**NEWSLETTER**

 **Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas
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 **5th Sunday of Lent, 6th April 2025**

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

 *(Page 449 in Missal for Order of the Mass) (Page 838 for Mass readings)*

Dear Parishioners

At Sunday Mass last weekend, we heard the parable of **the Prodigal Son.** I explained it was in fact the parable of the **TWO Sons**: the irresponsible younger son and his reliable, but resentful elder brother. I said in the homily that there was something of both sons in each of our lives. Since then, I have read a piece regarding the late Fr Henry Nouwen’s interpretation of the parable:

*You know how it goes: A man has two sons. One leaves; the other stays. One disregards the rules; the other lives by them. One gets a big party after he finds his way home; the other is bitter and jealous, for though he followed every rule he didn’t get what he thought he was owed.* ***The younger son. The older son. The prodigal and the perfectionist.*** *We’re encouraged to find ourselves in one of these two characters; we’re reminded that, in truth, there’s a bit of both in each of us.*

*Recognizing this reality and plumbing its depths gives us insight for our own spiritual journeys. When am I being invited to turn back to God? When do I allow bitterness to drown out God’s loving voice?*

*But here’s the thing:* ***There’s another character. We’re tempted to disregard the father.*** *“That’s God, of course,” we say. “God always welcomes me home. God is always eager to delight, to throw a party, to share God’s own abundance.” Consequently, the father is not a character we’re often encouraged to* identify with*.*

*The beloved spiritual writer Fr. Henri Nouwen, in his classic text, “The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming,” challenges us to* become the father. *“The father of the prodigal son is not concerned about himself,” Nouwen writes. “His long-suffering life has emptied him of his desires to keep in control of things” (128).*

*I’m struck by the image Nouwen conjures.* ***The father has let go of the need to* control*.******He knows he can’t control what his younger son* does*; he knows he can’t control how his older son* feels*.*** *Instead of allowing these warring energies to deplete him, to leave him bitter and aloof, the father instead* leans in*. He’s not battered about by these divergent winds. He watches and waits and (one imagines) prays. He keeps vigil. Most importantly, he keeps the light on; he never ceases to maintain a disposition of humble hospitality. The father never stops giving, never stops making himself available — even and especially when he’s left all alone.*

*“Can I give without wanting anything in return, love without putting any conditions on my love?” Nouwen asks. “Considering my immense need for human recognition and affection, I realize that it will be a lifelong struggle.” I wonder how many of us resonate with these words.*

***We all know someone who has disappointed us, who has made or continues to make decisions we disagree with, who reacts in anger and envy and inadvertently undermines relationships. We know these people. We are, at times, these people****.* ***And that’s why* becoming the father *is an important stop on our spiritual journey. We cannot control others.*** *All we can do is invite. All we can do is keep the light on. All we can do is turn in radical, humble hospitality.*

*I invite you to consider two Ignatian practices this week. First, put yourself in that parable. Become the father; take on that mantle.* ***What control do you need to surrender?*** *Who do you need to embrace with open hands rather than closed fists? Second, consider Ignatius’ invitation to cultivate indifference. Is that not what the father in the parable ultimately displays?* ***What do you need to let go of as we approach Easter?***

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**Jubilee Year:** On **Saturday, 26th April**, as part of the parish activities commemorating the Jubilee year, St Mary’s Castletown and St Columba’s Port Erin are hosting a day titled “PILGRIMS OF HOPE”. It will be led by **Rev. Fr. Eamonn Mulcahy, CSSp,** an esteemed theologian and lecturer. This event will take place at St Columba’s Hall, Port Erin commencing at 10am with Morning Prayer and finishing with Evening Prayer at 3.30pm. To help with catering arrangements please email Castletown parish at stmarycastletown@rcaol.org.uk if you wish to attend. *Fr John*

**CAFOD MYANMAR EARTHQUAKE APPEAL**
Following the devastating earthquake in Myanmar, CAFOD is responding through the Catholic Church there to support families affected by the disaster. Your donations will provide essentials like water, food, solar lights and mosquito nets. Please support the Myanmar Earthquake Appeal. You can donate online at [cafod.org.uk/myanmar](https://cafod.org.uk/give/donate-to-emergencies/myanmar-earthquake-appeal) or by calling 0303 303 3030. You can also text EARTHQUAKE to 70450 to donate £10.

**CAFOD Green Family Fast Day envelopes** at the back of church can also be re-purposed for this emergency collection. **Please clearly write on the envelope that you are giving to Myanmar.**

* Those present at the AGM of the **Columba Club** on 25th March agreed overwhelmingly that the Club should continue. The Committee has been charged with developing a sustainable basis for future operations. The next event will be a Q**uiz Night on Saturday, 26th April** **hosted by Paul Copparelli** raising funds jointly for the Club and Lourdes Youth. More information will follow in next week’s newsletter. The viability of the club depends on your support. Further parish and community events are planned. The Club is also available on request for private events.
* Due to ongoing works at St Anthony’s, **Stations of the Cross** will take place at **7pm** in **St Mary’s** on **Wednesday 9 April**.
* **Reflections on the Word** next meeting will take place in **St Mary’s Church** **meeting room** on next **Thursday 10 April** at **7pm.** Please notechange of venue for this meeting.
* **St Anthony’s Charity Bingo** will be held on **Thursday 10 April** at **7.30pm** inSt Anthony’s Pastoral Centre. All 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.

**Masses and Services for the coming week**

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

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| **Saturday 5th April**5th Sunday of Lent | 5.00pm | St Mary’s | Ann Fox, birthday anniversary |
| **Sunday 6th April**5th Sunday of Lent | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | People of our ParishesMargaret Stack, anniversary |
| **Monday 7th April** | 12.10pm  | St Mary’s | Deceased Clergy |
| **Tuesday 8th April** | *No Mass or Service*12.10pm | *St Anthony’s*St Mary’s | *No Mass or Service today*Carlo Signorio, birthday anniv |
| **Wednesday 9th April** | 12.10pm***7.00pm*** | St Mary’s**St Mary’s** | Sonja Lees, recently died***Stations of the Cross*** |
| **Thursday 10th April** | *No Mass or Service*12.10pm***7.00pm*** | *St Anthony’s*St Mary’s**St Mary’s** | *No Mass or Service today*Delia & Thomas Vahey, anniv***Reflections on the Word*** |
| **Friday 11th April** | ***10.00am***12.10pm | ***Crematorium***St Mary’s | ***Funeral Service: Norma Chapman***Terry Clarke, R.I.P. |
| **Saturday 12th April*****Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord*** | 11.00am to 12noon5.00pm | St Mary’sSt Mary’s | Exposition and Confessions People of our Parishes |
| **Sunday 13th April*****Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord*** | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Fran Quayle, 1st anniversarySick Parishioners |

We remember in our prayers **Norma Chapman** who died recently. We think of her family and friends who mourn her loss. May she rest in peace.

**HOLY WEEK SERVICES 2025**

**Maundy Thursday 17th April: Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper at St Mary’s at 7.00pm.** This will be followed by‘watching’ at the Altar of Repose concluding with **Night Prayer at 9.30pm.**

**Good Friday 18th April: There will be TWO celebrations of The Lord’s Passion: 12.00 noon at St Anthony’s and 3.00pm at St Mary’s.**

**Holy Saturday 19th April at 12 noon:** Traditional Blessing of Food Baskets for the Polish Communityat **St Mary’s.**

**Holy Saturday 19th April at 7.30pm: Easter Vigil** and **First Mass of Easter** at **St Mary’s.**

**Easter Sunday 20th April:** Masses as normal: **9.30am** at St Anthony’s; **11.00am** at St Mary’s.