

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

Holly Ryan, John Bason, Wendy Webb, Ann-Marie and Andy, David Games, Daniel Argov, Abigail, Melanie, Dan, Angela, Anna and Phoenix, Philip, Chris, Lewis, Timothy, Ilona Zimon, Steven Wiltshire, Jenny Hey, Julie, Michael, Sara Ali, John Cuff, Sue Goodall, Alex Underwood, Janet Semper, Peter Parsons, Richard Gurney, Brian, Martin, Ray Hey, Dick Thomas, Birthe Biddle

### **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

20th December

6:30pm Carols by Candlelight

24th December CHRISTMAS EVE

12.15 Said mass; 4pm Crib Service—NB No 6pm mass

11.30 pm Midnight Mass of the Nativity and Blessing of the Crib

25th December CHRISTMAS DAY

8.00 Mass; 10.30 High Mass

**CAROL SERVICE** On Sunday 20th December, at 6:30pm, we shall hold our annual service of carols by candlelight. This is an important opportunity for us to bring new faces into St Mary Magdalen's, and also to welcome some of the many thousands of people who pass through our parish whilst shopping, or whilst visiting historic Oxford. It is also a chance for us to make the most of the magnificent sound we have come to expect from our director of music, organist and choir. The high standard of music in our church is a significant factor in our continuing growth. Please make this carol service a priority (though not at the expense of Sunday mass!).

### **CONFESSIONS BEFORE CHRISTMAS**

Fr Peter will be in church for confessions:

Saturday 19th December 11.30am, Tuesday 22nd December 12.45pm, Thursday 24th December 12.45pm, or by appointment (247836).

**ADVENT SALE** The Advent Stall will be in church on 29th November after mass. Produce can be ordered through the forms available at the back of church. All proceeds go to parish funds, and the home-made fare on offer is of an extremely high quality.

**CHRISTMAS RAFFLE** Tickets will be on sale during Advent for the annual Christmas raffle, with a host of prizes available. The draw will be made after the High Mass on Sunday 20th December.

**COLLECTIONS FOR FLOWERS** There will be special collections at the end of mass in aid of the church flower fund on Sundays 6th and 13th December.

**ROAD CLOSURES** On Sunday 13th December several roads in central Oxford will be closed during the morning to facilitate a fun run in aid of Helen & Douglas House. Those who wish to drive are advised to park in or near Walton Street or the Beaumont St/ Gloucester Green car park.

**EVENING MASSES** There will be no 5:30pm mass on Sunday 20th December (the evening of the carol service), on Saturday 26th December (bank holiday) or on New Year's Eve, Thursday 31st December.

**ST MICHAEL'S CRIB SERVICE** complete with a real donkey, will take place on Monday 21st December at 3pm, and all are most warmly invited.

**ST MARY MAGDALEN'S CRIB SERVICE** Our own children's crib service will take place on Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24th December, at 4pm. All are welcome. If you have children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, neighbours and friends who might be interested, please come along and bring them with you.

**CHRISTMAS CARDS** Muriel Hunt will be selling Christmas Cards as usual this Advent in aid of church funds. A charity Christmas Card shop is open at St Michael at the Northgate.

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL** meets at 8pm on Wednesday 9th December in the Vicarage.

**CHRISTMAS STAMPS** Jenny Farthing's grandchildren are beginning their annual collection of Christmas stamps in aid of a good cause. Please keep the stamps from your Christmas cards and pass them on to Jenny at church.

**ST THOMAS THE MARTYR OXFORD** celebrates Sung Vespers of Our Lady and Solemn Benediction at 6pm on Saturday 5th December.

**ALL SAINTS CONVENT**, the community of which Sr Margaret Anne is a member, hosts its annual carol service on Saturday 19th December at 4:30pm. Members of St Mary Magdalen's are most welcome.

**GOING TO ROME?** Fr Peter's reflections on recent ecumenical events are below. In a different vein, we would like to know how many members of St Mary Magdalen's might be interested in a trip to Rome next summer (probably at the end of August and beginning of September, a little before St Giles Fair). A stay or six or seven days is what we have in mind. Please speak to the Parish Assistant, James Holden, or contact Fr Peter by email.

### **CROSSING THE TIBER?**

by Fr Peter

The announcement of a proposed "Apostolic Constitution" whereby the Roman Catholic Church will make special provision for former Anglicans has received much media discussion, but very little of that discussion has been well informed. Several very important things seem to have passed many people by. I offer below some reflections on those important issues.

First, this is a move directed not primarily at the Church of England but at ex-Anglicans, in particular the "Traditional Anglican Communion", a collection of breakaway churches which has been in conversation with Rome for a very long time. The very significant difference between these "ex-Anglican" churches and C of E parishes is that the ex-Anglicans own their church property, and are legally able to convert the building, as it were. This is not the case in England, where even the Archbishop of Westminster has made it clear from the outset that church buildings and other property such as vicarages will not have their ownership transferred. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States has enormous financial problems as a result of law suits brought by victims of clerical abuse. Any possible gain of resources by the church in the USA will not be idly spurned.

Secondly, the recent move has been greeted with dismay by many English Roman Catholics. In the weeks since the original announcement, it has become clear that the English and Welsh Bishops were not consulted about these developments, an act which has seen at least one leading Roman Catholic theologian denounce the move as un-catholic: the episcopal government of the church is fundamental to catholic

ecclesiology. Moreover, Roman Catholic Church's own ecumenical wing, the Council for Christian Unity led by Cardinal Kasper, has been similarly in the dark. Why? Because they—as ecumenists—would have been opposed to the move. As Archbishop Rowan said in his recent lecture, this initiative is a short term pastoral response to a particular situation, but has no long term implications for the development of ecumenical dialogue between the two communions.

Thirdly, there has always been a small group of Anglo-Catholics who are accurately described as “Anglo Papalist”. These clergy—many of whom are friends to many of us—see Rome and the Petrine Office as the only true sources of magisterial authority. Oxford's own Canon Judith Maltby pointed out on Radio 4 recently that they should “be careful what they wish for”. For Anglo-Papalists, already struggling deeply with issues of conscience, the reasons not to become Roman Catholics seem fewer than ever. It's a deep irony that the only significant concession on offer in the “Apostolic Constitution” seems to be the chance to continue using Anglican liturgical forms, when those in the Church of England most excited by the move use only the Roman Rite anyway! One might be so bold as to say that a bluff has been called. If one cannot accept the teaching and practice of one's own church, but longs to be joined to another communion, it would seem odd to spurn the invitation which has now been made. However, the life of a Roman Catholic priest—poorly remunerated, and subject to an ecclesial discipline quite foreign to many Anglo Catholics (many of whom are gay and have private lives kept entirely secret from their congregations)—is one which sometimes comes as a shock to those who have been used to the culture of the Church of England. And there's the rub.

What has changed as a result of this proposed Apostolic Constitution? Very little. Anglican priests wishing to become Roman Catholics will still need to be re-ordained (or, as some Roman Catholics would have it, ordained for the first time). Married priests will be allowed to minister as ordained Catholics, but of course they already can. Will clergy go over to Rome in large numbers? No more than would have anyway, and far fewer than the media would have one believe. The prospect of losing a large vicarage and having one's stipend cut by two thirds is not one relished by many Anglo Catholics, whatever their consciences may be telling them. Will clergy be able to take with them their church buildings and clergy property? Absolutely not.

More than anything, I would urge Catholic Anglicans not to worry about recent events, but to give thanks for the Roman Catholic church's welcome to those who belong within it; for the extraordinary progress of ecumenical work over many generations; and for the long term results of these latest developments which will, I am certain, prove more beneficial to the Church of England and its friends than to those (largely located in the media, it seems) who are foretelling its demise.

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### Sunday Readings

DECEMBER 6TH:	Baruch 5.1–9	Philippians 1.3–11	Luke 3.1–6
DECEMBER 13TH:	Zephaniah 3.14–18	Philippians 4.4–7	Luke 3.10–18
DECEMBER 20TH:	Micah 5.1–4	Hebrews 10.5–10	Luke 1.39–45
DECEMBER 27TH:	I Samuel 1.20–end	I John 3.1–2, 21–end	Luke 2.41–end.

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# ST MARY MAGDALEN

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**Services**  
**Sundays :** Eucharist at 8 am and 5.30 pm  
 Mattins 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

### Parish Clergy

The Reverend Dr Peter Groves  
 Telephone: Oxford 247836  
[peter.groves@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:peter.groves@theology.ox.ac.uk)  
 Sr Margaret Anne, ASSP  
 Telephone: Oxford 200479  
[margaretanne@socallss.co.uk](mailto:margaretanne@socallss.co.uk)

### Website

[www.stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk](http://www.stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk)

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## Calendar for December 2009

1	Tue	Advent	<i>John, our Bishop</i>
2	Wed	Advent	<i>Rowan, our Archbishop</i>
3	Thur	Francis Xavier, Pr	<i>Missionaries</i>
4	Fri	John of Damascus, Pr Dr	<i>Teachers</i>
5	Sat	Advent	<i>The homeless</i>
6	Sun	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	<i>Parish community</i>
7	Mon	Ambrose, B Dr	<i>Bishops</i>
8	Tue	Conception of the BVM	<i>Parents</i>
9	Wed	Advent	<i>Helen &amp; Douglas House</i>
10	Thur	Advent	<i>Parish fundraising</i>
11	Fri	Advent ( <i>6pm monthly Requiem</i> )	<i>The departed</i>
12	Sat	Advent	<i>Ordinands</i>
13	Sun	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	<i>Parish community</i>
14	Mon	John of the Cross, Pr Dr	<i>Spiritual Directors</i>
15	Tue	Advent	<i>Altar servers</i>
16	Wed	Advent : <i>anointing at 6pm mass</i>	<i>Healing Ministry</i>
17	Thur	<i>O Sapientia: anointing at 12.15 mass</i>	<i>Oxford's hospitals</i>
18	Fri	Advent	<i>Choir and musicians</i>
19	Sat	Advent	<i>The PCC</i>
20	Sun	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	<i>Parish Community</i>
21	Mon	Advent	<i>Sidespeople</i>
22	Tue	Advent	<i>Flower arrangers</i>
23	Wed	Advent	<i>The R &amp; D Trust</i>
24	Thur	Advent	<i>Crisis</i>
25	Fri	CHRISTMAS DAY	<i>Thanksgiving for the Incarnation</i>
26	Sat	Stephen, M	<i>Persecuted Church</i>
27	Sun	HOLY FAMILY	<i>Parish Community</i>
28	Mon	Holy Innocents, Ms	<i>Children in need</i>
29	Tue	Christmas (Thomas Becket, Bp M)	<i>St Thomas, Oxford</i>
30	Wed	Christmas	<i>World peace</i>
31	Thur	Christmas	<i>Thanksgiving for the year</i>

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