

Passionist Family Group Newsletter – 9 August 2026



Reflection

The readings this Sunday invite us to recognise the many forces that shape our lives. Like the elements of nature, we can be shaken by fear, frustration, hostility, anxiety, and despair, tossed about as though caught in rough surf. Yet these readings also remind us of the sustaining power of God's presence and the faith that helps us remain steady.

Elijah waits for God and hears the mighty wind, the earthquake, and the fire, yet God is not revealed in any of them. Then comes the gentle breeze, and Elijah covers his face. God is present not in the overwhelming forces, but in stillness. This reminds us that, amid life's trials and tribulations, when we feel overwhelmed or lost, God is quietly present, ready to receive us, hold us, and strengthen us.

In Paul, we see the heartbreak of someone unable to lead his own people to acknowledge Jesus. Although they had many opportunities to hear the message of God's presence among them in Jesus, many could not accept it. Paul's sorrow is deep because, as a Jew who had encountered God in Christ, he continued to testify through his life to that transforming reality.

The Gospel offers another lesson on presence. Jesus withdraws to the hills to be alone, but he is not isolated; he is with his God. That relationship keeps his compass steady. Michael Fallon MSC suggests that, because of this union with God, Jesus is able "*to master the chaos around him.*" This points us toward faith: with God's presence, we can rise above the chaos rather than be consumed by it.

It is fair to say that there are moments when we feel strong and confident, and many others when fear and doubt cause us to stumble or lose heart. At such times, we can lose sight of what matters and sink into hopelessness. I have experienced this in myself, in the street children I worked with long ago, in young people on retreats who shared their stories, in friends and loved ones now dead but not forgotten, in families struggling to make ends meet, in the ministry of Passionist Family Groups, and in children with special needs or students struggling with school and life. Through all these experiences, I have also encountered the presence of God.

The truth is that everybody hurts sometimes. Recently, I heard a song with the same title as the REM version, though this one was very different, and because of my Irish heritage it spoke to me deeply. Today, may these readings remind us that God is

always with us, even when we feel lonely or afraid. May they also encourage us to be signs of God's presence for one another through kindness, forgiveness, service, acceptance, patience, and tolerance. We need each other, and God remains present, as Elijah found, as Paul found, and as Jesus showed us through compassion. in passionist Family Groups

Click on the link, and I hope it speaks to you. May it help us realise that we are in this together, and that together we can overcome much through the belief that God is with us. No matter what we have done, God continues to invite us home.

<https://youtu.be/DkVnc3d34Kk?si=4fZK43A-DsoMupsS> Everybody Hurts by The Celtic Trio

God go with you,

Paul



Scripture reflection: Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A, 9 August 2026.



Take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid

Almighty and ever-living God, your Spirit made us your children, confident to call you Father. Increase your Spirit within us and bring us to your promised inheritance.

LECTIONARY READINGS

First reading: 1 Kings 19:9, 11-13

Responsorial psalm: Ps 84(85):9-14

Second reading: Romans 9:1-5

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

[Link to readings - click here](#)

In the readings this week, we witness the full range of the earth's natural order: the mountains, the wind, the sea, an earthquake and fire. Through all the upheaval and suffering that life may bring, we are reminded of God's ever-loving presence.

In the **First Reading**, a solitary Elijah is invited to go to the mountain to pray. God reveals himself to Elijah not in the dramatic events he witnesses, but in a gentle, low whisper. The **Psalm** reminds us that God will always provide for us, if only we open our hearts and ears to him. Guided by God's values of mercy, peace, justice, righteousness and faith we will stay on the right path.

St Paul (**Second Reading**) reaches out to his fellow Jews with a great yearning that they should see and accept the abundant gifts offered by Christ their Lord.

The **Gospel** retells another dramatic encounter with the earth's elements: this time the disciples are caught aboard their boat in a storm. Consumed by fear, it takes some time for them to recognise Jesus and accept his saving help.

May we be confident of the enduring presence of our Lord as we navigate our own stormy waters. We need only reach out to him.

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 2026:

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

Formation Bookings: Ashburton 8 August and Christchurch parishes August 9th

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 renewal of hostilities between US and Iran continue. No winners here. Again we witness the nonsensical actions of power and war while the human suffering goes unchecked.

2. We pray for the refugees clambering to enter Spain and for all those displaced
3. 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.
4. We pray for peace.
5. We remember all those who are suffering as a result of wars and injustices.
6. We are reminded by Pope Leo XIV in his first encyclical to stay strong in the preservation of human dignity.
7. 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.
8. We pray for many members of PFG's in Whakatane who are seriously ill.
9. We pray to be like Jesus, spending ourselves in the service of others- welcoming, guiding and leading people through care, compassion and forgiveness.
10. We pray for all struggling to live due to the constraints globally impacting our world
11. 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
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 Robert Steele PP and family. Leonie Christian, 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 pray for each other and our intentions.



Humour:

- When construction workers party they raise the roof
- I told my suitcases, 'No vacation this year' . Now I am dealing with emotional baggage
- What do you call a man with a seagull on his head? Cliff
- Some butchers make cutting remarks to those they meet with, and get into a real stew.
- "A skeleton walks into a bar and says, 'Hey, bartender. I'll have one beer and a mop.'"
- "Where do fruits go on vacation?" "Pear-is!"

- "I asked my dog what's two minus two. He said nothing."
- "What did Baby Corn say to Mama Corn?" "Where's Pop Corn?"
- "What's the best thing about Switzerland?" "I don't know, but the flag is a big plus."
- "Where do you learn to make a banana split?" "Sundae school."
- "What has more letters than the alphabet?" "The post office!"
- "Dad, did you get a haircut?" "No, I got them all cut!"
- "What do you call a poor Santa Claus?" "St. Nickel-less."
- "I got carded at a liquor store, and my Blockbuster card accidentally fell out. The cashier said never mind."
- "Where do boats go when they're sick?" "To the boat doc."
- "I don't trust those trees. They seem kind of shady."
- "My wife is really mad at the fact that I have no sense of direction. So I packed up my stuff and right!"

Belong, Behave, Believe



Have a great week everyone.....