



## 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 – Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – (Year C)

Mon 21 Feb	Saint Peter Damian
Tue 22 Feb	The Chair of Saint Peter
Wed 23 Feb	Saint Polycarp

**Sunday Masses:** 9:00am and 10:30am (Sung Mass)

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

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction:** **Fri:** 6:00pm – 7:00pm

**Confessions:** **Fri:** 6:00pm – 6:45pm; **Sat:** 9:30am - 10:00am

**Holy Rosary:** Daily before Mass

### We Pray For:

**Our sick and injured:** Maria de Los Angeles ('Angelines') Agudo, Nerisa Williams, Josephine Finneran, Ana Teresa Rodrigues, Mafalda Triolo, Aimi McEwen, Louise McCann, Marija Barclay, John Yo-un, Dan Southee, Matic (baby).

**Our deceased:** Damien Carroll ((31/1), Julian Ciappara (28/1), Joanna and Tadeusz Wolski (17/1), Rolando (Sr Asunta Marie's brother) (9/1)), Robert Armstrong, Alan Davidson, Peter Hanrahan, Marisa Mandelli (23/11), 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, 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:** Check-in is no longer required for entry to church buildings. Masks wearing are encouraged for indoor settings where you cannot maintain safe distance from others to protect vulnerable people who must access these premises.

The Holy Father set forth the Church's position concerning the Covid virus pandemic and vaccination in his recent address to ambassadors from countries around the world to the HolySee/Vatican City State:

Dear Ambassadors,

In these days, we are conscious that the fight against the pandemic still calls for a significant effort on the part of everyone; certainly, the New Year will continue to be demanding in this regard. The coronavirus continues to cause social isolation and to take lives. Among those who have died, I would like to mention the late Archbishop Aldo Giordano, an Apostolic Nuncio who was well-known and respected in the diplomatic community. At the same time, we have realized that in those places where an effective vaccination campaign has taken place, the risk of severe repercussions of the disease has decreased.

It is therefore important to continue the effort to immunize the general population as much as possible. This calls for a manifold commitment on the personal, political and international levels. First, on the personal level. Each of us has a responsibility to care for ourselves and our health, and this translates into respect for the health of those around us. Health care is a moral obligation. Sadly, we are finding increasingly that we live in a world of strong ideological divides. Frequently people let themselves be influenced by the ideology of the moment, often bolstered by baseless information or poorly documented facts. Every ideological statement severs the bond of human reason with the objective reality of things. The pandemic, on the other hand, urges us to adopt a sort of "reality therapy" that makes us confront the problem head on and adopt suitable remedies to resolve it. Vaccines are not a magical means of healing, yet surely they represent, in addition to other treatments that need to be developed, the most reasonable solution for the prevention of the disease.

A political commitment is thus needed to pursue the good of the general population through measures of prevention and immunization that also engage citizens so that they can feel involved and responsible, thanks to a clear discussion of the problems and the appropriate means of addressing them. The lack of resolute decision-making and clear communication generates confusion, creates mistrust and undermines social cohesion, fuelling new tensions. The result is a "social relativism" detrimental to harmony and unity ... (from the ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE, Benediction Hall, Monday, 10 January 2022)

### **Homily of Pope Francis on "The Beatitudes" at the midday Angelus for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time** (13 Feb 2022)

At the centre of the Gospel of today's Liturgy are the Beatitudes (cf. Lk 6:20-23). It is interesting to note that Jesus, despite being surrounded by a great crowd, proclaims them by addressing them to "his disciples" (v. 20). He speaks to the disciples. Indeed, the Beatitudes define the identity of the disciple of Jesus. They may sound strange, almost incomprehensible to those who are not disciples; whereas, if we ask ourselves what a disciple of Jesus is like, the answer is precisely the Beatitudes. "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God" (v. 20). Blessed are you poor. Jesus says two things to his people: that they are blessed and they are poor; indeed, that they are blessed because they are poor.

In what sense? In the sense that disciples Jesus do not find their joy in money, power, or other material goods; but in the gifts they receive every day from God: life, creation, brothers and sisters, and so on. These are gifts of life. They are content to share even the goods they possess, because they live according to the logic of God. And what is the logic of God? Gratuitousness. The disciple has learned to live in gratuitousness. This poverty is also an attitude towards the meaning of life, because Jesus' disciples do not think about possessing it, about already knowing everything, but rather they know they must learn every day. And this is poverty: the awareness of having to learn every day. The disciple of Jesus, since he or she has this attitude, is a humble, open person, far from prejudice and inflexibility.

There was a good example in last Sunday's Gospel reading: Simon Peter, an expert fisherman, accepts Jesus' invitation to cast his nets at an unusual hour, and then, full of wonder at the miraculous catch, leaves the boat and all his goods to follow the Lord. Peter shows himself to be docile by leaving everything, and in this way, he becomes a disciple. Instead, those who are too attached to their own ideas and their own securities, find it difficult to truly follow Jesus. They follow him a little, only in those things in which "I agree with him and he agrees with me", but then, as far as the rest is concerned, it goes no further. And this is not a disciple. Perhaps they listen to him, but they do not follow him. And so, they fall into sadness. They become sad because the accounts do not add up, because reality escapes their mentality and they find they are dissatisfied. Disciples, on the other hand, know how to question themselves, how to humbly seek God every day, and this allows them to delve into reality, grasping its richness and complexity.

In other words, the disciple accepts the paradox of the Beatitudes: they declare that those who are poor, who lack many goods and recognize this, are blessed, that is, happy. Humanly speaking, we are inclined to think in another way: happy are those who are rich, with many goods, who receive plaudits and are the envy of many, who have all the certainties. But this is a worldly mindset, it is not the way of thinking of the Beatitudes! Jesus, on the contrary, declares worldly success to be a failure, since it is based on a selfishness that inflates and then leaves the heart empty. Faced with the paradox of the Beatitudes, disciples allow themselves to be challenged, aware that it is not God who must enter into our logic, but we into his. This requires a journey, sometimes wearisome, but always accompanied by joy. Because the disciple of Jesus is joyful, with the joy that comes from Jesus. Because, let us remember, the first word Jesus says is: blessed, *beati*, which gives us the name of the Beatitudes. This is the synonym of being disciples of Jesus. The Lord, by freeing us from the slavery of self-centredness, breaks our locks, dissolves our hardness, and opens up to us true happiness, which is often found where we do not expect it to be. It is he who guides our life, not us, with our preconceptions and our demands. Disciples, in the end, are those who let themselves be led by Jesus, who open their heart to Jesus, who listen to him and follow his path.

We might then ask ourselves: do I – each one of us – have the disciple's readiness? Or do I behave with the rigidity of one who believes him- or herself to be right, who feels decent, who feels they have already arrived? Do I allow myself to be "inwardly unhinged" by the paradox of the Beatitudes, or do I stay within the confines of my own ideas? And then, with the logic of the Beatitudes, setting aside the hardships and difficulties, do I feel the joy of following Jesus? This

is the decisive trait of the disciple: the joy of the heart. Let's not forget – the joy of the heart. This is the touchstone for knowing if a person is a disciple: does he or she have joy in the heart? Do I have joy in my heart? This is the point.

May Our Lady, first disciple of the Lord, help us live as open and joyful disciples.

### **The Chair of Saint Peter (Feast day 22 Feb) – Catholic Culture**

This feast brings to mind the mission of teacher and pastor conferred by Christ on Peter, and continued in an unbroken line down to the present Pope. We celebrate the unity of the Church, founded upon the Apostle, and renew our assent to the Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, extended both to truths which are solemnly defined *ex cathedra*, and to all the acts of the ordinary Magisterium.

The feast of the Chair of Saint Peter at Rome has been celebrated from the early days of the Christian era on 18 January, in commemoration of the day when Saint Peter held his first service in Rome. The feast of the Chair of Saint Peter at Antioch, commemorating his foundation of the See of Antioch, has also been long celebrated at Rome, on 22 February. At each place a chair (cathedra) was venerated which the Apostle had used while presiding at Mass. One of the chairs is referred to about 600 by an Abbot Johannes who had been commissioned by Pope Gregory the Great to collect in oil from the lamps which burned at the graves of the Roman martyrs. — *New Catholic Dictionary*



Saint Peter, holding his keys, seated in his chair in Saint Peter's Church Surry Hills

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### **Chair of St. Peter**

Since earliest times, the Roman Church has had a special commemoration of the primatial authority of Saint Peter. As witnessed by one of the Apostolic Fathers, the Roman See has always held a peculiar place in the affection and obedience of orthodox believers because of its "presiding in love" and service over all the Churches of God:

"We shall find in the Gospel that Jesus Christ, willing to begin the mystery of unity in His Church, among all His disciples chose twelve; but that, willing to consummate the mystery of unity in the same Church, among the twelve He chose one. He called His disciples ... and among them He chose twelve. Here is the first separation, and the Apostles chosen. And these are the names of the twelve Apostles: the first, Simon, who is called Peter ... [Mt. 10, 1-2] Here, in a second separation, Saint Peter is set at the head, and called for that reason by the name of Peter, 'which Jesus Christ,' says St. Mark, 'had given him,' in order to prepare, as you will see, the work which He was proposing to raise all His building on that stone.

"All this is yet but a beginning of the mystery of unity. Jesus Christ, in beginning it, still spoke to many: Go, preach; I send you [see Mt. 28, 19]. Now, when He would put the last hand to the mystery of unity, He speaks no longer to many: He marks out Peter personally, and by the new name which He has given him. It is One who speaks to one: Jesus Christ the Son of God to Simon son of Jonas; Jesus Christ, who is the true Stone, strong of Himself, to Simon, who is only the stone by the strength which Jesus Christ imparts to him. It is to him that Christ speaks, and in speaking acts on him, and stamps upon him His own immovableness. And I, He says, say to you, you are Peter; and, He adds, upon this rock I will build my Church, and, He concludes, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. [Mt. 16, 18] To prepare him for that honour Jesus Christ, who knows that faith in Himself is the foundation of His Church, inspires Peter with a faith worthy to be the foundation of that admirable building. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. [Mt. 16, 16] By that bold preaching of the faith he draws to himself the inviolable promise which makes him the foundation of the Church.

Excerpted from *The See of St. Peter*, Jacques Bossuet

The law of the Catholic Church ("Canon Law") concerning the Roman Pontiff (aka the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, the Holy Father, the Servant of the Servants of God, the Vicar of Christ on Earth), concerning his pastoral governance as Teacher, Sanctifier and Ruler (Prophet, Priest and King) of the Universal Church, promulgated by Saint Pope John Paul II in 1983:

#### THE ROMAN PONTIFF

Can. 331 The bishop of the Roman Church, in whom continues the office given by the Lord uniquely to Peter, the first of the Apostles, and to be transmitted to his successors, is the head of the college of bishops, the Vicar of Christ, and the pastor of the universal Church on earth. By virtue of his office he possesses supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he is always able to exercise freely.

Can. 332 §1. The Roman Pontiff obtains full and supreme power in the Church by his acceptance of legitimate election together with episcopal consecration. Therefore, a person elected to the supreme pontificate who is marked with episcopal character obtains this power from the moment of acceptance. If the person elected lacks episcopal character, however, he is to be ordained a bishop immediately.

§2. If it happens that the Roman Pontiff resigns his office, it is required for validity that the resignation is made freely and properly manifested but not that it is accepted by anyone.

Can. 333 §1. By virtue of his office, the Roman Pontiff not only possesses power over the universal Church but also obtains the primacy of ordinary power over all particular churches and groups of them. Moreover, this primacy strengthens and protects the proper, ordinary, and immediate power which bishops possess in the particular churches entrusted to their care.

§2. In fulfilling the office of supreme pastor of the Church, the Roman Pontiff is always joined in communion with the other bishops and with the universal Church. He nevertheless has the right,

according to the needs of the Church, to determine the manner, whether personal or collegial, of exercising this office.

§3. No appeal or recourse is permitted against a sentence or decree of the Roman Pontiff.

Can. 334 Bishops assist the Roman Pontiff in exercising his office. They are able to render him cooperative assistance in various ways, among which is the synod of bishops. The cardinals also assist him, as do other persons and various institutes according to the needs of the times. In his name and by his authority, all these persons and institutes fulfil the function entrusted to them for the good of all the churches, according to the norms defined by law.

Can. 335 When the Roman See is vacant or entirely impeded, nothing is to be altered in the governance of the universal Church; the special laws issued for these circumstances, however, are to be observed.

**Opus Dei Vicar for USA: We are fully united with the Pope** - New York City, N.Y., Apr 5, 2018 / 15:56 pm, Catholic News Agency

In a letter to the New York Times, the U.S. vicar of Opus Dei said that the personal prelature has no conflict with Pope Francis, but supports him and is united with his mission.

"From my perspective, I don't see that there's any conflict with the Holy Father. Love for the Holy Father is part of our DNA. We pray for him every day. We learn from him," Msgr. Thomas Bohlin told CNA April 5. He quoted Opus Dei's founder, St. Josemaria Escriva, who used to say that Opus Dei had three great loves in the Church: "Christ, Mary, and the pope."

Bohlin spoke to CNA after responding by [letter](#) to the mention of Opus Dei in a March 24 [opinion piece](#) in the New York Times, written by Paul Elie, a senior fellow at Georgetown's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs.

"While John Paul forged a relationship with Opus Dei - the strict and secretive movement with roots in the post war Spain of Francisco Franco - Francis is at ease with the Community of Sant'Egidio, founded in Rome during the student uprisings of 1968 and now present in 70 countries, working with the poor, migrants, the elderly and people with AIDS," Elie wrote. Msgr. Bohlin responded in an April 3 letter to the Times' editor. "As head of Opus Dei in the United States, I want to affirm that all of us in Opus Dei support the pope and his work as pastor of the universal Church," he said. Pitting Sant'Egidio and Opus Dei in opposition to each other creates a false dichotomy, he said, adding that Pope Francis "can be at ease with both."

Bohlin pointed to several signs of the Pope Francis' support of Opus Dei. "He has prayed at the tomb of Opus Dei's founder in Rome; he has beatified Opus Dei's first prelate, Álvaro del Portillo; and he has appointed several Opus Dei priests as bishops around the world," the vicar said. "Recently, the pope sent a beautiful letter supporting a project for young people (UNIV) organized by members of Opus Dei."

In his comments to CNA, Msgr. Bohlin said he felt compelled to write the letter because "we wanted to make sure that people know that we support the pope, we pray for the pope. He needs our prayer, he needs to feel that support." "We are very much on the wavelength of the Holy Father...We love the pope, and the pope loves and respects Opus Dei too."

Bohlin objected to the depiction of Opus Dei as "strict and secretive," saying that this is a "caricature" of the personal prelature, which is open about its mission in the Church. "Opus Dei is fully a member of the Church. [It] spreads the message of holiness in ordinary life, especially among the laity, to be actively engaged in society through their work and their presence there, to bring the Christian message there and make it felt in the world."

Opus Dei and Sant'Egidio are not opposed to each other, he emphasized, adding, "It's kind of a red herring to try to divide the Church that way." "We are all united with the Holy Father, in his message of mercy and love for the poor, imitating Jesus in this world today, being missionary disciples. All the things that Sant'Egidio stands for are things that we too stand for." While Elie in his opinion piece emphasized the service work being done by Sant'Egidio, Bohlin said Opus Dei also has a strong tradition of service, with projects all over the world. For example, he said, the organization runs a major hospital in Democratic Republic of the Congo, schools for poor children in Guatemala, and an inner-city centre for kids in Chicago.

Bohlin clarified that Opus Dei does not have a specific mission to serve in one particular way. Rather, he said, "we try to set people on fire with the love of Christ," and then encourage them to serve in whatever way they feel called. Members of Opus Dei work in hospitals, schools, homeless shelters, pro-life organizations and other charitable outreaches. "We leave people a lot of freedom, but we urge them, 'Take your talents, and go out and serve,'" he said.

### **Saint Polycarp (Feast day 23 Feb), CNA**

On Feb. 23, the Catholic Church remembers the life and martyrdom of St. Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle and evangelist St. John. Polycarp is celebrated on the same date by Eastern Orthodox Christians, who also honour him as a Saint.

Polycarp is known to later generations primarily through the account of his martyrdom, rather than by a formal biography. However, it can be determined from that account that he was born around the year 69 AD. From the testimony he gave to his persecutors – stating he had served Christ for 86 years – it is clear that he was either raised as a Christian, or became one in his youth.

Growing up among the Greek-speaking Christians of the Roman Empire, Polycarp received the teachings and recollections of individuals who had seen and known Jesus during his earthly life. This important connection – between Jesus' first disciples and apostles and their respective students – served to protect the Catholic Church against the influence of heresy during its earliest days, particularly against early attempts to deny Jesus' bodily incarnation and full humanity.

Polycarp's most significant teacher, with whom he studied personally, was St. John – whose contributions to the Bible included not only the clearest indication of Jesus' eternal divinity, but also the strongest assertions of the human nature he assumed on behalf of mankind. By contrast, certain tendencies had already emerged among the first Christians – to deny the reality of Jesus' literal suffering, death, and resurrection, regarding them as mere "symbols" of highly abstract ideas. With John's help, Polycarp may have been the one who compiled, edited, and published the New Testament

Another Catholic teacher of the second century, St. Irenaeus, wrote that Polycarp "was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ; but he was also, by apostles, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna." In a surviving letter that he wrote to the Philippians, he reminded that Church – which had also received the teaching of St. Paul – not to surrender their faith to the "gnostic" teachers claiming to teach a more intellectually refined gospel.

"For every one who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is antichrist," he wrote – citing St. John himself – "and whosoever shall not confess the testimony of the Cross, is of the devil; and whosoever shall pervert the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts and say that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, that man is the firstborn of Satan."

"Let us therefore, without ceasing, hold fast by our hope and by the pledge of our righteousness," Polycarp taught – as he went on to explain that both hope and righteousness depended upon "Jesus Christ, who took up our sins in His own body upon the cross." With eloquence and clarity, he reminded the Philippian Church that Christ, "for our sakes, endured all things – so that we might live in him."

However, Polycarp's most eloquent testimony to his faith in Jesus came not through his words, but through his martyrdom, described in another early Christian work. The Church of Smyrna, in present-day Turkey, compiled their recollections of their bishop's death at the hands of public authorities in a letter to another local church.

"We have written to you, brethren, as to what relates to the martyrs, and especially to the blessed Polycarp" – who, in the words of the Catholics of Smyrna, "put an end to the persecution – having, as it were, set a seal upon it by his martyrdom."

Around the year 155, Polycarp became aware that government authorities were on the lookout for him, seeking to stamp out the Catholic Church's claim of obeying a higher authority than the Emperor. He retreated to a country house and occupied himself with constant prayer, before receiving a vision of his death that prompted him to inform his friends: "I must be burned alive." He changed locations, but was betrayed by a young man who knew his whereabouts and confessed under torture.

He was captured on a Saturday evening by two public officials, who urged him to submit to the state demands. "What harm is there," one asked, "in saying, 'Caesar is Lord,' and in sacrificing to him, with the other ceremonies observed on such occasions, so as to make sure of safety?" "I shall not do as you advise me," he answered. Outraged by his response, the officials had him violently thrown from their chariot and taken to an arena for execution. Entering the stadium, the bishop – along with some of his companions, who survived to tell of it – heard a heavenly voice, saying: "Be strong, and show yourself a man, O Polycarp!"

Before the crowd, the Roman proconsul demanded again that he worship the emperor.

"Hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian," the bishop said. "And if you wish to learn what the doctrines of Christianity are, appoint me a day, and you shall hear them."

"You threaten me with fire," he continued "which burns for an hour, and after a little is extinguished. But you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly." "But," he challenged the proconsul, "what are you waiting for? Bring forth what you will." ... St. Polycarp has been venerated as a Saint since his death in 155.