



# CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY TO THE LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITIES

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

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Chaplain: Fr Neil Ritchie

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## 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A**  
**Day of Prayer for Prisoners and their dependents**



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Events for Students and University Members:

### Masses & Services This Week:

**Monday:** **No** Mass at the MC Convent this week  
**Tuesday:** **No Morning Prayer / breakfast or 6.00pm Mass\***  
**Wednesday :** **No Mass at Faith Express**  
**Thursday** Mass Adoration 5.30pm, followed by "£1 supper"  
\*events in the chaplaincy; Blackburne Place entrance  
**Sunday: Mass 6pm**

Fr Neil will be away on retreat this week from Monday to Thursday. So there will be **no Morning Prayer/Breakfast on Tuesday, or Mass on Tuesday evening or at Faith Express on Wednesday.** However, he'll be back Thursday, so there will be Adoration as usual on Thursday, followed by the "£1 supper". Hana will be around on Tuesday evening.

### House Prayer and Fellowship.

The residents of the student house at the chaplaincy (Sam, Alisha and Kaden) are opening their house on **Tuesday evening**, and every fortnight thereafter, from **7.00pm till 8.30pm** for an **informal prayer meeting**, based on scripture readings.

There will be prayer, discussion and refreshments. Its open to university members (UoL, LJMU or LIPA).

Come to the front door at 30 Catharine St. (next to church) and ring the bell marked 'students'.

This is reviving an 'ancient tradition' of the resident student community running a prayer group for their peers. All students are welcome, but do remember that this is their home, and you are guests in it!

On other Tuesday evenings, CathSoc will be running other events.

**Staff & PhD Group:** Will be re-starting for the year on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October at 6pm** at the chaplaincy. We meet every other Wednesday during university term time for a fellowship, prayer and faith-based discussion. Open to all university staff and doctoral students.

**CathSoc event:** Canon Montjean ICKSP, from the 'Dome of Home' on the Wirral, will be giving a talk on "Angelic Warfare" at the University of Liverpool, 502 building on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> October, 7-9pm

**Please pray for the Synod** presently taking place in Rome, on the very subject of synodality, and for all the participants; that they may be truly open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Some of you (a very few) may recall the meetings that took place here for the Liverpool Archdiocesan synod, between 2018 and 2020. I was really impressed how many students took part, and how positively engaged they were in the process.

Today is 'Prisoners Sunday', or the Day of Prayer for Prisoners and their Dependents. We are asked to pray for the many thousands of people who are serving time in jail, and for their families. Remember that Jesus said "I was in prison and you came to visit me (Mt 25:36)" We pray for chaplains who work in prisons, and for the work of the charity PACT, which the church supports ([prisonadvice.org.uk](http://prisonadvice.org.uk)). We also remember those people around the world who are imprisoned for preaching the Gospel.



Because **October is the Month of Mary**, on Thursday evenings during adoration, after the 15 minutes of silent prayer, we will be praying the **Rosary**, in place of our usual evening prayer.

**Readers & Servers:** Thanks to all of you who have volunteered to read at Mass and to serve. This will really enhance our liturgy. There are WhatsApp groups on the CathSoc hub for each.

If you are **musical, play a musical instrument, or would just be happy to sing**, we'd also love to hear from you!



**Weekly Collection & other donations, you can pay online at [philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com](http://philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com)**  
Thank you so much for your contributions

**Please note:** all chaplaincy events are open to university members who are 18 yrs of age or older. If you are under 17 at the moment, please make yourself known to Fr Neil or to Hana.

## What are you here for?

It has been a great joy in these last 3 weeks to meet so many of you who are new, either to Liverpool, to university life, or to the chaplaincy – or perhaps to all three! And of course to welcome again old faces. Perhaps you are full of excitement for a new year, or a new course of studies, but perhaps you are full of trepidation and anxieties, wondering if you will cope with your studies, or with the other aspects of student life. At the chaplaincy, we try to provide a place of support to help you settle in, make new friends. We provide opportunities for worship, in Mass and other types of prayer, and ways to explore and deepen your faith. And we have plenty of fun, with social events through the term and so on. But your primary purpose in being here (for those of you who are students) is to study and get the degree you came to achieve. You can change your mind, of course – a number of students each year conclude that they are on the wrong course, or even that they don't want to continue studying. And that's fine, as long as it's a carefully made and reasoned decision.

One of the things we try to help people to understand is that our faith is about our whole life, not just a part of it. So our faith should inform our attitude to our studies, and the end purpose of our programme. If you are studying business studies, you should be asking yourself all the time: what does my faith have to say about this? How can it inform my studying, and how can my faith shape the way I approach or eventually practise business in our world? Get to know, for instance, the rich world of Catholic Social Teaching. The same should be true for any vocational course – medicine, dentistry etc. You might wonder whether our Catholic faith has anything to say about a degree in art, or Hispanic studies, or history – but it does, if you look carefully and critically. Every area of study reflects aspects of our world, the relationships between peoples and nations, the values that are operative. Some of you already know that there can be tensions between the values of the Catholic faith, and the pressures on students and practitioners of various subjects in our country today – medicine is one example. It might be an interesting evening at the chaplaincy, to have a group discussion about our respective areas of study – whatever it is – and how we see our faith informing our approach to that field.

**“To believe in Jesus Christ is to encounter him as the beginning and source of true life; it is to know in Him the ultimate meaning of your personal life in society and in history”**

Fr Jean Lafrance

How do we be a Catholic studying English, or media studies, or engineering?

As you may know I used to teach moral theology in a seminary (training college for future priests). And one of my favourite areas in that branch of theology is the recently revived subject of 'virtue ethics'. I say revived because virtue was a key aspect of morals for St Thomas Aquinas – the greatest of medieval theologians. The focus in virtue ethics is on who and what we are becoming – what character is being formed. Virtues are features of our character which lead to good. Core virtues are things like temperance, prudence, courage and justice, but there are many other virtues under those brackets. We can acquire those virtues by application of the will – by practising them. But we can lose them if we don't practise them – and of course the opposite of virtues are vices, which produce bad fruits. The 'supernatural virtues' – faith, hope and love – come to us from God, though we still have to be open to them and cultivate them.

Our time at university should shape us: it should be a time of asking – who do I need to become? How can I shape myself to be the person God calls me to be? How can I engage with my studies so that they become something that shapes me in a positive way, and how do I allow my faith to help me be a positive presence in my faculty, and eventually in my field of work?

Fr Jean Lafrance, a great writer of books on prayer and spirituality, writes: “To believe in Jesus Christ is to encounter him as the beginning and source of true life; it is to know in Him the ultimate meaning of your personal life in society and in history (*Pray to your Father in secret*, 1986)

To live in the world as a disciple of Jesus Christ (which is what you are if you are baptised!) is challenging. There are many forces acting on us which can weaken our resolve. But that is what the Church is for – we need the support of fellow Christians, and a supportive community – which is what your parish is, and, while you are here, what the chaplaincy is!

Have a great week & God bless!

Fr Neil