

NEWSLETTER

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

Tel 01624 675509 Email saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk Website www.manxcatholic.org

13th Sunday of Ordinary Time, 2nd July 2023

(Page 96 in Mass Book)

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

Dear Parishioners

We are all saddened by the death of **Canon Brendan** and pray for his eternal rest.

We give thanks to God for his life of service. A remarkable number of people have shared with me how Canon Brendan accompanied them at difficult times in their lives. He did so quietly and discreetly. In his later years Brendan suffered with his eyesight and with mobility problems, making frequent visits to Liverpool for treatment. He was always appreciative of the Health Service. He also gave us a marvellous example of a good death. On hearing of his terminal diagnosis over a year ago, Brendan faced death calmly and without fear. He refused any dramatic medical or surgical interventions. He had great faith in his GP Dr Orla Flanagan and in Nobles Hospital consultant Dr John Thomas. He talked about his impending death openly. On his last visit in May, Archbishop Malcolm visited Brendan at home and personally gave him the Sacrament of the Sick. That meant a lot to him.

Canon Brendan continued to celebrate Mass daily until he was unable to do so. In his final weeks I brought him Holy Communion on many occasions. The devotion with which he received Holy Communion each time was an inspiration. On receiving Holy Communion, he would repeat three times: *'O Sacrament most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine'*. Brendan was always grateful. When asked how he was, he always expressed his thanks that he was in no pain or discomfort. He talked calmly about his funeral arrangements and the disposal of his belongings. During his last weeks, the need for pain relief became apparent but he never complained. Sheila was a constant presence. Brian Murphy gave regular support. When he could no longer play cards on Fridays at the Columba club, Brian even ensured that Brendan continued to play Canasta at home with other card players. A game of skill rather than chance, Brendan's sharp mind enabled him to beat his friends to the very end.

On the Saturday afternoon before he died, I was privileged to celebrate Mass at his bedside. He wore his priestly stole so that he could concelebrate the Mass with me. Drifting in and out of consciousness his lips moved with the sacred words. He was able to receive a small piece of the Sacred Host and to sip the Precious Blood before sinking back into his pillow. He made the sign of the cross at the final blessing. The following day, Sunday, I called with Holy Communion, but he was unable to receive. Sheila said that morning he had encouraged them with what seemed like a little sermon quoting the words of St Paul *'I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness' (Philippians 4:4)*. I sensed it was the last time I would see him. On Monday morning I was off Island at a meeting in Liverpool. I received a text message that Sheila, Rose Mary and Rosie had read the Prayers for the Dying while he slept. Within fifteen minutes Sheila then called me to say he had gone to God. It was shortly after midday.

It is said that a priest never retires. But the death of Canon Brendan and people's response to that news has brought home to me that the sacrament of priestly ordination embraces more than celebrating Mass. Ordination is a sacrament, a sign of the Lord's presence, not just for the priest himself, but for the whole community. The Lord uses his priests to be a sign to his people of his faithfulness and active presence in the world. He uses his priests through their inevitable human weaknesses and failings. He uses them when they are strong and healthy and he uses them when they are sick. He uses them when they are dying. I know that Canon Brendan's priesthood will be alive and present even at his funeral and in our memories of his life in the weeks and months ahead. *Fr John*

- The **Memory Support Group** will next meet on **Tuesday 4th July** from **10.30am-12 noon** in **St Anthony's Pastoral Centre**. Everyone will be warmly welcomed. Refreshments will be served. For more information, please contact Josie on 406063.
- **Island Spirituality Network** meeting will be held on **Saturday 8th July** from **9.30am to 12.15pm** in St John's Mill. The speaker will be Revd Andrew Walker, Founder-Director of the London Centre for Spirituality. His theme will be *'Beginning the song exactly where you are'*. Donations welcome.
- The **Red Mill Hill Missionary Boxes** for **St Anthony's** will be emptied this week. If you have a box, please leave it in the usual place in the church porch at St Anthony's.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Anthony's £580; St Mary & St Joseph £890. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Canon Brendan's funeral will take place on **Monday 10th July at 12 noon** in St Mary's. Archbishop Malcolm is coming over to preside.

On **Sunday 9th July Canon Brendan's remains will be received into St Mary's Church at 5pm with a Vigil Service.** Canon Brendan's coffin will rest alone overnight in the presence of the Lord in the church in which he served as parish priest for 22 years. The church will close at 6.00pm.

It was Canon Brendan's wish that a **buffet lunch be provided for parishioners at St Anthony's Pastoral Centre** after his Requiem Mass.

Some of you will choose to bring your own cars to the funeral and park in Douglas town centre car parks. Please respect the importance of keeping Hill Street as uncongested as possible. And please do not block the Myrtle Street rear of church entrance.

Having considered this, we realise that many of you will have difficulty in parking close to St Mary's for the Requiem Mass. Another option for **those attending is to park in the Car Park at St Anthony's. Two Buses are being provided to transfer people to St Mary's in plenty of time for the funeral, leaving St Anthony's at 11.15am promptly and to return in the buses from St Mary's directly after the Requiem Mass at 1.15pm to St Anthony's Pastoral Centre where everyone is invited for lunch.**

Those wishing to avail themselves of this free bus service PLEASE LET US KNOW immediately by email. We need to know numbers by this Sunday evening, 2 July, so that the bus service can be confirmed and paid for first thing on Monday morning.

Those also wishing to attend lunch are requested to let the parish office know. This will enable the caterers to provide sufficient food without waste and for the parish to avoid unnecessary extra expense. Thank you

Masses and Services for the coming week

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

Saturday 1st July St Oliver Plunkett			
13 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	People of our Parishes
Sunday 2nd July	9.30am	St Anthony's	Alan Bridson, recently died
13 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00am	St Mary's	Mary & Patrick Reaney, anniversary
Monday 3rd July St Thomas, Apostle	12.10 noon	St Mary's	The People of the Isle of Man
Tuesday 4th July St Elizabeth of Portugal	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> Phyllis, Tom & Tommy Kelly, anniversary
Wednesday 5th July <i>Tynwald Day</i>	<i>No Mass today</i>		
Thursday 6th July St Maria Goretti	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Veronica Stackhouse Roy Newson anniversary
Friday 7th July	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Esther & George Murphy & family, anniv
Saturday 8th July	11.00 to 12.00 noon	St Mary's	Confessions and Exposition
14 th Sunday of Ordinary Time <i>Sea Sunday</i>	5.00pm	St Mary's	Leo McCaffrey, 3 rd anniversary
Sunday 9th July	9.30am	St Anthony's	People of our Parishes
14 th Sunday of Ordinary Time <i>Sea Sunday</i>	11.00am 5.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Sue & Kevin Manning, deceased Service of Reception: Canon Brendan
Monday 10th July	12.00 noon	St Mary's	Requiem Mass: Canon Brendan Alger

We hold **Canon Brendan** in our prayers this week. May he rest in eternal peace. We think of Canon Brendan's many friends on the Island who grieve his loss and all those whose lives he touched during his ministry on the Island.