

# PARISH NEWS

## Parish Office in Tier 4 Restrictions

The Parish Office re-opens on 4<sup>th</sup> January to email traffic and to telephone calls 01424 210 263 opt 4. The Parish Office is not open to personal callers in Tier 4.

## Christmas Masses

Thank you to the stewards who helped facilitate eight public Masses in our Churches and Halls. From the track and trace we can report that 299 people were able to join us publicly and many others have accessed our parish Masses Live on Facebook or afterwards on You Tube. Fr Simon & Fr Rajesh thank you for your cards, greeting and Christmas offering.

## St Mary Magdalene School Forms

If you still have a supplementary information form for Fr Simon to sign, he will be available at the Presbytery Porch at 9am on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

## First Holy Communion 2020 & 2021

We will not set new dates for the delayed 2020 First Holy Communion celebration whilst we are in Tier 4 restrictions. Fr Simon will release a more detailed statement next week. **However**, as preparation for Holy Communion usually takes several months, we invite applications for 2021 children, found at the sacramental section of the parish website:

[First Holy Communion – Catholic Parish Of Bexhill \(stmmbexhill.co.uk\)](http://stmmbexhill.co.uk)

## Communal Worship in Tier 4 & Review of Stewarding

The government have confirmed that communal worship may continue in Tier 4 providing that we remain vigilant to the requirements of **contract tracing, social distancing** (*including no household mixing in or outside the Church*), **face coverings** (*ideally one that covers both mouth and nose rather than a shield which does not provide the same level of protection*) **cleaning and sanitizing of the Church.**

To this end, we conducted our regular monthly review of stewarding and due to availability of stewards, we need to adjust our public Masses for the month of January 2021. With immediate effect, the **6pm Saturday Vigil Mass at St Martha's** and the **10am Tuesday Mass at St Mary Magdalene Church** will not be celebrated publicly during January. The intentions will be celebrated privately or via Facebook Live, depending on which priest is available.

Bishop Richard wrote to the clergy: ***"I am conscious that some parishes will be finding it difficult to maintain the numbers of stewards required and that this new tier level may produce a degree of nervousness for some people. It is to be hoped that some additional stewards can be found to enable the celebration of Masses to continue."***

Therefore, if you can join a stewarding team please contact the parish office. As stewards clean, they need to be under 70 and have no underlying health conditions either individually or in the household. Ideally, they will have also received some safeguarding awareness training either through the parish or another recognizable organization. At the end of January, we will complete a further review of stewarding to see what is possible for February. The view from December tells us that the *11am and 6pm Masses on Sunday are at risk* and need additional stewards to join and strengthen the teams. Best wishes and prayers, Fr Simon.

**We pray for those who have died:** Eileen Mary Furnell RIP, Tom Lowry RIP, Brian Maher RIP, Ella Louise Searle RIP, Jean Pearce RIP and Lem Murphy RIP.

**We pray for the sick:** Roy Cox, Margaret Pink, Margaret Hitchman, Martin Stiles, David Spooner, Doreen Turner, Lem Murphy, Martin Murphy, Linda Scully, Janie Butcher, Samuel Barden.

### The Epiphany of the Lord (6<sup>th</sup> January 2020)

Last year, the Bishops of England and Wales received Vatican approval to return the Feast of the Epiphany back to its proper day of 6<sup>th</sup> January, restoring the obligation that goes with it. Of course, due to the pandemic, the obligation to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy Days remains suspended until further notice. Whilst Communal Worship is permitted in Tier 4, many parishioners may not be able to attend Mass due to the current restrictions on numbers allowed at Church, and so, Fr Simon offers this reflection:

Three events mark out the Epiphany of the Lord: *the visit of the Magi, the Baptism of the Lord, and the changing of water into wine at the wedding of Cana*. Above all, however, it is the visit of the Magi that captures our imagination and often dominates Christmas Greeting Cards. St Matthew calls them wise men, and tradition gives them the names, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.

The Magi do not belong to the chosen people of Israel, but God chooses them to come to Bethlehem. They are not political watchers but are astronomers who watch the sky at night, a sign of our prayerful attention towards the heavens. In December 2020, the planets of Jupiter and Saturn aligned and were (despite the clouds!) visible from the earth. This conjunction is rare and may well have been the Bethlehem Star which was followed by the Wise Men. They are not simply seeking knowledge but something (or someone) who will bring order to chaos, in fact, the one who brings light to the darkness.

Wise people are always on a quest for the divine and we should be on our guard not to be led astray by 'stars' who promote pride, selfishness or arrogance. Happiness is not found in wealth, status, or celebrity but only in Jesus Christ, the one through whom all the stars were made. This is a reminder to us that we do not look for our fortune in 'astrology'; we are not interested in what our star sign or horoscope is but instead we put our trust in Jesus Christ, our King, our Lord, and our God.

Many would laugh at these Wise Men humbling themselves before an infant in the manger. It all seems childish, but these are wise men who have studied the philosophical disciplines of the day, have consulted the scriptures, and so recognise what they have searched for. The gifts that the wise men bring are not practical and with earthly eyes we would hope for a gift receipt so that we could return them to the store for a refund or exchange them for something we really wanted for Christmas. These gifts, however, have a deeper theological significance: gold for a king, frankincense for God, and myrrh to signify his sacrificial death. What should we offer God? The carol '*in the bleak midwinter*' tells us, poor though we are, that we should offer God our hearts. Indeed, as instructed: '*lift up your hearts*', '*we lift them up to the Lord*'.

**Parish Clergy:** Fr Simon Dray, Fr Rajesh Minz, Deacon Simon Kirkdale  
**Administrators:** Bonita Osmond-Maher & Lisa Young  
**Safeguarding:** Sylvia Cousins

Just like the Magi before us, we should come and adore the Lord, prostrating ourselves before Him, for *‘it is right and just our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give him thanks’* for our redemption. The Eucharist we celebrate is our thanksgiving, and as Pope Benedict XVI wrote: *‘whenever applause breaks out in the Mass because of some human achievement, all sense of the Liturgy has been lost’*. That is because above all else, what is being offered in the Mass is Jesus to the Father: *‘to you therefore most merciful father, we make humble prayer and petition, through Jesus Christ our Lord’*. Today, we celebrate the Son of God who appears in a human body, truly sharing our flesh to restore it to its proper dignity of sharing in his eternal glory. As we move into 2021, may we ask for the intercession of the Magi as we sing: ***‘O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to Thy perfect light’***.

***On the Epiphany of the Lord, in keeping with an ancient practice, the Church announces the moveable feasts of the coming year:*** “Know, dear brothers and sisters, that 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 his Resurrection, who is our saviour. On the 17<sup>th</sup> day of February will fall Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten season. On the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April you will celebrate with joy Easter Day, the paschal feast of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of May will be the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May the feast of Pentecost; on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of June, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. On the 28<sup>th</sup> day of November the First Sunday of the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Baptism applications** can still be submitted: [www.stmmbexhill.co.uk/baptismal-from/](http://www.stmmbexhill.co.uk/baptismal-from/) You will then be directed to the online preparation.

**Non-Urgent Pastoral Visits to the Housebound:** If you need the Sacraments please contact the Parish Office on 01424 210263 or email [stmm@btconnect.com](mailto:stmm@btconnect.com) to make an appointment for a priest to make a one-off visit. Please let us know of any COVID concerns.

**For Mass offerings & other payments: BACs:**

**Name: St Mary Magdalene, Account No. 21077139, S/C 40-05-20**

<b>Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> December</b> St Mary Magdalene	<b>Feast</b> 10.00am	<b>St Thomas a Beckett, Martyr</b> Public Mass: on 850 <sup>th</sup> anniversary
<b>Wed. 30<sup>th</sup> December</b> St Mary Magdalene	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Day</b> 10.00am	<b>Octave of Christmas</b> Public Mass: Edna & Fred Herring RIP
<b>Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January</b> St Mary Magdalene	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Day</b> 6.45pm	<b>Octave of Christmas</b> <b>No Mass today</b>
<b>Friday 1<sup>st</sup> January</b> St Mary Magdalene	<b>Solemnity</b> 12noon	<b>Holy Mary, Mother of God</b> Public Mass: Hilda Alexander RIP
<b>Green Collection Envelopes available at the above Mass to support the clergy</b>		

**Epiphany Blessing:**  
On the lintel of your door,  
mark with chalk:  
**20+C+M+B+21**

As we inscribe the  
entrance of our homes with  
the names of the Three  
Wise Men and the Year  
may our homes know the  
protection of God.

**Parish Office**

Remains closed to casual callers.

All enquiries:

[stmm@btconnect.com](mailto:stmm@btconnect.com)

**Sacrament of the Sick**

**Urgent Requests**

**Last Rites does not mean Last Minute!**

As soon as a person begins to be in danger of death because of illness, injury or old age, the time for anointing has surely already come.

[stmm@btconnect.com](mailto:stmm@btconnect.com)

01424210263

opt. 4 Office

opt. 3 Fr Simon

opt. 2 Fr Rajesh

(back up your call with an email message)

**Hospital Visits**

For **DGH Eastbourne & Conquest Hastings** you must contact the Conquest Chaplaincy on 01424 757088 who co-ordinate all visits to both hospitals (out of hours ask the Ward to call the on-call Catholic chaplain). For **Bexhill Hospital**: contact Fr Rajesh on 01424 210263

**Care Home Visits**

You must first clear the visit with the Home before contacting us to arrange a visit. We will discuss with you / the home as to what is most appropriate.

**Home Visits**

Please contact us above to discuss the most appropriate response. A member of the family bubble should be present when a priest visits, stepping out of the room for Confession.

*The Sunday Obligation remains suspended*

**Parish Mass Diary and Intentions**

Facebook Live: [www.facebook.com/stmmbexhill](http://www.facebook.com/stmmbexhill)

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January**

St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene

Facebook Live (Vigil)

**Memorial Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen**

10.00am Public Mass: David & Claire Ryan RIP

10.30am Confessions & Adoration

6.00pm Intentions of the Young, Bourne & Mistry families

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas**

*Eccl. 24,1-2, 8-12, Eph 1:3-6, 15-18 & John 1:1-18*

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January**

St Martha's

St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene

**Public Masses**

9.00am Eileen Furnell RIP

11:00am Jean Pearce RIP

6.00pm Pro Populo

**Second Collection: Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC)**

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January**

Facebook Live Mass

**Ferial Christmas Weekday**

10.00am Holy Souls

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January**

Facebook Live

**Ferial Christmas Weekday**

10.00am Intentions of Catholic Women's League

**Wed. 6<sup>th</sup> January**

St Mary Magdalene

**Solemnity THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

10.00am **Public Mass:** Brian Keavney RIP & Ian Keavney RIP

**Like Sundays, the obligation to attend Mass on "Holy Days" is suspended**

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January**

St Mary Magdalene

**Ferial Thursday after the Epiphany**

11.30am Requiem Mass: Ellen Mary Walsh RIP (30 Family & Friends only)

St Mary Mags. School

St Mary Magdalene

- Epiphany Mass for the Children

6.45pm **Public Mass:** Colin Brignall RIP

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January**

St Mary Magdalene

**Ferial Friday after the Epiphany**

10.00am **Public Mass:** Pearl Lucy RIP

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January**

St Mary Magdalene

Facebook Live (Vigil)

**Ferial Saturday after the Epiphany**

10.00am **Public Mass:** Cyril Hanson RIP

6.00pm Cesidio Capaldi RIP

**The Baptism of the Lord (B)**

*Alternative Readings for Year B: Is. 55:1-11, 1 John 5:1-9 & Mk 1:7-11*

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January**

St Martha's

St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene

**Public Masses**

9.00am Holy Souls

11:00am Nellie Irwin

12.30pm Baptism of Vienna Rexha

6.00pm Amalia Young RIP

**Second Collection: Parish Charity Fund**

**Parish Offertory**

A simple way to donate (+gift aid) online via Diocesan Website:

<https://abdiocese.churchsuite.com/donate/>