



Friends' Newsletter

St Francis' Choir Inc. 326 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. 3000

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Director's Report



180th Anniversary Mass of St Francis' Church & Choir

Dear Friends,

We are at that time again when we marvel that nearly half another year has passed! 2026 has already been full of wonderful music for the choir. Once again, the privilege of singing to the thousands of worshippers who attended the Holy Week and Easter ceremonies underlines for us the importance of our musical ministry.

The choir has also celebrated the solemnity of Pentecost with

Mozart's charming *Sparrow Mass* and his youthful *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, while for Corpus Christi we sang Haydn's imposing *Harmoniemesse*, so named because of the large complement of wind instruments in the orchestra.

All of this follows on from last year's 180th anniversary celebrations. One of the highlights in the second half of the year was *Sing to the Lord*, a concert in St Patrick's Cathedral celebrating the



life of John Henry Byrne, our visionary chorister who died in 2021. The concert

Tony Way conducts the massed choirs at St Patrick's

was a collaboration with the choirs of St Patrick's Cathedral and St Paul's Cathedral and drew an audience of nearly 500 people on a cold Friday night in August. This was a splendid ecumenical venture in a magnificent setting.

Our 180th celebrations culminated in a special Mass on the feast of St Francis. Such an occasion called for Gounod's *Saint Cecilia Mass*, arguably the setting for which the choir is most famous, having first performed it soon after its premiere. Christopher Willcock's popular *Prayer of St Francis* was the communion motet, while Hadyn's *Te Deum* in C concluded the Mass with an *(continued over)*

exultant hymn of praise. It was also a pleasure to welcome many of the Friends to the celebratory luncheon afterwards.

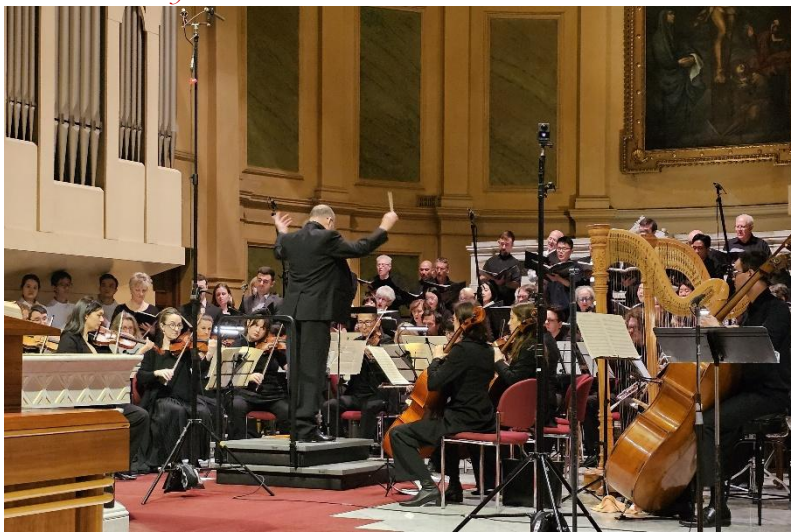
We are also now rejoicing that the choir has six choral scholars. In addition to our two soprano scholars, Marianna Paradowski and Shelby Holland, we are pleased to welcome altos Caitlin Monique Wans and Monica Ruggiero, tenor Ben Hjorth and bass Ian Damman.



St Francis' Choir performing at St Patrick's Cathedral

You may be wondering what musical delights are in store for the rest of the year. We are currently in the process of finalising the music list for the second half of the year and in coming weeks you will be able find the details on our website.

180th Anniversary Mass



As we draw close to the end of the financial year, we encourage you to consider making a tax-deductible donation and/or renew your membership to help us maintain our living tradition of liturgical music. Another option is to consider becoming a life member of the Friends. We are very grateful to those who have already taken up this option.

In Australia, St Francis' Choir offers a unique and important contribution not only to the life of the Catholic Church, but also to the broader community, ensuring that St Francis' Church continues to be a 'place of festive celebration, ... of welcome and meeting...' as described in the *Rule of Life* of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Any donation, no matter how small, is very welcome and will be gratefully received. Details of how to donate are included in this newsletter.

In conclusion, the choir joins with me in thanking you all for your ongoing support and wishing you and your loved ones every blessing. We look forward to welcoming you to St Francis' very soon.

Tony Way
Director of Music

In Brief

Welcome back to all our Friends. We have had a wonderful start to the year with so much uplifting music being sung every Sunday at the 11.00am Mass. On behalf of the Friends, we thank Tony and Anthony for their musical leadership and pay tribute to the dedication and commitment of all our regular choir members.

As we approach the end of the financial year, we ask you to consider supporting the choir by renewing your membership to the Friends and/or by making a tax-deductible donation. You may do this by using the enclosed form or by using the EFT details included in this newsletter. As always, my thanks to all the Friends of the Choir for your continual support.

Marilyn Jamieson, Co-ordinator, Friends of St Francis' Choir

Vale Fergus Ryan



Fergus Ryan AO was a trustee of the St Francis' Choir Foundation from its inception in 2005 until his death earlier this year.

He had a deep love of fine liturgical music and this motivated his long association with the choir, often attending the 11.00am Mass.

Bringing a lifetime of experience in the financial world, Fergus was a thoughtful and visionary trustee who was truly dedicated to ensuring that the choir maintained adequate financial resources to ensure it could both fulfil and expand its ministry.

He died after a short but courageous battle with illness. We will miss his friendship, generosity and wisdom but we give thanks for his extraordinary contribution to both St Francis' Choir and St Francis' Church. We extend our deep sympathy to his wife, Judy, all the Ryan family and his many friends and associates across diverse walks of life.

May the choirs of angels come to welcome him into the heavenly Jerusalem and may he rest in peace.

Donating to the Choir

- You can donate using the form accompanying this newsletter.
- Given the current delivery speed of ordinary mail, we encourage to use the donation facility on the choir website www.stfrancischoir.org.au or
- You can also donate by EFT:

St Francis' Choir

BSB 033068

Account 186383

If you are making an electronic donation, please email us at

stfmusic@blessedsacrament.com.au to advise us of your donation and then we can issue a receipt. Thank you!