**NEWSLETTER**

 **Parishes of St Anthony of Padua, Onchan; St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph, Douglas
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 **Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, 29th June 2025**

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

 *(Page 449 in Missal for Order of the Mass); (Mass Readings: Page 1044)*

Dear Parishioners,

**Last Friday I was invited back to my first parish in Skelmersdale to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Church of St Francis of Assisi.** Working as a team of six priests, each of us had responsibility for each of the local communities centred around the new town’s catholic schools where Sunday Mass was celebrated each week. Of the six priests I worked with, all except **Fr Bernard Higham,** are now dead, as are many of the parishioners. On Friday those of us who are now 50 years older shared lots of happy memories. Many of the people had begun watching live-streamed Mass from St Mary of the Isle during the Covid pandemic and continue to do so. They are therefore familiar with my 77-year-old face while I had to scan wrinkles and white hair to identify once youthful parishioners. It was moving to be with people from my first parish when I will soon be saying goodbye to the people of the Isle of Man. Just as we now have fewer priests on the Island, there is now one priest for the whole of Skelmersdale, **Fr Kenny Hyde.**

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Last week we celebrated the feast of **Corpus Christi**, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. The following sermon given by **Fr Philip Dyer-Perry,** Parish Priest at Our Lady of the Rosary church in Staines, West London makes a connection between **the plight of the starving people in Gaza** and the Eucharist.

*‘The feeding of the five thousand. It makes me think of the images I've seen lately of people in Gaza waiting to be fed, of aid trucks queuing at the border while vast crowds make their way to a handful of secure compounds to be given food at gunpoint by security contractors - and that's the lucky ones. This isn't feeding people, this isn't taking care of them - it's using food as means of control, and indeed torture. Contrast that with Jesus, who cares for the crowd in front of him, not just spiritually, but materially. Contrast that with Jesus, who the night before he died, gave his very self to his disciples, totally out of love for them, knowing that even this would not protect him from being betrayed. They often say that the way to a person's heart is through their stomach - and it's true, to feed a person is (or at least ought to be) such a massive expression of love. Which is why what we see happening elsewhere feels so wrong. You don't mess with people's food, you don't play with food, you don't waste food - it's way too precious.*

*This also applies when it comes to Holy Communion. People sometimes talk about who may or may not receive Holy Communion, or about the things we do that might disqualify us from availing of this Sacrament. Now, I'm not saying that there aren't such things, but I don't think we would ever ask questions like this if we truly recognised what it is that we are being given and how much Jesus loves and cares about us, for then our heart would automatically be in the right place.*

*Essentially Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist because he loves us and he wants us to live - and he knows that the journey through life is too hard and too long to be able to do so without him. And, so if we know we need that love and we know we need that life, then who am I or anyone else to tell you that you shouldn't have Holy Communion? As Pope Francis said, the Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine for the weak. In fact, if we think we are perfect and that we don't need it, maybe that's more of a problem.*

*The way we approach the Eucharist does invite a level of appreciation. That appreciation begins when we think about how we're fed outside of the Eucharist, about the people who work to bring our food from the farm to our plate - farmers, food processing workers, delivery drivers, supermarket workers, cooks. It makes us think about how hard we and others work to put bread on the table and sustain our families. And finally, it makes us think about those who have very little food - so that we who receive Christ in the Eucharist will play our part in building a world where no one is hungry.’*

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On Friday, 27th June, we celebrated **the** **Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**. In his encyclical letter *Dilexit nos* ‘He loved us’, **Pope Francis** said “the Lord’s open heart has gone before us and waits for us, unconditionally, asking only to offer us His love and friendship.” He explains that **‘the world seems to have lost its heart’** and thatby encountering the love of Christ, “we become capable of forging bonds of fraternity, of recognising the dignity of each human being, and of working together to care for our common home”.

Today we celebrate the **Feast of St Peter and St Paul.** Within days of his election Pope Leo visited the tomb of St Paul in Rome. The prayer service was dedicated to St Paul, the so-called "Apostle to the Gentiles" who brought the Gospel to peoples across the central and eastern Mediterranean, exemplifying evangelical zeal and the missionary spirit. The visit was part of entrusting "the beginning of this new pontificate to the intercession of the apostle," the pope said. "Let us compete in showing the love that, following (St Paul's) encounter with Christ, drove the former persecutor to become 'all things to all people,' even to the point of martyrdom." St Paul received the grace of his vocation from God, acknowledging "that his encounter with Christ and his own ministry were the fruit of God's prior love, which called him to a new life while he was still far from the Gospel and persecuting the church," the pope said.

When St Paul speaks of "the obedience of faith," he said, he is referring to what happened to him on the road to Damascus, when the Lord appeared and "did not take away his freedom, but gave him the opportunity to make a decision, to choose an obedience that would prove costly and entail interior and exterior struggles, which Paul proved willing to face.….."Faith leads us to 'open our hearts to this mystery of love and to live as men and women conscious of being loved by God," he continued. "Here we see, in all its simplicity and uniqueness, the basis of every mission, including my own mission as the successor of Peter and the heir to Paul's apostolic zeal. May the Lord grant me the grace to respond faithfully to his call," Pope Leo said. *(Catholic News Service, May 20, 2025)*  *Fr John*

* **T & Chat** will next meet on **Tuesday 1 July** from **10.30am to 12 noon at St. Anthony’s Pastoral Centre.** Lucy Buxton from the Manx Deaf Society will be joining the group to demonstrate sign language and lip reading. Refreshments will be served. Everyone welcome. For more information, please contact Josie on 406063.
* The **Red Mill Hill Missionary Boxes for St. Anthony’s Church**, Onchan, will be emptied over the next 2 weeks. If you have a box, please leave it in the usual place in the Church porch at St. Anthony’s.
* **Big thank you from the Columba Club** to all who attended and supported their recent film night. Thanks to those who generously gave donations to the Club as well.

**Fr John’s Retirement**: As you know Fr John will be retiring at the end of August. He does not want a big fuss so a modest party in appreciation of Fr John’s 10 years in our parishes will take place on **Sunday 20th July from 3pm to 4.30pm at St Mary’s Church** and outside in the garden if weather permits. Many parishioners who are going away for the school holidays have asked for an opportunity to mark Fr John’s farewell and to say Goodbye to him. The latest available Sunday afternoon in July is Sunday 20th. The party theme will be ***Strawberries & Fizz*** with soft drinks, beer, fizz and wine provided together with mini sweet snacks, goodies and nibbles. **All St Anthony’s and St Mary of the Isle & St Joseph’s parishioners are invited**. For the purpose of ordering drinks and food, *please let the parish office know if you would like to attend, preferably by* *email to* saintmaryiom@rcaol.org.uk. Several parishioners have also asked how they can donate to a farewell gift for Fr John. Brown Collection Envelopes are available at the back of both Churches from this weekend if you would like to contribute to Fr John’s retirement. Please return these in the collection baskets at weekend Masses or through the parish office letterbox. Thank you.

**Masses and Services for the coming week**

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

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| **Saturday 28th June*****Solemnity of Sts Peter & Paul*** | 5.00pm | St Mary’s | People of our Parishes |
| **Sunday 29th June*****Solemnity of Sts Peter & Paul*** | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Bernard Simpson, recently diedPaddy Quinn, recently died |
| **Monday 30th June** | *No Mass today* |  | *No Mass or Service today* |
| **Tuesday 1st July**St Oliver Plunkett | *10.00am*12.10pm | *St Anthony’s*St Mary’s | *Eucharistic Service* John Nolan, recently died |
| **Wednesday 2nd July** | 12.10pm | St Mary’s | Hilton Holland, recently died |
| **Thursday 3rd July**St Thomas | 10.00am12.10pm | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Brid Britton, 1st anniversaryPeter Cain, recently died |
| **Friday 4th July**St Elizabeth of Portugal | 12.10pm***1.15pm*** | St Mary’s***Crematorium*** | Angela Main Thompson, rec died***Funeral Service: Brian McNeice*** |
| **Saturday 5th July**14th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 11.00am to 12noon5.00pm | St Mary’sSt Mary’s | Exposition and Confessions Leo McCaffrey, anniversary |
| **Sunday 6th July**14th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 9.30am11.00am | St Anthony’sSt Mary’s | Christopher McBurnie, deceasedPeople of our Parishes |