

# St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church

Moore Street, Adelaide

An open, welcoming and inclusive community  
in the heart of the City of Adelaide



## Keeping Community Spiritual Resources & Reflections

Thursday 1 September 2022

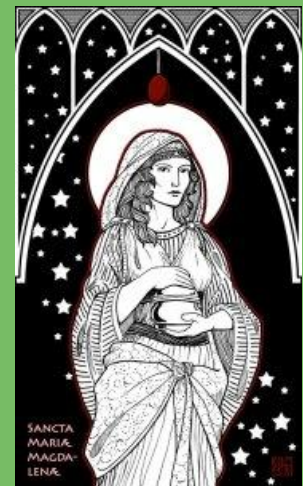
Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions will make it possible to again open the church for private prayer and public worship.

Sunday Mass is offered weekly at 10 am, and the church will also be open on Thursday between 11.30 am and 1 pm, with the Angelus at noon and Mass at 12.10 pm.

The decision to return to worship in community, whether for private prayer, or the public celebration of the Word and Sacraments, is not a straightforward matter.

These newsletters are intended to provide some resources for prayer and reflection: enjoy!



### 1. From Fr Steven – For Freedom

On Sunday, I will be preaching on the letter to Philemon, a short letter of just a single chapter, in which slavery is a prominent theme. I will also mention Father's Day. And I will be discussing both of these issues in the light of the themes of redemption, Jesus as redeemer, and our work of redemption in Adelaide. Of course, the theme of redemption is rightly associated with the concept of freedom.

In Paul's letter to the Galatians, the theme of freedom is critical, "For freedom Christ has set us free" (5:1). This freedom is not just an abstract philosophical principle. Remember, Paul was addressing the Galatians, who were a Celtic people, despised by the Romans. The Romans referred to the Galatians as barbarians. So, for Paul, freedom in Christ is real and it has religious and political implications. In order to appreciate all this, we need to look at the theme of freedom in the context of redemption.

In the Jewish tradition, redemption is a *constellation* of ideas and terms about the divine work of liberation set within the context of our relationships with God, the other, and the land. Critically, the divine initiative of liberation is premised on divine generosity (*hesed*).

*Hesed* is a major theme in the Hebrew Scriptures. It has nuances of obligation, loyalty, kindness, and grace. It can be translated as *loving kindness*. It is used broadly to describe God's gracious response to the people, which is an expression of God's character and God's (covenant) commitment to the people of God. As a consequence, there is a mutual dimension, that is, the people of God are called to live-out loving kindness in community with others.

The constellation of redemption encompasses various elements including immanence and transcendence, returning and changing, origin and renewal, which are not separated into discrete categories. In Jewish thinking, then, which profoundly influenced the early church, redemption is about the fullness of life for everyone. It encompasses our relationship with other species too. It is not just about human beings (Romans 8:18-26).

Fr Steven

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## 2. COVID-19 Update

The Declaration that enabled COVID-19 related directions to be made was revoked on Tuesday 24 May, but there are still some restrictions on public activities associated with the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-Safe Plans are no longer required, though everyone is encouraged to follow SA Health guidance about infection control and community safety, especially if there is a risk of over-crowding.

The current increase in cases of COVID-19 in the community have been considered by the Parish Council, which has agreed that we will continue to take a conservative approach for the time being, and to encourage precautions including Distancing, Ventilation and Facemasks: **DVM** for short. Distancing means maintaining a sensible distance of 1.5 metres between individuals or family groups; Ventilation means leaving some doors and/or windows open to allow a flow of air—and in this cold weather, we have air conditioning, so we won't freeze!—and Facemasks are obvious.

It is worth remembering the advice of the Australian Medical Association that a face masks continue to be an effective way of minimising the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases, especially in crowded or indoor settings, and anyone who wishes to continue to wear a face mask is at liberty to do so. We will continue to make face masks available, along with the other hygienic measures that have been in place for much of the past two years.

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## 3. Daily Prayer

Most Christian denominations have forms for prayer in the morning and the evening, and at other times of the day. Morning and Evening Prayer in *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are available in either a fixed form (pp 3-33) or a form for each day of the week (pp 383-424).

### Online Resources

There is an online version of Daily Prayer from *A Prayer Book for Australia* for each day available at Australian Daily Prayer <https://dailyprayer.ampers.x10.mx/>. There is also a free app for mobile devices from the App Store or Google Play.

The Church of England provides an online version of its orders for Daily Prayer at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>. This is also available as a free app. The Divine Office of the Catholic Church is available online at [www.ibreviary.com](http://www.ibreviary.com) and is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

### Times of Prayer

Many people find it helpful to make a particular time daily for prayer and reflection. One option might be to join your prayer with those of the wider world at some special times during the day, especially in praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

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#### 4. Reflections and Meditations

In addition to Fr Steven's regular reflection in this newsletter, which is uploaded to the web page for wider accessibility, Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections are presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>.

To access these meditations, simply go to the blog and select the "Spirit matters" tab on the top. If you would like to receive an email update when there is a new posting on the blog, whether for a Sunday or weekday service, or for meditations and other supports for prayer, please subscribe to the blog using the box on the right-hand side of the page.

Service booklets as PDF files are still available for Sunday and weekday services on the web site and on the Parish's Facebook page.

#### 5. This Week in the Calendar

In the coming week we celebrate the 20th century Martyrs of New Guinea (d. 1942), as well as the great teacher Pope St Gregory the Great (d. 604), and the pioneering Australian social reformer Eliza Darling.

**The New Guinea Martyrs** (2 September) are of deep significance in our part of the world. They are 12 Anglican clergy, nurses, teachers and other Christian workers who were executed by Japanese soldiers during the Japanese occupation of Papua, New Guinea and other parts of Melanesia in 1942 and 1943.

The Bishop of New Guinea, Philip Strong, instructed Anglican clergy and missionaries to remain in their ministries even if the Japanese were to overrun their posts. In the course of the occupation, many were arrested, and some were executed.

(Altogether, around 400 Christian clergy and church workers were killed in Melanesia during the Japanese occupation - the largest group being Roman Catholics.)

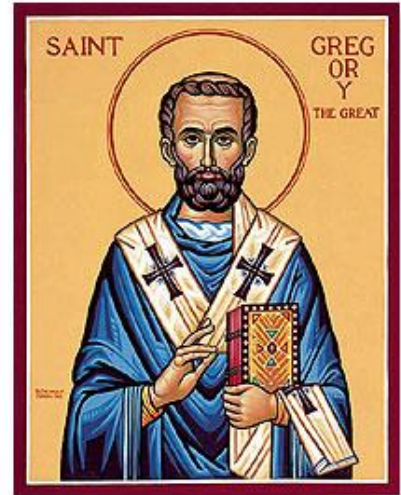
There is a very particular connection between the Diocese of Adelaide and the New Guinea Martyrs. Lilla Lashmar was a teacher and a member of the Parish of Prospect who offered herself for missionary service, was captured during the occupation, and was beheaded by her captors. A stained glass window in her memory in St Cuthbert's, Prospect (pictured) features a Cross of Sacrifice. The cross in the window was a gift of the Japanese Anglican Church.



**St Gregory the Great** (3 September) is another great saint of the early church. He was Prefect of Rome before the age of 30, but after five years in office he resigned, founded six monasteries on his Sicilian estate, and became a Benedictine monk. He was later ordained a priest, Gregory became one of the pope's seven deacons, and also served six years in the East as papal representative in Constantinople. He was recalled to become abbot, then at the age of 50 was elected pope by the clergy and people of Rome.

Gregory was direct and firm. He removed unworthy priests from office, forbade taking money for many services, emptied the papal treasury to ransom prisoners of the Lombards and to care for persecuted Jews and the victims of plague and famine.

Among his writings, his book *Pastoral Care*, on the duties and qualities of a bishop, was read for centuries after his death. He described bishops mainly as physicians whose main duties were preaching and the enforcement of discipline. In his own down-to-earth preaching, Gregory was skilled at applying the daily Gospel to the needs of his listeners. Called "the Great," Gregory has been given a place with Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, as one of the four key doctors of the Western Church. An Anglican historian has written: "It is impossible to conceive what would have been the confusion, the lawlessness, the chaotic state of the Middle Ages without the medieval papacy; and of the medieval papacy, the real father is Gregory the Great."



Sharing a date of commemoration with St Gregory is **Eliza Darling**. A devout Anglican of evangelical leanings, she showed a practical interest in the well-being of less fortunate elements in society. This was particularly evident while she was in New South Wales, where her husband was Governor from 1824 to 1831. Here she used her position to establish the Female School of Industry, "to assist the women convicts in the Female Factory and to improve the morality of the convicts."

Eliza regarded prayer and worship as a source of strength and comfort, as well as essential to moral and spiritual well-being. But hers was a strong practical faith: she took practical steps to see that those most in need of support and guidance were able to receive it.



## 6. From a homily on Ezekiel by St Gregory the Great

*For Christ's love I do not spare myself in speaking of him*

*Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel.* Note that a man whom the Lord sends forth as a preacher is called a watchman. A watchman always stands on a height so that he can see from afar what is coming. Anyone appointed to be a watchman for the people must stand on a height for all his life to help them by his foresight.

How hard it is for me to say this, for by these very words I denounce myself. I cannot preach with any competence, and yet insofar as I do succeed, still I myself do not live my life according to my own preaching.

I do not deny my responsibility; I recognize that I am slothful and negligent, but perhaps the acknowledgment of my fault will win me pardon from my just judge. Indeed when I was in the monastery I could curb my idle talk and usually be absorbed in my prayers. Since I assumed the burden of pastoral care, my mind can no longer be collected; it is concerned with so many matters.

I am forced to consider the affairs of the Church and of the monasteries. I must weigh the lives and acts of individuals. I am responsible for the concerns of our citizens. I must worry about the invasions of roving bands of barbarians, and beware of the wolves who lie in wait for my

flock. I must become an administrator lest the religious go in want. I must put up with certain robbers without losing patience and at times I must deal with them in all charity.

With my mind divided and torn to pieces by so many problems, how can I meditate or preach wholeheartedly without neglecting the ministry of proclaiming the Gospel? Moreover, in my position I must often communicate with worldly men. At times I let my tongue run, for if I am always severe in my judgments, the worldly will avoid me, and I can never attack them as I would. As a result I often listen patiently to chatter. And because I too am weak, I find myself drawn little by little into idle conversation, and I begin to talk freely about matters which once I would have avoided. What once I found tedious I now enjoy.

So who am I to be a watchman, for I do not stand on the mountain of action but lie down in the valley of weakness? Truly the all-powerful Creator and Redeemer of mankind can give me in spite of my weaknesses a higher life and effective speech; because I love him, I do not spare myself in speaking of him.

## 7. From a Sermon on the New Guinea Martyrs by Fr Daniel Dries

[On 2] September, our church commemorates the memorial of a group commonly referred to as the 'Martyrs of New Guinea'. The term 'The New Guinea Martyrs' suggests the 13 Anglican missionaries, including 5 priests, who were killed by Japanese soldiers in World War II as an 'example to others'. However, it is believed that there were in fact several hundred Christian missionaries killed in New Guinea as an 'example to others'.

The death of the New Guinea Martyrs does provide an extraordinary example of enduring faith for the likes of us. As the very dark shadow of World War II hovered above New Guinea, it became very obvious that missionaries of European origin would be in very grave danger. However, the Bishop of New Guinea, Bishop Philip Strong, sent a very clear message to his clergy regarding the horrifying trials that would soon confront them: He wrote: *"We must endeavour to carry on our work. God expects this of us. The church at home, which sent us out, will surely expect it of us. The universal church expects it of us. The people whom we serve expect it of us. We could never hold up our faces again if, for our own safety, we all forsook Him and fled, when the shadows of the Passion began to gather around Him in His spiritual and mystical body, the Church in Papua."*

Bishop Strong seems to have possessed a very deep understanding about the nature and purpose of suffering. He could have encouraged his clergy and laity to protect themselves; he could have instructed them to flee and to avoid certain persecution. His clergy could have ignored his instructions – priests don't always follow their Bishop's instructions. But it would seem that they too were able to find the strength and the courage to confront the most unimaginable suffering.

The martyrs of New Guinea must have offered the most extraordinary prayers as their faith was put to test ... and somehow they were given the strength to endure.

## 8. The Letter of Paul to Philemon

As Fr Steven mentions above, this Sunday we have the single appearance in the three year series of readings of the Letter of Paul to Philemon.

This short letter addressed to three specific individuals was written by Paul during an imprisonment. It concerns Onesimus, a slave from Colossae (Col 4:9). The traditional interpretation of the reading was that Onesimus had run away from his master, perhaps guilty

of theft, but was converted to Christ by Paul, who sends him back to his master with this letter asking that he be welcomed not just as a slave but as a brother in Christ. A more nuanced understanding of the letter is that Onesimus has been sent on a mission by his master, Philemon, to care for Paul in prison, and that Paul takes the initiative in writing to Philemon, to ask him to set the slave free so he can become a Christian missionary. As to the suggestion that Onesimus has wronged his master, it is possible that he was not a thief, but probably a debt slave; thus Philemon would lose out if he set Onesimus free.

Whichever of these interpretations one makes, Paul uses very strong arguments (especially Phlm 19) in his touching appeal on behalf of Onesimus.

It is difficult, but true, that Paul's letter deals with an accepted institution of antiquity, human slavery. But Paul breathes into this letter the spirit of Christ and of equality within the Christian community. He does not attack slavery directly, for this is something the Christian communities of the first century were in no position to do, and the expectation that Christ would soon come again militated against social reforms. Yet Paul, by presenting Onesimus as "brother, beloved... to me, but even more so to you" (Phlm 16), voiced an idea revolutionary in that day and destined to break down worldly barriers of division "in the Lord."

## 9. Intentions for Your Daily Prayers

*We pray throughout the week for the world and the church. These intentions may be helpful in your private or family prayers.*

*For the world.* The leaders of the world as they seek to respond to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. For refugees and asylum seekers, that they may find places of safety and welcome.

*For the church.* In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Minnesota (USA). In our national church, pray for the Primate, Archbishop Geoff Smith, and his office; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Archdeaconry of the City of Adelaide and the Port.

*For our local community.* For the Collective and its ministry in the local community. For the Magdalene Centre, as it deals with the need to change the way it delivers services in order to safeguard the health of customers, staff and volunteers.

*For those in need.* Pray for all those who are troubled in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Sim, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Olivia, Nance, Neil and Elaine.

*For those who have died.* Those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us; those who have died as a result of COVID-19 and in other tragic circumstances; those who have died recently, and those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time. ✠ *Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.*

*For the saints.* For the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph, St Mary Magdalene, the New Guinea Martyrs, St Gregory, and holy women and men of every time and place.

This newsletter will normally be distributed weekly on Thursday. Any appropriate items should be emailed to the Parish Office, [StMMAdeelaide.Parish@outlook.com](mailto:StMMAdeelaide.Parish@outlook.com), by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

