

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER – for the next two weeks

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

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The Nativity of the Lord, 24/25th December 2023 &

Feast of the Holy Family, 31st December 2023

(Year B for Sundays) (Cycle 1 for weekdays)



Dear Parishioners

Christmas is a time to say thank you. We give thanks for the birth of Jesus. And it's an opportunity for me to thank you. Thank you for the contribution you make to the life of our parishes. And thank you for the many cards, gifts and messages of encouragement and support. They are much appreciated.

I'm conscious of travel difficulties to and from the Island both by air and by sea. Our supermarket shelves and postal deliveries also face disruption. The uncertainty seems more acute this Christmas. We pray that our Christmas plans aren't ruined. Having said that, the first Christmas didn't go to plan either.....

We are living in a time of two major wars. That's in addition to the drawn-out conflicts elsewhere that rarely hit the news. Wars and climate change are the biggest drivers of migration but politicians would have us believe refugees and migrants are responsible for their own misfortune. The movement of people in vast numbers is a new reality that we all have to face. We can't simply put up walls, physical or virtual, to keep people out. How do we respond to this scale of human suffering? This imperfect world is the one Jesus was born to save.

Each family has had its own milestones to celebrate this year, some sad and some happy. This past year has been an eventful one for me, too. My sister Mary died at the beginning of February. Canon Brendan died in the summer. There were also happy times as I celebrated both my 75th birthday in May and 50 years as a priest in June. It was great to be able to share those events with parishioners on the Island and with family and friends across. And then we had the wonderful news that Saint Mary's was to be given cathedral status. Although our parishes are our people, not our buildings, it is people who make our buildings special. Generations of parishioners who have gone before us will share the same pride we all feel in our cathedral church. It's an honour both for the parish and the Island. A big thank you is due to all those who made these events memorable. I'm hoping for a quieter year in 2024.....

The list of people to thank is endless. And I fear missing anybody out: our cleaners, stewards, readers, eucharistic ministers, our choirs, catechists, flower arrangers, servers, office staff, collectors, counters, KSC, SVP and Memory Support group. It's a privilege to be your priest. A Happy, Peaceful and Blessed Christmas to you and your families.

I share this **Christmas poem by Malcolm Guite:**

*O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame,
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
Be folded with us into time and place,
Unfold for us the mystery of grace
And make a womb of all this wounded world.
O heart of heaven beating in the earth
O tiny hope within our hopelessness,
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,
To touch a dying world with new-made hands
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.*

And here's another by the same poet for **December 28th, the Feast of the Holy Innocents:**

*We think of him as safe beneath the steeple,
Or cosy in a crib beside the font,
But he is with a million displaced people
On the long road of weariness and want.
For even as we sing our final carol
His family is up and on that road,
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,
Glancing behind and shouldering their load.*

*Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power,
And death squads spread their curse across the world.
But every Herod dies; and comes alone
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.*

- 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.
- The **Memory Support Group** say a big **thank you** to the Ukulele band who entertained at their recent pre-Christmas gathering. It was much enjoyed by all. The Group would also like to **thank the volunteers** who so kindly give up their free time to support them and supply endless cups of tea and coffee. The **Group will next meet on Tuesday 9 January 2024 from 10.30am to 12noon**. All welcome.

Masses and Services for the next two weeks

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

Sunday 24th December 4 th Sunday of Advent	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions All our Christmas Intentions
Sunday 24th December <i>First Masses of Christmas</i> <i>The Nativity of the Lord</i>	12.30pm 5.30pm 8.00pm (Carols 7.30pm) 10.00pm (Carols 9.30pm)	St Mary's St Mary's St Anthony's St Mary's	'Come to the Manger' Service for young children and families All our Christmas Intentions All our Christmas Intentions All our Christmas Intentions
Monday 25th December <i>The Nativity of the Lord</i> Christmas Day	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions All our Christmas Intentions
Tuesday 26th December St Stephen	12.10pm	St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions
Wednesday 27th December St John, Apostle	12.10pm	St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions
Thursday 28th December Feast of the Holy Innocents	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions All our Christmas Intentions
Friday 29th December St Thomas of Canterbury (Becket)	12.10pm	St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions
Saturday 30th December Feast of the Holy Family	5.00pm	St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions
Sunday 31st December Feast of the Holy Family	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions All our Christmas Intentions
Monday 1st January 2024 Mary, Mother of God	12.10pm	St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions
Tuesday 2nd January St Basil the Great	<i>10.00am</i> 12.10pm	<i>St Anthony's</i> St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> All our Christmas Intentions
Wednesday 3rd January The Most Holy Name of Jesus	12.10pm	St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions
Thursday 4th January	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions All our Christmas Intentions
Friday 5th January	12.10pm	St Mary's	All our Christmas Intentions
Saturday 6th January <i>The Epiphany of the Lord</i>	11.00am to 12noon 5.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Exposition and Confessions Hazel Smith, anniversary
Sunday 7th January <i>The Epiphany of the Lord</i>	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Stephen Craig, 33 rd anniversary Billy Murray, anniversary