



St Mary  
Magdalen  
OXFORD

**Parish Notes**  
**February 2020**

## **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  
Telephone: 01865 247836  
peter.groves@theology.ox.ac.uk

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The Reverend Dr Jonathan Jong  
Telephone: 07799 271913  
jonathanjong@stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

The Reverend Prof Judith Brown  
Telephone 01865 514486  
judith.brown@history.ox.ac.uk

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### **Parish Administrator**

Dr Jonathan Roberts  
Telephone: 01865 246143  
admin@stmarymagdalenoxford.org.uk

### **Website**

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

[www.theschooloftheology.org](http://www.theschooloftheology.org)

## **Events**

### **Candlemas**

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February is the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. 10.30am - High Mass with blessing and procession of candles.

### **Pancake Party**

This will be held on Shrove Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> February at the Vicarage from 7pm. It will be combined with the film night which will consist of a screening of The Wizard of Oz at 8.15pm.

### **Ash Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February**

Said Mass 12.15pm, High Mass at 7.30pm. Ashes will be imposed at both services.

### **Confessions before Lent**

Fr Peter will be in church to hear confessions on Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 12.45pm and on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 12.45pm. Times for the other clergy will be advertised in the pew sheet.

### **Scripture on Saturday**

Our monthly Bible study mornings continue on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, when we shall be considering Hebrews 2-4.

All are welcome, no previous experience or participation required.

## **Notices**

### **Gatehouse Sandwiches**

We are making sandwiches for collection on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February. Details of preferred fillings can be found by the north door.

### **Vicarage Tea**

There will be no vicarage tea in February

### **Climate Sunday Coordinator**

Churches together in Britain and Ireland are seeking to appoint a project coordinator for *Climate Sunday*, a national event in the autumn aiming to enable churches to support bolder action on climate change. The role is part time for nine months. More information can be found at <https://ctbi.org.uk/wanted-climate-sunday-project-coordinator> or on the poster by the north door.

### **Palm Crosses**

We are now collecting last year's palm crosses in preparation for Ash Wednesday. There is a shoebox near the north door for these.

### **Fr Peter's Address for Fr Michael Farthing's Requiem Mass**

Anglicans are apt to enjoy nostalgia, and Anglo-Catholics particularly so. In a city as churchy as this one, it's all too easy to reach across the generations with tales of the great men and women who have lived and served the Christian faith and whose lives were closely bound up with the city and the county of Oxford. In this particular church, which dates back a thousand years and has lived through most of the upheavals of English Christianity, it's hard to be unaware of the past. But it's also essential to learn from it, and not simply to shrug one's shoulders and sigh that the days are gone when there were giants in the land.

Of the many words one might use to describe Michael, giant would not come very high on the list. I remember well a previous requiem mass in which we both participated - I felt these lovely black vestments were a little too long for me, but poor old Michael was practically at the stage of having to hitch up his skirts for fear of tripping over the sanctuary step. When I was licensed to this parish as priest in charge, I had several assisting colleagues who were well over six feet, and towered over me at the high mass. It was nice, from time to time, to have a deacon who made everything look in proportion, even if those proportions were pretty tiny.

But of course, in another sense Michael was a giant, and a giant of the Lord's own making. More than sixty years of priesthood, and a Christian life dating back to his infancy, saw him grow not just in faith and in years, but in the wisdom of the gospel which comes only with practice, with doing, the essential experience of living out the love of Christ in Christian ministry, and for which there is no possible substitute. As many of you know, we liked to tease Michael about his date of birth – the 29<sup>th</sup> February 1928. In 2012, he celebrated his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday having been eighty four years upon this earth. But that paradox, most ingenious as W.S. Gilbert calls it, came for me to reflect something essential about the priest who was known and loved in this place as in so many places before: his years, his knowledge and his experience were close to unrivalled, but his kindness, his generosity and his commitment remained always youthful because they were the outworking in his own life and person of the love of God which is eternally new.

Michael came to Christian ministry from an existing life of service, having joined the Royal Navy in the immediate aftermath of the second world war when global and political uncertainty continued to dominate. He spoke of the importance of his naval chaplains and the discipline of prayer in the formation of his own vocation. He went to Durham to study, and then came to Oxford to be trained under one of those aforementioned giants in the land, the great Fr Arthur Couratin of St Stephen's House. Serving his curacy at St Mark's in Marylebone he met a young member of the choir named Jennifer Woods, and the rest was history. Apart from that first parish, the whole of Michael's ministry was spent in this diocese of Oxford – Newport Pagnell, Standlake, Lower Windrush, Wheatley – and then at the Cathedral, and here at Mary Mags, and St Cross and countless other parishes and communities which benefited from his care and generosity. The memories we treasure today, of a loving husband and father and grandfather, of a priest and pastor and teacher, of a friend and colleague and mentor, are a part of our tribute to someone who gave so much to so

many. Personally, I will always be tremendously grateful for his gentle wisdom and support, offered fifteen years ago to a young and very inexperienced priest in charge: Michael never imposed anything, but his guiding hand, often almost unnoticed, saved me from many of the pitfalls of that inexperience. His and Jenny's friendship to everyone here, and especially to my children to whom they are second grandparents, is a gift which carries on giving in our thoughts and in our hearts.

But there is much more than memory to celebrate. It would be easy to say that they don't make them like they used to. Michael represents a generation in the life of our country as well as in the life of our church to which we all owe an enormous amount. The exemplary model of priesthood he displayed has been an inspiration to younger clergy and ordinands literally for decades, and how fitting it is that the first woman to serve as a bishop in our diocese was guided and nurtured in her vocation by Michael more than thirty years ago. The world which he knew and in which he ministered is in some ways distant from us, and we might mourn for a time when the church's face and presence in the communities of our country was personified by Michael and his ilk. But at the same time, nothing is lost, because the faith which Michael lived and taught is a faith for the here and now, a gospel of love and of hope which transcends the rose tinted visions we are so ready to conjure. No matter how keen we are to look back, the truth remains that there is nothing nostalgic about the love of God, nothing old fashioned about his grace and presence in our lives.

That grace and that love were not just the reason for Michael's ministry, they were the very content of that ministry. Christianity does not call us away from the world to a remote and distant heaven, it proclaims the good news of heaven on earth, it celebrates the God who is with us in the child of Bethlehem and the preacher and healer from Nazareth. Everything Michael did as a priest – every mass celebrated, every sermon preached, every baby baptised, every couple married, every sick person anointed, every lonely person visited, every child affirmed and taught, every parishioner supported and upheld, every hospital ward attended, every deathbed sat beside, every soul commended to God, every mourning family comforted – every one of these things is nothing other than the love of God lived out in our world and in our lives, lived out in the ministry of the church which is the body of Christ, and through the sacred order of the priesthood to which Michael was called more than sixty years ago.

As we celebrate God's love in the life of our departed brother, we are marking the end of a life. But we are also celebrating the end of a life, not end in the sense of termination, but end in the sense of purpose or goal. Michael's life was directed by, and directed towards, the love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Easter faith which Michael proclaimed sustains and assures us that if there is an end of things, it is only the end, the goal, of the love which will not be contained and bursts the realms of emptiness and death. The Hebrew name Michael means: who is like God? The answer was Michael's whole life.

### **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**

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February: Malachi 3.1-4; Hebrews 2.14-18; Luke 2.22-32

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February: Isaiah 58.7-10; 1 Corinthians 2.1-5; Matthew 5.13-16

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> February: Ecclesiasticus 15.15-20; 1 Corinthians 2.6-10; Matthew 5.17-37

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February: Leviticus 19.1-28; 1 Corinthians 3.16-23; Matthew 5.38-48

## February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1 Feria</b>
						Steven our Bishop
<b>2 Presentation of the Lord</b>	<b>3 Feria</b>	<b>4 Feria</b>	<b>5 Agatha V M</b>	<b>6 Paul Miki and companions Ms</b>	<b>7 Feria</b>	<b>8 Feria</b>
Parish Community	Justin our Archbishop	Oxford City Council	Churches Together	The church in Japan	Monthly requiem	Spiritual directors
<b>9 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year</b>	<b>10 Scholastica V</b>	<b>11 Feria</b>	<b>12 Feria</b>	<b>13 Feria</b>	<b>14 Cyril and Methodius B</b>	<b>15 Feria</b>
Parish Community	Religious communities	Peace in the Holy Land	Healing ministry (anointing at 6pm)	Oxford's hospitals (anointing at 12.15)	Europe	Ember day
<b>16 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year</b>	<b>17 Feria</b>	<b>18 Feria</b>	<b>19 Feria</b>	<b>20 Feria</b>	<b>21 Feria</b>	<b>22 Feria</b>
Parish Community	Sacristans and servers	Christian unity	The PCC	Famine relief	Confessors	Preachers
<b>23 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year</b>	<b>24 Feria</b>	<b>25 Feria</b>	<b>26 Ash Wednesday</b>	<b>27 Feria</b>	<b>28 Feria</b>	<b>29 Feria</b>
Parish Community	Assistant clergy	Theologians	The homeless	Ecumenical work	Teachers	Oxford Winter Night Shelter