



PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP

NEWSLETTER

4 October, 2026

+ Reflection

On this Feast of St Francis of Assisi, we honour Francis' spirit: his open mind, generous heart, and deep commitment to peace. His witness shows us how to resist the turmoil around us and seek a way of living the Gospel as Jesus did.

This Sunday's readings remind us that God is always present and active in our lives, even when we struggle to see it. In times of loss or crisis, we may ask, "Have you left me? What is happening? Where are you, God?"

The Gospel parable of the servants sent into the vineyard, only to be attacked and killed, carries a clear message: God trusts us and calls us to labour in the vineyard. We are the servants; God is the owner. The parable reveals God's patience, as servant after servant is sent to gather the fruit. Yet we often find ways to avoid the task entrusted to us—sometimes, as in this case, even violently.

We may avoid this call by seeking power or privilege, misusing our freedom, acting unjustly, or refusing accountability. At times, we misuse our position in ways that bring suffering or isolation to others. When we do this, we set ourselves against God and place both our lives and the lives of others at risk. The Gospel calls us to imitate Jesus: to lift people up, treat others with dignity, and build communities shaped by love, care, kindness, support, and forgiveness—a true sense of belonging.

This is what we hope to create through our Passionist Family Groups within the parish: real connections with one another. It is easy to walk into Mass, see the altar, genuflect, and overlook the people in the pews. One gentleman told me that after being greeted by a Passionist Family Group Coordinator visiting our parish, he immediately spoke to the man beside him. The man smiled and later shared that it was the first time anyone had spoken directly to him in four years.

I had heard similar stories before. Belonging shapes our belief and behaviour; it is at the heart of building a faith community where we recognise, acknowledge, and come to know one another. It is easy to focus only on our own prayer and forget that we are a missionary people. The Mass sends us out to live what we have shared and proclaimed; it is not a race to the car park. We are called into relationship.

In *Resilient Grieving*, Dr Lucy Hone quotes an American programme called *Touch*, which moved her to write: "*Human beings are not the strongest species on the planet, not the fastest and not the smartest. The one advantage we have is our ability to cooperate: to help each other out. We recognise ourselves in each other, we are programmed for compassion, for heroism, for love. And those things make us stronger, faster and smarter, that's why we survive.*"

Let us be encouraged, as St Paul was, to live with the mind and example of Jesus, setting our hearts and lives on the path of kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. In this way, we help build communities where

people are welcomed, accepted, and given a true sense of belonging. People see and learn that they matter and that what and who we are matters! Our faith tells us that God is love, and Jesus' experience was that God never let go; he is with us. Let us reach for peace, which Scripture scholar William Barclay describes as "a sentinel or guard on our hearts."

As we began by remembering St Francis, perhaps we now need simply to sit with the words of his Peace Prayer. It can be seen as a mantra for action, mission, and bringing people to a sense of family and home.

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love;

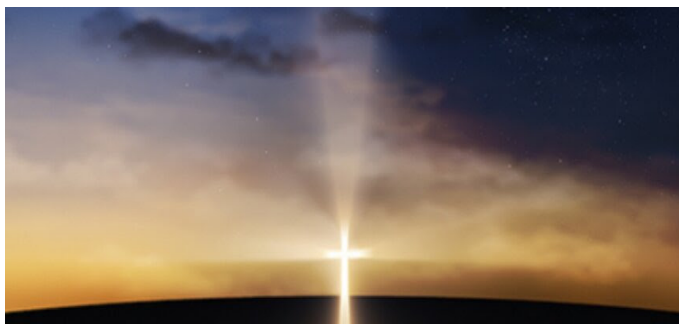
For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

As Our Aims and Goals State

- + *To share our Christian values*
- + *To live and love like the early Christians*
- + *To give example to and involve our children in Christian sharing*
- + *To build and promote community in the Parish*
- + *To support one another in times of need and celebration*



God go with you,
Paul

Scripture Reflection

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time —4 October, 2026

LECTIONARY READINGS

First reading: Isaiah 5:1-7

Responsorial psalm: Ps 79(80):9, 12-16, 19-20

Second reading: Philippians 4:6-9

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

[Link to readings - click here](#)

The Season of Creation draws to a close today on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. It is fitting that throughout this Sunday's readings, the vineyard is used as a way of illustrating our relationship with God.

Isaiah (First Reading) uses a song of love to describe how God cares and protects us, his precious vines. Although we remain rooted in that love, we may not always produce the fruit of God's love. The Psalm uses the same vineyard imagery. It is a song of repentance and longing to return to God's protection. In the Gospel, Jesus uses the image of the vineyard to illustrate how God's radical message of love, professed by ancient prophets and by himself, has been ignored and rejected. Despite this, Jesus can confidently proclaim the truth: that what people have ignored will become the foundation of a new covenant of love.

Paul's letter to the Philippians (Second Reading) assures us that through prayer and thanksgiving we need not be afraid, because our hearts and minds are guarded in Christ Jesus. We will bear good fruit when we set our hearts on what is true, honourable, just, pure and lovely in the Lord.



The peace of God surpasses all understanding

Almighty ever-living God, who in the abundance of your kindness surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you, pour out your mercy upon us to pardon what conscience dreads and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.

A Good Read — Resilient Grieving by Dr Lucy Hone

A good place to start is by looking and listening to her TED Talk, which can be found by clicking the link below. Thank you to Stephanie Butchard for alerting us to this link and book.

▶ [3 secrets of resilient people — Dr. Lucy Hone, TED Talk](#)

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 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 · Mobile: 021357933

Formation Bookings

Cambridge – Hamilton: October 11

Whakatane - PFG Corods Meeting October 15

Mt. Maunganui: October 16

Katikati: October 17

Waihi Paeroa: October 18

Levin and Otaki: November 1

Havelock North and Hastings: November 8

There are parishes that are still 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

- ♥ We pray for peace amid renewed tensions and the threat of hostilities between the United States and Iran.
- ♥ We pray for the people of Nepal after the devastating floods and the huge loss of life.
- ♥ We pray for refugees and for all those who have been displaced from their homes.
- ♥ We remember all who are suffering, and we pray that we may act on Pope Leo XIV's call to uphold and preserve human dignity.
- ♥ 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.
- ♥ We pray that we may be more like Jesus, giving ourselves in service to others by welcoming, connecting, guiding, and leading with care, compassion, and forgiveness.
- ♥ Keep in mind all those who continue to struggle with mental health challenges, and their families who support them in their daily lives.
- ♥ Keep Dr Ann Conroy editor of Tui Motu in your prayers she is currently suffering ill health and taking time out from her editorial role.
- ♥ *Please remember in prayer Richard Gibbs who died on early Monday Morning. Please remember Sue and Richards family, Fr Alfonso, Daphne and Bill Chamberlain, Stephanie Butchard and family, Preston and Jenny's daughter Kate, Pam and Bob Arthurs, , 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 pray for many members of PFG's in Whakatane who are seriously ill.*

We pray for one another and for all the intentions we hold in our hearts.



A Little Humour ♥

- "Why are piggy banks so wise?" "They're filled with common cents."
- "Why is Peter Pan always flying?" "He neverlands."
- "How do you get a good price on a sled?" "You have toboggan."
- "How can you tell if a tree is a dogwood tree?" "By its bark."
- "I used to hate facial hair, but then it grew on me."
- "It's inappropriate to make a 'dad joke' if you're not a dad. It's a faux pa."
- "What do you call a hot dog on wheels?" "Fast food!"
- "Where do young trees go to learn?" "Elementree school."
- "Did you hear about the circus fire? It was in tents."
- "Can February March? No, but April May!"
- "How do lawyers say goodbye? We'll be suing ya!"
- "Wanna hear a joke about paper? Never mind—it's tearable."
- "What's the best way to watch a fly fishing tournament? Live stream."
- "Spring is here! I got so excited I wet my plants."
- "I could tell a joke about pizza, but it's a little cheesy."



With love and prayers from the Passionist Family Group Movement