

NEWSLETTER

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

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32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, 12th November 2023

Remembrance Sunday

(Page 152 in Mass Book)

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

Dear Parishioners

Last Friday was a wonderful day in the life of the church on the Island. I was proud to be part of it. The event only happened through the efforts of so many individuals over a long period of time. All important things in life depend on relationships. And relationships take time and patience to build. Priests and people on the island have adapted to the realities of our changing world in so many ways since 1859 but the Cathedral Church of Saint Mary of the Isle remains the same; a sign of continuity and stability - the big difference being that it is now recognised as such by the wider community and not just by Catholic parishioners.

When news of cathedral status was first announced, I jokingly remarked that Pope Francis had been particularly impressed by our new toilets and refurbished meeting room at the back of St Mary's. I had long felt that the back of the church did not do justice to the dignity of the rest of the building. But we found ourselves 'cathedral ready' when the possibility of cathedral status arose. You will also have noticed the new sanctuary carpet. In addition to providing extra microphones, we re-upholstered and varnished the existing presidential chair and added the new coats of arms to make it the bishop's chair. It was fitting that we were able to replace the chairs on the front altar and sanctuary with the chairs taken from St Joseph's, Willaston.

I wish to thank so many people for all their efforts both on November 3rd itself and also in the weeks leading up to it: our cleaners and flower arrangers; parish office staff; our stewards; the caterers and those serving food and drinks; St Mary's & St Anthony's choir and organist; St Mary's School Choir and teachers; our readers; clergy and parishioners on the Island (it was good to see Fr Brian Dougherty being able to attend but sad that Canon Brendan Alger didn't live to see the day - he was fully supportive of the initiative); Bishop Tom Neylon; the Metropolitan Cathedral canons; Canon Aidan Prescott, Fr Sean Riley and other visiting clergy; Dean Nigel Godfrey and ecumenical colleagues; the President of Tynwald, the Chief Minister and MHKs; the Mayor of Douglas and elected members; the Chief Executive and Council officers; Martin Miller, the COO of Liverpool Archdiocese; Kirk Williams, head surveyor; Manx Radio and the BBC; the photographer and video recordist; the Papal Nuncio with his councillor and, of course Archbishop Malcolm. Grateful thanks to you all.

I copy a recent article I have written on the significance of the event:

The distance between the north and south of the Isle of Man is the same as the distance between Preston and Warrington. Whereas both those towns are connected by the M6 motorway, the roads on the Island are dark and winding country lanes. The Island forms one third of the landmass of the Archdiocese. Liverpool is eighty miles away across the Irish sea, four times the distance between France and England across the English Channel. Both Scotland and Northern Ireland are a shorter distance from the Island than England. Indeed, the Island feels more like Ireland than England. I set my alarm for 4.30am to get to the airport for the early flight to Liverpool. If I return the same day, I'm lucky to arrive home before 9.00pm. Flights are frequently delayed and sometimes cancelled. These are just a few of the things I discovered when appointed to the Island in 2015. But when the sun shines, the Isle of Man is paradise.

As I write we are recovering from the inauguration of the Cathedral Church of Saint Mary of the Isle, Douglas as co-cathedral of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. It was good to have so many of our chapter of Canons present on Friday 3rd November as Archbishop Malcolm was led to his chair or *cathedra* by the Apostolic Nuncio. This was the first visit ever of the Holy Father's personal representative to the Island.

Involvement of civic authorities on the Island in the Inauguration ceremony, along with leaders of other Christian denominations, would have been beyond the imaginings of those present when the church was opened in 1859. Catholics were then outsiders. As recently as the 1960s, a Catholic applying to join the Isle of Man police force received a letter to say that it was not their policy to employ Catholics. Decades of engagement by our priests with other churches and both local authority and Manx national government have led to the point where the contribution of the Catholic community to public life is taken for granted.

Since coming to St Mary's as parish priest, I have learned how remote the Archdiocese can feel to our parishioners. It is difficult for them to see the relevance of its structures and the support and oversight it brings to every aspect of parish life. The granting of Co-Cathedral status to Saint Mary of the Isle is a recognition of the Island's distinctiveness. But is also a bridge that brings the two parts of the Archdiocese closer together.

- The **‘Warm and Cosy Hub’** has re-opened on Monday and Friday from 10am until 2pm for the winter months in the Columba Club, Circular Road, Douglas. Thanks to the Knights of St Columba who have again gifted the premises. Hot soup with bread & butter will be served with tea, coffee and biscuits. If you are feeling low or need cheering up, do pop into this friendly warm environment. Everyone welcome. Thank you also to the volunteers.
- **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2024:** Children attending St Mary’s Catholic Primary School are being prepared for First Holy Communion as part of the school’s RE curriculum. Parents and Guardians of **Year 4 children attending other non-Catholic schools who wish to make their First Holy Communion in 2024 are required to register their names by email with the parish office saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk**. They will then receive an application form followed by an invitation to attend evening classes at St Anthony’s, Onchan. Six sessions of preparation are required, taking place next Spring. Thank you to our parish catechists who lead the preparation course.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Anthony’s £429; St Mary & St Joseph £904. This does not include standing orders and credit card donations. Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Masses and Services for the coming week

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

Saturday 11th November			
32 nd Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary’s	Shaun O’Hare, 2 nd anniversary
Sunday 12th November			
<i>Remembrance Sunday</i>	9.30am	St Anthony’s	People of our Parishes
32 nd Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00am	St Mary’s	For all our Faithful Departed
Monday 13th November	12.10 noon	St Mary’s	For a family with difficulties
Tuesday 14th November			
	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony’s St Mary’s	Mass - Holy Souls The Dolan Family, special intention
Wednesday 15th November			
St Albert the Great	12.10 noon	St Mary’s	Holy Souls
Thursday 16th November			
St Edmund of Canterbury St Margaret of Scotland	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony’s St Mary’s	Eucharistic Service Lucas Martin, recently died
Friday 17th November			
St Hilda	12.10 noon	St Mary’s	Corazon Quiambao, sick
Saturday 18th November			
	11.00am to 12noon	St Mary’s	Exposition and Confessions
33 rd Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary’s	Ann Fox, anniversary
Sunday 19th November			
	9.30am	St Anthony’s	People of our Parishes
33 rd Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00am	St Mary’s	Jimmy Byrne, 10 th anniversary

The **Holy Souls** will be remembered during our November Masses. Envelopes are available at the back of church for you to include the names of those you wish to be remembered. These can then be placed in the box in front of the altar.

For Grief by John O’Donohue (1956-2008)

When you lose someone you love, your life becomes strange, the ground beneath you gets fragile, your thoughts make your eyes unsure;
 And some dead echo drags your voice down where words have no confidence. Your heart has grown heavy with loss;
 And though this loss has wounded others too, no one knows what has been taken from you when the silence of absence deepens. Flickers of guilt kindle regret for all that was left unsaid or undone.
 There are days when you wake up happy; again inside the fullness of life, until the moment breaks and you are thrown back onto the black tide of loss.
 Days when you have your heart back, you are able to function well until in the middle of work or encounter, suddenly with no warning, you are ambushed by grief. It becomes hard to trust yourself. All you can depend on now is that sorrow will remain faithful to itself.
 More than you, it knows its way and will find the right time to pull and pull the rope of grief until that coiled hill of tears has reduced to its last drop. Gradually, you will learn acquaintance with the invisible form of your departed;
 And, when the work of grief is done, the wound of loss will heal and you will have learned to wean your eyes from that gap in the air and be able to enter the hearth in your soul where your loved one has awaited your return, all the time.