



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 – First Sunday in Lent (Year C/2)

Mon 7 Mar	Saints Perpetua and Felicity
Tue 8 Mar	Saint John of God
Wed 9 Mar	Saint Frances of Rome

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

Stations of the Cross: Fridays after Mass during Lent

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: Sebastian Gomes, Neville Stapleton, 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

PARISH WORKING BEE: All able bodied parishioners to join a "working bee" on this Tuesday 8 March between 5:00pm and 7:00pm. We will meet in the parish courtyard.

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Lent is a favourable time for personal and community renewal, as it leads us to the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For our Lenten journey in 2022, we will do well to reflect on Saint Paul's exhortation to the Galatians: "Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity (kairós), let us do good to all" (Gal. 6:9-10).

1. SOWING AND REAPING

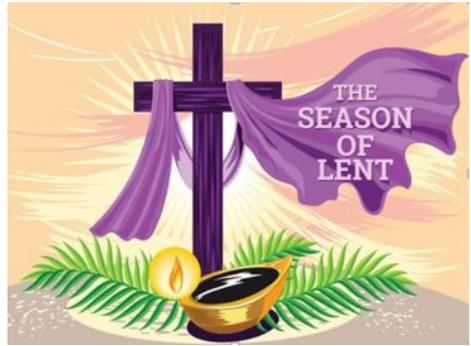
In these words, the Apostle evokes the image of sowing and reaping, so dear to Jesus (Mt. 13). St. Paul speaks to us of a kairós: an opportune time for sowing goodness in view of a future harvest. What is this "opportune time" for us? Lent is certainly such an opportune time, but so is our entire existence, of which Lent is in some way an image. All too often in our lives, greed, pride and the desire to possess, accumulate and consume have the upper hand, as we see from the story of the foolish man in the Gospel parable, who thought his life was safe and secure because of the abundant grain and goods he had stored in his barns (Lk. 12:16-21). Lent invites us to conversion, to a change in mindset, so that life's truth and beauty may be found not so much in possessing as in giving, not so much in accumulating as in sowing and sharing goodness.

The first to sow is God himself, who with great generosity "continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family" (Fratelli Tutti (FT), 54). During Lent we are called to respond to God's gift by accepting His word, which is "living and active" (Heb. 4:12). Regular listening to the word of God makes us open and docile to his working (Jas. 1:21) and bears fruit in our lives. This brings us great joy, yet even more, it summons us to become God's co-workers (1 Cor 3:9). By making good use of the present time (Eph. 5:16), we too can sow seeds of goodness. This call to sow goodness should not be seen as a burden but a grace, whereby the Creator wishes us to be actively united with his own bountiful goodness.

What about the harvest? Do we not sow seeds in order to reap a harvest? Of course! Saint Paul points to the close relationship between sowing and reaping when he says: "Anyone who sows sparsely will reap sparsely as well, and anyone who sows generously will reap generously as well" (2 Cor. 9:6). But what kind of harvest are we talking about? A first fruit of the goodness we sow appears in ourselves and our daily lives, even in our little acts of kindness. In God, no act of love, no matter how small, and no "generous effort" will ever be lost (Evangelii Gaudium, 279). Just as we recognize a tree by its fruits (Mt. 7:16, 20), so a life full of good deeds radiates light (Mt. 5:14-16) and carries the fragrance of Christ to the world (2 Cor. 2:15). Serving God in freedom from sin brings forth fruits of sanctification for the salvation of all (Rom. 6:22).

In truth, we see only a small portion of the fruits of what we sow, since, according to the Gospel proverb, "one sows, while another reaps" (Jn. 4:37). When we sow for the benefit of others, we share in God's own benevolent love: "it is truly noble to place our hope in the hidden power of the seeds of goodness we sow, and thus to initiate processes whose fruits will be reaped by others" (FT, 196). Sowing goodness for the benefit of others frees us from narrow self-interest,

infuses our actions with gratuitousness, and makes us part of the magnificent horizon of God's benevolent plan. The word of God broadens and elevates our vision: it tells us that the real harvest is eschatological, the harvest of the last, undying day. The mature fruit of our lives and actions is "fruit for eternal life" (Jn. 4:36), our "treasure in heaven" (Lk. 12:33; 18:22). Jesus himself uses the image of the seed that dies in the ground in order to bear fruit as a symbol of the mystery of his death and resurrection (Jn. 12:24); while Saint Paul uses the same image to speak of the resurrection of our bodies: "What is sown is perishable, but what is raised is imperishable; what is sown is contemptible but what is raised is glorious; what is sown is weak, but what is raised is powerful; what is sown is a natural body, and what is raised is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44). The hope of resurrection is the great light that the risen Christ brings to the world, for "if our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are of all people the most pitiable. In fact, however, Christ has been raised from the dead, as the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:19-20). Those who are intimately united to him in love "by dying a death like his" (Rom. 6:5) will also be united to his resurrection for eternal life (Jn. 5:29). "Then the upright will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Mt. 13:43).



2. "LET US NOT GROW TIRED OF DOING GOOD"

Christ's resurrection enlivens earthly hopes with the "great hope" of eternal life, planting the seed of salvation in our present time (cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 3; 7). Bitter disappointment at shattered dreams, deep concern for the challenges ahead and discouragement at the poverty of our resources, can make us tempted to seek refuge in self-centredness and indifference to the suffering of others. Indeed, even our best resources have their limitations: "Youths grow tired and weary, the young stumble and fall" (Is. 40:30). Yet God "gives strength to the weary, he strengthens the powerless... Those who hope in the Lord will regain their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles; though they run they will not grow weary, though they walk they will never tire (Is. 40:29, 31). The Lenten season calls us to place our faith and hope in the Lord (1 Pet. 1:21), since only if we fix our gaze on the risen Christ (Heb. 12:2) will we be able to respond to the Apostle's appeal, "Let us never grow tired of doing good" (Gal. 6:9).

Let us not grow tired of praying. Jesus taught us to "pray always without becoming weary" (Lk. 18:1). We need to pray because we need God. Thinking that we need nothing other than ourselves is a dangerous illusion. If the pandemic has heightened the awareness of our own personal and social fragility, may this Lent allow us to experience the consolation provided by faith in God, without whom we cannot stand firm (Is. 7:9). No one attains salvation alone, since we are all in the same boat, amid the storms of history; and certainly no one reaches salvation without God, for only the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ triumphs over the dark waters of death. Faith does not spare us life's burdens and tribulations, but it does allow us to face them in union with God in Christ, with the great hope that does not disappoint, whose pledge is the love that God has poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:1-5).

Let us not grow tired of uprooting evil from our lives. May the corporal fasting to which Lent calls us fortify our spirit for the battle against sin. Let us not grow tired of asking for forgiveness in the

Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, knowing that God never tires of forgiving. Let us not grow tired of fighting against concupiscence, that weakness which induces to selfishness and all evil, and finds in the course of history a variety of ways to lure men and women into sin (FT, 166). One of these is addiction to the digital media, which impoverishes human relationships. Lent is a propitious time to resist these temptations and to cultivate instead a more integral form of human communication made up of “authentic encounters,” face-to-face and in person. Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity towards our neighbours. During this Lent, may we practice almsgiving by giving joyfully (2 Cor. 9:7). God who “supplies seed to the sower and bread for food” (2 Cor. 9:10) enables each of us not only to have food to eat, but also to be generous in doing good to others. While it is true that we have our entire life to sow goodness, let us take special advantage of this Lenten season to care for those close to us and to reach out to our brothers and sisters who lie wounded along the path of life (Lk. 10:25-37). Lent is a favourable time to seek out – and not to avoid – those in need; to reach out – and not to ignore – those who need a sympathetic ear and a good word; to visit – and not to abandon – those who are lonely. Let us put into practice our call to do good to all, and take time to love the poor and needy, those abandoned and rejected, those discriminated against and marginalized (FT, 193).

3. “IF WE DO NOT GIVE UP, WE SHALL REAP OUR HARVEST IN DUE TIME”

Each year during Lent we are reminded that “goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day.” Let us ask God to give us the patient perseverance of the farmer (Jas. 5:7), and to persevere in doing good, one step at a time. If we fall, let us stretch out our hand to the Father, who always lifts us up. If we are lost, if we are misled by the enticements of the evil one, let us not hesitate to return to God, who “is generous in forgiving” (Is. 55:7). In this season of conversion, sustained by God’s grace and by the communion of the Church, let us not grow tired of doing good. The soil is prepared by fasting, watered by prayer and enriched by charity. Let us believe firmly that “if we do not give up, we shall reap our harvest in due time” and that, with the gift of perseverance, we shall obtain what was promised (Heb. 10:36), for our salvation and the salvation of others (1 Tim. 4:16). By cultivating fraternal love towards everyone, we are united to Christ, who gave his life for our sake (2 Cor. 5:14-15), and we are granted a foretaste of the joy of the kingdom of heaven, when God will be “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). May the Virgin Mary, who bore the Saviour in her womb and “pondered all these things in her heart” (Lk. 2:19), obtain for us the gift of patience. May she accompany us with her maternal presence, so that this season of conversion may bring forth fruits of eternal salvation. Rome, St. John Lateran, Nov. 11, 2021, Memorial of St Martin, Bishop.

Russian Orthodox priests: no call for peace should be rejected – by Andrea De Angelis, Vatican City, 2 Mar 2022

Reconciliation, forgiveness, dialogue, and the full awareness that there can be no room for violence are underscored in an appeal for peace by a group of 233 clerics of the Russian Orthodox Church, who also expressed hopes that all soldiers, Russian and Ukrainian, can return home unharmed.

A group of 233 priests and deacons of the Russian Orthodox Church has launched a strong appeal to all those who can bring an end to the war in Ukraine. They have described the situation as “fratricidal” and called for reconciliation and an immediate cease-fire. They write: “We mourn the ordeal to which our brothers and sisters in Ukraine were undeservedly

subjected". The appeal came following the Sunday of the Last Judgement and in the week before Forgiveness Sunday (the two Sundays preceding Great Lent in the Eastern calendar).
The Last Judgement

Recalling that each person's life is a unique and priceless gift from God, the priests and deacons stress that the Last Judgement awaits all. "No earthly authority, no doctor, no guard," they read, "will protect us from this judgement. Concerned for the salvation of every person who considers himself a child of the Russian Orthodox Church, we do not want him to come to this judgement, carrying a heavy burden. Let us remember that the blood of Christ, shed by the Saviour for the life of the world, will be received in the sacrament of Communion by those who give murderous orders, not for life, but for eternal torment".

An appeal to the soldiers

In the appeal, the soldiers who are fighting the war are remembered and hopes are expressed "for all of them, both Russians and Ukrainians, to return unharmed to their homes and families. It saddens us to think of the grief that our children and grandchildren in Russia and Ukraine will have to bridge in order to begin to be friends again, to respect and love each other". The firm conviction is also expressed that the Ukrainian people must be free to make their own choices, "not under the crosshairs of machine guns, without pressure from the West or the East".

Reconciliation

Looking forward to Forgiveness Sunday, the 233 Russian Orthodox clerics recall that "the gates of heaven will be open to all, even to those who have sinned greatly, if they ask forgiveness of those whom they have despised, insulted, or killed at their hands or at their will". They emphasise that there is no alternative to mutual reconciliation. With the wish to start Lent in a spirit of faith, hope and love, the message concludes by reiterating that "no non-violent appeal for peace and an end to war should be rejected by force and considered as a violation of the law, because this is the divine commandment: Blessed are the peacemakers". The invitation to dialogue is underscored, because "only the ability to listen to the other can give hope of a way out of the abyss into which our countries have been thrown in so few days".

Young Catholics deliver critique of US church leaders' climate silence straight to the pope - by Brian Roewe, 26 Feb 2022

Henry Glynn was blunt as he spoke directly to the pope.

"Our experience is priests never discuss climate change," the Creighton University junior said during a virtual conversation that 130 university students and young Catholics held Thursday with Pope Francis as part of a listening session for the synod on synodality hosted by Loyola University Chicago.

The issue of climate change, Glynn said, is "the issue that profoundly worries our generation." As his synodal group, consisting of students in the central U.S. and Canada, conversed before their meeting with Francis, he said they discerned "a shared frustration" about the lack of leadership they see from the U.S. church on the issue of accelerating temperatures that threatens the entire planet.

"Our generation values authenticity, and deplores hypocrisy," Glynn told Francis. "U.S. Catholic leaders' failure to share and enact the church's own climate teachings is disillusioning young people," adding that the similar failure among political leaders "sows doubt and cynicism among us."

The moment was one of the most direct critiques delivered during the nearly two-hour discussion. And Glynn, an intern in Washington, D.C., with the Catholic Climate Covenant whose day began with a Google search about what to wear to a papal audience, was determined not to miss his chance to take his generation's frustrations straight to the pope. "I think I would have been more nervous to say those things if I never read *Laudato Si'*, or if I didn't know anything about Pope Francis," he told EarthBeat as he was still processing the experience hours after the Zoom session. "I think I would have thought that, 'Like really? I'm going to tell him that his bishops aren't doing their job, like to his face? I don't know if that's a good idea.' "

Part of what gave him the confidence is that his synodal cohort came with receipts. A study co-authored by his fellow panelist, Emily Burke, found that less than 1% of columns by U.S. bishops in diocesan newspapers have mentioned climate change in the six-plus years since Francis issued his encyclical "*Laudato Si'*, on Care for Our Common Home."

Burke, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who attended classes around the meeting with Francis, said it was "surreal" to hear the research she conducted while at Creighton cited to the pope. She watched closely as Francis sat up in his chair and took notes as Glynn summarized the silence and inaction from their church leaders around climate and environmental issues.

"And I'm sure he's well aware of it, but that lay people are aware of it, too, and young people are aware of it, too, I think is important for him to hear," she said.

The idea to raise the topic of climate change with Francis emerged from the biweekly meetings their synodal group held in the month they had to prepare. Tasked with looking at the root causes of migration, the group — which included a number of students who were migrants or had migrant family members — eventually talked about climate. The United Nations estimates more than 20 million people annually are displaced by extreme weather events, which are intensifying and becoming more prevalent as global temperatures rise. A 2017 study from Cornell University projected there could be as many as 1.4 billion climate refugees by 2060. Or, from the perspective of many of the students in the group, before they reach age 60 ... (To read the remainder of this article you might like to click on the link:

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/earthbeat/young-catholics-deliver-critique-us-church-leaders-climate-silence-straight-pope>)



Pope Francis speaks during a virtual dialogue with Catholic university students from across the Americas Feb. 24. (NCR screenshot/YouTube)

Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity (Feast day 7 Mar) – Franciscan Media

"When my father in his affection for me was trying to turn me from my purpose by arguments and thus weaken my faith, I said to him, 'Do you see this vessel—water pot or whatever it may

be? Can it be called by any other name than what it is?' 'No,' he replied. 'So also I cannot call myself by any other name than what I am—a Christian.'"

So writes Perpetua: young, beautiful, well-educated, a noblewoman of Carthage in North Africa, mother of an infant son and chronicler of the persecution of the Christians by Emperor Septimius Severus.

Perpetua's mother was a Christian and her father a pagan. He continually pleaded with her to deny her faith. She refused and was imprisoned at 22.



In her diary, Perpetua describes her period of captivity: "What a day of horror! Terrible heat, owing to the crowds! Rough treatment by the soldiers! To crown all, I was tormented with anxiety for my baby.... Such anxieties I suffered for many days, but I obtained leave for my baby to remain in the prison with me, and being relieved of my trouble and anxiety for him, I at once recovered my health, and my prison became a palace to me and I would rather have been there than anywhere else." Despite threats of persecution and death, Perpetua, Felicity—a slavewoman and expectant mother—and three companions, Revocatus, Secundulus and Saturninus,

refused to renounce their Christian faith. For their unwillingness, all were sent to the public games in the amphitheater. There Perpetua and Felicity were beheaded, and the others killed by beasts.

Felicity gave birth to a daughter a few days before the games commenced.

Perpetua's record of her trial and imprisonment ends the day before the games. "Of what was done in the games themselves, let him write who will." The diary was finished by an eyewitness.

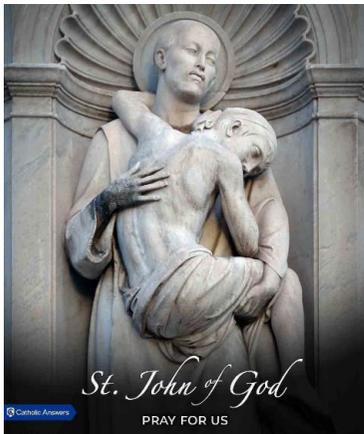
Reflection

Persecution for religious beliefs is not confined to Christians in ancient times. Consider Anne Frank, the Jewish girl who with her family, was forced into hiding and later died in Bergen-Belsen, one of Hitler's death camps during World War II. Anne, like Perpetua and Felicity, endured hardship and suffering and finally death because she committed herself to God. In her diary, Anne writes, "It's twice as hard for us young ones to hold our ground, and maintain our opinions, in a time when all ideals are being shattered and destroyed, when people are showing their worst side, and do not know whether to believe in truth and right and God."

Saint John of God (Feast day 8 Mar) – Franciscan Media

Having given up active Christian belief while a soldier, John was 40 before the depth of his sinfulness began to dawn on him. He decided to give the rest of his life to God's service, and headed at once for Africa where he hoped to free captive Christians and, possibly, be martyred. He was soon advised that his desire for martyrdom was not spiritually well based, and returned to Spain and the relatively prosaic activity of a religious goods store. Yet he was still not settled.

Moved initially by a sermon of Saint John of Avila, he one day engaged in a public beating of himself, begging mercy and wildly repenting for his past life. Committed to a mental hospital for these actions, John was visited by Saint John, who advised him to be more actively involved in tending to the needs of others rather than in enduring



personal hardships. John gained peace of heart, and shortly after left the hospital to begin work among the poor.

He established a house where he wisely tended to the needs of the sick poor, at first doing his own begging. But, excited by the saint's great work and inspired by his devotion, many people began to back him up with money and provisions. Among them were the archbishop and marquis of Tarifa.

Behind John's outward acts of total concern and love for Christ's sick poor was a deep interior prayer life which was reflected in his spirit of humility. These qualities attracted helpers who, 20 years after John's death, formed the Brothers Hospitallers, now a worldwide religious order.

John became ill after 10 years of service, but tried to disguise his ill health. He began to put the hospital's administrative work into order and appointed a leader for his helpers. He died under the care of a spiritual friend and admirer, Lady Ana Ossorio.

Reflection

The utter humility of John of God, which led to a totally selfless dedication to others, is most impressive. Here is a man who realized his nothingness in the face of God. The Lord blessed him with the gifts of prudence, patience, courage, enthusiasm, and the ability to influence and inspire others. He saw that in his early life he had turned away from the Lord, and, moved to receive his mercy, John began his new commitment to love others in openness to God's love.



Month of March is dedicated to Saint Joseph Prayer to St. Joseph

Oh St. Joseph whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the Throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires. Oh St. Joseph do assist me by your powerful intercession and obtain for me from your Divine Son all spiritual blessings through Jesus Christ, Our Lord; so that having engaged here below your Heavenly power I may offer my Thanksgiving and Homage to the most Loving of Fathers.

Oh St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms. I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine Head for me, and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

St. Joseph, Patron of departing souls, pray for us. Amen