

NEWSLETTER

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

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3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, 22nd January 2023

Day of the Word of God

(Page 127 in Mass Book)

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

Dear Parishioners

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity runs from Wednesday 18 - Wednesday 25 January. It is fitting that in this same week the leaders of the main Christian denominations on the Isle of Man - Churches Alive in Mann (CAIM) - have issued a statement on Assisted Dying to which we have all put our names; Ecumenism in practice:



Churches Alive in Mann - Response to Assisted Dying Consultation

Churches Alive in Mann represents all the main Christian denominations on the Isle of Man. We speak with one voice in saying that we do not support any changes to the law which would permit assisted dying, more accurately described as physician assisted suicide. While it is a duty for a caring society to relieve suffering, the artificial termination of life must be resisted in the strongest terms.

Pastoral Concerns

The long-rooted experience within our Churches of supporting a wide range of people through illness, through the final stages of life, and through bereavement, has given us insight into living well and dying well. There is so much that is precious about Manx community and the care we give to one another. A concern for personal autonomy regarding end-of-life choices needs to be weighed against care for people who live with disabilities, physical and mental impairments, or people with obvious or hidden vulnerabilities.

It is a sad reality that a proportion of elderly people suffer from physical, emotional or financial abuse and we have deep misgivings that a change in the law would in some cases lead to a greater concern for relieving the family's suffering (or bank balance) than for the best interests of their elderly relative. Most people treat their loved ones with integrity, but for the few, existing experience shows that it is not easy to spot coercion.

Even for people who are not subjected to abuse, the existence of the proposed law would inevitably lead some people to conclude, not only that they could, but that they should end their lives to relieve burden on others. This is a well-documented trend in Oregon.

In our Churches, we often find ourselves caring for people who are suicidal and helping them to find reasons to go on living. Legislation for assisted suicide would greatly weaken the message of hope we, and so many others on our Island, seek to share.

We believe that the dangers the proposed legislation poses to so many vulnerable people, far outweigh the benefits of autonomous choice for a few.

Moral Concerns

For thousands of years, "Do not kill" has been an ethical foundation of many civilisations. We believe that all human life is a sacred gift from God. The value of any member of our society is not determined by variable measures of the quality of life. If we begin to end individual lives prematurely, we will inevitably diminish the high value we place on all lives.

Living Well and Dying Well

We believe that life and death find meaning in relationship, both with God and with family, friends and wider community. To die well, we need to live well. To live well, we need to develop relationships, life practices and a depth of hope that sustains us throughout life to our dying breath. Life is just as valuable in suffering, limitations and loss of capacity, as it is in health, independence and strength.

We support the ethos of the Hospice and palliative care movement. We urge the Government to invest in extending and deepening the Island's Hospice and palliative care provision as a life-giving alternative to legalising assisted suicide.

In the words of Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the Modern Hospice Movement:

You matter because you are you, and you matter to the last moment of your life. We will do all that we can to help you to die peacefully, but also to live until you die.

Churches Alive in Mann affirm the enormous value of all lives and stands opposed to the legalising of assisted dying on the Isle of Man. Such legislation would inevitably turn us into a less compassionate society.

The Isle of Man Government 'Assisted Dying' consultation period ends on 26th January. You are encouraged to make your views known. In addition to completing the consultation form you are also free to write to your MHK to make known your concern.

Further details on the Churches Alive in Mann (CAIM) website: <https://www.churchesalive.im/assisteddying2023.htm>. This will lead you to a CAIM video presentation along with some statistics and a link to CAIM's briefing paper to help you respond to the IOM Government consultation on the proposed Assisted Dying Bill. Hard copies of these documents are still available at the back of our churches:

- A SUMMARY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S TEACHING ON ASSISTED DYING. This summary includes statements from the Catholic Bishops of England & Wales, Canada and Australia. Also included are the relevant paragraphs from the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- The Manx Government Consultation Document.
- A guide to filling in the consultation document 'Care not Killing'.

YOU ARE INVITED TO A HOLY HOUR OF SILENT PRAYER WITH EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AT SAINT MARY OF THE ISLE, DOUGLAS AT 3.00PM THIS SUNDAY 22nd JANUARY TO PRAY FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL AND THE DYING AND FOR A JUST OUTCOME TO THE CURRENT CONSULTATION.

'Let us always remember that the way we treat the last and the least of our brothers and sisters speaks of the value we place upon all human life.' (Pope Francis tweet 12 January 2023).

Any **adults** who wish to explore the possibility of **becoming a member of the Catholic Church** or **Baptised Catholics who have never made their First Holy Communion or received the Sacrament of Confirmation** are invited to make themselves known to the parish office by email. Some have already approached us. We will shortly be contacting those interested with an invitation to join our **'Come and See'** group.

- **IOM National Holocaust Memorial Service** will take place next **Sunday 29th January** in St Mary's at 3.00pm accompanied by St Mary's Church Choir. Everyone is welcome to attend.
- **Island Spirituality Network** will be held on **Saturday 28 January** from 10am to 1pm in St John's Mill. Guest speaker will be Revd Professor David Wilkinson who is Principal of St John's College, Durham and a lecturer in theology and religion, with a special interest in the relationship between faith and contemporary culture. He is the author of many books and holds doctorates in both Astrophysics and in Systematic Theology. Everyone welcome.
- **Memory Support Group:** Next meeting will take place at St Anthony's Pastoral Centre on **Tuesday 7th February** from 10.30am to 12 noon. Sophie Linham from IoM Arts Council will be demonstrating exercise routines to music. Everyone warmly welcomed to come along. Tea/coffee and refreshments will be served. For further information please contact Josie 406063 or Amanda 642879.
- **Warm and Cosy Centre at the Columba Club:** Open to all each Monday and Friday from 10am to 2pm. No charge, just a warm and cosy welcome. Tea, coffee and homemade soup available.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Anthony's £280, St Mary & St Joseph £726. Thank you for your generosity.

Masses and Services for the coming week
All Masses and Services from St Mary's are live-streamed

Saturday 21st January 3 rd Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>Day of the Word of God</i>	5.00pm	St Mary's	Jim & Maureen McAleer, birthday anniversary
Sunday 22nd January 3 rd Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>Day of the Word of God</i>	9.30am 11.00am 3.00pm	St Anthony's St Mary's St Mary's	David Moon, 3 rd anniversary People of our Parishes <i>Holy Hour of silent prayer with Exposition for terminally ill and IOM Assisted Dying Consultation</i>
Monday 23rd January	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Assisted Dying Consultation
Tuesday 24th January St Francis de Sales	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> Stephen Simpson, anniversary
Wednesday 25th January The Conversion of St Paul	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Matthew Patani, anniversary
Thursday 26th January St Timothy & St Titus	10.00 am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Michael Mullholland, anniversary Paddy Dunne
Friday 27th January St Angela Merici	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Danielle & Tom, special intention
Saturday 28th January St Thomas Aquinas 4 th Sunday in Ordinary Time	<i>No Confessions or Exposition</i> 5.00pm	St Mary's	Rose Kewin, anniversary
Sunday 29th January 4 th Sunday in Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am 3.00pm	St Anthony's St Mary's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Craig Dorrian, 7 th anniversary <i>Holocaust Memorial Service</i>

The Sending: A Franciscan Benediction Attributed to the earliest followers of St Francis

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in the world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

Amen

The Theme for this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is "Do good, seek justice" (Isaiah 1:17)

Fr Bryan Massingale, one of the world's leading Catholic social ethicists and scholars in racial justice, reminds us of his hope and challenge:

'Social life is made by human beings. The Society we live in is the result of human choices and decisions. This means that human beings can change things. What humans break, divide and separate, we can with God's help also heal, unite and restore. What is now does not have to be. Therein lies the hope and the challenge.'

During this Christian Unity week, Pope Francis asked that we each give thanks to the Lord *'who faithfully and patiently guides His people towards full communion and let us ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten and sustain us with His gifts'*.