

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

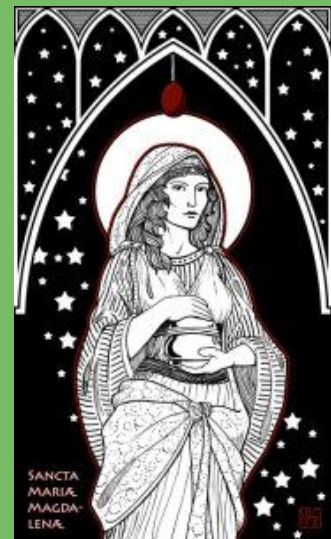
Thursday 4 November 2021

Dear friends,

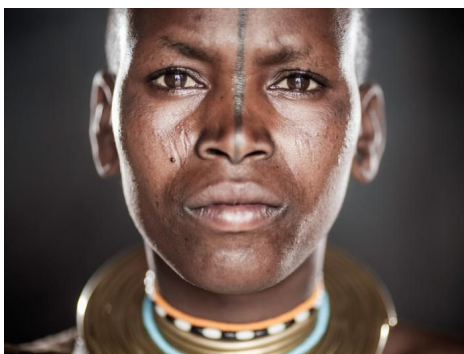
The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions means it possible to again open the church for private prayer and public worship. Sunday Mass is offered weekly at 10 am, and the church will also be open on Thursday between 11.30 am and 1 pm, with the Angelus at noon and Mass at 12.10 pm.

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: we will continue to produce these news bulletins for now.

We will respond to this challenge as we have done before. Please keep an eye on the [web page](#) and the [blog](#) for further information.



1. From Fr Gwilym – In your face!



From the news I see that Facebook said it will shut down its face-recognition system and delete the faceprints of more than 1 billion people. This is in response to widely expressed concerns about the inaccuracy and misuse of the technology. It is a technological and ethical response to the problem.

Identifying people from their faces and their appearance is a fundamental human characteristic. Medical News Today calls it the human superpower". One of the first things a baby learns is to recognize human faces and its mother's face in particular, or the face of its primary caregiver. By doing this the baby learns to pick out the person they can trust to care for them. New babies can't look after themselves and they need to know who can be relied on.

So hard wired is this skill that humans will pick out human features in the world around them. They will even pick out faces on the surface of Mars or the Moon, despite the logical impossibility. And who has not played the game of finding faces in the clouds, or picking them out in other improbable places?

This ability appears in the Bible, of course, particularly when the face of God is mentioned. The face of God is a symbol of God's identity and God's power, an unknowable mystery, something to be looked for and something to be feared.

Exodus 33: You cannot see my face, for no one can see the face of God and live.

Psalms 27: You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek."

Isaiah 59: Your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Matthew 18: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven."

Seeing and recognizing a person's face has become indispensable to the way we humans interact and live together. Our faces are on our passports and our driving licences. Our faces only, no other parts of our body and no other characteristics like our voices or the way we walk. We read each other's faces and find it much easier to understand what someone is saying if we can see their face. So wearing masks in public meeting places creates a new barrier to recognizing friends or enemies. And yet, so proficient is our skill that even part of a face reveals much. There is a picture of Scott Morrison grinning at President Macron in a most patronizing way. Macron is wearing a mask, but his eyes are eloquent!

How terrible it would be if we lost this skill, if we lost the ability to read faces, or even to recognize them. People living with various degrees of Prosopagnosia have this skill impaired to a greater or lesser extent. Just as a person with impaired hearing may use sign language, so people with impaired recognition skills may use other clues to recognize and interpret other people. The ways people stand, or talk or use gestures become more important. The persona of an individual becomes more easily recognizable when the person is seen in their entirety and in their context. (I have often failed to recognize the barista from the local café when I meet them in the bank!)

A few things arise from this meditation. One is that Christians see the face of God shining in the face of Jesus. Jesus, for us, is the human face of God. To recognize Jesus is to recognize God. As he himself said, "Those who have seen me, have seen the One who sent me."

God is also to be recognized in the "mighty works of God". The Jewish Scriptures proclaim this, that God is seen "in the work of his hands and the deeds his arms have done". The whole of creation is the work of God's hands, and the salvation of humankind is God in action.

We need to see the whole picture to even start to recognize God.

And the same is true for us. We can be recognized by our faces and other physical characteristics, but the way we live our lives can, if we choose, show us as we really are. Faces can be recognized by facial recognition technology and AI, but if we really want to know someone or be known ourselves, the whole story must be known, the whole picture must be seen.

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 we cannot attend at the church at the present time, 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. In the Church's Calendar

In the coming week in the Church's calendar, we remember the early church bishop and teacher Leo of Rome.

St Leo of Rome, often called St Leo the Great, was born in the year 400 into an aristocratic Roman family. He was called to Christian ministry in his youth, and by the year 431 was widely known in Rome and further afield for his love for the Lord, intelligence and persuasive nature. He was also gifted in bringing reconciliation between disputing groups of Christians.

Elected Pope in 440, he worked tirelessly to emphasise the pope's total responsibility for the flock of Christ, and to counter heresies when they arose. He responded to doctrinal controversy in the Church in the East with a classic letter setting down the Church's teaching on the two natures of Christ. With strong faith, he also led the defence of Rome against barbarian attack, taking the role of peacemaker.



Leo's growth to sainthood has its basis in the spiritual depth with which he approached the pastoral care of his people. He is known for his spiritually profound sermons, which had the ability to reach the everyday needs and interests of his people. It is said of Leo that his true significance rests in his doctrinal insistence on the mysteries of Christ and the Church and in the supernatural charisms of the spiritual life given to humanity in Christ and in his Body, the Church. Leo died in the year 461.

5. St Leo the Great – remembering dignity

One of St Leo's greatest writings is his sermon on the Nativity of Christ. In this extract, he urges Christians to remember the dignity that is theirs.

Dearly beloved, today our Saviour is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness.

No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the pagan take courage as he is summoned to life.

In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its creator. He came to overthrow the devil, the origin of death, in that very nature by which he had overthrown mankind.

And so at the birth of our Lord the angels sing in joy: *Glory to God in the highest*, and they proclaim *peace to men of good will* as they see the heavenly Jerusalem being built from all the nations of the world. When the angels on high are so exultant at this marvellous work of God's goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men?

Beloved, let us give thanks to God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit, because in his great love for us he took pity on us, and *when we were dead in our sins he brought us to life with Christ*, so that in him we might be a new creation. Let us throw off our old nature and all its ways and, as we have come to birth in Christ, let us renounce the works of the flesh.

Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom.

Through the sacrament of baptism you have become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Do not drive away so great a guest by evil conduct and become again a slave to the devil, for your liberty was bought by the blood of Christ.

6. 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 the Harare (Central Africa). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Ballarat; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Parish of Parkside.

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, Gary Priest (priest), 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 Rosemary Scrutton, 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 Leo, 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.

