

# 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](mailto:saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk) Website [www.manxcatholic.org](http://www.manxcatholic.org)

**21<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

*(Page 120 in Mass Book)*

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

Dear Parishioners

Can God change his mind?

Last Sunday's gospel saw Jesus ignoring a request for help from a Canaanite woman and then seemingly changing his mind. She was foreign, a non-Jew. Jesus said 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. This Sunday's second reading from Paul's letter to the Roman says: 'Who could ever know the mind of the Lord?'

Fr Richard Rohr suggests that God does not change. The bible relates how our understanding of him matures: 'As we read the Bible, God does not change as much as our knowledge of God evolves. I certainly recognize there are many biblical passages that present God as punitive and retributive, but we must stay with the text - and observe how we gradually let God grow up. Focusing on divine retribution leads to an ego-satisfying and eventually unworkable image of God which situates us inside of a very unsafe and dangerous universe. Both Jesus and Paul observed the human tendency toward retribution and spoke strongly about the limitations of the law.'

*The biblical notion of justice, beginning in the Hebrew Scriptures with the Jewish prophets—especially Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea—is quite different. If we read carefully and honestly, we will see that God's justice is restorative. In each case, after the prophet chastises the Israelites for their transgressions against YHWH, the prophet continues by saying, in effect, "And here's what YHWH will do for you: God will now love you more than ever! God will love you into wholeness. God will pour upon you a gratuitous, unbelievable, unaccountable, irrefutable love that you will finally be unable to resist."*

*God "punishes" us by loving us more! How else could divine love be supreme and victorious? Check out this theme for yourself: Read passages such as Isaiah 29:13–24, Hosea 6:1–6, Ezekiel 16 (especially verses 59–63), and so many of the Psalms. God's justice is fully successful when God can legitimate and validate human beings in their original and total identity! God wins by making sure we win—just as any loving human parent does.*

*Love is the only thing that transforms the human heart. In the Gospels, we see Jesus fully revealing this divine wisdom. Love takes the shape and symbolism of healing and radical forgiveness - which is just about all that Jesus does. Jesus, who represents God, usually transforms people at the moments when they most hate themselves, when they most feel shame or guilt, or want to punish themselves. Look at Jesus' interaction with the tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10). He doesn't belittle or punish Zacchaeus; instead, Jesus goes to his home, shares a meal with him, and treats him like a friend. Zacchaeus' heart is opened and transformed. Only then does Zacchaeus commit to making reparations for the harm he has done.*

*As Isaiah says of God, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways" (Isaiah 55:8). Yet I am afraid we largely pulled God down into "our thoughts." We think fear, anger, divine intimidation, threat and punishment are going to lead people to love. We cannot lead people to the highest level of motivation by teaching them the lowest. God always and forever models the highest, and our task is merely to "imitate God" (Ephesians 5:1). Fr John*

\*\*\*\*\*

- The **Memory Support Group** will meet on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30am-12noon** in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre. Everyone warmly welcomed. Refreshments will be served. Contact Josie on 406063 or Sally 642879.
- **Mill Hill Red Box Collections:** Message from Phil Newton who looks after St Anthony's red box collections – in 2022 St Anthony's raised £1033.73 through the Mill Hill Red Box collections. Phil will say a few words at St Anthony's Sunday Mass in the near future. Our thanks to Phil for taking care of these collections and thank you to those parishioners who continue to give to the Missions by having a red box at home.
- **September is St Vincent de Paul Awareness month.** St Anthonys SVP members are holding a fundraising Afternoon Tea on **Saturday 16th September** from 2pm to 4pm in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre. **Adults £8; Children £3.50.** There will also be a raffle at £1 for a strip of tickets. All funds raised will help St Anthony's SVP provide for the needy this winter. Members of the SVP will be at the back of St Anthony's church this Sunday. Please add your names to their list if you wish to attend or bring a friend along to the afternoon tea. Please note children must be accompanied by an adult. Thank you for your continuing support of the SVP.

**Masses and Services for the coming week**  
*All Masses and Services from St Mary's are live-streamed*

<b>Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August</b>			
21 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	People of our Parishes
<b>Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August</b>	9.30am	St Anthony's	Mary McNally & Caiti Kelly
21 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00am	St Mary's	Paul Wilson, 4 <sup>th</sup> anniversary
<b>Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August</b> St Augustine	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Helen & John Cowburn-Wood & Vivian Garnham
<b>Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August</b>	10.00am	St Anthony's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i>
Passion of St John the Baptist	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Roy Nixon, 4 <sup>th</sup> anniversary
<b>Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August</b> St Edmund Arrowsmith	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Walter Gilbey, recently died
<b>Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August</b>	10.00am	St Anthony's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i>
St Aidan & the Saints of Lindisfarne	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Vera Cain, anniversary
<b>Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September</b> Saints Margaret Clitherow, Anne Line & Margaret Ward	12.10 noon <b>7.00pm</b>	St Mary's <b>St Anthony's</b>	Sue Manning, recently died <b>Monica Caley, recently died</b>
<b>Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September</b>	11.00 to 12.00 noon	St Mary's	Confessions and Exposition
22 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	Angela Dean, anniversary
<b>Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September</b>	9.30am	St Anthony's	People of our Parishes
22 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00am	St Mary's	Canon Brendan Alger, recently died

In his address to pilgrims at Wednesday's General Audience, **Pope Francis** thanked mothers and grandmothers who hand on the faith to children, saying the faith is passed on in one's mother tongue.

The Holy Father gave the example of **Our Lady of Guadalupe** to stress the importance of transmitting the faith in one's native language, as he continued his series of catechesis on "the passion for evangelisation."

Although the faith had already arrived in the Americas when Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego, the Pope noted, the first evangelisation of the new continent had not been without problems. "Instead of the path of inculturation, too often the hasty approach of transplanting pre-constituted models had been taken, lacking respect for the indigenous peoples, the Pope said.

When Mary appeared to Juan Diego, though, she came "dressed in the clothing of the native peoples, speaking their language, welcoming and loving the local culture.

"She is a Mother, and under her mantle, every child finds a place. In Mary, God became flesh; and through Mary, He continues to incarnate Himself in the lives of peoples."

**The Pope thanked mothers and grandmothers**, especially, for handing on the Gospel to their children and grandchildren, explaining that faith is passed on with life. "This," he said, "is why **mothers are the first evangelisers.**" And he invited those present to offer a round of applause for mothers.

Despite difficulties, including resistance from Church leaders, Pope Francis said Juan Diego persisted in the mission Our Lady gave him.

"Even today, in so many places inculturating the Gospel and evangelising cultures requires constancy and patience, not being afraid of conflict, not losing heart." We must not be discouraged, he said, knowing that Mary is there to console us and help us to grow, "like a mother who, while following her child's steps, launches him into the world's challenges."

Our Lady confirmed her message to Juan Diego with a miracle, the "extraordinary and living image" that appeared on the tilma, or cloak, of the saint. This is "the surprise of God," the Pope said. "When there is willingness and obedience, He can accomplish something unexpected, at times and in ways that we cannot foresee."

Even today, at Marian shrines, pilgrimage destinations, and places of proclamation, we see the welcome and evangelisation that marked the life of St Juan Diego. "Faith is welcomed in these places in a simple and genuine, popular way," the Pope said, concluding, "We need to go to these oases of consolation and mercy, where faith is expressed in a maternal language; where we lay down the labours of life in Our Lady's arms and return to life with peace in our hearts."