

Thoughts from the LAAMB

“Oh, how lovely is the evening, is the evening,
when the bells are sweetly ringing, sweetly ringing,
ding dong, ding dong, ding dong.

A church bell was rung to commemorate a special time.

Thanks to Howard James for my reflective thoughts today. We have all heard a church bell ringing whether it was from our church or at another church. So why do we ring church bells? Thanks to Howard and his research.

Churches such as those of the Anglican, Catholic, and Lutheran denominations ring bells to:

- *Signal that Mass (Catholic) or service (Protestant) is about to begin*
- *Mark each hour from early morning to the late evening to remind those hearing the bells of God's daily presence in our lives*
- *Announce that three specific daily prayer times have been reached—6 a.m., 12 p.m., and 6 p.m.—during which the faithful are encouraged to unite in prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer or the Angelus*
- *Honor a special occasion taking place at the church, such as a wedding or funeral;*
- *Highlight a specific stage of a church service, such as when handbells are rung during a Catholic Mass to draw attention to the priest's elevation of the consecrated Host and Precious Blood during the Eucharistic Prayer*
- *Welcome Christmas day and Easter day with a “joyful noise” (Psalm 100)*

I also found other reasons for ringing a church bell. A church bell was rung to commemorate a special time. After the war both Germany and England rang their bells to proclaim that the war was over. Some of you may remember when the Diocese asked us to ring our bells in unison on Armistice Day to mark the hundredth anniversary of the end of the first world war. On December 6, 2019, the thirtieth anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, some churches in Montreal rang their bells fourteen times, one for each woman that died.

In the United states on the 1st anniversary of September 11 terror attacks some churches in different communities rang their bells to remember all those persons who died. Even today, there are some churches across Europe in small towns that are ringing their bells for the amount of people who have died from the coronavirus. I can't image the comfort those bells ringing brings those families whose loved ones have died.

In Paris, on this past Wednesday, April 15, 2020, a year from the inferno that gutted Notre-Dame de Paris, the cathedral's great bell rang out across the capital in a tribute to the Gothic landmark's resilience and to the medics battling the coronavirus epidemic.

Finally, on this past Thursday, I spoke with an Anglican clergy person in Durham who has been ringing their church bell for a few weeks now on Sunday. They ring their bell with all the other churches in town at 11am. The people in Durham have been giving them positive feedback that the bell ringing is comforting in this challenging time.

I began by saying “A church bell was rung to commemorate a special time”. Are we in a special time? I would like to think that we are in a special time. A time to remember that God's power of love still rings out in our world. So let's ring our bell on Sunday with the message of peace, especially, to all those fighting this Pandemic on the front lines and remember....

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Perry