



*Drawing by John R Hume,
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St Mary Magdalene's Church

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PARISH MOTTO - 'THE BEST IS YET TO COME'

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD 7th of JANUARY 2024

Dear Parishioners and Friends of our parish,
we are so happy that you could join us today to
celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord.

Who were they, these three men we call magi? Were they kings? Popular tradition refers to them as the three kings, and maybe they were. Certainly, their gifts were those one king would offer to another. The title "king" was used rather loosely in the ancient East. They may have been more similar to the medieval counts or dukes. Were they astrologers? Well, not astrologers in the sense of Madame Take-your-money, who says whatever she figures would keep her cash flow solid. But they were astrologers in the sense that they studied the sky looking for the sign that the Golden Age would begin.

Perhaps, they were more astronomers than astrologers. Certainly, they were wise, wiser than most men. They were willing to leave their lands, their comforts, and journey to find the great King whose birth was announced by the star. And, how about this King Herod? Who was he? He was to be known as Herod the Great. His son, Herod Antipas, would be the king who would put John the Baptist to death and mock Jesus. The first Herod built up much of Jerusalem, including the new Temple, a wonder of the ancient world. This Herod was a fierce politician. His family came from the Roman province of Idumea, and had been pagan themselves. They became Jewish in order to rule in Palestine under the protection of Rome. So Herod was always suspected by the Jews as being a Jew in name only, but not committed to Yahweh. In 40 BC the Roman Senate declared that Herod was vassal king in Palestine, answering ultimately to Rome. Herod

For today's Mass

Responsorial Psalm

All nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

We saw his star as it rose
and have come to do the Lord homage.



spent most of his reign trying to protect himself from being overthrown. His own family was not safe from his paranoia. He sent his wife and son into exile.

When his young brother-in-law was becoming too popular, he had a "drowning accident" in what archaeology has shown to be a rather shallow pool. Herod also had three more of his sons killed when he suspected them of plotting against him. Many modern writers repeat the probably apocryphal story that the Emperor Augustus remarked, "It is better to be Herod's pig than his son." So when the three magi called on Herod and asked where is the new born King of the Jews was, all that Herod could hear was that once more his power was being challenged. You can understand the phrase, "He was greatly troubled and all Jerusalem with him." That he would send his soldiers to kill all the children born in the vicinity of Bethlehem is in perfect keeping with how he protected his reign. Herod was a man of the political world, fiercely holding onto his power. The magi were men devoted to finding the King announced by the star, even though they did not know who this King was or exactly where the star would lead them.

Herod was a Jew in name but a pagan in all things. The Magi were pagans in name, but acted like sincere Jews seeking the One who was the summit of God's Plan for mankind. Where exactly are we going to find Him? We really don't know. He

may be in marriage. He may be in the priesthood or religious life. He may be in the life of the single determined to spread Christianity. He may be in a career. He may be in our caring for a sick spouse or relative. He may be in the outcast who reach out for us. He is in all these and countless more places. If we are wise, we will spend our lives seeking Him out, wherever He is. But if we are attune to God's Word, He will set us straight and direct us to the course we need to follow. "Where am I going with my life?" we ask ourselves. Ideally, our answer should be, "I am going to Jesus, wherever He might be." "When will I get there?" we also might ask.

And we answer, "I will get there when the Lord decides that the journey of my life is complete." For none of us has arrived at the goal of fully embracing the Lord. We need to keep searching for Him throughout our lives. After all, our lives are journeys of love. There are always new places to find love. We will all get to our Bethlehem's if we are open to God's call. And, so, we journey, not alone, but guided, guided by an interior star, the voice of the One we love who calls to us deep within ourselves. And we go "without discerning and with no other light except for that which in our hearts is burning." We pray today for the wisdom to seek the Lord.

Have a wonderful week— wishing all of you a happy and healthy New Year!

Fr Bogdan SDS

PRAYERS

Please prayer for the repose of the souls of all whose anniversaries occur about this time.

Eternal rest grant unto their souls, O Lord. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Thank You!!!

We thank you for your spectacular generosity. Your generous support of our Parish and your help with the needs of our community is greatly appreciated!

Collections

31st December 2023 – £766.00.

Today our Second Collection is for Justice & Peace

Priest's Musing

Adam was walking outside of the Garden of Eden with his young sons, Cain and Abel. The boys looked into the garden and viewed waterfalls, lovely birds, lush forests, and trees covered with fruit. Then they took a long look at where they were living. It was dry and dusty with weeds and sickly looking trees. "Daddy, why don't we live in there instead of out here?" they asked innocently. Adam said, "Well sons, Eve and I used to live in there at one time. But your mother ate us out of house and home."

Gift Aid Boxes

New Gift Aid envelopes for the year 2024 are now available for collection in the porch. Thank you for your continued support.

Thank you

Many thanks to all who worked hard to make our parish Christmas Masses worthy and fitting. Special thanks to our organist Eileen Williamson and the ashers. A very sincere thanks and gratitude to all those who offered me Christmas wishes, prayers, cards offerings and gifts. I wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year 2024.

Fr Bogdan

Healing Service / Blessing of the Sick

It was proposed that a quarterly Blessing of the Sick should be held during the 10am Sunday Mass. The next blessing will take place during Mass on 21st January 2024.



Anointing of the sick

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

"Is anyone among you sick? They should call for the priests of the church, and he will pray over them and anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise them up. If they have committed any sins, they will be forgiven" — Letter of St. James 5:14-15.

Suffering and illness affect us in body and spirit. If one member suffers in the Body of Christ, which is the Church, all the members suffer with that member. In times of frailty, sickness, treatment, or surgeries the parish family assures the infirmed of our care and support through our prayer, personal visits and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is for all who face a serious illness or surgery or who are impaired by old age. It is distinct from the "Last Rites," or Viaticum, in which the Church offers Holy Communion as food for the journey to life eternal. One may celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick many times if needed for strength and healing in mind, body and spirit. In this sacrament of anointing, Christ strengthens our faith and bestows God's grace in a time of anxiety and pain.

Noveritis

Dear brothers and sisters, as we have rejoiced at the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, so, by leave of God's mercy we announce to you also the joy of the Resurrection of He Who is our Saviour.

On the fourteenth day of February will fall Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten season.

On the thirty-first of March, you will celebrate with joy Easter Day, the Paschal feast of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the ninth day of May will be the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the nineteenth day of May, the feast of Pentecost.

On the second day of June the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

On the first day of December, the First Sunday of the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SAINTS DAYS THIS WEEK

Monday 8th January
Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Tuesday 9th January
1st Week of the Year

Wednesday 10th January
1st Week of the Year

Thursday 11th January
1st Week of the Year

Friday 12th January
1st Week of the Year

Saturday 13th January
Feast of St Kentigen (Mungo)

ARE YOU GOING TO BE IN HOSPITAL? DO YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS IN HOSPITAL?

Name _____ Hospital _____ Ward _____

Please complete/ tear off and hand it to Fr Bogdan after Mass