



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 Ninth Week in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Mon 5 Jun Saint Boniface, bishop, martyr

Fri 9 Jun Saint Ephrem, deacon, doctor

We Pray For:

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

Our deceased: Geoff Stevens, Ana Ofelia Sierra Bustamante (18/3, (Indi's mother)), Philomena Smith, John Rogers, Martin Bonke, Frederick, Edward & Margaret M Hailwood & Margaret D Hailwood.

Our Recently Deceased: Patrick Tomelty (26/5), Adi Soediarso (10/5)

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

Bishop Barron on the Meaning of the Trinity: <https://youtu.be/5I-Lv9tGQwI>

Bishop Barron on Unity in Diversity (Pentecost Sunday):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdrubPgKtnw>

Explaining the Trinity, Tim Staples, 20 Jun 2014

Recently, I had an extensive discussion with a Muslim about the Trinity. His problem with the Trinity was not so much with biblical texts, and obviously so, because he did not accept the Bible in the form it is in today as the word of God. Though I must say that he was remarkably interested in looking at what the New Testament had to say about the topic.

His main problem was conceptual. And I find this to be generally the case with folks who reject the Trinity. They either think Christians are claiming there are three Gods (which is what my Muslim friend actually believed to be so), or that we are teaching something that is a logical contradiction, e.g., $3=1$, and $1=3$.

Neither is true, of course. But if we are going to help these people to understand, I find, a little background information is essential in order to establish a conceptual foundation for discussion.

Processions and Relations in God

In Catholic theology, we understand the persons of the Blessed Trinity subsisting within the inner life of God to be truly distinct relationally, but not as a matter of essence, or nature. Each of the three persons in the godhead possesses the same eternal and infinite divine nature; thus, they are the one, true God in essence or nature, not “three Gods.” Yet, they are truly distinct in their relations to each other.

In order to understand the concept of person in God, we have to understand its foundation in the processions and relations within the inner life of God. And the Council of Florence, AD 1338-1445, can help us in this regard. The Council’s definitions concerning the Trinity are really as easy as one, two, three... four. It taught there is one nature in God, and that there are two processions, three persons, and four relations that constitute the Blessed Trinity. The Son “proceeds” from the Father, and the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” These are the two processions in God. And these are foundational to the four relations that constitute the three persons in God. These are those four eternal relations in God:



1. The Father actively and eternally generates the Son, constituting the person of God, the Father.
2. The Son is passively generated of the Father, which constitutes the person of the Son.
3. The Father and the Son actively spirate the Holy Spirit in the one relation within the inner life of God that does not constitute a person. It does not do so because the Father and Son are already constituted as persons in relation to each other in the first

two relations. This is why CCC 240 teaches, “[The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity] is Son only in relation to his Father.”

4. The Holy Spirit is passively spirated of the Father and the Son, constituting the person of the Holy Spirit.

We should take note of the distinction between the “generative” procession that constitutes the Son, and the “spirative” procession that constitutes the Holy Spirit. As St. Thomas Aquinas explains, and Scripture reveals, the Son is uniquely “begotten” of the Father (cf. John 3:16; 1:18). He is also said to proceed from the Father as “the Word” in John 1:1. This “generative” procession is one of “begetting,” but not in the same way a dog “begets” a dog, or a human being “begets” a human being. This is an intellectual “begetting,” and fittingly so, as a “word” proceeds from the knower while, at the same time remaining in the knower. Thus, this procession or begetting of the Son occurs within the inner life of God. There are not “two beings” involved; rather, two persons relationally distinct, while ever-remaining one in being.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, but not in a generative sense; rather, in a spiration. “Spiration” comes from the Latin word for “spirit” or “breath.” Jesus “breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit...” (John 20:22). Scripture reveals the Holy Spirit as pertaining to “God’s love [that] has been poured into our hearts” in Romans 5:5, and as flowing out of and identified with the reciprocating love of the Father for the Son and the Son for the Father (John 15:26; Rev. 22:1-2). Thus, the Holy Spirit’s procession is not intellectual and generative, but has its origin in God’s will and in the ultimate act of the will, which is love.

As an infinite act of love between the Father and Son, this “act” is so perfect and infinite that “it” becomes (not in time, of course, but eternally) a “He” in the third person of the Blessed Trinity. This revelation of God’s love personified is the foundation from which Scripture could reveal to us that “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

God is not revealed to “be” love in any other religion in the world other than Christianity because in order for there to be love, there must be a beloved. From all eternity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have poured themselves out into each other in an infinite act of love, which we, as Christians, are called to experience through faith and the sacraments by which we are lifted up into that very love of God itself (Romans 5:1-5).

It is the love of God that binds us, heals us, and makes us children of God (1 John 4:7; Matt. 5:44-45). Thus, how fitting it is that the Holy Spirit is depicted in Revelation 22:1-2, as a river of life flowing out from the Father and the Son and bringing life to all by way of bringing life to the very “tree of life” that is the source of eternal life in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 22:19).

Back to the Relations in God

Biblically speaking, we see each of the persons in God revealed as relationally distinct and yet absolutely one in nature in manifold texts. For example, consider John 17:5, where our Lord prays on Holy Thursday:

... and now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made.

Notice, before the creation, the Son was “with” the Father. Also, the Son addressing the Father and himself in an “I/thou” relationship is unmistakable. We have distinct persons here. “Father” and “Son” reveal a generative relationship as well. Yet, this relationship between two persons clearly has no beginning in time because it existed before the creation, from all eternity. Thus, the relational distinction is real, and personal, but as far as nature is concerned, Jesus’ words from

John 10:30 come to mind: “I and the Father are one,” in that they each possess the same infinite nature.

The Holy Spirit is also seen to be relationally distinct from both the Father and the Son in Scripture inasmuch as both the Father and the Son are seen as “sending” “him.”

But when the Counsellor comes (the Holy Spirit), whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness of me... (John 15:26).

... he will guide you into all truth (John 16:13).

Thus, the relational distinction is real, and personal, but the Holy Spirit, like the eternal Son, is revealed to be God inasmuch as he is revealed to be omniscient. “He will guide you into all truth.” In fact, I Cor. 2:10 also reveals the Holy Spirit to be omniscient when it says, “... no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” He speaks as God in texts of Scripture like Hebrews 3:7-11: 10:15-18. Thus, the Holy Spirit is revealed in Scripture to possess the same infinite and divine nature as does the Father and the Son.

The Anthropological Analogy

Analogy is the theologian’s best friend in explaining the mysteries of the Faith. And when it comes to the Trinity, there are many analogies to choose from. We will explore just two of them here that I have found helpful. In fact, it was these very two analogies that helped my Muslim friend to say the idea of the Trinity “made sense” to him, even though he wasn’t ready to leave his Muslim faith... at least, not yet.

From his famous and classic *Confessions*, Bk. 13, Ch. 11, St. Augustine writes:

I speak of these three: to be, to know, and to will. For I am, and I know, and I will: I am a knowing and a willing being, and I know that I am and that I will, and I will to be and to know. Therefore, in these three, let him who can do so perceive how inseparable a life there is, one life and one mind and one essence, and finally how inseparable a distinction there is, and yet there is a distinction. Surely a man stands face to face with himself. Let him take heed of himself, and look there, and tell me. But when he has discovered any of these and is ready to speak, let him not think that he has found that immutable being which is above all these, which is immutably, and knows immutably, and wills immutably.

In order to appreciate Augustine’s words, we must begin with three essential and foundational truths that undergird them. Without these, his words will fall on deaf ears.

1. We believe in one, true God, YAHWEH, who is absolute being, absolute perfection, and absolutely simple. Our belief in the Trinity does not mean God is three, or any other number of Gods.
2. Humankind is created “in [God’s] image and likeness” (cf. Gen. 1:26). From the context of Genesis 1, we know this “image and likeness” does not pertain to the body of man because God has no body. Indeed the divine nature cannot be bodily or material because there can be no potency in God as there is inherent in bodies, so this “image and likeness” must be referring to our higher faculties or operations of intellect and will.
3. It follows, then, that God is rational. He too is both intellectual and volitional.

These simple truths serve as the foundation for what I call St. Augustine’s anthropological analogy that can help us to understand better the great mystery of the Trinity:

In God we see the Father—the “being one” and first principal of life in the Godhead—the Son—the “knowing one”—the Word who proceeds from the Father—and the Holy Spirit—the “willing one”—the bond of love between the Father and Son who proceeds as love from the Father and

Son. These “three” do not “equal” one if we are trying to say $3=1$ mathematically. These three are distinct realities, relationally speaking, just as my own being, knowing, and willing are three distinct realities in me. Yet, in both God and man these three relationally distinct realities subsist in one being.

As St. Augustine points out, we can never know God or understand God completely through this or any analogy, but it can help us to understand how you can have relational distinctions within one being. And we can see this is reasonable.

The weakness inherent here—there are weaknesses in all analogies with reference to God—is that our knowing, being, and willing are not each infinite and co-extensive as the persons of God are. They subsist in one being in us, but they are not persons.

The Analogy of the Family

The Catechism of the Catholic Church gives us another analogy wherein we can see the reasonableness of the Trinity by helping us to see the possibility of distinct persons who possess the same nature. CCC 2205 provides:

The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.

When we think of a family, we can see how a father, mother, and child can be distinct persons and yet possess the same nature (human), just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons who each possess the same nature (divine).

The weakness, of course, is that in God each person possesses the one infinite and immutable divine nature, and is therefore, one being. Our analogous family consists of three beings. Again, no analogy is perfect.

But in the end, if we combine our two analogies, we can at least see both how there can be three relationally distinct realities subsisting within one being in the anthropological analogy, and how there can be three relationally distinct persons who share the same nature in the analogy of the family.

Saint Boniface, Franciscan Media (Feast day 5 Jun)

Boniface, known as the apostle of the Germans, was an English Benedictine monk who gave up being elected abbot to devote his life to the conversion of the Germanic tribes. Two characteristics stand out: his Christian orthodoxy and his fidelity to the pope of Rome.

How absolutely necessary this orthodoxy and fidelity were is borne out by the conditions Boniface found on his first missionary journey in 719 at the request of Pope Gregory II.

Paganism was a way of life. What Christianity he did find had either lapsed into paganism or was mixed with error. The clergy were mainly responsible for these latter conditions since they were in many instances uneducated, lax and questionably obedient to their bishops. In particular instances their very ordinations were questionable.

These are the conditions that Boniface was to report in 722 on his first return visit to Rome. The Holy Father instructed him to reform the German Church. The pope sent letters of recommendation to religious and civil leaders. Boniface later admitted that his work would have been unsuccessful, from a human viewpoint, without a letter of safe-conduct from Charles Martel, the powerful Frankish ruler, grandfather of Charlemagne. Boniface was finally made a regional bishop and authorized to organize the whole German Church. He was eminently successful.

In the Frankish kingdom, he met great problems because of lay interference in bishops' elections, the worldliness of the clergy and lack of papal control.

During a final mission to the Frisians, Boniface and 53 companions were massacred while he was preparing converts for confirmation.

In order to restore the Germanic Church to its fidelity to Rome and to convert the pagans, Boniface had been guided by two principles. The first was to restore the obedience of the clergy to their bishops in union with the pope of Rome. The second was the establishment of many houses of prayer which took the form of Benedictine monasteries. A great number of Anglo-Saxon monks and nuns followed him to the continent, where he introduced the Benedictine nuns to the active apostolate of education.

Reflection: Boniface bears out the Christian rule: To follow Christ is to follow the way of the cross. For Boniface, it was not only physical suffering or death, but the painful, thankless, bewildering task of Church reform. Missionary glory is often thought of in terms of bringing new persons to Christ. It seems—but is not—less glorious to heal the household of the faith.

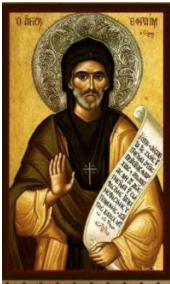
Saint Ephrem – Harp of the Holy Spirit, the Maronite Voice, Fr. Joseph Amar, 21 Jun 2019

We know very little about the life of St. Ephrem. He was born around 305, in or near the Syrian city of Nisibis, and died around 373. He tells us nothing about his family background, upbringing, or education. He had no reason to. In a place like Nisibis, everyone knew everyone else. Ephrem never expected his home-grown verses to outlive him.

The fact that so little is known about Ephrem's life encouraged the creation of all sorts of stories—some inspiring, some not. He may have been a deacon, but he was never a monk, as later tradition portrayed him.

At first glance, it seems like Ephrem comes from a time and place very different from our own. In fact, just the opposite is true.

Ephrem lived during a time of enormous political and religious upheaval. Traditional



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**May Thy light shine in
my thoughts; may they be
illuminated by Thy rays,
and may Thy magnificent
radiance gladden them,
for Thou art the sun
that irradiates all.**

St. Ephraim the Syrian - A Spiritual Psalter

beliefs and values were under attack from every side. Society was coming apart at the seams, and nobody seemed to care. All that mattered was winning the latest high-profile, public debate. Ephrem did not mince words: "God's flock is starving; it has been left to graze on fields of words." Religion and politics had

become hopelessly entangled, and the result was toxic.

The church was torn between two rival factions. On the one side, a new breed of Christian philosophers reduced God to a concept—"an idea." On the other, the rigidly pious spiritualized God. They kept him safely in heaven, far from the nastiness of everyday life. As Ephrem saw it, the remedy for both groups was the same—"a return to the simple words of the Apostles."

God was not a monarch ruling from a distant throne. He was a person who revealed himself in his Son. “Jesus is the Bridge,” Ephrem taught, “who leads us back to the source of our life.”

Ephrem was a poet and a teacher. But he taught like no one else. Educated people of his day wrote and spoke Greek. They went to school in places like Antioch and Athens.

Ephrem was a very different sort of person. He wrote exclusively in Syriac, and never left his native land. In place of human credentials, he prayed to be filled with the spirit of the Gospels. And his prayers were answered.

People who heard Ephrem speak nick-named him the “Harp of the Holy Spirit.” They could hear God’s music in his words, and it was a breath of fresh air. It was the same reason his earliest Arabic biography, written around 750, calls him *al-Nabi al-Suryani*—“the Syriac Prophet.” Ephrem breathed life and hope back into faith.

We cannot read Ephrem without becoming aware of the profound respect he had for the power of words, especially the words of scripture. He describes opening the Bible as a homecoming: “The words ran out to meet me. They flung their arms around me, took me by the hand, and led me in.”

The lessons scripture taught were simple and clear. God did not play favourites. His love was bigger than all the controversies people invented to divide and destroy: “Our Lord,” Ephrem reminded anyone who would listen, “spoke gently to teach his followers the power of gentle words.”

Ephrem called Jesus “the Medicine of Life” for an ailing world. If people lowered their voices and opened their eyes, they might see the wonder of creation—a wonder they were part of. They would know that life is a privilege and a blessing not to be squandered on man-made conflicts.

Popular wisdom held that self-interest was at the root of human problems. Ephrem saw things differently. If people were really self-interested, if they really cared about their well-being and happiness, they would not waste their lives. Ephrem put it bluntly: “We wear ourselves out hoarding power and working for personal advancement. It only adds to our insecurity and makes us unhappy. The Lord taught us in the Gospel that creation has blessings enough for everyone. He said, ‘Look at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field’? When will we look?”

Ephrem was celebrated for his writing because he brought deep insight to what it meant to be human. Commenting on the Gospel, he wrote: “The things our Lord wants to teach us are simple, but they’re hard.” “This,” Ephrem concluded, “should tell us how well our Lord knew human nature.” But even with his divine knowledge, the Lord responded with compassion, not judgement. It’s what made him Lord. Quoting John’s Gospel, Ephrem reminded his hearers of Jesus’ words, “I have not come to judge the world, but to save it.”

Ephrem’s vision inspires much of Maronite liturgy, but his poems are hard to translate. Modern English is not the best fit for ancient Syriac. In other ways, though, we may be in a better position to appreciate him than the people of his own day who called him “Harp of the Holy Spirit.” In a world aching to hear again “the simple words of the Apostles,” Ephrem may be the whole orchestra.

Evangeliuim

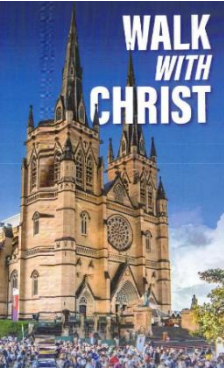
Sunday 4 Jun	Surry Hills Community BBQ
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Sunday 10:30am Mass Readers' Roster

Sunday 4 Jun	James and Geneviève McCaughan
Sunday 11 Jun	Jessica Gereis and Rebecca Lerve

(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.



We encourage everyone to join in the Walk with Christ for the Feast of Corpus Christi on Sunday 11 June.

Corpus Christi processions have a long history in Australia's capital cities. They are powerful symbols of the Church at the heart of human society. For just as we receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, we are in turn called to be Christ's sacrament to the world.

Festival: 1:00pm; Procession: Begins at 2:30pm sharp, Cnr of Martin Place and Pitt St.

WHY HAVE A PROCESSION? In a Eucharistic procession a priest or a bishop carries a monstrance (an ornamental container used to hold the Eucharist), which at its centre holds the living presence of Jesus Christ. During a procession, Jesus Christ comes among us in humility and in love. We use incense to signify adoration to God as well as our prayers rising heavenwards.

A procession allows us to give public witness to this central belief of Catholic faith: the intimate presence of God in the world, His merciful love for all and His invitation to us to journey with Him into eternal life.

EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES OF THE WORLD: More information regarding some prominent Eucharistic Miracles can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2WGY4PU>

**The Blessed Sacrament
The Bread of Life**



“ Behold this Heart which has so loved that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself in order to testify its love. ”

- JESUS TO ST MARGARET MARY ALOCOQUE

Jesus, you are real. You know me and you love me! I turn to you so that I may receive the gift that you long to give me - the gift of your peace, joy, freedom, mercy and love. I trust in you, and ask you for the faith to be able to recognise you in the Eucharist, where you make yourself present to me and invite me into your Heart.

Jesus is present in every tabernacle in every Catholic church around the world. You are always welcome to spend time with Him as He awaits your response to His love and mercy!



**WHO IS THE
EUCCHARIST?**

Catholics believe that the Eucharist, also known as the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Communion, is truly Jesus Christ under the form of bread and wine.

Pope Francis said of the Eucharist:

"It is Jesus, It is Jesus who saved me, It is Jesus who comes to give me the strength to live. It is Jesus, Jesus alive!"