



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
Website: 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 Seventh Week of Easter (Year A)

Mon 22 May	Saint Rita of Cascia, religious
Wed 24 May	Our Lady, Help of Christians, Solemnity
Thur 25 May	Saint Bede the Venerable, priest, doctor St Gregory VII, pope St Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, virgin
Fr 26 May	Saint Philip Neri, priest
Sat 27 May	Saint Augustine of Canterbury, bishop

We Pray For:

Our sick and injured: John Rookes, Maximiliano Carias Suriano, (Jacqui's father), Roy Child, Roslyn Furber, Nerissa Williams, Patrick Tomelty, Sophie Marden, Grace Moon, Josephine Finneran, Anna Seow, Ricardo Francisco, Gerry Cassar, Makram Nammour, Ana Teresa Rodrigues, Mafalda Triolo, Marija Barclay.

Our deceased: Adi Soediarto, Geoff Stevens, 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 happened at the Ascension of Jesus?, Aletea, Philip Kosloski, 26 May 22

The Ascension of Jesus occurred when Jesus ascended into Heaven after his resurrection.

The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven is a biblical event narrated by both St. Mark and St. Luke. St. Mark summarizes the event in a single verse.

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. Mark 16:19

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains what happens at the Ascension of Jesus in more theological terms.

Jesus' final apparition ends with the **irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory**, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven, where he is seated from that time forward at God's right hand.

Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, **precedes us into the Father's glorious kingdom** so that we, the members of his Body, **may live in the hope of one day being with him for ever.**

CCC 659, 666

While Jesus' humanity may have ascended into Heaven, his abiding presence is still among us in a variety of ways, including his Real Presence in the consecrated Eucharistic bread and wine.

Catholics also believe that Jesus will come again at the end of time.



The Strength in Mary's Silence, Dr Tod Woner, Word on Fire, 3 May 2022

Years ago, I found myself standing in front of her. Young yet timeless, she was awash in disheveled robes. Across her ample lap lay the body of her dead son. The sinews of his lean muscles were overshadowed by their morbid flaccidity. With head tipped and eyes closed, her right hand cradled her boy while her left rested open and upward as if to ask weakly, "Why?" This was [Michelangelo's famous Pietà](#) located in St. Peter's Basilica.

Sculpted from a single block of his favourite Carrara marble (Michelangelo purportedly claimed the *Pietà's* marble was the most perfect block he ever worked with), the *Pietà* has never stopped haunting me, or comforting me. Like everyone who has laid eyes on the tragic scene, I was broken by the sheer enormity of Mary's grief. How does one *not* feel a lump in their throat when beholding a mother cradling her perfect son's bloodied, lifeless body in her lap? As I've grown older, however, I have been struck by [an entirely different aspect of this masterpiece](#) that I had somehow overlooked: Mary's composure, Mary's silent strength.

She is here. Suffering, silent, and eternally strong.

It is probably safe to say that when Mary witnessed the Passion of her son and held his broken body in her arms, she was utterly crushed. Surely, Simeon's dark prophecy at Christ's presentation that Mary would be pierced with a sword must have haunted her throughout her life. In fact, it is not hard to imagine Mary's possible reactions to the full weight of the intertwined

death of God and death of her child. Crying? Wailing? Breathless agony? All are conceivable and all would be justified.

But Michelangelo's *Pietà* does not show us Mary broken, but Mary silent. And there is quiet strength in that silence. It is difficult for me not to look upon this statue with her eyes closed and unlined face, and hear the words embodying Mary's reaction to the Annunciation, "She



pondered [it] in her heart" (Luke 2:19).

This, by no means, is meant to diminish the profound grief the Mother of God endured in her son's unparalleled suffering. Nor is it to suggest that Mary possessed some inhuman, otherworldly detachment from the greatest horror of her life. But what if Mary saw through the suffering? What if, at her worst moment, Mary believed (as remote as they may seem) her God's promises? What if, while heaving inwardly and blinded by tears, Mary sensed that the divine drama does not end in dark tragedy, but in

incomprehensible, limitless hope?

The Mary we see in the *Pietà* is the epitome of a saint. We see Mary in St. Thomas More kneeling before the headsman and in St. Maximilian Kolbe singing in the starvation bunker, in St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in the cattle car to Auschwitz and in Blessed Miguel Pro before the firing squad. And she learned it from her son. She embraces the cross instead of rationalizing it. She surrenders to God instead of irritably effecting human plans. She loves through hate and hopes through doubt. Does she hurt? Without question. Does she worry? Of course. But she knows—even if it takes every ounce of strength to persist in the knowing—that God knows what he is doing, that God will never abandon us. In Bob Dylan's "[Shelter From the Storm](#)," one could sense a message of Mary's steadfast strength and motherly intercession on our behalf.

*Suddenly I turned around and she was standin' there
With silver bracelets on her wrists and flowers in her hair
She walked up to me so gracefully and took my crown of thorns
Come in, she said
I'll give ya shelter from the storm*

It has been a long time since I stood before the *Pietà* at St. Peter's Basilica. But I know Mary is there. And she is here. Suffering, silent, and eternally strong.

The majestic heights of Christian prayer begin in humility, Crux Now, Father Jeffrey F. Kirby
May 14, 2023

The Christian approach to prayer is vast in its richness and depth. Drawing from the spiritual tradition, prayer is understood as the dynamic interaction of God thirsting for us and we, in turn, thirsting for him.

Prayer is about living in a vital relationship with the living God. It is **about being with God, knowing that we are loved and wanting to love him in return.**

The Church's teachings on prayer are majestic and radically relational. In the hearts of most Christians, however, prayer is relegated to a type of "Santa's list," in which we make our lists, check them twice, and tell God what we want from him. We promise to be good. We implore, negotiate, plead, and expect God to do what we tell him.

In such an approach, prayer is an extension of our selfishness. We want God to do what we tell him because we want it, or we think it's what's best. When God doesn't do what we want, we conclude that there must be something wrong with prayer (or even with God). Such notions of prayer are veiled versions of self-worship.

Rather than allow ourselves to learn and engage in the highest forms of prayer, which are relational and selfless, we allow ourselves to wallow in the lowest form of prayer with all the wrong spirits filling our hearts.

Prayer isn't about demanding things of God. It's about seeking his thirst for us, realizing that he wants us and desires friendship with us. Prayer is about seeing how God makes himself a beggar before us, so that we might accept his invitation to be with him, walk with him, and opening our hearts and allowing ourselves to thirst for him.

In such a way, prayer is about being comfortable with God. It's desiring to be with him for himself, with no demands, expectations, and no requests. Prayer is being with God with empty hands, wanting and demanding nothing other than to be in his presence. It's wanting to be with God because we know how much he wants to be with us.

Understanding this height of prayer humbles our sinful pride. It exposes the mercantile approach we can bring to prayer, as we expect a quid-pro-quo from God. But God is terrible at business. He doesn't play by the rules of Wall Street or Madison Avenue. God will not allow us to mock him, use him, or fall deeper into a self-centred love. He will teach us the right understanding of prayer, either through an open heart or through the school of hard knocks.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church rightly instructs us that **the beginning of prayer is humility. It is loving God for himself. It is about discarding misplaced entitlement, arrogance, and false demands of a God who owes us nothing and is not bound to give us anything.**

In such humility, we don't find a vengeful judge, but a loving Father who desires to love and embrace us. It is the face of a good Father who calls us to himself, desires to be with us, and wishes to enter into a relationship with us.

It's for this reason that the Catechism calls prayer both a covenant and a communion.

Prayer is a covenant and communion because we are bound to God. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, we are members of his family. The Catechism explains: **"Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man."**

No matter what we do, we cannot break our bond with God. We can neglect prayer or turn it into something it's not. We can turn away from his moral truth. We can deny him. But we cannot break our bond with him. He will not let go.

Russian spirituality goes so far as to assert that the real hell of the souls that are damned is their realization that the God they hate and have rebelled against, will never let go. They eternally deny love to the God who continues to love them.

We are in a covenant with God. We are in communion with him and he does not approach this bond lightly or treat it cheaply. Such a bond is the foundation and source of prayer as a living and vital relationship with God.

Our Lady Help of Christians, by: America Needs Fatima, Jun 05, 2013 (Feast day 24 May)

The invocation "Help of the Christians" is very old, having been included in the Litany of Loreto by Pope Saint Pius V in 1571, as a token of gratitude to the Most Holy Virgin. After having recourse to the Most Holy Rosary, the pope learned of Christendom's victory over Muslim forces in the famous Battle of Lepanto.

Attributing the naval victory to Our Lady's intercession, the Holy Father wished to make her power known throughout the world.

But that was not to be the last intervention of Mary under that glorious title. Several centuries later, she came to the aid of another Holy Father, this time Pope Pius the VII.

Pope Pius VII's Captivity

During five years of captivity, Pius VII appealed continuously to Our Lady under the invocation of "Help of Christians." From 1809 to 1812, the Pontiff remained imprisoned in the Italian city of Savona, then making a vow to crown an image of the Mother of Mercy existing there, should he be granted his freedom.

In 1812, the Pope was taken to Paris, remaining a prisoner in Fontainebleau, where he suffered terrible humiliations inflicted by the French tyrant.

But in the course of time, Divine Providence intervened, overturning the good fortune of the despotic ruler, Napoleon.

In 1814, weakened by losses suffered on several fronts and pressured by public opinion, Napoleon permitted his august prisoner to return to Rome. The Supreme Pontiff took advantage of the journey to honour in a special way the Mother of God, crowning her image in Ancona under the invocation of Queen of All Saints. And, fulfilling the vow that he made when still prisoner in Savona, he adorned the forehead of the image of the Mother of Mercy with a golden frond as he passed by that city.

The journey continued amid glorious displays of reverence on the part of the common people in all the localities where Pius VII passed. And on May 24th, he made a triumphant entrance in Rome, being received by the population at large.

As the carriage that transported the Supreme Pontiff advanced with difficulty amid the crowd along the Flavian way, a group of faithful, earning the applause of all onlookers, unharnessed the horses and went on to pull the vehicle up to the Vatican Basilica themselves.



Pius VII, attributing this great victory of the Church over the Revolution to the powerful intercession of Mary Most Holy, wanted to show his gratitude by means of establishing a feast day of universal scope dedicated to the beautiful Marian invocation, Our Lady Help of Christians. Therefore, May the 24th became her feast day, in thanksgiving for the Holy Father's happy return to Rome.

Saint John Bosco

Such invocation took a new turn in the Catholic world due to the action of one of the greatest saints of modern times: Saint John Bosco, founder of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales (Salesians) and of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

The companions of Saint John Bosco noticed that, from 1860, he began to invoke the Most Holy Virgin under the title of Mary Help of Christians, *Maria Auxilium Christianorum*.

In December of 1862, the Saint made a resolution to build a church dedicated to that invocation. And he declared, on that occasion:

"To the Virgin Most Holy whom we desire to honour with the title of 'Help of Christians'; the times we are in are so sad that we truly need the Most Holy Virgin to help us in preserving and defending the Christian Faith as in Lepanto, as in Vienna, as in Savona and Rome.... and it will be the mother church of our future Society and the centre from where all our works will radiate in behalf of the youth."

— *St. John Bosco, December 1862*

Six years after, on May 21, 1868, the magnificent Church of Mary Help of Christians was solemnly consecrated in Turin by the Archbishop of the city. The dream of Saint Bosco became a reality. Since then, this special devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians has spread throughout the Catholic world, owing in great measure to the work of the Salesian Congregation.

Saint Philip Neri and the Wisdom of Holy Fools, Word on Fire, Br. Philip Neri Reese, 26 May 2020

The doorbell rang.

Most of the guests had already arrived. Rome's elite filled a bustling main hall. Very powerful cardinals struggled to hear the very rich men to whom they spoke. The din died down, however, as a very pale butler announced the party's very newest arrival.

A man missing half his beard. "Fr. Philip Neri," the pallid butler proclaimed.

According to the people of Rome, the man was a living saint. According to the cultured, cultivated eyes of his onlookers, he was a lunatic. Moreover, there was no mistaking it for an accident. The famed priest had neatly trimmed his beard on one side of his face, and meticulously removed it on the other.

The rest of the night passed awkwardly, especially for the party's host, to whom the preposterous priest assiduously attached himself until party's close. Upon leaving, most of the guests made two resolutions: (1) avoid that priest at all costs, and (2) never attend another party thrown by the host again.

At this point you might ask yourself: Why the beard-shaving?

It would be true for me to say that God gave St. Philip Neri the gift to read souls (to see someone's virtues and vices), and that, when the party's host had extended him the invitation to come, St.

Philip had seen immediately that the man only wanted him there so that the Roman elite would see their host standing beside a reputed saint.

But that would not be the answer.

St. Philip Neri did not shave off half his beard and attend an A-list party simply to teach a prideful and vain man a lesson (though *that* it certainly did). He did it to look like a fool.

I imagine for most of us that's an unsettling answer, but there it is. And St. Philip Neri wasn't alone. The Church has a rich tradition of "holy fools," men and women whose intense sanctity comes tied hand-and-foot to their extreme self-abasement. St. Simeon Salos was known to drag a dead dog behind him; St. David the Dendrite lived in a tree for three years; and St. Benedict Joseph Labre spent thirty years in a state of voluntary homelessness, sleeping among the ruins of the Colosseum in Rome.

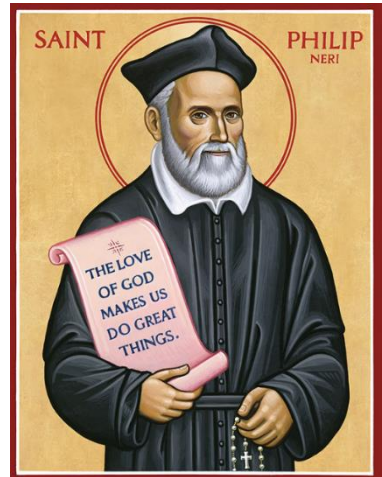
What do we do with stories like these? What do we do with saints like these?

I think we're supposed to *marvel* at them. Scripture says that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" and "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (see 1 Cor. 1:18-25). Saints such as these give us shocking and abrasive opportunities to believe it. Purely human reason, purely human prudence, cannot comprehend the actions of holy fools. In fact, even for people with the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom (and that includes every Christian in a state of sanctifying grace), it can be tough to make out the divine reason behind the apparent folly. But the holy fools do make clear one thing: God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are his ways our ways (cf. Isaiah 55:8).

St. Philip Neri did a lot of things we can relate to: he gave young people wholesome alternatives to the lascivious entertainment of the carnivals; he invited musicians and composers to offer their art to God; he praised cheerfulness as a far more religious temperament than solemnity. But he also did a lot of things that, on a purely human level, we cannot relate to. And that's okay.

In fact, it might well be those things that are the most important. The holy fools thought so little of themselves—lived lives of such awe-inspiring humility—that mere human reason cannot comprehend what that would be like.

And praise God for it. Because if we cannot wrap our minds around these holy fools, how much more will God transcend our wildest dreams?



Church in Australia celebrates Laudato Si' Week, CathNews, 18 May 2023

The Church in Australia is this week celebrating Laudato Si' Week, marking eight years since the publication of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on care for creation. Source: *Catholic Outlook*.

Catholic communities are encouraged to reflect on the *Laudato Si'* encyclical and act to bring its ideals to life, focusing on this year's theme, "Hope for the Earth. Hope for Humanity".

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Justice, Peace and Ecology Office has developed a series of reflection sheets based on the key findings of the State of the Environment Report 2021, exploring the human impacts on Australian ecosystems and the environment. They can be accessed from the ACBC Justice, Ecology and Peace site.



On Sunday, Pope Francis will open Laudato Si' Week, which for the rest of the world takes place on May 21–28. Australia celebrates Laudato Si' Week one week earlier (May 16–24)

so it does not clash with the national Reconciliation Week, May 27–June 3.

As part of the global celebrations, the Vatican is promoting the movie *The Letter*. The film tells the story of frontline leaders journeying to Rome to discuss the encyclical with Pope Francis. For more information on Laudato Si' Week and to download the resources and action ideas go to the ACBC Justice Ecology and Peace site.

Sunday 10:30am Mass Readers' Roster

Sunday 21 May	Alex Leach and Annalouisse
Sunday 28 May	John and Patrizia O'Brien

(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.

Evangelium

Sunday 21 May	Vonnie on Pope Saint John Paul II
Sunday 28 May	Rev. Prof. Gerard Kelly on "Lumen Gentium and Synodality"



Procession for the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians (Feast day 24 May)

Please join Bishop Danny Meagher and Fr Pat Austin, MSC for the 10:00am Mass on Saturday 20th May at Saint Peter's Surry Hills. Following the parish mass, Bishop Danny will be blessing the Pilgrims as he leads us on a street procession to St Mary's Cathedral. There will be a 12pm Mass at St Mary's Cathedral in honour of Mary Help of Christians.

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL PENTECOST CELEBRATIONS

Please join the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in celebrating Pentecost 2023 with an uplifting, inspiring, encouraging Holy Spirit afternoon of Praise & Worship, Testimonies, Hearing the Word of God, and Prayer Ministry on **Saturday 27th May** at the Servants of Jesus Centre, 15 Park Road Seven Hills. **2:00pm-5.30pm**. Enquiries: 9810 2499.