**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](http://www.manxcatholic.org)

 **2nd Sunday of Lent, 16th March 2025**

 **CAFOD Day of Prayer for the Needy and Hungry of the World**

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

 *(Page 449 in Missal for Order of the Mass) (Page 824 for Mass readings)*

Dear Parishioners

It was good to see so many of you attending our Jubilee Year Lenten Service as we focussed on the Mission Cross and renewed our commitment to our crucified Lord. **Chiara Lubich** *(1920-2008)***, the founder of the Focolare Movement,** had a special devotion to **‘Jesus Forsaken’** as he hung on the cross:
*‘One day we asked ourselves what was the greatest suffering of Jesus on the cross, and it seemed to us that it was that cry, uttered after three hours of agony,* ***“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*** *(Cf Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34). It is like the swan song of the God-Man who had poured out everything of himself for his brothers and sisters.****In that pain, that Man represented and embodied the anguish of humanity, loneliness, aridity, disappointment, failure, weakness, separation, defeat, sin.*** *He is therefore also an image of the rifts between people, between conflicting ideologies. But by loving Jesus Forsaken we find the motivation and the strength never to flee from these evils, these divisions, but to accept them, consume them and give them our individual and collective remedy.****In the embrace of the pain experienced, He turned out to be: speech for the mute, the answer for the ignorant, light for the blind, a voice for the deaf, rest for the weary, hope for the despairing, satisfaction for the hungry, reality for the deceived, victory for the failure, daring for the timid, joy for the sorrowful, certainty for the uncertain, normality for the strange, company for the lonely, unity for the separated, that which is uniquely useful for the useless. The rejected felt chosen. Jesus forsaken was peace for the restless, a home for the evicted, and reunion for the outcast. Because of him, people were transformed, and the senselessness of suffering acquired meaning****.’*

The **Focolare Movement** grew out of Chiara’s experience of the devastation of the Second World War in Italy. On May 13, 1944, the city of Trento was subjected to heavy bombing. The Lubich home was damaged to the point of being uninhabitable. The family decided to look for shelter in a mountain village, while Chiara made the difficult choice to stay in the city to support the increasingly numerous groups of young women who were inspired by her actions and her words. While she was going through the streets, looking for her friends, a woman, distraught with grief, grabbed her by the shoulders, shouting at her that four of her family members had been killed. For Chiara, this was a call to set aside her own pain to take on the pain of humanity. In the autumn of 1944, Chiara was offered a small apartment in Piazza Cappuccini, where she went to live with some of her companions. This would be the seed of a small and rather unique community. The warmth of their love earned them the nickname **"focolare",** the Italian word for hearth. Even though they had no intention of starting anything, this small household marked the first basic structure of the newly born movement. It would constitute its heart, its backbone.

There are two Focolare houses in Liverpool – one for men and the other for women. Members of Focolare, both Catholic and Anglican, live in community and work in a variety of professions in the secular world. They have a particular commitment to ecumenism and inter-faith relations. Chiara Lubich was awarded an honorary doctorate by Liverpool Hope University in 2008, the year of her death. The cause for her beatification and canonisation was opened by Pope Francis on 27th January 2015.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Ramadan**, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is a joyous month for Muslims around the world. This year it overlaps with our own observance of Lent finishing on 29th March. It is a month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community. Ramadan is a joyous time of self-discovery. In denying themselves the most existential needs like food and water, Muslims are encouraged to be their best selves. Like Lent, Ramadan invites believers to return to their spiritual core. It is a moment to pause, turn the noise down and be more attentive to the life of the Spirit. Much of the media would have us view Islam with suspicion but committed Christians share much in common. During Lent, we, just like our Muslim brothers and sisters, engage in a period of self-reflection and reassessment of our relationship with God and our fellow human beings. As in Lent, Ramadan also requires Muslims to give alms to the poor and needy.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

In May 2023 I celebrated my 75th birthday and submitted my resignation to Archbishop Malcolm. We agreed on a phased retirement: that I would first relinquish my archdiocesan responsibilitiesand then continue as parish priest for a further year. Accordingly, I gave up my archdiocesan role as Episcopal Vicar for Finance in September 2024. Now, at the end of this summer, I will retire as parish priest and dean. I’ll be 77. As I told Archbishop Malcolm in 2015, my appointment to the Island was to be my final adventure. Whilst I’ll be sad to leave the Island when that time comes, I’m beginning to realise that retirement itself can be a further adventure. *Fr John*

Thanks to the parents who have been in touch and completed forms to register their children for the **Sacrament** **of** **Confirmation.** Details of the preparation courses will be sent to those who have enrolled as soon as the dates are finalised. We are hoping the sessions will begin shortly after Easter. In Confirmation our young people have the chance to make their own, the faith they have inherited from their parents. They had no choice in their Baptism. They can now choose to be Confirmed. Their interactions and discussion within a group of peers is invaluable in the development of a grown-up faith. It doesn’t mean that their understanding and questioning of that faith is over. Faith is not static. It flexes and bends throughout our lives and sometimes even seems to disappear. In Confirmation a young person is committed to continuing to explore what that faith might mean for ME. And that’s a lifelong task.

**Young people currently in Year 8** are eligible to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Older children under 18, who have missed out on Confirmation in previous years, will also be included.The preparation will consist of sessions in Ballakermeen High School at the end of the school day. Please email the parish office this week atsaintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk if you wish to enrol your child.

* **Reflections on the Word:** Next meetingtakes place in **St Anthony’s Pastoral Centre** on **Tuesday 18th March at 7pm.** All welcome. Something extra for Lent?
* **Stations of the Cross** will take place at 7pm in St Anthony’s for the remaining Wednesdays in Lent.
* **CAFOD Lent Fast Day:** On Friday CAFOD advised that for this weekend any online donations will be matched up to £80,000 by a group of generous donors. So your donation this weekend will have double the impact. CAFOD says ‘Thank You’ and that your support can make a world of difference.
* **St Peter’s Parish Church, Onchan** are running a Lent course each Tuesday at 7pm based on the film ‘Les Misérables’. The next session takes place on Tuesday 18th March at 7pm**.** All are welcome.
* **Lenten Soup Lunches** will be served on Wednesdays during Lent from 12noon - 2pm until Wednesday 16 April at St Anthony’s Pastoral Centre. £8 or donation. Proceeds to Hospice. All welcome.
* **Columba Club AGM** will be held in the Club at **8pm on Tuesday 25 March**. This is an important meeting which will determine and shape the future of the Club and the premises. All members are encouraged to attend. If you know anyone who is not a member but would be interested in joining, they will be welcome. Voting will be open to all paid up members. Doors will open at 7.30pm. The bar will also be open.
* **The Warm and Cosy Hub** continues until the end of this month in the meeting room at the back of St Mary’s Church **every Monday and Friday** from **10am to 2pm.** Thanks to the volunteers who help with this.

**Masses and Services for the coming week**

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Saturday 15th March**CAFOD Prayer Day for Needy2nd Sunday of Lent | 5.00pm | St Mary’s | Pat Gaffey, recently died |
| **Sunday 16th March**2nd Sunday of LentCAFOD Prayer Day for Needy | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | People of our ParishesDes Dougan, 70th birthday anniv |
| **Monday 17th March**St Patrick, Patron of Ireland | 12.10pm  | St Mary’s | Renee O’Neill |
| **Tuesday 18th March** | *10.00am*12.10pm***7.00pm*** | *St Anthony’s*St Mary’s***Pastoral Centre*** | *Eucharistic Service*Mary & Norah Gallagher***Reflections on the Word*** |
| **Wednesday 19th March**Solemnity of St Joseph | 12.10pm***7.00pm*** | St Mary’s***St Anthony’s*** | Peter Simmons, recently died***Stations of the Cross*** |
| **Thursday 20th March** | 10.00am12.10pm | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | William Roy Gilmour, recently diedAlf & Betty Bowden |
| **Friday 21st March** | 12.10 noon ***1.15pm*** | St Mary’s***St Mary’s*** | Stephanie Newson & family***Funeral Service: Marion Askew*** |
| **Saturday 22nd March**3rd Sunday of Lent | 11.00am to 12noon5.00pm | St Mary’sSt Mary’s | Exposition and Confessions People of our Parishes |
| **Sunday 23rd March**3rd Sunday of Lent | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Peter Lees, anniversaryMichael McCarrick, anniversary |

Please remember in your prayers **Maria Valasquez** who died this week. We think of her grieving family and friends. May she rest in peace.