
The Cathedral Coronavirus Chronicle



St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney — 8 April 2020 — Second edition

NEWS ALERT: LIVE-STREAMED HOLY WEEK IS HERE!

Dear Cathedral Parishioners and Visitors,

Here at the Cathedral, Holy Week is as busy as ever as we prepare for the beautiful, if somewhat simplified, liturgies of the Paschal Triduum. Shaping the ceremonial of such rich and complex celebrations into a form that is intelligible on-screen is an interesting challenge!

We have received a lot of very encouraging feedback about our daily livestreamed Masses. Gradually we are smoothing over our rough spots and getting the technology under control...

Most recently, we have been collaborating with The Ephphetha Centre, our Catholic centre in Sydney for deaf and hard of hearing people, to provide live Auslan signing at some of our livestreamed Masses. Their passion and behind-the-scenes hard work to provide this service is fantastic to see!

Music is always an important part of Holy Week at St Mary's Cathedral and will be again this year, albeit with a reduced choir size. Early this year our Director of Music, Thomas Wilson, went away on sabbatical leave, and Simon Nieminski, our Assistant Director, did a great job guiding us through those first difficult days of coronavirus restrictions. Thomas came back early from overseas but has then had 14 days of self-isolation before he could return to the cathedral precincts.



Here is Thomas un-solated and back at Cathedral House!

Thomas, Simon, and some of our wonderful singers will be enhancing our closed-door, live-streaming Holy Week liturgies with beautiful sacred music to help us rise above our present trouble!

And thanks to the fact that Channel 7 will be broadcasting the Good Friday afternoon and Easter Sunday morning liturgy on television nationwide, the gift of beauty and prayer from St Mary's Cathedral Sydney may reach even more people than usual this Holy Week!

Every blessing,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Fr. Don Richardson'.

*Fr Don Richardson, **Dean**,
Administrator of St Mary's
Cathedral Parish, Sydney.
Administrator St Philip Howard
Parish, Norfolk Island, South Pacific.
Administrator of Sacred Heart
Parish, Darlinghurst.
Liturgy Office Director, Archdiocese
of Sydney.*

REFLECTION:

**from
Fr Brendan Purcell of
the cathedral pastoral
team**

The bells of St Mary’s Cathedral ringing for the Angelus at 9, 12, and 6 in the evening, remind me of the Irish Round Towers, which were the bell-towers of the monasteries built from about 850 to 1150 AD.

The many people working in the neighbourhood could unite themselves in prayer with the monks chanting the Divine Office.

Since the Irish did not build towns at that time, and the many little kingdoms spent a lot of time fighting each other, the monasteries were like oases of peace (we find this recorded in some place names, using the Irish word for desert, ‘diseart’).

And while there were other names for ‘people,’ the preferred word in Irish still is ‘muintear,’ from the Latin for monastery, ‘monasterium,’ since it was in the monasteries that the divided tribes, around the Eucharist, experienced themselves most as God’s united people.

So in this time of deprivation—for some of health, for many of employment, for most of us from the Mass and the Sacraments—when offering Mass in the live-stream transmission, I don’t feel I’m in an empty St Mary’s, but with the invisible congregation who in your participation are really becoming a renewed community, more than ever, a people-of-God.



Image: *Irish Round Tower*