

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 3 February 2022

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 Steven – Good News

Anne and I found out on Tuesday that we are *close contacts* of one of our wonderful grandchildren who has, alas, tested positive for COVID-19. We are fine. Unfortunately, however, we have to isolate for 7 days. Nonetheless, you will be in good hands with Sr Juliana on Sunday. In the meantime, I will keep providing my reflections – and today, perhaps paradoxically, what I want to talk about is Good News!

The gospel reading for Sunday concerns the call of Jesus to the disciples (Luke 5:1-11). In response, Peter protests that he is unworthy of this calling (“for I am a sinful man.”). What are we to make of this? And what about sin in general?

In the Gospel of Luke, the concepts of sin, repentance, and reconciliation are central (e.g., the parable of the lost son). It is important to raise the issue of sin in particular. By sin, I am not advocating here a strictly pessimistic view of the human person, focused solely on individual words and actions. Instead, I am seeing sin in relational terms. That is, by addressing sin, we restore relationships with self, others, and the environment.

Clearly, sin is a loaded word. So, I need to name some of these wider associations. Occasionally, for example, a stereotype of Christianity surfaces in the media, social media, and daily conversations. In this stereotype, clergy are eccentric, churchgoers are gullible, and Christianity is obsessed with sin.

Of course, there is substance to the notion that the church has been fixated on sin. Historically, a pessimistic view of the human person emerged, across the traditions, where this person had to confess incessantly. In the 21st century, this pessimistic view of humankind has been off-putting.

Be that as it may, the signs of sin abound. For example, from office bullying and domestic violence to war and environmental degradation, we see signs of the prevalence of sin.

Moreover, we are often left to pick up the pieces resulting from the sinful words and actions of others. So, what can be said about sin? Subsequently, I want to develop a more substantial understanding of sin. To begin, I want to make four qualifications:

- I am an advocate of a positive view of humankind, made in the image of God
- We all sin. However, I see sin in relational terms. In this view, sin represents the things we say or do that harm relationships with ourselves, others, and the earth
- The focus is not on sin per se, but on the restoration of relationships
- The key to reconciliation is an experience of transformation

In terms of Jewish antecedents, the meaning of repentance needs to be set in the context of the theme of redemption. Redemption represents a *constellation* of ideas about relationships with God, the self, the other, and the land, which are premised on divine generosity (*hesed*). *Hesed* is a major theme in the Hebrew Scriptures. It can be translated as *loving kindness*. It is used to describe God's gracious response to the people of God, which is an expression of God's character. As a consequence, the people of God are called to live-out loving kindness, in community, in the world.

We all make mistakes. We have all sinned. We have all experienced brokenness. Nonetheless, the gospel is good news. Yes, and this bears repeating, it is good news. In fact, the ministry of Jesus was dedicated to the inherent possibility of human and ecological transformation. Of course, not everything can be fixed, and not every relationship can be restored. But with God's grace, we can learn to live with a renewed sense of purpose, dignity, and self-worth.

Steven Ogden
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

Reflections for our two weekly newsletters will continue for the time being, and our Thursday "Spiritual Resources" newsletter will continue to be uploaded to the web page. Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections have resumed with a series on the teachings of Julian of Norwich, and 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. In the Church's Calendar

This week the Church celebrates the First Anglican Service on Sydney Cove, conducted by Richard Johnson in 1788, as well as the Swedish missionary bishop St Anskar, and the 16th century Martyrs of Japan.

The **First Anglican Service in Australia** was held at Sydney Cove on 3 February 1788. Conducted by the Rev Richard Johnson, Colonial Chaplain, it consisted of some 1500 people including the Governor Arthur Phillip, civil servants, soldiers, marines and convicts. It consisted of Morning Prayer, the Great Litany, a sermon, and Ante-communion.

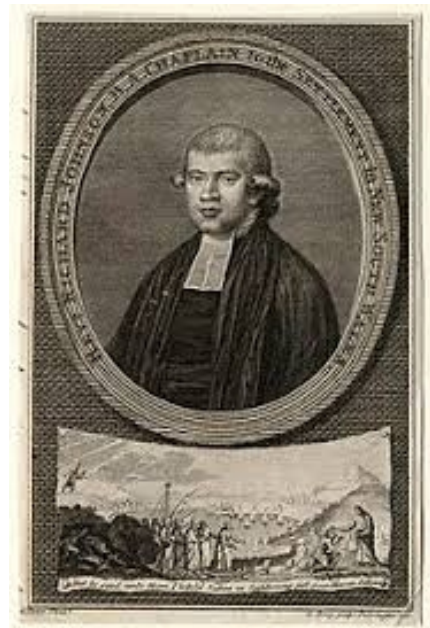
The scripture text for the sermon was Psalm 116: 11-12: "How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord."

Richard Johnson was a product of the eighteenth century evangelical revival in the Church of England. He accepted the chaplaincy of a 'penal colony' because he had a great concern for the welfare of underprivileged people. The early evangelicals were people motivated by a strong sense of responsibility to the outcast.

Johnson was friendly toward the local Gadigal people, and he gave his daughter, born in 1790, the Aboriginal name 'Milbah'. He was a farmer, and the survival of the people from the First Fleet depended on his ability to propagate crops.

At his own expense of 67 pounds, Johnson built a church, Saint Phillip (spelt with two 'l' letters in honour of the Governor) on a ridge to the west of what is now known as Tank Stream. The simple 'wattle and daub' structure was burnt down in 1798, reportedly by those who disliked compulsory church attendance.

Johnson may not have 'reaped' harvests of conversion, but he certainly 'sowed' seeds of faith. The Church exists for everyone, those who attend and those who do not alike, and a fundamental Gospel principle is the care of people who live on the margins of society.



St Anskar, the “Apostle of the North”, had enough frustrations to become a saint—and he did. He became a Benedictine at Corbie, France, where he had been educated. When the king of Denmark became a convert to Christianity, Anskar went to that country for three years of missionary work, without noticeable success. Sweden asked for Christian missionaries, and he went there, suffering capture by pirates and other hardships on the way.

He was later recalled to become abbot of New Corbie (Corvey) and bishop of Hamburg. The Pope made him legate for the Scandinavian missions, but funds for the northern apostolate stopped with Emperor Louis’s death. After 13 years’ work in Hamburg, Anskar saw his cathedral burned to the ground by invaders from the far north; Sweden and Denmark returned to paganism.



He directed new apostolic activities in the North, travelling to Denmark and being instrumental in the conversion of another king. By the strange device of casting lots, the king of Sweden allowed the Christian missionaries to return.

Anskar’s biographers remark that he was an extraordinary preacher, a humble and ascetical priest. He was devoted to the poor and the sick, imitating the Lord in washing their feet and waiting on them at table. He died peacefully at Bremen, Germany, without achieving his wish to be a martyr.

The Christian faith reached Japan by the efforts of the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier (1506-1552). Jesuit outreach to the Japanese continued after his death, and around 200,000 Japanese had entered the Church by 1587.

During 1593, Franciscan missionaries came to Japan from the Philippines by order of Spain's King Philip II. These new arrivals gave themselves zealously to the work of charity and evangelism, but their presence disturbed a delicate situation between the Church and Japanese authorities.

Suspicion against Catholic missionaries grew when a Spanish ship was seized off the Japanese coast and found to be carrying artillery. The empire responded by sentencing 26 Catholics to death by crucifixion and lancing.



The condemned men were first marched some 600 miles to the city of Nagasaki. The group was comprised of priests, brothers, and laymen, Franciscans, Jesuits, and members of the Secular Franciscan Order; there were catechists, doctors, simple artisans, and servants, old men and innocent children—all united in a common faith and love for Jesus and his Church.

Brother Paul Miki, a Jesuit and a native of Japan, has become the best known among the martyrs of Japan. While hanging upon a cross, Paul Miki preached to the people gathered for the execution: “The sentence of judgement says these men came to Japan from the Philippines, but I did not come from any other country. I am a true Japanese. The only reason for my being killed is that I have taught the doctrine of Christ. I certainly did teach the

doctrine of Christ. I thank God it is for this reason I die. I believe that I am telling only the truth before I die. I know you believe me and I want to say to you all once again: Ask Christ to help you to become happy. I obey Christ. After Christ's example I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain."

When missionaries returned to Japan in the 1860s, at first they found no trace of Christianity. But after establishing themselves they found that thousands of Christians lived around Nagasaki and that they had secretly preserved the faith. Beatified in 1627, the martyrs of Japan were finally canonized in 1862.

Although the number of Christians in Japan is not large, the Church is respected and has total religious freedom. The spread of Christianity in the Far East is slow and difficult. Faith such as that of the 26 martyrs is needed today as much as in 1597.

5. A reflection on St Anskar – from the decree on the missionary activity of the Church (Vatican II)

We must boldly proclaim the mystery of Christ

Every disciple of Christ is responsible in his own measure for the spread of the faith, but Christ the Lord is always calling from among his followers those whom he wills, so that they may be with him and be sent by him to preach to the nations.

Through the Holy Spirit, who distributes gifts as he wills for the good of all, Christ implants in the hearts of individuals the vocation to be a missionary, and at the same time he raises up in the Church institutes which make their own the task of spreading the Gospel that belongs to the whole Church.

A special vocation marks out those ... who are prepared to undertake the missionary task in their own country or abroad, and have the right natural disposition for it, with suitable gifts and talents. Sent by lawful authority, they go out in obedience and faith to those who are far from Christ. They have been set apart for the task to which they have been called as ministers of the gospel, to make the Gentiles an acceptable offering, sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

Those whom God calls must answer his call in such a way that, without regard for purely human counsel, they may devote themselves wholly to the work of the gospel. This response cannot be given except with the inspiration and strength of the Holy Spirit. The person who is sent enters into the life and mission of him who emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave. He must be ready therefore to be true to his vocation for life, to deny himself, renouncing all that he had before, and to become all things to all men.

In preaching the Gospel to the nations he must boldly proclaim the mystery of Christ, whose ambassador he is, so that in Christ he may have the courage to speak as he ought, and not be ashamed of the scandal of the cross. He must follow in the footsteps of his Master, who was gentle and humble of heart, and reveal to others that his yoke is easy and his burden light.

By a life that is truly according to the Gospel, by much endurance, by forbearance, by kindness and sincere love, he must bear witness to his Lord ... He will pray to God for strength and courage, so that he may come to see that for one who experiences great hardship and extreme poverty there can be abundant joy.

6. From a contemporary account of the martyrdom of the Martyrs of Japan

You shall be my witnesses

The crosses were set in place. Father Pasio and Father Rodriguez took turns encouraging the victims. Their steadfast behaviour was wonderful to see. The Father Bursar stood motionless, his eyes turned heavenward. Brother Martin gave thanks to God's goodness by singing psalms. Again and again he repeated: "Into your hands, Lord, I entrust my life." Brother Francis Branco also thanked God in a loud voice. Brother Gonsalvo in a very loud voice kept saying the Our Father and Hail Mary.

Our brother, Paul Miki, saw himself standing now in the noblest pulpit he had ever filled. To his "congregation" he began by proclaiming himself a Japanese and a Jesuit. He was dying for the Gospel he preached. He gave thanks to God for this wonderful blessing and he ended his "sermon" with these words: "As I come to this supreme moment of my life, I am sure none of you would suppose I want to deceive you. And so I tell you plainly: there is no way to be saved except the Christian way. My religion teaches me to pardon my enemies and all who have offended me. I do gladly pardon the Emperor and all who have sought my death. I beg them to seek baptism and be Christians themselves."

Then he looked at his comrades and began to encourage them in their final struggle. Joy glowed in all their faces ... When a Christian in the crowd cried out to him that he would soon be in heaven, his hands, his whole body strained upward with such joy that every eye was fixed on him.

One brother looked toward heaven and called upon the holy names – "Jesus, Mary!" He began to sing a psalm: "Praise the Lord, you children!" (He learned it in catechism class in Nagasaki. They take care there to teach the children some psalms to help them learn their catechism). Others kept repeating "Jesus, Mary!" Their faces were serene. Some of them even took to urging the people standing by to live worthy Christian lives. In these and other ways they showed their readiness to die.

Then, according to Japanese custom, the four executioners began to unsheathe their spears. At this dreadful sight, all the Christians cried out, "Jesus, Mary!" And the storm of anguished weeping then rose to batter the very skies. The executioners killed them one by one. One thrust of the spear, then a second blow. It was over in a very short time.

7. Valerie Taylor, 1931-2022



In your prayers this week, please remember especially our dear friend Valerie Taylor, who died last Sunday morning. Valerie had been dealing with the challenges of old age and frailty for some years, and especially since a fall some months ago. Her death brings to an end a long association of Valerie and her late husband Fr Anthony Taylor with St Mary Magdalene's. They were married at the church, and following a long and successful ministry in many parts of Australia, returned to Adelaide and St Mary Magdalene's where in retirement they were much loved members of the community.

Fr Philip Carter, among others, ministered to Valerie in recent years, and will celebrate her Requiem Mass at 2 pm on Monday at St Theodore's, Toorak Gardens. May Valerie rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

8. 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. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Kanyakumari (South India). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Armidale; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Croydon "Experimental Congregation of St Barnabas".

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, Sim, Clarice, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest) and Mark.

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 Valerie Taylor, 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 Anskar, the Martyrs of Japan, 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, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

