**NEWSLETTER**

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

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

 *(Page 449 in Missal for Order of the Mass) (Page 804 for Mass readings)*

Dear Parishioners

Last Tuesday I was at the **Metropolitan Cathedral** in Liverpool for a special Mass to mark the formal recognition by the church of the miracle cure of **Jack Traynor**. Severely injured in the First World War, he travelled to **Lourdes** on the first Archdiocesan pilgrimage in 1923 where he was cured of epilepsy, paralysis of the right arm and paraplegia. He returned to Lourdes annually thereafter to help other sick pilgrims. Tuesday’s Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Malcolm with Cardinal Vincent Nichols and other bishops from England and Wales. The homily was preached by the **Bishop of Tarbes,** Monsignor Jean Marc Micas, in whose Diocese the shrine of Lourdes is located. Also present were civic guests along with the medical consultants responsible for verifying the authenticity of this miracle after a lapse of over 100 years. It was a joyful occasion attended by hundreds of people. The full story of Jack Traynor can be found on https://liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/john-jack-traynor/

Central to devotion to our Lady of Lourdes is the Rosary. I am currently reading ***‘The Time of the Child’*** a novel by **Niall Williams** set in December 1962 in the County Kerry town of Faha:

*‘Without signal or announce, but same as if, the brother who was the driver placed his cap on the table and got down off the chair onto the floor. He wasn’t there two seconds before his brother was kneeling alongside him, by reflex the two old men assuming a position that had been in their bones since they could stand..….The seats of the chairs they turned into and made as bases for elbows. From a jacket pocket a beads was brought. The man spilled the beads into the cup of his hand, put the pouch in a side pocket. He let the rosary loose so the anchor of the cross dangled, and before he had blessed himself the boy had slid to the floor and blessed himself, too…..*

*The three were in that head-bowed state that was part-habit, part-ritual, a state that, whether through devotion or not, dissolved time and space, and through the rhythm of the spoken words made that kitchen other. Not that they were spoken exactly. From long use, the words of the prayers had lost their edges. Without pauses between them, and the use of that singular intonation that was the one used in every house in the parish, they became a low-voiced chant that was no language and all languages at once, a tonal music to the Mother of God rising off the cold floor….

In Faha, if a caller came in the back door when a family were on their knees, he got onto his, and when that decade ended, the caller would be offered the courtesy of taking the next one. The brother who held the beads let the other lead the second decade. It had a lifetime’s practice in it. The two bachelor gentlemen with bowed crowns of the same hair, the same bulbed knuckles, and the same weather-crusted and winged-out ears were twinned souls with one voice. Behind them, their boots, toes to the ground, had the look of earthen things. At the end of that decade, the brother let open a small pause, but neither Jude nor Ronnie came in quick enough and the one with the beads closed the seam without raising his head. And so it was until the end. The brothers shared the rosary, the other two joining in. By the time they were at the ‘Poor banished children of Eve’, the cold of the floor had come in Ronnie’s bones and she felt each of the twenty minutes she had been kneeling. But something else, too. She had not the words for it.’*

This was the way we, too, prayed the Rosary as children at home each night in Liverpool. We knelt on the floor with our elbows on the seats of the chairs. As a concession to our years, we recited one decade rather than five – or even fifteen. And the final intercession was always ‘Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us’. In recent months we’ve been closing up my sister Michele’s house in the West Midlands. I have claimed her kitchen chairs, the very same chairs on which we rested our elbows and bowed our heads for the Rosary seventy years ago. *Fr John*

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An early morning phone call from Clare on Monday let us know that her mother, **Sonja Lees,** had died peacefully in her sleep. Her health had been failing for some time. Sonja and her husband Peter were pillars of St Anthony’s parish. Peter was honoured with the Bene Merenti medal in 2019 along with Kath Rodgers and Brendan Caley. I remarked at the time that Sonja and Monica were equally deserving of these awards. Sonja and Peter’s involvement over the years pre-date the construction of the new church. Sonja also made her own distinctive contribution to the life of the parish in the choir and as a reader. I was always inspired by the conviction with which Sonja proclaimed the Word of God from the altar at Mass. In her final days in Nobles hospital her eyes lit up whenever I brought her Holy Communion. Her Requiem Mass is at St Anthony’s on Friday 28th February at 1.15pm.  May she rest in peace.

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* **Ukraine War 3rd anniversary:** Father Taras and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic community in Liverpool invite you to pray with them at a Vigil for Peace in their beloved homeland on **Monday 24 February at 6.30pm** at Liverpool Parish Church, Old Churchyard, L2 8TZ. Faith leaders and city representatives will attend.
* **Opportunity of Work Experience for young adults: CAFOD** and **St Vincent de Paul Society** are working together to offer residential work experience for 20 young people during week 22 – 27 June 2025. Candidates must have completed their first or second year at university. Accommodation, meals and travel costs to the CAFOD London Waterloo office will be covered. Please contact KeziaH@svp.org.uk or Khutchinson@cafod.org.uk for more information. Closing date for applications 20 April 2025.
* **CAFOD** has sent 2 letters of thanks for donations totalling £3,504 and £1,196 for St Anthony’s and St Marys last year. CAFOD stands with communities facing injustice, poverty and climate change. Your donations help to fund CAFOD’s work with local experts, who combine their expertise with the skills of the communities and people they support.
* **The Red Mill Hill Boxes for St Anthony’s** will be emptied over the next 2 weeks. Please leave your box in St Anthony’s Church porch. If you have forgotten to collect your box, please do so if you wish to continue. Thank you.
* **LGBTQ+ Catholics, Archdiocese of Liverpool:** Mass will be held on **Sunday 2nd March 2025** at 2pm in All Saints, High Street, Golborne, Warrington WA3 3BG, followed by refreshments. Everyone welcome.
* **T and Chat** will meet on **Tuesday 4th March 2025** from **10.30am – 12 noon** at St Anthony’s Pastoral Centre. The group will be joined by Caitlin Dancox from MuchBetter to raise awareness on identity fraud and scamming. Everyone will be warmly welcomed. Refreshments will be served. Please contact Josie on 406063.
* **World Day of Prayer:** A Service for Everyone will be held in St Ninian’s Church, Douglas at 7pm on Friday 7 March. The theme is ‘**I Made You Wonderful’.** Program written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of the Cook Islands.
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* **The Warm and Cosy Hub** is open in the meeting room at the back of St Mary’s Church **every Monday and Friday** from **10am to 2pm.** Thanks to the volunteers who help with this.

**Masses and Services for the coming week**

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

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| **Saturday 22nd February** 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 5.00pm | St Mary’s | Florence & Syd Turner and Jane Harrison, anniversaries |
| **Sunday 23rd February** 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Michael Mulholland, anniversaryPeople of our Parishes |
| **Monday 24th February** | 12.10pm  | St Mary’s | Peace in Ukraine  |
| **Tuesday 25th February** | *10.00am* 12.10pm | *St Anthony’s*St Mary’s | *Eucharistic Service* David Simpson, anniversary |
| **Wednesday 26th February** | 12.10pm | St Mary’s | Daryl, Cyrus, Brenda & Jovel intentions |
| **Thursday 27th February** | ***9.30am***No Mass or Service 12.10pm | ***St Mary’s School***St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | ***School Mass – All welcome***No Mass or ServiceBaby Joshua Smith-Newson |
| **Friday 28th February** | ***10.00am***12.10pm ***1.15pm*** | ***St Mary’s***St Mary’s***St Anthony’s*** | ***Funeral Service: Pat Gaffey***Tynan family intentions***Requiem Mass: Sonja Lees*** |
| **Saturday 1st March**8th Sunday in Ordinary Time*Day for the Unemployed* | 11.00am to 12noon5.00pm | St Mary’sSt Mary’s | Exposition and Confessions Caroline Connors, anniversary |
| **Sunday 2nd March** 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time *Day for the Unemployed* | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Sheila Creedon, anniversaryPeople of our Parishes |