

# NEWSLETTER



To the greater glory of God  
**St ALOYSIUS' CHURCH**  
a Jesuit church founded in 1908

## 31<sup>st</sup> January – 6<sup>th</sup> February

### This week:

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year**

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February *Feria*

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February **The Presentation of Jesus**

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February *Feria*

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February *Feria*

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February **St Agatha**

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February **The Japanese Martyrs**

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**Weekly Sunday Mass on YouTube**

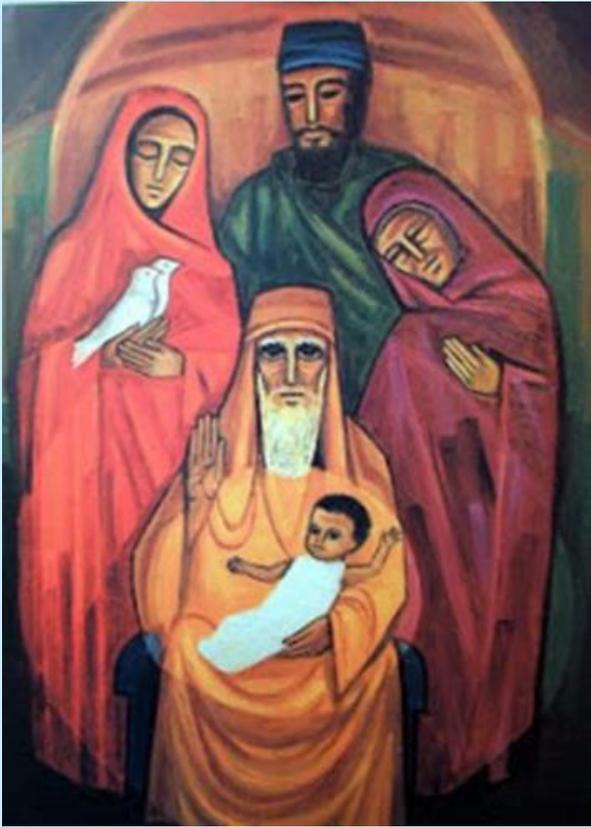
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-GPleOdFrbiCLvmqTVgIIg>

# The Presentation of Jesus

(2<sup>nd</sup> February)

“When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, **Joseph** and **Mary** took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord... Now there was a man in Jerusalem called **Simeon**, who was righteous and devout... Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God... There was also a prophetess, **Anna**. She was very old. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem...”

(Luke 2.22-40)



## News: Pain & the Embryo

In the Westminster Parliament an *Early Day Motion* which has been tabled by Carla Lockhart MP which highlights the latest science & developments on fetal pain and calls on the Government to urgently review official guidance in this area.



The All-Party Parliamentary Pro-Life Group (APPPG) commissioned, and recently released, a report on fetal sentience & pain summarising the extensive developments in medical science and academic research that point to the same conclusion: that it is likely that babies in the womb can feel pain, possibly from as early as 12 weeks' gestation, with some evidence suggesting even earlier.

The report also highlighted inconsistencies in UK law – currently, the killing of ‘protected animals’ from “two-thirds” of gestation is subject to tighter legal regulation than unborn humans being aborted from the same stage. The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act of 1986 stipulate how animal fetuses must be killed in ‘humane’ ways, whilst no parallel legal provision exists for human fetuses.

The *Early Day Motion* (No.1340) highlights the latest science and developments on fetal pain and calls on the Government to urgently review official guidance in this area.

<https://righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion>

# St Agatha (5<sup>th</sup> February)

Agatha was revered by the early Church and although many legends abound, it seems clear was a native of Sicily in southern Italy.

During the persecution of Christians under the Emperor Decius (AD 250-253) she refused to renounce her faith and was badly tortured and her

body was mutilated before she died. A vision of St Peter sustained her in her sufferings.

Agatha is the Patron Saint of rape victims. She is also the Patron Saint women suffering from breast cancer and also for the region of Sicily.



WWW.POPESPRAYER.NET

THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS  
FEBRUARY 2021

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

| Universal intention  
**FOR WOMEN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE**

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

The Pope's Prayer Network for February is dedicated especially for Women who are victims of Violence

<https://www.praywiththepope.net/>

In our sister Parish of Sacred Heart Church in Edinburgh the Jesuits are looking for a Finance Administrator/Accountant. If you know someone who might be interested point them in the direction of the their website...

<https://www.sacredheartedinburgh.org/parish-news/3adv40kt5l9w0cnp6fnh9bql4ebk3>





## St Paul Miki SJ & The Martyrs of Nagasaki (6<sup>th</sup> February)

Christianity spread like wildfire in sixteenth-century Japan. By the 1580s, less than forty years after St Francis Xavier introduced the faith, the church counted 200,000 converts. The growth had proceeded despite the opposition of Buddhist priests and many local rulers.

However, in 1587, Emperor Hideyoshi ordered the banishment of all Catholics, forcing the Jesuit missionaries to operate from hiding. But outright persecution did not break out until late 1596, when Hideyoshi rounded up twenty-six Jesuits, Franciscans, and laypeople and prepared to martyr them.

Among the victims was **St. Paul Miki**, a Jesuit novice who had just completed eleven years of training. Paul's noble family was converted when he was a child and at age five he was baptized. Educated by Jesuits, the gifted youth joined their novitiate at age twenty-two. He had studied intensively the teachings of the Buddhists so as to be able to debate their priests. He welcomed his chance at martyrdom, but may have wished just a little that it would be delayed long enough for him to be ordained a priest.



Hideyoshi had the left ears of each of the twenty-six martyrs severed as a sign of disrespect and paraded them through the city of Kyoto. Dressed in his simple black cassock, Paul Miki stood out among them. Most onlookers realized that this noble young man could easily have worn the samurai's uniform with two swords on his belt. The whole display had the unexpected effect of evoking compassion from the crowd, some of whom later became converts.

The martyrs were then taken to Nagasaki. They were tied to crosses with their necks held in place by iron rings. Beside each was an executioner with his spear ready to strike. An eyewitness gave this account:



“When the crosses were set up it was a wonderful thing to see the constancy of all of them. Our brother Paul Miki, seeing himself raised to the most honourable position that he had ever occupied, openly proclaimed that he was a Japanese and a member of the Society of Jesus. And that he was being put to death for having preached the gospel. He gave thanks to God for such a precious favour.

He then added these words: “Having arrived at this moment of my existence, I believe that no one of you thinks I want to hide the truth. That is why I declare to you that there is no other way of salvation than the one followed by Christians. Since this way teaches me to forgive my enemies and all who have offended me, I willingly forgive the king and all those who have desired my death. And I pray that they will obtain the desire of Christian baptism.”

At this point, he turned his eyes toward his companions and began to encourage them in their final struggle. The faces of them all shone with great gladness. Another Christian shouted to him that he would soon be in paradise. “Like my Master,” murmured Paul, “I shall die upon the cross. Like him, a lance will pierce my heart so that my blood and my love can flow out upon the land and sanctify it to his name.”

As they awaited death the entire group sang the canticle of Zechariah (see *Luke 1:67-79*). The executioners stood by respectfully until they had intoned the last verse. Then at a given signal they thrust their spears into the victims' sides. On that day, February 5, 1597, the church of Japan welcomed its first martyrs. With 5% Catholics the city of Nagasaki remains the centre of Christianity in Japan.

