



St Mary  
Magdalen  
OXFORD

# **Parish Notes**

## **January 2026**

## **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**

We are in Interregnum just now,  
awaiting the appointment of a new Vicar.

### **Associate Priest**

The Reverend Dr Mel Marshall  
Telephone: 01865 436243  
mthrmelanie@gmail.com

## **Administration**

### **Parish office**

admin@stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

Phone: 01865 246143

### **Website**

www.stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

## **X**

Parish: @marymagsoxford

Choir: @magschoir

## **Facebook**

stmarymagdalen.oxford

## **Safeguarding**

The PCC is committed to making St Mary Magdalen's a safe environment for everyone. If you have any questions about safeguarding matters or wish to report a concern, a new Parish Safeguarding Officer is being appointed this month, so send an email to: [safeguardingsmmox@gmail.com](mailto:safeguardingsmmox@gmail.com)

## **Treasurer**

"Mary Mags Oxford costs £470 per day to run and is supported by your generous donations. We have to be self-funding. This means that we do not receive any funds other than the income we raise through planned giving, fundraising, etc.

We are constantly aware how the cost of living is affecting every one of us differently. We want you to know that we appreciate every penny you give and do not take your generosity for granted.

If you would like to discuss giving options, please contact the Treasurer, Oscar Riba-Thompson at [marymagstreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:marymagstreasurer@gmail.com)

## **Events**

### **PCC**

The next Parochial Church Council meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>** at 7pm in church. Please note that this is the new regular time.

## **Notices**

### **Interregnum**

The closing date for applications to become our new Vicar is Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>. It is now hoped that the process will be complete and the appointment confirmed in early May.

As we move towards the climax of this process, we ask that you hold all those involved, our Representatives, the Wardens and the PCC in your prayers. We offer for your use our Vacancy prayer.

*O God, who alone guides and guards the Church  
by your Spirit. Strengthen and encourage us  
in this time of uncertainty and opportunity, and inspire  
those who maintain our worship, and those engaged  
in the discernment and selection of a new incumbent.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.*

### **Volunteers**

Two ladies are stepping down for the time being, Jane Allingham who has church-watched for many years, and Susan Weavers who, among many other roles, has been on the door several Sunday mornings a year for an equally long time. We owe both a big debt of thanks. Would anyone like to have go replacing them? Please let Nigel know if you do. There will be plenty of help and advice to get you started. The church watching will be one two- or three-hour stint a week in the company of another, while the Sunday sidespersoning will be once every five weekends or so.

## **Sunday readings**

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January: Isaiah 60: 1-6. Eph 3: 2-3a & 5-6. Mat 2: 1-12

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January: Isaiah 42: 1-4 & 6-7. Acts. 10: 34-38. Mat 3: 13-17.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January: Isaiah 49: 3 & 5-6. Cor 1: 1-3. Jn 1: 29-34.

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January: Isaiah 8: 23-9:3. Cor 1: 10-13 & 17. Mat 4: 12-23

## Intercessions

*Please pray for the long-term sick and those in special need, among them: Sophie Brown, Eleanor Sartain, Corinna Lloyd Roe, Guy Westwood, Edward Llewelyn Jones, Susannah, Susan Weavers, Karen Jones, Graham Davies, Rene, Anna, Phoenix, Barbara Duncombe, Isla, Sarah Murray. Joyce Day.*

**If you would like any name added to this list (or removed from it, post recovery) ask [admin@stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk](mailto:admin@stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk). Please note that unless we are advised that the illness could be protracted, names will be taken off after three months.**

## Our Mary Mags

*Every month we highlight a feature of the Church (**Our Mary Mags**) or invite a member of the community to describe how and why they hooked up with it (**My Mary Mags**). This month, our Churchwarden Charl Engela continues his descriptions of the stained glass at Mags, turning to the main section of the window above the reredos of the main altar. It was installed in 1894, the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rededication of the church by St Hugh.*



## **The Resurrected Christ**

Christ is shown in glory, standing within an almond-shaped frame called a **mandorla** representing the meeting of heaven and earth, a doorway between the divine and the human; not bound by time or space, but radiant with eternal light. Yet his wounds are visible – and around him are the four figures from the foot of the Cross. This is not a mistake but a message. Victorian artists often combined Good Friday and Easter to teach that the Passion and Resurrection are one mystery: the same Christ who suffered now reigns victorious. His stigmata remind us that salvation came through the Cross, while the mandorla proclaims eternal life. The faithful witnesses on either side are those listed in John 19:25 – Mary his mother, John “whom Jesus loved”, Mary Magdalen, and Mary of Clopas – link sorrow to joy. They stood firm in grief and were rewarded with hope. Placing this scene above the altar draws our eyes to the Eucharist, which celebrates both sacrifice and triumph. The window compresses the story into a single vision: through the wounds of Christ come glory and the promise of resurrection.

### **Mary, the Mother of Jesus**

Mary is shown on the left, clothed in serene blue robes, to symbolise purity and faith. She is the mother who bore Jesus and now shares in his suffering. Her presence reminds us of steadfast love and the cost of discipleship.

### **John, the Beloved Disciple**

Beside Mary stands John, traditionally also understood as the Evangelist. He is often shown as a youthful figure without a beard, comforting Mary. John represents loyalty and spiritual family.

### **Mary Magdalen**

On the right, kneeling in devotion, is Mary Magdalen, the patron saint of our church. She was one of Jesus’ closest followers and the first to witness the Resurrection. She is shown gazing upward in love and grief. She reminds us of repentance, courage, and unwavering faith.

### **Mary of Clopas**

Next to Mary Magdalen stands Mary, the wife of Clopas. The early Christian writer Hegesippus (c. 110 - c. 180 AD) suggests she was Jesus’ aunt, and the mother of the disciple James the Less. Her presence shows that family and faithful friends stood by Jesus to the end.

## **Why these four?**

Together, they form a circle of love around Christ: his mother, his closest disciple, a devoted follower, and a loyal relative. In their courage and compassion, we see a model for our own discipleship – to remain faithful even when hope seems lost.

## **Poem of the Month**

### **The Darkling Thrush by Thomas Hardy**

I leant upon a coppice gate  
    When Frost was spectre-grey,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
    The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
    Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted nigh  
    Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
    The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
    The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
    Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
    Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among  
    The bleak twigs overhead  
In a full-hearted evensong  
    Of joy illimited;  
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
    In blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
    Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings  
    Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
    Afar or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
    His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
    And I was unaware.

The feeling of apprehension and curiosity we have as New Year comes and goes is all the more acute when it coincides with the turn of a century and looking back at this poem now from beyond the century it heralds, the yearning for “blessed Hope” about which Hardy writes seems even more unreal than it clearly felt to him at the time.

Originally to be entitled “By the Century’s Deathbed,” this was published in The Times on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1901 having appeared in The Graphic three days earlier. Death has reached so deeply into the opening landscape that frost is not white but “spectre-grey” and the people that are no longer there were like ghosts when they were as “haunted” suggests. Twilight is like the death of the day and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century a corpse. New Year Parties? No, because with instruments broken there is no music. Except “All at once” there is. Because all the doom and gloom provides a striking backdrop for the dramatic countermovement from the birdsong and the startling scale of that is then set against the comic contrast of its miniature source. The singular “voice” is given the power of “full-hearted evensong/Of joy illimited” so it is more like an angelic horde than a solo bird.

“Blast-beruffled” is a condition that characters in Hardy’s novels would understand well: he tortures so many of them with dreadful twists of fate. But his finessing of the subtle twists within this piece is utterly typical of the practices within his poems – and he wrote over 900. Their movements are as elegant as those of an expensive watch, with plenty of clever counterbalancing. Of all the poems we have considered so far, this is the most smooth-running. There is the occasional double beat, but the rhyming is perfectly tuned and there are none of the firecrackers we have seen breaking up iambic metre elsewhere. The underlying calmness persists. The “gloom” remains “growing”; the “Hope” maybe be sanctioned by God (“blessed”) but it only “trembled” into life and he “could think” that, which is not quite committing to admitting that he did think it, and whereas he imagines that the bird “knew” it, the final emphasis falls on how “unaware” the poet was. In other words, he is writing about our appetite for hope and jubilation sanctioned by religious fervour, he is not sharing the experience of it as Hopkins did when watching the Windhover. Given what actually followed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, maybe Hardy was right to hold back.



# January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1 Mary, Mother of God</b>	<b>2 Basil and Gregory Nazianzen Bs</b>	<b>3 Feria</b>
				Thanksgiving for the Incarnation	Steven our Bishop	Sarah, Archbishop-designate
<b>4 Epiphany</b>	<b>5 Feria</b>	<b>6 Feria</b>	<b>7 Feria</b>	<b>8 Feria</b>	<b>9 Feria</b>	<b>10 Feria</b>
Parish community	The homeless	The PCC	Oxford City Council	The Gatehouse	Colleges in our Parish	Servers and Sacristans
<b>11 The Baptism of the Lord</b>	<b>12 Aelred of Rievauls Ab</b>	<b>13 Hilary B Dr</b>	<b>14 Feria</b>	<b>15 Feria</b>	<b>16 Feria</b>	<b>17 Antony Ab</b>
Parish community	World peace	Universities	Oxford Deanery	Healing Ministry	Christian Unity	Religious Communities
<b>18 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>19 Wolfstan B</b>	<b>20 Feria</b>	<b>21 Agnes VM</b>	<b>22 Vincent D M</b>	<b>23 Feria</b>	<b>24 Francis de Sales B</b>
Parish Community	Confessors	Ecumenical Work	Children	Preachers	The faithful departed (Monthly Requiem)	
<b>25 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	<b>26 Timothy and Titus Bs</b>	<b>27 Feria</b>	<b>28 Thomas Aquinas Pr Dr</b>	<b>29 Feria</b>	<b>30 Feria</b>	<b>31 John Bosco Pr</b>
Parish Community	Bishops	College Chaplains	Theologians	The Appointment Panel	The King	Teachers