The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh (Matthew 2, 10-11).

The Gospels we shall hear at Sunday Masses this year will be mostly taken from St Matthew. Matthew seems to be writing for converts from Judaism and so, unlike Mark, he does not explain Jewish customs and names. He often quotes from the Old Testament to demonstrate how it has been fulfilled in the life and actions of Jesus. He presents Jesus in terms of the heroes of Judaism; the angel tells Joseph he must adopt Jesus as son of David, and Jesus relives and fulfils the life of Moses. Like Moses, Jesus is driven into exile by a wicked ruler; like Moses he is taken up onto a high mountain to see the kingdoms of this world, and, like Moses, he imparts a new holy Law from a mountain. And yet it is more important to notice the differences, the ways in which Jesus surpasses Moses. His disciples call Jesus ‘Lord’, not ‘Rabbi’; only Judas calls Jesus ‘Rabbi’, when he betrays him with his kiss. When he walks on the water, when Peter calls him the Son of the living God at Caesarea Philippi (16, 16) and when they fall down and worship him (14,33), Jesus’ disciples recognise his divinity even before the resurrection. And in our Epiphany Gospel we see the Magi falling before the child Jesus to adore him (2, 11).

By tradition Matthew is identified with the tax collector who answers Jesus’ call to follow him (9, 9), but he is also a natural teacher and artist. He presents important ideas such as the Beatitudes, the six corrections of the Old Law, and the good works of almsgiving, prayer and fasting in memorable sequences. These will help his disciples when they in their turn take on the role of teachers. The community is so important for Matthew (and that is why Bishop Declan has chosen this year for our focus on Communion) that in his Gospel Jesus gives five great discourses on community life:

- The Sermon on the Mount (chh. 5-7)
- The Little Commission to the 12 Apostles (ch. 10)
- Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven (ch. 13)
- The Discourse on the Church (ch. 18)
The Discourse on the End Times (chh. 23-25)
Even so, Jesus’ community is not perfect; Peter, the chosen leader, fails at crucial moments; there have to be unlimited forgiveness and processes of reconciliation; the lost must be sought out. And yet, three times Jesus’ permanent and guiding presence with his disciples is guaranteed (1, 24; 18, 20; 28, 20). ‘And look I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’

Kathy Baker: the funeral will take place at 12 noon in the Holy Ghost Church, Midsomer Norton, on Wednesday 8 January.

Epiphany Blessings for Homes: increasingly Catholics and other Christians like to mark their homes with a special Epiphany blessing. On the Feast of the Epiphany you can mark the entrance of your home with chalk like this: 20 † C † M † B † 20. The numbers give the year; the initials C.M.B. have a double significance, referring to the three kings, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, and to the words ‘Christus Mansionem Benedicat’, ‘May Christ bless this house.’ You can add an Epiphany star if you like. Our diocesan liturgical diary offers an accompanying prayer: ‘O God, you revealed your Son to all people by the shining light of a star. We pray that you bless this home and all who live here with your gracious presence. May your love be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide, your truth our light, and your peace be our blessing; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) Mass for SVP intention will be celebrated on the Anniversary of our formation on Thursday 16 January at 6 p.m. All welcome.

A Treatise of Schisme. In this week’s Martyrology you can read how Blessed William Carter was convicted of treason and put to death for printing in 1580 a second edition of Gregory Martin’s A Treatise of Schisme, which was first published in 1578. Books putting the Catholic case in England were clearly in popular demand, but to provide or print them was to endanger your life. We reproduce here part of Gregory Martin’s treatise from a copy we have in the monastery library. The title page tells us that the book shows ‘that all Catholikes ought in any wise to abstaine altogether from heretical Conventicles, to witt, their prayers, sermons, &c …’ It was because he followed the advice of the book he printed that William Carter came to the attention of the Protestant authorities, eventually suffering imprisonment, torture on the rack, and finally execution.

The author, Gregory Martin, had been a friend of St Edmund Campion at Oxford and was a vital influence on his converting to Catholicism. After being ordained priest in 1573 in Douai, he helped William Allen found the English College in Rome. He then returned to Douai where, from 1578 to 1582, he took the lead in preparing a Catholic translation of the Bible (the Douai Rheims version). The notes to this edition focus on passages most used by Protestants to justify their separating from the Catholic Church. Fr Gregory Martin’s translation is nevertheless understood to have influenced the translators of the King James’
Version of 1611. He died of consumption at Rheims in 1582, aged 40. Downside Abbey Library has a splendid collection of English Catholic books printed in recusant times, often at the cost of great sacrifice as the story of William Carter shows us.

**We pray for the sick and housebound of our parish:** Laurence Bloom-Davis, Arthur Haynes, Eileen Barrett and Will and Detta Duggan

**The Truth About Plastics: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly:** 6.15 p.m. 13th January 2020 at Komedia, Bath. Tickets cost £10 and are on sale now, through Bath Komedia box office as well as 3SG. [https://www.komedia.co.uk/bath/talk/bath-ocean-plastic-day/](https://www.komedia.co.uk/bath/talk/bath-ocean-plastic-day/)

**Diocesan Prayer Link:** St Augustine of Canterbury, Downend; St John Fisher, Frenchay; Our Lady of Lourdes & St Bernadette, Kingswood; St Lawrence, Chipping Sodbury, with St Paul, Yate.

**Ecumenical Prayer Link:** St Nicholas, Radstock

**If you are new to our parish or are visiting,** please make yourself known to Dom Michael or Dom Leo. If you are at the 10 a.m. Mass in the Abbey, please make yourself known to the priest saying the Mass.

**January Needs** Biscuits, Brown sauce & ketchup, Corned beef, Custard, Dried pasta, Instant mashed potato, Meat pies (tinned), Pasta sauce, Powdered milk, Savoury rice, Sponge puddings, Super noodles & pot noodles, Tinned fruit, Tinned ham, Tinned potatoes, Tinned vegetables, Tuna, UHT milk.

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If you would like to receive the **newsletter by email**, please contact Steve Parsons sparsons@downside.co.uk

**Items for the Newsletter** If you would like to contribute items for consideration for inclusion in the Parish Newsletter, please send to: sparsons@downside.co.uk or call 01761 235323)
Masses in St Benedict's church
Saturday Vigil Mass 5 p.m.
Sunday Masses 9 a.m. 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.

Weekday Masses in Holy Ghost church, Midsomer Norton
Tuesday, Friday & Saturday at 9.45 a.m.

Confessions
Saturdays at Holy Ghost 10.15-11 a.m.
Sundays in St Benedict's 10.15-10.45 a.m.
Sundays in the Abbey church 9.35-9.55 a.m.

Regular events
Adoration 9.30-5pm Monday to Saturday
and 11.30-6 p.m. on Sundays in the crypt of Downside Abbey Church
Prayer group on Mondays at 7.30 p.m. in Holy Ghost church

Rosary on Thursdays at 7 p.m. in St Benedict's

The Abbey Church
Weekdays
Vigils 6 a.m.
Lauds 7.10 a.m.
Mass 8.35 a.m.
Midday Office 12.30 p.m.
Vespers 6 p.m.

Sundays
Lauds 7.30 a.m.
Mass 10 a.m.
Midday Office 12.30 p.m.
Vespers/Benediction 5 p.m.

Parish Priest: Dom Michael Clothier. Tel: 01761 235111
Assistant Parish Priest: Dom Leo Maidlow Davis. Tel: 01761 235107

Martyrology: Saturday 11 January is the feast of Blessed William Carter, who was martyred on this day at Tyburn in 1584. He was a printer who had been secretary to Nicholas Harpsfield, the last Catholic archdeacon of Canterbury, when he was imprisoned in the Fleet. William subsequently married and set up a press on Tower Hill. In 1578 and 1579 he was imprisoned for not conforming to the government’s religious directives. Among Catholic books he printed a new edition of Dr Gregory Martin’s A Treatise on Schisme in 1580. In 1582 he was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower; his wife died while he was in prison. He was racked and then tried on 10 January for having printed Dr Martin’s book, which contained the wish that ‘Catholic Hope would triumph, and pious Judith would slay Holofernes’. This was taken to be incitement to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I. He was martyred the next day.