**NEWSLETTER**

**Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas  
 Tel** 01624 675509 **Email** [saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk](mailto:saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk) **Website** [www.manxcatholic.org](http://www.manxcatholic.org)

**3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, 26th January 2025**

**Sunday of the Word of God**

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

*(Page 449 in Missal for Order of the Mass) (Page 787 for Mass readings)*

Dear Parishioners

It’s been a stormy week, not just on the Island but in the United States. The prophetic homily delivered by the Anglican Bishop of Washington DC, the Rt Revd Mariann Edgar Budde, deserves our attention – ‘truth speaking to power’:

*As a country this morning we have come together to pray for unity. As a people and a nation. Not for agreement, political or otherwise but for the kind of unity that fosters community across diversity and division. A unity that serves the common good…. It is not conformity…. Rather unity is a way of being with one another that it encompasses and respects our differences….That enables us in our communities and in the halls of power to genuinely care for one another. Even when we disagree….*

*In his Sermon on the mount, Jesus of Nazareth exhorts us to love, not only our neighbours, but to love our enemies. And to pray for those who persecute us. To be merciful as our God is merciful. To forgive others, as God forgives us. And Jesus went out of his way to welcome those who society deemed were outcasts…*

*There isn't much to be gained by our prayers if we act in ways that further, deepen the divisions among us. Our Scriptures are quite clear about this. That God is never impressed with prayers when actions are not informed by them….*

*Those of us gathered here in the Cathedral, we are not naive about the realities of politics. When power and wealth and competing interests are at stake, when views of what America should be are in conflict…. there will be winners and losers….. Not everyone's prayers will be answered in the way we would like…. The culture of contempt which has become normalised in this country threatens to destroy us. We are all bombarded daily with messages from what sociologists now call the 'outrage industrial complex.'…. Contempt fuels political campaigns and social media and many profit from that. But it's a worrisome, a dangerous way to lead a country.*

*I'm a person of faith. Surrounded by people of faith, And with God's help I believe that unity in this country is possible. Not perfectly. For we are imperfect people and an imperfect union. But sufficient enough to keep us all believing in and working to realise the ideas of the United States of America. Ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence with its assertion of innate human equality and dignity. And we are right to pray for God's help as we seek unity…. But only if we ourselves are willing to tend to the foundations upon which unity depends. Like Jesus's analogy of building a house of faith upon the rock of his teachings as opposed to building a house on sand. The foundations we need for unity must be sturdy enough to withstand the many storms that threaten it. So what are they these foundations of unity?*

*Drawing from our sacred traditions and texts let me suggest that there are at least three.*

***The first foundation for unity*** *is honouring the inherent dignity of every human being, which all the faiths represented here affirm, the birthright of all people as children of our one God… Honouring each other's dignity means refusing to mock, or discount or demonise those with whom we differ…….And if common ground is not possible, dignity demands that we remain true to our convictions without contempt for those who hold convictions of their own.*

***Second foundation for unity is honest****y, in both private conversation and public discourse. If we're not willing to be honest there's no use in praying for unity, because our actions work against the prayers themselves..….*

*Now to be fair, we don't always know where the truth lies. And there is a lot working against the truth now. But when we do know, when we know what is true, it's incumbent upon us to speak the truth, even when, especially when, it costs us.*

***And the third and last foundation I'll mention today is humility*** *- which we all need, because we are all fallible human beings. We make mistakes. We say and do things that we later regret. We have our blind spots and our biases. And perhaps we are most dangerous to ourselves and others when we are persuaded without a doubt that we are absolutely right and someone else is absolutely wrong. Because then we are just a few steps from labelling ourselves as 'the good people' versus 'the bad people'. And the truth is that we're all people. We're both capable of good and bad……*

*Let me make one final plea, Mr President. Millions have put their trust in you. And as you told the nation yesterday you have felt the Providential hand of a loving God. In the name of our God I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now. There are gay, lesbian and transgender children in Democratic, Republican and Independent families, some who fear for their lives. And the people who pick our crops and clean our office buildings, who labour in poultry farms and meat packing plants, who wash the dishes after we eat in restaurants and work the night shifts in hospitals. …. The vast majority of immigrants are not criminals. They pay taxes. And are good neighbours. They are faithful members of our churches and mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras and temples.*

*May I ask you to have mercy Mr President on those in our communities whose children fear that their parents will be taken away…. Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger - for we were all once strangers in this land.*

*May God grant us the strength and courage to honour the dignity of every human being. To speak the truth to one another in love. And walk humbly with each other and our God, for the good of all people, the good of all people in this nation and the world. Amen.*

Watch the homily here: [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwwaEuDeqM8**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwwaEuDeqM8)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 to explore our Catholic faith. Please get in touch with us at [saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk](mailto:saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk) if you wish to be part of the group.
* **The Warm and Cosy Hub** is open in the meeting room at the back of St Mary’s Church **every Monday and Friday** from **10am to 2pm** until further notice.
* **The T and Chat group** will meet on **Tuesday 4 February 2025** from **10.30am to 12 noon** at St Anthony’s Pastoral Centre. Refreshments and cake will be served. Everyone warmly welcomed. For more information contact Josie on 406063. A big thanks to Howard Parkin MBE who gave a stimulating talk at the last meeting.

**Masses and Services for the coming week**

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

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| **Saturday 25th January**  **3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**  *Sunday of the Word of God* | 5.00pm | St Mary’s | John Byrne, 1st anniversary |
| **Sunday 26th January**  **3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**  *Sunday of the Word of God* | 9.30am  11.00am  *3.00pm* | St Anthony’s  St Mary’s  *St Mary’s* | People of our Parishes  Colm Garrity, anniversary  *Holocaust Memorial Service* |
| **Monday 27th January**  St Angela Merici | No Mass today |  | No Mass or service today |
| **Tuesday 28th January**  St Thomas Aquinas | *10.00am*  12.10pm | *St Anthony’s*  St Mary’s | *Eucharistic Service*  Michael Tobin, anniversary |
| **Wednesday 29th January** | ***10.00am***  12.10pm  ***2.00pm*** | ***Crematorium***  St Mary’s  ***St Anthony’s*** | ***Funeral Service: Victoria Hook***    Greene & McElroy families  ***Funeral Service: Margaret Shimmin*** |
| **Thursday 30th January** | ***10.00am***  *10.00am*  12.10pm | ***Douglas Lawn Cemetery Chapel***  *St Anthony’s*  St Mary’s | ***Funeral Service: Vitalijs Potapovs***  *Eucharistic Service*  Gary Heaney, sick |
| **Friday 31st January**  St John Bosco | 12.10pm | St Mary’s | Edmund Alexander, sick |
| **Saturday 1st February**  *St Brigid, Patron of Ireland*  **The Presentation of the Lord** | 11.00am to 12pm  5.00pm | St Mary’s  St Mary’s | Exposition and Confessions  Shirley Savage, anniversary |
| **Sunday 2nd February**  **The Presentation of the Lord** | 9.30am  11.00am | St Anthony’s  St Mary’s | People of our Parishes  Ben McCarrick, recently died |