



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

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



26th May 2024

The Most Blessed Trinity



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 Hana, use

h.koubkova@rcaol.org.uk

Events for Students and University Members:

Masses & Services This Week:

Monday: 8am Mass at the [Missionaries of Charity](#) house, 55 Seel street – students are always welcome!

Tuesday: Mass 9am

Wednesday: Mass 9am (no Mass @Faith Express)

Thursday: Mass 9am ; Adoration 5.30pm followed by £1 supper

Saturday: 9.30am

Sunday: Confessions 10.15am-10.35) 11am Mass (The Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), Yr B)



Today, Mass will be offered for our late dear friend and gardener, Frank Fox. We will be joined by some of his friends from the area. Fittingly, although it is Trinity Sunday, its also the Feast of St Philip Neri!

Gardening

The next gardening mornings will be on this Saturday, 1st of June at 10am, and the 22nd June. On June 23rd, the garden and church will be open (as last year) as part of the **National Garden Scheme**.

Weekly Collection & other donations, you can pay online at
philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com

Thank you so much for your contributions



If any of you wish to use the chaplaincy for private study this week, please contact me to arrange access. Fr N

"Mary Mondays"

There is a weekly prayer group throughout the month of May at 1800 in the Guild building (check WhatsApp for room no.) Then recitation of the Rosary, and time for reflection. The room is then booked for revision. Feel free to bring drinks and snacks.'

On Thursday 30th, after our shared meal (starting c.7.30), we plan to have a review of the chaplaincy year. Are we fulfilling our aims as a Chaplaincy? What has worked well? What could be improved? What would you like to see more (or less) of?

Saturday 8th June, 7pm: Mary's Meals Benefit Concert.



Members of our chaplaincy community will perform a programme of musical pieces, both choral and instrumental. This event is being advertised in local parishes, and admission will be by ticket. The proceeds will go to Mary's Meals. Tickets cost £5 and can be bought online



Johann Sebastian Bach: Wo soll ich fliehen hin?

To where shall I flee? (Cantata 5)

Fittingly, for the feast of Corpus Christi, the cantata dwells on how the wounds and blood of Christ bring salvation to the Christian soul. The four vocal soloists and chorus are joined by the usual ensemble of oboes, strings and organ, and a trumpet.

Sunday 2 June 2024 at 6.30pm

Evening Prayer and Cantata

Church of St Philip Neri, Catherine Street,
Liverpool L8 7NL



LIVERPOOL BACH COLLECTIVE

Dying to serve God...

As many of you know, I recently read “He Leadeth Me” by Jesuit Fr Walter Ciszek, who ministered in Russia, was incarcerated for 5 years in solitary confinement for 5 years by the KGB, then was sent to a Siberian prison camp for 15 years. On being released, you’d think that he would be anxious to be able to return to his home country, the USA – but no, when he was released he located another priest who he had been in prison with, and together they ministered to the Catholic population of that city – with only the most basic of resources. Warned by the KGB to stop, and moved to another city, he simply carried on in his new location. People needed a priest, and he was determined to serve them. Eventually, he was returned by the KGB to the USA in exchange for 2 Russian spies, but I think given the choice he would have carried on. It was a moving example of a priest who literally ‘poured out’ his life in service to others, no matter what the cost. One of the central themes of his book is that he learned through his many trials, to seek God’s will above his own – to abandon himself to God’s will in each situation. This is a perfect example of ‘dying to self’, which is what ‘mortification’ really means.

This was something that in Catholic circles, people heard quite a lot – in parish missions, in sermons, in schools: “to die to self”. We don’t hear quite as much about it these days as we maybe once did, and I wonder if that is because our sensibilities have changed somewhat. In the present day, it sounds old-fashioned, and maybe makes us wince a little! Surely, our selves, our individuality with all its unique talents, is a gift from God – to ourselves, and to the world. Why would we want to ‘die’ to this self?? Good question! I think however a little balance is needed. It’s true that in times past, uniformity was the order of the day. Seminarians were told, when learning how to celebrate Mass, that their actions and words should be so ‘standardised’ that no-one should notice who the priest was that celebrated Mass – you should draw no attention to yourself! Perhaps that reflected something in wider society. Watching a programme recently about the airline Pan American, former stewardesses from the ‘50s recalled how there was not only a regulation dress, but even regulation lipstick!

But in our won day, perhaps we have lost something of the value of self-offering. Each of

us is made by God. We are indeed unique, blessed and special – a gift to the world. In an ideal world, we would be perfectly in tune with God, and would follow his will perfectly, because we would see in it our perfect fulfilment. He knows what is best to us, and if we want to flourish, and be the best versions of ourselves, to achieve our aim (the reason for which God made is – to know him, love him, and serve him in this life, and be happy with him forever in the next. Yet, we know all too well that we are not perfect. So often we just don’t want to follow God’s will – we think we know best, we think our plans are what’s needed in a given situation. We are free to choose not to follow God – and we frequently do!

The journey of growth in personal holiness is that of ‘letting go’ of the desire to be autonomous – the idea that we know best, “I’ll do it my way...thank you very much!” But this ‘letting go’ is hard – it is painful. A little death that we have to make over and over again.

Fasting, undertaking penances can be ways that we practise dying to self, and acquire the virtue of attuning ourselves to God’s will. BUT – as I said last week in my homily, St Seraphim emphasised that these things must be undertaken *in relation to God*; not as activities or ends in themselves. The aim is to allow God to ‘divinise’ us. Penance can be ways that we open ourselves to God. They are not about inflicting suffering on ourselves for its own sake. That might strengthen your will power, but it will not bring you closer to God. It might even encourage a certain arrogance. Fr Walter’s book is a humbling account of this dying to self in practice. Life sent him numerous trials, in which he learned to surrender his own will. But his motive was always the service of God, which he recognised in his ministry to the people he served as a priest in Russia.

Today we celebrate the Holy Trinity, and as Fr Peter McGrail reminded us a few days ago in his talk, the three Persons of the Trinity continuously pour out their love for each other. We are invited to reflect something of their self giving in our relations to God and others. But the best way to do that is to seek His will in all things, and pray for the grace to carry it out.

Blessed Feast!

Fr Neil