



CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY TO THE LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITIES

The University Church of St Philip Neri Church ~ "The Oratory Church"

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16th March 2025

Second Sunday of Lent (Year C)



"This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him" (Lk 9:35)

Events for Students and University Members:

Masses & Services This Week:

Monday: No 8.15 Mass at the [Missionaries of Charity](#) house

Tuesday: Mass 5.30pm

Wednesday: Lunchtime prayer at Faith Express, 1pm; Mass 5.30pm

Thursday: 5.30pm Adoration *

Sunday: Confessions 5.15-5.30pm; Mass 6pm

*events in the chaplaincy; enter via the Blackburne Place entrance

Welcome to Fr Derek Lloyd who is celebrating the 6pm Mass today... Fr Neil will be in Scotland. I am sure you will give him a warm welcome!!

Congratulations to Joshua and Lorenzo who last Sunday were enrolled as candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation (Confirmation and First Communion) which we will be celebrating here in May. In the meantime, we accompany them in our prayers.

Staff & PhD group meets this Wednesday

at 6pm in the Chaplaincy. We continue our reading and discussion of Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe & Łukasz Popko's book "Questioning God"

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We gratefully acknowledge receipt of a generous donation of £500 to St Philip Neri from an anonymous benefactor, which is deeply appreciated.

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Thursday 5.30pm-6pm:
Come and pray in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. 15 mins of silence; followed by Evening Prayer.

Following Exposition on Thursday, **Dr Paige dePolo**, Science faculty lecturer at LJMU and vertebrate paleontologist will be speaking to us about the relationship between **Science and Religion**.

Faith Express: Wednesday lunchtime: Join us for lunch (bring your own!) and a reflection on the Sunday Gospel, preceded by Prayer during the Day. 1pm.

Fr Neil writes: This weekend, I am in Aberdeen, giving a talk on Pope Francis' recent encyclical letter "Dilexit Nos", on the divine and human love of the Sacred Heart. It's a beautiful document and a great read. Here are some inspiring words from the letter:

"Jesus is calling you and sending you forth to spread goodness in our world. His call is one of service, a summons to do good, perhaps as a physician, a mother, a teacher or a priest. Wherever you may be, you can hear his call and realised that he is sending you forth to carry out that mission. He himself told us, "I am sending you out (Lk10:3). It is part of our being friends with him. For this friendship to mature, however, it is up to you to let him send you forth on a mission in this world, and to carry it out confidently, generously, freely, and fearlessly. If you stay trapped in your own comfort zone, you will never really find security; doubts and fears, sorrow and anxiety will always loom on the horizon...."

"Never forget that Jesus is at your side every step of the way. He will not cast you into the abyss, or leave you to your own devices. He will always be there to encourage and come and accompany you. He has promised, and he will do it: "For I am with you always to the end of the age (Mt 28:20)."

Chaplaincy and CathSoc

Over the past eight years, I have seen how beneficial the working relationship is between the Chaplaincy and the Catholic Society (CathSoc). The current committee, as in previous years, have worked very hard and done a great job! With elections not far away, I want to share a few words.

A “**Memorandum of Understanding**” exists between Liverpool CathSoc and the Chaplaincy, which set out roles and expectations. It’s published on www.cathchap.org.uk website. This states what CathSoc can expect from the Chaplaincy team and what we in turn expect of CathSoc. I have highlighted some things which I think are particularly important.

“Chaplain & Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy is led and managed by the Chaplain, Fr Neil Ritchie, assisted by the Chaplaincy Assistant. Fr Neil is appointed by the Archbishop of Liverpool, and is accredited as a chaplain and member of the universities’ chaplaincy team by the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University. The Catholic Chaplaincy is a mission to the whole of the universities’ communities, including staff.

CathSoc is a student-led society, registered with the University of Liverpool Guild of Students (the Guild) and the Students’ Union at Liverpool John Moores University (SU), open to students of the universities and LIPA.

“CathSoc and the Catholic Chaplaincy are closely linked, and cooperate in the provision of pastoral care, catechetical and intellectual formation, arranging visiting speakers, liturgical provision, planning opportunities for prayer and worship, developing links with other faith groups, and other activities.

“CathSoc members also assist the chaplaincy team in planning, preparing and delivering social and other events which take place at the chaplaincy, such as the start-of-year and end-of-year barbecues. It is the role of the CathSoc committee to encourage and facilitate CathSoc members in this, by encouraging participation and setting an example of willing involvement.

“The Chaplain and his team value the existence of a student led Catholic Society, which is available

for students in Higher Education in Liverpool to join, and are willing to offer what support and guidance is appropriate to CathSoc, as long as CathSoc operates in a way which is in accordance with the vision of the Catholic chaplaincy. The Chaplain, while not a *member* of CathSoc, is chaplain **to** the society. “

University Catholic societies in this country are closely linked with their university chaplaincies. A society *separated* from its chaplaincy would no longer be ‘Catholic’, and would not be entitled to use the name.

As well as social events, a University Catholic Society should also be –

- -supporting faith by running running groups for lectio/prayer,
- -exploring faith through catechesis,
- Fostering links with other faith groups
- -helping with charitable causes...

Chaplaincy and CathSoc work **collaboratively**. It is never a case of the chaplaincy and CathSoc organising things independently. Of course, we recognise that the committee may not have all the skills to run these things by themselves...*that’s why we have to act collaboratively!* Just as the chaplaincy depends on CathSoc.

In the end, CathSoc is a student-led society. That is something I personally value. There are expectations as to what CathSoc is, what it can and can’t do, and what it should be doing to be entitled to use the name ‘Catholic’.

I look forward to working with future CathSoc committees. They are great ‘training grounds’ for Catholic leaders, whether lay or ordained. Please consider supporting CathSoc and the Chaplaincy as a committee member. It is important, however, not to stand for election unless you are really committed to serving on the committee, attending all of its meetings and being involved in all its activities.

Finally, on the Guild website we find the following description: “As well as being involved in the life of the Liverpool Universities Catholic Chaplaincy... CathSoc aims to deepen the unique bonds within our society and enable members to engage with their faith.”

Amen to that!!

With my best wishes,

Fr Neil