

NEWSLETTER

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

Tel 01624 675509 Email saintmaryiom@rcaolp.co.uk Website www.manxcatholic.org

15th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Sea Sunday, 11th July 2021

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

Dear Parishioners,

Last week all Synod members received the following email: *'For the final time before the Synod office closes, we wanted to be in touch with you to thank you for all your work'*. It reminded us that the results of the Synod are available on the Synod website www.synod2020.co.uk and in the July edition of the Catholic Pic. The message concluded with these words: *'From today the Synod office will close, and any questions or other enquiries should be directed to Fr Philip Inch at email philipinch@rcaol.org.uk. It's been a pleasure to share this journey with you, thank you for joining us in it!'* And so ends this remarkable achievement informed by 27,000 contributions from parishioners throughout the Archdiocese.

This week I am travelling across to take part in a meeting of the Archbishop's Council with other lay representatives. This process will eventually lead to the drafting of the Pastoral Plan, to be launched by Archbishop Malcolm on the first Sunday of Advent 2021. I'm looking forward to this five-day meeting and what may emerge for the future of the church in this part of the world. I've seen the timetable for the meeting. It's full-on; not a holiday; but I'm excited to be leaving the Island for the first time since March 2020!

The closure of St Joseph's church has been a massive undertaking. The consultation process alone took several months and required individual responses to St Joseph's parishioners who sought reassurance at the loss of a building that was so much part of their way of life. Liaison with Archdiocesan authorities and ultimately with the Archbishop also took time. Formal requests then had to be made to comply with the requirements of Canon Law. Like so much parish activity it has taken hours of demanding physical effort by a few people, all invisible to the average parishioner. We thank those who helped with their cars, vans and labour in emptying St Joseph's of its religious artifacts.

The demands of running three sets of buildings have been immense. The running of our two remaining churches will be equally demanding. Last week hours were wasted waiting on three occasions for an engineer to fix the boiling water tap in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre. This week electricians failed to turn up on three successive days at St Mary's. Time wasted. In a previous generation there existed a cohort of willing volunteers a priest could call on. Those days are over. Our volunteers are older. They can't be expected to lug furniture or climb ladders. They have responsibilities of their own. And they certainly can't be expected to respond at short notice to cover such eventualities. Reading at Mass or acting as a Eucharistic Minister are 'visible' roles but does the average parishioner ever ask who opens the church, cleans it, sets out the altar, arranges the flowers, puts out votive candles, counts the collection, banks the money, buys the milk, makes the tea, washes the cups? Who is it who visits the housebound and the sick in our nursing homes? Who prepares our children for first Holy Communion and Confirmation? These are tasks undertaken by a silent minority who seek no acknowledgement.

The priest is the first port of call for many routine enquires and emergencies that aren't remotely 'priestly'. I live over the shop and know where the spare toilet rolls and light bulbs are stored. What's the practical alternative to the priest jumping into his car early in the morning to meet a contractor at short notice? Who can he reasonably call upon to meet a plumber at 8.00am? All this is time taken away from the priest's core responsibilities, but it's difficult to know how these can be delegated.

A major theme that emerged in the Synod process was *the role of the laity*. The truth is the involvement of the laity is already here. This is the first parish in which I have served where there is no Parish Council. I have personally set up such bodies in many of the places where I have been appointed. Parish Councils function best when they give a voice to the invisible volunteers who are the ones who keep the parish running; 'the doers rather than the talkers'. I would like to establish such a body in the autumn. It will help identify gaps in the provision of what we do and hopefully lead to the engagement of more volunteers willing to give their time and muscle to the routine tasks that keep our parishes functioning.

Some people may wonder how a priest spends his days other than celebrating Mass. On average each funeral takes over three hours of the priest's time: liaising with the undertaker, meeting the bereaved family, preparing the order of service, conducting the funeral, travelling to the crematorium or cemetery for the committal etc. This year we have had over 145 First Holy Communions, and at least two Baptism per week since the end of lockdown. Each of these requires contact with parents to arrange dates in addition to preparation. The administrative requirements of weddings can be massive. Long gone are the days when Janet married John who lived just around the corner. Initial paperwork with each couple takes a least an hour followed by a paper trail and compliance that routinely requires contact with parishes in the UK, Ireland, Eastern Europe and the Philippines. Often such paperwork is undertaken for Manx resident parishioners who wish to be married elsewhere. Marriage preparation courses and services have also to be arranged. This isn't a whinge. I enjoy the

variety. Ultimately the role of a priest is to serve the needs of his people in whatever form that takes. And it's a privilege to do so.

This week it was announced that Pope Francis has appointed our own **Canon Tom Neylon** as a new Auxiliary Bishop of Liverpool. Canon Tom is 62 years of age and is currently a Vicar General with responsibility for Safeguarding and a parish priest in Widnes. Growing up in Warrington he studied at St Joseph's Upholland and Ushaw. He was ordained by Pope John Paul II during his visit to Manchester in 1982. He will be ordained bishop by Archbishop Malcolm in our Cathedral on 3rd September. Canon Tom is a really nice man and universally popular. He will make an excellent bishop and will play a key part in both the production and implementation of the new Pastoral Plan. We hope to welcome him to the Island in due course. Please pray for him. *Fr John*

- **Message from Canon Brendan:** 'I would like to express my gratitude for all the Masses, prayers and gifts received on the occasion of my Diamond Jubilee. A very enjoyable celebration dinner was held in the Empress hotel. I am thankful to all who arranged it and to those who attended. God bless you and yours.'
- **Covid:** At the time of writing there are 71 Covid cases on the Island. This is an inevitable consequence of relaxing border restrictions. More cases will inevitably follow. Learning to 'live with' Covid means that some of those carrying the virus will bring it with them to Mass. Prudence demands that we continue to respect the request to sanitise our hands on entering and leaving church and to maintain reasonable social distancing.
- **St Anthony's Red Mill Hill Missionary Boxes** will be emptied this week. Please leave your St Anthony's boxes only in the usual place in St Anthony's Church porch.
- **World Day of Prayer** (formerly Women's World Day of Prayer), which was postponed in March due to the lockdown, will be held on **Friday 16th July**. A Service will take place in Trinity Church, Rosemount at 7.00 pm. Everyone is welcome. The service is also available to watch via Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85974782049?pwd=WVZHSXgwNVZVREkrSUZWOTJoOEpbDz09>; Meeting ID 859 7478 2049; Passcode 508480. If anyone would like to join via zoom please contact Sandra on 416692. This year the Service has been prepared by the ladies of Vanuatu.
- **Catholic Pic July edition** devoted to the Synod can be read at: <https://bit.ly/2UuEb1k>. It also contains photographs of the Island's Synod members and a great picture of Canon Brendan's Diamond Jubilee celebration Mass at St Mary's.

Masses for the coming week

All Masses from St Mary's are live-streamed

Saturday 10th July 15 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	Mary & Patrick Reaney, anniversary
Sunday 11th July 15 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Hilarion Eymard Dimayuga, anniversary
Monday 12th July	No Mass today		
Tuesday 13th July	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Panella Cedeno, recently died
Wednesday 14th July	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Gerard Machin, recently died
Thursday 15th July St Bonaventure	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Connell Tebay, 18 th birthday anniversary
Friday 16th July Our Lady of Mount Carmel	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Patrick McCarrick & Family
Saturday 17th July 16 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00am 5.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Confessions and Exposition Joe Greene, 4 th anniversary
Sunday 18th July 16 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Vivian Garnham People of our Parishes

- We remember **Eric Casey** who died on Thursday. We pray for his grieving relatives and friends.

Our prayers and best wishes go to **Alan Molloy**. A parishioner of St Columba's, Port Erin, Alan often attends midday Mass in St Mary's. Alan will be ordained as a Permanent Deacon in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral at 3pm on Sunday 18th July. The celebration will be livestreamed on <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheMetropolitanCathedralLiverpool> and <https://www.facebook.com/liverpoolmetro cathedral>. Alan has asked for our prayers. We wish him and his wife Helen every blessing for the future.