

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.*

1st Sunday of Advent: 29th November, 2020

Sunday Readings: Year B. Weekday Readings: 1st Week of Advent

Services This Week

Sunday 29 th – 1 st Sunday of Advent	10:00 am	Holy Mass – For the intention of John Shorten. (Live streamed)
Monday 30 th	St Andrew Patron of Scotland 12:00 pm	Requiem Mass for Julienne May
Tuesday 1 st December	Advent Feria 10:00 am	Holy Mass – Celebrated in private for Frank Edward junior
Wednesday 2 nd	Advent Feria 10:00 am	Holy Mass – Deceased members of the Long family
Thursday 3 rd	St Francis Xavier 10:00 am	Holy Mass – Vieira family
Friday 4 th	Advent Feria 10:00 am	Holy Mass
Saturday 5 th	Advent Feria 10:00 am	Holy Mass
Sunday 6 th – 2 nd Sunday of Advent	8:00 am 10:00 am 6:00 pm	Holy Mass Holy Mass – (Live streamed) Holy Mass – The people of the parish

Today, the first Sunday of Advent, we place upon the sanctuary our Advent wreath. This is a circular garland of evergreen branches representing eternity on which five candles are arranged: three purple candles and one pink around the wreath and one white one at its centre. During the season of Advent, one candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday as a part of the Advent services. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ and as a whole, these candles represent the coming of the light of Christ into the world.

Each Sunday in Advent, a particular Advent candle is lit. Catholic tradition states that each of the four candles, representing the four weeks of Advent, stands for one thousand years, to total the 4,000 years from the time of Adam and Eve until the birth of the Saviour.

On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the "*Prophecy Candle*" in remembrance of the prophets, primarily Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel.

This first candle represents hope or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

Lockdown II

With the end of of Lockdown II at midnight Wednesday 2nd December, we will once again be allowed to attend Mass in person. From the 10:00 Mass on Wednesday onwards, we will be able to attend Mass again, subject to the same rules that applied before Lockdown II started – face masks should be worn, 2 metre separation should be maintained from everybody not in your household, no hymn singing, special arrangements for communion, post service cleaning and disinfecting etc.

There are no guarantees that things will not change again in the future, but let us be grateful that at least we will be able to return to the celebration of the Holy Mass for the immediate future.

Spiritual Communion

For those occasions when we can't be in our churches, an act of Spiritual Communion can help us keep Christ at the centre of our lives as we worship and pray at home.

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen

Today's Gospel

Today we begin the season of Advent, which marks the start of a new liturgical year for the Church. The readings for Sunday Mass are arranged on a three-year cycle. Each year features a different Gospel - Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Readings from the Gospel of John are interspersed throughout all three years. With this year's first Sunday of Advent, we begin Cycle B of the Lectionary, which focuses our attention on the Gospel of Mark. This week and next week, our readings from Mark's Gospel present two important Advent themes: the Lord's return at the end of time and John the Baptist's preparation for Jesus. Today's Gospel is taken from the end of Mark's Gospel, the chapter that immediately precedes Mark's account of Jesus' Passion. Having been questioned repeatedly by the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus is now questioned by his disciples - Peter, James, John, and Andrew - who want details about his prediction of the destruction of the Temple. Jesus answers with many warnings about the difficulties that the disciples will face. Today's passage comes at the conclusion of Jesus' warnings to his disciples. Jesus emphasizes the need for watchfulness. The Son of Man will come without warning; only the Father knows the exact hour. The disciples must not be caught unprepared when this time comes.

Scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was written around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. Mark's audience consisted of Christians who were living in difficult social and political times, times of conflict. They were likely beginning to face persecution as followers of Jesus. In this difficult time, it helped to recall that Jesus had foretold of such difficulties. Early Christian communities took courage from Jesus' warning to remain alert and watchful, and they found in his words a way to persevere through suffering. Today's Gospel reminds us that Advent is about more than our preparation for the Church's celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. Advent is also about preparing ourselves for Christ's return in glory at the end of time. Like the disciples and the faithful in Mark's community, we must also stay alert and watchful. Our faithfulness to God, through the good times as well as the difficult times, shows us to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man.

Advent

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. In the Catholic Church, Advent is a period of preparation extending over the four Sundays before Christmas. The word Advent comes from the Latin verb *advenio*, "to come towards," and refers to the coming of Christ. The term *the coming* includes three references: first of all, to our celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas; second, to the coming of Christ in our lives through grace and the Sacrament of Holy Communion; and finally, to his second coming at the end of time. Our preparations, therefore, should have all three comings in mind. We need to prepare our souls to receive Christ worthily.

Parish Development Project

Following the news last week that we have been given planning permission for the construction of the new parish room alongside the church, anybody visiting church will have seen already that things are beginning to happen with the erection of wooden hoardings around the garage to protect the area where works will begin. The vast majority of the funding for this project has been provided by a generous, Gift Aided donation from one of our parish families, but there is a balance which we will need to raise ourselves. There is a letter from Fr Mathew to all parishioners which provides more information about this, but circulating this letter in the current lockdown will be a challenge.

The letter can be seen on the parish web site and is being sent out to all parishioners for whom we have registered email addresses. Hard copies are available in the narthex should you visit church for private prayer.

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 we make may still have to be changed should government guidance change. At this time, it is intended to say Mass at 5:00 pm on Christmas Eve, Thursday 24th December. On Christmas morning, there will be Mass at 8:00 am and 10:00 am.

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.

Advent Taizé Service

On Thursday 3rd December at 7:00 pm, an Advent Taizé Service will be streamed from St Mary's church, Ipswich. The service will last for approximately 40 minutes. The church will be in semi-darkness, lit up with candles and a few lights and the service will comprise beautiful music, monastic chants and Scripture readings all wrapped around with deep silences and prayerful intercessions. The service is open to anybody, and can be followed using the link on the parish web site

TK (Talitha Koum)

TK (Talitha Koum) is an Ipswich based charity whose mission is to reach out with love, compassion and practical support to vulnerable women. It has two key aspects to its work, it provides supported housing for women recovering from addictions and other life challenges form its purpose-built therapeutic accommodation set on a 2-acre rural site at Witnesham known as The Hope Centre, and it runs Women Together Recovery Support groups. You will be pleased to know this is not an appeal for your funds – but an appeal for your help. A financial services organisation called Movement for Good has £120, 000 to donate to good causes and is inviting you to nominate your favoured charity to receive one of 10 daily £1000 donations during its 12 Days of Giving campaign this December. TK is asking that you go to the Movement for Good web site www.movementforgood.com/12days/index.php?cn=1135528&ct=health and register a vote for TK, so that it is in with a chance to receive one of the £1000 donations.

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 Mildred Courtney, John Mahony, Harry Head, Doris Williams, Margaret Janes, Laura Beavis, Czeslaw Kasprzak, Mario Pasini, Lelio Di Franco, Charles "Rod" Long, Miriam Wiseman, Percy "Ron" Bates, Cynthia O'Mara, Valerie Jenkins, Agnes Eaton, Casilda Janssen, Walter Richardson, Mary McGinley, Pamela Dee, George Grimwood and Alice Keohane 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.

Mass Readings: First Sunday of Advent: 29th November, 2020

Entrance Antiphon:

To you I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Collect:

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom. 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: Isa. 63:16-17,64:1,3-8 *O that you would tear the heavens open and come down*

You, Lord, yourself are our Father, 'Our Redeemer' is your ancient name. Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways and harden our hearts against fearing you? Return, for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance. Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down! – at your Presence the mountains would melt. No ear has heard, no eye has seen any god but you act like this for those who trust him. You guide those who act with integrity and keep your ways in mind. You were angry when we were sinners; we had long been rebels against you. We were all like men unclean, all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing. We have all withered like leaves and our sins blew us away like the wind. No one invoked your name or roused himself to catch hold of you. For you hid your face from us and gave us up to the power of our sins. And yet, Lord, you are our Father; we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps. 22:1-3, 5-6

Response to the psalm is: *God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.*

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from haven and see.

Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted.

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name..

Second Reading: 1Cor 1:3-9

We are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace. I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help. Alleluia!

Gospel: Mark: 13:33-37

Stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

Prayer over the Offerings:

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below, gain for us the prize of eternal redemption. Through Christ Our Lord.

Communion Antiphon:

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

Prayer after Communion:

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures. Through Christ our Lord.