

Presbytery

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**ST MARY MAGDALEN
CATHOLIC CHURCH**
**DECEMBER - MONTH OF
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**
YEAR C
20 DECEMBER 2015
4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mass Times

Monday—Thursday: 9:30am

Friday: 9:30am,
6:30pm

Saturday: 9:30am, 6:30pm (Vigil
Mass of Sunday)

Sunday: 9:00am, 10:30am,
12:00 noon, 6:30pm

Sinhalese Mass

Last Sunday of the month: 4:30pm

Eucharistic Adoration

Weekdays: One hour before
morning Mass

Saturday: 8:30am—9:30am
5:30pm—6:15pm

First Friday 7:00pm—8:00pm

Confessions

Saturday: 10:00am—10:30am
5:30pm—6:15pm

What's The Point?

This is a favourite line of one of my priest friends. It smacks of despair but he's really a very optimistic chap. That question is very important with regard to the Visitation—the journey of Our Blessed Lady to her cousin Elizabeth—which is today's Gospel.

To put it in context the Annunciation has just taken place and knowing that she is expecting the Son of the Most High, Mary—a very young woman—makes the treacherous journey to the hill country of Judah to visit Elizabeth who is six month's pregnant with John the Baptist. At the end of this story (although we don't read that far today) St Luke tells us that she stayed with her "about three months." (Luke 1:56) Why? Why make the journey? And why leave when she gives birth? You would think that would be the time that she needs help the most. Indeed, we might well ask, "What's the point?"

The answer is in what these women bear—not gifts of gold or frankincense or myrrh, or a pair of novelty socks, but their children—the Christ and the greatest of all the prophets. As soon as Elizabeth hears Mary's "Hello!" or whatever, she is filled with the Holy Spirit and John the Baptist leaps in her womb. This overwhelming indwelling of the Third Person of the Trinity has implications because of the unity of a mother and her unborn child—for the former it is a great blessing but for the latter, as yet unexposed to the possibility to sin, it cleansed John the Baptist of the stain of Original Sin. As to whether the Holy Spirit filled him or his mother first and then filled the other is irrelevant since they are one—pro-abortionists "Go figure" as the Americans would say.

Hence the Visitation is about proclamations—of the Divinity of Jesus Christ in the womb, Mary as Theotokos (God-bearer), John the Baptist as the last and greatest prophet even from within the womb. Why Mary goes there and when she leaves are of no significance in the face of these truths. The story simply serves to shout the enormity of God's gracious mercy towards humanity and love for us in a child, God made man.

Last Tuesday with the Confirmation candidates I spoke about how the course teaches the faith, the necessity for weekly Mass, the role of a sponsor, etc. Two of our catechists then spoke eloquently of how the candidates will come to know Jesus Christ better and deepen their relationship with Him. It was brilliant. I had missed the point.

We shall all make journeys over the next two weeks bearing thoughtful gifts for those we love and be very helpful when we are there. But how long would it take for us to greet our hosts with a word about the reason we're there at all—because of Emmanuel, God-with-us? That's the point. Happy Christmas and may God bless you all. *Fr Kevin*

Those who are sick: Tim Ryan, Josephine Nylon, Peter Corcoran, John Cattigan, Ena Rosario

Those who have died recently: Patricia Breen

Those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Lola Toyloy, Gertrude Jarmulowicz, Dennis Mulligan, Helen Casey

Those Baptised: Chloe Abena-Hemaa Gyekye

Parish News

Collection. Last week's collection was £1,829.40 (excluding standing orders). Thank you very much for your generosity.

Confessions. Confessions will be heard by a visiting priest today, Sunday, 9:30am to 11:00am and at additional times in the week.

Repository. Advent candles, Church art calendars, cribs, Christmas cards, Mass bouquets, the 2016 Westminster Year Book and other items are on sale. 'Also, *A Pilgrimage Companion*' for the *Year of Mercy* can be purchased now for £1.

Christmas Rotas. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and readers should indicate their availability on the lists at the back of the church today. Servers should check with their parents and then indicate their availability on the lists in the sacristy. Thank you for your ministry throughout the year.

Tea/Welcomers' Rotas are in the rack in the Sacristy.

Christmas Services. Please take home one of the leaflets which are in the rack in the porch, detailing the times of services over the remainder of Advent, Christmas and the New Year.

Tea and coffee. You are welcome in the Annexe after the 9:00am and 10:30am Masses when we will be serving drinks. Do take this opportunity to meet your fellow parishioners.

Can You Spare Just an Hour a Week Once a Month? We need more people to help count the collections. Full training on procedures will be given by the Diocese in the New Year. Please talk to one of the clergy to take part in this important work.

Church cleaning. Kindly note that the church will be closed immediately after the 9:30am Mass on Tuesday 22 December 2015 to enable the floors to be polished. Thank you.

Ashford Place. The monthly collection of non perishable food stuffs only, for Ashford Place, takes place next weekend.

Bidding Prayers

During the 'Year of Mercy' the Cardinal has requested that we say the 'Hail Holy Queen' prayer after the bidding prayers instead of the 'Hail Mary':

Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy!
Hail our life, our sweetness, and our hope!

To thee do we cry, poor banished
children of Eve, to thee do we send
up our sighs, mourning and weeping
in this valley, of tears.

Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
thine eyes of mercy toward us; and
after this our exile show unto us the
blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus;
O clement, O loving, O sweet virgin Mary.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God
that we may be made worthy of the
promises of Christ.

Amen.

Funeral Notice

The Reception and Requiem Mass of the late Patricia Breen of Church Road will take place on Monday 21 December 2015 at 12:30pm followed by cremation at West London Crematorium at 2:15pm

May she rest in peace

Diocesan News

Volunteers needed for CAFOD. Do you have good public speaking skills and want to help tackle poverty and injustice? CAFOD needs more volunteers to speak in parishes and/or schools about its work in the developing world. To find out more and book a place on the next "Understanding CAFOD" training day on Saturday 23 January 2016, please use the online booking facility at <https://understandingcafod2016.eventbrite.co.uk>. Alternatively, you can telephone CAFOD on 020 8449 6970, or email westminster@cafod.org.uk.

The annual Mass in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes in this 'Year of Mercy' will take place in Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 6 February 2016 at 2:00pm. The Sacrament of the Sick will be administered during the Mass by the bishops and priests. If any parishioners will be attending in a wheelchair, please let the parish office know by Friday 29 January 2016 to ensure that the appropriate space is reserved for you in the Cathedral.

Vinnie Packs. The *Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)* are distributing 12,000 Vinnie Packs containing cold weather essentials to the homeless and those spending the principal part of their day on the streets. Each pack contains thermal gloves, socks and gloves, a toothbrush, toothpaste, emergency foil blanket, information card and pen. They would be very grateful if you could sponsor packs at a suggested donation of £3.25 per pack. Donations can be sent to Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ with cheques made out to SVP or go to virginmoneygiving.com and type "SVP" into the charity section. Vinnie Packs is in the "Campaign" drop down box. Thank you for your support.

Catholic Singles is an organisation which helps single adult Catholics of all ages meet, either one to one or through social events. Please telephone 0161 941 3498, visit the website www.catholicsingles.org.uk or email info@catholicsingles.org.uk.

Responsorial Psalm and Acclamation

Antiphon: God of hosts, bring us back; let Your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!

Parish Diary

Monday

7:00pm

Prayer Group meeting in the Annexe