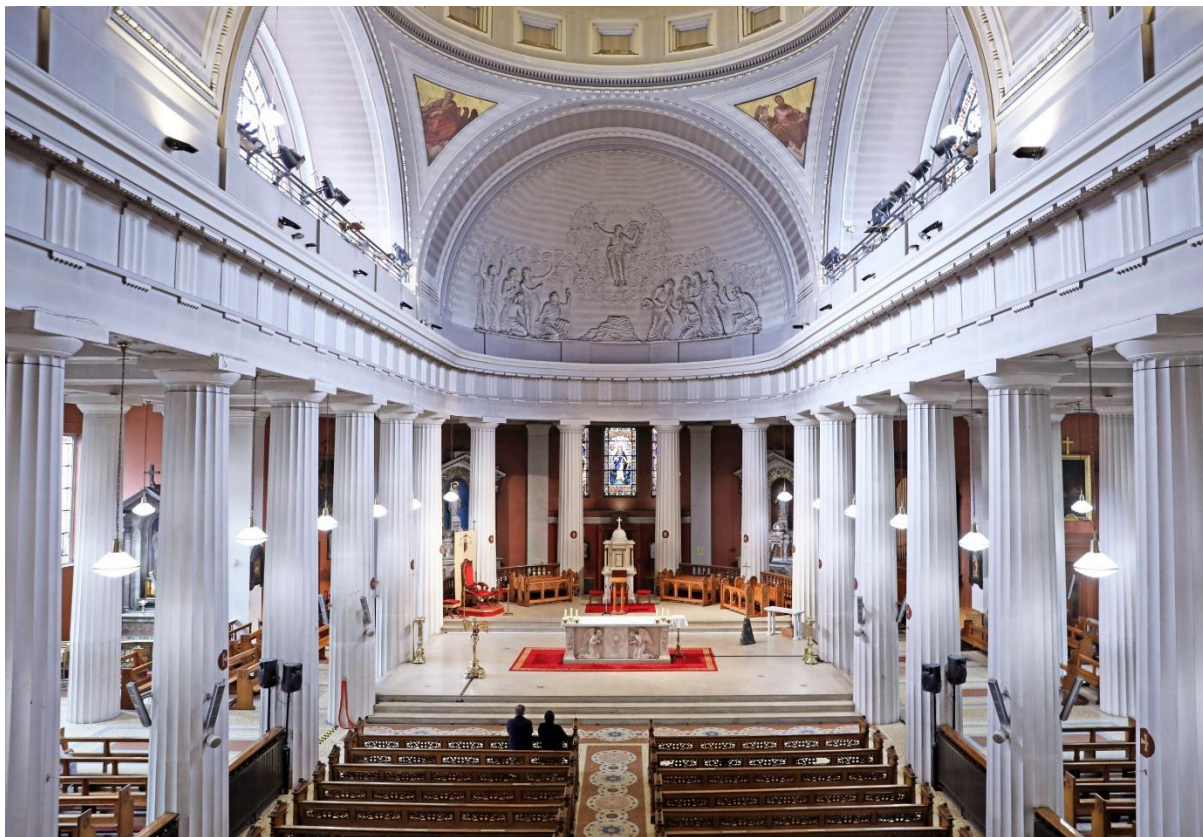


St Mary's Cathedral – essential conservation, accessibility and renewal works



St Mary's Cathedral, Marlborough Street, Dublin, will close temporarily from 17th August to allow essential conservation, accessibility and renewal works as part of the next phase in its development as the Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Dublin.

For 200 years the Pro-Cathedral, as it was known, has been the centre of Catholic life in Dublin. It has hosted major religious ceremonies and significant national events, from the funeral of Michael Collins in 1922 to the visit of Pope Francis in 2018. **Last November, on its 200th anniversary, Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell announced that the Holy See had designated St Mary's the Cathedral for Dublin**, placing it at the centre of the diocesan mission, looking in faith-filled and creative ways to the future.

Following a competitive procurement process, a "Letter of Intent" has been signed with the main contractor. The construction budget is 17 million euro (excl. VAT). Planning permission was received from Dublin City Council last October.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell has described St Mary's as a place of prayer, proclamation and presence; a place of peace, hope and welcome at the heart of the city. The works beginning this year will help the Cathedral to fulfil that role more effectively in the years ahead. They will address important conservation and accessibility needs, safeguard the building's heritage and enhance its capacity to host major liturgical celebrations, as well as providing an enhanced space for personal prayer, catechesis, social outreach, and musical and cultural events.

The Archbishop believes this vision is “both an expression of faith and a sign of hope”. He said: “At a time when Dublin city centre is experiencing significant social, demographic and economic change, the Church is reaffirming its commitment to the people who live, work, study and visit there.”

The proposed works to the Cathedral include external accessibility upgrades and structural maintenance, particularly the roof area; the interior to include a mechanical and electrical upgrade; a new amplification system; and the designation of a new baptismal area. The works will also see the upgrade of the facilities for the Palestrina Choir and Cathedral Girls’ Choir to include new rehearsal areas, a choral manuscript library and toilet facilities. **Full details can be found on [Dublin City Council’s planning website](#) under reference 2684/25.**

While the Cathedral’s recent designation gives added significance to the project, the need for substantial works has long been recognised. This investment will preserve one of Dublin’s most important church buildings while preparing it to serve future generations.

During the closure period, major diocesan liturgies will take place in St Andrew’s Church, Westland Row. The Palestrina Choir will be based at the College Chapel on the All Hallows Campus of DCU, by kind permission of the University. Parish and sacramental life will continue at St Joseph’s Church, Berkeley Road, where the Cathedral Girls’ Choir will also be based.

The temporary closure forms part of a wider vision for the Church’s presence in Dublin city centre. **Guided by the principles of [Building Hope](#), Archbishop Farrell has adopted a [Twin Pillar strategy](#) centred on St Mary’s Cathedral and St Andrew’s, Westland Row, along with the adjoining parishes.** Not merely about buildings, this initiative seeks to strengthen the Church’s mission through prayer, welcome, service, encounter and outreach, maintaining a strong presence on both sides of the River Liffey and creating opportunities to engage with practising Catholics, those who feel disconnected from faith and those newly drawn to the Christian tradition.

Archbishop Farrell said: “Through the renewal of St Mary’s Cathedral and the development of the Twin Pillar strategy, the Archdiocese seeks to strengthen its witness, deepen its service and offer a welcoming presence in the heart of the city for generations to come, all centred on the person of Jesus Christ.”

Both St Mary’s and St Andrew’s have long histories of serving the population of Dublin. Their location, capacity and existing links with civic, cultural and educational institutions provide unique opportunities for a renewed pastoral presence at the heart of the city. Alongside the physical renewal of St Mary’s, plans are being developed for new initiatives, events, charitable outreach and programmes across the inner city that will foster encounter, encourage participation and support the Church’s mission in contemporary Dublin. These will be announced over the coming months.

Three-quarters of the costs for the project have already been pledged by generous donors and the remaining outlay will be raised through ongoing fundraising efforts. The project will be completed without prejudice to other pastoral needs in the Archdiocese.