

St Mary's Monthly News

March 2016



From the Parish Priest

One of the things I love about being a Christian is the annual cycle or timetable of our faith. I enjoy keeping the feasts and festivals which mark out the ebb and flow of the year. The holy season of Lent leads us to the drama of Palm Sunday and we have the daily devotions of Holy Week to prepare us for Easter. At St. Mary's we have a rich diet of services which help us to enter more deeply into the presence of God and to feed our souls. It is important that we prepare well for Easter so that when the great day of Resurrection comes we are ready to celebrate the defeat of death and the promise of eternal life with all our hearts and minds and souls. On Easter Eve make a special effort this year to be at the Easter Vigil. We gather around a bonfire outside the church, we light the Easter Candle, we enter a dark church and we retell the story of salvation by candle light. Eventually we sing the Gloria, bells ring and we rejoice that Christ has risen! It is a wonderful service and, for me, is the high

point of our life together. It is followed by a party at the Rectory and we drink champagne as we celebrate together. Celebration is important in our parish and at the end of April we are holding a week of Celebration. We are calling the last week in April our week of 'Going Deeper'. During that week there will be a series of events which celebrate what God is doing in our parish and which aim to inspire us for the next stage of our journey together. As Lent comes to a close and as you prepare to celebrate Easter, thank God every day for the blessings of your life, thank God for the gift of faith and thank God for St. Mary's. Make Holy Week 2016 and our week of 'Going Deeper' the time when your faith sets your life on fire with the love of God and when your life changes for ever and for good.

With love, Chris (Parish Priest)

Mary around the Globe



This month's image of our Patron Saint is from Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) in Vietnam. Notre Dame Cathedral was established in Saigon by French colonists in the late 19th Century, with all building

Free or by Donation

materials being imported from France. The statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, made in granite from Rome, was added in 1959. Next month, this picture series ends with a final image from St Mary's Church, Prestwich.

Remaining events in our Parish **Year of Mary** are as follows:

Sunday 6 March at 1030 – Mothering Sunday Eucharist

Wednesday 6 April at 1000 – Eucharist for the Annunciation

Sunday 10 April at 1030 – Closing Eucharist for the Year of Mary.

The outstretched arms of Jesus



Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the United States writes:

*"Our commitment to be an inclusive church is not based on a social theory or capitulation to the ways of the culture, but on our belief that **the outstretched arms of Jesus** on the cross are a sign of the very love of God reaching out to us all ... the belief that the words of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians are true for the church today: All who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, for all are one in Christ."*

Holy Week in the Holy Land



The "Cenacle room" in Jerusalem (pictured above) is believed to be where the Last Supper took place. The Cenacle is on the upper floor of a two-storey building within the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. Above it is the minaret of a Muslim mosque; immediately beneath it is the Jewish shrine venerated as the Tomb of King David. A prayer for Maundy Thursday (24 March), when we commemorate the Last Supper: *God our Father, your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end and drank the cup prepared for him: may we who share his table watch with him through the night of suffering and be faithful.*

The Name of God is Mercy



The Name of God is Mercy is the title of a new book in which Pope Francis reveals his vision of God's mercy: "To follow the way of the Lord, the Church is called on to dispense mercy ... The Church

does not exist to condemn people, but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy."

The Roman Catholic Church has declared a **Jubilee Year of Mercy** in 2015-16. More information can be found at ww.im.va



3-Minute Retreats invite you to take a short prayer break at your computer screen. Spend some quiet time reflecting on a Scripture passage, and respond in prayer. You can receive a link to each day's Retreat by email. Sign up on the website to have these prayer breaks delivered to your inbox every morning. A mobile app is also available. Why not consider using these during Lent? For more information, go to www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer.htm.



The Christian publishers SPCK have launched a new series of short books aimed at enquirers and those new to Christian faith. Titles include ***What is Christianity*** (by Rowan Williams) ***Why Go to Church*** (by John Pritchard) and ***Why Read the***

Bible (by Tom Wright). Each book is priced at £3.99. More information can be found at www.spckpublishing.co.uk.



All are welcome to celebrate Holy Week & Easter at St Mary's

Sunday 20 March

1030 Palm Sunday Eucharist, with Procession & Passion Gospel

Monday 21 March

1930 Stations of the Cross

Tuesday 22 March

1930 Eucharist & Homily

Wednesday 23 March

1000 Eucharist

1930 Eucharist & Homily

Seder Meal at St Margaret's

Thursday 24 March

1930 Eucharist of the Last Supper followed by Vigil of Prayer until midnight

Friday 25 March

1200 Walk of Witness

1400 Liturgy of the Cross

Saturday 26 March

1930 Easter Liturgy, followed by celebration Champagne Party

Sunday 27 March – Easter Day

0800 Eucharist

1030 Sung Eucharist & Baptisms

Pre-School Praise is for parents and carers with babies and toddlers from birth to pre-school age. Bible stories, singing, prayers, craft activities, home-made cakes & refreshments.

Thursdays 1000-1100 during term time. £1 per household.

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Diary Dates

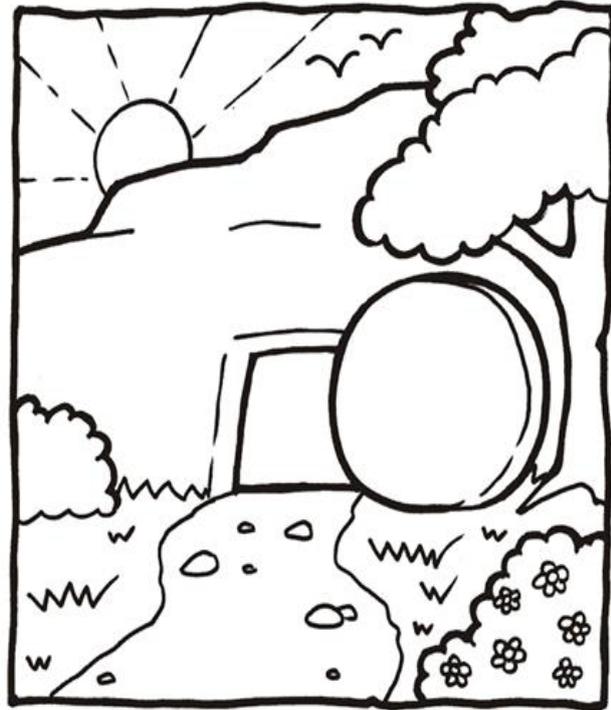
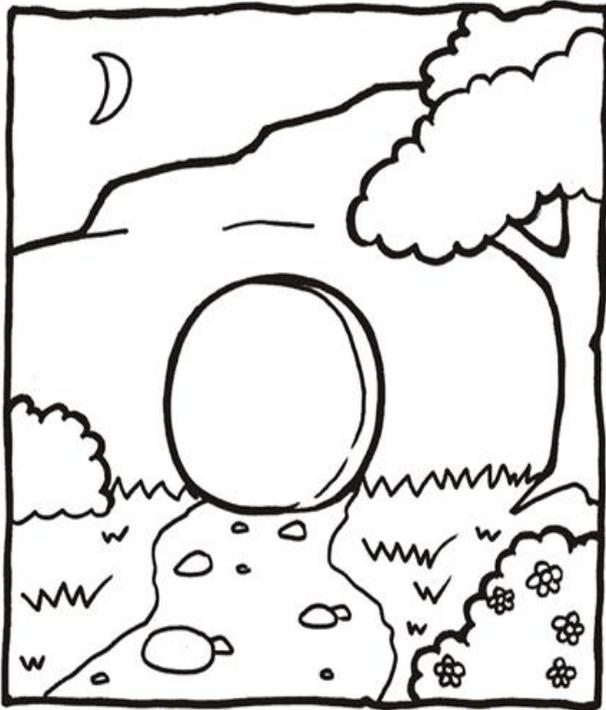
Sunday 6 March – All Age Eucharist for Mothering Sunday.

Saturday 26 March – Easter Champagne Party at the Rectory, following the Easter Liturgy.

Sunday 10 April – Annual Parish Meeting & Closing Eucharist for the Year of Mary.

Sunday 24 April – Parish Week of Celebration “Going Deeper” begins.

Spot the Difference – The Easter Empty Tomb (Read about it in the Gospel of John, Chapter 20).



Praying, Giving and Sacrificing During Lent

Giving up something for Lent, eating fish on Fridays and almsgiving - these are some of the Lenten practices for which Christians might be known. But why do we do this?

Praying - we know the importance of prayer in our lives and the Lenten season is a special time for prayerful reflection. Lent asks us: “What needs changing?” Lent calls us to a personal conversion and renewal—to a recommitted life in Christ so that we might not just celebrate Easter forty days later but also feel the risen Christ alive in us and in the world.

Giving - every day we witness situations of injustice, violence, and hatred. During Lent we can be especially conscious of the needs of others and act with this in mind - first to convert ourselves and then to transform the world in the cause of justice.

Sacrificing - fasting and abstinence are not sacrifices for the sake of pain or discomfort. If we fast, feeling an empty stomach does more than just remind us that for some people an empty stomach is their daily experience. Fasting and abstinence help us to ask ourselves the question: “What sustains me and gives me life?” What nourishes me on my journey of life? We will find the answer, not in our next meal, but at the end of these forty days of Lent—in the Resurrection of Jesus.

(Adapted from the website “Living Lent Daily”)

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Isonen on the Road at St Mary's



St Mary's recently hosted a Eucharist to mark the end of this year's **Isonen on the Road** project. This is the diocese of Manchester's youth leadership programme which takes place in collaboration with our link Diocese of Tampere in Finland. ("Isonen" means young leader in Finnish). Above Bishop Chris and Bishop Mark are pictured with Chris and the five young people who benefited from this opportunity to explore areas of leadership, develop their gifts and talents and grow in faith. *Isonen on the Road* is coordinated by Susie Mapeldoram, Youth Officer for the Diocese, who is a member of the congregation at St Mary's. For more information see www.manchester.anglican.org/education/youth/isonen-on-the-road

Children are a valued part of our community.

Junior Church meets on Sunday at 1030. The Prestwich Mission Partnership **Youth Group** meets on Sunday at 1830. **Pre-School Praise** is on Thursdays at 1000. **The 22nd Prestwich Scout Group** meets on weekday evenings. We enjoy a close relationship with our **Parish School**. More information at: www.stmarysprestwich.org/church-groups.



Sunday Gospel Readings



6 March

0800 John 6: 1-14
1030 Luke 2: 33-35

13 March

0800 John 8: 46-end
1030 John 12: 1-8

20 March

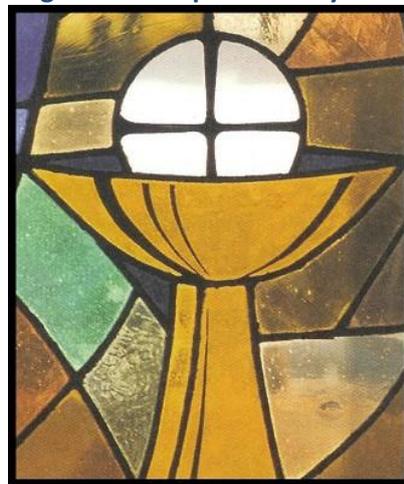
0800 Passion of St Matthew
1030 Passion of St Luke

27 March

0800 John 20: 1-10
1030 Luke 24: 1-12

Full listings of the lectionary readings used at St Mary's can be accessed on the internet at almanac.oremus.org

Regular worship at St Mary's



Eucharist

Sunday 0800 & 1030
Wednesday 1000
Thursday 0730 in the Oratory
Friday 0915 in St Mary's School

Morning Prayer in the Oratory
Tuesday Wednesday Friday 0730

The Oratory is in the Rectory, Church Lane

An Easter Prayer

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

St Mary's on Twitter

St Mary's has an active presence on **Twitter @stmaryprestwich**. Our Twitter followers have increased by nearly 20% over the last few months. Join them for information on prayer and worship, pictures of parish events, and regular messages about the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Contact us

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E: stmarysprestwich@hotmail.com
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Parish Priest: Chris Wedge
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Assistant Curate: Jules Mambu
Church Wardens: Stewart Barnet
telephone 07950 354445; Julia
Dutton telephone 07931 293470

St Mary's parish prayer

Loving Father, we pray your blessing on our parish. Help us to have hearts open to your Holy Spirit. Give us the courage to follow the way of Christ. Strengthen us to be faithful in prayer and loving service. Help us to play our part in building up your Kingdom here and now.

We welcome contributions to St Mary's Monthly News by email to stmarysprestwich@hotmail.com