



*Drawing by John R Hume,  
courtesy of Scotland's Churches Trust*

# St Mary Magdalene's Church

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**PARISH MOTTO - 'THE BEST IS YET TO COME'**

## 5th Sunday of the Year 4th February 2024

Dear Parishioners and Friends of our parish, we are so happy that you could join us today to celebrate the 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Jesus lived in a world of problems. Emperors, kings and dictators routinely abused their subjects. The Jewish people particularly suffered. Some of this they brought on themselves. They didn't seem to understand that they had been conquered by Rome. They went out of their way to challenge the conquerors whenever they could. And then it would be routine for them to be tortured to death by crucifixion. After the Romans put down the First Jewish Revolt from 66-74 AD, it is said that they ran out of timber to use for crosses. Debtor prison, something we do not have now, was a reality back in the time of the Lord. People would be thrown into the prison, perhaps even tortured while they were there. Their frantic family would have to find a way to come up with money to get them out. Slavery was not just a racial reality as it would be in later centuries. Anyone could be enslaved, particularly as part of a conquest. And then there was sickness. There was so much sickness, so much misery. We read in the Gospels people suffering from leprosy, paralysis, epilepsy. We hear about the blind and the deaf. We even hear about a lady with a delicate personal problem. It is no wonder that large crowds of people continually pressed on Jesus pleading with Him to heal them. And Jesus did heal many people, lepers, a man with a withered arm, cripples, and many, many more. Notice, though, what Jesus did before he healed people. He prayed. He prayed to His Father. His human nature stayed in touch with his divine nature as he went off to a deserted place to pray. And His prayers were answered with such power that



he could heal. We do not know the reasons why there are so many problems in the world. We do not know why good people suffer. We do not know why children die. We do not even know the extent of suffering around us. What we do know is that if we keep a union with God, we can see all difficulties for what they are, temporary. "This too will pass," the wise say. And so we meet challenges head on knowing that God will fight with us, helping us win the battle here so we can join him in the eternal celebration of His victory. And so, we pray. We welcome the spiritual into our lives.

We welcome the Presence of God into our lives and witness Him strengthening our faith life. And we witness the power of prayer. Over and over again I hear people tell me stories of how they or their loved ones survived and grew closer to God due to prayer. One of my doctors had to step aside from his practice because he became severely ill. His doctors told him that he probably would not survive. "But," he told me, "people prayed for me. And I have benefitted from a miracle." I have witnessed people being healed through the sacrament of the sick. And how many people have gone to healing services and been healed? It is not the person who leads the service who does the healing. The healing is due to the power of God answering prayers. Scores of people pushed against Jesus. They wanted to be healed. Jesus knew that sickness was not part of the Father's plan. These people were suffering the result of man's choosing death over life, choosing to push God aside in favor of the material

world. They were innocent as individuals, but they all suffered from mankind's guilt. Jesus' heart went out to them. He hurt for them. He healed them. Jesus heals. He heals the pain not just of the people of the past, those people we hear about in the Gospels. Jesus heals the pain of the people of today. Some receive physical healing immediately. Others receive healing in stages. All who call out to the Lord are healed. Some are healed physically. Some are healed emotionally, able to accept their condition in life. All receive spiritual healing as they unite their pain to the Cross of Christ. We who carry Christ within us, carry within us the one who heals. If we believe in Him, if we trust in Him, then we refuse to join Job's cry of despair. We recognize that Christ is present when we need Him the most, healing our internal and our external turmoil. We need to remember: we are not alone. Jesus is always with us. The last words of the Gospel of Matthew are so important: "Know that I am with you always until the end of time." He is here to protect us from the doubts and despair. He is here to give us the courage to walk with Him over the threshold to a new life. Today all of us are told that when we are suffering, in any manner whatsoever, we must reach out to the presence of God. We believe that He is present for us; that He is with us.

Have a wonderful week – stay well. Please keep me in your prayers as you all are always in mine.

Fr Bogdan SDS

### For today's Mass

#### Responsorial Psalm

Praise the Lord  
who heals the broken-hearted.

#### Gospel Acclamation

He took our sicknesses away,  
and carried our diseases for us.

## PRAYERS

For our departed parishioners, friends, and family members, and for Christie Hart and Mairead Ni Flatharta who died recently and for Adam Martin and Mary McAdam and 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

28th January 2024 – £739.50.

Organ Fund - £ 829.00.

## Priest's Musing

*Late one Saturday evening, a woman was awakened by the ringing of her phone. In a sleepy voice, she said "Hello?" The party on the other end of the line paused for a moment before rushing breathlessly into a lengthy speech. "Mom, this is Susan and I'm sorry I woke you up, but I had to call because I'm going to be a little late getting home. See, Dad's car has a flat but it's not my fault. Honest! I don't know what happened. The tire just went flat while we were in the theater. Please don't be mad, okay?" Since she didn't have any daughters, she knew the person had misdialed. "I'm sorry, dear," she replied, "but you've reached the wrong number. I don't have a daughter named Susan." "Gosh, Mom," said the young woman, "I didn't think you'd be this mad."*

## Knock Pilgrimage

Escorted Tour to Westport, Knock & Co Mayo, 10th March 2024. £899.00 pps. Price includes flight, 10kg hold luggage, 5 nights' in 4\* Castlecourt Hotel, Westport with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Lunch on three days. All entertainment, excursions and transport included. Visit

Knock, Galway City, Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick & Ashford Castle. Single supplement on Enquiry. Contact Patricia or Natali on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com. More information you can find on the poster in the church porch.

## World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer, which is held annually, will take place in St John the Baptist Church, Melville Street, Perth on Friday 1st March 2024 at 11.30am. This year the theme is "Bear With One Another in Love" and has been prepared by a group of Palestinian Christian Women. The call to bear with each other in love, despite all difficulties and oppression, is particularly meaningful in view of the current war in Gaza. All are very welcome to attend.

## Explore - A Retreat for Young Women

Thinking about a vocation to the religious life? Join other young Catholic women to chat and explore God's will in monthly get-togethers in Edinburgh. Led by Sr Mirjam Hugens FSO, Vocations Director for religious vocations, the first get-together takes place on Sunday 28 January, 4-7pm at St Columba's, 9 Upper Gray Street, Edinburgh.

It is a chance to pray, share and discuss in a relaxed environment, and refreshments will be served. The series continues each month at the same time/venue on 25 Feb, 17 Mar, 21 Apr, 12 May, 22 June. To register or find out more about exploring religious life, please email Sr Mirjam on religiousvocations@staned.org.uk

## The Unseen Embrace

During World War II, there was a soldier named Desmond Doss. He became legendary not for wielding weapons, but for saving lives without them. As a medic, Doss saved the lives of countless men in the Battle of Okinawa, all while under heavy enemy fire. His faith forbade him from carrying a gun, so he carried men instead. Many of us face inner conflicts where fear, doubt, and despair besiege us.

Like soldiers in an unseen war, we fight against these forces, often feeling overwhelmed and alone. But, just as Doss carried wounded soldiers to safety, God promises to lift and carry us through our inner battles. In our darkest

## SAINTS DAYS THIS WEEK

**Monday 5th February**  
Memorial of St Agtha, virgin and martyr

**Tuesday 6th February**  
Memorial of St Paul Miki and Companions Martyrs

**Wednesday 7th February**  
5th Week of the Year

**Thursday 8th February**  
5th Week of the Year

**Friday 9th February**  
5th Week of the Year

**Saturday 10th February**  
Memorial of St Scholastica, virgin

moments, when we feel besieged by life's challenges, it's hard to sense the presence of a divine carrier. Yet, this is precisely where faith steps in. Faith is the realization that even in our deepest distress, we are not forsaken.

Like Doss, who persisted through danger out of a sense of duty and faith, we too are called to trust in the unseen arms that carry us. God's way of lifting and carrying us can be subtle and unexpected. It might come through the encouraging words of a friend, the unexpected resolution of a problem, or a moment of peace in chaos. These are not coincidences but manifestations of divine love and support.

St Augustine wisely said, "Trust the past to the mercy of God, the present to His love, and the future to His providence." To actively engage with this divine support, it's essential to cultivate a habit of mindfulness and a life of prayer. In the rush of daily life, take a moment to pause and acknowledge the presence of God. In acknowledging, we open ourselves to receive the strength and comfort that comes from being spiritually carried by Him. The challenge for us is to remain open to this divine intervention, to recognize it in the small, everyday miracles that fill our lives.

Fr Bogdan

**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