

St Mary Magdalen Catholic Church

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Parish Priest: Fr Mathew George

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Parish school: St Pancras Catholic Primary School, Stratford Road, Ipswich, IP1 6EF

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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.*

4th Sunday of Advent: 20th December, 2020

Sunday Readings: Year B. Weekday Readings: 4th Week of Advent Services This Week

Sunday 20 th – 4 th	8:00 am	Holy Mass
Sunday of Advent	10:00 am	Holy Mass (Live Streamed)
	6:00 pm	Holy Mass – The people of the parish
Monday 21 st	Advent Feria	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass – Janes family
Tuesday 22 nd	Advent Feria	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass – Vieira family
Wednesday 23 rd	Advent Feria	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass
Thursday 24 th	Advent Feria	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass
	5:00 pm	Holy Mass (Live Streamed) – First Mass of Christmas
Friday 25 th	The Nativity of the Lord	
	8:00 am	Christmas - Mass at Dawn
	10:00 am	Holy Mass - The people of the parish
Saturday 26 th	St Stephen The First Martyr	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass
Sunday 27 th –	8:00 am	Holy Mass
Sunday within	10:00 am	Holy Mass (Live streamed)
the Octave of		
Christmas	6:00 pm	Holy Mass – The people of the parish

The 10:00 Mass on Sundays is streamed live. You can find the link to watch this on the Mass Times page of the parish web site

We are back again – the New Normal

Under the current restrictions there will be no Children's Liturgy group, no coffee after church and no hymns sung at 10:00 Mass. The bidding prayers will not be said, the homily will be kept short, the collection and offertory procession will be omitted, the sign of peace will not be exchanged and special arrangements for Holy Communion will apply.

We are committed to following the Government guidelines on social distancing.

Please ensure you maintain a 2 metre distance separation from each other whilst entering, leaving and inside church and remember that government regulations require that you wear a face covering whilst in church.

Today's Gospel

This Sunday we read the story of the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary about the birth of Jesus. This story is found only in Luke's Gospel. On this fourth Sunday of Advent, the liturgy shifts our attention from John the Baptist to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both John and Mary serve as important figures for our reflection during the season of Advent; they both played instrumental roles in preparing the way for Jesus. Last week we reflected on John the Baptist's announcement that the Saviour was among us, although not yet recognised. This week we reflect upon Mary's example of faith and obedience to God, traits which permitted her to receive the angel's message that God's Son would be born as a human person, as one of us.

We are familiar with the story of the Annunciation, and it is fitting that we recall how God announced the birth of Jesus as we make our final preparations for our celebration of the Incarnation. The angel Gabriel visited Mary, a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph. Mary greeted the angel's news with awe and wonder and asked how it could be possible that she could give birth to a child. In his reply, the angel Gabriel announced the seemingly impossible reality: the child to be born would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and would be God's own Son. The angel reported to Mary another miracle; her relative Elizabeth was also pregnant despite having been thought to be unable to have a child. Mary's response to the angel is an example of complete faith and obedience to God.

The story of the Annunciation calls to our attention God's wondrous action in human history. God chose a human person to give birth to his Son so that all humanity would know God's salvation. Mary, already full of God's grace, was able to cooperate in this great plan for our salvation. Thus Jesus was born as one of us, fully human and also fully divine. This is the mystery we prepare to celebrate at Christmas, the mystery of the Incarnation. In the model of Mary, we pray that we will be people of faith who recognise God's saving plan for us and are able respond with obedience.

Advent Wreath

Today, the fourth and last Sunday in Advent, we light the last purple candle. This candle, often called the *Angel's Candle*, represents peace.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

On Christmas Eve at the Vigil Mass, the white centre candle is lit. This candle is called the *Christ Candle* and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world. The colour white represents purity. Christ is the sinless, spotless, pure Saviour. Those who receive Christ as Saviour are washed of their sins and made whiter than snow:

"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Christmas Post

The letter rack in the narthex is being used by many people to leave Christmas cards for fellow parishioners. Please check the rack before you leave church and take any cards addressed to you as, in previous years, we have sadly had to dispose of several cards that were never collected by the intended recipients.

Baptism

Last Sunday we welcomed four new members to the church – Larissa, Antoni, Destiny and Leighton. Please pray for them, their parents and godparents.

150 Club

Due to pressure of other Christmas activities, the December prize draw of the parish 150 club, including the 3rd quarter bonus prizes, will be made after the 10:00 Mass on Sunday 3rd January, one week later than scheduled.

Christmas Offering

As you will all be aware, Easter and Christmas present us with two scheduled opportunities to collect the traditional personal gift from the parish community to our parish priest, Fr Mathew. The pandemic completely ruled out the Easter gift in 2020 and now the Christmas collection is upon us. For many people these will be the most difficult of economic times, and Mass attendance has been significantly reduced as people respond in various ways to the current crisis. These two factors may make the total of our Christmas offering less than might otherwise have been the case.

Therefore our generosity, particularly for those who can still more readily afford to contribute, is perhaps under greater scrutiny than ever. All contributions, big or small, will be much appreciated. Either put your offering in the special Christmas collection envelope, or in any envelope clearly marked as 'Christmas Gift' and return it at any time between now and the end of January. We will ensure that it gets to Father Mathew. The total realised will be published in the newsletter after the closing date.

Christmas Midnight Mass

The traditional Christmas Eve celebration of Midnight Mass on BBC1 television this year comes live from the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul, Clifton, Bristol. The Bishop of Clifton, the Rt. Revd Declan Lang, will preside and the Mass will be introduced by Canon Bosco MacDonald, Cathedral Dean, who will also preach. The Mass will include some traditional carols sung by the Cathedral choir.

St Pancras School Carol Service

The proposed carol service in conjunction with St Pancras school had to be cancelled due to staff sickness. It had been hoped to reschedule this before the end of school term, but pressures of the curriculum and other activities prevented this. Instead, the school has put together a video of the children singing and reading as part of a virtual carol service. This video can be seen by following the link on the News page of the parish web site.

CAFOD World Gifts

In the run-up to Christmas, CAFOD's World Gifts are still available to provide all your fun and ethical gift needs. What's more, they've got an exciting new look which they hope you will love! With virtual gifts for as little as £4, you can change the lives of those living in poverty across the world, all from the comfort of your own home. They have added a delivery option to make it even easier to send World Gifts. Choose "Post Direct" when ordering your gift online and they will print your personalised message in your card of choice send it directly to your loved one. They have some inspiring new gifts to choose from this year - checkout the CAFOD web site at <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/> or follow the link from the parish web site.

Parish Development Project

Work continues apace on the construction of the new parish room. 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.

Advent & Christmas

Fr Mathew writes: "As we all know, we remain in tier 2 of the Covid-19 restrictions. We are going to have three Masses on Sundays: 8.00 am, 10.00 am and 6.00 pm just as we had before the pandemic and the lockdown. We are not taking bookings for these as we have never needed to turn anyone away so far. However, we are taking bookings for the Christmas Masses. Our Christmas Masses are on 24th at 5.00 pm and 25th at 8.00 am and 10.00 am. Please email bookings@marvmagdalens.org or use the contact form on the parish web site to book a place. IF WE HAVE SPACE at the Christmas Masses, we will not turn away anyone who has not booked. However, the best way to ensure your place is to book in advance.

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 Elvira Cucurrullo, Fr Alfred S Bull (former parish priest), Bernice Chaisty, Richard Fox, Richard Miller, Eric Mountford, Michael Dooley, Gordon Potter, Edward Marchant, Joseph Dodds, Claudio Fella and Winifred Fisher whose anniversaries occur this week.

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: Fourth Sunday of Advent: 20th December, 2020

Entrance Antiphon: Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

Collect: Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

First Reading: 2Sam. 7:1-5,8-12,14,16

The kingdom of David will always stand secure before the Lord.

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.' But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me; if he does evil, I will punish him with the rod such as men use, with strokes such as mankind gives. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."

Responsorial Psalm: Ps.88:2-5,27,29

Response to the psalm is: *I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.*

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord;
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,
that your truth is firmly established as the heavens.

I will establish your dynasty for ever
and set up your throne through all ages."

He will say to me: "You are my father,
my God, the rock who saves me."

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:

I will keep my love for him always;
for him my covenant shall endure.

Second Reading: Rom. 16:25-27

The mystery, which was kept secret for endless ages, is now made clear.

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son.

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

Prayer Over the Offerings May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through Christ our Lord.

Communion Antiphon: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Prayer after Communion: Having received this pledge of eternal redemption, we pray, almighty God, that, as the feast day of our salvation draws ever nearer, so may we press forward all the more eagerly to the worthy celebration of the mystery of your Son's Nativity. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.