



St Peter's Church, Surry Hills

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Fr. John Macdonald, Administrator

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Feast Days – Octave of Christmas - Year C

Mon 27 Dec	Saint John, apostle, evangelist
Tue 28 Dec	The Holy Innocents, martyrs
Tues 29 Dec	(commemoration of Saint Thomas Becket)
Thu 31 Dec	(commemoration of Saint Sylvester I)
Sat 1 Jan	Marv. the Holy Mother of God. Solemnity

Christmas Octave Mass Times 25 Dec - 1 Jan 2022

Daily Mass: Mon to Sat: 10:00am

Mass times effective 2 Jan 2022

Daily Mass: Tues to Sat: 10:00am

Sunday Mass: 9:00am & 10:30am

Confessions: Sat: 9:30am - 10:00am (during the Christmas season)

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 – Bro. Kevin Francis Guthrie (28/12), 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 Rules and Recommendations in NSW

QR Code check-in is still a legal requirement for entry to places of worship.

According to the Premier's most recent announcement (23 Dec), everyone attending Mass at Saint Peter's is **once again required to wear a face mask** and to maintain at least 1.5m **social distance**. By continuing to practise mask wearing and social distancing in church, we are also obeying core moral teachings of the Church concerning our care for ourselves and our care for the common good.

The Catholic moral principle of regard for the common good requires us to always weigh our individual rights against our care and concern for others. As the State and Church authorities continue to emphasise, the most important instrument in the protection of our own health and the health of the community is for all of us to be fully vaccinated.

Full vaccination also preserves the viability of our medical and hospital systems and reduces unnecessary pressure on our already fatigued medical and nursing professionals.

2021 Christmas Message from Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP:



Christmas is the story of God-made man holding out his hand in friendship to humanity. The offer is real, tangible, personal - even physical.

After two years of isolation, we need it more than ever. In such dark times, Christmas is a ray of light, a sliver of hope.

May the Christmas Babe find a home in the manger of our hearts!

God bless

Anthony Fisher, OP

Link to view Archbishop Anthony Fisher's 2021 full Christmas message on video:

https://comms.sydneycatholic.org/v/75218/8557470/email.html?k=0yLNggFH_2yNt_px6_kv1S5xBCFhi7CIUt1SLPkwABY

The Holy Father's Christmas Homily to the Roman Curia on the humility of God (the Roman Curia is the Pope's "court" which assists him in the governance of the Universal Church) - by Devin Watkins

Officials of the Roman Curia met with Pope Francis on Thursday for the annual exchange of Christmas greetings. The Pope said the audience offers a yearly opportunity to "express our fraternity 'out loud'" and to reflect on the identity and mission of the Church's central governing body.

Pope Francis exchanged Christmas greetings with members of the Roman Curia, and urged them to embrace humility like the Child Jesus in order to leave space for creativity, build communion, and keep the Church's mission focused on Christ.

Humility formed the focus of the Pope's homily, since the King of kings entered the world through precisely that door.

Lepers in need of healing - Pope Francis took the Biblical account of Naaman the Syrian, a military general and leper who sought healing from the prophet Elisha (2 Kgs 5), as an example for a person who covered their disease with bravery and honours.

"We often find this contradiction in our lives: sometimes great gifts are the armour that covers great frailties."

The Pope said there comes a time in every person's life when we must set aside the "world's glory for the fullness of an authentic life."

When Elisha offered Naaman a simple solution to his problem—stripping off his armour and bathing in the River Jordan—the general hesitates at first, before relenting and descending in humility to find healing.

"Once we strip ourselves of our robes, prerogatives, positions and titles, all of us are lepers in need of healing. Christmas is the living reminder of this realization."

Humility embraces humanity - Pope Francis then warned against the temptation of "spiritual worldliness" which sets aside humility in favor of "our role, the liturgy, doctrine, and religious devotion." This leads to vainglory where we dream of glorious undertakings yet spend no time on service or our true mission.

Humility, on the other hand, means "inhabiting" our humanity with "realism, joy, and hope", while looking on our poverty with the love and tenderness of Jesus.

Pride, as the opposite of humility, burns both our link to the past and our growth in the present and future, leaving us only as barren trunks who neither remember nor are able to give life.

"The humble are those who are concerned not simply with the past, but also with the future, since they know how to look ahead, to spread their branches, remembering the past with gratitude. The humble give life, attract others and push onwards towards the unknown that lies ahead."

Style of synodality - The Pope went on to note that everyone is called to humility, in the footsteps of Jesus, so as to encounter God, find salvation, and embrace our brothers and sisters.

He recalled the opening of the synodal journey in October, calling the Roman Curia to embrace the conversion toward the "style of synodality" and lead the Church as a witness. Poverty and simplicity of lifestyle, he said, are concrete ways the Curia can lead along the path of humility.

Pope Francis recalled his opening speech of the Synod and the three ways he offered to concretize humility.

"Participation" expressed through co-responsibility, he said, leaves space for creativity to emerge within various Vatican offices. "Authority becomes service when it shares, involves and helps people to grow."

"Communion" allows us to put Christ back in the centre, encourages healthy working environments, and overcomes the urge to create factions and climb the corporate ladder. "An attitude of service requires, and indeed demands, a good and generous heart, in order to recognize and experience with joy the manifold richness present in the People of God."

“Mission” opens our hearts to embrace Jesus’ “passion for the poor” and those who languish in material or spiritual need. “The Church also reaches out to the poor because we need them: we need their voice, their presence, their questions and criticisms.”

Humility: condition for faith - Pope Francis concluded his homily expressing his hopes that the Roman Curia might embrace the “humility of Christmas and the manger, by the poverty and simplicity with which the Son of God entered into the world.”

As Jesus descended—both in his birth and in his washing of the disciples’ feet at the Last Supper—so are members of the Curia called to recall their own leprosy and need for healing and humility.

“This is the lesson of Christmas: humility is the great condition for faith, for the spiritual life and for holiness. May the Lord grant it to us as a gift, starting with the primordial sign of the Spirit’s presence within us: desire. What we lack, we can at least begin to desire.”

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (Feast day 26 Sun)

A prayer to the Holy Family of Nazareth to bring love to your own family



Heavenly Father, we ask You to bless our family and our Church family.

Open our hearts to receive Your love. May our home be another Nazareth, so that our family may be a place where Your peace and love abides.

Open our eyes to recognize the gift and beauty of life, so that we may find joy in Your presence among us.

Grant us pure hearts seeking holiness, generous hearts full of Your love, **merciful hearts** ready to forgive and **tender hearts** full of kindness. May our family be a sanctuary of life and love, a **beacon of hope** drawing others to your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Holy family of Nazareth, pray for us.

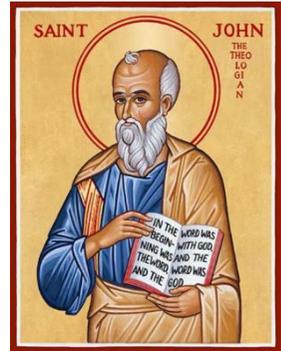
St. John, Apostle and Evangelist (Feast day 27 Dec)

St. John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee and Salome, was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. John was called to be an Apostle by our Lord in the first year of His public ministry. He is considered the same person as John the Evangelist, John of Patmos and the Beloved Disciple. John's older brother was St. James the Great, another one of Jesus' Twelve Apostles. Jesus referred to the brothers as "Boanerges," meaning "sons of thunder." John is believed to be the longest living apostle and the only one not to die a martyr's death.

John, along with Peter and James, were the only witnesses of the raising of Daughter of Jairus, and the closest witnesses to the Agony in Gethsemane. John was the one who reported to Jesus they had forbidden a non-disciple from casting out demons in Jesus' name. This prompted Jesus to state, "he who is not against us is on our side."

John and Peter were the only two apostles sent by Jesus to make preparations for the final Passover meal, the Last Supper. During the meal, St. John sat next to Jesus, leaning on him rather than lying along the couches. John was the only one of the Twelve Apostles who did not forsake the Saviour in the hour of His Passion. He stood faithfully at the cross when the Saviour made him the guardian of His Mother.

After the Assumption of Mary, John went to Ephesus, according to Church tradition. He later became banished by the Roman authorities to the Greek Island of Patmos; this is where he allegedly wrote the Book of Revelation. It is said John was banished in the late 1st century, during the reign of the Emperor Domitian, after being plunged into boiling oil in Rome and suffering no injuries. It is also said that all those who witnessed the miracle in the Colosseum were converted to Christianity. Emperor Domitian was known for his persecution of Christians.



John is known as the author of the Gospel of John and four other books in the New Testament - the three Epistles of John and the Book of Revelation. The authorship of the Gospel is credited to the "disciple whom Jesus loved," and John 21:24 claims the Gospel of John is based on the "Beloved Disciple's" testimony. However, the true authorship has been debated since the year 200. In his Ecclesiastical History, Eusebius states the First Epistle of John and the Gospel of John are agreed upon as John's. Eusebius continues to state the second and third epistles of John are not John the Apostle's. In the Gospel of John, the phrase "the disciple whom Jesus loved," or "the Beloved Disciple" is used five times, but is not used in any other New Testament accounts of Jesus.

St. John is called the Apostle of Charity, a virtue he had learned from his Divine Master, and which he constantly inculcated by word and example. The "beloved disciple" died in Ephesus after AD 98, where a stately church was erected over his tomb. It was afterwards converted into a Mohammedan mosque.

St. John is the patron saint of love, loyalty, friendships, and authors. He is often depicted in art as the author of the Gospel with an eagle, symbolizing "the height he rose to in his gospel." In other icons, he is shown looking up into heaven and dictating his Gospel to his disciple.

The Holy Innocents (Feast day 28 Dec) - A Battle Between Good and Evil – Sara And Justin Kraft

“When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet:

*‘A voice was heard in Ramah,
sobbing and loud lamentation;
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she would not be consoled,
since they were no more.’” (Matthew 2:16-18)*

In the Christmas story, I always think of the bravery of St. Joseph to pick up his family and flee to Egypt so Jesus would not be killed. However, I never think of the innocent children that were killed so Herod could remain in power. We do not know the exact number of boys killed in the massacre. Claims have been made from as few as 6 to as many as 144,000. The Church, in her wisdom, sets aside December 28 to remember these innocent children Herod ordered to be killed.

These little boys bear witness to Christ who was hated by some since the day of his birth. In reading these accounts, I can't help but think of the nights standing watch over a sick child, praying for health. I cannot imagine those families' horror.

Saint Quodvultdeus, who lived in the fifth century, speaks in a sermon of Herod's fear and sacrifices of others so he can remain in power.

“A tiny child is born, who is a great king. Wise men are led to him from afar. They come to adore one who lies in a manger and yet reigns in heaven and on earth. When they tell of one who is born a king, Herod is disturbed. To save his kingdom he resolves to kill him, though if he would have faith in the child, he himself would reign in peace in this life and forever in the life to come.

Why are you afraid, Herod, when you hear of the birth of a king? He does not come to drive you out, but to conquer the devil. But because you do not understand this you are disturbed and in a rage, and to destroy one child whom you seek, you show your cruelty in the death of so many children.

You are not restrained by the love of weeping mothers or fathers mourning the deaths of their sons, nor by the cries and sobs of the children. You destroy those who are tiny in body because fear is destroying your heart. You imagine that if you accomplish your desire you can prolong your own life, though you are seeking to kill Life himself.



Yet your throne is threatened by the source of grace – so small, yet so great – who is lying in the manger. He is using you, all unaware of it, to work out his own purposes freeing souls from captivity to the devil. He has taken up the sons of the enemy into the ranks of God's adopted children.

The children die for Christ, though they do not know it. The parents mourn for the death of martyrs. The child makes of those as yet unable to speak fit witnesses to himself. See the kind of kingdom that is his, coming as he did in order to be this kind of king. See how the deliverer is already working deliverance, the savior already working salvation.

But you, Herod, do not know this and are disturbed and furious. While you vent your fury against the child, you are already paying him homage, and do not know it. How great a gift of grace is here! To what merits of their own do the children owe this kind of victory? They cannot speak, yet they bear witness to Christ. They cannot use their limbs to engage in battle, yet already they bear off the palm of victory.”

On this Feast of the Holy Innocents, we should pray for all those children (and their parents) who have had their lives senselessly taken by force. The story also calls to mind the greater story of salvation as it also makes us harken back to the story of Moses—who just like Jesus came into the world to bring forth a kind of deliverance. *“Then a new king, who knew nothing of Joseph, rose to power in Egypt. He said to his people, “See! The Israelite people have multiplied and become more numerous than we are! Come, let us deal shrewdly with them to stop their increase... Pharaoh then commanded all his people, “Throw into the Nile every boy that is born, but you may let all the girls live.”* (Exodus 1: 8-10, and 22).

Just as Moses would deliver the people of God from bondage in Egypt, so Jesus has come to deliver us from bondage to sin. The connection is made perfectly clear on the mountain of Jesus' transfiguration. *“... he took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.”* (Luke 9:28-31) emphasis added.

Jesus then comes to make a personal work of both transfiguration and exodus in our lives such that turning away from sin, the beauty of God can shine through us. I am always reminded of this when I see pictures of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Though aged in body, she always seems aglow. The story also points to key aspects of the battle between good and evil in our world and in our own lives. These two events in Salvation History make clear that evil will always lash out violently toward the good, taking any means necessary to maintain its power. This means we should never be surprised when we receive resistance for doing good in the world. Nor, should we be surprised by temptations as we try to turn away from sin. In fact, the more committed we are to making change, the stronger the temptations will likely be. Evil will also focus its attack on the weakest and most innocent. In the modern world, this means children within the family. As Christian parents, we must constantly strive to protect not only the physical lives of our children but also their spiritual lives. We must not let modern secularism,

like Herod, snatch away their spiritual lives. Rather, we must identify active practices to foster spiritual development. One way to do this, if you aren't already doing so, is to begin a practice of blessing your children each and every day. Simply make the Sign of the Cross on the child's forehead with your right thumb as you pray: "Bless you, my child, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." **All Holy Innocents, Pray for us!**

Mary, Our Mother, Queen of Heaven teaches us to be humble and meek like your Son , Jesus.

Litany of Humility

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed,....

DELIVER ME, JESUS

From the desire of being loved...

From the desire of being extolled ...

From the desire of being honored ...

From the desire of being praised ...

From the desire of being preferred to others...

From the desire of being consulted ...

From the desire of being approved ...

From the fear of being humiliated ...

From the fear of being despised...

From the fear of suffering rebukes ...

From the fear of being calumniated ...

From the fear of being forgotten ...

From the fear of being ridiculed ...

From the fear of being wronged ...

From the fear of being suspected ...

That others may be loved more than I,...

JESUS, GRANT ME THE GRACE TO DESIRE IT

That others may be esteemed more than I ...

**That, in the opinion of the world,
others may increase and I may decrease ...**

That others may be chosen and I set aside ...

That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...

That others may be preferred to me in everything...

**That others may become holier than I, provided that I may
become as holy as I should...**

JESUS, GRANT ME THE GRACE TO DESIRE IT AMEN..