



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 – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – (Year C)

Mon 14 Feb

Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius

Thur 17 Feb

The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order

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: Anthony Brien, 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.

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), 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, 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 mandatory for entry to places of worship.

According to the NSW Government regulation, 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.

For the above reasons, Pope Francis is now referring to the need for vaccination against the COVID virus as a 'moral obligation'.

The month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family – Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Swithun Parish, UK

The special devotion which proposes the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as the model of virtue of all Christian households began in the 17th century. It started almost simultaneously in Canada and France: **the Association of the Holy Family** was founded in Montreal in 1663, and by the Daughters of the Holy Family in Paris in 1674. This devotion soon spread and in 1893 **Pope Leo XIII** expressed his



approval of a feast under this title and himself composed part of the Office. On account of the flight into Egypt this feast has been observed by the **Copts** from early times. The feast was welcomed by succeeding Pontiffs as an efficacious means for bringing home to the Christian people the example of the Holy Family at Nazareth, and by the restoration of the true spirit of family life, stemming, in some measure, the evils of present-day society. In the words of His Holiness **Pope Leo XIII**, "Nothing truly can be more salutary or efficacious for Christian families to meditate upon than the example of this Holy Family, which embraces the perfection and completeness of all domestic virtues."

From Feast to Fast

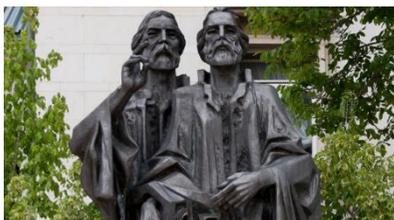
The month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family. This year the entire month of February falls within the liturgical season of Ordinary Time which is represented by the liturgical colour

green. Green, the symbol of hope, is the colour of the sprouting seed and arouses in the faithful the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the hope of a glorious resurrection.

Though the shortest month of the year, February is rich in Liturgical activity. It contains a feast (**Presentation of our Lord**) that bridges two other seasons (Christmas and Easter)! In addition, the faithful may receive in February two of the four major public sacramentals that the Church confers during the liturgical year: blessed candles and the blessing of throats. The Solemnity of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd harkens back to the Christmas mystery of Light except that now, Christ, the helpless babe, is *“the Light of Revelation to the Gentiles who will save his people from their sins.”* Candles, symbolising Christ our Light, will be carried in procession this day, as will be the Paschal candle during the Easter Vigil Liturgy.

“The Light of Revelation” shines more brightly with each successive Sunday of Ordinary Time, until its magnificence – exposing our sinfulness and need for conversion – propels us into the penitential Season of Lent. We prepare to accept the cross of blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday (March 2) and plunge ourselves into anticipating the major exercises of Lent – fasting, prayer, alms giving – laying our thoughts and prayers on the heart of our Mother Mary. She, who offered her Son in the temple and on the Cross, will teach us how to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow after her Son.

Saints Cyril and Methodius’ Stories (Feast day 14 Feb): Franciscan Media



Because their father was an officer in a part of Greece inhabited by many Slavs, these two Greek brothers ultimately became missionaries, teachers, and patrons of the Slavic peoples.

After a brilliant course of studies, Cyril (called Constantine until he became a monk shortly before his death) refused the governorship of a district such as his brother had accepted among the Slavic-

speaking population. Cyril withdrew to a monastery where his brother Methodius had become a monk after some years in a governmental post.

A decisive change in their lives occurred when the Duke of Moravia asked the Eastern Emperor Michael for political independence from German rule and ecclesiastical autonomy (having their own clergy and liturgy). Cyril and Methodius undertook the missionary task.

Cyril's first work was to invent an alphabet, still used in some Eastern liturgies. His followers probably formed the Cyrillic alphabet. Together they translated the Gospels, the psalter, Paul's letters and the liturgical books into Slavonic, and composed a Slavonic liturgy, highly irregular then.

That and their free use of the vernacular in preaching led to opposition from the German clergy. The bishop refused to consecrate Slavic bishops and priests, and Cyril was forced to appeal to Rome. On the visit to Rome, he and Methodius had the joy of seeing their new liturgy approved by Pope Adrian II. Cyril, long an invalid, died in Rome 50 days after taking the monastic habit.

Methodius continued mission work for 16 more years. He was papal legate for all the Slavic peoples, consecrated a bishop and then given an ancient see (now in the Czech Republic). When much of their former territory was removed from their jurisdiction, the Bavarian bishops retaliated with a violent storm of accusation against Methodius. As a result, Emperor Louis the German exiled Methodius for three years. Pope John VIII secured his release. Because the Frankish clergy, still smarting, continued their accusations, Methodius had to go to Rome to defend himself against charges of heresy and uphold his use of the Slavonic liturgy. He was again vindicated.

Legend has it that in a feverish period of activity, Methodius translated the whole Bible into Slavonic in eight months. He died on Tuesday of Holy Week, surrounded by his disciples, in his cathedral church.

Opposition continued after his death, and the work of the brothers in Moravia was brought to an end and their disciples scattered. But the expulsions had the beneficial effect of spreading the spiritual, liturgical, and cultural work of the brothers to Bulgaria, Bohemia and southern Poland. Patrons of Moravia, and specially venerated by Catholic Czechs, Slovaks, Croatians, Orthodox Serbians and Bulgarians, Cyril and Methodius are eminently fitted to guard the long-desired unity of East and West. In 1980, Pope John Paul II named them additional co-patrons of Europe.

Reflection

Holiness means reacting to human life with God's love: human life as it is, crisscrossed with the political and the cultural, the beautiful and the ugly, the selfish and the saintly. For Cyril and Methodius much of their daily cross had to do with the language of the liturgy. They are not saints because they got the liturgy into Slavonic, but because they did so with the courage and humility of Christ.

The Story of the Seven Founders of the Servite Order (Feast day 17 Feb)

Can you imagine seven prominent men of Boston or Denver banding together, leaving their homes and professions, and going into solitude for a life directly given to God? That is what happened in the cultured and prosperous city of Florence in the middle of the 13th century. The city was torn with political strife as well as the heresy of the Cathari, who believed that physical reality was inherently evil. Morals were low and religion seemed meaningless.

In 1240, seven noblemen of Florence mutually decided to withdraw from the city to a solitary place for prayer and direct service of God. Their initial difficulty was providing for their dependents, since two were still married and two were widowers. Their aim was to lead a life of penance and prayer, but they soon found themselves disturbed by constant visitors from Florence. They next withdrew to the deserted slopes of Monte Senario.

In 1244, under the direction of Saint Peter of Verona, O.P., this small group adopted a religious habit similar to the Dominican habit, choosing to live under the Rule of St.

Augustine and adopting the name of the Servants of Mary. The new Order took a form more like that of the mendicant friars than that of the older monastic Orders. Members of the community came to the United States from Austria in 1852 and settled in New York and later in Philadelphia. The two American provinces developed from the foundation made by Father Austin Morini in 1870 in Wisconsin.

Community members combined monastic life and active ministry. In the monastery, they led a life of prayer, work and silence while in the active apostolate they engaged in parochial work, teaching, preaching, and other ministerial activities.



Reflection

The time in which the seven Servite founders lived is very easily comparable to the situation in which we find ourselves today. It is “the best of times and the worst of times,” as Dickens once wrote. Some, perhaps many, feel called to a countercultural life, even in religion. All of us are faced in a new and urgent way with the challenge to make our lives decisively centred in Christ.

Pope Francis: What it does (and doesn't) mean to pray to a saint: Feb 2, 2022 – “America” Review

In recent weeks we have been able to deepen our understanding of the figure of Saint Joseph, guided by the few but important pieces of information given in the Gospels, and also by the aspects of his personality that the Church over the centuries has been able to highlight through prayer and devotion. Starting precisely from this *sentire commune* (common feeling) of the Church that has accompanied the figure of St Joseph, today I would like to focus on an important article of faith that can enrich our Christian life and also shape our relationship with the saints and with our deceased loved ones in the best possible way: I am talking about the communion of saints.

We often say, in the Creed, “I believe in the communion of saints.” But if you ask what the communion of saints is, I remember as a child I used to answer immediately, “Ah, the saints receive Communion.” It’s something that...we don’t understand what we are saying. What is the communion of saints? It’s not the saints receiving Communion, it’s not that. It’s something else.

Sometimes even Christianity can fall into forms of devotion that seem to reflect a mentality that is more pagan than Christian. The fundamental difference is that our prayer and our devotion of the faithful people is not based, in these cases, on trust in a human being, or in an image or an object, even when we know that they are sacred. The prophet Jeremiah reminds us: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man, [...] blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord” (17:5,7).

Even when we rely fully on the intercession of a saint, or even more so that of the Virgin Mary, our trust only has value in relation to Christ. As if the path toward this saint or toward Our Lady does not end there, no. Not there, but in relationship with Christ. He is the bond, Christ is the bond that unites us to him and to each other, and which has a specific name: This bond that unites us all, between ourselves and us with Christ, it is the “communion of saints.”

It is not the saints who work miracles, no! “This saint is so miraculous....” No, stop there. The saints don’t work miracles, but only the grace of God that acts through them. Miracles are done by God, by the grace of God acting through a holy person, a righteous person. This must be made clear. There are people who say, “I don’t believe in God, I don’t know, but I believe in this saint.” No, this is wrong. The saint is an intercessor, one who prays for us and we pray to him, and he prays for us and the Lord gives us grace: the Lord, through the saint. What, then, is the “communion of saints”? The Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms: “The communion of saints is the Church” (no. 946). See what a beautiful definition this is! “The communion of saints is the Church.” What does this mean? That the Church is reserved for the perfect? No. It means that it is the community of saved sinners [*peccatori salvati*]. The Church is the community of saved sinners. It’s beautiful, this definition. No one can exclude themselves from the Church, we are all saved sinners. Our holiness is the fruit of God’s love manifested in Christ, who sanctifies us by loving us in our misery and saving us from it.

Thanks always to him we form one single body, says St. Paul, in which Jesus is the head and we are the members (cf. 1 Cor 12:12). This image of the Body of Christ and the image of the body immediately makes us understand what it means to be bound to one another in communion: Let us listen to what St. Paul says: “If one member suffers,” writes St. Paul, “all the members suffer together; and if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with him. Now you are the body of Christ and, each according to his part, his members” (1 Cor 12:26-27). This is what Paul says: we are all one body, all united through faith, through baptism... All in communion: united in communion with Jesus Christ. And this is the communion of saints.

Dear brothers and dear sisters, the joy and sorrow that touch my life affect everyone, just as the joy and sorrow that touch the life of the brother and sister next to us also affect me. I cannot be indifferent to others, because we are all in one body, in communion. In this sense, even the sin of an individual person always affects everyone, and the love of each individual person affects everyone. In virtue of the communion of saints, this union, every member of the Church is bound to me in a profound way. But I don’t say “to me” because I am the pope;

[I say] to each one of us he is bound, we have been bound, and bound in a profound way and this bond is so strong that it cannot be broken even by death. Even by death. In fact, the communion of saints does not concern only those brothers and sisters who are beside me at this historic moment, or who live in this historic moment, but also those who have concluded their journey, the earthly pilgrimage and crossed the threshold of death. They too are in communion with us. Let us consider, dear brothers and sisters, that in Christ no one can ever truly separate us from those we love because the bond is an existential bond, a strong bond that is in our very nature; only the manner of being together with one another then changes, but nothing and no one can break this bond.

“Father, let’s think about those who have denied the faith, who are apostates, who are the persecutors of the Church, who have denied their baptism: Are these also at home?” Yes, these too. All of them. The blasphemers, all of them. We are brothers. This is the communion of saints. The communion of saints holds together the community of believers on earth and in heaven, and on earth the saints, the sinners, all.

In this sense, the relationship of friendship that I can build with a brother or sister beside me, I can also establish with a brother or sister in heaven. The saints are friends with whom we very often establish friendly relations. What we call devotion to a saint—“I am very devoted to this or that saint”—what we call devotion is actually a way of expressing love from this very bond that unites us. Also, in everyday life one can say, “But this person has such devotion for his elderly parents”: no, it is a manner of love, an expression of love. And we all know that we can always turn to a friend, especially when we are in difficulty and need help. And we have friends in heaven. We all need friends; we all need meaningful relationships to help us get through life. Jesus, too, had his friends, and he turned to them at the most decisive moments of his human experience.

In the history of the Church there are some constants that accompany the believing community: first of all, the great affection and the very strong bond that the Church has always felt towards Mary, Mother of God and our Mother. But also the special honour and affection she has bestowed on St. Joseph. After all, God entrusts to him the most precious things he has: his Son Jesus and the Virgin Mary.

It is always thanks to the communion of saints that we feel that the men and women saints who are our patrons—because of the name we bear, for example, because of the Church to which we belong, because of the place where we live, and so on, as well as through personal devotion—are close to us. And this is the trust that must always animate us in turning to them at decisive moments in our lives. It’s not some kind of magic, it’s not superstition, it’s devotion to the saints. It’s simply talking to a brother, a sister, who is in the presence of God, who has led a righteous life, a model life, and is now in the presence of God. And I talk to this brother, this sister, and ask for their intercession for the needs that I have.

Precisely for this reason, I want to conclude this catechesis with a prayer to St. Joseph to which I am particularly attached and which I have recited every day for more than 40 years. It is a prayer that I found in a prayer book of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary, from the 1700s, the end of the eighteenth century. It is very beautiful, but more than a prayer it is a

challenge, to this friend, to this father, to this our guardian, Saint Joseph. It would be wonderful if you could learn this prayer and repeat it. I will read it.

“Glorious Patriarch St. Joseph, whose power makes the impossible possible, come to my aid in these times of anguish and difficulty. Take under your protection the serious and troubling situations that I commend to you, that they may have a happy outcome. My beloved father, all my trust is in you. All my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power. Amen.”

And it ends with a challenge, this is to challenge St. Joseph: “You can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power.” This is a prayer... I have been entrusting myself to St. Joseph every day with this prayer for more than 40 years: It's an old prayer. Amen.

'Living in the Light' - A Spiritual Conversation led by Margaret Hill from Christian Life Community (CLC); 7.30pm-8.30pm **Wednesday 16 February** in the Duffy Hall
All are welcome. More about CLC visit: clcaustralia.org.au



INVITATION

Bishop Terry Brady invites you to attend

A day of reflection on the Plenary Council and Synod of Bishops

Led by Sr Monica Cavanagh RSJ

On Saturday February 26, 2022

at

Mary MacKillop Place, 7 Mount St, North Sydney.

From 9.30am to 3.00pm.

A light lunch will be provided.

RSVP Sr Jo Brady RSJ at jo.brady@sydneycatholic.org
By February 14 2022