

# THE PARISHES OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST AND ST MARY MAGDALENE

35 Brighton Place, Edinburgh EH15 1LL

Bingham Avenue, Edinburgh EH15 3HY

*Parish Priest:*

*Fr Jock Dalrymple:*

*0131 669 5447*

*Deacon:*

*Revd Eddie White:*

*07986 015772*

*Sacrament of Reconciliation: after the Vigil Mass (7.30pm on Saturday) or any time by appointment*

*Pastoral Team: Jennifer Morris and Chris Vinestock*

*Shared Parish House: 3 Sandford Gardens, Edinburgh, EH15 1LP*

*Parish Administrator: Enrico Fertini*

*(Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10.00am to 3.00pm & Friday 11.00am to 4.00pm)*

*Web address:*

*<https://sites.google.com/view/stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes/>*

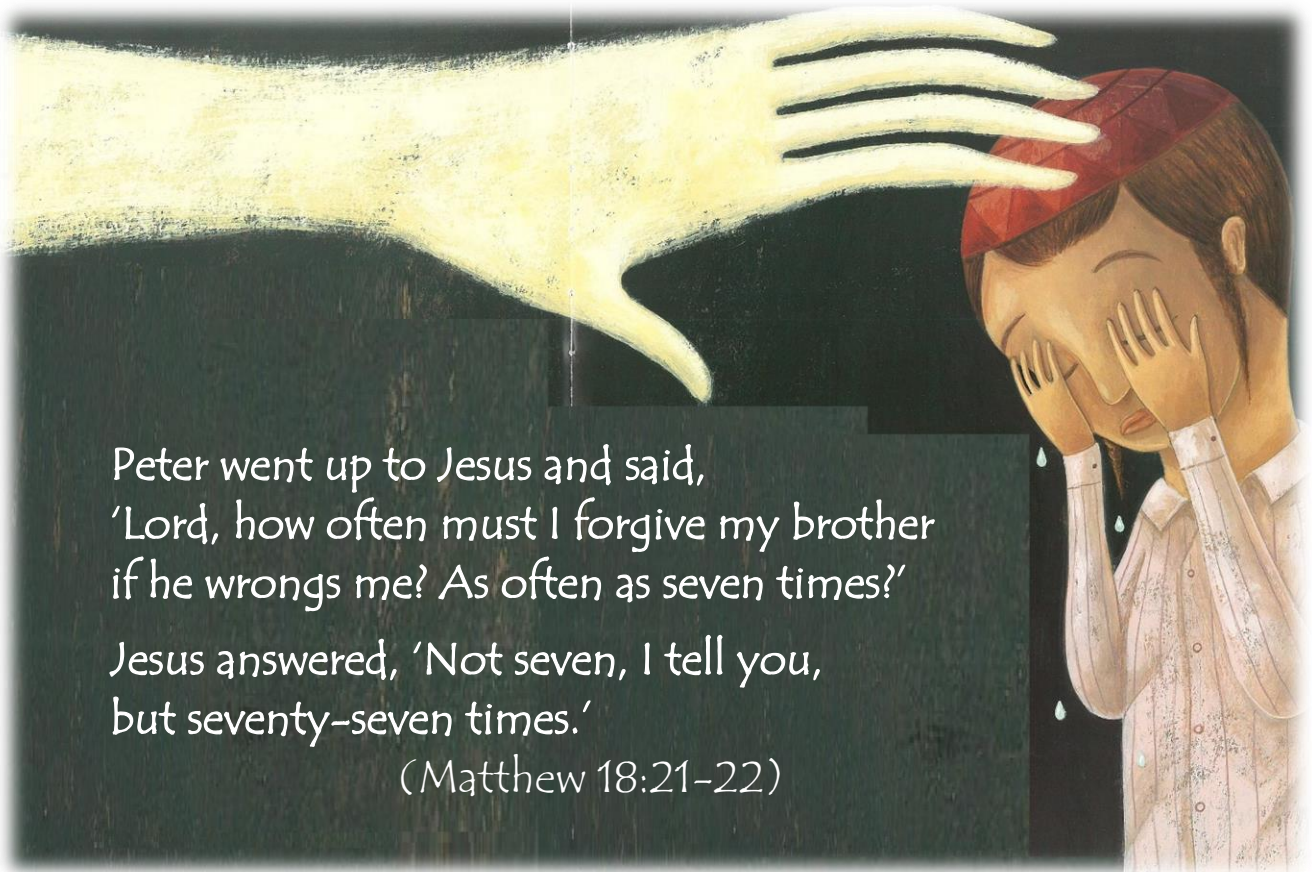
*Joint Facebook page:*

*<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsandStMaryMagdalenes>*

*Joint e-mail address for our sister parishes:*

*[stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com)*

## 17 SEPTEMBER 2023 TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR



Peter went up to Jesus and said,  
'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother  
if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?'

Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you,  
but seventy-seven times.'

(Matthew 18:21-22)

**SCIAF Emergency Appeal for Morocco and Libya – on the recommendation of our Justice and Peace Group, we are having a leaving collection this weekend to enable parishioners to respond to these two dreadful crises in North Africa. (See handout for further details)**

**Enquiry Group for the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) -** Would you like to discover more about the Catholic Faith or possibly even be received or baptised into the Catholic Church? Were you baptised Catholic but were never confirmed or made your first communion? Or do you wish to return to the practise of the faith? You would be most welcome to come along to our informal gatherings on Tuesday evenings at 7.45pm in the Parish House – **the first enquiry evening will take place on Tuesday 9 October...**For more information, contact Fr Jock or Enrico in the Parish Office, or Colette Dempsey (07864 670151) and Bronagh Power (07902 607936), our catechists.

**The next Baptismal Preparation Course will take place on Thursday 12 and Thursday 19 October at 7.30pm in the Parish House....if you would like to participate, please contact Fr Jock or Enrico Fertini, our administrator, to enrol for the course.**

**Fr Jock** sets off on a late summer holiday on Sunday afternoon, bike as ever on top of his car (and occasionally coming off it). **Fr Jim Smith** will very kindly cover for him for weekday and Sunday Masses until Tuesday 26 September when **Fr Loreto Tabone** arrives from Gozo. Fr Tabone will be with us till Sunday 8 October, overlapping with Fr Jock for a few days.

## THIS WEEK

### **Saturday 16 September – Feast of St Ninian**

9.30am-1.30pm – St John’s Hall – **Gathimba Edwards Foundation Fashion Sale**

6.30pm – St John’s – **Vigil Mass** - livestreamed

### **Sunday 17 September (24<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR)**

9.30am - St John’s - **Mass** - livestreamed

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

### **Monday 18 September**

10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

7.00pm – Zoom – **Gospel Sharing** – please click [HERE](#) (or type <https://bit.ly/46chfDX> in your browser)

**Tuesday 19 September** - 10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

### **Wednesday 20 September**

9.15am-9.50am – St John’s – **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**

10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

### **Thursday 21 September – Feast of St Matthew**

10.00am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

### **Friday 22 September**

9.15am-9.50am – St John’s – **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**

10.00am – St John’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

### **Saturday 23 September**

6.30pm – St John’s – **Vigil Mass** - livestreamed

### **Sunday 24 September (25<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR)**

9.30am - St John’s - **Mass** - livestreamed

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – **Mass** – livestreamed

View the **links for the Masses** by visiting our webpage:

<http://bit.ly/2023Mass> - or by scanning the QR code → → → →



## From Archbishop Leo’s Weekly ‘Ad Clerum’

**Margaret Sinclair Pilgrimage** - The 2023 National Pilgrimage to pray for the Beatification of the Venerable Margaret Sinclair is **today Sunday 17 September** at St Patrick’s Church, Cowgate, Edinburgh, EH1 1NA. 12:30-1.50pm Refreshments and sale of candles & goods; 2:00pm Holy Hour with Rosary, Confession, Silence, Hymns & Benediction; 3:00pm Reflection & Novena Prayers; 3:30pm break for refreshments and sale of candles & holy items; 4:30pm Holy Mass.

**SCIAF event** - **Mark Booker from SCIAF hosts a two-part workshop on 21 and 28 September**, 7-9pm at Sacred Heart Church, 28 Lauriston Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9DJ. It is titled ‘**Catholic Social Teaching in Action: The SCIAF Approach**’. It will highlight the charity’s work and how Catholic Social Teaching can be put into action in the light of the Gospel. Register at [ejcyoungadults@jesuit.org.uk](mailto:ejcyoungadults@jesuit.org.uk).

**Retreat in Daily Life** - Fr David Stewart SJ leads a four-week Retreat in Daily Life from 1 October to 5 November. You can make this individually guided retreat without leaving your home, just attend the welcome gathering at the start, and a similar shared closing at the end at Sacred Heart Church, Lauriston Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9DJ. For an application pack and more details email [ejcretreats@jesuit.org.uk](mailto:ejcretreats@jesuit.org.uk)

**Free2Pray** - The Scottish Parliament is considering a proposed Bill to ban peaceful prayers and offers of help near abortion clinics in Scotland. Join a webinar titled ‘Free2Pray’ to find out what you can do to make your voice heard. It takes place on **Tuesday 3 October** at 7:45pm and is organised by the Scottish Catholic Parliamentary Office. Register at [bit.ly/free2pray](http://bit.ly/free2pray)

**A View from Within** - Those with experience of what life is like inside Scotland’s prisons – including prison chaplains – share their stories at this free event to mark Prisoners’ Week. It takes place on **Saturday 7 October** from 10:00am- 3:30pm at the Gillis Centre, 100 Strathearn Road, Edinburgh, EH9 1BB. Details and registration at [bit.ly/aviewfromwithin](http://bit.ly/aviewfromwithin)

**Mass for Young Adults** - A Mass for Young Adults takes place each Sunday at 7pm at Sacred Heart Church in Lauriston Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9DJ. The new Young Adults Ministry programme for 2023-24 is available at the Church or via [ejcyoungadults@jesuit.org.uk](mailto:ejcyoungadults@jesuit.org.uk)

## NOTICEBOARD

### **A Farewell Party for Gift - Sunday 8 October 2023, 7.00pm in St John’s Hall**

**Chris Jones writes:** ‘Gift Thomson has been part of our community of St. John’s and St Mary Magdalene’s for over five years and has made a huge contribution to our life. He will be greatly missed when he returns to Malawi in the second week of October. There will be a Farewell Party in St John’s Hall on Sunday 8 October, to which parishioners and friends are warmly invited. To help with catering, please let me know - if you can - by Sunday 1 October. Thank you. (BYOB) Chris (AKA *The Godfather* – or, at least, Gift’s!) [chrisjones442@hotmail.com](mailto:chrisjones442@hotmail.com)’.

Date		*** St John’s Eucharistic Ministers rota ***		
September	16	Jim Roarty	Rossana Velazco	Pat Whyte
	17		Angela Preston	Anna Tanzi
	23	<b>John Lawler</b>	Pauline MacInnes	Tracy Burgess
	24		Anne Dixon	Marie Sinclair

**The Pamoja Fashion Sale Team** reminds that this **Saturday, 16 September**, in St John’s Hall, from 9.30am to 1.30pm, there will be a sale of preloved clothes accessories, raffles, tea & coffee in aid of the **Gathimba Edwards Foundation**. The charity is based in Aberdeen. Its volunteers provide children in Kenya with an education by supporting school, college and university; by supplying school uniforms, books, shoes & access to school meals; by giving these children a safe place of shelter; by building houses for them or improving existing homes; by bringing them and their families closer to self-sustainability with help to grow their own food; and by caring for them through providing access to psychosocial support. Thank you for your help.

### **From the Legion of Mary:**

‘The *September Charity Coffee Morning* raised **£300.00**. £150.00 will be given to RNLI. The crews of lifeboats are mostly volunteers and give devoted service. £150.00 will be given to Stella Maris, formerly The Apostleship of the Sea. Chaplains board ships in port and minister to the seamen. Most of these men are far from home and appreciate spiritual contact and practical help. Thank you for donating to help these charities, which rely on our help to carry out their work. Well done!

Due to the forthcoming trip to Medjugorje, the *October Charity Coffee Morning* will be held on **Monday 16 October**. Donations will be given to SCIAF. Funds are needed for the help they are giving in Morocco and Libya, where there has been such devastating destruction due to an earthquake and floods. Thank you’.

Our last five newsletters contained various excerpts from a talk given by Fr James Martin SJ on 'FAQ' – Frequently Asked Questions about Faith and Life. This week we include a recent article from *The Tablet* in which Maggie Fergusson interviewed Fr Martin.

# The bridge builder

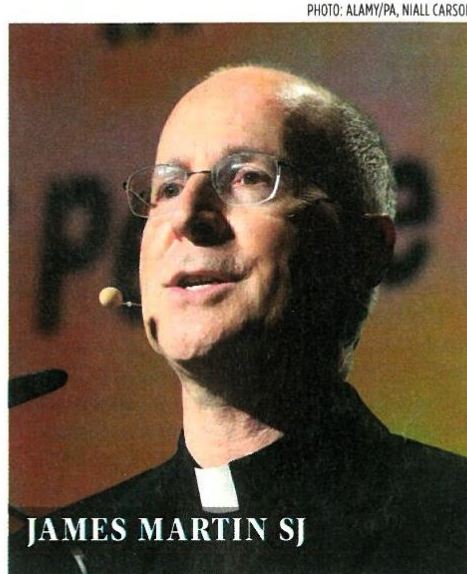
**F**OR FR JAMES – “Jim” – Martin SJ, prolific author and frequent commentator in the US media, one of the greatest challenges in life has been fighting the need to be loved and admired – not just by friends and family, but by “everyone”. A new book is bound to inspire criticism as well as praise. His *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity* prompted what he calls “Catholic death threats”. So when we meet via Zoom in late August, with *Come Forth: The Raising of Lazarus and the Promise of Jesus’s Greatest Miracle* on the point of publication, I expect him to be feeling jittery. Instead, he pops up on my screen with a winning smile and an easy charm. He has been fascinated by the story of Lazarus ever since watching Franco Zeffirelli’s mini-series *Jesus of Nazareth* as a teenager. He can’t wait to share his thoughts about it.

Apart from the Passion, the raising of Lazarus is the longest continuous narrative in the gospel of John (the only gospel in which it appears). And the story, Fr Martin believes, has much to teach us about “love, friendship, family, faith, prayer, sadness, frustration, fear, anger, freedom, joy, hope, death and life”. With *Come Forth*, he hopes to reach “people who are struggling with life, and who don’t think that the gospels have anything to say to them”. It’s a book combining “exegesis, spirituality and travelogue”, and “travelogue” is vital.

Over a decade ago, Fr Martin made his first visit to Al-Eizariya, modern-day Bethany, which, though only two miles from Jerusalem, being a Palestinian town in the West Bank draws fewer visitors than most other sites in the Holy Land. Descending the steep steps into Lazarus’ tomb was, he says, “life-changing”. He has since led countless pilgrims to the tomb, inviting them to leave behind there some burden, something painful, something preventing them from hearing Jesus’ call to new life: “We all wear grave clothes that prevent us from moving around freely, keeping us in our own tombs.”

“I think the physicality of going down those stairs, going into a dark place, being by yourself – or with just a few others – and leaving something behind is very powerful,” he says. “Many people come out crying.” But “for reasons of time, money, health, perhaps a bit of fear, the majority of Catholics are never going to go. So this is an armchair traveller’s book. I hope to be my readers’ guide down into the tomb, and then back out into the light.”

Fr Martin admits to being “a little bit of a Bible nerd” (on a shelf behind his desk, along



with a photograph of St Thérèse of Lisieux, I spot the five volumes of John P. Meier’s *A Marginal Jew*), and he hopes, through his writing, to “take things that might be seen as the province of scholars and make them accessible to the general reader”. So his writing is companionable, but also challenging, and readers like me who only hear the Lazarus story once a year at Sunday Mass will be amazed by the number of questions he raises: was Lazarus the Beloved Disciple? As a man still living with his sisters, and apparently without speech (“He doesn’t even say ‘Thank you’ to Jesus”), was Lazarus in some way mentally challenged? Why did Jesus delay coming to Bethany for two days after hearing Lazarus had died? And why do Matthew, Mark and Luke not tell this story?

**SO SHOULD** Catholics be urged to pay more attention to the Bible? “For some reason Catholics tend to think that the Bible is the province of Protestants. Daniel Harrington, the Jesuit biblical scholar who was said to have forgotten more about the Bible than most of us ever knew about it, remembers a Bible salesman coming to the door when he was a boy in Boston. And his mother said, ‘We’re Catholic. We don’t read the Bible.’ I think many people are afraid of the Bible. They don’t realise that it offers a call to new life for every individual.”

Not that the Bible is straightforward, even for scholars. Fr Martin quotes St Augustine: *Si comprehendis, non est Deus* (“If you understand it, it’s not God”). And he plunges us into mysteries: the mystery of unanswered prayer, for example, and the mystery of miracles. Occasionally – 70 times since 1858 in Lourdes, for example – we hear of a miraculous cure.

But no one since Jesus has risen from the dead. Why not? “I can’t speak for God, obviously, but the raising of the dead may be something that could only happen when Jesus was with us: Jairus’ daughter, the widow of Nain’s son, Lazarus are the three he raised. Maybe this is something so meaningful that it is reserved for Jesus. He is life, so to be with him is to be with new life.”

Of the characters in the Lazarus story, I ask, whom does he identify with most closely? Without skipping a beat – Fr Martin is fluent, but never flippant – he answers: “Martha. I love her for her bluntness. Talking of her sister Mary, who is apparently not pulling her weight, she says to Jesus, ‘Tell her to help me!’ Who else speaks to him like that? To speak like that, I think she and Jesus must have been very close.” And what do the stories of women in the Gospel lead him to think about the roles of women in the Church? “I think the Church may have moved backwards since Jesus’ time. I often think the woman to look to here is Mary Magdalene. Christ appears to her in the garden, and between the time she meets the risen Christ and she announces the good news to the disciples she is, in effect, the Church on earth. I think any discussion of women’s roles in the Church should begin with that.”

So should women be ordained?

“I would say we need to listen to the experience of women who feel called to be priests. And I think we need to listen to the need for the Eucharist in places where it’s just not being shared. And I would also say that in terms of women deacons, the question is not whether we should initiate women as deacons but whether we should restore women as deacons, like Phoebe.”

All of us, meantime, are “called to be both Martha and Mary. The Jesuit ideal – to be ‘a contemplative in action’ – is also the Christian ideal. The Martha and Mary story has been used against active people – ‘Mary has chosen the better part’ – but my sense is that Jesus is saying, ‘There’s a time and a place for everything: a time for action, and a time for contemplation.’” In Fr Martin’s life this means praying for half an hour every morning, with the day’s gospel; daily Mass; an examination of conscience in the evening, and regular retreats.

The “active” side of his life is increasingly demanding. Following the publication of *Building a Bridge*, and alongside the hate mail (“I hope you die and go to hell,” read a typical note), some cardinals and bishops began to invite him to give lectures in their dioceses, and the Vatican asked him to speak about LGBTQ Catholics and their families at the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in

2018. Then, in 2019, Pope Francis invited him to come for his first one-to-one meeting at the Vatican (another followed last November). What was that like?

“You know, I don’t have a big position: I’m not a cardinal or an archbishop. So for the Pope to see me at all was extraordinary. But I think the most surprising thing was how comfortable I felt: it was very relaxed. I just felt I was meeting a fellow Jesuit. We were able to speak very openly about my LGBTQ ministry, and at the end of the meeting he said, ‘You can continue this ministry in peace.’ I felt so encouraged, so consoled. He’s my boss – I mean, Jesus is my boss, but Francis is my boss on earth. So many people had been attacking me, but now I thought, ‘If the Pope wants me to do this, I’ll do it.’”

I suggest that, whatever Francis has said, the Church’s teaching on homosexuality hasn’t actually changed during his papacy. Fr Martin is quick to point out what he *has* changed: “He is the first pope to use the word ‘gay’. He’s told parents not to kick their LGBTQ children out of the house. And he’s come out for the decriminalisation of homosexuality. In the UK, the US and Western Europe we might think, ‘big deal’. But in sub-Saharan Africa, India, Latin America and Eastern Europe –

in the 10 countries where you can be executed for being gay – it *is* a big deal. You say none of the teaching has changed, but this *is* a form of teaching. And the proof of the pudding is that, in general, LGBTQ people love Francis and feel more welcome in his Church.”

Yet the Catechism still describes homosexuality as “objectively disordered”. “Yes,” says Fr Martin, “and I know of no other phrase that’s as much of a stumbling block to LGBTQ Catholics. One mother said to me a couple of years ago: ‘Do people in the Vatican understand what language like that can do to a 14-year-old?’ And in Italy, when I gave a talk about being welcomed into the Church, another mother said, ‘I don’t want my son welcomed into a Church that calls him objectively disordered.’ We need to listen to those voices.”

Does he hope, in his lifetime, to see the Church blessing gay unions? “I had a friend, Carlos, a eucharistic minister, a lector, a spiritual director, who gave up a high-paying job to become chaplain at a cancer hospital. He was also gay, and when he’d been married to his partner, Jim, for 35 years, he got cancer. Jim nursed him through his surgery, his chemotherapy and radiotherapy, arranged for him to go to Lourdes and was with him when he died. The memorial Mass was

packed. The question the Church has to ask is, ‘Is this love?’”

The Pope has appointed Fr Martin a member of the Synod on Synodality which will meet in Rome in October. What changes might the synod bring to the Church’s attitude to LGBTQ Catholics? “I’m not being coy, but I don’t know what’s going to happen in the synod. The way it’s structured it seems to me that, to begin with, it’s going to be mainly conversations, to teach us how to dialogue. But LGBTQ voices will be heard. They are in the working document. A couple of months ago, in Rome, I met with the young man who had been responsible for helping to compile the diocesan-level documents. He said that half of all the diocesan documents around the world mentioned LGBTQ people. That would never have happened 10 years ago.”

And, 10 years ago, Fr Martin might not have been able to talk about all this with such serenity. But Lazarus’ tomb has profoundly changed his life, helping him to let go of “the part of me that craved approval”, and to live without fear of judgement. He loves the words of “the gentle, light-hearted, seventeenth-century saint Francis de Sales: ‘Be who you are, and be that perfectly well.’”

*Come Forth: The Raising of Lazarus and the Promise of Jesus’s Greatest Miracle* by James Martin SJ is published this week by William Collins (£22; Tablet price £19.80).

**‘The physicality of going into a dark place, being by yourself and leaving something behind is very powerful’**

*The feminine spirit, which is not synonymous with the female person, has a certain familiarity with roots and springs and the basic elements of air and fire: a certain attentiveness to the flow of time and the harvesting of life’s fruits. The feminine spirit waits in readiness for the opportunity to inject breath into the clay of existence and to humanise the daily affairs of life.*

From the American writer Sister Joan Puls (1934-2022). *Every Bush is Burning*, World Council of Churches, 1985

*I am a woman and my blood cries out. We are millions and strong together. You better hear us or you may be doomed.*

Gabrielle Dietrich, theologian, companion of the marginalised

## SAINT OF THE WEEK

### September 17 - St. Hildegard of Bingen, Abbess and Visionary (1098-1179)

*“In the year 1141...a fiery light, flashing intensely, came from the open vault of heaven and poured through my whole brain. Like a flame that is hot without burning, it kindled all my heart and all my breast, just as the sun warms anything on which its rays fall. And suddenly I could understand what such books as the Psalter, the Gospel and the other Catholic volumes both of the Old and New Testament actually set forth.”*

St. Hildegard was by any standard one of the remarkable figures of her age: abbess and foundress of a Benedictine religious community; author and theologian; prophet and preacher, musician and composer; poet and artist; doctor and pharmacist. She had visions in which the word of God - both in Scripture and in the book of nature - was revealed to her. Yet for eight hundred years she remained in relative obscurity. Only in recent decades has she emerged into the light, partly thanks to contemporary interest in the role of women in history. But increasingly Hildegard is honoured not only as an outstanding woman of history but as a visionary whose ecological and holistic spirituality speaks prophetically to our time.

Hildegard was born in 1098 in the German province of Rheinhessen, the tenth child of noble parents. When she was eight, she was given to the care of a holy anchoress, Blessed. Jutta, who lived in a cottage attached to a nearby Benedictine abbey. Jutta raised the child and educated her until the age of eighteen, when Hildegard put on the



habit of a Benedictine nun. By this time a monastic community had gathered about Jutta. When the old woman died in 1136 Hildegard became prioress.

Up to this point it seems that Hildegard was an unexceptional nun. Only to Jutta had she confided the secret of the visions which, as she later wrote, she had enjoyed since the age of three. "*These visions which I saw I beheld neither in sleep nor dreaming nor in madness nor with my bodily eyes or ears, nor in hidden places; but I saw them in full view and according to God's will, when I was wakeful and alert, with the eyes of the spirit and the inward ears.*"

After she became prioress, her visions pressed upon her with greater urgency until she eventually described them to her confessor. She was bidden to write them down, and the text was presented to the archbishop of Mainz. He in turn read them and had them examined by a team of theologians who certified their orthodoxy. Henceforth she was provided with a monk as secretary and with his help she began her major work, *Scivias* (Know the Ways), which occupied her efforts over the next ten years.

Eventually Pope Eugenius III himself read her book and authorized her to continue to write.

Her *Scivias* is the record of a series of visions concerning the relation between God, humanity, and the cosmos. With extraordinary symbolic paintings that accompany the text, Hildegard presents a picture of human beings and the cosmos as emanations from God's love, "*living sparks*" or "*rays of his splendour, just as the rays of the sun proceed from the sun itself.*" She shows the effects of sin in rupturing creation, and the drama of redemption that ultimately restores the world to its intended state, purified of its infirmities and reconciled with the divine energy of its origins.

About this time Hildegard received a divine call to move her community to a new site on the Rupertsberg, a hill above the Rhine, near Bingen. This involved an ordeal, with the monks and the town of her original foundation, who depended on the traffic of pilgrims and thus adamantly opposed her plan. But after she became deathly ill - a frequent occurrence when Hildegard's will was crossed - she had her way.

Between 1152 and 1162 Hildegard made numerous preaching tours through the Rhineland. Her authority as a holy preacher was widely recognized, and her reputation extended far beyond her native Germany. She corresponded with kings, popes, and other figures of note, sharing her spiritual insights but also freely dispensing criticism where she felt it was needed. Besides her religious writings, she wrote extensively on medicine and physiology. She avidly studied the use of medicinal herbs and seems to have anticipated the principles of homeopathy. In addition, she composed religious music of haunting beauty and originality; music, she wrote, was a symbol of the harmony that Satan disturbed.

There are many elements to Hildegard's visions which speak to our ecological age. She had a wide understanding of the cosmos as a whole and of the human place in it. Human beings, she wrote, are the universe in microcosm, made of the same elements that constitute the world. But within the great cosmos human beings are the thinking heart, called to be co-creators with God in shaping the world. Through human sin the entire world was fractured and fell out of harmony with the Creator. But this sin does not erase the original goodness and blessing of creation. Through Christ - first fruits of a new creation - the cosmos and human beings find their way back to their original destiny. Constantly Hildegard refers to God as "*Living Light*," and she employs a remarkable word "*greenness*" (*viriditas*) to describe the animating energy or grace of God that shines forth in all living things. For this holistic vision Hildegard has been particularly celebrated by proponents of creation spirituality.

Toward the end of her life Hildegard ran afoul of local church authorities after she allowed a young man who had been excommunicated to be buried in the monastery cemetery. She was ordered to have the body disinterred. This Hildegard refused, insisting that, before dying, the youth had been reconciled with the church and received the sacraments. Nevertheless, the bishop had the convent placed under an interdict, forbidding the celebration or reception of the Eucharist. It was a terrible sanction, and Hildegard protested bitterly. Eventually the interdict was lifted, but she lived on only a few months longer. She died on September 17, 1179.

See: *Hildegard of Bingen: Mystical Writings*, ed. Fiona Bowie and Oliver Davis (New York: Crossroad, 1995), *Hildegard of Bingen, Illuminations, with commentary by Matthew Fox* (Santa Fe: Bear, 1985)

# PARISH REGISTER

*Welcome to world...Cormac Gilchrist, born on 21 July, a first child for Laura and Jamie, and first grandchild for Anne and Jim.*

*Please pray for those who have died recently:*

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*Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time:*

*Josie Tilley – Brian Carr  
Enrique Gimeno – Albert Hancock  
Elizabeth Mackaill.*

*Please pray for those Parishioners who are sick:*

St. John's:

Donna Buchan, Ronnie Carroll, Charlotte and Fred McGregor, Frank Phillips, Ann O'Brien, Kathie Gallagher, Diane McCarthy, Raymond Walker, Margaret Duffy, Mike and Patricia Lawler, Mike Burns, Harry Allan, May Thomson, Carol Simpson, Kenny O'Connor, Gerry Gallagher, John Cregan, Rose Thornton, Kathleen Brown, Mike Noonan, John Whyte, Maria Pacitti, Fiona Connel, Ann Dobie, Sheelagh Dobson, Chloe Sutherland, Norah Bruce, Ruth Vizor, Mary Grady, Pauli Walker, Anna Butler, May Flynn, Vincent Knowles, young Saoirse Golden, Frances Cunningham, David Reid, Betty Dougal, Anne Thomson, Sarah McManus, Sr Jennifer Lindsay, Maureen Low, Mary Slight, Norman Telfer, Erin Corbett, Roz Byers and Marie Angela Crolla.

St Mary Magdalene's:

John Cunningham, Monica Gorman, Allan Guthrie, John McLaughlin, Mary McGovern (jnr), Carolynne McCann, Tom Bauld, Sam Burns, Jacqueline Marinello, Sandra Watt, Chris English, Andrew Farmer, Maria Scott Jnr, Louise Gorman, Bridget Malone, Charles Malcolm, Margaret Ryan, Jacqueline Hannan, Julie Keegan, Annie Watson, David O'Donnell, Jude Ferguson and Mary and James Muir.

## *Offertory 10 September 2023*

St Mary Magdalene's, **£183.87 total**, including £92.87 Offertory and £91.00 Gift Aid

St John's, **£1166.20 total**, including £288.20 Offertory, £130.00 Gift Aid and £748.00 online donations.

## *Anniversaries:*

St John's:

**Sept.16:** Agnes Cassidy (2000); Marian Craik (1994); Kitty De Marco; **Sept.17:** Albert Hancock (2017); William Brown (1996); Alexander Nicholson (1985); Charles Tunley (1983); Margaret Griffin (1967); **Sept.18:** Nicole D DiBiasi (1999); James Robertson (1999); Norrie Lamb (1996); Leonardo Politi (1989); Mary Reading (1979); Robert Harrop (1976); John Adair; Annie Hanlon; **Sept.19:** Josie Tilley (2021); Ellen McEvoy (2019); Peter Murray (2015); Catherine Tesoro (2012); Williamina Brockman (1997); Mary Elizabeth Bryant; John Quigley; **Sept.20:** Charles Doherty (2008); Thomas Walker (2000); Robert Forbes (1997); Greta Davies (1996); Sam Cunningham (1993); Thomas D'Arcy (1985); Joe Davies (1974); Sophia Gollogly (1968); **Sept.21:** Helen Parry (1992); Eileen McCarthy (1989); James Tunley (1943); Roseanna & Patrick Lynch (1917); Mary Phair; James Syme; **Sept.22:** Joseph Phair (2010); Rena Quigley (1992); John P Laydon (1988); Josephine Kempton (1984); Rena Fusco (1982);

St Mary Magdalene's:

**Sept.19:** Roseanne Redmond (2018); Sarah Davidson (2004); George Grieve (1995); **Sept.21:** Margaret Gray (2005); Barbara Greenan (1969); **Sept.22:** Elizabeth Mackaill (2020);

*Please pray for sick friends and relatives of our Parishioners:*

Rose May Mattison, Joan Brooks, Brian Gurney, Alec Robb, Mike Nelson, Kathie Duffy, Dave Cook, Richard Reid, Anne Morris, Alison St.Clair Ford, Shirley Robertson, Elaine Connolly, Miranda McDonnell, Mary Madden, Neil Boyle, John Wiggins, Lucy Pagett, Jim Gray, Angela McKenna, John Curran, Saramma Samuel, Margaret Troupe, Caitlin Mair, Robert Clark, Peter Robinson, Stuart Goddard, Win Veitch, Peter Hanley, Kate Titterington, Ann Currie, Chris White, Douglas Edington, Helen Robertson baby Josh Simpson, Desire Bascon, Janet Haring, Shona Killin, Tom Heaney, Mary Whyte, Tish Deacon, Elizabeth McGrath and Granny Elizabeth, Andrew Muldoon, John Havard, Mary Wallace, Ellen Green, Sophie Robinson, Louise Young, Tricia Scott, Harriet Wingfield Digby (aged 9), Alan Proudlock, Evelyn Walsh, Grace Stuart, Stephen Norwood, John Miller, Agnes Clarke, David Fenwick, Maurice McAllister, Rita Noonan, baby Lucas McCourt, Ellen Dow, members of the McGrath Family, Hans Zaunbrecher, Judith Franklin, Clare Johnston, Mary and Derek Lamarque, Keiran Smart (aged 16), Michael Doherty, Carol Turnbull, Jean Wylie, Angela Khan, George and Ann McDermott, Tara Kuppinger, Jessica Haggerty, Charlotte O'Brien, young Martha Moyes (aged 6), Jennifer Kay, Seval and Kazim Kazimoglu, Ann Watt (Mgr Rae's sister), Jan Meise, Mary Taygarth, Roger Bromley, Tony Rigg, Stuart Falconer, Elizabeth, Elizabeth and Gordon Marron, Katie McAnenny, John Kellagher, Ann Thorp, Dani Miniette, Peter Millar, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Michael Igoe, Clare Richardson, Laura Anderson, James O'Rourke, Tommy Muir, James Shepherd, Andrew Franklin, Jamie Mitchell, Edward Caulfield, Igor Rekowski, Joan Brooks, Mary Turnbull and young Ray Donovan Syme.

**THANK YOU!**

# A REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE 24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

## MATTHEW 18: 21-35

*(The author of this reflection is a friend of Fr Jock who lives in Northumberland)*

I know Joan Collins' secret. Mind you, so does the rest of the sentient world. She wears a wig. Not many 90 years-old can boast the luxuriant and abundant hair growth of a 20-year-old. But where you ASSUME that she MUST wear a wig, I KNOW that she does. In days of yore, when British Airways had an enviable operation, the aforementioned Ms Collins travelled First Class. I have a good friend who was once cabin crew in First Class. They were trained to higher standards than those in Economy. On a Transatlantic flight the wig would be lovingly stored until either New York or London neared. At least thirty minutes was given over to make-up, wig and outfit so that when Ms Collins alighted from the aircraft, the image would be maintained. (NB it was always Ms despite more past husbands than fingers!) Sometimes, when |I am really, really REALLY bored I play spot the join. A TV or Film star appears on some chat show or to be interviewed as part of a book launch. HD televisions are merciless when it comes to evidencing lines, wrinkles and blemishes – and equally forensic in showing the telltale signs behind the jaw line or just before the ears when skin has been stretched tighter than any vellum on a Kettle Drum and glued or micro-stitched to refute any suggestion of cosmetic surgery.

Vanity of vanities, the preacher cried, all is vanity. Whenever I see Barry Manilow on the television screen, a peculiar stressful tension envelops me. My heart is in my mouth as I wait for him to explode into a trillion pieces of silicon and plastic. Little of his body seems to move naturally. His bottom lip appears to move, but this may be an optical illusion. The remainder of his facial features seem to be set in a Botox ridden rictus grin. Few of his joints and muscles appear to move naturally. He looks more and more like a badly controlled string puppet. I can only presume that eye-watering amounts have been paid to cosmetic surgeons to achieve this look – and let's not forget the hair. He is an 80-year-old with the hair line and growth of someone 60 years his junior. Contrast his appearance with that of Dame Judi Dench. I loved her as 'M' in the Bond movies, I loved her as Queen Elizabeth in the Comedy 'Shakespeare in Love' and I love her as controller of her gang of purple clad female agents charged with saving Britain some serious money. She has turned aging into a grace-filled experience and chapter of her life. She regrets, but nonetheless embraces and accepts, her failing sight; continuing to act but now learning roles and dialogue by heart; lines and wrinkles add character to her face and persona. They are carried with pride. She has turned aging into an art-form. Many refer to her as a national treasure and few contradict this moniker. She has certainly inspired me to embrace the advancing years.

Aging involves deterioration. There is a time for everything: a time to be born and a time to die. In between lie maturity and growth on the one hand, decay and decline on the other. Joints creak, hearing fails, taste and wit become stuck in a long-gone era: 'Oh Grandad, not that one, again!' Change and decay in all around I see. Sometimes the decay can be arrested and slowed but eventually fillings and crowns and veneers reach the end of the road. We and the dentist are involved in a battle. Drills manically scream, injections pierce the gum, speech momentarily becomes a struggle, mouths drool – and the probability of an improvement in pain levels or appearance is our only driving force. And so it is in the field of human relationships. Hurts are delivered and received, lies and exaggerations told to emphasise our sense of righteousness. Sometimes we are forced by the sheer hopelessness of the situation to STOP. Stop the hurts, heal the resentments – a cancerous growth that is powerless when confronted by love. Take stock. Forgive. We cannot forget for our memory is an essential part of a healthy mind. But we can forgive. And it is personal forgiveness that Jesus focusses on this weekend. '*How often must I forgive my brother? - As often as seven times?*' '*Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times*' And right at the end of the passage: '*And that is how my Heavenly Father will deal with you, unless you each forgive your brother **from the heart.***' No further commentary is called for. We need to forgive, forgive from the heart, with determination and generosity in equal proportions. We must stop the decay, and forgive: arrest the hurting, emasculate the resentment - just love.... and forgive.