

NEWSLETTER

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

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18th Sunday of Ordinary Time 31st July 2022

(Year C for Sundays) (Cycle 2 for weekdays)

Our indulgent leaders can learn from Trimble

Unionist showed that meaningful change comes from persuading supporters to re-think their cherished nostrums.

David Aaronovitch 'The Times', 28th July 2022.

We easily forget the tragedies of others. When Boris Johnson ennobled the unrepentant supporter of past IRA violence Claire Fox two years ago, it was a sign to me that forgetting had become a virtue in Britain. We had lost sight of how terrible the killing and wounding in the times of the Troubles had been and how seemingly impossible the path to peace had looked.

This week we lost the more improbable of the two Nobel peace laureates who helped to take Northern Ireland from sectarian slaughter to prosperity. John Hume, who died in August 2020, had always been a man trying to bend the arc of the future towards reconciliation. **David Trimble** for much of his career was not.

The 1980s was the decade I was most in Northern Ireland as a student leader then as a journalist. In 1985 I was covering the British and Irish governments (along with John Hume) to try to create a framework for peace: the Anglo-Irish agreement. The Provos opposed it because it recognised the status of Northern Ireland. In parliament Jeremy Corbyn voted against it for the same reason. And Unionists, including Trimble, opposed it because it gave the Irish Government an official role in discussing the future of the province. Ian Paisley stood outside Belfast City Hall and thundered "Never! Never! Never!" The killing went on.

As a journalist you could understand, even if you despaired, how hardened people on both sides had become. I knew Queen's University quite well. In December 1983 a young law lecturer was walking next to the college when two IRA gunmen approached and shot him several times in the back of the head. One of those who heard the shots from his office and reacted first was Graham's colleague, David Trimble.

Seven years later Trimble became an MP for Upper Bann and five years after that took over the leadership of the Ulster Unionist Party from James Molyneaux, a man whose smile, to quote Daniel O'Connell talking about Sir Robert Peel, was "like the gleam of wintry sunshine on the brass handles of a coffin".

Molyneaux embodied a problem. Unionism was rarely understood or sympathised with either in Britain or abroad. Republicanism might be murderous but it was also romantic, its passionate songs sung in the ubiquitous Irish pubs and bars around the world. Unionism was seen as dour, censorious and reactionary. It was grim-faced men in sashes and bowlers at best, parading in protest against the march of history.

I remember well into the 90's the hope-deadening consensus of analysts and commentators was that the conflict between Unionism and Republicanism/nationalism was so intractable there could not in any foreseeable future be an agreement.

But just as Sinn Fein contained people beginning to doubt the strategy and therefore the morality of terrorism (or the "armed struggle" as apologists for their killing called it), Unionism contained a bright, tight little strand of new thinking. It began to countenance a settlement that reassured nationalists. What it needed was the right leader.

No one much thought this was David Trimble with his seeming liking for provocative Orangemen parades. Until suddenly it was. He was, as Tony Blair said this week, "difficult" but once he had become convinced the principle of consent ran through the proposals for Northern Ireland's status and governance that became the Good Friday Agreement, he turned entirely and set about making it something that enlightened Unionists might accept.

Then he had to sell it. Just as Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness took huge risks with their (sometimes well-armed) supporters, so did Trimble. Many in his party loathed the agreement. Paisley's DUP opposed it as a sell-out to terrorism. They weren't alone. Not a few British Conservatives (including the youthful Michael Gove) were against it.

Trimble's advocacy of the agreement was essential. He has performed the duty of leadership that Blair this week called the most difficult of all: telling your supporters they were wrong about a cherished belief and needed to think again. Trimble certainly suffered for it, losing his Westminster seat in 2005 to the DUP, but the benefit to his people was almost incalculable. And, of course, it is just as possible to duck courageous leadership, always trying to palliate your supporters, and still fail, even while contributing nothing to making the world a better place.

During the 2010 Labour leadership elections the fratricidal Ed Miliband determined to make his appeal to the activist left and the unions. New Labour, he said, was "dead". He narrowly won. His leadership pandered to the rhetoric of

good old socialist days and his chief contribution to history was helping to stop military action against Assad's Syria after it used chemical weapons against civilians. His second main legacy was Jeremy Corbyn.

The man who beat Miliband in 2015, David Cameron, included the Brexit referendum in his manifesto not because he thought there should be one, but to try to lance the boil of Tory Europhobia. His pre-referendum crowd-pleasing "talking tough" to Europe made it nearly impossible (and far too late) to make the positive case for membership. Having the anti-EU Corbyn as Labour leader compounded the problem.

In each case, far more good would have befallen the country if leaders had led, not indulged their parties. Good politics is about persuasion above all, not garnering cheap applause for colourful sloganising.

Last weekend the frontrunner for the Tory leadership achieved this headline in the Mail on Sunday: "Truss: I'd sent MORE migrants to Africa." The Truss campaign clearly thought doubling down on a policy described as immoral by the Archbishop of Canterbury and as unworkable by every single authority on refugees and asylum policy was a vote-winner among Tory members.

Then on Tuesday Rishi Sunak said he now supported removing VAT on fuel bills despite having earlier described it as "disproportionately benefiting wealthier households". The wrong policy now endorsed for the wrong reason – the very opposite of good politics.

It is exhausting, of course, always to argue with those you want to support you, but any political huckster can (as the New Statesman recommended to Sir Kier Starmer this week) throw "red meat" to their tribespeople. Little good can come of this. A true leader seeks, as David Trimble did, to lead.

- Welcome back to all those who took part in the **Liverpool Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes**. Bishop Tom Williams kindly took to Lourdes an envelope of petitions given to him by parishioners at last Sunday's 11am Mass.
- In the absence of all but one of the Onchan Church leaders, the decision has been made to cancel the **Ecumenical United Service** which was advertised to take place this **Sunday 31st July** in St Anthony's Church.
- The **Memory Support Group** will meet this **Tuesday 2nd August 2022** from **10.30am to 12 noon at St Anthony's Pastoral Centre**. Paul Winter will be leading an armchair exercise session with the group. Refreshments will be served. Everyone welcome. Please contact Josie on 406063 for more information.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Anthony's: £385; St Mary & St Joseph: £621. Thank you.

Masses and Services for the coming week

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

Saturday 30th July 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	Lil Brownwick, sick
Sunday 31st July 18th Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Anne Mullin
Monday 1st August St Alphonsus Liguori	<i>No Mass or Service today</i>		
Tuesday 2nd August	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> Kevin Manning decd & Sue Manning
Wednesday 3rd August	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Richard Wylde, recently died
Thursday 4th August St John Vianney	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> Margaret McQuilliam, 90 th birthday
Friday 5th August	12.10 noon 7.00pm	St Mary's St Anthony's	Grace & Edmund Ambrose, anniv <i>Monica Bersin</i>
Saturday 6th August	11.00 - 11.30am <i>(Wedding Service at 12 noon)</i>	St Mary's	Confessions
19th Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	John & Helen Cowburn-Wood
Sunday 7th August 19th Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Monica Singleton, deceased

"Christian joy is about the experience of a peace that remains in our hearts, even when we are pelted by trials and afflictions, for then we know that we are not alone, but accompanied by a God who is not indifferent to our lot."
(Pope Francis in Canada, July 2022)