

NEWSLETTER

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

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1st Sunday of Advent, 3rd December 2023

Day of Special Prayer for Migrants

(Page 82 in Mass Book) (Year B for Sundays) (Cycle 1 for weekdays)



Dear Parishioners

Last weekend I shared some details of my **recent visit to Rome**. The occasion was a gathering of 29 priests from England and Wales who have celebrated the 40th, 50th and 60th anniversaries of ordination this year. We were hosted by the Venerable English College in their summer villa, Palazola, perched on the hillside on the opposite side of lake Albano to Castel Gandolfo, the Pope's summer residence.

One evening we celebrated Mass with the staff and students of the English College. On the final evening we visited the Beda College at the invitation of Canon Philip, the college rector. Again we celebrated Mass and had dinner with the staff and students – among them future priests for the Archdiocese as well as our priests pursuing further studies in Rome.

The highlight of our stay was **an audience with Pope Francis**. With the help of Archbishop Paul Gallagher, a Liverpool priest, the Vatican's Foreign Minister, the three Liverpool priests were able to personally greet Pope Francis. After he had spoken at the general Weekly Audience in St Peter's Square, Pope Francis was slowly wheeled along the lines of guests. Father Peter Morgan and Monsignor Des Seddon suggested I spoke with him in Spanish. I explained we were from Liverpool. He replied that 'Liverpool is the Naples of England'. We each shook his hands while photographers captured every moment. Pope Francis has a wonderfully open friendly face and gave an individual word of encouragement and a smile to each person. There was certainly no sign of the virus that was reported days later in the media. The sun continued to shine for the rest of the day while the three of us wandered the streets of the 'Eternal City' and digested the experience. For me it was the fitting climax to a special year.

This week I received an official document naming me **Dean of the Co-Cathedral Church of Saint Mary of the Isle**. People had asked whether the granting of **cathedral status** to St Mary's would affect me personally. The document went on to specify that my 'pastoral responsibility for the care of souls in the parishes of St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas and St Anthony of Padua, Onchan remains unchanged.'

Pope Francis has dedicated the month of December to prayers for people with disabilities.

The Holy Father says: *"People with disabilities are among the most fragile among us. Some of them suffer rejection, rooted in either ignorance or prejudice, which then marginalizes them. Civil institutions need to support their projects through access to education, employment, and places where they can express their creativity. Programs and initiatives are needed that promote their inclusion. Above all else, big hearts are needed who want to accompany."*

It means changing our mentality a little and opening ourselves to the abilities and talents of these people who are differently abled, both in society as well as in the life of the Church. And so, creating a completely accessible parish does not only mean eliminating physical barriers. It also assumes that we stop talking about "them" and start talking about "us." Let us pray that people with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions offer inclusion programs that enhance their active participation."

You can watch the video on www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqCUxQtytms

This Friday, 1st December, saw the start of the **COP28 conference in Dubai**. Jane Lavery, a member of the Columban Justice, Peace and Ecology Team reflects:

When I first read the phrase 'Integral Ecology' in Pope Francis' encyclical 'Laudato Si' I thought I knew what it meant but wasn't really sure. I certainly knew what each word meant - 'integral' is essential or fundamental to, and 'ecology' is the study of an environment and everything in it, but I really wasn't quite sure how the two fitted together, although they did appear to be as one. The other phrase that Francis uses frequently in Laudato Si' is 'everything is connected'. And I came to realise that's what 'integral ecology' means - everything is connected.

For instance, did you know that some trees and fungi have a connection which benefits them both? The fungi attach themselves to the roots of the trees and gain access to the sugars that they themselves can't produce, while the trees benefit as the process extends the roots, allowing for greater absorption of nutrients for them. Because of the scale of the fungus' growth along its roots, these spread further and overlap with other trees, and as a result the trees can communicate with each other, particularly in times of distress. An amazing example of interconnectedness - integral ecology - everything working with everything else for the common good.

*Humans are not always very good at seeing themselves as part of nature, often considering themselves superior to and in charge of the rest of the created world. But as Pope Francis says in his recently published apostolic exhortation **Laudate Deum**, 'Human beings must be recognised as part of nature' and continues that 'a healthy ecology is also the result of*

interaction between human beings and the environment'. He tells us that we should be able 'to recognise ... that human life is incomprehensible and unsustainable without other creatures'.

This is the integral ecology that Pope Francis promulgates; an understanding that the wonderful world which God has created out of pure love is totally interconnected, and that everything, including humankind, is, according to *Laudato Si'*, 'linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect'.

This Sunday, on First Sunday of Advent, there will be a **Joint Advent Service** at 6.30pm in Onchan Methodist church. The different churches will participate, and I will be preaching. All are encouraged to attend. Another Ecumenical development..... The days of tribal divisions between Christian denominations are a thing of the past. Thanks be to God.

To help us prepare for Christmas, there will be an **Advent Service** on **Wednesday 13th December** at **7.00pm** in **St Mary's Church**. We will reflect with **Mary Untier of Knots** on the coming birthday of her Son, accompanied by our choir.

Pax Christi: The annual Pax Christi Advent Peace Service will be livestreamed this Saturday 2 December at 2pm from the Church of the Holy Apostles, Pimlico, London on www.churchservices.tv/pimlico/archive/recordings/gSbH1wTvJVMGjUK

- **St Anthony's SVP Christmas Party** for adult parishioners will take place in **St Anthony's Pastoral Centre on Saturday 9th December from 2pm to 4pm**. SVP Members will be at the back of church this weekend to take names of those wishing to come along. Entertainment by Ukelele band and Santa Claus will be in attendance.
- The **Memory Support Group** will next meet on **Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 10.30am-12 noon**. The Group is delighted to welcome the **Ukulele group** to provide entertainment for their pre-Christmas meeting. All will be warmly welcomed and tea/coffee and cake will be served. Please contact Josie on 406063 or Sally on 642879.
- **Hosanna Rock:** We look forward to welcoming to St Mary's church the pupils, teachers and staff from **St Mary's School** on **Monday 18 December at 10.30am** when the children will perform their Christmas celebration "**Hosanna Rock**". Thanks to the teachers, school staff, parents and pupils who together put a lot of work into this performance. "**Hosanna Rock**" will be livestreamed for family members who are unable to attend.
- The '**Warm and Cosy Hub**' is open on Mondays and Fridays from 10am until 2pm for the winter months in the Columba Club, Circular Road, Douglas. Hot soup with bread & butter will be served with tea, coffee and biscuits.
- **Living Hope at St Joseph's Church, Willaston** are offering a **free Community Christmas Day Meal** from 12 noon to 3pm on Christmas Day. Booking essential. For transport or more information please call Sue on 07624 470802.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Anthony's £407; St Mary & St Joseph £1,105. Thank you for your generosity.

Masses and Services for the coming week

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

Saturday 2nd December			
1 st Sunday of Advent	5.00pm	St Mary's	Ann Fox, deceased
Sunday 3rd December	9.30am	St Anthony's	David Killey, anniversary
1 st Sunday of Advent	11.00am	St Mary's	People of our Parishes
<i>Day of Special Prayer for Migrants</i>	<i>6.30pm</i>	<i>Onchan Methodist</i>	<i>Onchan Churches Advent Service</i>
Monday 4th December	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Terry Hanna, recently died
Tuesday 5th December	10.00am	St Anthony's	Monica Caley, recently died
St John Almond	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Anthony McNair, anniversary
Wednesday 6th December	10.00am	St Anthony's	Funeral Service: Ann Scott
St Nicholas	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Douglas Wheeler & Eammon McNally
Thursday 7th December	10.00am	St Anthony's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i>
St Ambrose, Bishop	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Frank Begley, recently died
Friday 8th December	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Margaret Lindley & all deceased members of the Kelly family
Immaculate Conception of Mary			
Saturday 9th December	11.00am to 12noon	St Mary's	Exposition and Confessions
2 nd Sunday of Advent	5.00pm	St Mary's	People of our Parishes
Sunday 10th December	9.30am	St Anthony's	Josie Lees, 30 th anniversary
2 nd Sunday of Advent	11.00am	St Mary's	Pearl & Hugh McFeat, anniversary