

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 n.ritchie@rcaol.org.uk

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



2nd February 2025

The Presentation of the Lord (Year C)



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: Morning Prayer 8am, followed by Breakfast Mass 5.30pm

Wednesday: Lunchtime prayer at Faith Express, 1pm 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

Tuesday: Morning Prayer 8am in the Chaplaincy, Followed by breakfast. All welcome!

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.

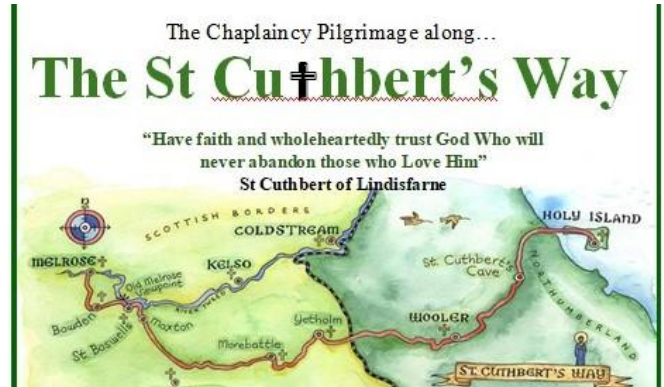
Tuesday CathSoc Evening: Rosary making!

Join after Mass us as we make Rosaries – a great way of preparing something we will be using on retreat (but you're still welcome if your not planning to come on the retreat!) We will supply all the materials and the know-how! And Father will bless the Rosaries at the end of the evening!



Staff & PhD group meets this Wednesday

at 6pm in the Chaplaincy. We continue our reading and discussion of Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe & Łukasz Poko's book "Questioning God" See Fr Neil for further details.



We had a very positive initial meeting on Wednesday of those interested in the St Cuthbert's Way pilgrimage we are planning for June. Further details will be added over the coming weeks.

Retreat Weekend: 21st-23rd Feb, at St Joseph's, Freshfield.



Our annual weekend away is just 3 weeks away and places are going fast! Prayer, social time and input from our leaders, Sister Angela Marie OP & Sr Bernadette

Marie OP. Cost for students: £45 Open to students of UoL, LJMU & LIPA. **Return** your completed forms a.s.a.p. and **pay** in the office (cash or card) – you need to do both to confirm your place.

Gardening this Saturday from 10am – 12noon, all welcome! (Mass beforehand at 9.30, and bacon butties for lunch!)

On Thursday 13th Feb Fr Taras Khomych, lecturer in Theology at Hope University and Chaplain to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic community will be joining us to give us a presentation on the Jesus Prayer, after Adoration.



Weekly Collection & other donations, you can pay online

philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com

Thank you so much for your contributions!!

Assisted Dying: Keeping up the pressure

I know some of you have written to your MP, prior to the vote in the House of Commons last November on the Assisted Dying Bill. You know, of course, that the Bill passed with a comfortable majority – 330 for and 275 against.

But this is not the end of the story. The Bill still has a long way to go before it becomes law, and many stages to go through, both in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords. So there is no guarantee that it will actually become law. **SO THERE IS STILL A NEED TO ACT** as your voice, and your opinions can still swing how your MP will vote in the future. Do not think that just because you wrote once to your MP, the matter is closed. If your MP voted in favour of the change to the law, they might still change their mind. And if they wrote back to you and voted against the Bill, they may still be glad of your support and arguments in the on-going debate.

My MP (Kim Johnson, Liverpool Riverside) wrote back and thanked me for my letter, but explained that she felt that she had to vote in favour of the Bill. She cited the list of [so-called] “safeguards” which would, she thought, provide protection so that the assisted dying provision could not be mis-applied, and would not lead to a “slippery slope”. Of course, we can and should mention firstly our belief that human life is sacred, God-given, and only God should decide the moment of our death. But we can also explore the practical dangers of the proposed legislation – its potential for abuse and mis-application, as these can speak to those who don’t share our faith.

The editorial of the Tablet of 7th December provided an exploration of these “safeguards” which demonstrates how vague they are. I provide a summary here, in the hope that you will again write to your MP. But I encourage you to consult the original copy of the Tablet, available in the Chaplaincy.

How is “mental capacity” – itself a very vague concept – to be assessed? The claim that two independent doctors would be involved raises the question, how would *they* know whether sufficient “mental capacity” exists, in a particular case? And how would they know that the patient is not being coerced? If the patient were under such pressure, they *might* tell a doctor...but they equally might not. Nor might they be likely to, if they felt they were a burden to others.

And if one doctor refused to sign off on the request, would the patient be free to ‘shop around’ for another doctor, more amenable to the request? Would there be a list of available doctors, well-disposed to requests from people wishing to end their own lives?, willing to be so consulted? How many attempts to obtain a doctor’s approval would a patient be allowed?

A Hight Court judge would have to review the case. It seems to me that their job is virtually impossible. Are they just going to rubber-stamp what the doctor says? If not, what are they expected to do, and how would they know when they needed to do it? What extra ‘safety margin’ does this step actually amount to? Would judges be able to conscientiously object to being involved in such a case? If so, would we not then likely have group of doctors and judges who specialise in assisted dying cases?

Claims that objective certainty could be reached by these criteria evaporate, when examined in detail. What the House of Commons wanted to achieve in proposing these safeguards was no doubt, in many cases, well meant. But it seems to me that analysis of the raft of questions raised by the numerous vague and sometimes unquantifiable values proposed in this legislation cannot but lead to the conclusion that such safeguards are unachievable. ***The inevitable outcome is that assisted dying will become widely available, unlimited by these proposed safeguards,*** because they are unworkable, unless the proposed legislation is stopped before becoming law.

It is impossible not to think back to the Abortion Act of 1967, which, we were assured, would be surrounded by safeguards to limit access to carefully defined cases. In law, at least, they still exist. But in reality, those safeguards did not last at all (The NHS website does not even mention the role of the doctors in the decision). It was the classic case of the ‘slippery slope’ (which turned out in fact to be quite steep).

I hope these are helpful. Keep up the fight – we could still have this overturned!

Fr Neil