

NEWSLETTER

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

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33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, 17th November 2024

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

(Page 157 in Mass book)

Dear Parishioners

'You don't still believe in all that stuff do you?' So many who grew up as Catholics come to reject their faith. They see the Bible with its stories and miracles that they once accepted as children to be in conflict with rational scientific evidence. Canadian priest **Fr Ronald Rolheiser OMI** challenges us to look deeper to find the mystery at the heart of all religious language.

Consider the language and image surrounding the death of Jesus and paying the price of our sins. Scripture, our creeds and our Christian tradition have a certain language for this. Among other things we say 'He paid the price for our sins. We are saved by his blood. He paid the debt of sin. We are washed clean in his blood, the blood of the lamb. He is the Lamb of God who takes away our sins. He restored us to life after our death in Adam's sin. He conquered death once and for all. By his stripes we were healed. He offered an eternal sacrifice to God. He opened the gates of heaven. He descended into hell.

Accepting the truth of this language is one thing, explaining within the categories and language of ordinary life is something else. We know its meaning, but we can never adequately explain it.

What do we actually mean by these statements? **How does Jesus's death save me from being accountable for my sins? How does his death substitute for human shortcomings? Why does God need someone to suffer that agonisingly in order to forgive me? How does Jesus's death open the gates of heaven? Why had they been closed? What does it mean that Jesus descended into hell?**

Literal explanations come up short here. The words are more like an icon, an artifact that highlights form to bring out essence. **The language of scripture, the creeds, and our dogmas put us in touch with something we can know but struggle to conceptualise and explain.** It is meant to be grasped at levels beyond the intellect. It is a language to be contemplated and knelt before more than a language to be understood literally.....

We cheat ourselves of meaning whenever we treat scripture, the creeds and the dogmas of our faith as simple statements of history, newspaper accounts in literal language. They are anchored in history and we risk our very lives on their truth, but they speak to us more as an icon than as yesterday's newspaper. **Their language is meant to be contemplated and absorbed in the heart as we experience life's mysteries.**

An atheist, someone once quipped, is just another name for someone who doesn't grasp metaphor.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2025: Children attending St Mary's Catholic Primary School are being prepared for First Holy Communion as part of the school's RE curriculum. The school liaises with parents directly on arrangements. Parents and Guardians of **Year 4 children living in our parishes who attend other non-Catholic schools who wish to make their First Holy Communion in 2025 are required to register their names by e-mail with the parish office saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk.** They will then receive an application form followed by an invitation to attend evening classes at St Anthony's, Onchan. Six sessions of preparation are required, taking place next Spring. Thank you to our parish catechists who lead the preparation course.

Archdiocese of Liverpool Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage 2025: Thank you to those young people who got in touch to say they have been successful in obtaining a place on next year's Lourdes pilgrimage. If any other young people would like to go to Lourdes next summer please email directly St Mary's parish office at saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk. There are changes to leaders and safeguarding procedures with the Archdiocesan Youth Pilgrimage for next year.

Fr John

- **A Christmas Indoor Boot Fair** will take place on **Saturday 30 November** from **10am to 4pm** at the **Columba Club**. All proceeds will go to the Columba Club. The Manx Youth Band will be playing at 4pm to welcome the erection of the Crib in the garden. For more details, please see the poster at the back of church.
- **Christmas Live Event IOM 2024:** Rev Alex Brown, the Pioneer Minister for Church of England on the Isle of Man, has been asked by Douglas City Centre Management to arrange the Christmas Live Event on **Thursday 12 December** on North Quay (outside St Matthew's Church). Volunteers from all 8 Christian denominations on the Island are invited to help and be involved. For further information please view the website www.christmaslive.im
- **St Peter's Mothers' Union, Onchan** invites ladies from our church to an afternoon of entertainment and refreshments on **Tuesday 3 December at 2pm** at the Village Hall, Onchan (top of Royal Avenue) together with ladies from the Methodist Church in Onchan.
- The **'Warm and Cosy Hub'** continues each week on Monday and Friday from 10am until 2pm throughout the winter months in the Columba Club, Circular Road, Douglas. Hot soup with bread and butter will be served - tea, coffee and biscuits with a warm welcome. Thanks to the Knights and volunteers.
- **CAFOD** as a member of the **Disasters Emergency Committee** has joined efforts to launch an emergency appeal to help families in Gaza and Lebanon. They ask for compassion, donations and prayers. Please see posters at back.
- **St Anthony's SVP Christmas party for adult parishioners** will be held on **Saturday 7 December** from **2 - 4pm** in St Anthony's Pastoral Centre. The **children's Christmas party** will take place on **Sunday 8 December** from **2 - 3.30pm** in the Pastoral Centre. Santa Claus will make an appearance plus a magician for the children. Forms for registering for both parties will be at the back of church this weekend. All children must be accompanied by an adult.
- **Offertory Collections:** St Mary and St Joseph £901, St Anthony's £435. 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 16th November			
33 rd Sunday of Ordinary Time	5.00pm	St Mary's	Ann Fox, deceased
Sunday 17th November	9.30am	St Anthony's	People of our Parishes
<i>World Day of the Poor</i>			
33 rd Sunday of Ordinary Time	11.00am	St Mary's	Derek Kenna, 1 st anniversary
Monday 18th November	12.10pm	St Mary's	Holy Souls
Dedication of the Basilicas of Saints Peter & Paul			
Tuesday 19th November	10.00am	St Anthony's	<i>Eucharistic Service</i>
	10.30am	St Mary's	Funeral Service: Peggy Tomlinson
	12.10pm	St Mary's	Joe Quinn, anniversary
Wednesday 20th November	12.10pm	St Mary's	Holy Souls
Thursday 21st November	10.00am	St Anthony's	Holy Souls
Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	12.10pm	St Mary's	Jeanne Dubourg, anniversary
Friday 22nd November	12.10pm	St Mary's	Brian Leneghan, 89 th birthday anniversary
St Cecilia			
Saturday 23rd November	11.00am to 12noon	St Mary's	Exposition and Confessions
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King	5.00pm	St Mary's	People of our Parishes
Sunday 24th November	9.30am	St Anthony's	Brenda Park, 12 th anniversary
<i>Youth Sunday</i>			
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King	11.00am	St Mary's	Frank O'Neill, 7 th anniversary

We remember in our prayers **Peggy Tomlinson** who died recently. May she rest in peace. We think of her grieving family and friends who mourn her loss.