**NEWSLETTER**

 **Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas
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 **18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 3rd August 2025**

  **(**Year C for Sundays; Cycle 1 for weekdays)

 *(Page 449 for Order of the Mass; Readings: Page 936)*

Dear Parishioners,

Sincere thanks to all those who attended my farewell ‘**Strawberry and Fizz**’ party on the afternoon of Sunday 20th July. I really enjoyed having the time to speak to many of you. Thanks, too, to those who sent apologies and messages of support and thanks. I have already received many moving cards and gifts.

It was a busy week. Three days later, on 23rd July I was awarded an honorary doctorate at the Liverpool Hope University’s Graduation ceremonies in Liverpool’s Anglican Cathedral. That evening there was a dinner to which a group of my family and friends were guests. It has been a great few days. There were three other recipients of honorary doctorates: journalist **Fergal Keane**, former Chelsea and currently United States women’s football coach **Emma Hayes** (who is a former Hope student) and journalist and documentary film maker **Peter Taylor**. The honorary degree came at an appropriate stage as my active ministry as priest comes to a close. In delivering the citation for my award Father Peter McGrail, a professor at Liverpool Hope, gave an account of my 52 years as a priest referring to my years in Skelmersdale, South America, Upholland College, my ecumenical post in the NW of England, my time in Warrington and my nine years as Pro-Chancellor of the University.

I have often reflected that I didn’t choose any of those appointments. I went where I was asked. In the ordination ceremony every priest and deacon makes a promise of obedience to the Archbishop and his successors. I can honestly say that that promise has never let me down. Sometimes life has been tough but each of my assignments has been more fulfilling than I could ever have imagined. I have a lot to thank God for and to thank the people I have been privileged to serve. My life has had many blessings – and those blessings have been in the form of the people I have met. It is said that reluctance to let go is the vice of old men. But as **Jurgen Klopp** said on leaving Liverpool Football Club, it’s better for people to ask ‘Why are you going?’ rather than ‘When are you going?’ I will be retiring to Liverpool in the shadow of the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and, to use my grandmother’s phrase, ‘as long as God spares me’, I hope to fill in gaps for priests who are on holiday or on sick leave. Thank you again for your kindness. I’ll never forget the Island and its people. I’ll be here until the 31st August but, as they say ‘I’m missing you already’.

Recent months have seen new leadership in the Catholic Church with **Pope Leo** and **Archbishop John** and very soon, **Canon Philip**, on the island.While getting parish paperwork in order prior to retirement, I noticed that the 2023 decree from the Holy See raising St Mary’s to co-cathedral status was signed off by an obscure, unknown Vatican official: **+ Robert F. Provost, Prefect.** He is none other than our very own **Pope Leo XIV**. At that time, he was Cardinal Robert Prevost, head of the Dicastery for Bishops, the Vatican department responsible for selecting bishops and regulating cathedrals. I am framing the decree and displaying it at the back of St Mary’s along with the decree of execution confirming that the inauguration of the new cathedral of Saint Mary of the Isle had taken place as decreed. I do believe that if Pope Leo took the trouble to sign off our cathedral status on Pope Francis’s behalf, he should follow up with a personal visit!

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What does Pope Leo say about Gaza?

**"I am following with deep concern the extremely grave humanitarian situation in Gaza, where the civilian population is being crushed by hunger and continues to be exposed to violence and death,"** the pope said during his weekly Angelus prayer, Vatican News reported.

The Vatican website reported on 31st July that during a three-day conference, United Nations member states debated how to establish peace between Israel and Palestine, with the Holy See Permanent Observer arguing that lasting peace can be found only in the two-state solution. The Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, explained that “in the light of the profound anguish and terrible human suffering that has befallen the region,” the Holy See “unequivocally” condemns the terrorist attack of 7 October 2023 by Hamas. **“Terrorism can never be justified”, the Permanent Observer argued. But he also emphasized that self-defence must be contained within the “traditional limits of necessity and proportionality.”**

Moreover, Archbishop Caccia stressed, the Holy See is very concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian crisis taking place in the Gaza Strip. He highlighted the atrocities that continue to “wound an already distressed community”- scores of children killed and homes, hospitals, places of worship destroyed.

This situation is “deeply concerning given that Christians in the region have long played a vital role as a moderating and stabilising presence, promoting dialogue and peace”, the Holy See Permanent Observer highlighted.

In light of the widespread displacement of families, collapse of critical services, increasing hunger and hardship, **the Holy See calls urgently for “an immediate ceasefire, the release of all Israeli hostages, the restitution of the bodies of the deceased, the protection of all Palestinian civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law, and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.”** Archbishop Caccia expressed the Holy See’s firm belief that the **Two-State Solution, “based on secure and internationally recognised borders, is the only viable and equitable path toward a just and lasting peace.”** *Fr John*

* **T and Chat** will meet on **Tuesday 5 August 2025** from **10.30am -12noon** at **St. Anthony’s Pastoral Centre** when they will welcome Suzanne Harding MBE & Sylvia Lawrinson from the Samaritans to speak about their work. Everyone welcome, refreshments will be served. Please contact Josie on 406063.
* **Invitation from Fr Joseph, Castletown** to Rushen Abbey Open-Air Mass in honour of Our Lady of Rushen at **3pm on Saturday 16 August 2025**. This Mass is part of the Jubilee Year of Hope with theme***Mary, Mother of Hope.*** Main Celebrant Fr John Devine. All parishioners welcome.

**Masses and Services for the coming week**

*All Masses and Services from St Mary’s are live-streamed*1

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| **Saturday 2nd August**18th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 5.00pm | St Mary’s | People of our Parishes |
| **Sunday 3rd August**18th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Monica Caley, anniversarySheila Hennessy, anniversary |
| **Monday 4th August**St John Vianney | *No Mass today* |  | *No Mass or Service today* |
| **Tuesday 5th August**Dedication of Basilica of St Mary Major; St Oswald  | *10.00am*12.10pm | *St Anthony’s*St Mary’s | *Eucharistic Service*Stefanija Burinskene, anniversary |
| **Wednesday 6th August***Transfiguration of the Lord* | ***9.30am***12.10pm | ***St Mary’s***St Mary’s | ***Funeral Service: Mike Hennessy***Hilton Holland, recently died |
| **Thursday 7th August** | 10.00am12.10pm | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Bryan Stott, anniversaryDoreen Sumbrilla, recently died |
| **Friday 8th August**St Dominic | 12.10pm | St Mary’s | Jimmy Wall, anniversary |
| **Saturday 9th August**St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross19th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 11.00am to 12noon5.00pm | St Mary’sSt Mary’s | Exposition and Confessions Brian Keenan, anniversary |
| **Sunday 10th August**19th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Fr Brian DoughertyPeople of our Parishes |

We remember in our prayers **Mike Hennessy** who died recently. May he rest in peace. We think of his grieving family and friends who mourn his loss.

On the final day of the **Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes**, **Archbishop John Sherrington** said the following:

*As we return home, I invite you to carry the gift of peace in your hearts. Pope Leo has spoken often of the gift of peace since the beginning of his papacy. Our world is desperately in need of peace: peace in the midst of warfare and conflict, peace in our hearts and families, peace in our lives. We are called to carry some of the peace of Lourdes home to others. I hope that today you will be able to savour the little, and perhaps the greater, miracles of these days; talk about them, thank God for them: maybe a new friendship, a time of prayer, a new freedom, a calling from God, a deepening of love, a blessing of peace.* ***Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us. St Bernadette, pray for us.***