

NEWSLETTER

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

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16th Sunday of Ordinary Time 18th July 2021

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

Dear Parishioners,

Claude AnShin Thomas suffered for years from the trauma of war as a Vietnam combat veteran. A retreat with Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh set him on the path of mindfulness and healing. He is now a Zen Buddhist monk. He recounts his story:

I suffer from a disturbed sleep pattern that has been a part of my life since a night-time attack in Vietnam in 1967. Since that time, I haven't slept for more than two consecutive hours in any one night. . . . My sleeplessness became the central symbol of my not-all-rightness, of my deepest fears that I would never be all right. . . . Part of the reason I had difficulty sleeping was because of my night terrors: the sounds of artillery (that isn't there) firing in the distance, of helicopters on assault, that special look of everything illuminated by artificial light, the sounds of small arms fire, of the wounded screaming for a medic. For me, this is what rises up out of the silence that is special to night. I hated the sun going down. I fought and struggled with my inability to sleep, and the more I fought, the more difficult the nights became. So I turned to alcohol and drugs (legal and illegal) for relief, but my suffering just got worse. . . .

Some years after getting sober, I was standing at the kitchen sink in my cottage in Concord, washing dishes. Above the sink was a window through which I could see a row of fifty-foot-tall pine trees that lined the driveway. That day as I did the dishes, I was watching a squirrel busy doing whatever it is that squirrels do, when I had a powerful experience. A voice inside me, the voice of awareness, said to me, "You can't sleep, so now what?" I began to laugh. It was a moment of complete acceptance. I finally understood that I just was how I was. To resist, to fight, to attempt to alter the essential nature of my life, was in fact making matters worse, and now I understood that I simply needed to learn how to live with the reality of who I was. In this moment I discovered that it was here, in the midst of suffering and confusion, that healing and transformation can take place, if I can stop trying to escape.

But I'm not special, you know. You can do this, too. You can face your own sorrow, your own wounds. You can stop wanting some other life, some other past, some other reality. You can stop fighting against the truth of yourself and, breathing in and breathing out, open to your own experience. You can just feel whatever is there, exploring it, until you also discover the liberation that comes with stopping the struggle and becoming fully present in your own life. This is the real path to peace and freedom. You could do this for yourself; you could do this for your family. Our whole world will benefit. [Claude AnShin Thomas, *At Hell's Gate: A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace* (Shambhala: 2004)]

- The **Liverpool Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes** due to take place from 25-30 July 2021 has been cancelled due to the pandemic. The organisers have instead arranged a Lourdes at Home Pilgrimage Programme. Archbishop Malcolm will celebrate the opening Mass in the Metropolitan Cathedral at 3.00pm on Sunday 25 July. The pilgrimage will conclude with a picnic followed by the Rosary and Torchlight Marian Procession in Our Lady's prayer garden, Southport Road, Lydiate from 6.00pm on Friday 30 July. There will be two celebrations each day at venues across the Archdiocese which people will be able to attend. The full programme is available [here](#). Printed copies can be found at the back of church.

Being a Dean!

One of our Archdiocesan priests has shared this piece on what being a Dean means to him. *My 'duty' as Dean is to keep in touch with the priests of the deanery - checking they're okay and offering support if needed. As I've tried to do this over the last eighteen months, I've got to know the priests quite well, and I am truly humbled by the love and care they have for the people they serve. Priests can come in for a lot of criticism. People can be very quick to judge and condemn us because of the way some priests were in the past, or because of the evil of abuse which has scarred the Church, or because we can't respond to every request or be everyone's cup of tea. That aside, the priests I've got to know in this deanery love you, worry about you, pray for you, lie awake at night worrying about making the right decisions and, I dare to say, lay down their lives for you. They've taught me a lot about being a "Good Shepherd".*

- We remember in our prayers **Michael Barry** and **Declan McGeown** who died recently and we think of their families and friends who mourn their loss.

When the cat's away

- In my absence we had an unwelcome visit from a seagull in St Mary's church on Friday morning. After flying around inside the church causing chaos it ended up perched on top of the organ in the choir loft. Many attempts were made to rescue it and encourage it outside, with help from the MSPCA. However it evaded all attempts and is still up there. There's no food in the church so hopefully it will get hungry and fly down to freedom soon. Maybe it's found its own Sacred Space in the centre of town!
- Apologies to those of you who arrived for the noon Mass on Friday. Fr Joseph kindly agreed to celebrate this Mass while I was away. However after his Mass in Castletown, Fr Joseph was asked if he would attend to a dying person so could not make it to Douglas on time. A Eucharistic Service replaced the Mass. Thank you to Fr Joseph and Canon Brendan who celebrated the weekday Masses in my absence. We wish Fr Brian Dougherty a safe and refreshing break in Ireland. Thanks to you all for your understanding and continued support.

Masses for the coming week

All Masses from St Mary's are live-streamed

Saturday 17th July 16 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	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
Monday 19th July St John Plessington of Garstang	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Irene Klobski, recently died
Tuesday 20th July	12.00 noon	St Mary's	Requiem Mass: Eric Casey
Wednesday 21st July	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Funeral Service: Michael Barry John Lyons, sick
Thursday 22nd July St Mary Magdalene	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Requiem Mass: Kathleen Hopkins Catherine Wareing, thanks for recovery
Friday 23rd July St Bridget, Patron of Europe	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Sean Gunn, recently died
Saturday 24th July 17 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00am 5.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Confessions and Exposition Sheila Mander, anniversary
Sunday 25th July 17 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Jose Jaime Gallo Santacruz, birthday and 7 th anniversary

This coming week we celebrate the feast days of two important female saints - Mary Magdalene and Bridget, Patron of Europe. In his book 'Let us Dream' Pope Francis has this to say,

'A sign is something that stands out and strikes us. A sign of hope in the Covid crisis is the leading role of women. Women have been at the same time among the most effected and the most resilient in this crisis. Affected, because they are more likely to be on the front line – about 70 percent of those working in health care worldwide are women – but also because they are harder hit economically while working in the informal or unpaid sector. The countries with women as presidents or prime ministers have on the whole reacted better and more quickly than others, making decisions swiftly and communicating them with empathy.'

What does this sign invite us to think about? What might the Spirit be saying to us? I think of the strength of the women in the Gospel following the death of Jesus. They were not paralyzed by the tragedy, nor did they flee. For love of their Master, they went to the tomb to anoint Him. Like so many women in this pandemic they were able to hold it together, to get around obstacles in their path and keep hope alive in their families and communities.... Could it be the perspective women bring is what the world needs at this time to face the coming challenges? Could the Spirit be prompting us to recognise, value and integrate the fresh thinking that some women are bringing to this moment?'

- **COVID:** With the expected surge in cases now a reality we know that many parishioners are anxious. A number of you have tested positive. The obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still suspended. Learning to 'live with' Covid means that some of those carrying the virus will unknowingly bring it with them to Mass. Prudence demands that we continue to sanitise our hands on entering and leaving church and to maintain reasonable social distancing. We respect those who wish to wear face masks or choose to move to a section of church where they feel safer.