

Passionist Family Group Newsletter – 6 September 2026



Happy Father's Day – *we give thanks for all fathers, both those still with us and those who have departed. We honour their love, guidance, and contribution to the building of family. Their presence remains with us in the present moment, and through our love, prayers, and gratitude, we continue to affirm the enduring truth that love never dies.*

Reflection: You Matter: Belonging, Mattering, and the Mission of Community

Over the past few years within Passionist Family Groups, I have heard and witnessed many examples of people becoming weary from continually reaching out and giving of themselves. Much of this weariness appears to come from the weight of responsibility carried by those coordinating groups. Some feel unappreciated or frustrated that something once life-giving and enriching has gradually become a burden. Their generosity has, in some ways, been relied upon for too long, and when they feel the need to step back, it is often difficult to find others willing or able to step forward.

The Church has changed, and our Passionist Family Groups have also aged. It has become increasingly difficult to encourage families to become involved, particularly given the busyness and pressures of modern life. Many people come to church, and for some it meets an important social need. For others, however, church can feel more like a petrol station: they arrive to be spiritually refuelled and then leave until the following week. Contact with fellow parishioners can be minimal. Because some people do not know anyone, they may arrive late or leave early. Many are trying, yet when they come, few feel truly seen or welcomed. It raises an important question they may quietly carry: "Do I matter?"

As in any community or organisation, those who are already part of the inner circle often experience a sense of worth and belonging. They are known, hopefully appreciated, and often actively involved in organising and contributing. In that sense, what they do clearly matters. Recently, I began reading a book called *Mattering*, which I received from my wife, Clare. She did not intend to read it herself, so she passed it on to me. The title caught my attention, although I began reading with some hesitation; I wondered whether it might be somewhat "new age" in tone. However, the book contains many stories and insights, and it has challenged me to remain open to what it offers.

Engaging with this idea has been valuable for me. It has also provided an opportunity to reflect more deeply on our Passionist Family Groups: what we do, how we do it, and why it matters. We often speak about the importance of belonging as the place where people are accepted. Yet there is something about the word “mattering” that has spoken to me in a new way. It has taken time to sit with the word and consider its meaning. Through reflection and reading, I have come to see that this psychological concept has real relevance for our time and, importantly, for our Passionist Family Groups.

The sense that “you matter” and “I matter” invites us to ask important questions about the work of building and sustaining family and community. At its core, mattering has two closely connected dimensions:

- **Feeling valued** — believing that other people notice you, care about you, and see you as important.
- **Adding value** — feeling that what you do has an impact, helps others, or contributes meaningfully to a group, community, or purpose.

The concept is widely discussed in psychology, education, leadership, and wellbeing because people who feel they matter tend to experience stronger motivation, belonging, resilience, and mental health. When people feel they do **not** matter, they may experience isolation, low self-worth, disengagement, or hopelessness. In simple terms, mattering answers the question: **“Do I count, and does what I do count?”**

This suggests that mattering is not limited by age or stage of life. In our time, we see significant social isolation, loneliness, and depression, even though we have more communication tools than ever before. We can contact almost anyone at any time, yet mental health concerns and personal struggles continue to increase. Many neighbourhoods have become more isolated, and the demands of work often shape our time more than relationships, community, and service. This is not a judgment, but rather an acknowledgement of the social realities affecting both faith communities and wider society.

Our Passionist Family Groups should be places where this sense of mattering is nurtured and strengthened. At their best, they offer a model of being family with and for one another. Their goal of living like the early Christians reminds us that we are called to bring people together, not to create favourites, closed circles, or fashionable trends. We are here to live the message of Jesus. In recent weeks, the Gospel call to “take up your cross and follow me” has been especially illuminating. It invites us to open our eyes to society in all its complexity: the weak and the strong, the frail and the sick, the old and the young, the blind, and all those affected by injustices each day.

We are not asked to solve everything on our own. Rather, we are called into community: to support and encourage one another, to offer forgiveness and mercy, to show compassion, to

give to those in need, to ask for help when we need it, and to truly see others. This movement of valuing others allows people to grow in confidence and strength. It creates a sense of being recognised and included: "I am here." In many small but meaningful ways, we can create a welcoming family by sharing the load, taking the lead when we are able, asking for help when we are burdened, and being willing to carry responsibility together.

Our connections and sense of belonging should lead us to show others that they matter. In doing so, we create a wave of hope within our community. We affirm the value of every person, build genuine connection, lift one another up, and recognise Christ in each person we encounter. Attending church is important, but it must never be separated from following in the footsteps of Jesus. This is the mission to which we are sent: to live as St Paul said, as 'Ambassadors for Christ'.

To play click on the link below:

<https://youtu.be/bUfwVAzAlqc?si=BLTtDOqsRAFnXBUy> *We are Strong Juliet Rames*



God go with you,

Paul



Scripture reflection: 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 6 September 2026

Love each other

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance.

LECTIONARY READINGS

First reading: Ezekiel 33:7-9

Responsorial psalm: Ps 94(95):1-2, 6-9

Second reading: Romans 13:8-10

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Link to readings – [click here](#)

This Sunday's readings encourage us to listen to the Lord at all times, and to listen to our neighbour and to our communities too. This will sometimes ask for tough love in our relationships with each other.

In our **First Reading**, the prophet Ezekiel is called to be a watchman and stresses the obligation for us to challenge evil when we meet it. The theme of listening which runs through our readings is clear in the **Psalm**: 'O that today you would listen to his voice. Harden not your hearts'. St Paul reminds us in the **Second Reading** that love covers every commandment. We are called to love our neighbour as ourselves.

In our **Gospel**, we perhaps see the young Church striving to keep the values of Jesus, putting the demands of mutual love above the necessity for structures. Jesus promises to be with us and is active in our decisions and in everything that we do.

'Love does no wrong to a neighbour,' St Paul says. We can remember these words as we celebrate this Season of Creation, and pray to work with others for the good of all.

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: Cambridge - Hamilton October 11; 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 are unfolding.

2. We pray for the people of Nepal after the devastating floods and the huge loss of life.
3. We pray for the refugees for all those displaced. Now Columbia
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.
14. *Please remember in prayer Pam and Bob Arthurs, Richard Gibbs, 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:

- "That car looks nice but the muffler seems exhausted."
- "Shout out to my fingers. I can count on all of them."
- "If a child refuses to nap, are they guilty of resisting a rest?"
- "What country's capital is growing the fastest?" "Ireland. Every day it's Dublin."

- "I once had a dream I was floating in an ocean of orange soda. It was more of a fanta sea."
- "A cheeseburger walks into a bar. The bartender says, 'Sorry, we don't serve food here.'"
- "I once got fired from a canned juice company. Apparently I couldn't concentrate."
- "I used to play piano by ear. Now I use my hands." "Have you ever tried to catch a fog? I tried yesterday but I mist."
- "I'm on a seafood diet. I see food and I eat it."
- "Why did the scarecrow win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field."

Belong, Behave, Believe



Have a great week everyone.....