**NEWSLETTER**

 **Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas
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 **23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, 7th September 2025**

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

 *(Readings: Page 955) (Page 449 for Order of the Mass)*

Dear Friends and Parishioners

First of all may I introduce myself. My name is Philip Gillespie and I was born and bred in Liverpool where I attended Saint Matthew’s Primary School and then De La Salle Grammar School. At the age of 18 I went to Rome to become a Seminarian at the Venerable English College. I studied at the Jesuit run university (the Gregorian) and then at the Benedictine University (Saint Anselm) where I gained a teaching degree in Liturgy.

I was Ordained as a Priest in 1989 and in these past 36 years I have served in parishes at Southport, Warrington, Liverpool and Durham (on the Formation Team in Saint Cuthbert’s Seminary at Ushaw) before coming here to the Isle of Man in 2011, following Canon Brendan Alger as Parish Priest at Douglas, Onchan and Willaston. In 2015 I was asked to move back to Rome and for the past 10 years I have been Rector of the Pontifical Beda College, an international seminary for ‘later’ vocations, which meant that most of our students and seminarians were aged 40+.

The end of my 10-year appointment in Rome coincided with the retirement plans of Monsignor Devine and so Archbishop Malcolm and subsequently Archbishop John very kindly asked if I would be happy to return to the Island. I am indeed delighted to be back with you as part of the Catholic Community of our parishes here in Douglas and Onchan and indeed the wider Community served by the parishes of the Island.

I very much look forward to renewing old friendships - and forging new ones ! It was providential that the first Mass at which I presided on Tuesday of last week had as one of its readings the words of Saint Paul

*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*

Not a bad MISSION STATEMENT! Father Philip

This Month’s Liturgy: September 2025 (as published in the Catholic Pic)

For the past 10 years I have been used to packing my bags in September and returning to the Beda College in Rome, ready for the arrival of our new seminarians and then the unfolding of the events and challenges and joys of the months ahead of us. Not so this year!

While many of us are getting used to new schools, new universities and perhaps even new jobs I like several of my Diocesan brethren will be getting used to taking up position in fresh pastoral appointments.

I wish Canon Marcus Holden, the new Rector of the Beda College in Rome, every blessing and happiness in his new role. It is really a great privilege to be involved in the Vocational journey of the men entrusted to our care, learning day by day the appropriate gentleness and encouragement necessary in fostering and nurturing the response to the call of the Lord through his Church.

In the midst of this month, the Liturgy has the Feast of the Exaltation (or finding) of the Holy Cross which falls by date (14th) on a Sunday in Ordinary Time. While historically it commemorates the discovery by Bishop Macarios or by Helena , Mother of the Emperor Constantine, of the relics of the true cross in Jerusalem and the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in the year 335, the centrality of the Cross and Resurrection is obviously highlighted - and this is why it is allowed to stand in the Liturgical Calendar on a Sunday, the day of Resurrection.

In the Byzantine tradition this is named as a celebration of ‘the precious and life giving Cross’ and this perhaps gives it a slightly different ‘mood’ to the commemoration which is Good Friday.

Given the current situation in which our Christian brothers and sisters find themselves in Jerusalem and in the Holy Lands, it would be good to pray for them on this Sunday and perhaps the words of Saint Francis of Assisi prayed before the Crucifix in the church of San Damiano may help us:

Most High glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart. Grant me an upright faith, secure hope and perfect charity. Fill me with understanding and knowledge that I may fulfil your command. Amen.

Happy September Father Philip

* The **Season of Creation** takes place from 1 September - 4 October. During this time Archbishop John encourages us to celebrate the goodness of Creation and commit ourselves to caring for our common home.
* **Mary’s Meals** announce the wonderful milestone that they have reached 3 million children with daily school meals. Archbishop John will celebrate Mass for the work of Mary’s Meals at 3pm on Sunday 21 September at St Teresa’s Church, Upholland.
* **St.** **Anthony’s Charity Bingo** will be held on **Thursday 11 September** at 7.30pm in the Pastoral Centre. Everyone welcome to join in the fun with tea and coffee served in the break.
* **Island Spirituality Network:** The next meetingwill take place **on Saturday 13 September** from10am - 1pm **at** St. John’s Mill.The speaker will be Stephen Hoyland from the Jesuit Institute, retreat leader, spiritual accompanier and spirituality outreach worker. His theme will be “Who do you say that I am? – Jesus who turns up in our prayers”. All 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 6th September**23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time | 5.00pm | St Mary’s | Washington Sia, 4th anniversary |
| **Sunday 7th September**23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | People of our ParishesPaul Douglas, 1st anniversary |
| **Monday 8th September**Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary | *No Mass today* |  | *No Mass or Service today* |
| **Tuesday 9th September**St Peter Claver | *10.00am*12.10pm | *St Anthony’s*St Mary’s | *Eucharistic Service*Mary Antoinette Amosin, sick |
| **Wednesday 10th September**St Ambrose Barlow | 12.10pm | St Mary’s | Kieran & Frances Doherty, 60th wedding anniversary |
| **Thursday 11th September** | 10.00am12.10pm | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Special IntentionRowena Villaret, anniversary |
| **Friday 12th September**St Mary of Rushen | 12.10pm | St Mary’s | Maria Klapp, deceased |
| **Saturday 13th September**24th Sunday in Ordinary Time*The Exaltation of the Holy Cross* | 11.00am to 12noon5.00pm | St Mary’sSt Mary’s | Exposition and Confessions People of our Parishes |
| **Sunday 14th September**24th Sunday in Ordinary Time*The Exaltation of the Holy Cross* | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Eileen & John Jawczak, anniversaryJames Stack, anniversary |

A message from Father John

This weekend you will be welcoming Canon Philip. I know you will give him a warm reception. The three Masses on my final weekend were so special. I write from my new home in Liverpool to say thank you.

At the 5.00pm Mass at St Mary’s on Saturday 30th August, **Shawn Sturnick** led the farewells. **Patrick O’Hanlon** presented me with a four-volume set of mini lectionaries, **Mike Connors** with the beautiful picture of the view from Marine Drive, **Josie Lorimer** with an amazing scrap book of my time on the Island and **Paula Curphey** presented me with a very handsome cheque from parishioners.

At the 9.30am Mass at St Anthony’s on Sunday 31st **Fran Caley** led the tributes. **Aarthi Miranda** presented the lectionaries, **Tricia Kissack** the picture, **Margaret Myers** the scrap book and **Paul Smart** the cheque.

At the 11.00am Mass at St Mary’s **Brian Murphy** led the tributes. **Michael Lees** presented the lectionaries, **Mike Johnson** the picture, **Claire Manning** the scrap book and **Juvy Pabellan** the cheque.

Each of those individuals were a wonderful cross section of all those with whom I have been privileged to serve over the last ten years. I thank you all for your generosity. I’ll treasure these gifts and also the memories they will trigger for years to come. I’m using the lectionaries as I celebrate Mass in my new home. I will pray for you all every time I do so.