

NEWSLETTER

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

Tel 01624 675509 Email saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk Website www.manxcatholic.org

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, 21st January 2024

Sunday of the Word of God

(Page 129 in Mass book)

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

Dear Parishioners

This Thursday past was the first day of the annual **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**. It traditionally ends on 25th January, the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul. During my seminary training there was tremendous enthusiasm for Ecumenism. The Second Vatican Council had recently recognised the validity of the Baptism of all major Christian denominations. It was a massive change of outlook. Prior to that, anyone wanting to become a Catholic had to be baptised all over again since the Catholic church did not recognise the validity of their original Baptism in another church. The implications of that recognition went further. In the 3rd century St Cyprian had declared there to be **no salvation outside of the church**. Recognition of Baptism performed by other churches effectively extended the boundaries of the church to include all the baptised. If we share a common Baptism what else do we share?

In my early days as a priest, now fifty years ago, there was an assumption that Christian unity was not only inevitable but just around the corner. I now accept we will have to wait a little longer. Meanwhile the notion of what church unity might even look like has developed. We will never all be members of a single uniform body. Rather, while the different denominations retain their identity, it suggests that individual churches can learn and be enriched by each other and that, conversely, no particular Christian church has the fullness of the truth. This approach has been named '**Receptive Ecumenism**'. Put simply, we can be enriched by each other's traditions and practices.

Attributed to the late Cardinal Walter Kasper, former president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: 'The essence of receptive ecumenism can be encapsulated in the following questions, which Churches are encouraged to ask themselves: '**what can we learn from each other as Churches?**' and '**what gifts must we receive from others, recognising that we do not possess everything we need to be faithful, fruitful and fully ourselves?**' Receptive ecumenism, as its advocates stress, is not about diluting or abandoning particular ecclesial identities, but about **mutual enrichment, hospitality, listening and gift exchange: 'receiving Christ in the other'**.

(Churches Together in England - <https://cte.org.uk/about/ecumenism>)

One example of receptive ecumenism is the re-discovery by the Catholic Church of an appreciation of the role of the Bible. Some 'Protestant' churches, in their turn, have come to appreciate the role of the Eucharist. Even simple things like the lighting of candles, once anathema in non-Catholic churches, are now the norm. We give and take from each other.

Archbishop Derek Worlock and his Anglican counterpart in Liverpool, Bishop David Sheppard, adopted the principle of '**better together**'. Here on the Island, church leaders' united opposition to the **Assisted Dying Bill** is an example of that principle in practice. Furthermore, the church leaders of CAIM (Churches Alive in Mann) entrusted co-ordination and leadership on this issue to the Rev Bill Leishman, minister at the Broadway Baptist Church, Douglas.

Within our own parishes, concern that the closure of **St Joseph's, Willaston** could see the end of social welfare projects such as **St Joseph's Nursery** and **St Christopher's Fellowship**, led to collaboration with **Living Hope**. Leasing the church building to them maintains Christian worship in Willaston along with the continuation of those community initiatives.

But perhaps the biggest advance in Ecumenism is **the move from rivalry and suspicion** to mutual trust. Loyalty to our faith is no longer measured in terms of hostility. There is a welcome realisation that we share the same journey and honour the devotion of our Christian sisters and brothers to the same Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Fr John

- We regularly receive enquiries from adults (over 18) who wish to become Catholics or from those who, although Baptised in the Catholic church, have never been Confirmed or made their First Holy Communion. In a few weeks' time we will be reconvening our 'Come and See' group which meets every few weeks to explore our Catholic faith. Please get in touch with us at saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk if you wish to be part of the group.
- The St Anthony's memory support group is changing its name to '**The T and Chat Group**' which will make the group more inclusive. The group will be supported by St Anthony's St Vincent de Paul Society. A donation box will be available. Proceeds will support the excellent work which the SVP carry out discreetly in our community. **The T and Chat Group will meet on 06/02/2024 from 10.30am to noon at St Anthony's Pastoral Centre.** Refreshments will be served. All welcome. For further information please contact Josie Lorimer on 406063.
- **First Holy Communion 2024 Preparation:** Parents and Guardians of Year 4 children attending non-Catholic schools, who have contacted us, should have received application forms this week. When your completed form is returned, dates and times of evening classes at St Anthony's, Onchan will be advised. Six sessions of preparation are required, taking place during March and April. Thank you to our parish catechists who lead the preparation course.
- 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.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Mary and St Joseph £979, St Anthony's £483. This does not include standing orders or the tap and pay machine at the back of church. 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 20th January 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	Margaret Duffy, sick
Sunday 21st January 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>Sunday of the Word of God</i>	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Albert Gubay, anniversary People of our Parishes
Monday 22nd January	12.10pm	St Mary's	George Foolkes, anniversary
Tuesday 23rd January	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	Deceased members of McGowan family Hector Miranda, anniversary
Wednesday 24th January St Francis de Sales	12.10pm	St Mary's	Stephen Simpson, anniversary
Thursday 25th January	10.00am	St Anthony's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i>
The Conversion of St Paul	12.10pm	St Mary's	Dave Prudence Tayag intention
Friday 26th January Saints Timothy & Titus	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	Requiem Mass: Simon Mellon Colm Garrity, anniversary
Saturday 27th January	11.00am to 12noon	St Mary's	Exposition and Confessions
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	Rose & Jimmy Kewin, anniversary
Sunday 28th January	9.30am	St Anthony's	People of our Parishes
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>Racial Justice Day</i>	11.00am	St Mary's	Margaret & John Tweddle, anniversary

The Word of God pierces our lives, enabling us to discern the feelings and thoughts of the heart. It helps us to see where to give space to the light of goodness and also where the darkness of vice and sin needs to be resisted. (Pope Francis on Sunday of the Word of God).