



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 – Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Tues 21 Dec	Saint Peter Canisius
Thu 23 Dec	Saint John of Kanty

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: The 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

Parish Office will be closed from 25 Dec - 10 Jan 2022 Inclusive

We Pray For

Our sick and injured – Josephine Finneran, 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, Slyvia 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*

COVID Safe Regulations and Recommendations

QR Code check-in is still a legal requirement for entry to places of worship. We also strongly encourage everyone attending Mass at Saint Peter's to wear a face mask and to maintain the 1.5m social distance. By continuing to practise mask wearing and social distancing in church we are obeying a core moral teaching of the Church concerning our care for the common good. This Catholic moral principle requires us to always weigh our individual rights against our care and concern for the common good.

Introduction - Reflection on 4th Sunday of Advent - Gerard Moore, University of Notre Dame

As the feast of Christmas looms, the readings for the final Sunday of Advent take us closer to the expectations of the one who is to come. There is a shift that allows us greater insight into the sense that Christ comes not from the great but from the more lowly, that God chooses differently to human society. With this is the understanding that Christ, the mighty ruler, brings peace not to rule by might.

This is strengthened with the narrative of the Visitation, where the two kinswomen Elizabeth and Mary, meet and exchange greetings and recognitions. Interestingly, this is the story of two strong women, each pivotal to salvation, carrying faith in strength and hope. They will be the teachers of Jesus and John, and they are our teachers.

Reflection

The readings for this final Sunday in Advent move us towards an understanding of the Christ who is coming. The reading from the prophet Micah offers some new notes and brings forth themes that will be taken up in the Visitation, our Gospel text.

As with the extracts from the prophets over the last few weeks, the underlying theme is the emergence of a new leader, something of a 'strongman', to take up the reins of the nation and to rule under the reign of God. Further features are revealed here. The coming one is from humble leadership stock. The leading clans are not able to bring forth such a true leader. However though coming from the lowly ranked tribal group, the emergent ruler has a lineage that is ancient, and so has integrity born from the most original faith in God. There is a connection being drawn between the lowly, the humble and the true.

The ultimate result is not national riches, defeat of enemies or empire, but peace. The ruler brings peace.

There is another point that can be made here, and though obvious is absolutely key to Christian faith. Micah speaks of the ruler born of a woman, a point made forcefully in the Gospel. The feast of Christmas is the feast of the incarnation, of the coming of the divine amidst creation as truly flesh as truly divine. Micah's down to earth statement presages the pivotal point of the revelation of the depth of God's love.

Regarding the second reading, there are three features of this extract from the Letter to the Hebrews that enrich our Advent theology. The passage begins with a modified verse from the Ps 40. The striking phrase is that God has prepared a 'body' for the Christ. While there are a range of ideas at play in that verse, this is the one that ties the reading to our preparation for the feast of Christmas.

With this comes the reference to the obedience of Christ. There are a pair of themes here. Foremost is the obedience of Christ, who takes flesh for our salvation. This is a strong message in the Letters of Paul and is echoed here as well. But, given the context and the Gospel that will follow, there is too an intimation of the obedience of Mary. It is *Mary's fiat* that enables the Christ child to be born, and her obedience is integral to the incarnation. Mary the Mother of the saviour and Mary the faithful believer, are one.

The third point is a subtle shift in the text itself, testament to the theological view of the author. We have before us the line "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ..." I am leaving aside the language of sacrifice and offering what are central to Hebrews and turning our concentration to the appellation Jesus Christ. Our author rarely joins these two names so closely, yet here places 'Jesus' the earthly one and 'Christ' the divine signification together. The writer is highlighting the integrity and absolute unity of the incarnation. We are quite used to this after 2000 years, but here there is a particular effort to ensure there is no loss of the full sense of the incarnation, an important contribution to our preparation for the feast of the incoming of the light.

Our Gospel passage is the narrative of the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. Let's not forget as we take up the Advent interpretation of this text that it is a profound encounter between two strong women. The readings from the prophets across the season have focused on the coming male leader, the ideal king of justice, of peace, of the reign of God. Here the final advent reading features two strong women, both poor, both bearing children of enormous significance, both supportive one of the other, both willing and able to read and enact the will of God.

It might be best interpreting both as prophets, as tellers of the will of God. Mary has conceived by the Spirit, Elizabeth too is filled with the Holy Spirit. As the elder cousin reveals Mary's pregnancy, she does so in the language of the beatitudes, the language of Jesus most famous preaching. She also allows that her child will give way to Mary's child, not just in respect but in full joy.

With all this there is a theological profundity as the meaning of the incarnation is explored. The coming of the divine to take flesh is a cooperative venture, and Elizabeth praises her younger kin for her faith. The faith of the young woman is inseparable from the salvation of all creation in Christ. She is the 'mother' of 'my Lord'. These two women are the teachers of Jesus and the Baptist: are they our teachers too?

The divine in breaking is a cooperative event. The Spirit is present, but so too is the will and willingness of these two individual women, prophets who wring in the reign of God. Perhaps there is something systemic that the church could learn from this.

Saint Peter Canisius' Story (Feast day 21 Dec)

The energetic life of Peter Canisius should demolish any stereotypes we may have of the life of a saint as dull or routine. Peter lived his 76 years at a pace which must be considered heroic, even in our time of rapid change. A man blessed with many talents, Peter is an excellent example of the scriptural man who develops his talents for the sake of the Lord's work.

Peter was one of the most important figures in the Catholic Reformation in Germany. He played such a key role that he has often been called the "second apostle of Germany," in that his life parallels the earlier work of Boniface.

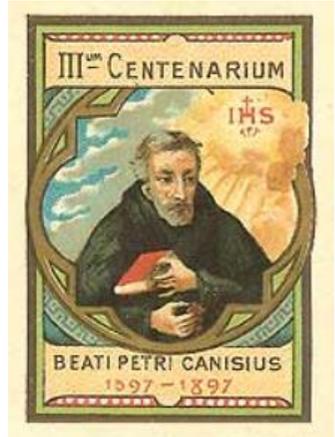
Although Peter once accused himself of idleness in his youth, he could not have been idle too long, for at the age of 19 he received a master's degree from the university at Cologne. Soon afterwards he met Peter Faber, the first disciple of Ignatius of Loyola, who influenced Peter so much that he joined the recently formed Society of Jesus.

At this early age Peter had already taken up a practice he continued throughout his life—a process of study, reflection, prayer, and writing. After his ordination in 1546, he became widely known for his editions of the writings of St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Leo the Great. Besides this reflective literary bent, Peter had a zeal for the apostolate. He could often be found visiting the sick or imprisoned, even when his assigned duties in other areas were more than enough to keep most people fully occupied.

In 1547, Peter attended several sessions of the Council of Trent, whose decrees he was later assigned to implement. After a brief teaching assignment at the Jesuit college at Messina, Peter was entrusted with the mission to Germany—from that point on his life's work. He taught in several universities and was instrumental in establishing many colleges and seminaries. He wrote a catechism that explained the Catholic faith in a way that common people could understand—a great need of that age.

Renowned as a popular preacher, Peter packed churches with those eager to hear his eloquent proclamation of the gospel. He had great diplomatic ability, often serving as a reconciler between disputing factions. In his letters—filling eight volumes—one finds words of wisdom and counsel to people in all walks of life. At times he wrote unprecedented letters of criticism to leaders of the Church—yet always in the context of a loving, sympathetic concern.

At 70, Peter suffered a paralytic seizure, but he continued to preach and write with the aid of a secretary, until his death in his hometown of Nijmegen, Netherlands, on December 21, 1597.



Reflection

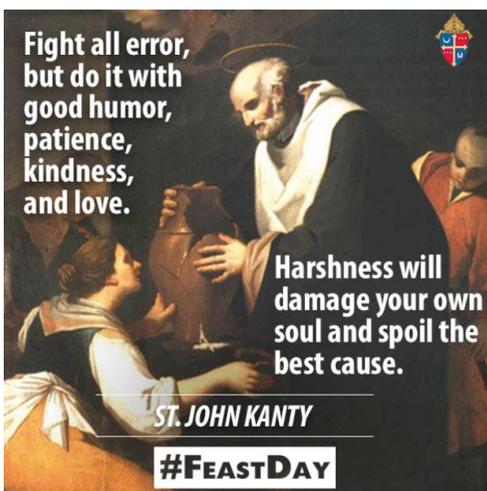
Peter's untiring efforts are an apt example for those involved in the renewal of the Church or the growth of moral consciousness in business or government. He is regarded as one of the creators

of the Catholic press, and can easily be a model for the Christian author or journalist. Teachers can see in his life a passion for the transmission of truth. Whether we have much to give, as Peter Canisius did, or whether we have only a little to give, as did the poor widow in the Gospel of Luke (see Luke 21:1–4), the important thing is to give our all. It is in this way that Peter is so exemplary for Christians in an age of rapid change when we are called to be in the world but not of the world.

Saint John of Kanty (Feast day 23 Dec) – uCatholic 23 Dec 2010

St. John of Kanty is the patron Saint of Teachers, Students, Priests and Pilgrims. John of Kanty was born in the small southern Polish town of Kanty, only thirteen miles from the Pope John Paul II's birthplace, on June 24, 1390. At the age of 23, he registered for studies at the Jagiellonian University, located in the not too distant city of Krakow—then, the capital of the Polish Kingdom. Founded 1364 by royal decree, it was the same university at which astronomer, Nicolas Copernicus, would study almost 80 years later.

Enrolled in the Department of Liberal Arts, John became a doctor of philosophy in 1418. During



the following three years, he undertook further studies in preparation for the priesthood, while supporting himself by conducting philosophy classes at the university.

Immediately following ordination, he accepted a position as rector at the prestigious school of the Canons Regular of the Most Holy Sepulcher in Miechow. That such a school would offer him this position at his relatively young age was evidence of John's exceptional intellect and talents. It was there in conducting formation classes for the young novices that he became firmly grounded in the writings and spirituality of St. Augustine.

In 1429, a position became vacant in the Philosophy Department at the Jagiellonian University. John quickly returned to Krakow for the job, taking up residence at the university where he remained until his death. He also began studies in theology and after 13 long years of study intertwined with teaching and administrative duties as head of the Philosophy Department, he finally received his doctorate. Later, after the death of his mentor, the eminent theologian Benedykt Hesse, John assumed directorship of the university's Theology Department.

As most learned men of his day, John spent many of his free hours hand copying manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures, theological tracts, and other scholarly works. Although only 26 volumes have survived to our time, their total of over 18,000 pages is a testament to his exceptional industriousness.

During the course of his life in Krakow, John became well known among the city's residents for his generosity and compassion toward the poor, always sacrificing his own needs in order to help those less fortunate. He felt a special affinity toward need students at the university, helping to care for their spiritual, physical, and academic needs. Whether it was in the classroom or in the pulpit, everyone knew him as a staunch defender of the faith and enemy of heretics.

By the time the Master from Kanty died on December 24, 1473, the people of Krakow already considered him a very holy man. That his opinion was wholly justified can be evidenced by the numerous favors and miracles attributed to John's intercession beginning immediately following his death. Before long, John from Kanty became known widely throughout Europe, drawing pilgrims from many countries to his tomb in the university's Collegiate Church of St. Anne. Despite this, the process for his beatification did not begin until 150 years later. Finally, in 1676, Pope Clement XIII declared him a saint of the Roman Catholic Church. (October 20th feast day pre-1970)

Throughout his many years in Krakow, our philosopher Pontiff, Pope John Paul II drew much inspiration at the grave of his patron saint of learning. It was no surprise, therefore, that during his 1997 pilgrimage to Poland, he once more prayed at the Saint's tomb. There, during a special gathering with professors from the Jagiellonian—both his and St. John's alma mater—he alluded to the Master from Kanty when he stated: "Knowledge and wisdom seek a covenant with holiness."

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.

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](#)

Don't miss out on this opportunity to attend this performance. Bookings in the link below.

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

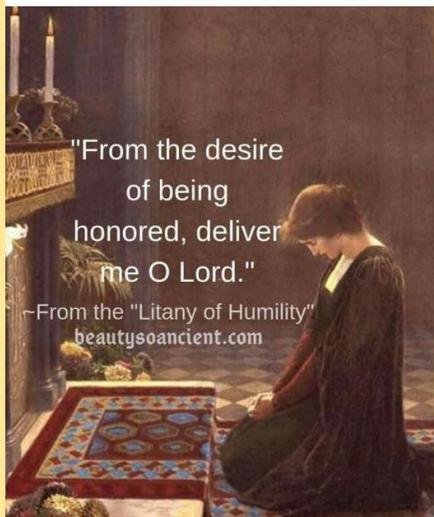


Join in Sydney's favourite free Christmas tradition, uniting families, locals and tourists with a display of digital storytelling projected onto St Mary's Cathedral. Find out more: <https://lightsofchristmas.com.au/>

Prayer for true humility

Dear heavenly Lord,
Why do I hide behind a mask?
You see right through me.
When I say I can't or won't
Acting humble and meek,
Is it really out of fear?
Or maybe I just don't care.
Break down the barriers, oh Lord.
Open up my hard heart
To let you enter inside.
Show me, oh loving Lord,
That true humility
Is letting you into my life
To quiet my fears,
To heal my wounds,
And to set me free.
Let my relationship with you
Be intimate and clear,
United with the Father, the Son
And the Holy Spirit.
Nothing to run from, nothing to hide,
Only purity, truth, love
And faithfulness
To your eternal will.
Give me a confident voice, oh Lord,
To speak simply and clearly
Of my love for you.
Take away my insecurity,
May I trust in Christ alone.
In Jesus name,
Amen.

prayerforanxiety.com



"From the desire
of being
honored, deliver
me O Lord."

—From the "Litany of Humility"
beautysoancient.com