

NEWSLETTER

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

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4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 28th January 2024

Racial Justice Day

(Page 132 in Mass book) (Year B for Sundays) (Cycle 1 for weekdays)

Dear Parishioners

Since the beginning of 2024 I've been conscious of the state of our broken world: the wars in Ukraine and the Holy Land, the threat of climate change with severe and disruptive weather, the rise of populist government and disenchantment with democracy; uncertainty brought about by pending elections in the US and the UK; the cost-of-living crisis. Within our own parish community there has been serious illness and tragic deaths. All these factors present a personal challenge to our faith. **Dr Otis Moss** reflects as follows on the difficulties we face as individuals and in community:

A true crisis—a threat to yourself or someone you love—can sometimes do wonders to focus the mind. In the moment, if we have spiritual practices in place or we are blessed with inspiration, the noise and confusion may recede for a little while, and we may see again what matters. But you don't get that kind of clarity every time your blood pressure rises.....

In our darkest times, when the storm anxiety, worry, and chaos sweeps over an entire community, such feelings are everywhere. People who have children or elders worry they can't keep them safe. Those blessed with jobs worry about losing them. Even following the news can be too much to take. People with mental health issues feel even more intensely challenged. People who self-medicate do it more and more. Activists who work in their communities start saying to themselves, "The more I do to fight back, the more the pressure builds. The dam is cracking, and every time I plug a hole with my finger, ten more holes show up." The question haunts us: When will this end? ...

Struggling in all that confusion, uncertainty, and violence, we become spiritually worn down. It's too hard to keep believing.

We get tired. We think:

My road is too hard.

The powerful will never treat people right.

I've tried everything, there's nothing to be done. It's no use.

Otis Moss believes faith can sustain us in chaos:

In the storm of chaos, lost in confusion and disorder, ... the question is whether there might be some way to use the harsh, unpredictable winds and the relentless currents of our lives to get us moving to where we actually want to go. Do we have the spiritual audacity and the practical means to turn chaotic energy to our own purposes?

When you take on the confusion and the violence and you refine them, purify them into something new, you are doing what in the vocabulary of faith we call consecrating your chaos. To consecrate is to make holy, to put it into service for good. In consecrating chaos, you engage it, tame it, name it, take what seemed out of control and charge it with a duty.

The model here is the creation itself. We read in Genesis [1:2] that in the beginning, "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep." Scripture begins with a whole world of chaos. Then God begins to find the possibilities of design in that formless void, separating light from darkness, water from land.... God consecrates the chaos, giving it form. It is presented to us as an act of creativity and of choice. God works in the chaotic void until there is order and light, and it is good. The Genesis story reminds us that the void is not as empty as we think. Chaos is never as chaotic as we fear. (Dancing in the Darkness by Otis Moss)

The church was born in a time of persecution and potential annihilation. We place our trust in the suffering Christ who suffers with our broken world today.

Fr John

- We regularly receive enquiries from adults (over 18) who wish to become Catholics or from those who, although Baptised in the Catholic church, have never been Confirmed or made their First Holy Communion. In a few weeks' time we will be reconvening our 'Come and See' group which meets every few weeks to explore our Catholic faith. Please get in touch with us at saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk if you wish to be part of the group. Thank you to those who have already been in touch. We will contact you soon.
- The St Anthony's memory support group has changed its name to '**The T and Chat Group**' which will make the group more inclusive. The group will be supported by St Anthony's St Vincent de Paul Society. A donation box will be available. Proceeds will support the excellent work which the SVP carry out discreetly in our community. **The T and Chat Group will meet on 06/02/2024 from 10.30am to noon at St Anthony's Pastoral Centre** when Judith Ley will be joining the Group. Refreshments will be served. All welcome. Please contact Josie Lorimer on 406063.
- **First Holy Communion 2024 Preparation:** Parents and Guardians of Year 4 children attending non-Catholic schools, who have contacted us, should have received application forms. Those who have returned completed forms will also have received the dates and times of evening classes at St Anthony's, Onchan. Six sessions of preparation are required, taking place during March and April. Thank you to our parish catechists who lead the preparation course.
- The '**Warm and Cosy Hub**' is open on Mondays and Fridays from 10am until 2pm for the winter months in the Columba Club, Circular Road, Douglas. Hot soup with bread & butter will be served with tea, coffee and biscuits.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Mary and St Joseph £775, St Anthony's £405. This does not include standing orders or the tap and pay machine at the back of church. Thank you for your generosity.

Masses and Services for the coming week

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

Saturday 27th January 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	Rose & Jimmy Kewin, anniversary
Sunday 28th January <i>Racial Justice Day</i> 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Margaret & John Tweddle, anniversary
Monday 29th January	12.10pm	St Mary's	Felipe Yul Barnabal, anniversary
Tuesday 30th January	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> John & Catherine McIlroy, anniversaries
Wednesday 31st January St John Bosco	12.10pm 2.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Stefanija Burinskene, recently died Funeral Service: Rosemary Wilson
Thursday 1st February St Brigid	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	Requiem Mass: Barbara Doyle John Byrne, recently died
Friday 2nd February The Presentation of the Lord	12.10pm 2.45pm	St Mary's Crematorium	Cooper & Kelly families, anniversary Funeral Service: John Byrne
Saturday 3rd February 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time	11.00am to 12noon 5.00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Exposition and Confessions People of our Parishes
Sunday 4th February 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Sheila Creedon, anniversary May & Tommy O'Hare, anniversary

We remember in our prayers our parishioners who have died this week:

Barbara Doyle, John Byrne and Rosemary Wilson. May they rest in eternal peace. We think of their sorrowing families and friends who mourn their loss.

This Sunday is **Racial Justice Day**. Pope Francis on looking ahead to, International **Holocaust Remembrance Day**, this Saturday, 27 January, appeals for an end to war, including the bombardments of civilians in Ukraine and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. He says 'May the remembrance and condemnation of that horrific extermination of millions of Jews and people of other faiths, which took place in the first half of the last century, help everyone not to forget that the logic of hatred and violence can never be justified, because it denies our very humanity.' "Let us not tire," the Holy Father implored, "of praying for peace, for an end to conflicts, for a halt to weapons, and for relief for exhausted populations, fleeing from bombings."

"War itself is a denial of humanity. Let us not tire of praying for peace."