

## NEWSLETTER

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**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

*(Page 264 in Mass book)*

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

Dear Parishioners,

When I celebrated my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and 50 years as a priest last summer, one of the presents I received was a gift voucher for the Isle of Man Flying school. Last Tuesday was a special day when I took a trial one-hour flight from Ronaldsway in a small two-seater aircraft. Initial turbulence soon gave way to clear skies as we flew over Laxey to the north of the Island. The sun was shining, the sky was blue and our beautiful green Island looked stunning from the air. We followed the coast to the Point of Ayre and then followed the west coast of the Island over Peel and then turned left over Port Erin. Once over Ballasalla we did a U turn and came into land. Once past Laxey I was able to take control of the aircraft several times. It took a bit of getting used to. The joystick is very sensitive. I was told to hold it lightly with just two fingers. Just as a learner car driver grips the steering wheel too tightly, I inevitably did the same with the joystick. It also reminded me of steering a narrow-boat on the Liverpool Leeds canal. There's a brief time lag between moving the rudder and the boat responding. Until I got used to it the plane moved from side to side (and up and down) as I over-steered. Practice I am sure would make perfect but this was a one-off experience.

I could be described as a frequent flyer but flying to Liverpool with easyJet and Loganair is like sitting on a bus by comparison. There's no magic in that. This tiny plane, however, made me feel I had grown wings. I realised how accurately the phrase 'getting your wings' describes the experience of trainee fighter pilots. That's how it felt, up there in the sky at just 1,800 feet, close enough to see people and cars moving below me on familiar roads but remote enough to feel I was observing them from heaven. A great day.

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This weekend you will notice that a **plaque has been erected** at the back of Saint Mary's commemorating the Inauguration of the church as a co-cathedral on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023. This is a permanent memorial of that day and a reminder to both parishioners and visitors that the Catholic Church on the Isle of Man is a special part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

This Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> April, is the **Feast of Saint Maughold**, patron saint of the Isle of Man. The children from St Mary's, our parish school, have prepared a display on the life of Saint Maughold at the back of our cathedral church.

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It's great to see the lovely pink blossom on the flowering cherry tree in the grounds of St Mary's. It won't last. It's beginning to fade already but I managed to take a photo of it as its best. The tree was planted to commemorate **Fr Brian's ordination to the priesthood** nearly twenty-five years ago. We look forward to marking that occasion on the evening of **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July**.

Do you remember the outrage over the cutting down of the 300-year-old sycamore tree near Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland and the protests at the loss of trees on the streets of Sheffield? There's something sacred about a tree. They're more permanent than we are. Their roots stretch underground as far as their branches. Contemplating a tree helps us take the long view. Most trees outlive us. They take their time growing. They're patient. When they're ready they *flourish, just like Fr Brian's cherry tree*. The tree is an image used in the psalms: *'Happy indeed is the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked whose delight is the law of the Lord and who ponders his law day and night. He is like a tree that is planted beside the flowing water. That yields its fruit in due season whose leaves shall never fade; and all that he does shall prosper.'* (Psalm 1).

**Brother Lawrence** [1611–1691], the seventeenth-century barefoot friar who found God in the pots and pans of his monastery kitchen in Paris, told this story. He wrote how a tree in winter, stripped of its leaves, played a pivotal role in his conversion. Brother Lawrence absorbed the tree's stark emptiness, and, in the way that saints and wise people do, he saw beyond it. He imagined the possible. The soon-to-be-friar stood before the naked tree picturing its branches soon filled with tiny leaves as if clasped in prayer. The surging sense of the immensity of God knocked him down, realizing the life force, the beautiful that would burst from the barren.

**Barbara Mahany** asks: *'What are the sermons that trees might impart from their fretwork of branches and twigs, their columnar trunks and the boughs that hold up the sky? Certainly, there are tales of resilience, the way they stand against whatever time and the weather hurls their way: storms or drought or Noah-like rains.'*

**In today's Gospel Jesus says** "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing." In the words of **Pope Francis** 'Without Jesus we can do nothing, like the branches without the vine. And He - may the Lord permit me to say so - without us it seems that He can do nothing, because the branches bear the fruit, not the tree, the vine. What comes to my mind to say is this: what does the vine "need" from the branches? It is to have fruit. What is the "need", let's say it that way, a bit daringly, what does Jesus "need" from us? **Witness**. When the Gospel says that we are the light, it says "your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father." That is, it is witness that Jesus needs from us. To bear witness to His name because the faith, the Gospel grows because of witness, This is a mysterious way: Jesus, even though He is glorified in heaven, after having lived through the Passion, needs our witness for growth, for proclamation, so that the Church might grow.....Through small thoughts: "Lord, I know that you are here in me: grant me the strength and I will do what You will tell me". The Lord is present, the Lord is present in us, the Father is present in us, the Spirit is present in us. They remain in us. But I must remain in them.'

Fr John

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- **Assisted Dying:** A big thanks to those who came to the meeting at St Mary's on Thursday. It was good to see our own parishioners present alongside members of the Island's other Christian churches. Those present resolved to contact their MHKs to express their concerns regarding the proposed legislation. Thanks to those too who provided refreshments.
- **T and Chat Group** will meet on **7<sup>th</sup> 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.
- **Praying the Keeills Week** will take place from 18 – 25 May. This is an opportunity for everyone to visit some of the island's keeills – the ruined but sacred early chapels which dot the Manx landscape. The theme this year is 'The Sea'. For more information on the daily events go to [www.prayingthekeeills.org](http://www.prayingthekeeills.org).
- **Offertory Collections:** St Mary and St Joseph £1,000. St Anthony's £405. 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*

<b>Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April</b> <b>St Maughold, Patron of IoM</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	5.00pm	St Mary's	Fergal Farrell, Ireland
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	Mary Quinn, recently died People of our Parishes
<b>Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April</b> <b>St Catherine of Siena</b>	12.10pm	St Mary's	Rose & William Keenan, anniversary
<b>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April</b> <i>Day for Survivors of Sexual Abuse</i>	10.00am 12.10pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i> <i>Eucharistic Service</i>
<b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May</b> St Joseph the Worker	12.10pm	St Mary's	Delia Vahey, anniversary
<b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	10.00am 12.00pm	St Anthony's St Mary's	<b>Requiem Mass: Fran Quayle</b> <b>Requiem Mass: Miki Wilson</b>
<b>Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May</b> St Philip and St James	12.10pm	St Mary's	Danielle McCarrick intentions
<b>Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	5.00pm	St Mary's	Tim O'Hanlon, 3 <sup>rd</sup> anniversary
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	9.30am 11.00am	St Anthony's St Mary's	People of our Parishes Ken Daly, 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary

We congratulate the children of St Mary's School who will be making their First Holy Communion in St Mary's Church next Saturday morning. Please note there will be no confessions next Saturday morning.