



# OUR LADY OF DOLOURS Chatswood Catholic Parish

5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY of LENT

29 March 2020 – Year A/2

WITH OUR LADY OF DOLOURS  
WE PRAY FOR:

**Recently Deceased:**

Allan Khoury and  
Maria Menniti



**Church** - Cnr Kirk & Archer Sts,  
Chatswood  
**Parish Office** - 94 Archer Street,  
Chatswood, 2067  
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hours' emergency call:  
0473 046 906

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Mon-Fri 9.30am-4.30pm  
Closed for lunch 1pm – 1.30pm

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“By the rivers of Babylon, where we sat down, there we wept, as we remembered Sion...for how could we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”. These are the words of the 1970’s disco hit by Boney M, but they are also the opening words of Psalm 137, a song of lament by the people of Israel who had been taken into exile. Why did they weep? Why couldn’t they “sing the Lord’s song in a strange land”?

There were two things which gave the people of Israel their identity. The first was living in the land of Israel, which God had given them after they escaped as slaves from Egypt. The second was the Temple in which for them the presence of God dwelt. In 586 BC the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians and the people were taken into exile. No longer in their land, and with no temple in which to offer sacrifice and worship, the people felt adrift, abandoned and truly in a strange land. They had lost their way to experience God and their national identity. (Daniel 3 also picks up this sentiment.)

We might resonate with this experience of feeling that we are in a strange land in more ways than one. Our work has changed, or worse, disappeared. Our home life has changed. Our travel and recreation are curtailed. And for some of us the way we pray has changed, because we can no longer go to Mass, which for many of us has been the cornerstone of our religious lives every Sunday since childhood, and for some people even every day. The main way in which we experience the presence of God through Jesus is for a time not possible for reasons beyond our control.

So perhaps we can learn from the experience of the Israelites. What did they do? They lamented, yes, as an authentic cry to God, but they also leaned in to God to find new ways to pray, new ways to worship, and new ways to be a community of faith. Significant parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament were written or compiled during the exile. New ways of thinking about God and God’s action emerged, including the idea that maybe God’s promises wouldn’t all be fulfilled here on earth, but that there might be another life on the other side of death.

Fifty years later the exiles returned home, stronger and more dedicated to God than ever, and they rebuilt the Temple. In 70 AD the Romans destroyed this temple too, and this was instrumental in Christians defining themselves as a distinct faith community, not just as a group within Judaism. Most of the New Testament was written in the next three decades.

So, we can see that some of the greatest advances in the human experience and understanding of God have come in times of disruption and dislocation. We can see how faith has flourished despite the odds in countries where there has been persecution and poverty.

**PTO**

## WITHIN OUR PARISH

Our exile will last only months, not decades, but I think that our time in this strange land can be a time when we are refined and purified, where we will reach out to God in new ways and that we will discover new possibilities which we couldn't imagine just a few weeks ago. This will take courage, honesty, reflection and prayer. Let's go on this journey together. In the coming weeks I am going to record a homily and post it on YouTube as an aid to your personal journey of faith. This week as Jesus raises Lazarus, we'll look at how Jesus calls forth life from the place of death. Next week on Passion Sunday we'll take an honest look at the harsh realities we and the people around us are facing and how Jesus can draw close to us in this experience. And on Easter Sunday we'll celebrate the good news stories of how God is working in our lives, and that there is no land too strange, no place too dark, no experience so dreadful that the Resurrection of Jesus can't penetrate and redeem. And in between I'll post messages like this one with stories about how our parish is gathering in the online space and what services the parish can offer.

God bless you in this challenging time –  
Fr Jim McKeon

**Welcome Back Sam:** Sam French is back living with Fr Jim and Fr John in the presbytery. The Seminary of the Good Shepherd has temporarily closed, and Bishop Anthony has asked Sam to live here while he completes his studies over the next three months.

**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Lady of Dolours Church:** We were to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation stone of our church on April 19<sup>th</sup>, but this is of course no longer possible. Many thanks to the generous people who had already offered to provide food for this occasion.

**What is still on:** our situation changes rapidly, however, at the time of writing we can still offer:

- **Anointing of the Sick:** For people who are sick or awaiting surgery the sacrament is always to be available.
- **Weddings:** As per government requirements with just the couple and two witnesses. A couple might have a renewal of vows with family and friends at a later date.
- **Baptism:** Modelled upon weddings, also with just the parents and two godparents.

- **Funerals:** With up to ten people present.
- **Prayer and support:** Contact the parish office by phoning 9410 9000 or [chatswoodoffice@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:chatswoodoffice@bbcatholic.org.au). Members of the parish team will be available to call and visit people who are in need. Fr Jim will also be available for Skype conversations on [oldalpha2020@gmail.com](mailto:oldalpha2020@gmail.com)

*Mass for You at Home* is on Channel Ten on Sunday mornings at 6am. This can also be accessed at <https://10play.com.au/mass-for-you-at-home>. For weekday Mass see <https://www.northsydney Catholics.com/spirituality/liturgy/mass-on-demand> or search "cathnews Mass on demand" on YouTube for this.

We recommend <https://pray-as-you-go.org/> which offers at 10-15 minute reflection and meditation each day upon the daily scripture readings, and some great prayers for particular circumstances such as loneliness, grief and depression under "prayer tools". Access it via your browser or install the free app.

Attached to the bulletin is an article by Fr Thomas O'Loughlin which might help us reflect on life without the Eucharist.

### PARISH WORKING BEE 4 APRIL 2020 CANCELLED

Due to Churches having to close their doors as part of the Government's plan to try and stop the spread of COVID-19, we need to cancel our planned Working Bee on 4 April 2020.

We thank those who had nominated to help out on the day. Your kind gesture is very much appreciated. We will consider rescheduling the Working Bee once we know when the church will reopen.

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### FROM THE DIOCESE Chrism Mass 2020

All of the ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter are currently under consideration by Bishop Anthony. Bishop Anthony will write to all clergy next week and share how we might go about celebrating these ceremonies.

### BAPTISMS IN OUR PARISH:

Jasmine Ga Yan Ko,  
Summer Langenmaier-Pang and  
Otto Langenmaier-Pang

