

NEWSLETTER

Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas
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4th Sunday of Easter, 21st April 2024

Day of Prayer for Vocations

(Page 261 in Mass book)

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

Dear Parishioners,

As I write, the weather forecast promises sunshine this weekend. I find it easier to reflect convincingly on the Resurrection when the sun is shining. These weeks are special weeks. At Mass each day we follow the story in the Acts of the Apostles of the rapid expansion of the Christian faith to cover much of the known world. The presence of the Holy Spirit is palpable.

The voice of Jesus throughout John's Gospel is distinctive. Unlike his voice in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus speaks throughout his public ministry as if he is risen already. In the Gospel passage at Mass last Thursday Jesus says **'No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me'**. It is our faith that 'draws us' to Jesus. We are only drawn through the Spirit working in us. Faith is a gift. Each of us has a spark of faith, but it's enough. We can ask the Father to increase our faith. In the words of St Paul, we can fan that spark of faith into a flame. Or we can allow it to remain dormant.

Current events in our broken world from war in Gaza, Ukraine and elsewhere; climate change and its effects; the cost-of-living crisis; political polarisation and extremism – these are the contexts in which we are challenged to live out our faith. Do we fight the 'world' and its distorted values with the world's own weapons or do we follow the way of faith – the way of apparent weakness and failure? In the pages of the Acts of the Apostles a handful of disillusioned followers of Jesus take on both the Jewish establishment and the Roman Empire. They had faith in their own gift of faith.

In these weeks we also read the story of St Paul and his conversion. He was a religious fanatic, a 'God botherer' who felt called to tell everyone where they were going wrong and to lock them up for it. The frightening thing was that he thought he was doing God's work. His encounter with Christ opened his eyes to the blindness of his ways. No longer in charge, he in turn became a prisoner in chains, in and out of gaol. But he was free. In these Easter days we pray that we too, may capture something of the dynamism and resilience of those first Christians.

The Spirit is present wherever people live by love, witness to the truth, act in solidarity and practice compassion. Wherever such realities are manifest in human beings, anywhere in the world, it is a sign that the Spirit has come upon them and is active within them. It is by the inspiration of the Spirit that poets and writers redraw life with all its lights and shadows, its dramas and achievements. They are seized by an inner light, and by energies that prompt unexpected connections; they bring something new into the world. Many writers confess that they feel possessed by an inner energy (a daimon, a good spirit) that seizes them and makes them think and write.

By the inspiration of the Spirit, artists and artisans elicit from their material—wood, stone, marble, granite—an image that only they can see in it. The material is spiritualized, and the spirit is materialized.... The Spirit is especially intense in music. Sounds are invisible, unconstrained by space and time, just as no one can limit the action of the Spirit. And the melodies they project lift up and penetrate the soul; in them we find comfort, beauty to cry over, soaring joy. The great evangelical theologian Karl Barth used to say that Mozart took his wonderful melodies from heaven and the Breath (the Holy Spirit).

The arts are very much like the Spirit. They are intangible. They are ends in themselves. They have an intrinsic value.... Art, music, and poetry in themselves are priceless. They are unique creations, not serial productions. They are like a gift we give to a loved one, valuable for its own sake. Somehow they escape the limits of time and bring us a foretaste of eternity. Inspiration is in the air and settles on people without regard for their skin colour, their social background or their educational level. How many illiterate artists have emerged in marginal communities and were never noticed: poets, artisans, painters, singers, musicians, mystics? Boasting is not the Spirit's way; it is like water that quietly runs along the ground, fills the vessels it is poured into, and always chooses to run downhill.

That is why the Spirit does not have its own figure, as the Father and the Son do. It is portrayed as a dove, but what is important is the radiant light it gives off. It is the Breath (Spiritus in Latin) that reveals life, sustains life and renews life in every way. The universe and all beings are saturated with Spirit. To recognize its presence in every corner of the cosmos is the work of spirituality, of life in the Spirit. (Leonardo Boff)

Fr John

Churches Alive in Mann or CAIM – the leaders of the Island’s major Christian Denominations – have organised another event on the **Assisted Dying Bill**. It is to equip and motivate us in our opposition to the proposed Assisted Dying Bill and how we can more effectively bring our concerns to MHKs. This event will take place in our own **Cathedral Church of Saint Mary of the Isle, Douglas at 7.30 pm on Thursday 25th April**. Refreshments will be provided. Posters are available at the back of church.

Visit to UK by Fr Gabriel, Parish Priest at Holy Family in Gaza - Sunday 28 April

Fr Gabriel Romanelli, the parish priest of Holy Family Parish, Gaza, has accepted an invitation from the Catholic Bishops to visit the UK at the end of April. During the visit, Fr Gabriel will meet the bishops to thank them for their continued support. He will speak to MPs and Lords in Parliament before a brief visit to Glasgow. Then he will spend a few days at English Martyrs in Litherland, Liverpool before returning to the Holy Land. On Sunday 28 April, he will join Bishop Tom Neylon for Mass at English Martyrs at 10.30am. All are welcome.

- **Thank you from Lourdes Youth Quiz event:** Many thanks to Quizmaster Brian Murphy for a very entertaining evening. Thank you to everyone who attended and to those who donated prizes and supported the young people in any way, contributing to an amazing total of £1604.35. Well done everyone.
- **T and Chat Group** will meet on **7th May** at St Anthony’s Pastoral Centre from 10.30am to 12 noon. Refreshments will be served. Please come along. You will be warmly welcomed. Please contact Josie Lorimer on 406063 for more information.
- **LGBTQ+ Catholics:** The next gathering for LGBTQ+ Catholics will take place on Sunday 28 April at St John Stone, Ainsdale PR8 3RN. There will be Mass at 2.00pm followed by a social gathering. Everyone welcome.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Mary and St Joseph £1,374. St Anthony’s £630. This does not include standing orders or the tap and pay machine at the back of St Mary’s church. Sincere thanks for your generosity.

Masses and Services for the coming week

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

Saturday 20th April 4 th Sunday of Easter	5.00pm	St Mary’s	Brendan Murphy, recently died
Sunday 21st April <i>Day of Prayer for Vocations</i> 4 th Sunday of Easter	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony’s St Mary’s	People of our Parishes Michael McCarrick intentions
Monday 22nd April	12.10pm	St Mary’s	Deceased Clergy
Tuesday 23rd April St George, Patron of England	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony’s St Mary’s	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> Jimmy & Margaret Stack, anniv
Wednesday 24th April	9.30am 12.10pm	St Mary’s School St Mary’s	Beginning of Term Mass in School Julie O’Neill
Thursday 25th April St Mark, Evangelist	10.00am 12.10pm 7.30pm	St Anthony’s St Mary’s St Mary’s	Bridget Braid Virgilio Ferrer & Azucena Sonio, anniv CAiM Assisted Dying Bill Meeting
Friday 26th April	12.10pm	St Mary’s	Joan Fox, recently died
Saturday 27th April St Maughold, Patron of IoM	11.00am to 12noon 5.00pm	St Mary’s St Mary’s	Exposition and Confessions Fergal Farrell, Ireland
Sunday 28th April 5 th Sunday of Easter	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony’s St Mary’s	Mary Quinn, recently died People of our Parishes

Please pray for the family and friends of our parishioner **Miki Wilson** who died recently. May she rest in peace.

God is Peace and he desires Peace. Those who believe in Him should reject war, which only worsens conflict. War is always and only a defeat. It is a road leading to nowhere. It opens no horizons but extinguishes all Hope. Pope Francis