

# 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

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19<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)



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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:** Mass 5.30pm

**Wednesday:** 5.30pm Mass at the chaplaincy

**Thursday:** 5.30 Adoration

**Sunday:** Confession 5.15pm-5.35pm; Mass 6pm

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

**Faith Express:** Wednesday lunchtime Mass & discussions will resume from the start of Semester 2, as will Tuesday Morning Prayer & Breakfast. Mass on Wednesday will be celebrated in the Chaplaincy at 5.30pm

**CHAPLAINCY OPENING TIMES:** The Chaplaincy will be open this week Monday – Thursday, 10am to 4pm, if you wish to use the space to study. It is warm, there is wifi, and you can make yourself a drink. Let yourself in using the keypad (as Fr Neil or Arran if you need the code). Let us know when you arrive by coming up to the office, if we're not around just send an SMS or WhatsApp to Fr Neil on 07927 346 219

Tuesday Evening this week:

**Movie Night**

With snacks

"Father Neil's Choice" – the title will be revealed on the night – but a good film is guaranteed...clue: set in the Eternal City (but no, its not Conclave!)

**Retreat Weekend: 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, at St Joseph's, Freshfield.**

Our annual weekend away is the highlight of the year in many ways. Prayer, social time and input from our leaders, Sister Angela Marie OP & Sr Bernadette Marie OP. Application forms will be available next week. Cost for students: £45 Open to students of UoL, LJMU &

Liverpool Archdiocese celebrates the 71<sup>st</sup> Miracle to be declared at Lourdes:

the healing of Liverpool resident Mr Jack Traynor

Archbishop Malcom writes: "Last month, I was able to declare the cure of John (Jack) Traynor a miracle after a very long wait. Jack was a pilgrim on the archdiocese's first official pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1923, and was cured dramatically of epilepsy, paralysis of the right arm and paraplegia during the pilgrimage. Many people at the time considered the cure to be miraculous, but there was never any official ecclesiastical recognition because it was felt that there was insufficient medical evidence. Thankfully, some painstaking research over the last couple of years has unearthed



evidence of the medical examinations of Jack Traynor at the time of the pilgrimage in 1923 and subsequently. Thus, the cure of Jack Traynor has now been recognised as the 71st official miracle to have happened at Lourdes, and he is the **first person from England to be cured at the shrine**. Though the official declaration of the miracle has come a century after the cure, it is still a significant moment for the Archdiocese of Liverpool. We will, therefore, have a special **Mass of Thanksgiving to be celebrated on Tuesday 18th February 2025 at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool, at 7 p.m.** A drinks reception will follow in the Cathedral Crypt. It will be an opportunity for people from across the archdiocese and beyond, including representatives from the shrine at Lourdes, to gather in Liverpool to mark this historic moment, and to heed the call of Pope Francis in this Jubilee Year to be "pilgrims of hope". I wish to invite you personally to participate in this celebration of Holy Mass, and hope that you will be able to join us in celebrating this joyful event." Fr Neil writes: I will be concelebrating the Mass, and suggest that we make that our Tuesday evening CathSoc event!



Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 6pm at the chaplaincy

## Psychology & Catholicism

Talk & Discussion led by Fr Neil

How do we reconcile practice and theory in psychology with the Catholic Faith?

This lecture should be of interest to all, but especially those of you studying or working in healthcare sciences (not just Psychology). It also feeds into a wider discussion about the relationship between faith & science – of which more later in the term!

## Staff & PhD group meets this Wednesday

at 6pm in the Chaplaincy. We will be beginning a reading and discussion of Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe & Lukasz Poko's book "Questioning God" See Fr Neil for further details.



Weekly Collection & other donations, you can pay online

[philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com](http://philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com)

Thank you so much for your contributions!!

## What do you live for?

Recently I watched a 4-part drama on TV, "The Serial Killer's Wife" [Channel 5]. It was moderately exciting, (i.e. it only just held my attention enough to motivate me to watch through to the last episode!) like many of the TV dramas that are around today. What struck me though about this depiction of murder and skullduggery in middle-class middle England was the motivations of the various characters. What did they see as really important in life? What motivated them? What were their values? And the answer seemed depressing: they seemed to care most of all about lifestyle, about money, about nice houses and cars. Even the innocent parties seemed somehow hollow. What was absent was a sense that they actually cared about other people very much, or any clear sense of life values of any depth.



Recently I have been reading Pope St. John Paul's encyclical letter "Fides et Ratio", on the relationship between faith and reason. In the course of this he speaks about the human need for "wonder", as we reflect on our origin, and our part in the world, related to other people who share with us a common destiny. Yet it has to be said that very many people lack such a sense of wonder, of reflecting on their place within the world and creation. "Without wonder," the Pope wrote, "...people lapse into deadening routine, and little by little become incapable of a life which is genuinely personal". The problem, as the Holy Father explains, is a lack of openness to the transcendent, i.e. an inability - or unwillingness - to see anything beyond the narrow horizon of our own little world. As one commentator put it "...the real meaning of life is cast into doubt. This is why many people stumble through life to the very edge of the abyss without knowing where they are going." How many people lead lives of quiet desperation. Their lives lack any sense of meaning or purpose beyond material goods, or the acquisition of power and status. No wonder people become "incapable of the genuinely

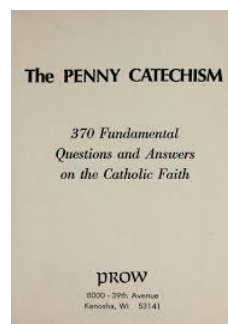
personal" and lose the ability to relate with warmth and genuine care. This is a reflection of the "crisis of meaning" that bedevils Western society - as our world has become more affluent, there is a terrible poverty of spirit; a collapse of any sense that life has meaning or purpose.

Of course this is a massive generalisation. There are still many people, even if they have no religious faith, who lead lives ordered to the service of others - a parents, teachers, healthcare professionals - and many more - people who find meaning and purpose in serving others despite the costs, and people who have a humble sense of "wonder".

I am always grateful for the gift of faith that I have received, and which led me into full communion with the Church when I was 20 years old. This gave meaning and purpose to my life in a specific way. I think was always open to that, and sensed in some way that I needed that, but the Catholic faith gave shape to my interior life in a specific and new way. It made me aware that I am a "creation" of God's: I did not give myself existence, but was made by Another, and made therefore with a purpose and a destiny: as the old "Penny Catechism" put it:

**Who made me? - God made me.**

**Why did God make me? - To know him, love him and serve Him in this life, and to be happy with him forever in the next**



Once you know that, you realise that discerning one's vocation is essential - how can I use the precious time that has been given to me in this life to serve him and others? Self-fulfilment does not come from being pre-occupied with what I am going to get out of it; it comes from giving myself to something *beyond* myself. This is what gives meaning and true fulfilment to life. It is what brings "wonder" and gratitude. Is it always that easy? No, obviously no-one's life is all "plain sailing"; there are many challenges, resistances, sacrifices, and times even when one may lose that sense of value and meaning. But I am immensely grateful for the "sense" that my Catholic faith give me, and the direction and shape it has given me.

Have a great week

*Fr Neil*