

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 4 August 2022

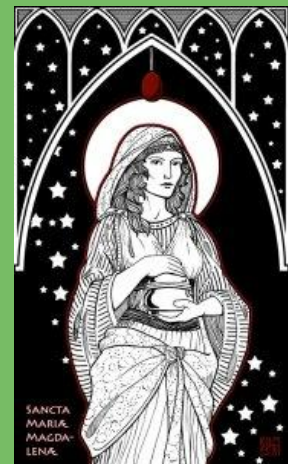
Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions makes it possible to offer the church for private prayer and public worship.

Sunday Mass is sung at 10 am; and on Thursday, the Angelus is said at noon followed by 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 keep our entire community informed on events in the life of the Parish, so we will continue to produce these news bulletins for now.



1. From Fr Steven – In The Beginning ...

Dear parishioners

On faith

On Sunday 7th August, I will start a four-part series of Sunday sermons on the theme of faith, using the letter to the Hebrews as a touchstone text. Now, Hebrews is an unusual letter. We do not know a lot about its historical context. Nevertheless, it touches the heart in many ways. Yes, there are images and phrases that resonate with our deepest aspirations

Faith is about the depth of our lives. Faith touches that yearning in us for a truer, more loving life. It does not eliminate doubt but enables us to live with the ambiguities and uncertainties of life with dignity and courage. So, then, we learn to live with the loose ends. It is not asking us to surrender our intellect, but instead, our faith is inviting us to give our hearts to a cause deeper and wider than ourselves. This is the Christ story writ large in our own lives, our faith community, and our city.

- August 7th Our deepest aspirations (Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16)
- August 14th Lay aside every weight (Hebrews 11:29-12:2)
- August 21st With reverence and awe (Hebrews 12: 18-29)
- August 28th Show hospitality to strangers (Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16)

Fr Steven

Special Vestry Sunday 14th August: Some talking points

This will be a relatively *informal* vestry. The emphasis will be on fostering an ongoing conversation about who we are, where we are going, and what is our mission? In terms of outcomes, we hope for a good conversation, a few ideas, and some questions for the future.

In terms of change, generally, the best change is organic, emerging from the life of the people, and evolving over time. Also, such change is often part of both/and process. We build on to what we have (*if it ain't broke, don't fix it*). Above all, trust, and transparency are indispensable. This takes time and grace. Key questions include how do we add to what we are already doing? Does it fit with the welcoming and caring ethos of the parish? How does it fit with our commitment to issues around compassion and social justice (cf. art group, COSMM)? Does it reflect our deepest aspirations?

So, we are not trying to solve anything today, but instead, we are cultivating a positive forum for thinking, dreaming, discussing, and exploring. In that vein, these notes are more prompts for discussion, than a business agenda. Before proceeding, it is worth reminding ourselves of the October parish consultation.

An extract from the parish consultation of 10th October 2021

What are our hopes as we go forward?

- That we have the courage to be more
- Growth in number
- A sacred space in the city, for everyone
- Creative, bold, and imaginative use of our buildings
- A more focussed concern for the poor, "poor" being interpreted very widely, and related to this, a living and lively presence in the city

Are they relevant? How can we progress them?

Taking stock of social and religious changes

In the last twenty years, there has been enormous change:

- Church attendance declining in the West
- We identify with the older demographic
- Generally, people are less inclined to be affiliated with institutions
- Organisations finding it harder to find volunteers
- We are living in a COVID-culture
- Increase in global conflict
- Climate change
- IT dependence
- Poverty rising

Identifying new possibilities

We have been adapting to change already, along with our Pastoral Care Network, Peter, Alison, and Philip's ministry on the web is vital. But also

- How can we work with boomers in our urban area?
- Where and how do we go to connect with the pre-boomer age group?
- There is growing interest in spirituality (we have a rich and diverse spiritual heritage)
- Loneliness and social fragmentation are increasing (we know about community)
- The idea and practice of partnerships and collaboration is widespread

A little bit of speculation (some blue-sky thinking)

- Some kind of centre for ethical, social, and/or spiritual issues?

Identifying ideas and questions for the future

- We will record key observations, ideas, and questions for future discussions

Fr Steven

2. COVID-19 Update from Tuesday 24 May

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.

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 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.

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://stmarymagdalenesadelade.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.

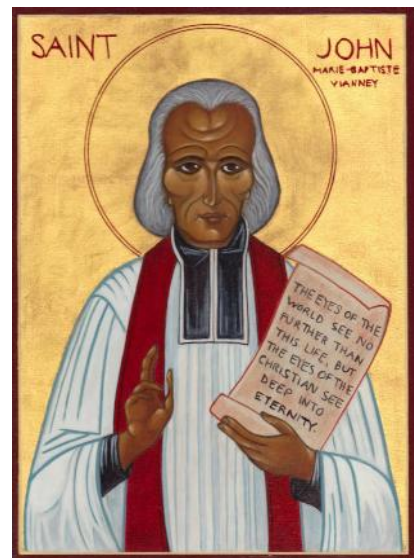
Service booklets as PDF files are still available for Sunday and weekday services on the web site and on the Parish's Facebook page.

5. This Week in the Calendar

In the coming week we celebrate the mysterious event in Jesus's life known as the Transfiguration, one of the major milestones in the gospel narrative of the life of Jesus. We also celebrate holy women and men ranging from the Early Church martyr St Lawrence, the Celtic king Oswald, the medieval priest and friar Dominic, and from the 19th century, John Vianney, the Cure d'Ars.

St John Vianney wanted from his childhood to become a priest. But he had to overcome his meagre formal schooling, which inadequately prepared him for seminary studies. His failure to comprehend Latin lectures forced him to abandon his studies. But his vision of being a priest urged him to seek private tutoring. After a lengthy battle with the books, John was ordained.

As pastor of the parish at Ars, John encountered people who were indifferent and quite comfortable with their style of living. But over the years, his work as a confessor was to become his most remarkable accomplishment. In the winter months he was to spend 11 to 12 hours daily reconciling people with God. In the summer months this time was increased to 16 hours.



Indifference toward religion, coupled with a love for material comfort, seem to be common signs of our times. A person from another planet observing us would not likely judge us to be pilgrim people, on our way to somewhere else. John Vianney on the other hand, was a man on a journey, with his goal before him at all times.

The Transfiguration was a special event in which God strengthened the wavering faith of some of his apostles, in order that they might be emboldened for the challenges they would later endure.

In the same way, at certain times in this life, God may give certain members of the faithful (not all of the faithful, all the time), special experiences of his grace that strengthen their faith.



We should welcome these experiences for the graces they are, but we should not expect them to continue indefinitely, nor should we be afraid or resentful when they cease.

Much about **St Oswald** is conjectural, no doubt a mix of fact and pious fantasy, but we know he was the son of Aethelfrith, Anglo-Saxon king of Northumbria, who had massacred Christian monks who opposed his warring ways.

When Aethelfrith was killed in battle, his children fled, and against all the odds were received kindly by the monks on the island of Iona.

Oswald's meeting with the monks of Iona was a moment of destiny. For through that moment came the conversion of the greater part of England to the Christian faith.

Like all Anglo-Saxon kings Oswald was a warrior. Like other kings he expected to die on the battlefield, and so indeed in the end he did. But unlike other kings, before he died Oswald had won for himself the reputation of being a saint, and his death in battle against Penda the heathen king of Mercia was seen as a martyr's death.

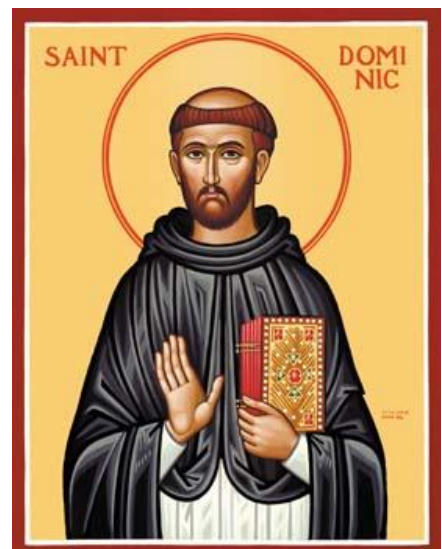


Oswald was a man of compassion. One of the best-known stories describes how one Easter, when he was about to dine with Bishop Aidan, a great crowd of the poor came begging alms. The king gave them not only the food but also the silver dish, to be broken up and distributed among them. Aidan was so moved by this generosity that he grasped the king's right hand and exclaimed, "May this hand never perish!"

History can tell us of King Oswald, one of the most powerful of all the northern kings skilful in both war and diplomacy. Such men do not find it simple to be Christian, beset as they are by all the difficult decisions and ambiguities that face any man who wields great earthly power. How much easier to be a Christian bishop than a Christian king! But Bede's story invites us to see in Oswald more than the king: to see the saint who gave his life to God and the martyr who gave his death, and who therefore in life or after death could be called on with confidence by those in need

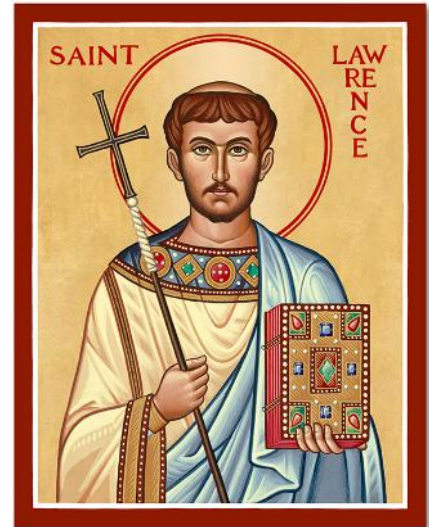
St Dominic preached for many years against heresy in the church, realising early on that the warm reception his preaching received within the wider community was not always shared by the officialdom of the church. He nonetheless persevered in his ministry, and in 1215 founded a religious house at Toulouse, the beginning of the Order of Preachers or Dominicans

Dominic's ideal, and that of his Order, was to organically link a life with God, study, and prayer in all forms, with a ministry of salvation to people by the word of God. His ideal: *contemplata tradere*: "to pass on the fruits of contemplation" or "to speak only of God or with God." The Dominican life combines contemplation and activity, which together are the wellspring of all their works.



St Laurence was a martyr of the early church. We know little about his life, but a legend persists that as deacon in Rome, he was charged with the responsibility for the material goods of the Church, and the distribution of alms to the poor. When Laurence knew he would be arrested along with the pope, he sought out the poor, widows, and orphans of Rome and gave them all the money he had on hand.

When the prefect of Rome quizzed him about the location of what was assumed to be a great treasure-trove, Laurence took him to the church, gathering together the blind, lame, maimed, leprous, orphaned, and widowed. Opening the doors, he said to the prefect, "These are the treasures of the church." He was put to death, suffering willingly for the poor.



6. From the Catechetical Instructions by St. John Mary Vianney, priest

The glorious duty: to pray and to love

My little children, reflect on these words: the Christian's treasure is not on earth but in heaven. Our thoughts, then ought to be directed to where our treasure is. This is the glorious duty of man: to pray and to love. If you pray and love, that is where a man's happiness lies.

Prayer is nothing else but union with God. When one has a heart that is pure and united with God, he is given a kind of serenity and sweetness that makes him ecstatic, a light that surrounds him with marvelous brightness. In this intimate union, God and the soul are fused together like two bits of wax that no one can ever pull apart. This union of God with a tiny creature is a lovely thing. It is a happiness beyond understanding.

We had become unworthy to pray, but God in his goodness allowed us to speak with him. Our prayer is incense that gives him the greatest pleasure.

My little children, your hearts are small, but prayer stretches them and makes them capable of loving God. Through prayer we receive a foretaste of heaven and something of paradise comes down upon us. Prayer never leaves us without sweetness. It is honey that flows into the soul and makes all things sweet. When we pray properly, sorrows disappear like snow before the sun.

Prayer also makes time pass very quickly and with such great delight that one does not notice its length. Listen: Once when I was a purveyor in Bresse and most of my companions were ill, I had to make a long journey. I prayed to the good God, and believe me, the time did not seem long. Some people immerse themselves as deeply in prayer as fish in water, because they give themselves totally to God. There is not division in their hearts. O, how I love these noble souls! Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Colette used to see our Lord and talk to him just as we talk to one another.

How unlike them we are! How often we come to church with no idea of what to do or what to ask for. And yet, whenever we go to any human being, we know well enough why we go. And still worse, there are some who seem to speak to the good God like this: "I will only say a couple of things to you, and then I will be rid of you." I often think that when we come to adore the Lord, we would receive everything we ask for, if we would ask with living faith and with a pure heart.

7. From a sermon on the transfiguration of the Lord by Anastasius of Sinai

It is good for us to be here

Upon Mount Tabor, Jesus revealed to his disciples a heavenly mystery. While living among them he had spoken of the kingdom and of his second coming in glory, but to banish from their hearts any possible doubt concerning the kingdom and to confirm their faith in what lay in the future by its prefiguration in the present, he gave them on Mount Tabor a wonderful vision of his glory, a foreshadowing of the kingdom of heaven. It was as if he said to them: "As time goes by you may be in danger of losing your faith. To save you from this I tell you now that *some standing here listening to me will not taste death until they have seen the Son of Man coming in the glory of his Father.*" Moreover, in order to assure us that Christ could command such power when he wished, the evangelist continues: *Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter, James and John, and led them up a high mountain where they were alone. There, before their eyes, he was transfigured. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. Then the disciples saw Moses and Elijah appear, and they were talking to Jesus.*

These are the divine wonders we celebrate today; this is the saving revelation given us upon the mountain; this is the festival of Christ that has drawn us here. Let us listen, then, to the sacred voice of God so compellingly calling us from on high, from the summit of the mountain, so that with the Lord's chosen disciples we may penetrate the deep meaning of these holy mysteries, so far beyond our capacity to express. Jesus goes before us to show us the way, both up the mountain and into heaven, and – I speak boldly – it is for us now to follow him with all speed, yearning for the heavenly vision that will give us a share in his radiance, renew our spiritual nature and transform us into his own likeness, making us for ever sharers in his Godhead and raising us to heights as yet undreamed of.

Let us run with confidence and joy to enter into the cloud like Moses and Elijah, or like James and John. Let us be caught up like Peter to behold the divine vision and to be transfigured by that glorious transfiguration. Let us retire from the world, stand aloof from the earth, rise above the body, detach ourselves from creatures and turn to the creator, to whom Peter in ecstasy exclaimed: *Lord, it is good for us to be here.*

It is indeed good to be here, as you have said, Peter. It is good to be with Jesus and to remain here for ever. What greater happiness or higher honour could we have than to be with God, to be made like him and to live in his light?

Therefore, since each of us possesses God in his heart and is being transformed into his divine image, we also should cry out with joy: *It is good for us to be here* – here where all things shine with divine radiance, where there is joy and gladness and exultation; where there is nothing in our hearts but peace, serenity and stillness; where God is seen. For here, in our hearts, Christ takes up his abode together with the Father, saying as he enters: *Today salvation has come to this house.* With Christ, our hearts receive all the wealth of his eternal blessings, and there where they are stored up for us in him, we see reflected as in a mirror both the first fruits and the whole of the world to come.

8. St Dominic – from various writings on the history of the Order of Preachers

He spoke with God or about God

Dominic possessed such great integrity and was so strongly motivated by divine love, that without a doubt he proved to be a bearer of honor and grace. He was a man of great equanimity, except when moved to compassion and mercy. And since a joyful heart animates

the face, he displayed the peaceful composure of a spiritual man in the kindness he manifested outwardly and by the cheerfulness of his countenance.

Wherever he went he showed himself in word and deed to be a man of the Gospel. During the day no one was more community-minded or pleasant toward his brothers and associates. During the night hours no one was more persistent in every kind of vigil and supplication. He seldom spoke unless it was with God, that is, in prayer, or about God, and in this matter he instructed his brothers. Frequently he made a special personal petition that God would deign to grant him a genuine charity, effective in caring for and obtaining the salvation of men. For he believed that only then would he be truly a member of Christ, when he had given himself totally for the salvation of men, just as the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of all, had offered himself completely for our salvation. So, for this work, after a lengthy period of careful and provident planning, he founded the Order of Friars Preachers.

In his conversations and letters he often urged the brothers of the Order to study constantly the Old and New Testaments. He always carried with him the gospel according to Matthew and the epistles of Paul, and so well did he study them that he almost knew them from memory.

Two or three times he was chosen bishop, but he always refused, preferring to live with his brothers in poverty. Throughout his life, he preserved the honour of his virginity. He desired to be scourged and cut to pieces, and so die for the faith of Christ. Of him Pope Gregory IX declared: "I knew him as a steadfast follower of the apostolic way of life. There is no doubt that he is in heaven, sharing in the glory of the apostles themselves".

9. St Laurence – from a Sermon by St Augustine of Hippo

He ministered the sacred blood of Christ

The Roman Church commends to us today the anniversary of the triumph of Saint Lawrence. For on this day he trod the furious pagan world underfoot and flung aside its allurements, and so gained victory over Satan's attack on his faith.

As you have often heard, Lawrence was a deacon of the Church at Rome. There he ministered the sacred blood of Christ; there for the sake of Christ's name he poured out his own blood. Saint John the apostle was evidently teaching us about the mystery of the Lord's supper when he wrote: *Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* My brethren, Lawrence understood this and, understanding, he acted on it. Just as he had partaken of a gift of self at the table of the Lord, so he prepared to offer such a gift. In his life he loved Christ; in his death he followed in his footsteps.

Brethren, we too must imitate Christ if we truly love him. We shall not be able render better return on that love than by modelling our lives on his. *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps.* In saying this, the apostle Peter seems to have understood that Christ suffered only for those who follow in his steps, in the sense that Christ's passion is of no avail to those who do not. The holy martyrs followed Christ even to shedding their life's blood, even to reproducing the very likeness of his passion. They followed him, but not they alone. It is not true that the bridge was broken after the martyrs crossed; nor is it true that after they had drunk from it, the fountain of eternal life dried up.

I tell you again and again, my brethren, that in the Lord's garden are to be found not only the roses of his martyrs. In it there are also the lilies of the virgins, the ivy of wedded couples, and the violets of widows. On no account may any class of people despair, thinking that God has

not called them. Christ suffered for all. What the Scriptures say of him is true: *He desires all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.*

Let us understand, then, how a Christian must follow Christ even though he does not shed his blood for him, and his faith is not called upon to undergo the great test of the martyr's sufferings. The apostle Paul says of Christ our Lord: *Though he was in the form of God he did not consider equality with God a prize to be clung to.* How unrivalled his majesty! *But he emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave, made in the likeness of men, and presenting himself in human form.* How deep his humility!

Christ humbled himself. Christian, that is what you must make your own. *Christ became obedient.* How is it that you are proud? When this humbling experience was completed and death itself lay conquered, Christ ascended into heaven. Let us follow him there, for we hear Paul saying: *If you have been raised with Christ, you must lift your thoughts on high, where Christ now sits at the right hand of God.*

10. 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 Lambeth Conference. Pray also for the Diocese of Mbale (Uganda). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Ballarat; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the RSL Veterans' Aged Care Chaplain.

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, Dulcie, 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, St John Vianney, St Oswald, St Dominic, St Laurence, 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.

