



St Peter's Church, Surry Hills

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Most Reverend Danny J Meagher: Bishop in Residence, Episcopal Vicar for the Northern Region

Fr. John A Macdonald: Administrator

Fr. Nicola Falzun OP: Priest in Residence for the *Missio ad gentes* of the Neocatechumenal Way

Sunday Masses: 9:00am and 10:30am

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

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: **Tues – Thurs:** 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Benediction: **Fri:** 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Confessions: **Fri:** 5:00pm – 5:45pm; **Sat:** 9:30am - 10:00am

Holy Rosary: Daily before Mass

Feast Days for the Seventh week in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Tues 21 Feb Saint Peter Damian, bishop, doctor

Thur 23 Feb Saint Polycarp, bishop, martyr

We Pray For:

Our sick and injured: Roslyn Furber, Patricia Conlan, Patrick Tomelty, Sophie Marden, Rose Ly-Schmitz, Grace Moon, Josephine Finneran, Anna Seow, Ricardo Francisco, Catherine Murphy, Adi Soediarto, Gerry Cassar, Makram Nammour, Camilla Pascoe, Ana Teresa Rodrigues, Mafalda Triolo, Aimi McEwen, Louise McCann, Marija Barclay.

Our deceased: Luisa Medina Sanches (First anniversary, 5/2) Rosa Bravo's mum), Dannie Southee (23/1/23), Julian Ciappara (First anniversary of death 28/1/22), Maria Helena Trujillo, Newton McMahon, Lydia Garrone (4/12 death anniversary, (Patrizia O'Brien's mother)), Henrietta Pham, Frederick, Edward & Margaret M Hailwood & Margaret D Hailwood.

Recently deceased:

Our house bound elderly: Bernadette Hailwood, Robert Pearce, Joyce Regoski, June Holt, Shirley Kennedy, Anna Maria, Patricia Wells.

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*

There will be Masses on Ash Wednesday, 22 Feb at 10:00am and 6:00pm at Saint Peter's.

Sport for Jove has offered some tickets to their 2 performances in the 1880 Hall on the following dates:

Henry IV (Part 1) - Friday February 24 at 7:00pm

Richard III - Friday March 3 at 7:00pm

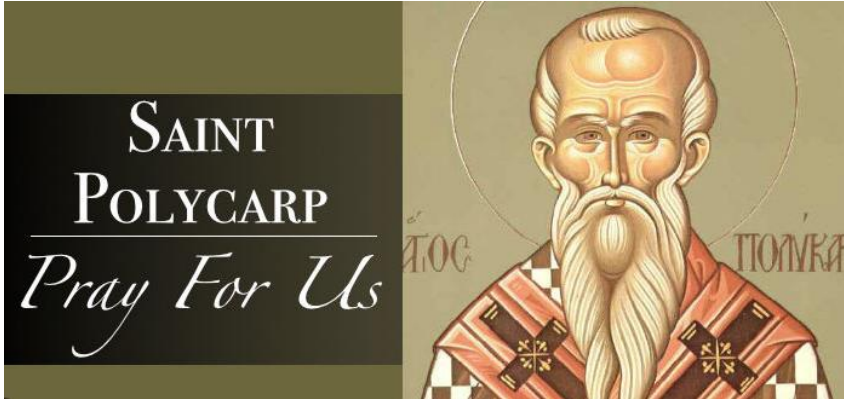
Please email the parish office on admin@stpeterssh.org.au, if you are interested.

Saint Polycarp, CNA (Feast day 23 Feb)

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."

Although the crowds clamoured for Polycarp to be devoured by beasts, it was decided he should be burned alive, just as he had prophesied. He prayed aloud to God: "May I be accepted this day before you as an acceptable sacrifice -- just as you, the ever-truthful God, have foreordained, revealed beforehand to me, and now have fulfilled."

What happened next struck Polycarp's companions with amazement; they recorded the sight in the letter that they circulated after Polycarp's death.

"As the flame blazed forth in great fury," they wrote, "we to whom it was given to witness it, beheld a great miracle." The fire did not seem to touch the bishop's body. Rather, as they described, "shaping itself into the form of an arch, it encompassed – as by a circle – the body of the martyr. And he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace."

"Moreover, we perceived such a sweet odour coming from the flames – as if frankincense or some such precious spices had been burning there."

The executioners perceived that Polycarp's death was not going as planned. Losing patience, they ordered him to be stabbed to death.

From the resulting wound, "there came forth a dove, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished."

The crowd, as the Christian witnesses recalled, were understandably amazed.

"All the people marvelled," they wrote, "that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect." Polycarp, they proclaimed, had been among that elect – "having in our own times been an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the Catholic Church which is in Smyrna."

St. Polycarp has been venerated as a Saint since his death in 155.

After synodal assembly Europe's bishops pledge to 'work tirelessly' to enlarge Catholic tent, by Sarah MacDonald, NCR, 15 Feb

The following article is meant to reflect a range of contributions to the continental assembly of the European Catholic Church, the continental assemblies being the final phase of the process leading to the 2023/24 Ordinary Synod of Bishops (on Synodality).

It does not represent an endorsement by me of any of the reported comments, observations or opinions (the reporter being a clansperson of mine notwithstanding!) - Fr John.

"Something special happened here," Archbishop Eamon Martin, president of the Irish bishops' conference, said at the close of a continental assembly of the European Catholic Church held this month as part of Pope Francis' ongoing process to reinvigorate the Synod of Bishops. As in-person participants, among them the representatives of 39 bishops' conferences across Europe, filed out of the assembly venue in the Czech Republic capital of Prague, the leader of the Irish church said [in a video statement](#) that there had been "huge diversity, a huge range of opinions" and "a strong acceptance that the body of Christ is wounded and in need of healing in so many ways."

The Prague assembly is one of seven continental assemblies taking place in February and March in preparation for the first of two back-to-back gatherings of the Catholic Synod of Bishops, to be held in Rome in October 2023 and October 2024.

The Prague gathering was divided into two parts. The first stage, from Feb. 6-9, saw some 600 members of the laity, priests and bishops come together in person and online. One hundred and fifty-six of the 200 in-person participants were delegates of the various European bishops' conferences. 390 participants took part online; 10 delegates for each of the 39 European conferences.

In his introduction to the assembly, [made available online](#), Czech theologian Fr. Tomas Halik recalled how Pope Benedict XVI, after a visit to the Czech Republic in 2009, first expressed the idea that the church should, like the Temple of Jerusalem, form a "courtyard of the Gentiles."

"While sects accept only those who are fully observant and committed, the church must keep a space open for spiritual seekers, for those who, while not fully identifying with its teachings and practices, nevertheless feel some closeness to Christianity," Halik said.

He told Europe's bishops, priests and lay leaders not to fear that "some forms of the church are dying" and that the turn of Christianity towards synodality, or the transformation of the church into a dynamic community of pilgrims, may have an impact on the destiny of the whole human family.

Discussions in Prague were structured around listening, dialogue and discernment against the backdrop of the overarching theme of the three-year synod process: "communion, participation and mission."

Clergy sexual abuse was one of the recurring themes raised by delegates, as well as the role of women in the church and the marginalization of LGBTQI people. According to [a statement](#) from the 14-member Irish delegation, "The deep and raw wounds of the abuse crisis were kept at the heart of the discernment."

Alongside hot button issues delegates also explored how the overarching document for the synod's continental stage, released by the Vatican [in October](#) with the theme "Enlarge the space of your tent," might foster greater inclusivity from the church — including among migrants and refugees; those with disabilities; young people; single parents, and even supporters of the pre-Vatican II Latin Mass.

Over the course of the week, representatives of all the national churches across Europe provided insights into their national synod processes, which took account of the "concrete, and very diverse, realities that shape the experience of being church and following Christ in Europe today," said the Irish delegates.



While delegates reportedly welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues previously considered off limits within the church, organizers of the assembly clearly sought to balance this openness with managing expectations of far-reaching change. Divisions were evident between reform minded Catholics, who, [looking to the German Synodal Way](#), saw the gathering in Prague as a litmus test for synodality and the church's capacity for reform, and more conservative groups anxious to put a check on what they think could turn into a runaway horse.

Cardinal Mario Grech, the secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, [told the Prague assembly](#) that the Oct. 4-29, 2023 gathering in Rome would neither discard Catholic teachings nor reject those who question those teachings. He said that journeying with those competing tensions through the methodology of "spiritual conversations" allowed participants to name their concerns, listen to the concerns of others, and discern together how the church is called to respond in a more pastorally sensitive way.

The Irish delegation praised that methodology, saying it "enables the church to model unity in diversity, to name and explore our tensions, identifying creative tensions which, illuminated by the light of faith, can enhance and enrich the mission of the church."

However, a Polish delegate, Aleksander Bańka, [reportedly told the assembly on Feb. 7](#) that the Rome synod should be careful not to "succumb to the temptation to build some other church,

but to seek answers to the question of how to realize the spirituality of synodality within the one church of Christ, with its hierarchical structure."

Speaking in [a podcast interview](#) following the presentation of the delegation from England and Wales on Feb. 6, Fr. Jan Nowotnik, director of mission for that bishops' conference, said the main task in Prague was to look at the synodal reports from the various European countries. "Virtually every country talks about the role of women, the LGBTQ+ people and then also the role of formation in mission," said Nowotnik. "I would say those have resonated the greatest, really, and alongside that, actually, to be fair, the role of young people."

He acknowledged there wasn't "total agreement" on some of those topics. "I know that some painful words have been said and there have been anxieties — you can sort of feel that tension sometimes in the room," said the priest.

To those observing proceedings from outside, that tension was perceived as "pushback," Luca Badini Confalonieri of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research in the U.K. told NCR.

"The most common refrain has been to appeal to spiritual conversion and focus on Jesus as a way of deflecting requests for structural reform," said Confalonieri. He said he was "particularly stricken" by a talk in Prague from the Riga, Latvia Archbishop Zbignevs Stankevics.

Confalonieri said Stankevics highlighted the Latvian bishops' efforts against legalizing same-sex unions in their country. "While his was a minority view, it was a stark reminder of that wild variety of opinions among Catholics in Europe alone," said Confalonieri.

Ursula Halligan, a respected Irish journalist who was part of the Irish delegation told NCR: "Old habits die hard."

Halligan, who is also a joint coordinator of the lay reform group We Are Church Ireland, said "the hierarchical church remains a deeply unfriendly place for women and LGBTQI people."

"Many of the presentations didn't prioritize the role of women and eight delegations had no women at all on their in-person teams," she said.

She also highlighted how some of the presentations caused pain to LGBTQI delegates, including to Halligan herself. "I felt dehumanized by them," Halligan said, although she acknowledged that other presentations were more supportive.

On Feb. 9 a text formulated by an editorial drafting team [of six writers of various nationalities](#) summarizing and synthesizing the contributions of the previous three days was read out to delegates by Nowotnik, one of the four-person England and Wales delegation. However, there was no vote on the issues in the text and no written text was distributed.

Speaking about the decision not to hold a vote, Christian Weisner, spokesperson for the international lay reform group We Are Church, told NCR: "The difference between traditionalists and reformers [mainly between Eastern and Western Europe] was very clear."

Weisner said he thought gathering organizers "wanted to avoid concrete numbers pro and against" on specific issues.

The second part of the Prague assembly, from Feb. 10-11, saw the presidents of the European bishops' conferences meet behind closed doors to review the final document and produce a commentary on the text. These two documents will be sent to Rome for use in October.

In a statement issued after the conclusion of the assembly, the Council of European Bishops' Conferences, or CCEE, [pledged](#) to "work tirelessly to enlarge the space of our tents" so that ecclesial communities become "places where everyone feels welcome."

I believe Pope's ministry is for life: Francis, CathNews, 17 Feb

Pope Francis addressed once again the question of whether he will resign the papacy in two conversations with Jesuit priests in Africa this month. Source: CNA.

"I believe that the Pope's ministry is *ad vitam*. I see no reason why it should not be so," the Pope said February 2 during a private conversation with 82 Jesuits in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Francis met the group of priests at the apostolic nunciature in Kinshasa, where he was staying during his January 31-February 3 visit to the DRC.

The conversations were reported in the Jesuit-run journal, *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

The Pope, repeating information he had revealed in a prior interview, said that he signed a resignation letter two months after his election as Pope in case he should become incapacitated.

"However, this does not at all mean that resigning popes should become, let's say, 'the fashion,' a normal thing. Benedict had the courage to do it because he did not feel like going on because of his health. I for the moment do not have that on my agenda," he said.

"Think that the ministry of the great patriarchs is always for life," he added. "And the historical tradition is important."

Pope Francis also said that if the Church listened to the gossip, it should change popes every six months.

He again addressed the question of his possible resignation in a meeting with Jesuit priests on February 4 in Juba, South Sudan, telling the group that resignation "didn't cross my mind".



Guide to Project Compassion and Lenten Companion 2023

Project Compassion begins with Ash Wednesday

Distribution boxes and donation envelopes will be placed on the side entrance and the front of the church.

There is also available Lenten Companion 2023 prepared by the Go Make Disciples, Parish Renewal Team to guide us through lent with reflections for each week in Lent. The Lenten Companion 2023 titled *Spirit and Truth, The Power of Christ Revealed*



Aid to the Church in Need is still supporting the Catholic Church in Ukraine in its commitment to stay on the ground and keep serving its flock in the face of material and economic war. ACN is helping priests and religious, who are working across the country in parishes, with refugees, in orphanages and homes for the elderly. The main cities where we are sending immediate help are Kyiv, Zaporizhya, Odessa and the region of Donetsk. We are doing everything we can to assist our Ukrainian brothers and sisters to be strengthened in their faith so that they may continue to be a light in Ukraine. ACN needs your help to continue this mission. To make an offering and learn more visit <https://aidtochurch.org/ukraine> or scan the QR code.

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Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The parish has commenced a new cycle of RCIA. In addition, to the seven (enquirers), any parishioner is welcome to attend the RCIA presentations which involved a systematic exposition of the doctrine and practice of the Catholic faith. The RCIA meetings take place each Wednesday evening between 6:30 and 7:30pm in the Duffy Hall.

In addition to serving as an excellent revision of our own knowledge of the faith, parishioners will also lend valuable moral support to the RCIA enquirers. Feel free to invite any of your own relatives and friends who would like to participate in this program.

Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney: Parish Safeguarding volunteer Online Induction Training, working With Children Check & Code of Conduct



The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office of the Archdiocese of Sydney advises that any person performing any role in the life of the Parish (e.g., readers, servers, collectors, welcomers is required to comply with Safeguarding Volunteer Online training as per the details below: Registration to complete the Online Safeguarding Induction

Training via this link <https://forms.gle/9ebT3voEAtfP7P8R9> or you can register to attend a Zoom Safeguarding Induction Training session by emailing safeguardingtraining@sydneycatholic.org for further information and dates.