

NEWSLETTER

Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle and St Joseph, Douglas

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11th Sunday of Ordinary Time, 18th June 2023

Day for Life

(Page 91 in Mass Book)

(Year A for Sundays) (Cycle 2 for weekdays)

Dear Parishioners

As a young priest I recall attending another priest's silver jubilee celebration. I thought he was an old man, past his prime after 25 years as a priest. I certainly didn't know any priests who'd been ordained for fifty years, other than those in retirement or living in seclusion in nursing homes. So it's a shock to realise that the years have caught up with me.

As required, on reaching my 75th birthday, I have submitted my resignation to the Archbishop but he has suggested that I continue a bit longer before withdrawing from diocesan responsibilities and thereafter to continue to serve on the Island as my health allows. However, I would not want diminishing capacity to hold back the future development of the church on the Island. I hope it will become obvious to me when that time comes – hopefully before it becomes obvious to everyone else. God may well intervene and take that decision for me.

Looking back over 50 years of priesthood I realise there is so much to thank God for. I've often said that the significant times in my life have not been the ones I predicted. We speak of the priesthood as a vocation. Marriage and the single life are also vocations along with parenthood and having no children of your own. And life, whatever our vocation, has a habit of presenting all of us with circumstances we never expected.

A lesson I have learned from my 75 years is that God is always faithful. God keeps his promises even if we are neglectful. I don't believe that on the day of my ordination in 1973 God had a plan for me that he has slowly revealed. The Holy Spirit is dynamic, not static. The Holy Spirit is flexible. The Holy Spirit adapts to my twists and turns, my uncertainties and U-turns. And the Holy Spirit can transform the mistakes I inflict on myself and on others into life-giving moments.

Priesthood is not about ME even if God allows me to think so. I'm convinced that the most fruitful work I have accomplished as a priest happened without me knowing. The things I try to do may satisfy my own ego, but I suspect the Holy Spirit tolerates my plans to distract me while he is using me in his own ways for his own purposes. There's something liberating in that realisation. In these weeks I've been overwhelmed with cards, gifts and good wishes from people I have encountered over the years.

I don't believe that my job as a priest is to tell people they aren't good enough, or where they're going wrong. Some people feel guilty that their faith is weak. I'm wary of people with 'strong' faith. They always want to inflict it on everyone else. I'm there to encourage people, to let them know they are loved and cherished by God however messy their lives. The grown-up world is messy. We're all in this together. I'm no better than anyone else. That's not false humility. That's my faith.

I have a sense of humour. In my better moments I laugh at myself. (Sometimes I'm too tired to see the funny side and that's a reminder to take a rest). I don't get my own way but the knowledge that God never lets me down gives me hope for the future – whatever that may bring.

Grace is another name for the Holy Spirit. I have found this poem inspirational over the years:

How to Recognise Grace by *Marylyn Chandler McEntyre*

It takes you by surprise.
It comes in odd packages.
It sometimes looks like loss
Or mistakes
It acts like rain
Or like a seed
It's both reliable and unpredictable.
It's not what you were aiming at

Or what you thought you deserved.
It supplies what you need
Not necessarily what you want.
It grows you up
And lets you be a child.
It reminds you you're not in control
And that not being in control
Is a form of freedom.

- **Lourdes Youth Fundraising:** Great Get Together with Food, Music and Dancing from Around the World will take place on **Thursday 22 June from 7pm to 11pm** at Manx Legion Club, Market Hill, Quayside, Douglas. Tickets £12 each available from Sheila on 475990. Children under 12 free. All Proceeds to Lourdes Youth Fund to support teenage IOM parishioners to travel to Lourdes to help with sick pilgrims from Archdiocese.
- There will be no refreshments after 11am Mass this Sunday in St Mary's. Back to normal next week. Thanks to parishioners who help, bake and support to allow people to meet and talk after Mass. All proceeds up to now will be donated to the SVP.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Anthony's £430; St Mary & St Joseph £917. Thank you for your generosity.

Masses and Services for the coming week

All Masses and Services from St Mary's are live-streamed

Saturday 17th June The Immaculate Heart of Mary 11 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	John Smith, anniversary
Sunday 18th June 11 th Sunday of Ordinary Time <i>Day for Life</i>	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Fr John, 50 th Anniversary of Ordination
Monday 19th June	<i>No Mass today</i>		
Tuesday 20th June St Alban	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> Linda Swift, sick
Wednesday 21st June St Aloysius Gonzaga, SJ	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Paddy O'Connor, recently died
Thursday 22nd June St John Fisher & St Thomas More	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Ava Barry, recently died Dave Tayag, thanksgiving
Friday 23rd June St Ethelreda	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Gordon Savage, anniversary
Saturday 24th June The Birth of St John the Baptist 12 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00 to 12.00 noon 5.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Confessions and Exposition John Smith, anniversary
Sunday 25th June 12 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Peter McCabe, 2 nd anniversary People of our Parishes

Assisted Dying Bill: Churches Alive in Mann have asked for prayers regarding the Assisted Dying Bill to be said during each of the four Sundays in June. These will be written by a different church leader each week and will give our Isle of Man Christian churches a significant point of unity in prayer. Here is the prayer for use in our churches on Sunday 18th June, with thanks to **Fr John Devine**:

Loving Father, we ask you to send your Holy Spirit upon all those engaged in the current debate regarding Assisted Dying on the Island. We are motivated in our opposition to the proposed legislation by our conviction that human life is sacred.

We are concerned that the vulnerable and frail should never be coerced, directly or indirectly, into shortening their lives so as not to be a burden on their loved ones or, indeed, on our health and caring services.

We proclaim the truth with humility, conscious that the Holy Spirit works in us and through us and in the hearts of those who listen.

We pray that our discussions be conducted in a respectful manner and that our representations in defence of the sanctity of human life be made without judgement or condemnation of those whose views, formed in good faith, may differ from our own.

We reaffirm our commitment to Jesus Christ who showed compassion for the sick throughout his ministry. He suffered and died in solidarity with our broken world and rose again to new life.

We make our prayer through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen