



## 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 – Christmas Time - Year C

Sun 2 Jan	The Epiphany of the Lord – Solemnity
Mon 3 Jan	The Most Holy Name of Jesus
Fri 7 Jan	Saint Raymond of Penyafort

### 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 holiday season) or by approaching Fr. John

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

### We Pray For

**Our sick and injured** – Nerisa Williams, 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

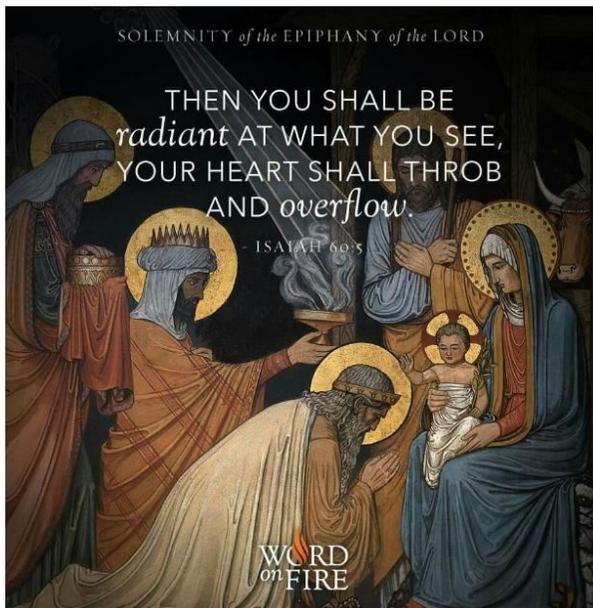
**QR Code check-in** is still a legal requirement for entry to places of worship.

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.

**The Epiphany of the Lord ( Solemnity 2 Jan)** by [Mary M. McGlone](#) Dec 6, 2021



Who were those wanderers who, unimpressed by King Herod, did homage to a newborn babe and allowed an angel to change their travel plans? Our creche

sets, carols and myths tell us they numbered three — an idea deduced from the gifts Matthew mentions — but there's no reason to think that there were not more of them: more people and more gifts. By tradition, they are called kings. If so, probably no more than ourselves who are baptized as priests, prophets and kings. (Not many areas of the world had three monarchs anxious to travel together to discover and revere yet another king.) Better we call them the Magi, a title that hints at mystery, magic and miracles.

Saint Matthew's account of The Epiphany of the Lord borrows key details for his story from Isaiah's prophecies. Isaiah assures the people who have been in darkness that the light of God's glory will shine on them and that their faith will attract people from afar who will come bearing gifts. With that, we have the background for the star, the travellers, the camels and the gifts: all signs of the advent of God's salvation.

Matthew is commenting on Isaiah and portraying Jesus as the fulfilment of ancient hopes. Continuing his commentary, Matthew describes how the Magi questioned King Herod about prophecies that referred to a king to come. Herod called in theologians who, foreshadowing future officials' attitudes about Jesus, quoted prophecies but exhibited no curiosity to see how they might be fulfilled in their own lifetimes. Matthew thus begins his Gospel with Jesus, Emmanuel, endangered among his own people and revered by representatives of the Gentile world. Matthew's Gospel ends with Christ's command to make disciples of all the nations and the promise that as our Emmanuel, he will remain with us until the end.

What does this narrative mean for us today as we begin the year 2022? Perhaps in these uncertain times (will COVID-19 ever end?), the Magi, those people willing to walk together like participants in a synod, can be our guides. More than the time and money required for their journey, they possessed a key combination of self-confidence and desire for more meaning in life. These attitudes urged them to read the signs of the times and to venture into the unknown. They humbly believed there was more wisdom in the world than they had yet discovered. These travellers, unafraid to seek knowledge from afar, were moved — literally — by a holy disquiet, the restlessness St. Augustine says niggles at us until we rest in God. Thus, they set off in a caravan that became the first Christian pilgrimage.

Today, we see signs of a similar holy disquiet. As a result of COVID-19, people are re-evaluating their lives. Researchers have reported that between

January and October 2021, [one in four people in the U.S. quit their jobs](#). Additionally, COVID-19 has made it impossible to ignore both the continuing political divisions among us and the wealth and wellness gaps that isolate us from one another, leaving multitudes of our brothers and sisters unconscionably vulnerable. At the same time, while some of our sick and their families suffered an isolation that magnified and even overshadowed the physical effects of illness, others discovered Zoom and other ways to be in direct, visual contact with their loved ones hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

In his book, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, Pope Francis shares ideas highly applicable to today's feast. He said, "We are not so much living in an epoch of change, but a change of epoch." He says that this change, "accelerated by the coronavirus, is a propitious moment for reading the signs of the times." Avoiding the trap of easy answers, Francis says, "A gap has opened up between the realities and challenges we face and the recipes and solutions available to us. That gap becomes a space in which to reflect, question, and dialogue."

Let us look to the Magi as models. Inspired by the gap between their knowledge and their hopes, they set out to seek meaning that their lives had not yet given them. They reflected together on the signs of their times and sought wisdom from foreigners, confident that truth from another quarter would only add to the truth they already understood. As a synodal people, let us be on the move, discerning the signs of our times while refusing to be awestruck by self-important leaders. Let us share the Magi's humble curiosity. Let us appropriate a share of their courage and confidence to that we too can seek, find and follow Christ in our world.

[St. Joseph Sr. Mary M. McGlone serves on the congregational leadership team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.]

**[Why do we call Mary, the Mother of God? – St Paul Centre for Biblical Theology, 12 Dec 2019](#)**

The image of Mary as Queen Mother is directly related to the first official Marian dogma defined by the Church: Mary's status as Mother of God. The Greek word for the title is *Theotokos*, which literally means "God-bearer." That title is one of the oldest and most commonly used titles for Mary, with Christians using it in the very first centuries of the Church. The title also appears in one of the oldest known Christian prayers, the *Sub*

*Tuum Praesidium* (“Beneath Your Protection”), an early form of the *Memorare* that dates to the third century.

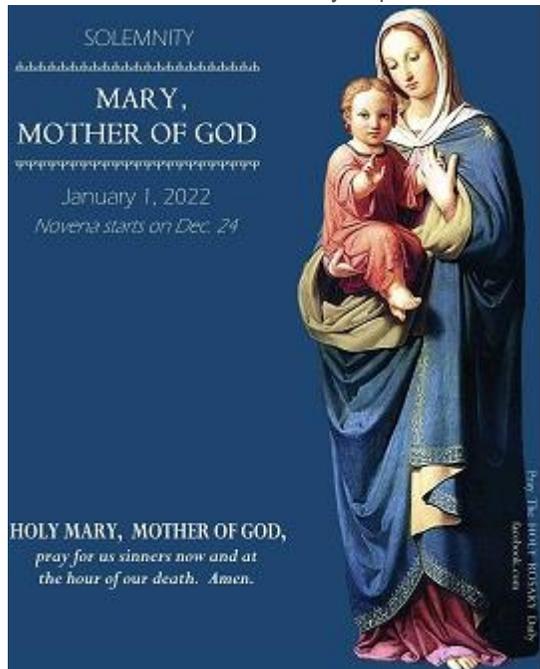
The first Christians called Mary the “Mother of God” without hesitation. There was scriptural precedent, and it seemed logical. If Jesus was God, and Mary was his mother, then that made her the Mother of God. That sort of logic depends on a principle called the “Communication of Idioms.” According to that principle, whatever one says about either of Christ’s natures can be truly said of Christ himself. That’s because His two natures, the divine nature and the human nature, were united in Him. He is one divine person.

In the fifth century, however, some people raised the same objections to the title that many non-Catholics raise today: They argued that the title “Mother of God” implied that Mary was the “originator of God.” Those objectors said that they could accept the title “Mother of Christ,” but not “Mother of God.” At the heart of those objections, however, was an objection to the unity of Christ’s two natures. Mary, they claimed, gave birth only to Christ’s human nature, not his divine nature. The Church, led by Pope Celestine I

and St. Cyril of Alexandria, disagreed. As St. Cyril pointed out, a mother gives birth to a person, not a nature. Accordingly, Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ, who was and is a divine person. Although Mary did not “originate” or “generate” God, she did bear Him in her womb and give birth to Him. She was God’s mother.

The controversy over Mary’s title as “Mother of God” was addressed in 431 A.D. at the Council of Ephesus. There, more was at stake than simply defending Mary’s title. The Christian teaching about Christ’s two natures was the real issue. The Church wanted to settle one

question: Was Jesus one person or two? Rejecting the teaching of the heretic Nestorius, the Church declared that Jesus is one divine person, with two natures—his



mother's human nature and his Father's divine nature. Mary did not give Jesus his divine nature or his divine personhood—those He possessed from all eternity as the only begotten Son of the Father. But she also didn't just give Him His flesh: She gave birth to the whole person. She gave birth to Jesus Christ, both God and man. That is what we confess every time we say the Apostles' Creed.

Calling Mary "Mother of God" states a truth that must be stated in order to protect an essential truth about Christ. In a similar way, that's what all Mary's queenly predecessors did for their sons. One of the three essential tasks of the Queen Mother was to be a sign of her son's legitimacy. She was the link between his father, the former rightful king, and her son, the present rightful king. Likewise, Mary as the virginal "Mother of God" is the link between her Son's humanity and divinity. She is the sign that He is both God and man.

**St. John Paul II's guide to reviewing the past year** (Philip Kosloski - 31/12/21- Aleteia)

***When looking over each year, St. John Paul II wanted everyone to view it in light of the family, expressing gratitude, while also asking forgiveness.***

It is a common custom to review one's life at the end of each calendar year. We do so to remember the many good things that happened to us over the past 12 months, as well as all the struggles we endured.

For St. John Paul II, this act should be done in the light of the family, both our own family and the "human family" in general. He explains this type of review in his first [\*Te Deum\* homily as pope in 1978](#).

***Fostering fraternity in the "human family"***

*This Sunday is also the last day of the year 1978. We have gathered here, in this liturgy to **give thanks to God** for all the good he has bestowed on us and given us the grace to do during the past year, and to **ask his forgiveness** for all that, being contrary to good, is also contrary to his holy will.*

*Allow me, in this **thanksgiving** and in this request for **forgiveness**, to use also the **criterion of the family**, this time, however, in the wider sense. As God is the Father, then the criterion of the family has also this dimension; it refers to all human communities, societies, nations and countries; it refers to the Church and to mankind.*

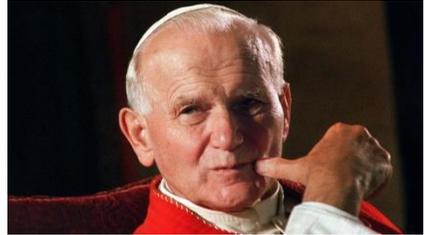
***Concluding this year in this way, let us give thanks to God for everything that—in the various spheres of earthly existence—makes men even more of a "family," that is, more brothers and sisters, who have in common the one Father. At the***

same time, let us **ask for forgiveness for everything that is alien to the common brotherhood of men, that destroys the unity of the human family that threatens it and impedes it.**

This type of review looks critically at our own lives and examines how we helped sow fraternity in our community, or if we sowed discord in the human family.

### ***Protecting life and married love***

In addition to the larger “human family,” St. John Paul II also mentions in that same homily two areas that we should examine in our own lives. He urges everyone to review how you have **protected life and the sanctity of married love.**



*[H]ere it is a question of **two fundamental values** which fall strictly into the context of what we call “**conjugal love.**” The first of them is the value of the person which is expressed in absolute mutual faithfulness until death: the **faithfulness of the husband to his wife and of the wife to her husband.***

*The consequence of this affirmation of the **value of the person**, which is expressed in the mutual relationship between husband and wife, must also be respect for the **personal value of the new life**, that is, of the child, **from the first moment of his conception.***

In this way, we can look at our own lives and see how we have supported the dignity of every human person, starting from their conception. Furthermore, we can examine how we have promoted the value of faithfulness in married life, recognizing the importance of the family and its connection to the fabric of society.

As we look toward the New Year, let us look back and give thanks for many things, but also ask forgiveness from anyone we may have hurt.

## Prayer to the Holy Family



Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,  
I give you my heart and my soul;  
Jesus Mary, and Joseph,  
assist me in my last agony;  
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,  
may I breathe forth my soul  
in peace with you.