

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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Catholic chaplain to the Ipswich hospitals: Fr Bineesh OCD ☎ 01473 684963
*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.*

The Second Sunday of Christmas: 3rd January, 2021

Sunday Readings: Year B. Weekday Readings: 2nd Week of Christmas

Services This Week

Sunday 3 rd –	8:00 am	Holy Mass
Second Sunday of Christmas	10:00 am	Holy Mass (Live streamed)
	6:00 pm	Holy Mass – The people of the parish
Monday 4 th	Christmas Feria	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass – Janes family
Tuesday 5 th	Christmas Feria	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass – Vieira family
Wednesday 6 th	The Epiphany	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass (Live streamed)
Thursday 7 th	Christmas Feria	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass
Friday 8 th	Christmas Feria	
	No Mass Today	
Saturday 9 th	Christmas Feria	
	10:00 am	Holy Mass
Sunday 10 th –	8:00 am	Holy Mass
The Baptism of the Lord	10:00 am	Holy Mass (Live streamed)
	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. The 10:00 Mass on Wednesday, the Feast of the Epiphany and normally a Holiday of Obligation, will also be streamed live.

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

Today's Gospel reading is a passage known to many. John clearly holds the incarnation as significant as he portrays it in such an important manner. His gospel is the only one that does not begin with the birth story of Jesus but instead it opens with a song of sorts, extolling the power of God becoming flesh and celebrates the grace that comes to all through Jesus Christ. It is part song, part poetry, and part prose and it is full of biblical allusions. In considering this text, two major questions arise. First, "Who came first, God the Creator or the Logos? Why does it matter?" And second, "What does it mean that God became flesh? Why would God put Godself into that kind of situation?" These types of questions often come about in discussing complex issues of life and faith. God was before time, in time, and outside of time. Time is different when discussing God and the incarnation. Jesus is the Word and the Word is also God. The Word gives light and life. And the Word is not always accepted. The Word was Jesus and the Word is the biblical text understood through the life and actions of Jesus. The Word is the embodiment of God in the world. God choosing to walk among us is one of the pivotal points in salvation history, which begins with the redemption of the Hebrew people and continues in the story of Jesus, his ministry with his disciples, and his death and resurrection). This point of Jesus being fully human and fully divine has been a bone of contention in history and continues to baffle some in the faith today. But it is one of the most important tenets of the faith - that God loved the world so much that God came to dwell among us, teach us, and die for us. The telling of Jesus' birth in simple and homely ways in Matthew, Mark and Luke make for powerful images and create a sense of connection we can see replayed every year in Christmas Pageants across the globe. But John goes another way. He utilises "grander theological declarations" in his Prologue to bring us into the story of salvation.

The Epiphany of the Lord

Wednesday is the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. It signifies a number of things. In the East, where it originated, it celebrates Jesus' birth and his baptism by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. In the west it is associated with the visit of the magi (wise men) to the infant Jesus when God revealed himself to the world through the incarnation of Jesus. What is emphasised is the "Revelation to the Gentiles" mentioned in Luke, where the term Gentile means all non-Jewish peoples. The Biblical Magi, (traditionally named Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar) who represent the non-Jewish peoples of the world, paid homage to the infant Jesus in stark contrast to Herod who sought to kill him. However, in this event there is also a revelation of God to the Children of Israel. Usually called the Feast of Theophany - meaning "God shining forth" or "divine manifestation", the focus of the feast is the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

The Baptism of the Lord : Sunday 10th January

Closely connected with the salvific events of the Epiphany are the mysteries of the Baptism of the Lord. The season of Christmas comes to an end with this feast. Jesus' public life begins with his baptism by John in the Jordan and marks the inauguration of His mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.' We are reminded of our rebirth as children of God in Baptism in which we rise from the waters of the sacramental font as children of God. For each of the baptised, the immersion in, or pouring of, water and the invocation of the Trinity is a real sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus, who in his own baptism anticipates his death and resurrection. The Christian must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus in order to rise with him, be reborn of water and the Spirit so as to become the Father's beloved son in the Son and 'walk in newness of life'.

Streamed Mass

With the significant recent rise in the number of Covid 19 cases and deaths in our region, the Government imposed the strictest Tier 4 Coronavirus regulations on Suffolk with effect from 00:01 Boxing Day. Under Tier 4 regulations, places of worship can remain open and there will continue to be Mass each weekday at 10:00 am and on Sunday there will be the usual three Masses at 8:00 and 10:00 am and 6:00 pm. The suspension of the Sunday Obligation to attend Mass which was introduced by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales last year, remains enforce, and with the new variant of the Coronavirus that has now been discovered, many people are understandably very nervous about leaving their homes to attend Mass, but equally many feel a conflict in not fulfilling a commitment that has always been part of their normal lives. In an effort to make our church available to as many as possible who cannot attend in person, the 10:00 Mass each Sunday is being streamed live and can be "attended" virtually from home by anybody with a smart phone, a tablet, a computer or even as TV as long as the device has an internet connection. The easiest

way to watch the streamed services is to go to the parish web site www.marymagdalesn.org and look at the Mass Times page where you will find a link. Simply click that link and you will be taken to the live stream, or if the live broadcast has already finished, you will be taken to the recording of it. Hopefully this will allow as many as possible to continue to join in the parish celebration of the Holy Mass even in these difficult times. If you have not already done so, we would ask that you subscribe to our YouTube channel. If we can get 100 or more subscribers, we can obtain a fixed channel identifier which will make watching much easier.

Fr Mathew

Thursday 7th January is the anniversary of Fr Mathew's ordination – he was ordained 23 years ago in 1998. We offer him our congratulations and thanks for his service to the church. Please remember him especially in your prayers this week.

Christmas Post

A number of cards remain in the narthex letter. 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.

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.

Parish Development Project

Work continues apace on the construction of the new parish room, with all the ground works now completed and the brick walls built to damp proof course level. The recent wet weather has meant the garden has been badly churned up by construction equipment, but this will be levelled and re-seeded once the building work is complete. It is hoped to have the building finished by Easter, but obviously this is dependent upon weather conditions and the availability of building materials with the current Coronavirus restricted supply chain. 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 of £15,000 which we will need to raise ourselves.



There is a letter from Fr Mathew to all parishioners which provides more information about this, which can be seen on the parish web site. This has been sent out to all parishioners for whom we have registered postal addresses. Copies are available in the narthex. If you are able to make a donation, it would be gratefully received and if

you are a tax payer, please Gift Aid any donation as this will increase its value by 25%.

St Pancras Church

The parishioners of St Pancras have been informed by Bishop Alan Hopes that Fr Joseph Welch will be taking over as priest at St Pancras from January 9th, and the temporary arrangement of cover by Fr Peter Raj and Fr Paul Vincent will be discontinued.

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 Richard Miller, Catherine Barrett, William King, John Galloway, Joseph Thompson, Rachel Abbott, Albert Richardson, Eleanor Chandler, Hugh Rodger, Vera Johnston, Timothy Downey, Regina "Queenie" Scott, and Godfrey Scholfield 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: The Second Sunday of Christmas: 3rd January, 2021.

Entrance Antiphon: When a profound silence covered all things and night was in the middle of its course, your all-powerful Word, O Lord, bounded from heaven's royal throne.

Collect: Almighty ever-living God, splendour of faithful souls, graciously be pleased to fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all peoples by the radiance of your light. 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: Ecc. 24:1-2, 8-12 *The wisdom of God has pitched her tent among the chosen people.*

Wisdom speaks her own praises, in the midst of her people she glories herself. She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High, she glories in herself in the presence of the Mighty One; 'Then the creator of all things instructed me, and he who created me fixed a place for my tent. He said, "Pitch your tent in Jacob, make Israel your inheritance." From eternity, in the beginning he created me, and for eternity I shall remain. I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle, and thus was established on Zion. In the beloved city he has given me rest, and in Jerusalem I wield my authority. I have taken root in a privileged people in the Lord's property, in his inheritance.'

Responsorial Psalm: Ps.147:12-15,19-20

Response to the psalm is: *The Word was made flesh and lived among us.*

O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!

Zion, praise your God!

He has strengthened the bars of your gates,
He has blessed the children within you.

He established peace on your borders,
he feeds you with finest wheat.

He sends out his word to the earth
and swiftly runs his command.

He makes his word known to Jacob,
to Israel his laws and decrees.

He has not dealt thus with other nations;
he has not taught them his decrees.

Second Reading: Eph. 1:3-6,15-18 *He determined that we should become his adopted sons through Christ.*

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence, determining that we should become his adopted sons, through Jesus Christ, for his own kind purposes, to make us praise the glory of his grace, his free gift to us in the Beloved. That will explain why I, having once heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love that you show towards all the saints, have never failed to remember you in my prayers and to thank God for you. May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Glory be to you, O Christ, proclaimed to the pagans; Glory be to you, O Christ, believed in by the world. Alleluia!

Gospel: John 1:1-18

The word was made flesh, and lived among us.

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness cannot overpower. A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. John appears as his witness. He proclaims: "This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me ranks before me because he existed before me." Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received – yes grace, in return for grace, since though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; it is only the Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Prayer over the Offerings Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings we make on the Nativity of your Only Begotten Son, for by it you promise the life of the heavenly Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord.

Communion Antiphon: To all who would accept him, he gave the power to become children of God.

Prayer after Communion: Lord our God, we humbly ask you, that, through the working of this mystery, our offences may be cleansed and our just desires fulfilled. Through Christ our Lord.