



St Peter's Church, Surry Hills

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Fr. John Macdonald, Administrator

Fr. Nicola Falzun OP, Priest in Residence for the *Missio ad gentes* of the Neocatechumenal Way

Feast Days – Third Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Mon 13 Dec	Saint Lucy
Tue 14 Dec	Saint John of the Cross

Christmas Mass times

Friday 24 Dec: 8:00 pm Vigil Mass

Saturday 25 Dec Christmas Day: 10:00 am Mass during the Day

Sunday 26 Dec: Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph: 10:00 am Mass

Daily Mass: **Mon:** 7:30am, **Tues to Sat:** 10:00am

Sunday Mass: 9:00am & 10:30am (Sung Mass)

Confessions: **Wed** (10:30am – 11:30am) & **Fri** (6:00pm – 7:00pm) during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Sat: 9:30am - 10:00am

We Pray For

Our sick and injured – Ana Teresa Rodrigues, Mafalda Triolo, Aimi McEwen, Louise McCann, Nathan Essey, Marija Barclay, John Yo-un and Dan Southee.

Our deceased – Robert Armstrong, Alan Davidson, Noel Allport (2/12), Peter Hanrahan, Marisa Mandelli (23/11), Robert Armstrong, Sylvia Abela (28/10), Coralie Hinkley, Katie Brincat (27/7), David Patrick Watson(18/7), Anne Kelly (Deborah White's mum (14/5), Betty Harkins (12/5), Frederick, Edward & Margaret M Hailwood, Margaret D Hailwood, Joyce Hailwood & Marge Heaney, Joan McEvoy and June Veronica Hailwood.

Our house bound elderly – Shirley Kennedy, Anna Maria and Myra Krcma

Partaking in the Eucharist commits us to others, especially the poor, teaching us to pass from the flesh of Christ to the flesh of our brothers and sisters, in whom he waits to be recognised, served, honoured and loved by us.

*Pope Francis
Catechesis on the Mass 2018*

Saint Lucy (Feast day 13 Dec) – Early Christian Martyr – Patron Saint of Eyes



St. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

*Those whose hearts are pure are
temples of the Holy Spirit.*

Lucy consecrated herself to God and was true to her promise of purity even through horrible torture. She is one of the seven women mentioned in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer 1) of the Mass.

The first account we have of Saint Lucy's life comes from the fifth-century Acts of the Martyrs. According to tradition, Lucy was born into a wealthy family of noble parents about the year 283 A.D. in Syracuse, Sicily. Her name comes from the Latin word *lux* meaning light and she is often referred to as a light in the darkness, her feast day being close to the longest day of the year.

It is believed that her father was a Roman nobleman, but little is known of him other than he died when Lucy was about five years old. This left Lucy and her mother without a guardian.

Her Heavenly Promise

Like many early Christian women Lucy consecrated herself to God, promising to live in purity and prayer

for her whole life. However, her mother, Eutychia, was very ill with a bleeding disorder and was afraid to die and leave her daughter without a guardian. Unaware of Lucy's consecration, she arranged a marriage between her daughter and a pagan.

Lucy persuaded her mother to go on a pilgrimage to Catania in Sicily where there was a shrine to Saint Agatha. While her mother was away Saint Agatha appeared to Lucy in a dream to tell her that because of her faith her mother would be cured.

When her mother returned, completely healed, Lucy persuaded her to give their wealth away to the poor, including Lucy's dowry. When the young man to whom Eutychia promised Lucy's hand in marriage discovered this he denounced her to Paschasius, the Governor of Syracuse. Paschasius ordered her to worship a pagan image and when Lucy refused, she was tortured. Among other things, her eyes were gouged out, which is why in iconography Lucy is often painted with eyes placed on a platter.

Through all her torture, God prevented her purity from being defiled and even preserved her from burning alive when the attempt to do so was made. Eventually, Lucy died by

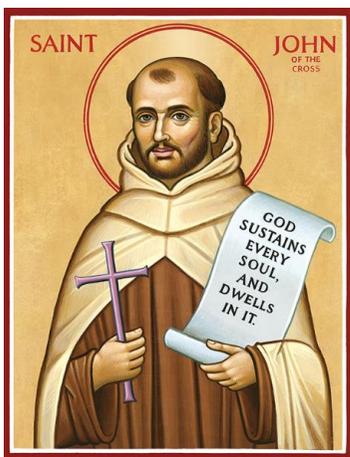
the sword. It is said that when her mother prepared her body for burial, her eyes had been restored.

Saint Lucy is one of the seven women mentioned in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer) of the Mass. She is the patron saint of eye illnesses, the blind, ophthalmologists, stained glass workers, salesmen, and martyrs. Her feast day is December 13th.

A wonderful way for the family to celebrate St. Lucy's Feast is with this delicious recipe. Many have made it an annual tradition with the youngest girl in the family, dressed in a white nightgown and a wreath on her head serving coffee and cake for breakfast

Saint John of the Cross: A Sound Teacher of True Love – Fr. Mario Attard, OFM, Cap
December 13, 2020

Today, 14 December, we celebrate the feast of a great Spanish mystic, a friend and a co-reformer of the Carmelite religious family, namely Saint John of the Cross.



Born in Fontiveros, Avila, Spain in 1542, as Juan de Yepes y Alvarez, John came from a family who turned poor overnight. His father, who was employed by a wealthy family, was disowned simply because he married a poor woman.

From its earliest days, John's life was destined for great suffering. He not only was born from a poor family but, to add insult to injury, his father died when he was just three years old. Family poverty killed his older brother Louis, two years, due to malnutrition. Finally, John's mother found a job, weaving, that could support her and her family.

He received his primary education at a boarding school for the poor and orphaned children, and his religious education in particular assisted him to discern a religious vocation from his childhood. John served as an acolyte at

an Augustinian monastery and when he grew older he started working in hospital and attending a Jesuit school simultaneously.

It was in 1563 when John could join the Carmelite Order and took the religious name "John of St. Matthias". After professing his first vows obedience sent him to Salamanca to delve deeper into the philosophical and theological studies. He immersed himself so much in his studies that he became a biblical expert and translated the Book of the *Song of Songs* into the Spanish language, a very courageous act to do in those days since the Church did not generally permit such translations to safeguard the original meanings of the biblical texts.

When he was ordained a priest in 1567 John was considering leaving the Carmelites and enter instead the Carthusians to live a simple and quite life within his individual cloistered cell. But Divine Providence led him to meet Saint Teresa of Avila, a great mystic and a very charismatic

Carmelite sister. Teresa requested John to join her. John was decisively attracted by Saint Theresa's strict routine which she wanted to introduce in her order together with her formidable dedication to prayer as well as simplicity of life. Those who followed Saint Teresa went barefoot, and from here they earned for them the name Discalced Carmelites.

When on 28 November 1568 Teresa established a new monastery, it was then that John also altered his name to John of the Cross. At the invitation of Theresa herself, in 1572 John travelled to Avila and became her personal confessor and spiritual director. He stayed in Avila for five years. During his stay he had a vision of Christ and made a drawing of this intense spiritual experience he experienced. This famous painting, which is still with us, is called "Christ from above". This intriguing drawing shows Christ on the cross, with the viewer looking down on him from above.

In approximately 1575 the Carmelite order experienced a division which kept growing and creating heaps of controversy in many monastic houses. The air of disagreement between the Discalced Carmelites and the remaining Carmelites over how the reform was to be conducted was huge. According to their view, the Discalced Carmelites tried to revert back to the original spirit of the Carmel based on strict rules and government of the Order. For some Carmelites, such as Teresa of Avila and John, when the strict rules of the order were lessened with them the spirit of Carmel also waned since it put both the order and practice into jeopardy. Thus, both Teresa and John tried to rightly restore the order back to its glorious original beginnings.

Officially the Carmelites were going through reforms from the year 1566, guided by two Dominican Canonical Visitors sent purposely by the Vatican. However, the very unfortunate political intrusion of King Philip II and his court fomented violent rifts between the Carmelites. In fact, towards the end of 1577 John was ordered to leave his hometown monastery in Avila and go back to his first house. Nonetheless his work of reform had, by that time, been approved by none other than the Papal Nuncio, who truthfully was a higher authority. Hence, John, conscientiously, opted to reject the lower order and remained there.

A said incident occurred on 2 December 1577 when a group of Carmelites raided John's monastery and captured him. John was forcibly taken back into the main order's house in Toledo. He was charged for disobedience and was sentenced to imprisonment. For that purpose a cell was prepared for him within the monastery walls. The conditions of this cell were really shocking. He could hardly lie on the floor. Furthermore, he was fed simply with water and bread, and casually chunks of salt fish. Every week he was publicly lashed then put back in his cell. His only comforts were a prayer book and an oil lamp thanks to which he could read. He spent his time writing poems on paper that was hidden to him by the friar who was responsible for guarding his cell of imprisonment. It is interesting noting that John became worldwide known as an outstanding and leading poet, particularly after his death. He had exerted and still exerts his influence on many poets, mystics together with artists.

Following nine months of harsh imprisonment John was able to burst in his cell door from its hinges and finally escaped. Immediately he reached Teresa's nuns who were in Toledo and was

hospitalized for six weeks to regain his health. In 1579, John was sent to the town of Baeza to be the new college rector and help the Discalced Carmelites in Andalusia.

A year after, in 1580, Pope Gregory officially sanctioned the split between the Discalced Carmelites and the remaining friars of the Carmelite Order, thus ending the separation within the order. During that time there were around 500 members in the order who were dwelling within 22 houses. In the last few years of his earthly life, John travelled and founded new houses across Spain. After he became ill due to a skin condition which culminated into an infection, John died on December 14, 1591. Pope Clement X in 1675 beatified him whereas Pope Benedict XIII canonized him in 1726. Saint John of the Cross is patron saint of contemplatives, mystics and Spanish poets.

In all this troubled and challenging life one thing stands clear: Saint John of the Cross was a man of God because he was full of love of the Crucified Christ. Instead of disseminating bitterness, hatred and resentment at the deluge of evil he received John spread love everywhere! His years in captivity taught him to exclaim: *Oh cherished cross! Through thee my most bitter trials are replete with graces!* It is clear that his years of imprisonment have surely helped him focus on Christ Crucified, the best school of love. He said: *Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent.*

Yes! Silent! Because, in that silence, you and me can recognise true love, its cost but also how to make ourselves available to receive it! He said: *The road is narrow. He who wishes to travel it more easily must cast off all things and use the cross as his cane. In other words, he must be truly resolved to suffer willingly for the love of God in all things.* John's sufferings presented to him a very important life insight: suffering can be a magnificent grace for those who silently listen to the language of love which is hidden in it. He said: *What we need most in order to make progress is to be silent before this great God with our appetite and with our tongue, for the language he best hears is silent love.*

And this silent love is translated into a faith, which, Saint John of the Cross explains, *is like the feet wherewith the soul journeys to God, and love is the guide that directs it.* The direction and essence of love culminates in contemplation. He said: *Contemplation is nothing else but a secret, peaceful, and loving infusion of God, which if admitted, will set the soul on fire with the Spirit of love.* For John the Spirit of love means befriending and marrying God. He said: *Take God for your spouse and friend and walk with him continually, and you will not sin and will learn to love, and the things you must do will work out prosperously for you.* True love entails detachment from what is not love to love the Love, the Beloved. Thus notes John: *Love consists not in feeling great things but in having great detachment and in suffering for the Beloved.* And this purgation of the self from the eros of love in order to give itself completely for the loved one is what characterises the purity of love. He said: *Beloved, all that is harsh and difficult I want for myself, and all that is gentle and sweet for thee.* And what is this soul so imbued with love? How can it be recognised? Thus, answers John: *A soul enkindled with love is a gentle, meek, humble, and patient soul.* All these noble attributes can be summarized in one word: **HUMILITY**. For a humble soul John says: **To be taken with love for a soul, God does not look on its greatness, but the greatness of its humility.** After all, humility makes the soul focus entirely on its object of love,

God himself. That is why John said: *Wisdom enters through love, silence, and mortification. It is great wisdom to know how to be silent and to look at neither the remarks, nor the deeds, nor the lives of others.*

Saint John of the Cross was really a very practical man. In fact, his poetry and mysticism led him to suggest the following two foundational life maxims. First, *where there is no love, put love and you will find love.* Second, *in the evening of life, we will be judged on love alone.*

PARISH GROUPS can resume meeting on the parish property provided everyone is fully vaccinated or the date of the meeting is 15 Dec or later

RCIA – Thursday: 6:30pm – 7:30pm (fortnightly) (Online)
Neocatechumenal Way – B16 - Thursday: 7:30pm – 8:30pm
Mother's Group – Courtyard – Friday: 2:30pm
Christian Life Community (CLC) – B16 - Tuesday: 7:30pm (fortnightly)
Marian and Divine Mercy Groups – before mass daily
Cenacle – Church – Tuesday after 10:00am Mass; Thursday 8:30 am
Liturgy Group – B16 – after Sunday lunch

Special prayer petitions

Our Lady of Guadalupe, we pray for your holy intercession, especially for all mothers-to-be that they carry their babies to full term and keep them protected under your blue mantel.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide our premier, Mr Dominic Perrottet that in making fair and just decisions, and that his decisions will be respected by the members of the NSW parliament. St Joseph, watchful defender of Christ intercede for us.

Sydney City Catholics - Annual Lessons & Carols (and BBQ)



St Peter's is thrilled we can again co-host our annual Lessons and Carols, together with the Parishes of the Sydney City Deanery.

Date: Saturday 18 December, 2021

Time: 6.30pm (doors open 6pm)

Location: St Benedict's Church, Broadway (note the rotating location), cnr Broadway & Abercrombie St, Broadway NSW 2007

The evening will be hosted by the young adults of the City Deanery, including our own Saint Peter's 'Evangelium' Young Adults. Following the Lessons & Carols, all are invited to a BBQ dinner in the adjacent courtyard (BYO alcohol).



Special guests include Bishop Brady, and will feature the scholas of St Peter's Parish, Surry Hills and St Benedict's, Broadway.

For catering and registration purposes, we ask for the small contribution of \$5, to be booked in advance via the [Trybooking link](#).

Please note that due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions capacity limits are in place and bookings are essential.

Reach out to **Gerard Horsfall** or **Sarah Moody** with any questions.

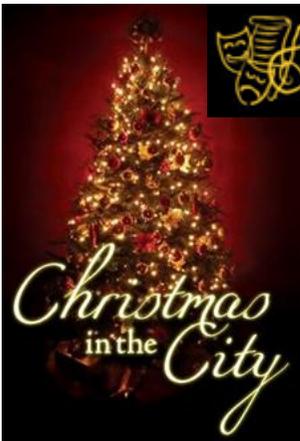
Become a Catechist or Helper in 2022

Half of Catholic children in Sydney are in public primary and high schools. Share the hope and joy that Jesus brings with them and become a catechist or helper, ready to start in Term 1, 2022.

Starting off as a helper, you'll receive easy step-by-step lessons and hand out activity books in primary schools.

Find out more about the work catechists do here, whether at primary or secondary level: <https://ccd.sydneycatholic.org/>

Talk with Fr John as Parish Priest or Catechist Co-ordinator, Sr Hannahri.



ARTES CHRISTI 13th Annual
Carols [CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY](#)

The full details for this event are:

CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY (Sydney)

Date: Sunday 19 December (5.30pm)

Venue: St Peter's Catholic Church, Surry Hills

Address: 235 Devonshire St, Surry Hills

ENTRY: \$20 or by Donation ~ but due to COVID, seats are a STRICTLY LIMITED so

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL [Here](#)

Lights of Christmas 2021, St Mary's Cathedral forecourt, 9-25 December

Join in Sydney's favourite free Christmas tradition, uniting families, locals and tourists with a display of digital storytelling projected onto St Mary's Cathedral.

Find out more: <https://lightsofchristmas.com.au/>



“Jesus taught us how to forgive out of love, how to forget out of humility.

So let us examine our hearts and see if there is any unforgiven hurt -- any unforgotten bitterness!

It is easy to love those who are far away.

It isn't always easy to love those who are right next to us.

It is easier to offer food to the hungry than to answer the lonely suffering of someone who lacks love right in one.”