

NEWSLETTER

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

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20th Sunday of Ordinary Time, 20th August 2023

(Page 117 in Mass Book)

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

Dear Parishioners

I look forward to seeing many of you again this weekend.

I began my break with a few days at Ampleforth, the Benedictine monastery in North Yorkshire. Monks from Ampleforth used to run the majority of the churches in Warrington. I served nine years there in St Benedict's and later years at St Mary's Buttermarket Street where I took over directly from the Benedictines. Only last year the Ampleforth monks left St Mary's Leyland in the north of our Archdiocese.

I visited Ampleforth for a gentle few days. I enjoyed joining the community as they sang the Divine Office, though not the early morning ones..... There is something very settling about punctuating the day with singing the psalms. The already familiar words penetrate to another level at each repetition. I'm conscious that these same words have passed the lips of the people of Israel and then Christians for thousands of years. The words haven't changed, and the unknown but loving God to whom they are addressed is also changeless.

I've had a lot to digest this year: there were a lot of deaths especially young deaths and terminal diagnoses among our parishioners, Canon Brendan's death, the death of my sister Mary and then my own significant milestones - 75th birthday and 50 years as a priest. Sometimes when priests are so busy dealing with parishioners' losses and parish life there is little time to process our own stuff. These days in Ampleforth have helped me catch up with myself and set me up for my motorcycle adventure.

I write this next piece in Hannover, travelling on my bike through Northern Europe - Holland, Germany and Denmark. I had intended to travel up to Norway. However, Storm 'Hans' put an end to that. Ferries were cancelled with roofs and bridges washed away in floods and landslides. Usually, I head for France or Spain - or even England, Scotland or Ireland. Hopefully by the time you read this I will be safely home.

I have come across very few Catholic Churches on my travels this year. And they seem to be locked when I call. Basically Northern Europe is Protestant, Southern Europe is Catholic. Is it something to do with the Mediterranean diet? Over the last couple of weeks, I've lived on sausages and beer rather than wine and olive oil.

Today Tuesday is August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady. In France and in Spain it is a public holiday. Here in Germany, it's business as usual; although, interestingly, Sunday is very much a day of rest - closed shops and no heavy goods vehicles allowed on the roads. Germany may be as secularised as the British Isles, but vestiges of its Protestant culture remain. France and Spain are equally secular but their attachment to Christian holidays also survives.

Traditionally Protestant churches are critical of devotion to Mary. They would say it's not Bible based. Yet the Hail Mary, at least the first part, is a direct quotation of Elizabeth's words of greeting to Mary in Luke's gospel. This same prayer is not a prayer TO Mary. Mary prays and we ask her to pray with us: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.'

Catholics are sometimes accused of putting Mary on a pedestal, and thereby diminishing the central figure of Jesus. But Mary is a member of the church, while her Son is the head. She was present with the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

The Feast of the Assumption does indeed put Mary on a pedestal. But her destiny is ours, by virtue of our Baptism. Today Mary invites us to join her on that same pedestal. When the day comes, we too, by God's mercy, will also be assumed into heaven.

I would like to thank Fr Sean Riley for offering to visit our parishes to celebrate weekend Masses, funerals and baptisms and of course Fr Peter for his continuing support.

Thank you to our volunteer stewards and to all our regular parish helpers who reliably carry on in their roles and keep an eye on our churches. It is comforting to go away knowing that our parishes are in good hands.

Fr John

- **September is St Vincent de Paul Awareness month.** St Anthony's SVP members are holding a fundraising Afternoon Tea on **Saturday 16th September** from 2pm to 4pm in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre. **Adults £8; Children £3.50.** There will also be a raffle at £1 for a strip of tickets. All funds raised will help St Anthony's SVP provide for the needy this winter. Members of the SVP will be at the back of St Anthony's church this Sunday. Please add your names to their list if you wish to attend or bring a friend along to the afternoon tea. Please note children must be accompanied by an adult. Thank you for your continuing support of the SVP.
- The **Memory Support Group** will meet on **Tuesday 5th September** at **10.30am-12noon** in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre. Everyone warmly welcomed. Refreshments will be served. Please contact Josie on 406063 or Sally 642879. The leaders would like to thank Clare and St Anthony's Choir for a lovely morning of entertainment at the July meeting.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Anthony's £538; St Mary & St Joseph £1,282. This does not include standing orders and credit card donations. Thank you for your generosity.

Masses and Services for the coming week

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

Saturday 19th August 20 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	Norah Cullinane, 2 nd anniversary
Sunday 20th August 20 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Sheila Hennessy, anniversary
Monday 21st August St Pius X, Pope	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Carmel Seeldrayers, 1 st anniversary
Tuesday 22nd August The Queenship of Mary	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> Lily O'Reilly, recently died
Wednesday 23rd August St Rose of Lima	12.10 noon	St Mary's	PK Mathew, recently died
Thursday 24th August St Bartholomew	10.00am 12.10 noon	St Anthony's St Mary's	Canon Brendan Alger, recently died Thomas & Mary Finnegan, anniversary
Friday 25th August	12.10 noon	St Mary's	Brian Cocker, 4 th anniversary
Saturday 26th August Blessed Dominic Barberi	11.00 to 12.00 noon	St Mary's	Confessions and Exposition
21 st Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	People of our Parishes
Sunday 27th August 21 st Sunday of Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Mary McNally & Caiti Kelly Paul Wilson, 4 th anniversary

Today's Gospel by Christian Art Reflections:

The beginning of the gospel reading tells us that the Canaanite woman is pleading with Jesus. He doesn't answer her. His disciples however are listening to the woman. Jesus walks on turning his head away from the lady. Three of his disciples talk to her and plead with Jesus to give her what she needs.

Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon, a predominantly pagan area. He and his disciples did not expect to find much faith there. So, when the Canaanite woman approaches them, they were genuinely surprised. The woman is desperate to help her troubled daughter. She wasn't going to give up. Most parents can identify with this and would do anything for their children to be happy and content. Jesus tells the Canaanite mother that she has great faith which can make things possible and attainable. The Canaanite woman offers inspiration, with her iron resolve coupled with good humour and ready wit.

This is how our Christian faith spreads - always handed on by direct contact, the sharing of trust, the bearing of one another's burdens.

We know from our own experience that people can surprise us. We expect them to behave in a certain way and then they can do or say something that far exceeds our expectations. The gospel reading tells us that sometimes the people we are tempted to keep at arm's length may be the very ones we have most to learn from. An unexpected meeting with a person may teach us the most unexpected things about God!

Maybe today's story simply invites us to leave ourselves open to being surprised by God through others.