

## NEWSLETTER

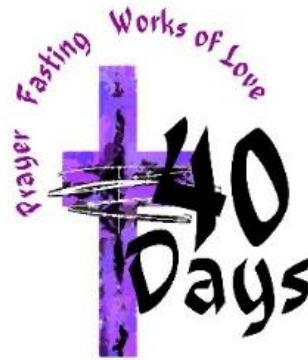
Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas  
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**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024**  
(Page 148 in Mass book)  
(Year B for Sundays) (Cycle 2 for weekdays)

Dear Parishioners

It's been reported that Rishi Sunak fasts for 24 hours one day each week. That's triggered comments across the media on the benefits of fasting. The three 'pillars' of Lent are traditionally prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We know that Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert. In his 2021 Lenten message, Pope Francis suggested that fasting need not be negative and can extend to all areas of life.

- Fast from **hurting words** and say kind words.
- Fast from **sadness** and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from **anger** and be filled with patience.
- Fast from **pessimism** and be filled with hope.
- Fast from **worries** and have trust in God.
- Fast from **complaints**; contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from **pressures** and be prayerful.
- Fast from **bitterness**; fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from **selfishness** and be compassionate.
- Fast from **grudges** and be reconciled.
- Fast from **words**; be silent and listen.



**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LENT?** *The English word 'Lent' comes from the same root as 'length'. Lent, the time of spring's first stirrings, is a time for our being lengthened. We are to grow into the full stature of Christ, to move nearer the kingdom prepared for us before the world's foundation. It may be very noble, and may meet some psychological need within ourselves, to think about Lent as our trying hard, as Lent being our effort. But when we think that way, the focus is probably on ourselves.*

*What Lent is really about is opening ourselves to someone else, about stretching ourselves, so that we can receive the gift of new life coming from God alone. Some people think that Lent is about resisting our temptations to chocolate or alcohol, that doing this we somehow gain merit, and rise above mere sensuality. But this way of thinking does not have much to do with the gospel.*

*When Matthew and Luke in their different ways name the temptations Jesus faces, it seems as though Jesus himself is growing into, being stretched towards, the full reality of his mission. He has to recognize that his way is not that of simple miracle-working. He has to realise that his kingdom is a kingdom given from above, and therefore not of this world (John 18: 36-37). Jesus is not proving his moral fibre but growing in his sense of his own identity.*

*The mindset we bring to Lent is very important. Lent is 'this great season of grace', God's gift to the Church. Lent places us before the author and pioneer of our faith, Jesus Christ, and asks us how we might follow him more deeply.*

**Lent is only Christian if it is positive. Lent is for lengthening, not for constriction.**

*As we begin the forty days, we need to ask the Spirit where we are being called, here and now, to grow. We need to ask ourselves what we must do to further that divine purpose. We need to stop confining ourselves, and instead be open to the one who calls light out of darkness, brings life out of death. It is not really about our effort, still less about our looking miserable. Rather, with humble pride, we boast that all we can do is to plant and to water. The real growth, the true lengthening, comes from God. (Philip Endean SJ, Professor of Spirituality, Centre Sèvres, Paris.)*

Having said all that, I do believe that '**giving up**' something like chocolate, alcohol etc teaches us something profound about ourselves. It might seem a contradiction, but our failures or lapses in Lent are of great value. They confront us with our weakness. The Christian life is not a self-improvement programme. We can only achieve anything through the grace of God working in us.

Some suggestions on how to make your Lent special:

- If you've got out of the habit of praying for a few minutes each day, why not try again?
- Attend a **Weekday Mass** at least once each week. Join in online if you can't make it physically at [www.manxcatholic.org](http://www.manxcatholic.org)
- Attend the **Stations of the Cross** each **Wednesday** in Lent at 7.00pm at St Anthony's.
- Pop into the Holy Hour with **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** on Saturday mornings at St Mary's from 11.00am until 12.00 noon.

- Attend some of the **Ecumenical Lent Course 2024** to be held at **St Peter's Church, Onchan on Tuesdays at 7pm** on 20 & 27 February and 5, 12, 19 & 26 March. This is a gentle reflective course using 'The King's Speech' which focuses on finding our voice and identity in Christ.
- Giving to charity:  
Archbishop Malcolm has asked our parishes during Lent this year to support with Lenten Almsgiving his two chosen charities **Asylum Link** @ <https://www.asylumlink.org.uk/> or **The Children of Gaza and the Holy Land**. We found some old Lenten Alms envelopes so any donations can be placed in these. Thank you.

**CAFOD** – the Catholic international aid agency works to alleviate poverty in developing countries: [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk). CAFOD Fast Day is Friday 23 February. CAFOD Envelopes available at the back of church.

**Mary's Meals** provides hungry school children in developing countries with one meal every school day [www.marysmeals.org.uk](http://www.marysmeals.org.uk)

**St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)** – donations are used to help those struggling in our own community.

Have a blessed Lent *Fr John*

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- **World Day of Prayer Service, Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 10.00am** will take place in the Cathedral Church of St Mary of the Isle. The 2024 Theme is 'I beg you, bear with one another in love'. A Service for Everyone. All welcome.
- **Lenten Lunches** of homemade soup, bread & butter, desserts, tea and coffee will be served in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre **each Thursday during Lent** from 12.30 until 2pm. Cost £8. All proceeds to IOM Hospice. Everyone welcome.
- **T and Chat** will meet on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March from 10.30 - 12noon**. Do come along. Everyone will be warmly welcomed, refreshments served. This group is supported by the SVP. Please contact Josie Lorimer 406063 for further information. Thanks to Judith Ley who provided a great morning of entertainment at our last meeting.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Mary and St Joseph £1,096, St Anthony's £440. This does not include standing orders or the tap and pay machine at the back of church. Thank you for your generosity.

### Masses and Services for the coming week

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

<b>Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February</b>			
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent</b>	5.00pm	St Mary's	People of our Parishes
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February</b>	9.30am	St Anthony's	David Moon, 4 <sup>th</sup> anniversary
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent</b>	11.00am	St Mary's	Marcus & Martin Reaney, recently died
<b>Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February</b>	12.10pm	St Mary's	Kathleen Rooney & dec'd family members
<b>Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February</b>	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> Joy Astrero, recently died
<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February</b>	12.00 noon 2.00pm 7.00pm	St Mary's <i>Crematorium</i> St Anthony's	<i>Requiem Mass: Shirley Savage</i> <i>Funeral Service: Helen Curmi Tonna</i> <b>Stations of the Cross</b>
<b>Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February</b>	10.00am 12.00 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Pat McCarthy, recently died <i>Requiem Mass: John Iveagh</i>
<b>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February</b> <i>Lent Fast Day (CAFOD)</i>	12.00 noon	St Mary's	<i>Requiem Mass: Rita O'Connell</i>
<b>Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February</b>	11.00am to 12noon	St Mary's	Exposition and Confessions
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent</b>	5.00pm	St Mary's	Karl Slann, 50 <sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary
<b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February</b>	9.30am	St Anthony's	People of our Parishes
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent</b>	11.00am	St Mary's	Phyllis Brohoun, recently died

We remember in our prayers **Shirley Savage, Helen Curmi Tonna, John Iveagh** and **Rita O'Connell** whose funerals will take place this week. We think of their grieving families and friends in their loss. May they rest in eternal peace.

**Prayer, Almsgiving and Fasting** are not three unrelated exercises, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying. We cast out the idols that weigh us down and the attachments that imprison us. Then will our atrophied and isolated hearts revive. *(Pope Francis, 15 February 2024)*