

Dear St Mary's community,

Welcome to this week's message providing updated advice on St Mary's parish, and our approach to COVID-19.

As we approach Holy Week, we are pleased that so many good things are happening in our faith community to keep us socially and spiritually together, if physically separated.

The St Mary's COVID-19 Working Group has been continuing to work keep our community in contact while containing the risk of this communicable disease, while also developing on options for the longer term.

Government advice – in for a long haul!

This week the federal and NSW governments advised that restrictions on gatherings and movement would likely continue for months, and provided some initial reports that the great response by Australians so far appears to be slowing down spread of the disease. So we are planning to ensure that we can keep 'together in spirit' through the long haul.

Weekly liturgy and homily. The Parish Office will continue to send the Sunday liturgy by email and hard copy. We are updating our contact list, so please reach out to friends and family who may want to receive updates to make sure we have their details.

Archdiocese online mass is available here:

<https://www.catholicvoice.org.au/mass-online/> . This provides video connection to mass every day. 'Mass for you at home' is also available on channel 10 and Foxtel.

We are delighted that we have been able to host a local homily from Fr Peter on YouTube, and received some great feedback on the first video over the week.

Holy Week

For Holy Week, we are expanding our local presence on YouTube to include participation by members of the parish. Links to each of the YouTube videos will be sent to you.

Sacrament of reconciliation

Fr Peter is available on request to offer the sacrament of Reconciliation. If you are interested, please call him on: 0407 914 341 to arrange a time outside St Mary's Church (note: this falls under the current government and archdiocesan protocols - i.e. no more than two gathering at a time and respecting social distancing rules).

Palm Sunday will include videos of Fr Peter reading the Gospel and giving the homily, and readings (including a special appearance by a very familiar face!).

Readings and videos for other Holy Week services will be distributed during the week. This includes **'Holy Week at Home'** resources, courtesy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, to assist you to observe at home.

We are keen for as many members of the community as possible to be involved in parish communications.

Please let the Parish Office know if you and your family would like to participate. You can do this in any way you like – offering a message, reflection, poem or prayer; providing a reading; filming a video. And let us know if there's anything you need.

Email bungendore@cg.org.au and telephone 02 6238 1247 (leave a message)

Support to the Bungendore community. St Mary's is continuing to work closely with Rotary, St Phillip's and others to provide assistance in our community. If you would like to support these activities, or are aware of neighbours in need, please advise the Parish Office or a member of the Working Group.

Ongoing communication. Updated advice will be provided to our faith community via email, social media and the Bungendore newspaper. Should you have queries, concerns or suggestions, please let us know via the Parish Office,

Our focus as a Parish through this time remains on our St Mary's community:

- Spiritual Health
- Physical Health, and
- Emotional Health.

Reflections

As we prepare for the most important week in our Catholic calendar, many of us will be reflecting on memories of our service together at St Mary's, and missing the opportunity to celebrate and share the Eucharist.

This week, Fr Gilles Drouin of France reminded us, in an interview with *La Croix* newspaper, that the Vatican Council made it clear that **Jesus Christ is present to us** in more ways than the Eucharistic bread and wine alone.

"People can read the Word of God with members of their family or those they live with," says Fr. Drouin.

In his Holy Week video, **Pope Francis** reminded us of the miracle amidst times of difficulty such as these, “**In the risen Jesus, life conquered death.**” The **video can be viewed here**, with subtitles. <https://youtu.be/xMJDcnmdhRg>

Peace and blessings to all.