



## Catholic Chaplaincy to the Liverpool Universities

Liverpool Roman Catholic Archdiocesan Trustees Inc. Reg. Charity no. 232709

**Chaplain: Fr Neil Ritchie**

St Philip Neri Church 30 Catharine Street L8 7NL

Tel: 0151-709 3858

[www.cathchap.org.uk](http://www.cathchap.org.uk)

[chaplain@cathchap.org.uk](mailto:chaplain@cathchap.org.uk)



University members can sign up to the Liverpool **CathSoc Facebook Page**

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

**Third Sunday of Eastertide**

### Mass & Services This Week:

**Monday:** Mass at 8am at the Missionaries of Charity House, Seel St. University members are welcome to attend.

**Tuesday & Wednesday:** *Morning prayer 8am*, followed by breakfast; (no Mass on Tuesday)

Wednesday: **Mass 12.30pm** \*, followed by lunch.

**Thursday** Mass @ 6pm, followed by Exposition, then Soup & Bread.

## “Father at Sea”



**8pm Thursday:**

*Fr Neil will give a presentation on his recent experiences as a cruise liner chaplain, and on the work of the Apostleship of the Sea. Some of the Sisters from Seel Street will be joining us.*



### Chaplaincy Open for Revision:

We are planning to make the chaplaincy lounge available to you during this term as a place to come and study. This week the chaplaincy will be open (via the Blackburne Place entrance) on **Monday and Tuesday from 5pm-8pm**. There is wifi, and you can make yourself a hot drink.

### Post-Graduate and Staff group.

**Wednesday Evening 7.30pm.** *The group meets every month or so for an informal discussion on faith-based material. All post-graduate students or staff of the universities are welcome.*

Please contact Anna Newlaczył ([anewlaczył@gmail.com](mailto:anewlaczył@gmail.com)) for further information.

**Pope Francis' latest letter to the Church** is called **Gaudete et Exsultate** (“Rejoice and be glad”) and the Tablet calls it his ‘spiritual masterpiece’.

You can buy a copy from St Paul’s bookshop in Bold Street, or download it from [tinyurl.com/tablet-texts](http://tinyurl.com/tablet-texts). But here are a few brief extracts to keep you going!

*“Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you, and you will be faithful to your deepest self (32).*

*“When somebody has an answer for everything, it is a sign that they are not on the right road (41).*

*“So often we say that God dwells in us, but it is better to say that we dwell in him, that he enables us to dwell in his light and love (51).”*

### CathSoc Elections

**If you are interested in standing for election, please discuss with one of the existing CathSoc committee members, Fr Neil or Dominic.**

*A Request...* The Chaplain of **St Bede’s Catholic Secondary School**, Ormskirk, is asking for some students to be involved in their **retreat days for pupils** next month:

“This year we are looking for volunteers from 1.15-3pm on Wednesday 26th and Thursday 27th April. “In the afternoon of the retreat day we invite Christians to be **interviewed by small groups of pupils** about their experience of being a Christian in everyday life. We particularly value the input from university students as our pupils really benefit from the example of young adult Christians and most of the other volunteers are retired older people.”

You don’t have to go to both days, just one would be valued. Travel expenses can be paid for. Ormskirk is easily reached by train in about 40 minutes. Please see Fr Neil or James if you’re interested.

### An Invitation from ‘JSoc’

The Universities Jewish Society have reached out to us and invite us to the following event:-

This event will be **Wednesday the 25th April** and will approximately run from **1pm-3pm**. This event will take place in the **Liverpool Guild of Students** (Mount Pleasant) and will be called **‘Food, Faith and Friendship’**. The goal of this event is to put our shared values of social action to work to help those in need, and gain insight into each other’s Faiths along the way in an informal setting. This event will involve making bread together (the food aspect), which whilst cooking will provide an opportunity for discussion which will be focused around the symbolism of food or the role which it plays within each of our Faiths (the Faith aspect). Once the bread is baked we will head out to bold street together and distribute this bread amongst the homeless (the friendship aspect).

I hope some of us will be able to attend and take part, and that we might also think about how we could reciprocate the invitation! Fr N.

# The Balance of Benedict

Chaplaincy Assistant James Moroney offers the following reflection,

How do we cope with pressure? Maybe as exams approach it is particularly useful to think about what it means to keep a balance in our lives and what this balance may consist of. One particular saint has a lot to say about the topic of a balanced life.

St Benedict (c. 480-547) lived in sixth century Italy during a time when the Roman Empire was disintegrating. Barbarians had captured Rome itself in 410 and 455. Benedict began studying in Rome as young man but withdrew to cave about 30 miles from Rome to live a life of solitude and prayer. Maybe it was exam pressure but we are told he was disgusted by the corruption he experienced in the capital. After a while others gathered around the Saint and he became the father of Western monasticism, writing a short guide for monks called a 'Rule'.

St Benedict's Rule consists of 73 short chapters as a guide for 'beginners' in monastic life. His Rule aims to establish 'nothing harsh...nothing burdensome' but to provide a practical, yet flexible guide for life.

Well, we are not monks so what could this small document possibly say to us?

St Benedict's Rule is written for people who want to search for God with others. It takes an overview of the whole of human existence; Body, Mind and Spirit. St Benedict recognises human needs and weaknesses and also how inseparably linked holiness is to our treatment of others. The Rule also echoes throughout with scripture and really tries to articulate the message of the Gospel. Of course certain sections apply very specifically to St Benedict's own era or a monastery but by and large the rule is surprisingly relevant to everyday life.

The Rule devotes specific times to study, work and communal prayer. Prayer matters because through it we open 'the ears of our heart' to God who is the source of everything that exists. Study matters because we come to know God better by exercising our minds as far as we are able to. Work matters because we need to support ourselves and those around us; being able to feed other bodies. For St Benedict most of the work in the monastery would have been physical work and so in these three elements St Benedict recognises that as human beings we have physical, intellectual and spiritual needs.

With exams coming up do we keep such a balance? Do we eat enough? Do we rest enough? Do we keep prayer as a part of our life? It can be very easy to neglect one of these things and ultimately it can make us much less productive. We may be better studying less and going for regular walks or runs.

St Benedict allocated particular times for these activities but keeping a proper balance is not just about how we use our time. It is also about the inner reality of our lives and the humility to accept our human needs, strengths and weaknesses. The external balance may look different for different people at different times in their lives but keeping a true balance will involve having the right priorities and then ordering things according to those. How exactly we use our time will follow from those priorities but it is also true that how we use our time can subtly shift our priorities. If we act like our exam results are all that matter, even though we

start out thinking differently, then slowly our thinking can begin to change. Benedict's priority was that 'nothing whatsoever should be preferred to the love of Christ.'

Benedictine monks make a vow of stability, but we all need stability. This means basically a sense of peace and commitment in a particular situation. Knowing our duties and trying to do them the best we can so that 'in all things God might be glorified'. Doing what we need to now without always thinking to the next thing. Resting in our timetable. Of course things will interrupt us. The Rule anticipates that monks will be constantly interrupted by guests and those in need and asks that they be welcomed as 'Christ himself'. Do we use our time well? Would it be helpful to fixed a timetable for revision? Do we get interrupted in the right way or simply get distracted?

Don't be too ambitious or competitive. The early monastic tradition is full of saints who undertook incredible aesthetic practices: sitting on top of pillars for days on end for example. St Benedict's advice is more realistic. More ordinary. In putting great emphasis on humility he was aware that even very small things can cause pride: reading well, being a skilled craftsman. In the end his advice to monks 'is first become holy' rather than always comparing ourselves with others or being a slave to what they think. Find the freedom to be yourself.

You are not alone. St Benedict also places great emphasis on obedience. This word can sound negative but the original meaning is to be truly attentive to one another. To listen to their needs, 'each trying to be the first to show respect to the other.'

Obedience may mean being open to the invitation or suggestion of another person. Likewise it may mean being the person who, having seen a problem arising in the life of another, has the guts to help or even correct them.

There is balance within our own lives but also a balance of mutual concern that binds together a human community. In valuing balance St Benedict recognises that quite often problems arise when something good comes to over dominate. Something that is a virtue in moderation can be a vice in excess.

Does all this talk of balance sound too moderate, too controlled?!

Well in the end St Benedict wants that his readers should 'run along the path of God's commandments, our hearts over-flowing with the inexpressible delight of love.' That we should learn to live out Jesus' call 'to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind' and 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Mt 22:37). Love is the only thing in our lives that should overflow. It can't come in half-measures but how that love is expressed needs to take account of our human nature. Somebody told me that Aristotle said 'a wise man never runs'. I couldn't find that quote but I suppose it should read 'a wise man knows when to run.'

