



St Mary
Magdalen
OXFORD

Parish Notes
June 2019

Services

Sundays

Eucharist at 8 am and 5.30 pm,
Matins 10 am High Mass at
10.30 am

Weekdays

Eucharist at 12.15 pm and 6.00
pm Morning Prayer 8.15 am,
Evening Prayer 5.40 pm

Confessions

Daily after the 12.15 pm Mass,
Wednesdays & Saturdays at
6.30 pm

Baptism, Confirmation,
Marriage by appointment with
the Parish Priest

Parish Clergy

The Reverend Canon Dr Peter Groves
(On Sabbatical)

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Website

www.stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

www.theschooloftheology.org

Events

St Frideswide Pilgrimage (Registration opens)

1st June

On Saturday 19th October 2019, Christ Church Cathedral is offering a day of pilgrimage to the Shrine of St Frideswide. Booking is essential, and is open from today. For more information and to register, please visit <https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/pilgrimage>

Mathieson School Concert at Merton

5th June

A concert with a difference will take place in Merton College Chapel on Wednesday June 5th at 8 pm. It is part of a tour celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the Mathieson Music School in Kolkata. Inspired by his own upbringing at the Oxford Mission school in Kolkata, professional cellist Anup Kumar Biswas founded the school on Christian principles to give destitute children the chance of an education and the ability to play and sing both classical Indian and Western music. He is now raising money for new buildings to allow the school to expand, so that even more children can be helped.

The concert, given by Anup and three other international soloists, will include music from Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Brahms, Broadway, Indian Classical and operatic arias. Tickets available on the door as donations to the Mathieson Music Trust, Kolkata; suggested £10 full, £5 concessions. Further information from Edith and Nicholas Coulton at emc@proscenia.co.uk

Jericho Comedy present 'An Improvised Funeral'

7th June

After performances in Leicester Cathedral and St Mary's Kemptown, Brighton, Jericho Comedy are bringing their exploration of mortality through the medium of an improvised funeral based on audience suggestions. 7.30pm in church.
www.wegotickets.com/event/466041

Fr Michael Farthing: 60 years a priest

16th June

Fr Michael Farthing was ordained on Trinity Sunday 60 years go. Today we gather to celebrate and give thanks for his ministry.

Fount and Origin 'Fumeaux Fume: Music from the Chantilly Codex' 20th June

A programme of dazzling French songs from the late 14th century, as well as the famous Messe de Notre Dame by the great poet-musician, Guillaume de Machaut (c.1300 – 1377) performed by this new early music vocal ensemble. 8pm in church.
<http://www.fountandorigin.co.uk/events/>

Scripture on Saturday

22nd June

Our monthly Bible Study mornings continue today from 10.30am. Susannah Peppiatt will lead.

Notices

This Petertide, a few of our alumni and friends are being ordained, including Steven Hilton (June 30, Manchester) and Alan Rimmer (29th June, London) to the diaconate, and Angus Reid (June 16, Chichester), Melanie Clark (June 22, Lichfield), Arabella Milbank (June 29, Lincoln) to the priesthood. Please pray for them as they prepare for their ordinations and, in the latter cases, their first masses.

Ascension Day A sermon by Mthr Mel Marshall

Perhaps you know this experiment. It uses two dolls. Sally has a basket, Anne has a box. Sally puts a marble in her basket. And then she goes away. While Sally is away, Anne takes the marble from her basket and puts it in her own box. Then Sally comes back again. Where will she look for her marble?

Most children, even quite little children, regardless of intelligence, know that Sally will look in the basket where she left it, and not in the box where it now is. They can track the idea of another mind. An autistic child is different. They will say: she'll look in the box. They don't track the mental states of other people. They only track the actual state of affairs.

There is something rather pleasing about this kind of literal-mindedness. And I have often wondered if Luke had autists in mind when he developed the character of his angels.

Think of the resurrection. The angels in the tomb, say to the dumbfounded women, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?". Ummm—because last time *we* saw him, he was dead. So we assumed, not unnaturally, that he would still be dead. Likewise in the telling in the Acts of the Apostles about the Ascension. Two angels appear: "You, Galileans—why are you looking up into the sky?" Ummm—because Jesus just vanished into the sky.

It is natural for humans to look for something in the most obvious place. The marble will be in the basket. The corpse will be in the tomb. The person who flew up into the sky will be—I suppose—in the sky.

But he isn't. That's why the angel's question is important. It provokes the disciples to consider. That perhaps they are looking for the right thing but in the wrong place.

Well, let's begin by sympathising with the disciples, let's enter into their state of mind. They have met God incarnate. They have seen this Jesus restored, returned to them alive after he was dead. So when he vanishes again they presumably expect him to come back. How long should they expect to wait? Three days? Three minutes? Three millennia? They don't know.

And then the angels appear. "Oh yes", they say, "he will be back. But you saw how suddenly he vanished? It will be just as sudden and unexpected as that. In which case, hanging around here looking at the sky probably isn't going to help you."

Well, what is going to help them? They are going to have to think back to Jesus's words and see how they help make sense of this departure.

The first thing to remember is that Jesus promised: I will never leave you or forsake you. And this is who our God is—God, the Lord, is the one who is with us and will be with us. That is as close to a translation of the divine name YHWH as we can get.

More than that. It is in the absolute nature of God to offer himself for us. And that he never, ever stops doing. The stable, on the cross, at the resurrection. These are God doing what God does. Always the same. All the time. Offering himself for us.

The ascension is really startling. It looks wilder than the stable, or the cross, even than the empty tomb. But whether ordinary, like a birth, or crazy, like vanishing into thin air, they are saying the same thing. This God, who is with us. Maybe he's with us in a different way from the one we thought. Maybe not as a power, but as weakness, the weakness of a tiny baby. Maybe not as success, but as failure, in suffering and agony and rejection of the cross.

So if Christ 'goes', if he vanishes in the ascension. Then it is not because he has abandoned us. It is showing us, yet again, that God is present to us in a way we don't expect. Jesus says: it's for your good that I go. He is more real for us, more present to us, by going than by staying.

How?

Well think of the Ascension. The disciples look into the sky. Nothing. Then they look at the angels. Then they vanish. And then what are they left to look at?

One another.

Oh yes. Plain old, ugly old, annoying old, one another. That fool who chopped off the guy's ear and denied the Lord three times. This one who refused to believe in the resurrection. That pair who walked miles with Jesus and didn't even know who he was. Them.

Forgive me if this seems too obvious to be worth saying, but I'm going to say it anyway. It is really easy to love the loveable. It's easy to love this one man Jesus Christ. Who loves us with a fierce unquenchable love. Who forgives us with abundant mercy. Who will never else us for forsake us. He is supremely loveable.

But therein lies a danger. Part of the risk of the incarnation. The risk that we might stay fixated on the one human being that perfectly reveals God. And then we would miss the deeper truth. That, however imperfectly, all human beings reveal God. If we stayed fixated on honouring the precious person of Christ, we might think that he was the only precious person who needs honouring.

Remember what Jesus says to Mary Magdalen in the garden? He says: "Do not cling to me" Maybe all us followers of Jesus are in danger of clinging to him. Singing *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* and getting all misty eyed about it. God is not impressed by this. Oh lovely Jesus. You never let us down. Not like this oaf next to me with the bad breath. Not like that vaunting twit who sings out of tune. This person's filling the

chalices wrongly and that person can't even spell. My boss, my lawyer, my ex-wife. And as for the church—they're the least loveable of all! Liars, hypocrites, homophobes, misogynists. Cowards. Not so easy to love.

The Lord says:

If ye love me (oh yes, we do Lord, we do!)

Keep my commandments. (Oh yes, we will Lord!)

And my commandment is? (Tell us Lord, tell us!)

That ye love (yes Lord, go on!)

One another.

I know an Irish mother of four, and whenever she was asked by one of her children what she wanted for her birthday, she would say “I want you four to be nice to each other”. If you've either had siblings or produced siblings you'll know what a slim chance there was of that.

Such a prosaic message from such an exotic feast. But it's a wake up call for those of us who keep hoping that love comes cheap. Do you know that passage in *Much Ado About Nothing* where Benedick and Beatrice are arguing, and she upbraids him for his lack of loyalty. “You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy!” she says. Friends: I am guilty of this, every day. I dare easier be friends with Christ than keep his commandments, love his people, God's children.

Twice a day, and thrice on Sundays, we gather. We leave our homes and offices behind: we listen, we pray, sometimes we sing. And at the culmination of this gathering, the glorified body of the Lord Jesus is made present, and the priest lifts it, high up into the air. And we, we men of Galilee, look up into the heavens. At the glorified body of Christ. And then the priest lowers it, and it's broken up, and divided among us, and chewed, and swallowed, and digested. And then, for all the other hours of that day and that week, there is no glorified body but us.

If Jesus had not ascended. If he were still on earth in his earthly body, he wouldn't have twelve people following him. Or even five thousand. It would be 2.2 billion. One human body has no possible use for the love and care that 2.2 billion Christians can offer. But 7 billion people contains enough hungry mouths and mourning souls to keep those 2.2 billion busy for a long time. Even unto the end of the age.

The Angels say: “men of Galilee, why are you staring into the heavens?: What they mean is: “If you want to see God in human flesh, why not start by looking at human flesh?”

Intercessions

Please pray for the long term sick and those in special need, among them:

Ann-Marie, Anna, Phoenix, David, Elizabeth, Di, Terry, Michael, Lucy, William, Joy, John, Bernard, Fr Michael, Conor, Mary, Margaret, Philip, Liam, Allan, Colleen, Jo, Sr Mary Bernard, Jean, Eleanor, Clifford, Christopher

Sunday readings

2nd June: Acts 7.55-60; Revelation 22.12-14, 16-17, 20; John 17. 20-26

9th June: Acts 2.1-11; 1 Corinthians 12.3-7, 12-13; John 20.19-23

16th June: Proverbs 8.22-31; Romans 5.1-5; John 16.12-15

23rd June: Genesis 14.18-20; 1 Corinthians 11.23-26; Luke 9.11-17

30th June: 1 Kings 19.16, 19-21; Galatians 5.1, 13-18; Luke 9,51-62

June 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time						1 Justin, M
Parish community						Steven, our Bishop
2 Seventh Sunday of Easter	3 Charles Lwanga and companions Ms	4 Feria	5 Boniface B M	6 Feria	7 Feria	8 Feria
Parish community	Those taking examinations	Missionaries	The PCC	Ordinands	The divine compassion	Religious communities
9 Pentecost	10 Feria	11 Barnabas Ap	12 Feria	13 Antony of Padua Pr Dr	14 Feria	15 Feria
Parish community	St Barnabas Jericho	Churches Together	The lost	Students	The Gatehouse	Bishops
16 Trinity Sunday	17 Feria	18 Feria	19 Feria Anointing at 6pm	20 Feria Anointing at 12.15	21 Aloysius Gonzaga R	22 Alban M
Parish Community	Oxford City Council	Vocations	Healing ministry	Oxford's hospitals	Pilgrims	Oxford Deanery
23 Corpus Christi	24 Feria	25 Feria	26 Feria	27 Feria	28 Irenaeus B M	29 Feria
Parish Community	The sacred priesthood	World peace	Biblical scholars	Theologians	Christian unity	Those being ordained