



St Mary
Magdalen
OXFORD

Parish Notes

March 2025

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
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Associate Priest

The Reverend Dr Mel Marshall
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Parish office:

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Website

www.stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

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, please talk to the Parish Safeguarding Officer **Peter Dockrill** or send an email to:
safeguardingsmmox@gmail.com.

Events

Scripture on Saturday

Our monthly online Bible studies continue on Saturday 1st March when we shall be carrying on our examination of John's first chapter. The group meets fortnightly, so there will also be sessions on 15th March and 29th March. The gatherings last from 10am – 11.30am and take place via Zoom, with the link circulated beforehand.

All are welcome, no previous experience or participation required.

Confessions before Lent

Mthr Mel will be in church to hear confessions on Tuesday 4th March at 11.30am and Fr Peter will be there at 6.30pm the same day. Fr Barry will be in church on Wednesday 14th February (Ash Wednesday) after the lunchtime mass, around 12.45pm. Other times are available by appointment.

Ash Wednesday

The first day of Lent falls on 5th March. There will be a Said Mass with Imposition of Ashes at 12.15pm, and a High Mass with Imposition of Ashes at 7.30pm. Please try to make attendance at mass a priority on this solemn day.

The Way of the Cross

As is usual, we shall mark Lent with a weekly service of Stations of the Cross, which will take the form of a meditative service in the Lady Chapel in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed. These services will take place on Wednesday evening at 7.30pm, the first being on Wednesday 12th March. Please consider making this part of your Lenten devotion.

Antiphon Concert

After the success of their December concert in church, Antiphon return on Saturday, March 15th from 7pm.

The Chamber Choir presents two contrasting masses from two iconic English composers: William Byrd's *Mass for Four Voices* and Herbert Howells' *Collegium Regale*. The programme will be embellished by stunning music from Thomas Tallis, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck and James Macmillan.

A date for your diary: Antiphon will be performing again with us on Saturday, June 28th

Oxford Lent Concerts

Please put these dates in your diaries: March 25th and April 1st and come be part of these extraordinary evenings in Queen's College Chapel, 6 for 6:15 – 7pm. You will hear a wide range of music by 13 composers dating from the 16th to the 21st centuries. All musicians are donating their time and talent.

The concerts are FREE with the voluntary retiring collection divided equally and in its entirety between Médecins sans Frontières and the Guideposts Trust [which supports people in Oxon, Glos and Herts with mental health problems, and dementia / carer support]. And along with the music we will be given the opportunity to reflect on contemporary icons by artists Alison Berrett, Nicholas Mynheer, Tim Steward and Roger Wagner,

Both the concerts will begin and end with magnificent settings of the words Vox in Rama, the biblical text most associated by the church with the service for 'Holy Innocents', which called to mind the story of the mothers of Bethlehem weeping for their children whom Herod's soldiers have killed (told in Matthew 2, itself echoing an earlier passage from Jeremiah 31, when Rachel is described as weeping over her children who are being transported into captivity in Babylon). For us in our day the lamentations over the death and deportation of children is sadly relevant.

Please consider coming to these concerts as part of your experience of Lent, and please invite your friends.

Poem of the Month

Holy Sonnet 14 by John Donne

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

Some imagine God as a kind of albino Father Christmas. In this astonishing sonnet, Donne addresses God first as a blacksmith, then as a military commander (hardly the first to do that) and finally as a sado-masochistic gay lover (which might make the podium). The reader can imagine God's reaction: "Oh for goodness sake calm down. Try a brief millennium on the Purgatorial Naughty Step, Johnny Boy." The poet is not approaching the Divine with gentle supplication, but stamping alternate feet like a toddler.

Is there another sonnet, in any language, so densely packed with stressed, monosyllabic verbs? There are nine in the first four lines, where seven verbs are imperatively bossing God around or criticising Him. You could see this as an Unholy sonnet or a not wholly Holy one. Donne is being even more impudent than he was when writing about love. A poet of twin towers, he stands out like a beacon in both the mediocre Penguin The Poetry of Sex and the Penguin Book of Religious Verse.

Some 17th Century poets were good at anger, but we would be hard-pressed to find so much of that in 14 lines of religious verse. Published in 1633, two years after Donne's death, this is one of 19 Holy Sonnets and

that is a set to which this feature of Parish Nones will return, dv ironically permitting.

The arrogant egotism of the poem's voice is breathtaking. We have 14 stressed first person pronouns – ie one per line on average. “Me, me” indeed. But of course, Donne's exasperation with God is born out of his exasperation with himself. This is like a demand for flagellation in the desperate pursuit of purity, which drives towards the gorgeous pair of paradoxes at the end, especially the bomb-drop of the final phrase.

The poet is demanding a battering but delivers one to the reader as well, especially in the opening quatrain where 26 syllables are stressed instead of the normally iambic 20. In other words, we get hammered. Then the twisting begins; the next three sentences all hinge on the word “but” with each shift quite violent because emphasis is still falling everywhere.

The traditional shift between octave and sestet with a change of mood and tone is there – “Yet dearly I love you” (in case God was beginning to wonder) – but that doesn't last long as he takes up ordering God around again.

For me, this is a wonderful dramatization of the twists and turns of self-assessment that that can take place during prayer as self-disgust and self-righteousness do battle. It projects the anxiety of a man desperately trying to sort himself out by demanding that God gives him a hand.

I need a lie down.

I'll dream of asking Donne if he can get his blacksmith or rather Blacksmith to finish our railings...

Intercessions

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

Jo Laity, Sr Mary Bernard, Sophie Brown, Pamela Rogers, Sophie, Adrian, Ann, Alison, Johanna Merz, Maggie, Michael, Gordon Scott, Michael Starford, Helen Bell, Jenny, Susan Barnes, Roy Dicker, John O'Leary, Jennifer Larcombe, Bob Guthrie, Eleanor Jamison, Anna, Phoenix, Elwyn Knight, Andrew Linzey, Sancha Maya-Rai, Vernon Porter, Helen Peramatzis.

Sunday readings

Sunday 2nd March: Ecclesiasticus 22.4-27; 1 Corinthians 15.54-58; Luke 6.39-45

Sunday 9th March: Deuteronomy 26.4-10; Romans 10.8-13; Luke 4.1-13

Sunday 16th March: Genesis 15.5-12, 17-18; Philippians 3.17-4.1; Luke 9.28-36

Sunday 23rd March: Exodus 3.1-8, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10.1-6, 10-12; Luke 13.1-9

Sunday 30th March: Josh 5.9-12; 2 Corinthians 5.17-21; Luke 15.1-3, 11-32

March 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 David, B
						Wales
2 8th Sunday of the Year	3 Feria	4 Feria	5 Ash Wednesday	6 Feria (Lent)	7 Perpetua & Felicity, Ms	8 Feria (Lent)
Parish community	Steven, our bishop	Confessors	Penitence	Oxford City Council	The persecuted church	Christian Aid
9 1st Sunday of Lent	10 Feria (Lent)	11 Feria (Lent)	12 Feria (Lent) Anointing at 6pm.	13 Feria (Lent) Anointing at 12.15	14 Feria (Lent)	15 Feria (Lent)
Parish community	Aid workers	Refugees	Healing Ministry	Oxford's hospitals	Schools	Students
16 2nd Sunday of Lent	17 Patrick B	18 Feria (Lent)	19 Joseph, husband of the BVM	20 Feria (Lent)	21 Feria (Lent)	22 Feria (Lent)
Parish Community	Ireland	The homeless	Family life	The PCC	Parish clergy	The shrine at Walsingham
23 3rd Sunday of Lent	24 Feria (Lent)	25 Annunciation of the Lord	26 Feria (Lent)	27 Feria (Lent)	28 Feria (Lent)	29 Feria (Lent)
Parish Community	Preachers	Thanksgiving for the incarnation	Choir and musicians	Peace in the Holy Land	Oxford Deanery	Sacristans and servers
30 4th Sunday of Lent	31 Feria (Lent)					
Parish Community	The Gatehouse					