

St Mary Magdalen Catholic Church

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*Please contact Fr Bineesh or let Fr Mathew know if you, or any member of your family, are going into hospital. Please be aware that for reasons of patient confidentiality, the current practice in the NHS is **NOT** to inform the chaplains of any Catholics that are admitted to hospital. So unless you or your relatives inform the chaplains of your hospital stay, you will not be visited by a priest or any other member of the chaplaincy team.*

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time: 8th November, 2020

Sunday Readings: Year A

Weekday Readings: Year II, 32nd Week of the Year

Services This Week

Sunday 8 th November – 32 nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	10:00 am	Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for the intention of deceased members of the Barrett & Poll families.
Monday 9 th	10:00 am	The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for the intention of the Janes family.
Tuesday 10 th	10:00 am	St Leo the Great Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for the intention of the Vieira family.
Wednesday 11 th	10:00 am	St Martin of Tours Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for the intention of the deceased members of the Cranston family.
Thursday 12 th	10:00 am	St Josaphat Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for the intention of all deceased Covid 19 victims.
Friday 13 th	10:00 am	Feria Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for the intention of the deceased members of the Mullen family.
Saturday 14 th	10:00 am	Feria Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for the intention of the deceased members of the Fryatt family.
Sunday 15 th – 33 rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	10:00 am	Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for the intention of the people of the parish.

Lockdown II

On 4th November 2020, Parliament passed into law *The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020*. These are in force from Thursday, 5th November to Wednesday, 2nd December 2020. As well as the Regulations, the Government has updated its guidance for the safe use of places of worship to reflect current circumstances. The Government has also published its *New National Restrictions Guidance* on its website. The Regulations preclude gatherings for communal worship, including the celebration of Mass, baptisms and most weddings. However, it is important to stress that this does not represent a return to the previous lockdown earlier in the year. In the current Regulations, places of worship are permitted to remain open for certain purposes, and to attend a place of worship is listed as an acceptable reason to leave home. The purposes for which a place of worship may remain open are listed in Paragraph 18(8) of the Regulations. Most notably, the Regulations allow places of worship to remain open for "individual prayer" which is defined as "prayer by individuals which does not form part of communal worship." This means that, once again, we are in a position where we cannot attend the celebration of Mass in church. The President and Vice-President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, have written to the government expressing their distress at these new restrictions and asking the Government to release the data on which the decision to include places of worship in these restrictions was taken. The statement from the Cardinal can be read on the parish web site. Despite these concerns however, we are urged to obey the Government rulings and as such only private Masses will be celebrated in church during this lockdown period.

Today's Gospel

In this week's Gospel, Jesus talks about what it means to be prepared to receive the Kingdom of Heaven. This week's reading follows a series of warnings and predictions by Jesus about the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus wants his disciples to understand that the exact day and time cannot be predicted. He teaches the disciples that they must remain vigilant so that they will not be caught unprepared.

When thinking about the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, it is important to consider the first-century wedding traditions of Palestine. Scholars tell us that it was the custom of the day for young maidens - friends and family members of the bride - to meet the bridegroom when he came to bring his bride to her new home.

As with many of Jesus' parables, several levels of interpretation are possible. In last week's Gospel, we heard Jesus warn against following the example of the Pharisees and scribes. If read in the context of early Christianity's struggle to define itself against Pharisaic Judaism, this parable is a continuing critique of Judaism. It suggests that the Jewish leaders were like the foolish virgins, unprepared to meet Jesus, the bridegroom of Israel.

In the chapter preceding this parable, however, Jesus warns about the destruction of Jerusalem, the tribulation of the end times, and the coming of the Son of Man. When read in this context, today's parable is a warning to the Christian community to remain vigilant and prepared to receive Jesus, the Son of Man who will return at the end of time. This interpretation is supported by the reference to the delay of the bridegroom. The Christian community for whom Matthew wrote this Gospel was coming to terms with the realisation that the promise of Jesus' return would not be fulfilled within their lifetimes. The question remains for us to ask ourselves, are we ready to receive Jesus? Will we be prepared to receive him?

November – Month of the Holy Souls

Despite the lockdown restrictions, the parish community as a whole will pray for the departed souls from our parish in the month of November. The church will be open each day for private prayer between 10:00 and 12 noon so if you have anyone to be specially remembered, please write his or her names on a piece of paper and put it in the box on the altar. The box will remain on the altar for the whole month of November. There are also special envelopes in the Narthex to offer Masses for the dead.

The parish web site has been updated to include the record of the deceased of the parish and the days on which their anniversaries occur. This will enable us all to check regularly those people we remember and pray for those whose anniversary is occurring on each day – especially important in the month of November.

Remembrance Sunday

As with most things, this years commemorative events for Remembrance Sunday have been adversely affected by the Covid-19 restrictions, and national and local commemorative services have been cancelled. The Government led Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph will go ahead as a closed ceremony and will be broadcast live on BBC One from 10.15 am on Sunday 8th November as representatives of the Royal Family, the Government and the armed forces lay wreaths at the Cenotaph. Despite the changes this year, the Royal British Legion is encouraging people across the nation to ensure Remembrance Sunday is still marked appropriately as best we can, whether that be by watching the service on television or pausing for the Two Minute Silence in our homes or on our doorsteps.

Christmas 2020

Several bookings for the proposed Christmas services have been received and acknowledged. Clearly under the current restricted operations, services this year are going to be rather different from normal, and there is a strong possibility that any arrangements made may have to be changed should government guidance change between now and December. At this time, it is intended to say Mass at 5:00 pm on Christmas Eve, Thursday 24th December. This Mass will be aimed primarily at families with children. On Christmas morning, there will be Mass at 8:00 am and 10:00 am.

It is possible that, being Christmas, these Masses will be very well attended, but in order to comply with social distancing regulations, numbers will have to be limited. To ensure safety and legal compliance, we are going to have to implement a booking system for places at these Masses. It is not possible to state a maximum number of people who can attend any one service, as the total will depend on the size of the parties – clearly the total accommodated will be bigger with a smaller number of larger family groups which do not have to be distanced, where as individuals attending will need to be distanced from others leading to a lower total. To help this to be managed, you are asked to register your intention to attend the Christmas Masses and book places for your families as required. If you have not yet done so, please do so quickly. Places will be allocated on a strictly first come, first served basis. Please email bookings@marymagdalens.org or use the contact form on the parish web site – select Christmas 2020. Please provide your name, contact telephone number and email address, the Mass you wish to attend and the number in your party. You will receive a confirmation of your booking if you can be accommodated. Fr Mathew has said that should these Masses be heavily oversubscribed, he will say additional Masses to meet the demand, either later on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day.

Financial Position of the Parish

Fr Mathew writes: Following a review of our financial position at a Finance Committee meeting last week, the parish made an operating loss of £3,000 for the 9 months ending 30th September and is projected to make a loss of £5,000 for the full year. Since the end of March when Coronavirus restrictions were first imposed our offertory has dropped by an average of £100 per week but I would like to express my thanks to all those parishioners who have continued to contribute during this period. An increased number of you are now paying by standing order or direct credit to the parish bank account which is assisting greatly and if anyone is not yet signed up to give by Gift aid I would encourage this as it increases the income we receive by 25%. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Chris Coker if you would like further information on our financial position and/or would like to sign up to the Giftaid scheme.

The Sick of the Parish

Please pray for those who are sick or housebound: John Anderson-Hurst, Margaret Arbon, William Barnes, Peggy Barron, Jason Beaumont, Michael Clarke, Monica Ford, Josephine Kalagira, Fabiana Di Mascio, Ron Green, Jo Kelly, Molly Mc Garry, Yvonne Metcalfe, Robert Mullan, Anna Nelli, Mary O'Reilly and Pippa Williamson.

Own Dear Departed

Of your charity, pray for the repose of the souls of the faithful departed and especially for Ellen McCarthy, Michelina Di Franco, Michael Farrelly, Lillian Shevlin, Catherine English, Irene O'Halloran, Henrietta Haywood-Farmer, Emily McCreery, Peter Pratt, Helen Kerr, Martin Creswell, Agnes Collings, Michael Chapman and Pamela Oliver whose anniversaries occur at about this time.
Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Entrance Antiphon: Let my prayer come into your presence. Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

Collect: Almighty and merciful God, graciously keep from us all adversity, so that, unhindered in mind and body alike, we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

First Reading: Wis. 6:12-16 *Wisdom is found by those who look for her.*

Wisdom is bright, and does not grow dim. By those who love her she is readily seen, and found by those who look for her. Quick to anticipate those who desire her, she makes herself known to them. Watch for her early and you will have no trouble; you will find her sitting at your gates. Even to think about her is understanding fully grown; be on the alert for her and anxiety will quickly leave you. She herself walks about looking for those who are worthy of her and graciously shows herself to them as they go, in every thought of theirs coming to meet them.

Responsorial Psalm: Response to the psalm is: *For you my soul is thirsting, O God, my God.*

O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you
like a dry, weary land without water.

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory.
For your love is better than life,
my lips will speak your praise.

So I will bless you all my life,
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise you with joy.
On my bed I remember you.
On you I muse through the night
for you have been my help;
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.

Second Reading: 1Thes. 4:13-18 *God will bring with him those who have died in Jesus.*

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them; to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! Stay awake and stand ready, because you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming. Alleluia!

Gospel: Matt. 25:1-13

The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him.

Jesus told this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, "The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him." At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out." But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves." They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said "open the door for us." But he replied, "I tell you solemnly, I do not know you." So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.'

Prayer over the Offerings:

Look with favour, we pray, O Lord, upon the sacrificial gifts offered here, that, celebrating in mystery the Passion of your Son, we may honour it with loving devotion. Through Christ Our Lord.

Communion Antiphon:

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose, near restful waters he leads me.

Prayer after Communion:

Nourished by his sacred gift, O Lord, we give you thanks and beseech your mercy, that, by the pouring forth of your Spirit, the grace of integrity may endure in those your heavenly power has entered. Through Christ our Lord.