

NEWSLETTER

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

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14th Sunday of Ordinary Time, 9th July 2023

Sea Sunday

(Page 99 in Mass Book)

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

Dear Parishioners

Many of you will be familiar with the ornate pews installed in the 'new' extension to St Anthony's Church, Onchan. These were transferred from the chapel of the former Archdiocesan seminary at St Joseph's, Upholland. There is a plaque on the wall at St Anthony's commemorating generations of former students. The seating in the chapel at St Joseph's, Upholland was arranged in collegiate fashion, as is the case in ancient cathedrals and monasteries. The benches faced each other on either side of the sanctuary. The church of St Mary of the Isle has choir stalls in the sanctuary following the same pattern. At Upholland there were many more rows of these benches, sufficient to accommodate several hundred students for the priesthood.

Although we never spoke, I first encountered Canon Brendan Alger as a twelve-year-old in the chapel at Upholland. We were seated in order of seniority. I was in my first year. Canon Brendan was in his final year, thirteen years ahead of me. He, with his fellow deacons, occupied the back row of the benches. Those in the school were not allowed to speak to senior students. But we observed them at Mass each day in the knowledge that, if we stayed the course, in our turn we would one day occupy their places. The back rows of benches were particularly coveted. A canopy above each of these choir stalls had its own light, operated independently with a switch under the seat. Those in the back row were sub-deacons and deacons, obliged to recite the Divine Office. These lights enabled them to read from their breviaries when the rest of the chapel was in darkness. Brendan was duly ordained priest in 1961. Year on year I progressed through those same benches until I also reached the back row and was ordained deacon in 1972 and priest in 1973.

After ordination Canon Brendan was sent to Cambridge University to read History and Theology. In 1966, after taking his teaching qualification, he returned to Upholland to teach in the school. By now I was in the sixth form and sitting almost halfway towards the longed-for back row in the chapel. Only then did I get to speak to Father Alger for the first time. He taught us RE. I recall him saying that there was a new town being built, down the road from Upholland. He even suggested that if we went on to be ordained, the chances were that one of us might be assigned to work there as a priest. And so it came to pass. 1972 found me on placement as a deacon in Skelmersdale New Town. On Ordination to the priesthood, I was assigned there permanently and served for eight happy years. Canon Brendan's Mum, Kathleen was by then a parishioner, as were his brother Des and sister-in-law Maureen. In due course Des was ordained to the permanent diaconate.

When I came to the Island in 2015, I reminded Canon Brendan of the prediction he had made in the classroom. He'd forgotten all about it. Canon Brendan came to the Island in 1989 as parish priest and Area Dean. During his time, he saw St Mary's parish extended to include the former Sacred Heart parish, Pulrose. He subsequently took on responsibility for the parishes of St Joseph the Worker, Willaston and St Anthony of Padua, Onchan. Committed to fully implementing the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, Canon Brendan commissioned the reordering of the sanctuary at St Mary of the Isle. Building on the legacy of Monsignor Peter Ryan, he developed cordial and collaborative relations with the leaders of other Christian denominations and was a founder member of CAIM (Churches Alive in Mann). His greatest achievement, however, were the small acts of kindness and generosity he showed over the years to those in genuine need and distress. He did so discreetly and in a way that left the dignity of those he helped enhanced.

Definitely a 'come-over', Canon Brendan fell in love with the Island and its people. When the time came for him to retire in 2011, he chose to live out his final years among those whom he had served. Already well retired when I came to the Island in succession to Canon Philip in 2015, Canon Brendan became a friend and confidant; always encouraging and never intrusive. He loved to be the first with any news. Never one for prolonged conversations, he communicated frequently via text message and the briefest of phone calls. Emails often came with links and attachments to articles and books he thought might be of interest. He continued his support long after he felt unable to celebrate Mass publicly. One such example was the way in which he encouraged our Novena to Mary Untier of Knots. He was happy to sit without fuss in the congregation. May Canon Brendan rest in peace. *Fr John*

Thank you to all those who have booked the free bus service from St Anthony's to attend **Canon Brendan's funeral**. Please make your own way to St Anthony's in plenty of time for **the buses to leave promptly at 11.15am**. The buses will not be waiting for latecomers. Please park sensibly to allow space for Canon Brendan's family and close friends who will be arriving at St Anthony's later from the cemetery and for those driving their own cars from St Mary's. The buses will leave St Mary's immediately after Requiem Mass at approximately **1.15pm**. Both buses are now full.

Thank you also to those who sent an email or gave their name at Masses last weekend to request lunch in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre after Canon Brendan's funeral. All these names have been included in the final numbers which have been given to the caterers.

Sincere thanks to a very small group of regular helpers and cleaners who this week offered to deep clean the church so that it would look its best for Canon Brendan's Reception and Funeral. They also polished the Paschal candle and altar candle holders and cleaned up the choir loft for our singers. Thanks to another parishioner who removed wax stains from the fabric on the coffin stands. These lady parishioners notice what needs to be done and get on quietly with their work without fuss or mention. We have another parishioner who regularly comes into St Mary's at the weekend to clean and tidy for our Masses. These volunteers are invaluable in both our churches. Thank you very much for your reliability and dedication. Canon Brendan would be touched by your kindness.

- St Anthony's Bingo will take place on Thursday 13th July at 7.30pm. All welcome including visitors.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Anthony's £472; St Mary & St Joseph £1084. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Masses and Services for the coming week

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

Saturday 8th July 14 th Sunday of Ordinary Time <i>Sea Sunday</i>	5.00pm	St Mary's	Leo McCaffrey, 3 rd anniversary
Sunday 9th July 14 th Sunday of Ordinary Time <i>Sea Sunday</i>	9.30am 11.00am 5.00pm	St Anthony's St Mary's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Sue & Kevin Manning, deceased Service of Reception: Canon Brendan
Monday 10th July	12.00 noon	St Mary's	Requiem Mass: Canon Brendan Alger
Tuesday 11th July St Benedict, Abbot	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Eucharistic Service James O'Neill
Wednesday 12th July	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Fr Joseph Kiganda CSSp, birthday intention
Thursday 13th July	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Alf & Betty Bowden, anniversary Isabel Alexander, 1 st anniversary
Friday 14th July	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Connell Tebay, anniversary
Saturday 15th July 15 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00 to 12.00 noon 5.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Confessions and Exposition Prem Ananth & Selveraj, anniversary
Sunday 16th July 15 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Joe Greene, 6 th anniversary People of our Parishes

Pope Francis said this week: 'If you are the same at the end of Mass as you were at the beginning, something is wrong.'

He was referring to his prayer intention for July which asks that we place the Eucharist at the centre of our lives. The Pope invites us to see the celebration of the Eucharist not as an obligatory ritual, but rather as an encounter with the Risen Jesus, which is 'profoundly transforming'. It gives us courage to encounter others, to go out of ourselves and to open ourselves to others with love.

'We pray that Catholics may place the celebration of the Eucharist at the heart of their lives, transforming human relationships in a very deep way and opening to the encounter with God and all their brothers and sisters.'