



## St Peter's Church, Surry Hills

235-241 Devonshire St (between Crown and Marlborough Streets),  
Parish phone: (02) 9698 1948  
Email: [admin@stpeterssh.org.au](mailto:admin@stpeterssh.org.au)  
Website: [www.stpeterssurryhills.org.au](http://www.stpeterssurryhills.org.au)



**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 Second Week of Easter (Year A)

Fri 21 Apr

Saint Anslem, bishop, doctor

### We Pray For:

**Our sick and injured:** Roy Child, Roslyn Furber, Nerissa Williams, Patrick Tomelty, Sophie Marden, Grace Moon, Josephine Finneran, Anna Seow, Ricardo Francisco, Adi Soediartha, Gerry Cassar, Makram Nammour, Ana Teresa Rodrigues, Mafalda Triolo, Marija Barclay.

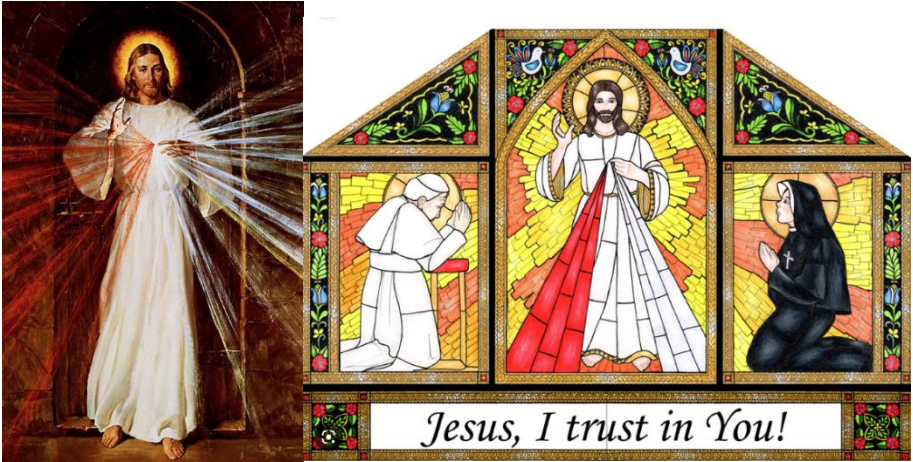
**Our deceased:** Tony Falzun (12/4, (Fr Nick's brother)), Ana Ofelia Sierra Bustamante (18/3, (Indi's mother)), Philomena Smith, John Rogers, Robert Azzopardi (First anniversary, 7/3, [Pauline Ciappara's nephew]), Martin Bonke, Luisa Medina Sanches (First anniversary, 5/2, [Rosa Bravo's mum]), Dannie Southee (23/1/23), Julian Ciappara (First anniversary of death 28/1/22), Miguel Trujillo, (23/3, (Teresa's father)), Frederick, Edward & Margaret M Hailwood & Margaret D Hailwood.

**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*

## What does 'Divine Mercy' actually mean?



The following is an excerpt from the book *Divine Mercy: A Guide from Genesis to Benedict XVI*, by Dr. Robert Stackpole, STD, and published by Marian Press.

Before we can walk through the story of God's merciful love for the human race, we need to have some knowledge of what "Divine Mercy" actually means. The phrase presents us with a semantic problem right from the start. After all, the word "mercy" in contemporary English has a very restricted meaning. It is usually used to refer to an act of pardon, as in "Let me off, judge; have mercy!" or "He threw himself on the mercy of the court." In the Catholic tradition of theology, however, mercy means more than just the cancellation of punishment, far more than that.

**Divine Mercy is God's love reaching down to meet the needs and overcome the miseries of His creatures. The Bible, the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, and Pope John Paul II all assure us that this is so.**

The Old Testament provides us with many images of human misery and of God in His mercy seeking to relieve it. One of most poignant images of such misery is that of a woman suffering the aching loneliness of having no husband and no children - of being completely bereft in the world. This is the spiritual plight of all of us without God. It was used by the Old Testament prophets to signify Israel being reduced to utter misery because of her sins and unfaithfulness to the Lord. But this is not the end of the story. The Lord Yahweh Himself has compassion on the woman by marrying her and making her fruitful. He reaches down to the woman in her misery and raises her up. Where there was only despair, loneliness, and heartache come joy, fruitfulness, and abiding love.


An inspiring example of such steadfast divine love relieving human misery is found in the Old

Testament prophet known as Second Isaiah. As he writes, he is encouraging the Jews who are exiles in Babylon not to give up hope that God in His compassion will deliver them:

*"Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married, says the Lord. Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; hold not back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your descendants will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.*

*"Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer.*

*"For this is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you" (Is 54:1-10).*



**The tongue is a small member, but it does big things... God does not give Himself to a chattering soul which, like a drone in a beehive, buzzes around but gathers no honey. A talkative soul is empty inside. It lacks both the essential virtues and intimacy with God...**

[www.facebook.com/IAMACatholicByHeart](http://www.facebook.com/IAMACatholicByHeart)

**A soul that has never tasted the sweetness of inner silence is a restless spirit which disturbs the silence of others.**

*- St. Faustina of Kowalska*  
Diary of St. Faustina

In the Old Testament, there are two principal Hebrew words that we usually translate as mercy. First of all, there is the word *hesed*, which means "steadfast love, covenant love." Someone who has the attribute of *hesed* is someone you can always count on, someone who never lets you down. According to the Catholic Biblical scholar John L. McKenzie, the word *hesed* is often used in Hebrew in connection with other words which bring out its meaning, such as *hesed-emet* (steadfast, dependable love), *hesed-sedekah* (righteous, holy love) and *hesed-yesua* (rescuing, saving love). In a remarkable endnote to his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia (Rich in Mercy)*, Pope John Paul II teaches that *hesed* contains the meaning of faithfulness to oneself, to one's own promises and commitments to others (Thus, Professor Scott Hahn's popular book on the Bible is entitled *The Father Who Keeps His Promises*). The Holy Father writes:

*When in the Old Testament the word hesed is used of the Lord, this always occurs in connection with the covenant that God established with Israel. This covenant was, on God's*

part, a gift and a grace for Israel ... God had made a commitment to respect it ... [this divine *hesed*] showed itself as what it was at the beginning, that is, as a love that gives, love more powerful than betrayal, grace stronger than sin (no. 52).

As we have seen in our opening example, in a sense, the whole experience of Israel with God is an experience of His *hesed*-love (Is 54:10): "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love [*hesed*] shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you." As John L. Mckenzie has written: "The entire history of the dealing of Yahweh with Israel can be summed up as *hesed*; it is the dominating motive which appears in his deeds, and the motive which gives unity and intelligibility to all His dealings with men" (*Dictionary of the Bible*).

The second most common word for God's mercy in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word *rachamim*: tender, compassionate love, a love that springs from pity. Someone who has *rahaimim* is someone who feels for your plight and is moved with compassion to help you. *Rachamim* is often used in conjunction with *hesed*. It comes from a root word *rechem*, which means a mother's womb. Thus, there is a special intimacy and responsiveness about this kind of love, and a special concern for the sufferings of others. The Holy Father sees *hesed* as, in a sense, a masculine form of love (steadfast, dependable, righteous, being true to oneself and to one's promises), while *rachamim* is more feminine (tender, responsive, compassionate, like a mother responding in love to the sufferings of her child).

In the New Testament, the Greek word that is usually translated as "mercy" is the word *eleos*. It can also be translated as loving kindness or tender compassion. The Greek word comes from a root word meaning oil that is poured out. Thus, when the Church sings in her liturgy the Greek words *Kyrie Eleison* and *Christie Eleison*, she is praying that the merciful love of God will be poured out upon her children, like holy oil from above. According to the ancient Fathers of the Church, the Church herself was born from the wounded side of Christ, when out of His heart there poured out blood and water, symbolic of all the graces of the two chief Sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist (Jn 19:34). In short, *eleos* is God's love poured out upon His people.

In the Latin tradition, the principal word for mercy is *miser cordia*, which means, literally "miserable heart." Father George Kosicki, CSB, the great Divine Mercy evangelist, once summed up the meaning of this Latin word as follows: *miser cordia* means "having a pain in your heart for the pains of others, and taking pains to do something about their pain."

The most comprehensive statement by the Magisterium on the meaning of Divine Mercy can be found in Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter *Dives in Misericordia* (*Rich in Mercy*, 1981). In that encyclical, the Holy Father made two very important statements about mercy. First, he wrote, "Mercy is love's second name." Secondly, he taught that mercy is "the greatest attribute of God."

Let us look at each of these statements in turn.

### **Mercy is Love's Second Name**

Here the Pope was not saying anything new. According to the Catholic theological tradition, mercy is a certain kind of love, a certain expression of love.



Love in general might be defined as a sharing and giving of oneself to another, a selfless seeking of the good of another. According to the Polish theologian Ignacy Rozycki:

*Traditional Catholic moral theology treats of the virtue of mercy as flowing from love of neighbour. Namely, it is that virtue which inclines us to offer assistance to a person suffering from want or misery. This being so, "mercy" in moral theology ... is not love itself but love's result and extension* (quoted in *Pillars of Fire in my Soul: the Spirituality of St. Faustina*, Marian Press, 2003, p. 95).

Thus, playing games with one's children, or enjoying and sharing conjugal love with one's spouse, or singing the praises of the Lord at Holy Eucharist, while each of these acts would be considered acts of "love" of various kinds, ordinarily we would not call them acts of "mercy." On the other hand, giving bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, and shelter to the homeless - or indeed bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to the lost and the broken - these are all acts of merciful love: love reaching down to lift people out of their physical and spiritual miseries.

### **Mercy is the Greatest Attribute of God**

Pope John Paul II wrote in *Dives in Misericordia*: "The Bible, Tradition, and the whole faith life of the People of God provide unique proof ... that **mercy is the greatest of the attributes and perfections of God**" (no. 13). As we shall see later in this book, the Pope was reiterating here the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. But we still may want to know how this can be true. How can any of God's perfections be "greater" than any other? According to the Christian philosophical tradition and the definition of God given at the First Vatican Council, God is one, simple, spiritual, infinitely perfect act of Being. He does not have "parts" as bodily creatures do. Rather, each of His perfections - such as His love, His goodness, His power, and His wisdom - is just another name for what He is. The Polish theologian Fr. Ignacy Rozycki explained it like this:

*In this sense, all of God's attributes are God, one and the same. For this reason, all are absolutely equal to each other. Divine Mercy is as infinitely perfect as His Wisdom or Power, for it is likewise God, and the same God, just as Divine Wisdom and Divine Power are God* (*Pillars of Fire*, p. 96).

In other words, God does not just do merciful things sometimes, nor does He have a merciful "side" to His character, as a human being might have. On the contrary, He is always and everywhere and at all times merciful. Everything He does is an expression of His Mercy - and of all of His other attributes too, all at once. All of His attributes are eternally in action! But then Fr. Rozycki goes on to write:

*If, on the other hand, mercy is understood in the Biblical sense as functional, then, even though it is called an attribute, it first of all denotes the results of the infinite and eternal love of God in*

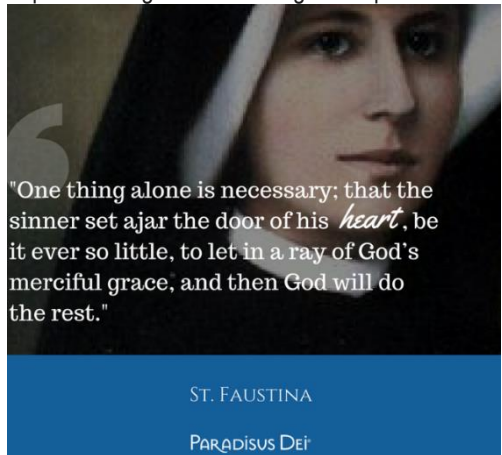
world history, and especially in the history of mankind's salvation. In fact, both *hesed* (mercy in the Old Testament), as well as *eleos* (mercy in the New Testament) signify active manifestations of God's love toward mankind. In the Old Testament the manifestations found their expression in the calling and directing of the chosen people, and in the New Testament they were found in the sending of the Son of God into the world and in the entire work of redemption. This Biblically formulated relationship between love and mercy is expressed by [St.] Faustina in the words: **'Love is the flower, mercy the fruit'** (Diary, 948).

So, if we understand mercy in the Biblical sense, then without any fear of error contrary to the faith, it can be said that **mercy is the greatest attribute of God** ... [in other words] within this Biblical understanding, the results of the activity of merciful love are the greatest in the world and in this respect, mercy surpasses all other Divine attributes (Pillars of Fire, p. 96).

Another way to express this insight would be as follows: Divine Mercy is supremely manifest in all of God's actions toward mankind, and to show mercy must be the motive and intention behind all of God's actions in the world.

Drawing upon the biblical words for mercy, and upon the magisterial teachings of Pope John Paul II, therefore, let us try to formulate a clear definition of what we mean by "Divine Mercy."

According to the first epistle of St. John, "God is love" (4:8). He is infinite, eternal, self-giving love within His own being, among the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From all eternity, therefore, within His own infinite essence, He enjoys the fullness of love given, love received, and love returned. He enjoyed that fullness of perfect love before He ever made the world - and even if He had never made any world at all, He still would have enjoyed this perfect beatitude of eternal love, for "God is love."



In the infinite, eternal love that He is, in the inner life of the Blessed Trinity, there is no need for "mercy," for there is no "want" or "misery" or "suffering" that needs to be overcome in the Infinitely Perfect Being. What then is Divine Mercy?

Saint Thomas Aquinas defined mercy in general as **"the compassion in our hearts for another person's misery, a compassion which drives us to do what we can to help him"** (ST II-II.30.1). Divine Mercy, therefore, is the form that God's eternal love takes when He reaches out to us in the midst of our need and our brokenness. Whatever the nature of our need or our misery might be - sin, guilt, suffering, or death - He is always ready to pour out His

merciful, compassionate love for us, to help in time of need:

*In fact, God's love for His creatures always takes the form of merciful love. As we read in the Psalms (25:10) "all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth," and again (145:9), "His tender mercies are over all His works."*

*When He created the world ex nihilo, therefore, and holds it in being at every moment, it is an act of merciful love: His merciful love overcoming the potential nothingness, the possible non-existence of all things.*

*When the divine Son became incarnate and dwelt among us, that was an act of merciful love too: His merciful love in sharing our lot, showing us the way to the Father, and making the perfect offering for our sins.*

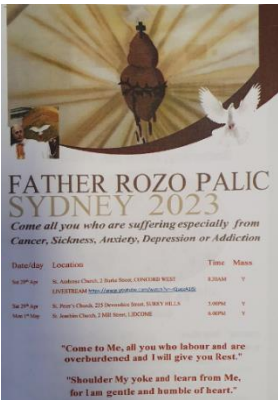
*When He sends His Holy Spirit into our hearts to refresh and sanctify us, that too is His merciful love: His merciful love pouring into our hearts the power to grow in faith, hope, and love, and to serve him with joy. Psalm 136 says it best. While celebrating all the works of the Lord in creation and redemption, the psalm bears the constant refrain: "for His mercy endures forever" (Robert Stackpole, Jesus, Mercy Incarnate, Marian Press, 2000, p. 112).*

**Sunday 10:30am Mass Readers' Roster**

First Sunday: 16 April	<b>Jessica Gereis and Rebecca Lerve</b>
Second Sunday: 23 April	Brendan and Theresa Byrne
Third Sunday: 30 April	Fiorella Vayda and Annalouise Aryati Abraham-Jacob
Fourth Sunday: 7 May	John and Susannah McCaughan

(If there is a fifth Sunday of the month, readers will be arranged ad hoc for that day.)

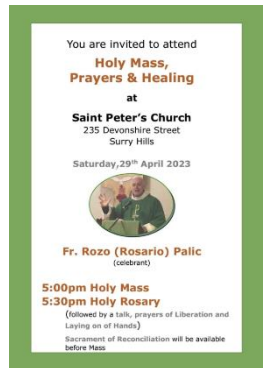
NB: if you are unable to read on your rostered Sunday, and you have been unable to find a replacement, please contact the parish office. Other parishioners are welcome to contact the office if they wish to read at either of the Sunday Masses.



**Fr Rozo Palic** will be at **St Ambrose Church**, 2 Burke Street, Concord West: 8:30am Mass on 29 April and livestream <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQuqzA1lSI>

**St Peter's Church** 235 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills: 5:00pm Mass on 29 April

**St Joachim Church** 2 Mill Street, Lidcombe: 6:00pm Mass on 1 May



## 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](mailto:safeguardingtraining@sydneycatholic.org) for further information and dates.



- Location: St Peter's Church, 235 - 241 Devonshire St, Surry Hills
- Date: Wednesdays, 3 May - 7 June 2023
- Time: 11:00am - 1:00pm

Receive practical advice and support to help you navigate ageing, along with information about the services available to you. Choose which weeks you'd like to come! Light lunch will be provided.

- Masterclass 1 - Planning Ahead
- Masterclass 2 - Navigating Aged Care
- Masterclass 3 - Physical Wellbeing
- Masterclass 4 - Digital Safety
- Masterclass 5 - Ageing Gracefully
- Masterclass 6 - Social Connections

Scan the QR code to register or go to [www.ageing-well.org/event/surry-hills](http://www.ageing-well.org/event/surry-hills)



Catholic Healthcare will be hosting a series of talks on Ageing Well. You can book via the QR Code. Please note that these talks are not only for Catholics and we encourage you to invite your friends to share this free six-week program. If anyone has a question or needs help registering, please email Doug: [info@ageing-well.org](mailto:info@ageing-well.org)