



CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY TO THE LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITIES

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

30 Catharine Street L8 7NL Tel: 0151-709 3858

Chaplain: Fr Neil Ritchie

www.cathchap.org.uk unichap@rcaol.org.uk

 [Liverpool CathChap Facebook Page](#)  [liverpoolcathsoc](#)



1st December 2024

First Sunday of Advent (Year C)



Email addresses: unichap@rcaol.org.uk is a general address. If you want to contact Fr Neil privately, use: n.ritchie@rcaol.org.uk. To contact Arran, use arran.kearney@rcaol.org.uk

Events for Students and University Members:

Masses & Services This Week:

Monday: 8.15 Mass at the [Missionaries of Charity](#) house, 55 Seel street L1 4AZ, – students are always welcome!
Tuesday: No Morning Prayer/breakfast or Mass today...
Wednesday: 12.30pm Mass at Faith Express
Thursday: Mass at 6pm in Church
Saturday: Day of Recollection
Sunday: Confessions 5.15-5.30pm; 6pm Mass
*events in the chaplaincy; enter via back door

Today, two students from Manchester University are going to film our Mass as part of their Masters project in Visual Anthropology.

The main purpose of the film is to look at the details and processes that take place during a Catholic mass, and how these processes contribute to a feeling of community and sanctity for the congregation. The film will not be broadcast or distributed anywhere, & will form part of their assessment; it will only be seen by our small masters cohort (18 people) and the course leaders. They also wish to interview a few of us afterwards

Next Sunday's 6pm Mass will be in Thanksgiving for Sr Rachel FCG's many years of ministry among us, here at the chaplaincy, which will be ending this Christmas. It will be our opportunity to show our appreciation for her gentle and supportive presence over the years. After Mass there will be refreshments in the Chaplaincy.

Day of Recollection

Fr Derek Lloyd will be leading us in a day of Recollection on Saturday 7th December. The theme is "Joy" Fr Derek will give us 2 talks, and there will be time for Adoration, Mass, and private reflection, and we'll have lunch together. The day will start at 10am

New Lectionary: Today at Mass, the readings will come from the New Lectionary. They are the same readings as we have always had for this Sunday (well, since 1970 anyway!) but they come from a new translation of the Bible, so they will sound a little different from the Jerusalem Bible that we have been used to.

Please note there is **no Morning Prayer or Mass on Tuesday** (Fr Neil is in London). If you are coming to **House Prayer & Fellowship** (starts 6.30pm) please come directly to the house entrance at 30 Catharine St.



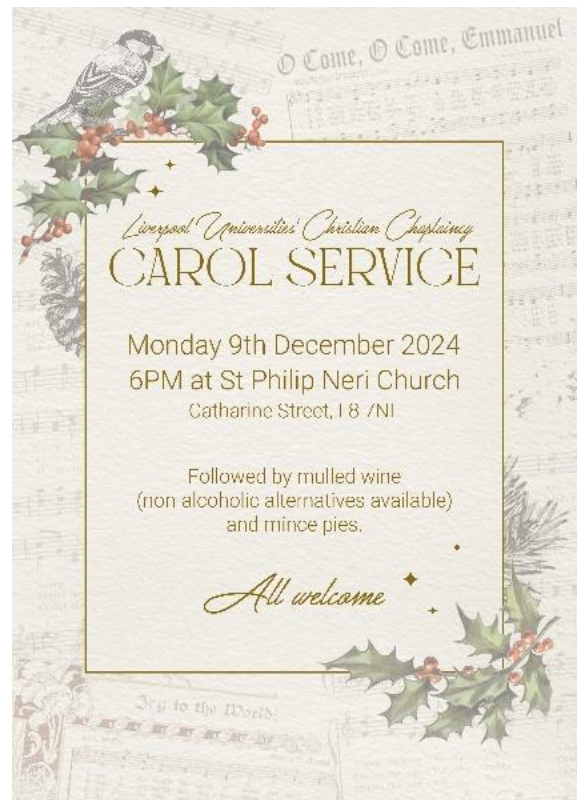
Chaplaincy Christmas Meal & Party:

Thursday December 5th

Mass in Church at 6pm, Meal at the **Blackburne Arms** then back to the chaplaincy to party!!

Philip Neri Student House: would you like to be part of the resident community at the Chaplaincy, living at Philip Neri House?

Residents play a vital role in supporting CathSoc & the Chaplaincy. (They also have one of the best garden views in Liverpool!) If you are interested, come and have a chat with Fr Neil.



Weekly Collection & other donations, you can pay online

philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com

Thank you so much for your contributions!!



Straighten up, and raise your heads!

Today in the Gospel, Jesus says “Now when these things begin to take place, **straighten up and raise your heads** (Jerusalem Bible trans. : “Stand erect; hold your heads high”) [Lk 21:28].

This and similar lines in the Scriptures have always intrigued me. ‘Standing up straight’ is associated with confidence, in this case confidence in the midst of turmoil – the “distress of the nations in turmoil” (if you hadn’t noticed, we have plenty of that right now!). But there are many other references to ‘standing up straight’ in the pages of the Bible: Google AI (full disclosure!) helped me to locate some more:

- **Luke 13:10-17**

In this passage, Jesus heals a woman who has been crippled for 18 years. Jesus lays his hands on her, and she immediately stands up straight and begins praising God.



- **Acts 14:8-10**

Paul encounters a man in Lystra who has been crippled since birth. Paul sees that the man is ready to believe, and he says, "Up on your feet!" The man jumps up and walks around.

- **Hebrews 12:12-14**

This passage says, "Now stand up straight! Stop your knees from shaking and walk a straight path. Then lame people will be healed, instead of getting worse".

- **Ezekiel 2:1-5**

In this passage, God says, "O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you".

It is as if being a follower of Jesus gives us the encouragement to *stand up straight*, with confidence. Of course, there are times when it is appropriate for us to bow down in humble submission before God, as an act of adoration, or to bow our heads humbly, as when we ask God for a blessing, or seek forgiveness for our sins. But standing up straight is clearly important too.

In the Bible, being ‘bent over’ is a sign of affliction, or even being ‘bound by Satan’ (as in the case of the woman with the haemorrhage in Luke 13). In Acts, we have the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35), who are joined by Jesus – whom they don’t

recognise. They are full of sadness, because their master has been taken and crucified; all their hopes are dashed. When Jesus asks them what they are discussing “They stopped, their faces downcast (Lk 24:17; JB trans.)” So looking down *can be* a sign of loss of faith: if they had had believed in the Resurrection (which Jesus foretold), they would not have been sad.

As many of you know, I do some work as a counsellor, in addition to my role as a chaplain. Often, when people are in the early stages of therapy, they can feel quite overwhelmed with all that seems to be wrong or oppressive in their lives, and the characteristic pose when people are very sad is to hang one’s head; to slump forward. One person I worked with on Skype, I kept having to ask to sit up, as all I could see on my screen much of the time was the top of her head!

Later that same year, I participated in an online webinar with the well known (in therapy circles) Dr Janina Fisher. We look at shame and self-loathing, and why these things so often seem to ‘stick like glue’ to our clients, and we looked at how we can help people get beyond them. One of many helpful suggestions to help people feel better is to adopt a straighter posture. It not only reflects better mood, it can promote it too. It won’t immediately solve all your problems – but it helps!

In the animal world, standing up straight is a way of asserting oneself when under threat; arching the back, holding the chin high and making yourself look as big and scary as possible!

In the context of our faith journey, the meaning of standing up straight is not to reflect a defiant or arrogant pose; it is a sign of confidence and faith in Jesus, who promises to be with us whatever threat we face, and who assures us that he has won the ultimate victory on our behalf.

So it is Jesus who invites us to stand up straight, and be assured of our dignity and worth before the God who saves us. Perhaps the next time you feel ‘downcast’ or sad, and find yourself slumping in a defeated pose, imagine Jesus bending down to you, placing his hand under your elbow, and inviting you to get up and stand up straight, with confidence. I bet you will feel immediately better!

Have a great week!

Fr Neil