

# NEWSLETTER

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

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**Fifth Sunday of Easter 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021**

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

Dear Parishioners,

I am enjoying the amazing sunshine even though temperatures are still low. The Island looks its best at this time of year. Fr Brian's cherry tree in the grounds of St Mary's is now fully resplendent.

*Jesus said to his disciples, "In those days, after the tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. And the stars will fall from the sky. And the powers in the heavens will be shaken, and they will see 'the human one coming on the clouds' with great power and glory. . . . . Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (Mark 13:24–27, 31)*

*Apart from the book of Revelation, Mark 13, along with parallel Gospel passages, is a primary example of apocalyptic literature in the New Testament. It is Jesus' way of showing that **everything is passing away**. **If we don't hold this in mind, we do one of two things: we take this world far too seriously, or we try to hold on to everything. We think it's all going to last, but it isn't.** The 21st century, capitalism, our churches and our political parties, and all the rest are passing away. We can take this as a morbid lesson, or we can receive it as the truth ahead of time, so we're not surprised, disappointed and angry when it happens in our generation.*

*The spiritual message is really quite simple. It is saying that **nothing is permanent**. Apocalyptic literature tells us to be prepared for that, so we won't be shocked or scandalized when someone dies, or something is destroyed. You might learn this truth the moment after you hear of the death of your mother or father, when the rug is pulled out from beneath you. Or, during that moment when you go to the doctor and get a fatal diagnosis and are told you have three months left to live. Or when your house is destroyed by a storm or flood in seconds. Apocalyptic literature describes such moments and crises. Again, this message is not meant to be heard as a threat, but as a truth that nothing lasts forever. Our great hope is that there will be something we can grasp onto, something that's eternal, something that's God. We want the absoluteness of God, the eternity of God, and we can't fully find it here.*

*God puts us in a world of passing things where everything changes and nothing remains the same. **The only thing that doesn't change is change itself. It's a hard lesson to learn.** It helps us appreciate that everything is a gift. We didn't create it. We don't deserve it. It will not last, but while we breathe it in, we can enjoy it, and know that it is another moment of God, another moment of life. People who take this moment seriously take every moment seriously, and those are the people who are ready for heaven. Adapted from Fr Richard Rohr, "The End of Worlds," homily, Nov 15, 2015*

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Once again, many thanks to those who have responded to requests for comments on the future of **St Joseph's Church**. All are saddened by the possibility of closure. The majority accept its inevitability. The Archdiocesan Council of Priests will be consulted by the Archbishop on this matter. We are keeping up with our prayers to the 'Sleeping St Joseph'. *Fr John*

## First Holy Communions

- Emails have been sent out to parents of **Year 5 children** whose celebrations of First Communion had to be postponed from May 2020. **Archbishop Malcolm** hopes that children throughout the Archdiocese whose First Holy Communion plans have been disrupted by the pandemic will opt for smaller informal family celebrations.
- Arrangements are also being made to prepare **children in current Year 4** for First Holy Communion. In keeping with the Archbishop's advice, Year 4 children will follow an abbreviated program of preparation. Those attending St Mary's School will be prepared during RE classes within school time. **Year 4 children who do not attend St Mary's school are asked to register with the parish office by email for FOUR WEEKLY sessions to take place at St Anthony's commencing at 6.30pm on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May.** Once their preparation is completed, all Year 4 children will go on to receive First Holy Communion in small family groups. Up to 10 children, with 6 family members each, may receive at 5pm Mass on Saturday evenings at St Mary's to take advantage of live streaming. Up to 5 children, with 6 family members each, may receive at St Anthony's at 9.30am on Sunday mornings. None of these less than perfect arrangements match what we would have hoped for our children in better days. These are not normal times. Parents' understanding is very much appreciated.

The good news from the **Manx Government** this week is that there is a limited relaxation of restrictions for visitors to the Island. We are still asked to be cautious and we remain in **'mitigation' mode**.

- **The obligation to go to Mass on Sunday is still suspended.** Many may feel insecure at the idea of returning to Mass.
- The requirement to **sanitise hands** on entering and leaving church and to maintain reasonable **social distancing** is still in place.
- The **wearing of masks** by some parishioners is a reasonable precaution that must be respected.
- The **sign of peace** will be exchanged without making contact.
- **Holy Communion** will continue to be distributed **only in the hand and under the form of bread**. As you receive please **avoid skin to skin contact** with the minister.
- **Socialisation within the church at the end of Mass is discouraged.** There's space to meet outside.
- Please respect a **reluctance to shake hands or hug** from friends you haven't seen for a while.

### Public Masses for the coming week

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

<b>Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May</b> Fifth Sunday of Easter	5.00pm	St Mary's	Rose & William Keenan, deceased
<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May</b> Fifth Sunday of Easter	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Jim Strickland, recently died People of our Parishes
<b>Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May</b> Saints Philip and James, Apostles	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Canon Eugene Hopkins and Nan Garlick, anniversaries
<b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May</b> Feast of the English Martyrs	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Patrick Gaffey, deceased
<b>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May</b>	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Salvatore Cutillo, 2 <sup>nd</sup> anniversary
<b>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May</b>	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Ken Daly, 2 <sup>nd</sup> anniversary
<b>Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May</b> <i>First Friday</i>	12.10 noon 7.00pm*	St Mary's St Anthony's	Bertie Abraham, birthday anniversary Alex and David Simpson, deceased
<b>Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May</b> Sixth Sunday of Easter	11.00am to 12.00 noon 5.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Confessions and Exposition Patricia Harman
<b>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May</b> Sixth Sunday of Easter	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Brigid and Joe Hayes People of our Parishes

- **Memory Support Group:** Josie and Amanda are hoping to resume the Memory Support Group on **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June between 10.30am-12 noon** in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre. Please contact Josie on 406063 or Amanda on 642879 for more details.
- **May is the traditional month of Mary.** Generations of Catholics have prayed the Rosary silently through times of persecution, wars, famine and disease. They have clung to their rosary beads as an unspoken act of faith in itself. For many it has been their 'survival' prayer. Many of our grandparents' generation recited the Rosary privately each day of their lives. (If my grandma ever lost her rosary beads there was pandemonium in the house.) Maybe even a quietly recited single decade of the Rosary is something you might consider during this month.
- **Join Pope Francis in the Rosary Marathon for an End to Covid-19.** The Rosary Marathon will be taking place in 30 shrines across the world throughout the month of May with a different intention to be prayed for each day. The Marathon begins at 5pm this Saturday 1 May at the English National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk. The Rosary can be followed each day by live-stream on the Vatican News website <https://www.vaticannews.va/en.html>. Pope Francis will close the Marathon by leading the Rosary himself on the final day, 31<sup>st</sup> May.

We have received the following from the **Archdiocesan Synod Office:**

As we approach our Archdiocesan Synod, taking place online on 19th June, Synod Members are currently discerning how they will vote on the recommendations that have emerged. If you haven't seen them yet, there are three places you can find them: in the Catholic Pic ([www.catholicpic.co.uk](http://www.catholicpic.co.uk)); on the Synod Recommendations Website ([www.synod2020recommendations.org.uk](http://www.synod2020recommendations.org.uk)); in the Synod book 'Together on the Road', available at [synod2020@rcaol.co.uk](mailto:synod2020@rcaol.co.uk). Please continue to keep the Synod in your prayers in the coming months.