

OUR LADY'S,
ST JOHN'S WOOD &
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY,
MARYLEBONE

54 Lodge Road, NW8 8LA
020 7286 3214
parish.rcdow.org.uk/stjohnswood
parish.rcdow.org.uk/marylebone
<https://www.facebook.com/ourladysjw>



SERVICE TIMES

St John's Wood

Sunday Mass

6:00pm (Sat), 9:00am (Sung),
10:30am (Sung Latin),
12noon (Sung),
6:00pm

Weekday Mass

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
10:00am
Thursday 7:00pm
Friday 10:00am
Saturday 10:00am

Confessions

Saturday 10:30am - 11:00am
5:15pm - 5:45pm

Adoration

Saturday 10.30am-11.00am.

Marylebone

Sunday Mass

6:00pm (Sat), 11:00am (Sung)

Weekday Mass

Monday
Wednesday & Friday 12:30pm

Confessions

Saturday 5:15pm-5:45pm

Adoration

Saturday 3pm-5.30pm

+ THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
PAGE 115 - YEAR C - 5 JANUARY 2025

The Gifts of the Magi

Every year, stories of the worst Christmas gifts bring a bit of post-holiday cheer—or horror. This year, highlights included a husband's well-meaning but ill-advised 2-in-1 recycling bin for his wife "to encourage her" to think of the planet and a boss's motivational masterpiece: a framed photo of herself.

The Wise Men, however, avoided the pitfalls of Christmas panic buying. Their gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, might strike us as unusual for a newborn, but they weren't thoughtless. Instead, they reveal profound truths about Christ and the life He calls us to live.

Gold is the tribute of property to a king. The Magi recognized Christ as their King and knelt in homage. Likewise, we're called to surrender our hearts and lives to His reign. Our lives should be lived guided by his teaching and his desires, not just our own.

Frankincense symbolizes worship. Its fragrant smoke, rising heavenward, is a visible act of reverence. True worship isn't just ritual; it is how we draw closer to God. The Magi's offering prefigures the perfect worship of the Mass, where we join in Christ's redemptive sacrifice.

Then there's myrrh—an embalming resin. Strange, perhaps, for a baby, but deeply prophetic. The Christ Child would one day suffer and die for the sins of the world. Myrrh reminds us to unite our own struggles with His. Whether it's a sore back, a broken heart, or the anguish of receiving a "motivational" photo from your boss, Christ invites us to bring our pains to Him. He can transform even our suffering into something redemptive.

And here's the beauty: the Magi didn't bring their gifts to impress, but to express their faith, hope, and love. They were strangers bearing offerings for someone they knew nothing of, yet they got it exactly right.

Unlike that infamous recycling bin or framed photo, the Wise Men's gifts still inspire us. They teach us how to live as Christians: serving our King, worshiping Him as God, and offering our sorrows to the Man of Sorrows. This Epiphany, let's follow their example, and perhaps think twice about giving office supplies or self-portraits next Christmas.

And on that subject, God bless you, and thank you from all of us, for your thoughtful Christmas gifts and generous offerings. *Fr Alex*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Parish Clergy

Canon Kevin Jordan

kevinjordan@rcdow.org.uk

Fr Alex Balzanella

alexanderbalzanella@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Sister

Sr Brigid Collins, RSM

brigid@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Administrator

Kathleen Reddington

stjohnswood@rcdow.org.uk

marylebone@rcdow.org.uk

Bookkeeper (both parishes)

Asha Stephen

stjohnswoodbookkeeper

@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Reps

Frances Uchea (St John's Wood)

stjohnswoodsg@

safeguardrcdow.org.uk

Valeria Naipan (Marylebone)

marylebonesg@

safeguardrcdow.org.uk

Musical Director (St John's Wood)

Martin Toyer

martintoyer@rcdow.org.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Religious of the Assumption

invite single women (18-30s)

to a discernment weekend

in Rome

from 31 January to 2 February.

For more information or to register,

email: vocations@assumpta-eu.org

before 20 January 2025.

Annual Mass of Our Lady of Lourdes

Saturday 8 February, 2:30pm at

Westminster Cathedral

celebrated by the Cardinal and will

include anointing of the sick.

Full details to follow.

PARISH NOTICES

Crib Offerings will be donated to the Catholic Children's Society. Envelopes are also available which allow any donations to be gift aided. The cribs will remain in the churches until Candlemas (the Presentation of the Lord), 2 February 2025.

'Westminster Year Book' 2025 is now available priced £5.50 from the repository.

SVP Foodbank Collection takes place in St John's Wood next weekend. Please leave non-perishable items on the table in the porch. Thank you for your support.

First Holy Communion Programme

Our Lady's candidates - the programme continues, Saturday 11 January from 12:00pm—1:00pm in the Upper Hall at St John's Wood. Our Lady of the Rosary candidates - the first class will be at 9:45am on Sunday 12 January in the Lower Hall at Marylebone.

English conversation group takes place in the Lower Hall at St John's Wood on Monday 13 January from 10:00am. The group meets regularly to provide an opportunity for people to improve their English in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. New students, tutors and helpers are especially welcome. Please contact Lois Darley: lois_darley@hotmail.com 07761 590 240.

Mass Intentions. The Sacrifice of Christ brings our prayers right to the heart of the Father. There can be no greater gift for another person. If you would like one offered, please either take a Mass offering envelope from the church and place it in the collection or contact Kathleen stjohnswood@rcdow.org.uk or 020 7286 3214. The minimum offering suggested by the Diocese is £10 per Mass. Payment can be made online or in cash.

Chalk Blessing An ancient Epiphany tradition is to ask God's blessing on our homes and on those who live in it or visit it, to invite Jesus to accompany us in our comings and goings, conversations, work and play, joys and sorrows. We will bless the chalk at Mass and you join in as follows:

V. Our help is the name of the Lord:

R. The maker of heaven and earth.

V. The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in.

R. From this time forth for evermore.

When the prayer of blessing is complete, take a piece of chalk home and mark the lintel (top) of your front door (or the porch step) as follows: 20 + C + M + B + 25 while saying: "The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son who became human two thousand and twenty years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen." As well as being the names of the three Magi, CMB is an acronym for *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house," the "+" sign representing the cross and 2025 being the year.

Finally, offer the following prayer: "Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen."

Confirmation Programme for both parishes continues on Sunday 19 January from 4:15pm—6:00pm in the Upper Hall at St John's Wood for those who have registered already. The sessions conclude with 6:00pm Mass at Our Lady's.