



PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP

NEWSLETTER 18

18 October, 2026

+ Reflection

*Last week, I was sent an article entitled “**Why Church Should Prioritise Adult Friendship, Not Just Fellowship?**” I have attached the article to this newsletter, together with a brief overview of its key ideas and the reasons churches may wish to adopt this approach.*

The article prompted me to reflect on Passionist Family Groups, where our focus has always been on belonging. I agree with the author that fellowship in many churches often centres on small talk, morning tea, and lively music. While each of these has value, they do not necessarily address the loneliness or isolation experienced by many churchgoers.

Even within some of our Family Groups, the busyness of life can prevent us from connecting or committing to events. As a result, we may miss opportunities to know other members more deeply and to understand what is truly happening in their lives. In his letter, Paul commends the Thessalonians for their “labour of love”. The same is true of every meaningful relationship: it requires commitment and effort. We must give time and make time to grow with others. Paul suggests that this is as essential in our human relationships as it is in our life of faith, with both grounded in love.

Friendship cannot be built in haste, even when people say they are busy. Birth, life, and death all require time: time to wait, to be present, to accompany one another, and to listen. Yet how often do we see people arrive at church without acknowledging others, only to rush away afterwards to the next commitment?

This week, I visited a couple of friends, and we spent more than two hours listening, sharing, laughing, telling stories, and simply being present to one another. We were refreshed by our time together, and it felt like family. This is what our Passionist Family Groups should ideally be and become: places of openness, acceptance, patience, warmth, humour, understanding, and, of course, support.

We live in a society where loneliness has reached epidemic levels and many people long for genuine connection and friendship. Our churches are natural places for these relationships to grow, yet we can still miss the mark. Increasingly, people seek emotional support through chatbots or by scrolling through their mobile phones. Let us instead seek meaningful human connection and adopt the attitude of Jesus, for whom a person’s rank was unimportant, but their identity, character, and inner life mattered deeply. Let us make time for God to move between us, among us, and within us as we labour in love, reaching out to others through compassionate action and service.

*The following song speaks powerfully about the importance of mutual support and being present as a friend: “It is only with the heart that one sees rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” (from **The Little Prince**) <https://youtu.be/TG8-bTp8ew4?si=RQnboCE7ghTBKe-n> “Support Each Other” by Lenzspot*

Have a good week - God go with you, Paul

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*



Scripture Reflection: *29th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 18 October, 2026*

Render to God the things that are God's

Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.

LECTIONARY READINGS

First reading: Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

Responsorial psalm: Ps 95(96):1, 3-5, 7-10

Second reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-21

Link to readings – [click here](#)

Our readings today leave us in no doubt that, as the Creator of all, there is only one God, who rules over everything on earth.

In the **First Reading** we hear Isaiah's prophecy concerning the pagan king, Cyrus, who, with God's help, will conquer nations, return the Jewish people to their homeland, and restore the greatness of Jerusalem. Through his actions, people around the whole world will know that God is Lord of all nations. The **Psalm** invites us to sing of the power and glory of God. As in the First Reading, we are exhorted to tell others that the Lord is king, praising him above all else. St Paul (**Second Reading**) writes to the developing Christian community in Thessalonica. He reminds them – and us – that we are chosen and loved by God. We know God not just through words, but also by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the **Gospel** we see Jesus neatly avoiding the trap set for him by those who seek to discredit him. Pointing out Caesar's image on a coin, he tells them: 'Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'

WHY CHURCHES SHOULD FOCUS ON FRIENDSHIP RATHER THAN JUST FELLOWSHIP (ARTICLE ATTACHED)

1. Reason 1: Because People are Hungering for In-Person Connection Over Screens
2. Reason 2: Because People Around You Are Turning to Chatbots For Friendship
3. Reason 3: Because your members are feeling lonely and disconnected
4. Reason 4: Because your small group leaders are getting exhausted
5. Reason 5: Because friendship is what makes people stay
6. Reason 6: Because your men are longing for deeper conversation
7. Reason 7: Because Your Church is Uniquely Placed to Meet the Loneliness Epidemic

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I make my church more friendship-focused?
2. Why do people feel lonely at church?
3. Why is making friends as an adult difficult inside a church community?

OVERVIEW OF THE ATTACHED ARTICLE - Why Your Church Should Prioritise Adult Friendship, Not Just Fellowship?

- Churches should prioritise **genuine adult friendship**, not assume that attendance, small talk or "fellowship" automatically creates meaningful connection

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

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



Prayer

- ♥ We pray for the health and well-being of Pope Leo after the diagnosis of lung cancer. We pray that he has suitable rest and recuperation and that going forward he is supported and cared for.
- ♥ 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 pray for all politicians as we approach Elections for 2026. May they seek to work for those who are in great need and those under privileged.
- ♥ 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: Fr Raphael whose relative is seriously ill as he returns home for a short vis. 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 ♥

- I saw an ad that said "radio for sale \$2, volume stuck on full"
I thought to myself "I can't turn that down".
- Someone glued my deck of cards together.
I don't know how to deal with it.
- I will never forget what my grandfather said before he croaked.
He said "wanna hear my frog impersonation?"
- I tripped over my wifes bra
It appeared to be a booby trap
- For my birthday my children gave me an alarm clock that swore at me instead of buzzing.
It was quite a rude awakening
- A man was recently hospitalised with 6 plastic horses inside of him.
he doctor is describing his condition as stable.
- I can always tell if someone is lying just by looking at them,
I can also tell if they are standing.
- It's a 5 minute walk from my house to the pub
It's a 35 minute walk from the pub to my house
The difference is staggering.
- Why is Peter Pan always flying?
He Never lands.
- I have a Polish friend who's a sound technician. Oh, and a Czech one too. Czech one too. Czech one too.
- A Mexican magician says he will disappear on the count of 3. He says "uno, dos..." poof. He disappeared without a tres.



With love and prayers from the Passionist Family Group Movement

