

## NEWSLETTER

Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas  
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**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

*(Page 266 in Mass book)*

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

Dear Parishioners,

*I read this recent obituary of Father Frans van der Hoff - a Dutch missionary, a priest for our time, whose integrity, humility and vision was an inspiration to the international community way beyond the boundaries of the church.*

The Dutch-born Catholic missionary Frans van der Hoff, who has died aged 84, was a co-founder of the global Fairtrade movement. Through guaranteeing price levels for their produce that benefits their communities, it has improved the livelihoods of millions of cooperative farmers. His initiative started in 1988, by helping the coffee farmers of the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, with whom he lived and worked for the bulk of his adult life, to gain fair prices by selling directly to consumers via a certification mark. Drawing on contacts in the Christian-influenced social justice movement of his homeland, Van der Hoff arranged for organically produced, cooperatively managed coffee beans from Oaxaca to be exported to the Netherlands and sold through a network of anti-poverty retail stores, known then as “world shops”.

Branded under the label Max Havelaar, the title of a classic 19th-century Dutch novel about the colonial-era exploitation of coffee producers in Java, Indonesia, the initiative immediately captured the imagination of consumers, who saw it as a means to express practical solidarity with low-income farmers in the global south. Van der Hoff saw his idea of engaging consumers in “trade not aid” quickly spread to Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, and Germany. In 1994, after expanding into the English-speaking markets of the UK and North America, it formally adopted the “Fairtrade” label.

The legacy of Van der Hoff’s vision of a peaceful means of asserting the rights of smallholder farmers in an increasingly globalised marketplace was profound. Through Fairtrade International, an umbrella body representing more than 25 national Fairtrade organisations and three regional producer groups, consumers can today buy Fairtrade products in more than 130 countries, benefiting more than 2 million farmers directly. True to principles ironed out by Van der Hoff and his fellow pioneers, these farmers gain protection from fluctuations in global commodity markets through a base price for their products. Similarly, the Fairtrade system provides a premium over and above the market price that cooperatives can reinvest in their communities as they see fit.

Despite receiving a number of awards, including the Légion d’Honneur in France (2005), *Van der Hoff was always reticent about becoming the public face of the Fairtrade movement, preferring instead to empower worker leaders so they could make their own case.* That strategy was welcomed by farmer cooperatives but led to occasional friction with some of Fairtrade’s partners in the global north, particularly around the movement’s efforts to expand into the mainstream. Van der Hoff shared the deep suspicions of Latin American workers towards foreign multinational corporations, associating them with historic government crackdowns against worker groups in the region. As a result, he could never quite reconcile himself with global brands such as Nestlé carrying the Fairtrade label.

Viewed as keeper of the Fairtrade movement’s conscience, he displayed consistent support for Fairtrade to be farmer-led, and this brought important changes in governance. Under reforms in 2012, most notably, Fairtrade International’s three regional producer networks were granted half of the organisation’s voting rights. Van der Hoff’s influence over the movement was enhanced by his personal integrity. In his adopted home of Barranca Colorada, a rural settlement in south-western Oaxaca, he lived alongside its poor residents for decades; his ownership of a cow and a small garden allotment enabled him to remain largely self-sufficient. The only funds he ever requested were for international travel, which he undertook purely to promote the cause of fair trade.

The sixth of 16 children from two marriages, Frans was born into a poor Catholic family in the village of De Rips, North Brabant, in the southern Netherlands. Educated in various seminaries, he went on to Radboud University Nijmegen, where he studied under the Dutch economist Jan Tinbergen and the pro-liberation Belgian theologian Edward Schillebeeckx. He graduated with two doctorates: one in political economy, and another in theology. He entered the priesthood in 1968, a few years after the Second Vatican Council. Inspired by the council’s pro-poor message, the young Dutchman briefly spent time working at a drug users’ shelter in Ottawa, Canada, before transferring in 1970 to Santiago, Chile, where he worked as a community priest. After the coup d’état against Salvador Allende in 1973, he moved to the slums of Mexico City to undertake a similar pastoral role.

At the invitation of the progressive bishop of Tehuantepec, he moved to Oaxaca, where he remained for the rest of his life. An advocate of the idea of “Organizar la Esperanza” (Organise the Hope), he believed strongly in the power

of social organisation to advance the collective interests of poor farmers. To that end, in 1982 he encouraged the Indigenous coffee farmers in his coastal region of Oaxaca to create their own cooperative. The original pilot for the Fairtrade experiment, the UCIRI cooperative today numbers more than 2,600 workers in 56 coffee-growing communities and comprises one of over 1,000 Fairtrade-certified organisations across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Van der Hoff's hand on the Fairtrade movement can be seen in its mix of fierce pragmatism coupled with a twinge of mysticism, the latter a testament to his deep respect for Indigenous spirituality. The movement also carries his rejection of political ideology (he eschewed Marxism, for instance) and his commitment to non-violent means of change. Late in life, "Padre Francisco" suffered from a metabolic-related condition that eventually resulted in the amputation of a leg. Fairtrade colleagues in Latin America marked his death by recalling one of his most abiding beliefs: "A world with more solidarity is possible." *The Guardian, Mon 15 Apr 2024*

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**First Holy Communion:** Congratulations to the **children of St Mary's School** who make their First Holy Communion in St Mary's Church on Saturday morning. Thanks to their teachers and parents who help and support them in this important stage in their lives. Next week at the 5pm Mass another group of children will make their First Holy Communion. Thank you to the Catechists who lead the preparation course and to office staff and helpers for the considerable work in arranging these sacramental events for our children.

I am grateful for the number of people who have been praying for my sister Michele who is critically ill following routine surgery last week. Thank you. *Fr John*

- **T and Chat Group** will meet on **7<sup>th</sup> May** at St Anthony's Pastoral Centre from 10.30am to 12 noon. Refreshments will be served. Please come along. You will be warmly welcomed. Please contact Josie Lorimer on 406063.
- **St Anthony's Bingo** will take place on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May** at **7.30pm**. Everyone welcome.
- **Island Spirituality Network (ISN):** Meeting on **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May** at St John's Mill from 10am to 1pm. **Revd Dr Isabelle Hamley** will lead on theme "**Happiness in the Psalms - Crafting a theology of Mental Health.**"
- **Praying the Keeills Week** will take place from 18 – 25 May. An opportunity to visit some of the island's keeills. The theme this year is 'The Sea'. For more information on the daily events go to [www.prayingthekeeills.org](http://www.prayingthekeeills.org).
- **Offertory Collections:** St Mary and St Joseph £840. St Anthony's £686. This does not include standing orders or the tap and pay machine at the back of St Mary's church. Sincere thanks for your generosity.

### Masses and Services for the coming week

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

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|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May</b><br>6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter                                   | 5.00pm                      | St Mary's                        | Tim O'Hanlon, 3 <sup>rd</sup> anniversary                                    |
| <b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May</b><br>6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter                                     | 9.30am<br>11.00am           | St Anthony's<br>St Mary's        | People of our Parishes<br>Ken Daly, 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary              |
| <b>Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May</b>   | <i>No Mass or Service</i>   | <i>St Mary's</i>                 | <i>No Mass or Service today</i>  |
| <b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May</b>  | 10.00am<br>12.10pm          | St Anthony's<br>St Mary's        | <i>Eucharistic Service</i><br>Doris Mary Barnabal, anniversary               |
| <b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May</b>  | 12.10pm                     | St Mary's                        | Mary Cocker, 2 <sup>nd</sup> anniversary                                     |
| <b>Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May (Holyday)</b><br><b>The Ascension of the Lord</b>                         | 12.10pm<br>7.00pm           | St Mary's<br><b>St Anthony's</b> | Marie Leavey, sick<br>Canon Eugene Hopkins, anniversary                      |
| <b>Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May</b><br>St John of Avila  | 12.10pm                     | St Mary's                        | Mary Bulman, recently died   |
| <b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May</b><br>7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter                                  | 11.00am to 12noon<br>5.00pm | St Mary's<br>St Mary's           | Exposition and Confessions<br>People of our Parishes                         |
| <b>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May</b><br>7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter<br><b>World Communications Day</b> | 9.30am<br>11.00am           | St Anthony's<br>St Mary's        | Cesare Leonetti, anniversary<br>Margaret Thomas, 7 <sup>th</sup> anniversary |

Pope Francis asks us during this month of May to entrust to Mary our personal and family matters, as well as the suffering of those who fall victim to war. We pray too for the Church, all nations and for a lasting peace in Ukraine and in the Middle East.