

St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church

Moore Street, Adelaide



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

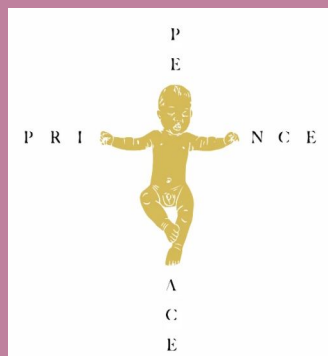
Keeping Community Spiritual Resources & Reflections

Thursday 5 December 2021

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions means 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.

These newsletters are intended to support the spiritual life of the community as we continue to cope with and respond to the pandemic.



1. From Fr Gwilym – A Meditation on Psalm 104



I am privileged to live at Largs Bay, on the Lefevre Peninsula, close to the sea. This means that I can easily walk along the beach, from Largs Bay to North Haven.

It is a beautiful flat beach where the ebbing tide reveals a wonderful sandscape of pools and streams, scattered with shells, seaweed and seagulls.

There are other birds there, Pacific Gulls, Terns, Oystercatchers, Cormorants, the occasional Pelican, as well as Magpies, Galahs, Nankeen Kestrels and Plovers.

It is a place of infinite variety, of different seasons and moods, varying shapes and colours, smells and odours. It would take a lifetime of study and careful description even to begin to describe the beach. The sea is known for its wonders. As I look out across the smooth water, I struggle to find words for the colours and textures, stretching out to the horizon and beyond the curvature of the Earth.

Outer Harbor, its name fixed by Act of Parliament in defiance of English spelling, is distinguishable by the breakwaters stretching out into the Gulf. And there go the ships, to and fro, as the Psalmist observed three thousand years ago. I have seen, years ago now, a Right Whale off the coast, that Leviathan whom God formed to sport in the deep. If I wanted to muse on the wonders of Creation, then Psalm 104 is a good place to start.

But now I am walking along the beach, hearing the tiny shells crunching beneath my feet, soothed by the soft susurrations of the shining sea. (How I love words! Susurrations are a favourite, and here the alliterative onomatopoeia is especially delightful.) Today there is no wind and the smallest sounds carry across the expanse. There are seagulls swearing at each other, and the magnificent chorale of the magpies warbling for joy on the seaweed.

There are human sounds too. It is eight minutes past six in the morning, and I can hear the bells of the railway crossing at Largs North telling me that someone has to go to work today. There is a faint hum from the city as the traffic begins to grow and grumble, and from the houses along the seafront I can imagine the sounds of breakfast.

The sun is rising and the shadows of the Norfolk Island Pines stretch and shrink over the shore. The broken shell of a Razor Clam casts a long shade and my own legs waver like wraiths over the water.

And the smells! Always the salty tang of the sea, so much loved by poets and writers, which no one can really describe. It intoxicates sailors and landlubbers alike. It was once recommended as a tonic for all sorts of ailments, and it is still a blessing for the soul. It is always fresh and clean, year in, year out, always a delight. And there is the smell of the seaweed, a not unpleasant odour of decay, at least when it is experienced in small quantities. One could spend a year just breathing, as Treebeard the Ent said in the *Lord of the Rings*.

Walking along the beach, my mind is set free to wander. It's like a dog let off its lead (and there are some of those on the beach, too.) My mind, like a dog, chases the seagulls, not out of malice or hunger, but just because. It goes jumping through the shallows, again, because it can, and then rushes back to me, all slobber and splashing from its shaking shaggy coat.

I saw a young man walking along the beach this morning. His head was clamped in a set of earphones, and I wondered if he knew that his brain was desperate to be set free to run on the beach. My own mind came running back, carrying a stick. The stick was the worry that humans might be frightened of freedom, always ready to shut out the world with noise and other distractions.

I am only a tiny scrap of God's creation, and the world will continue whether I live or die, but how thankful I am to be able to rejoice and give praise and thanks to God for all the wonders given to me.

Yes, it's true, God has given me the whole of Creation to sustain me, to fill me with wonder, to excite my curiosity, to give me joy and to give me life! "Bless the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, how great you are! Let us rejoice and exult and give God the glory."

Gwilym Henry-Edwards
Locum Priest

2. 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 the Anglican church's *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are available in either a fixed form (pages 3 – 33) or a different form for each day of the week (pages 383 – 424).

Online Resources

There is a complete 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 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. While the church cannot be open every day, you may like to join the wider community in praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

3. Reflections and Meditations

Fr Gwilym and others within our community will continue to prepare Reflections for Sundays and Holy Days for posting on the web page. 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.

4. Advent Prayer on Wednesdays

Each Wednesday during the Advent season, Alison McAllister and Leonie Zadow will be in the church at 7.30 am each Wednesday morning for 30 minutes of silent prayer.

You are welcome to join us.

Start at 7.30 am promptly ... Finish 8 am.

You can also join us remotely - you can be at home, or even in the car increasing the saints in the room!

If you would like to invite a friend that would be great too.

Questions? Please talk to one of us at church or email leonie@redirt.com.au, phone 0409 691 651

P.S. If you do intend to join us remotely, we'd love to know!

Alison and Leonie

There are no special requirements; a short reading, 20 minutes of silent prayer and a chant to conclude.

If you would like to join us in the church just come – if you're late, just come in.

You don't need to come every week!

If you'd like to join in from home, and you'd like to follow what we are doing, either email or phone, and we'll send you the resources for the day.

5. Blue Christmas

BLUE CHRISTMAS, THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER



A church service to support people who have lost loved ones and are experiencing grief.

The worship recognizes that many experience loss and pain and provides the promise of hope.

Candles, arranged as an Advent wreath, are lit and empty chairs are reserved as a way of commemorating those who have been lost in previous years.

This time is for those who struggle to find joy and hope during festive seasons.

The service is set to begin at 6:30pm on Thursday 9 December.

6. In the Church's Calendar

In the first week of December, we remember some remarkable holy men and women from almost every age of the church. There are the 4th century bishops St Nicholas and St Ambrose, the pioneer of Anglicanism's long road back to monastic spirituality following the Reformation, Nicholas Ferrar, the missionary St Francis Xavier, and the Victorian worker for social good, Frances Perry.

Frances (Fanny) Perry (1814-1892) was born in England and came to Australia in 1847 when her husband, Charles Perry, was appointed as the first Bishop of Melbourne.

On the long voyage from England, while the bishop led services and taught his clergy Greek, Mrs Perry took Scripture classes for the women and practised her benevolence on the steerage passengers.

In addition to the genteel expectations of the Bishop's wife, along with the arduous work of accompanying him in his journeys, Mrs Perry took a great interest in the people and landscapes she encountered and published a collection of colourful letters under the pseudonym 'Richard Perry' as *Contributions to an Amateur Magazine in Prose and Verse* (London, 1857). She took leading roles in the Governesses' Home, the Carlton Refuge, and the Melbourne Orphan Asylum.

Her chief work, however, was as head of the committee that founded the Melbourne Lying-in Hospital – later the Royal Women's Hospital. She was first president from 1856 until Bishop Perry's retirement in 1874. Her memory is preserved in Frances Perry House at the Royal Women's Hospital.

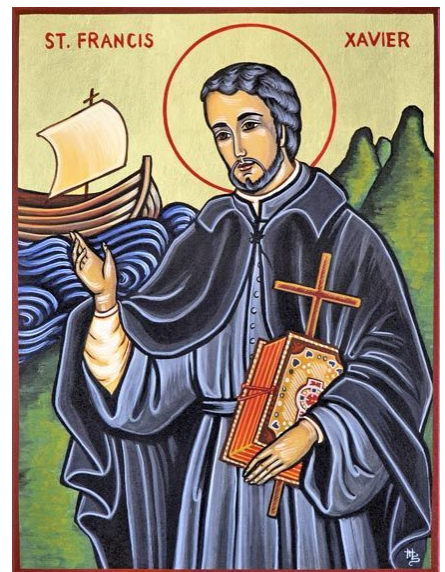
St Francis Xavier (1506-1552).

Jesus asked, "What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Matthew 16:26a).

The words were repeated to Francis Xavier, then a young teacher of philosophy who had a highly promising academic career before him, by his good friend Ignatius López de Oñaz – whom we know as St Ignatius of Loyola. Xavier did not heed these words at once, but Ignatius' persistence eventually won him over. Francis joined Ignatius's emerging religious community, the Society of Jesus.

Together at Montmartre they vowed poverty, chastity, obedience, and apostolic service according to the directions of the pope.

From Venice, where he was ordained a priest in 1537, Xavier went on to Lisbon and from there sailed to the East Indies, landing at Goa, on the west coast of India. For the next 10 years he undertook many missionary journeys, and served as provincial of the newly established Jesuit province of India.



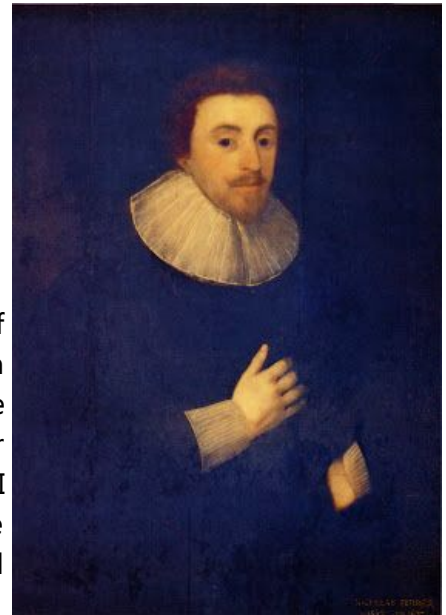
Wherever he went, Xavier lived with the poorest people, sharing their food and rough accommodations. He spent countless hours ministering to the sick and the poor, particularly to lepers. Very often he had no time to sleep or even to say his daily prayers but, as we know from his letters, he was filled always with joy.

Xavier went through the islands of Malaysia, then up to Japan. He learned enough Japanese to preach to simple folk, to instruct, and to baptize, and to establish missions for those who were to follow him. From Japan he had dreams of going to China, but this plan was never realized. Before reaching the mainland, he died. His remains are enshrined in the Church of Good Jesus in Goa.

All of us are called to “go and preach to all nations”. Our preaching is not necessarily on distant shores but to our families, our children, our husband or wife, our coworkers. And we are called to preach not with words, but by our everyday lives. Only by sacrifice, the giving up of all selfish gain, could Francis Xavier be free to bear the Good News to the world. Sacrifice is leaving yourself behind at times for a greater good, the good of prayer, the good of helping someone in need, the good of just listening to another. The greatest gift we have is our time. Francis Xavier gave his to others.

Nicholas Ferrar (1593-1637) was the guiding light of one of the most remarkable experiments in Christian community living in the history of Anglicanism. An English academic, courtier and businessman, he gave up his successful careers, was ordained a deacon and retreated with his extended family to the manor of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire (now Cambridgeshire), where they lived in community.

In 1625, Ferrar and bought the deserted manor and village of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire. Little Gidding had been deserted since the Black Death in the 14th century. The following year he was ordained a deacon, and made it clear that he would not proceed to the priesthood. He pledged: “I will also by the help of my God, set myself with more care and diligence than ever to serve our good Lord God, as is all our duties to do, in all we may.”



The first thing done at Little Gidding was to enter the church for prayer, ordering it to be cleaned and restored for worship before any attention was paid to the house. Little Gidding was in effect the only religious community in the Church of England between the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII and the revival of religious communities that came with the Oxford Movement.

The community at Little Gidding was suppressed by Cromwell in 1646, but remained in the Ferrar family. There was a revival of interest in Nicholas Ferrar and Little Gidding in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, an Anglican religious community, was established at a meeting there in 1913. The Community of Christ the Sower, inspired by the example of Nicholas Ferrar, was founded there in the 1970s and finally came to an end in 1998. The Society of the Friends of Little Gidding was re-founded in 2004.

St Ambrose was born around 340 to a Roman Christian family. Legend has it that when Ambrose was just an infant, a swarm of bees landed on his face, and rather than injuring the child, left behind a drop of honey. To his father, this was a sign that Ambrose would become someone great with a wonderful sense for speaking.

One of his biographers observed that at the Last Judgment, people would still be divided between those who admired Ambrose and those who heartily disliked him. He emerges as the man of action who cut a furrow through the lives of his contemporaries. Even royal personages were numbered among those who were to suffer crushing divine punishments for standing in Ambrose's way.



Yet his sermons, his writings, and his personal life reveal him as an otherworldly man involved in the great issues of his day. Humanity for Ambrose was, above all, spirit. In order to think rightly of God and the human soul, the closest thing to God, no material reality at all was to be dwelt upon.

Ambrose exemplifies for us the truly catholic character of Christianity. He is steeped in the learning, law, and culture of the ancients and of his contemporaries. Yet, in the midst of active involvement in this world, this thought runs through Ambrose's life and preaching: The hidden meaning of the Scriptures calls our spirit to rise to another world.

St Nicholas was born in 270 and died in 343, and that is almost all we know for certain about him. Historically, we can pinpoint only the fact that Nicholas was the fourth-century bishop of Myra, a city in Lycia, a province of Asia Minor.

The absence of the "hard facts" of history is not necessarily an obstacle to the popularity of saints, as the devotion to Saint Nicholas shows. Both the Eastern and Western Churches honour him, and it is claimed that after the Blessed Virgin, he is the saint most pictured by Christian artists. And yet.

As with many of the saints, however, we are able to capture the relationship which Nicholas had with God through the admiration which Christians have had for him—an admiration expressed in the colourful stories which have been told and retold through the centuries.



Perhaps the best-known story about Nicholas concerns his charity toward a poor man who was unable to provide dowries for his three daughters of marriageable age. Rather than see them forced into prostitution, Nicholas secretly tossed a bag of gold through the poor man's window on three separate occasions, thus enabling the daughters to be married. Over the centuries, this particular legend evolved into the custom of gift-giving on the saint's feast. In the English-speaking countries, Saint Nicholas became, by a twist of the tongue, Santa Claus—further expanding the example of generosity portrayed by this holy bishop.

The critical eye of modern history makes us take a deeper look at the legends such as these. Might we utilize the lesson taught by his charity, look deeper at our approach to material

goods in the Christmas season, and seek ways to extend our sharing to those in real need?

7. An Extract from *Little Gidding* by T.S. Eliot

'Little Gidding' is the last of T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets, and also his last significant poem. There is a sense in this poem of Eliot seeking to join the threads of his work together, to 'set a crown upon a lifetime's effort', as he puts it in 'Little Gidding' itself.

*There are three conditions which often look alike
 Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
 Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
 From self and from things and from persons; and, growing between them, indifference
 Which resembles the others as death resembles life,
 Being between two lives - unflowering, between
 The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory:
 For liberation - not less of love but expanding
 Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
 From the future as well as the past. Thus, love of a country
 Begins as an attachment to our own field of action
 And comes to find that action of little importance
 Though never indifferent. History may be servitude,
 History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,
 The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them,
 To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.
 Sin is Behovely, but
 All shall be well, and
 All manner of thing shall be well.
 If I think, again, of this place,
 And of people, not wholly commendable,
 Of not immediate kin or kindness,
 But of some peculiar genius,
 All touched by a common genius,
 United in the strife which divided them;
 If I think of a king at nightfall,
 Of three men, and more, on the scaffold
 And a few who died forgotten
 In other places, here and abroad,
 And of one who died blind and quiet,
 Why should we celebrate
 These dead men more than the dying?
 It is not to ring the bell backward
 Nor is it an incantation
 To summon the spectre of a Rose.
 We cannot revive old factions
 We cannot restore old policies
 Or follow an antique drum.
 These men, and those who opposed them
 And those whom they opposed
 Accept the constitution of silence
 And are folded in a single party.*

*Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
 We have taken from the defeated
 What they had to leave us - a symbol:
 A symbol perfected in death.
 And all shall be well and
 All manner of thing shall be well
 By the purification of the motive
 In the ground of our beseeching.*

8. St Ambrose writes to a new bishop ...

By the grace of your words win over your people

You have entered upon the office of bishop. Sitting at the helm of the Church, you pilot the ship against the waves. Take firm hold of the rudder of faith so that the severe storms of this world cannot disturb you. The sea is mighty and vast, but do not be afraid, for as Scripture says: *he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.*

The Church of the Lord is built upon the rock of the apostles among so many dangers in the world; it therefore remains unmoved. The Church's foundation is unshakeable and firm against the assaults of the raging sea. Waves lash at the Church but do not shatter it. Although the elements of this world constantly beat upon the Church with crashing sounds, the Church possesses the safest harbour of salvation for all in distress. Although the Church is tossed about on the sea, it rides easily on rivers, especially those rivers that Scripture speaks of: *The rivers have lifted up their voice.* These are the rivers flowing from the heart of the man who is given drink by Christ and who receives from the Spirit of God. When these rivers overflow with the grace of the Spirit, they lift up their voice.

There is also a stream which flows down on God's saints like a torrent. There is also a rushing river giving joy to the heart that is at peace and makes for peace. Whoever has received from the fullness of this river, like John the Evangelist, like Peter and Paul, lifts up his voice. Just as the apostles lifted up their voices and preached the Gospel throughout the world, so those who drink these waters begin to preach the good news of the Lord Jesus.

Drink, then, from Christ, so that your voice may also be heard. Store up in your mind the water that is Christ, the water that praises the Lord. Store up water from many sources, the water that rains down from the clouds of prophecy.

Whoever gathers water from the mountains and leads it to himself or draws it from springs, is himself a source of dew like the clouds. Fill your soul, then, with this water, so that your land may not be dry, but watered by your own springs.

He who reads much and understands much, receives his fill. He who is full, refreshes others. So Scripture says: *If the clouds are full, they will pour rain upon the earth.*

Therefore, let your words be rivers, clean and limpid, so that in your exhortations you may charm the ears of your people. And by the grace of your words win them over to follow your leadership. Let your sermons be full of understanding. Solomon says: *The weapons of the understanding are the lips of the wise;* and in another place he says: *Let your lips be bound with wisdom.* That is, let the meaning of your words shine forth, let understanding blaze out. See that your addresses and expositions do not need to invoke the authority of others, but let your words be their own defence. Let no word escape your lips in vain or be uttered without depth of meaning.

9. For your prayers

We continue to 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. For all those who are challenged to be church in a different and unfamiliar way. For Roman Catholics and Anglicans, that they may pray for one another. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Ifo (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for our own Diocese of Adelaide; and within the Diocese, for the Senior Chaplain, Sie McLeod, and the Archdeacon for Mission and Youth Engagement, David McDougall.

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. For all those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Valerie, Sim, Clarice, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Linda and Alex.

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, especially Peter Casson and Ann Bednall, 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, St Nicholas, St Ambrose, St Francis Xavier, 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, StMMAdelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

