

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: Alice Codling, Jennifer Morris, and Chris Vinestock

Shared Parish House: 3 Sandford Gardens, EH15 1LP

Parish Administrator: Enrico Fertini

(Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10am to 3pm & Friday 11am-4pm)

Web address: www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk

Web address: www.stmarymagdalenes.co.uk

Joint Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/StJohnsandStMaryMagdalenes>

Joint e-mail address for our sister parishes: stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com

Sixteenth Sunday of the Year *17 July 2022*



From today's Gospel: 'Jesus came to a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking.'
(Luke 10:38-40)

We Continue to pray for Peace – 'Dear Lord, please grant the people of Ukraine and Russia, Your Peace, Your Justice, Your Reconciliation, Your Forgiveness, Your Love. Amen.'

Today is the annual Mission Appeal – given by **Fr Kyran Murphy** of the St Patrick's Missionary Society (also known the Kiltegan Fathers). **A second collection will be taken at all Masses.**

Friday is the Feast of St Mary Magdalene, St Mary Magdalene's Patronal Feast – there will be Mass at 10am at St MM's preceded by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 9.20am.

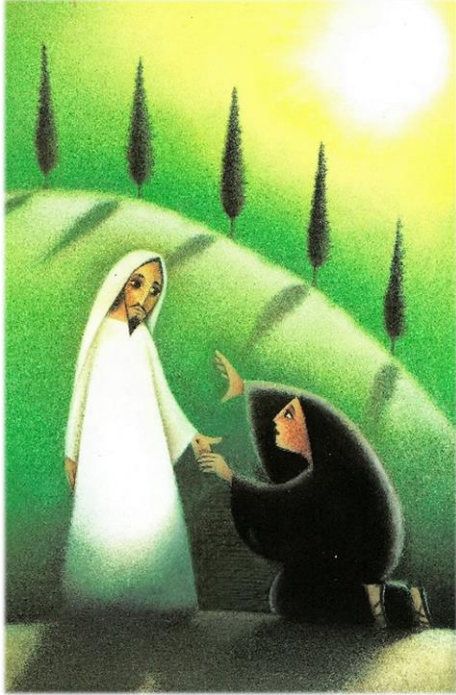
Next Sunday, 24 July, is World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Next Sunday's 9.30am Mass will be dedicated to them to show gratitude for their gifts and contribution to parish and family life. We warmly invite all grandparents and the elderly to join us for this special Mass.

SAINT OF THE WEEK – ST MARY MAGDALENE

Apostle to the Apostles (first century)

Feast Day – Friday 22 July - *"I have seen the Lord"* – John 20:18

Mary Magdalene was one of the original Galilean disciples of Jesus and the most eminent among the many women who followed in his itinerant ministry. Little can be said about her origins; she is characterized simply as *"a woman from whom seven demons had gone out,"* a statement subject to various interpretations. It was St. Gregory the Great who identified Mary with the woman, "a sinner," who sought Jesus out in the home of a Pharisee to wash his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair. This gesture, which scandalized the other dinner guests, prompted Jesus to say, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much." From this conflation, now rejected by scholars as well as the church, there came about the popular representation of Mary Magdalene as a penitent sinner or prostitute.



This image of *"The Magdalene"* has appealed to artists and dramatists throughout history, and it has doubtless been a comfort to many. But in attaching such a stereotypically female image to Mary Magdalene the Western fathers also helped to efface the memory of the leadership and prominence of women in the early Jesus movement. This amnesia was already well under way by the time the Gospels were written in the late first century. One of the most distinctive features of Jesus' movement was the presence of women among his intimate disciples. And yet the story and even identity of many of these women was left on the margins.

It is all the more significant when women such as Mary of Bethany, her sister Martha, or Mary Magdalene *are* named. It is a sign of just how vital a place they still occupied in the church's living memory. Mary Magdalene, in particular, was firmly associated with two vital facts: that she was a witness to the crucifixion and that she was the first witness of the Risen Lord.

All four Gospels name Mary among the women who followed Jesus to Golgotha and there witnessed his passion and death. While all the male disciples fled, it was these women who remained faithful to the end. It was also they, including Mary Magdalene, who went to his tomb on the day after the sabbath hoping to anoint his body.

Instead, they found an empty tomb, guarded by an angel who revealed the astonishing news that Jesus was risen. The women were charged to tell the disciples to meet the Lord back in Galilee. In the Gospels of John and Matthew, Mary Magdalene actually sees the Risen Lord. John provides a particularly poignant account, reflecting most clearly the special relationship that evidently existed between Mary and Jesus.

Here, after summoning Peter and the *"beloved disciple"* to see the empty tomb for themselves, *"Mary stood weeping outside the tomb."* Suddenly she sees Jesus but does not recognize him. Taking him to be the gardener she says, *"Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."* Jesus answers her with a single word - *"Mary"* - which is enough to identify him. *"Rabbuni!"* she cries, *"Teacher."* He instructs her not to hold him, *"but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."* And so, Mary goes out to the disciples and says, *"I have seen the Lord."*

Nothing else is known of Mary Magdalene. Her deeds are not reported in the Acts of the Apostles, nor does she figure in the writings of Paul. (In listing the appearances of the Risen Lord, he begins with the appearance to Peter.) But the name of Mary Magdalene deserves special honour, particularly at a time when women are struggling to be heard in the church and society. It was she, the faithful disciple, who first proclaimed the good news to the Twelve. Thus, she has often been called the *"Apostle to the Apostles."*

(From Robert Ellsberg's book – 'All Saints')

NOTICEBOARD

Fr Jock is on his annual pilgrimage to Lourdes ..Fr Jim Smith will kindly be celebrating the Weekday Masses while he is away, while this weekend we welcome Kiltegan Father, Fr Kyran Murphy, for the annual Mission Appeal.

The next Baptism Course will be on Thursday 18 August and Thursday 25 August at 7.30pm in the Parish House. If you would like to have a child baptised, please make contact with Fr Jock.

Saturday 16 July- 6.30pm – St John’s – Vigil Mass - livestreamed

Sunday 17 July – 16th Sunday of the Year

9.30am – St John’s – Mass – livestreamed

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – Mass

Monday 18 July

10.00am – St John’s – Mass - livestreamed

No Gospel Sharing this week

Tuesday 19 July – 7.00pm – Parish House Prayer Room – Mass - livestreamed

Wednesday 20 July - 10.00am – St John’s – Mass – livestreamed

Thursday 21 July

9.15am-9.45am – St John’s - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

10.00am – St John’s – Mass - livestreamed

Friday 22 July – FEAST OF ST MARY MAGDALENE

9.20am-9.50am – St Mary Magdalene’s - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

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

Saturday 23 July – Feast of St Bridget of Sweden

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

Sunday 24 July – 17th Sunday of the Year

9.30am – St John’s – Mass – livestreamed

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene’s – Mass

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From Archbishop Leo’s Weekly ‘Ad Clerum’

SCIAF Ukraine Appeal - As well as your prayers, please consider supporting SCIAF’s emergency appeal for Ukraine, if you are able. Donations can be made at <https://www.sciaf.org.uk/> To find out how the Catholic Church is helping those in Ukraine see <https://www.caritas.org/>

Free2Pray - The Scottish Parliament is considering a Bill which would ban peaceful prayers and offers of help near abortion clinics. Catholics concerned for freedom of speech and right of assembly are asked to respond to this proposed Bill. The Archdiocese is hosting an online session to help you do this. Free2Pray takes place on Zoom and lasts 30 mins. Register for one of the following dates: Monday 18 July 7:45pm – Register at bit.ly/freetoprayerjuly; Tuesday 2 August 7:45pm. Register at bit.ly/freetoprayeraugust

Youth Pilgrimage - The National Pilgrimage for young people 16-30 takes place on Saturday 24 September in Dunkeld, Perthshire. It includes walks to holy sites, talks and Holy Mass. A bus will leave from the Gillis Centre, 100 Strathearn Road, Edinburgh at 9:30am (£10). To book your place email yi@staned.org.uk.

ANOTHER 'SAINT OF THE WEEK' - THIS TIME UNCANONISED

STANLEY ROTHER - PRIEST AND MARTYR (1935-1981) – 28 July

"Pray for us that we may be a sign of the love of Christ for our people, that our presence among them will fortify them to endure these sufferings in preparation for the coming of the kingdom."



In the early morning hours of July 28, 1981, Father Stanley Rother was murdered in the rectory of the church of Santiago Atitlán in Guatemala. Unlike some other martyred priests of Central America, this lanky Oklahoma farmboy did not pose an obvious threat to the rich and powerful. To some Father Rother might even have seemed naively detached from the social upheaval around him. But in Guatemala there were those who saw subversion in any effort to affirm the dignity of the Indian peasants. As Rother said, *"To shake the hand of an Indian is a political act."*

Thoughts of death were far from his mind when Rother volunteered in 1968 to serve in Santiago Atitlán. The church in this picturesque Indian town had been adopted as a mission by Rother's diocese of Oklahoma City-Tulsa. For Rother, who had nearly failed to finish seminary because of his difficulties with Latin, the first challenge was to master the Mayan dialect of the Tzutuhil Indians.

Having passed this hurdle, he quickly won their trust and respect by his complete dedication to the needs of the community. The pastoral work alone was almost overwhelming - the usual cycle of baptisms, marriages, funerals, the training of catechists and eucharistic ministers, the constant visits to the sick and dying, responding to the endless stream of people at his door requiring food, medicine, or other help. Sunday Masses were attended by thirty-five hundred people.

But in the extra hours he squeezed from his days Rother could be found wielding a hoe in a farmer's cornfield, organizing weaving and food cooperatives, or performing any number of unseen acts of generosity and friendship. It is no wonder that as the years progressed, the parish church became the centre of renewal in this traditional Indian town and Rother, no longer an outsider, was accepted into the inner circles of village life. The people eventually conferred on Rother a unique honour, given to no other North American priest. They gave him an Indian name: Padre A'plas. For his part, Rother felt himself so inspired by the faith, strength, and simplicity of the Tzutuhil people that he could not imagine a life apart from them.

For years Rother and his flock were untouched by the violence and repression that were a fixture of Guatemalan history. The roots of this violence extended five hundred years to the original Spanish conquest. But in recent years a succession of military governments had found in anti-communism a convenient excuse to use brutal force against any challenge to the stark inequality and injustice of the status quo. In the 1980s this violence would become a raging storm that extended for the first time to the church.

As Rother wrote to his bishop in Oklahoma City, *"The country here is in rebellion and the government is taking it out on the church. The low wages that are paid, the very few who are excessively rich, the bad distribution of land-these are some of the reasons for widespread discontent. The Church seems to be the only force that is trying to do something about the situation, and therefore the government is after us."*

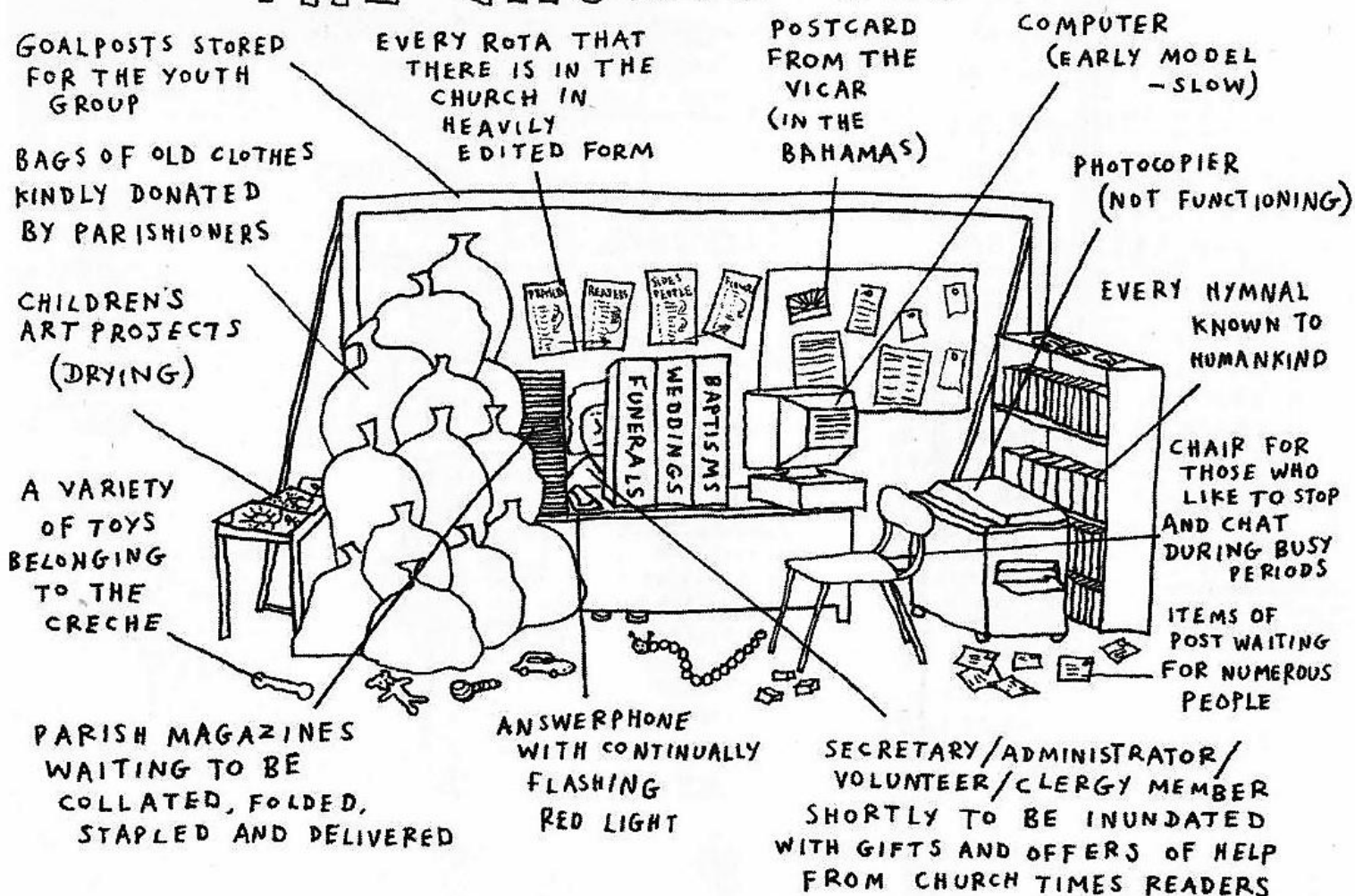
Eventually the violence reached Santiago Atitlán, and Rother and his pastoral team could no longer avoid the need for precautions. Still, Rother resisted any suggestion that he return to *the United States*. *"At the first signs of danger," he wrote, "the shepherd can't run and leave the sheep to fend for themselves."* One day one of Rother's most experienced catechists was kidnapped by armed men in broad daylight in front of the church. For months afterward Rother was haunted by the man's desperate cries and his own inability to protect him. Then in January 1981 Rother's own name appeared on a published death list. Persuaded that his presence posed a risk to members of his pastoral team, he agreed to leave the country and returned to Oklahoma. But he could not bear to remain so far from his flock.

By Holy Week he had returned to Santiago Atitlán. Things seemed relatively calm, and he was delighted to be once more among his people, sharing with them the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection. But in the middle of the night on July 28 death came for the shepherd. Three masked men slipped into the parish rectory and found their way to Rother's room. From the struggle that ensued it appears that their intention was to kidnap the priest. But knowing that this inevitably meant torture and eventual death, Rother put up a fight. Though he never called out for help, he was heard to cry to his abductors, *"Kill me here!"* They complied, shooting him twice in the head.

Rother was not a priest in the prophetic mold. He was in the truest sense a pastor whose life was a constant self-giving. He could not accept that his priesthood or his American citizenship should set him apart from the risks and sufferings of his people. In laying down his life, he guaranteed that he would never leave them.

After the funeral Mass Rother's body was returned to Oklahoma for burial. But his family agreed to the request of his parish and allowed his heart to be interred in the church of Santiago Atitlán.

THE CHURCH OFFICE



I am Mary and I am Martha.

Lord of earth and sky.
 as Martha did I welcome you into the house
 of my heart;
 as Mary did I welcome you into the home
 of my thoughts;
 In service, in listening.
 I welcome you.

Like Martha, I'm distracted:
 so many calls on my time....
 I run here and there,
 starting this and that,
 never spending long enough,
 giving people the impression that I'm too busy
 for them.

Like Mary, I choose:
 choose to slow down,
 choose to sit at your feet,
 choose to offer you my ministry of listening.
 Save me from feeling guilty about the kitchens
 of the world:
 the hot spots, the action areas
 and help me to identify with your compassion
 and your presence - there as everywhere.

Welcome and welcoming Christ,
 may all sisters come together into your presence
 and together eat at your table
 the meal you have prepared for us;
 that from the kitchen of your suffering
 a banquet may be prepared
 for all to eat.

(Kate McIlhagga in 'Dandelions and Thistles')

A REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE SIXTEETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR - LUKE 10:38-42

All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy. It's a phrase familiar to us all. Those acquainted with the film *The Shining*, will also be aware of the significance of the discovery by Jack's wife of hundreds of sheets of paper, where Jack has typed that same sentence, over and over again. *All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy.* Madness and insanity have arrived in their household. One of my childhood memories is that of my mother working diligently to keep the household running smoothly. She worked hard. It is ironic that the existence of so-called labour-saving devices don't always have their intended effect of freeing people to relax more. There is an epidemic of work with many obliged to take on two and three jobs merely to make ends meet. Taxi drivers, food delivery couriers, cleaners, might be aware that *All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy*, but they have little choice. Burn-out and premature death beckons them.

This weekend's Gospel introduces us to Martha and Mary. The one a worker, the other a thinker. Martha complains to Jesus that Mary is leaving all the work to her to complete. Jesus is unequivocal. *Martha, Martha - you worry and fret about so many things, yet few are needed. It is Mary who has chosen the better part; it is not to be taken from her.* 'Needed' presents us with a permanent challenge. What do we really need? One of my personal irritations is to hear others bleating on about threats to their summer holidays, flight cancellations and the like, while child poverty and foodbank usage are at record levels. So what is it that is really needed in life? Jesus is not belittling the efforts of Martha. He is calling for balance. As a child I well remember summer holidays when Auntie Jennie, Uncle John and a multitude of cousins from the Midlands of England would come to visit. Somehow sleeping space was created with a skill-set that made Doctor Who's Tardis appear quite amateur. Feeding was organised on a well-drilled rota basis and my Mam and Auntie Jennie took complete control of the kitchen. They were sisters and had much on which to catch-up. They enjoyed the seclusion of the kitchen and were a good team. Who needs one Martha when you could have two? They were happy preparing food for us, while drawing strength from each other's company. Once fed we would all go outside for some anarchic game loosely based on cricket. The Dads retired to somewhere safe where football could be discussed_ or some political issues. (Politically, they were poles apart and things could easily become heated!). We have often heard that life is never black and white. There are more shades of grey than even envisaged in the life of Christian Grey (Google him). The world needs its share of Marthas – just as it needs its share of Marys. Our life is a balance of the two. Sometimes we're Martha, sometimes we're Mary. They aren't exclusive to each other. It is a balance. A day filled just with work and activity will destroy us. A day without pause for reflection and self-examination will leave us arid and dry – as dry as the grasslands currently covering so much of Europe and that are threatening an inferno of Armageddon proportions.

Spending time with our inner 'Mary' allows us time and space for introspective reflection; it allows us time and opportunity to visit the issues around what it is that we 'need': *Martha, Martha – you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed.* Occasionally, an expert will crop up on one of the lifestyle programmes favoured by daytime TV or radio. "De-clutter your life" is the promise on offer. My own home is well-stocked with a plethora of things that I don't really need, but just own. If Jesus were to announce an imminent visit, I would struggle to justify their existence,,,,, or, hide them! What is it that we really need? As you sit in your own home this weekend, look around you. Look further afield at your life in general. What is it that you really need? How much time and energy do we expend on these non-essentials? *We worry and fret about so many things, yet few are needed.....*
Decision time looms!

(The author of these reflections is a friend of Fr Jock living in Northumberland)

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please pray for those who have died recently:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <i>Pat Hunter</i> <i>Willie Whyte</i> <i>Paddy McCafferty</i> <i>Alison Connarty</i> <i>Jimmy Kesson</i> <i>Mary Caffarkey</i> <i>Emma Williams</i> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Anniversaries:</i></p> <p>St John: July 16: Pat Hunter (2021); Paddy McCafferty (2019); Kathleen McColl (2006); Philomena Donnelly; Maria Howieson; July 17: Patrick Dourley (2005); Joseph O'Brien (2000); Margaret D'Inverno (1988); John Sandham (1985); July 19: Cardinal Gordon J Gray (1993); Eileen Walsh (1975); Domenica Andreucetti; July 20: Charles Bowyer (2013); Ellen Brennan (2005); Margaret Robertson (1995); Patrick Roarty (1992); William Holligan; July 21: Sally O'Connor (2020); William Whyte (2020); Bernard Flynn (1997); Bridget Ginnelly (1986); July 22: Mary Beatson (2003); Catherine Iannarelli (2003); Christina J Walker (2002); Peter Loftus (1985); Rose Maloney; July 23: Bridget Whigham (2010); James Tiernan (2006); Agnes McFadyen (1999); May McPhillips (1999); Michael Tierney (1993); Dominic Knowles (1986); Elizabeth Cordery (1959); Sarah Somerville; July 24: Alison Connarty (2018); Mary Cafferkey (2016); Catherine Tierney (2003); Francis J Meechan (1992);</p> <p>St Mary Magdalene's: July 16: Thomas Dewar (2008); July 17: Owen Barrett (1997); July 19: James Harvey (1996); Mary McQueen (1996); Angelina Risi (1968); July 20: Jimmy Kesson (2018); Sheila Foster (1975); Patrick Burns (1968);</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please pray for those Parishioners who are sick:</i></p> <p>St. John's: Carol Simpson, Shay Graham (aged 5), Kathleen Brown, John Cregan, Mike Noonan, Jean Bonar, Baby Archie Williams, John Whyte, Susan Cammack, Maria Pacitti, Kim O'Neill, Sheila Service, Frances Connelly, Fiona Connel, Inge Downey, John Freeman, May Thomson, Ann Dobie, Frank Logan, Sheelagh Dobson, Ernie Moran, Bob Kelly, Chloe Sutherland, Norah Bruce, Mike and Patricia Lawler, Ruth Viso, Mary Grady, Pauli Walker, Anna Butler, May Flynn, Vincent Knowles, young Saoirse Golden, Frances Cunningham, David Reid, Charlotte McGregor, Betty Dougal, Anne Thomson, Sarah McManus, Mike Burns, Sr Jennifer Lindsay, Maureen Low, Mary Slight, Rose Thornton, Kitty Dykes, Norman Telfer, Kathie Gallagher, Erin Corbett, Roz Byers, Marie Angela Crolla and Lorraine Syme.</p> <p>St Mary Magdalene's: Mary McGovern (jnr), Carolynne McCann, Tom Bauld, Sam Burns, Jacqueline Marinello, Sandra Watt, Mary Cole, Chris English, Andrew Farmer, Clive Davis, Isobel Phillips, Margaret Duffy, Maria Scott Jnr, Louise Gorman, Ann Dockrell, Michael McPhillips, Bridget Malone, Charles Malcolm, Margaret Ryan, Jacqueline Hannan, Julie Keegan, Rose McKay, Laurie Wallace, Annie Watson, David O'Donnell, Andrew Banks, Jude Ferguson, and Mary and James Muir.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please pray for sick friends and relatives of our Parishioners:</i></p> <p>Lorraine Kelly, Marlene Bonnar, George and Ann McDermott, Lalee Martin, Suzanne O'Callaghan, Ellen Dow, Lucille McFadden, Tara Kuppinger, Margo Law, Sheila White, Michael Durkin, Jessica Haggerty, Lauren Sutherland, Margaret Thomson, Charlotte O'Brien, Gwen Cullimore, young Martha Moyes (aged 5), Bill Henderson, Kit McCormick, Jennifer Kay, Margaret Troupe, Anne Lauder, Seval Kazimoglu, Ann Watt (Mgr Rae's sister), Jan Meise, Melanie Ford, Mary Taygarth, young Niamh McDougall, Bridget Bonner, Roger Bromley, Mary Thomson, Fr Raymond OCSO, Tony Rigg, Jozefine O'Connell, Robin Butler, Henrietta Fraser, Stuart Falconer, Nan Doig, Clare Johnston, Elizabeth, Baby Percy Keiran McShane, Colin Sandham, Elizabeth and Gordon Marron, Dawn Clarke, William Kinsley, Katie McAnenny, John Kellagher, Joy Allan, Colin Raasch, Christopher MacKinnon, Annabelle Cervantes, Emily Buchanan, Ann Thorp, baby Josh Simpson, Dani Miniette, Peter Millar, Sr May Lewis, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Jean Nelson, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Michael Igoe, Clare Richardson, Laura Anderson, Richard Reid, James O'Rourke, Tommy Muir, James Shepherd, Peter Hanley, Andrew Franklin, Ellen Green, Jamie Mitchell, Peter Bromley, Edward Caulfield, Igor Rekowski, Diana Hibbert, Joan Brooks, Mary Turnbull and young Ray Donovan Syme.</p>
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Offertory 10 July 2022

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>St Mary Magdalene</i></p> <p>£303.00 total including Offertory of £121.00 and Gift Aid of £182.00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>St John the Evangelist</i></p> <p>£1264.11 total including Offertory of £402.11, Gift Aid of £120.00 and online donations of £742.00</p>
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£114.25	<i>Sea Sunday Second Collection</i>	£282.67
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Thank You!

Parishioner Pat Dishon's 'View from the Pew' - 'Living Scripture'

There is a danger that familiarity might make the Scripture stories seem something for long ago, in a distant land, not really relevant to our days. But, in his Homily, on the parable of the Good Samaritan, Fr Jock encouraged us to take, without prejudice, the opportunities presented to us, in our everyday lives, to be a Good Samaritan.

It reminded me of two experiences that one of my son's' had that really brought Scripture alive for me. Before the pandemic struck, my son used to walk, up Leith Street, to his work in the morning. One morning he saw a man staggering towards him, clutching his head, and, as he passed, my son saw that the man had suffered a serious wound to his skull, and was bleeding heavily. He turned and approached the man, who had sunk down on a low step, and suggested he call him an ambulance. In an Eastern European accent, the man said - "NO! No ambulance, I have 'phoned a friend". So my son asked if he could help, in any way. The man replied - "Perhaps some water?" My son had been aware that passers-by had been giving the two of them a wide berth, but as he stood up he noticed that one passer-by had stopped. He asked my son if the man was alright. My son replied - "Not really, but I am just going to the Deli to get him a bottle of water". The passer-by responded - "You would be cheaper going down to Tesco" Having bought the water (from the Deli) my son stayed with the injured man until his friend arrived.

On another occasion my son was walking up Leith Street when he noticed a man, bundled up in a sleeping bag, huddled in the doorway of an Advice Centre for the Homeless, which was still closed. Sadly, not an unusual sight, given the level of street homelessness in the city. The man appeared to be asleep, but as my son passed he noticed a small pile of vomit, at the man's mouth. Alarmed that the man might have choked to death, my son crouched down and shook him. The man started awaking, looking confused. Just then my son felt a finger being jabbed into his shoulder. Thinking it was another concerned passer-by, my son glanced round. Standing behind him was a very smartly dressed woman. "Can I park here?", she asked, indicating the road behind them. Since it was when the new St. James' Quarter was being built, he answered "No" - and turned back to the confused man, in the doorway. Another jab to my son's shoulder - "Where can I park then?" she asked!

As the Homeless man came to his senses, he explained to my son that the Centre had got him a place at a Hostel, the night before, but as he had turned up drunk, the Hostel would not let him in. So, he had returned to the Advice Centre doorway to sleep until the Centre opened in the morning! My son asked the man if he would like a cup of tea and something to eat. The man said yes, and my son went into (the same) Deli and bought him tea and a roll. He then crouched down beside Brendan as he ate and drank. Brendan asked my son where he worked, and when my son told him, he said "I could tell you some tales about that place, from years ago" (the old GPO building). He then told my son his whole life story.

When I heard about the incident it reminded me about the parable of Dives and Lazarus. The rich man, and the poor man begging at the City Gate. The parable tells us that Lazarus ends up in Heaven "In the bosom of Abraham". There is a danger that we see Lazarus as a 'holy beggar', as a result. That we somehow 'sanitize' Lazarus. That we don't connect him with the grubby, somewhat smelly, Brendans, we see begging on the streets of Edinburgh. And yet the parable tells us that Lazarus was "covered in sores". There is nothing in the parable that suggests that Dives, the rich man, was actively cruel to Lazarus, his sin was, that, like the woman looking for a parking place, he never even SAW the distressed man.

Lord, give us the compassion, and the courage, not to pass by, on the other side.