

# NEWSLETTER

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

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3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Gaudete Sunday

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

(Page 449 in Missal for Order of the Mass)

(Page 772 for Mass readings)



Dear Parishioners

They say that most things happen in threes. That's certainly true of the coming of the Lord in Advent and Christmas. The early weeks of Advent foretell the coming of Christ at the end of time: *'The powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.'* (Luke 21:27). Last Sunday and this Sunday we hear John the Baptist's cry *'prepare the way for the Lord'*. But it's not until 17<sup>th</sup> December that we begin to look forward to the impending birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. So what is the third coming of the Lord?

**St Bernard of Clairvaux**, a Cistercian monk wrote in the 11<sup>th</sup> century:

*'We have come to know a **threefold coming of the Lord**. The third coming takes place between the other two. They are clearly manifest but the second is not. In the first coming the Lord was seen on earth and lived among men in the days when, as he himself bears witness, they saw him and hated him. In his last coming 'all flesh shall see the salvation of our God.... The other coming is hidden. In it only the chosen see him within themselves....'* Bernard goes on to quote Jesus *"If anyone loves me they will keep my words, and my Father will love them and we will come to them".....* Where then are they (my words) to be kept? Without any doubt they are to be kept in the heart'.

In other words, this second coming depends on you and me. The Lord waits to be invited into the lives of each one of us. I am encouraged to make my faith personal; to move beyond compliance with the formalities of our faith and to embark on my own individual faith journey. He invites me to invite him: *'Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and eat with him, and he with me.'* (Revelation 3:20). The Lord is polite and respectful. He doesn't barge in where he isn't invited. He is waiting for me to open the door of my own life and circumstances and let him in. A personal one-to-one conversation is required. How might this happen? It can take an experience of great sorrow or loss or failure or even great joy to bring about the realisation that not only am I dependent on God but that he doesn't judge me and that he's on my side. I don't have to bribe, cajole or browbeat him into loving me. I don't have to make promises that experience tells me I'm never going to keep. He loves me already and has always done so.

I renew and refresh my relationship with Lord at every Mass when I receive Holy Communion. Attendances at Mass can easily revert to a formality unless I personalise them with individual conversations with the Lord when I pray. Advent provides an opportunity to do just that.

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Last Sunday, the day before **the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Archbishop Malcolm declared the cure of John (Jack) Traynor during the first Liverpool Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1923 to be a miracle.** Jack was a casualty of the First World War. As a result of extensive injuries he suffered from epilepsy, paralysis of the right arm and paraplegia. Such was the scepticism of the War Office, Jack continued to receive a disability pension from the UK government until the day he died, even though on his return to Liverpool from Lourdes, he set up a coal business and personally delivered sacks of coal for the rest of his working life. Each year thereafter Jack returned to Lourdes to help with the sick as a brancardier. One consequence of his injuries had been the insertion of a metal plate in his skull. It disappeared on the day of his miracle cure. My father was a brancardier in Lourdes alongside Jack in the 1920s and 30s. Dad had some French and Jack used to ask him in his strong Scouser accent: 'Tell 'em I had a 'ole in me head'.

Archbishop Malcolm's statement reads *'Given the weight of medical evidence, the testimony to the faith of John Traynor and his devotion to Our Blessed Lady, it is with great joy that I declare that the cure of John Traynor, from multiple serious medical conditions, is to be recognised as a miracle wrought by the power of God through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes'*.

Contrary to popular belief, of the many millions of sick people who have visited Lourdes since 1855, only 70 cures have been officially recognised by the church as a miracle. Jack's is now the 71st case and the first and only one from England.

Fr John

To help us prepare for Christmas, there will be an **Advent Service on Wednesday 18 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.

**Sunday December 29<sup>th</sup> marks the beginning of the 2025 Jubilee Year**, a worldwide year of renewal and reconciliation. Archbishop Malcolm will inaugurate the Jubilee Year in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King in Liverpool. Simultaneously **Bishop Tom Neylon**, the Auxiliary Bishop of Liverpool, is travelling to the Island to **celebrate a special Mass at 11.00am on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December at our own Cathedral Church of Saint Mary of the Isle**.

- **Hosanna Rock:** We look forward to welcoming to St Mary's church the pupils, teachers and staff from **St Mary's School** on **Thursday 19 December at 10.30am** when the children will perform their Christmas Nativity celebration. Thanks to the teachers, school staff, parents and pupils who together put a lot of work into this performance. It will be livestreamed for family members who are unable to attend. Parishioners welcome.
- **Columba Club:** Due to structural damage the Columba Club will be closed until further notice. Regrettably this means the Knights have to postpone the 'Warm and Cosy Hub'.
- **CAFOD Advent 2024:** As well as providing **ongoing humanitarian support in Gaza**, CAFOD is asking for **help for families in Ukraine** threatened by the cold and loss of power. Please see [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk) for more details.
- **SVP Adult Christmas Party** will be held on Saturday 28 December from 2pm to 4pm in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre
- **Offertory Collections:** St Mary and St Joseph £750, St Anthony's £514. 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*

<b>Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent	5.00pm	St Mary's	Margaret Sherry, 1 <sup>st</sup> anniversary
	7.30pm	St Mary's	Tallis Consort Christmas Concert
<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December</b> <i>Gaudete Sunday</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent	9.30am	St Anthony's	Rosa Leonetti, anniversary
	11.00am	St Mary's	People of our Parishes
<b>Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December</b>	12.10pm	St Mary's	Reynolds & Tweddle families
<b>Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December</b>	10.00am	St Anthony's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i>
	12.10pm	St Mary's	The Wood family
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December</b>	12.10pm	St Mary's	Berenice Jordan, sick
	7.00pm	St Mary's	<b><i>Marian Advent Service in preparation for Christmas</i></b>
<b>Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December</b>	10.00am	St Anthony's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i>
	10.30am	St Mary's Church	St Mary's School Nativity Play
	12.10pm	St Mary's	Jim Kneen, anniversary
<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December</b>	12.10pm	St Mary's	Patrick Tynan, sick
<b>Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent	11.00am to 12noon	St Mary's	Exposition and Confessions
	5.00pm	St Mary's	Monica & John Crowe, deceased
<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December</b> <i>Day for Expectant Mothers</i> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent	9.30am	St Anthony's	Simon Mellon, 1 <sup>st</sup> anniversary
	11.00am	St Mary's	People of our Parishes

Looking toward Christmas, Pope Francis connected Advent's message of hope with contemporary challenges: "All of us, in many moments of life, ask ourselves: What can I do to have a light heart, a wakeful heart, a free heart? A heart that does not let itself be crushed by sadness?"

**Archdiocese of Liverpool Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage 2025:** Thank you to those young people who got in touch to say they have been successful in obtaining a place on next year's Lourdes pilgrimage. If any other young people would like to go to Lourdes next summer please email directly St Mary's parish office at [saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk](mailto:saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk).