges them to live their faith with confidence in Christ Jesus and his message. Together, we make ourselves and our community better not by following the values of the world, but by living with love and service for others.

This is an approach we can easily recognise. The ways of the world often appear more tantalising, and the appearance of power and prestige can dazzle our minds like light on moving mirrors. We can be tempted by other ways of living, drawn down roads that cause us to hold onto fear and hide in the shadows. We may fail to see that love and sacrifice are not enemies; they come to us in the ordinary, daily moments of life.

When Peter hears Jesus speak about his death and the path of the Cross, he shows his care for Jesus, but also his misunderstanding of what Jesus' life, mission, and message are truly about. I think we can all recognise moments in our own lives when it is easier and more convenient to choose comfort and safety, or even to turn a blind eye, as the saying goes.

But none of that prevents us from starting again and resetting our course in Jesus and his call. Our communities need us to keep connecting and to continue helping people hear and see that they matter. Sometimes being laid low, as I have been, gives us space to reflect and to look for new ways to support others while becoming more in tune with the Gospel.

I can relate to Jeremiah, Paul, and Peter. Like them, I am in no position to give up, but I do need to search and pray for God's wisdom, blessing, forgiveness, and guidance. I am acutely aware of the need to create and build connections, both for my own wellbeing and for the betterment of the people around me.

Jennifer Breheny Wallace reflects on this theme in her book on Mattering:

"We have lost track of our basic human needs for connection and contribution. Now we are often tempted to fill that void with counterfeit forms of mattering – chasing attention over connection, prestige over purpose, and money over meaning. The rise in loneliness, burnout, and anxiety is the predictable consequence of a society that has forgotten how to make people feel valued."

Our local communities are a good place to start. We walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and this way of the Cross is marked by compassion, love, sacrifice, hope, encouragement, and healing. We are called together in faith and love.

As St James reminds us, "Faith without good works is dead."

God go with you,

Paul





Scripture reflection: 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A, 30 August 2026

Let them take up their cross and follow me



God of might, giver of every good gift, put into our hearts the love of your name, so that, by deepening our sense of reverence, you may nurture in us what is good and, by your watchful care, keep safe what you have nurtured.

LECTIONARY READINGS

First reading: Jeremiah 20:7-9

Responsorial psalm: Ps 62(63):2-6, 8-9

Second reading: Romans 12:1-2

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-27

[Link to readings - click here](#)

Today's readings remind us that while we may find ourselves caught between the values of God's kingdom and those of the world around us, we will always have the love of God to protect and uphold us.

Jeremiah laments that answering God's call has led to him being mocked and derided (**First Reading**). Yet despite this, he can still sense a burning desire to speak God's words. The Psalmist, wandering in the desert, thirsts for God's presence, just as he thirsts for water. Recognising the Lord's loving mercy, he is able to raise his hands in praise and thanksgiving.

St Paul (**Second Reading**) reminds the Romans that the life we take on through baptism becomes the inspiration for how we live. Paul encourages them to resist the temptation to conform to the demands of the world as they seek to respond to God.

In the **Gospel**, we see Peter's struggle to embrace fully the reality of Jesus's Way. Soon after being named 'the rock' on which the Church will be built, Peter is still holding on to the values of the world, and struggling to accept what Jesus tells him about the suffering that lies ahead.

This week we pray for those taking up their cross in the service of Christ and his Church around the world. We ask the Lord to keep them safe 'in the shadow of his wings'.

Social Justice week 6-12 September Theme is: You Belong 2026-2028

In his encyclical *Laudato Si'* - Our Care for our Common Home published in 2015, Pope Francis writes that our lives rest on three connected relationships: with god, with our neighbour, and with the earth itself (*Laudato Si'*, 66)

We are invited to reflect on this truth; God made you. God knows you. God loves you. You belong. **For Resources:** www.caritas.org.nz/parishes/social-justice-week

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

Faith and Life Formation 2026: The Theme for this year's is Nurturing and Nourishment.

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. Email: paulus663@gmail.com or Mobile: 021357933

Formation Bookings: [Waihi Paeroa KatiKati October 17 & 18, Levin and Otaki November 1st](#)

There are parishes that are to confirm dates.



A Blessing for Nurturing

*May you see your body as a well where water needs to be replenished.
May you learn how to balance your self-needs with the needs of others so that you can live in
harmony with the world.*

*May you take the time to notice and nurture what your inner wisdom is asking of you.
May you find a place in nature where you can be in silence and hear your Creator in the trees,
the birds, the wind, and the earth.*

May you care for all of creation in gratitude, humbleness, and respect.

— Kaki Grubbs, Spiritual Literacy Certificates Program, 2024 Cohort

Belong, Behave, Believe



Prayer:

1. We pray for peace as the renewed threat of hostilities between US and Iran is predicted..
2. We pray for the refugees for all those displaced. Now Columbia
3. We pray for Pam and Bob Arthurs also remember Richard Gibbs
4. We prayer for all those who are experiencing the difficulties with Wild fires in Europe, Canada, USA. And the wild fires in Indonesia. Devastating floods in Himalaya's.
5. We pray for all the people who continue to support, assist and help the people of Venezuela. May they find support, acceptance and comfort due to their loss.
6. We pray for peace.
7. We remember all those who are suffering as a result of wars and injustices and hear and act on the words of Pope Leo XIV in his first encyclical to stay strong in the preservation of human dignity.
8. We pray with gratitude for all the men, women and children who have contributed to the life and spirit of our Passionist Family Group Movement over the past 38 years.
9. We pray for many members of PFG's in Whakatane who are seriously ill.
10. We pray to be like Jesus, spending ourselves in the service of others- welcoming, connecting, guiding and leading people through care, compassion and forgiveness.
11. We pray for all struggling to live due to the constraints globally impacting our world
12. We remember that God calls on us, as people of faith, to offer our voices to help those who have none.

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

Please remember in prayer Shelley Wards's brother Brett Hanlin. Please keep Jo Moorcroft and family in your prayer. Fr. Litto, Fr Robert Steele PP and family. Margaret and Graeme Armstrong, Kev Bryant and family, Tim Walsh, Debbie Cotter; Christine and Derrick Scott; Paul, Deb and Nick Kelly, Norma Bellamy and family.

Also, please remember, Pat Carson, Graeme Matthews, Di Buckley, Adrian van de Pas and her sons Robert and Dean, Tim Bartells & family, Linda Darbyshire and family in your prayer, Christine Geoghegan's daughter Kate and extended families;

We prayer for each other and our intentions.



Humour:

- "What concert costs just 45 cents? 50 Cent featuring Nickelback!"
- "What does a bee use to brush its hair?" "A honeycomb!"
- "How do you make a tissue dance? You put a little boogie in it."
- "Why did the math book look so sad? Because of all of its problems!"
- "What do you call cheese that isn't yours? Nacho cheese."
- "What kind of shoes do ninjas wear? Sneakers!"
- "How does a penguin build its house? Igloos it together."
- "How did Harry Potter get down the hill?" "Walking. JK! Rowling."
- "I used to be addicted to soap, but I'm clean now."
- "A guy walks into a bar... and he was disqualified from the limbo contest."
- "You think swimming with sharks is expensive? Swimming with sharks cost me an arm and a leg."
- "When two vegans get in an argument, is it still called a beef?"
- "I ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I'll let you know..."

Belong, Behave, Believe



Have a great week everyone.....

