

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

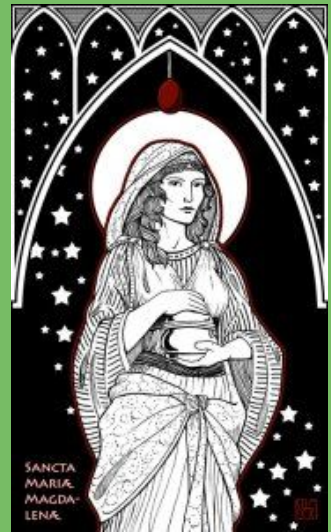
Thursday 5 August 2021

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 – Looking for Mary Magdalene



When I was studying at St Barnabas' College, (at Belair in those days) I attended a course called Homiletics, which was supposed to teach the science of preaching.

I'm afraid that I didn't find it very helpful, because preaching is far more than a science. It is an art and a passion, and when preaching is approached without feeling it is "stale, flat and unprofitable."

At the same time, good sermons benefit from a certain discipline. Research is essential, background learning is needed and the finished homily needs to have a structure to give it shape. And, it is important to have a purpose for the whole thing.

Sermons can be used to encourage hearers to take action, to stir up the Holy Spirit in the church and in the hearts of the congregation. A sermon can be a valuable tool of teaching the faith. A pastoral sermon is designed to address the needs of the people in the parish, to encourage them and to offer help and support. The skilful expositor of Scripture will take a passage from the Bible and explain its meaning and implications, calling upon scholarship and insight to do so. And a sermon can also be one which rebukes the sinful and calls them to repentance. Any one sermon can include any of these elements and more.

The skill of the preacher and the great art of preaching, is to know what style to use and in what circumstances. The essence of preaching is to communicate, so preachers need to be aware of and attentive to the place, the people and the happenings that surround them.

In my view, a sermon is a conversation. It is a conversation where those taking part are listened to and respected. The language used is neither too complicated (which makes it incomprehensible) nor too simple (which makes it patronising). A conversation relates to the realities of life, the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears of those taking part. A conversation uses the idiom of the community and picks up the cultural background, the stories, the jokes, the interests and events which people have in common.

A sermon is a conversation which can have many contributors. The first voice in the conversation is God's voice. The old prophets began their prophecies by saying, "Thus says the Lord ..." Preachers in today's churches speak in the context of the Scriptures, through which God speaks and in which God is present. A second voice is the community to which the sermon is addressed; the people who have come to meet with God. A third voice is the wider world, which, with the changes in communication, has a louder and louder voice which cannot be ignored. And a fourth voice is that of the preacher, who has the task of putting the conversation into words.

But perhaps the most important voice which we hear when listening to a sermon, or, indeed, when preaching a sermon, is the still small voice of God which speaks straight to our heart.

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://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.

4. In the Church's 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 St Laurence, a martyr of the early Church, two medieval religious, St Dominic and St Clare, and one of Christendom's most recently canonised saints, John Henry Newman.

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.

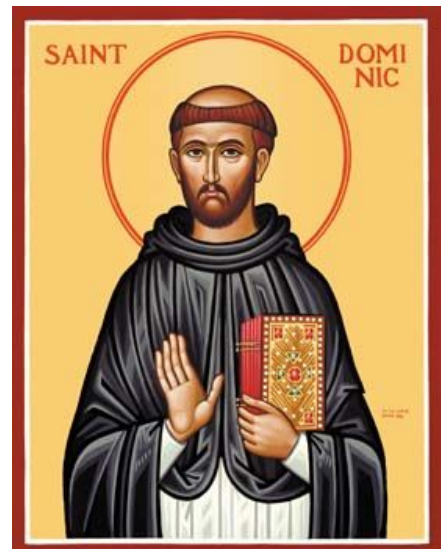
In the same way, at certain times in this life, God may give certain members of the faithful (not all of the faithful, all the time), special experiences of his grace that strengthen their faith.



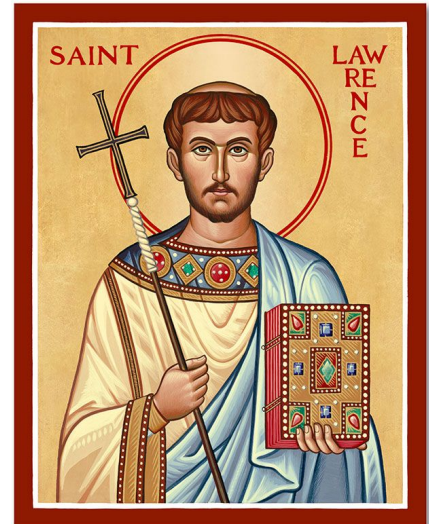
We should welcome these experiences for the graces they are, but we should not expect them to continue indefinitely, nor should we be afraid or resentful when they cease.

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.



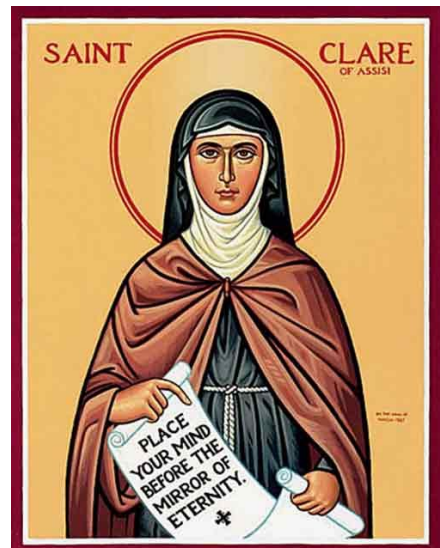
St Laurence was a martyr of the early church. We know little about his life, but a legend persists that as deacon in Rome, he was charged with the responsibility for the material goods of the Church, and the distribution of alms to the poor. When Laurence knew he would be arrested along with the pope,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



St Clare was a disciple of St Francis of Assisi. Having refused to marry in an arranged marriage at the age of 15, she was profoundly moved by Francis's dynamic preaching. He became her lifelong friend and spiritual guide.

At 18, Clare escaped from her father's home one night, was met on the road by friars carrying torches, and in a poor little chapel received a rough woollen habit, exchanged her jewelled belt for a common rope with knots in it, and sacrificed her long tresses to Francis' scissors.

St Francis placed Clare in a Benedictine convent, which her father and uncles immediately stormed in rage. Clare clung to the altar of the church, threw aside her veil to show her cropped hair, and remained adamant.

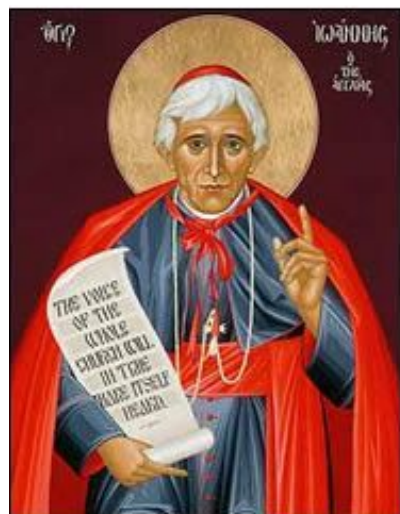


To this day, the "Poor Clare" nuns live a simple life of great poverty, austerity, and complete seclusion from the world. They are often called "a powerhouse of prayer".

St John Henry Newman is still commemorated in the Anglican church on 11 August, the date of his death, though since his canonisation in the Catholic Church, his feast is now celebrated in October.

Newman spent the first half of his life as an Anglican priest, when he was a prominent member of the Oxford Movement, and later as a Roman Catholic. He was an eminent theologian, preacher and writer in both.

Newman's writings on conscience, religious liberty, Scripture, the vocation of lay people, the relation of Church and State, and other topics were extremely influential in the shaping of modern ecclesiology, especially after Vatican II. He is often called the "absent Father" of the Council.



5. 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.

6. 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".

7. 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.*

8. St Clare – from a letter of St Clare to Blessed Agnes of Prague

His Indescribable Delights

Happy indeed is she who is granted a place at the divine banquet, for she may cling with her inmost heart to him whose beauty eternally awes the blessed hosts of heaven; to him whose love inspires love, whose contemplation refreshes, whose generosity satisfies, whose gentleness delights, whose memory shines sweetly as the dawn; to him whose fragrance revives the dead, and whose glorious vision will bless all the citizens of that heavenly Jerusalem. For his is the splendor of eternal glory, the brightness of eternal light, and the mirror without cloud.

Queen and bride of Jesus Christ, look into that mirror daily and study well your reflection, that you may adorn yourself, mind and body, with an enveloping garment of every virtue, and thus find yourself attired in flowers and gowns befitting the daughter and most chaste bride of the king on high. In this mirror blessed poverty, holy humility and ineffable love are also reflected. With the grace of God the whole mirror will be your source of contemplation.

Behold, I say, the birth of this mirror. Behold his poverty even as he was laid in the manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. What wondrous humility, what marvelous poverty! The King of angels, the Lord of heaven and earth resting in a manger! Look more deeply into the mirror and meditate on his humility, or simply on his poverty. Behold the many labors and sufferings he endured to redeem the human race. Then, in the depths of this very mirror, ponder his unspeakable love which caused him to suffer on the wood of the cross and to endure the most shameful kind of death. The mirror himself, from his position on the cross, warned passersby to weigh carefully this act, as he said: All of you who pass by this way, behold and see if there is any sorrow like mine. Let us answer his cries and lamentations with one voice and one spirit; I will be mindful and remember, and my soul will be consumed within me. In this way, queen of the king of heaven, your love will burn with an ever brighter flame.

Consider also his indescribable delights, his unending riches and honours, and sigh for what is beyond your love and heart's content as you cry out: Draw me on! We will run after you in the perfume of your ointment, heavenly spouse. Let me run and not faint until you lead me into

your wine cellar; your left hand rests under my head, your right arm joyfully embraces me, and you kiss me with the sweet kiss of your lips. As you rest in this state of contemplation, remember your poor mother and know that I have indelibly written your happy memory into my heart, for you are dearer to me than all the others.

9. From a sermon of Saint John Henry Newman

True faith is not shown here below in peace, but rather in conflict; in passing out of the country of sin, we necessarily pass through it.

The continual results, as I may call them, of [the Christian's] faith, are righteous and holy, but the process through which they are obtained is one of imperfection; so that could we see his soul as Angels see it, he would, when seen at a distance, appear youthful in countenance, and bright in apparel; but approach him, and his face has lines of care upon it, and his dress is tattered. His righteousness then seems, I do not mean superficial, this would be to give a very wrong idea of it, but though reaching deep within him, yet not whole and entire in the depth of it; but, as it were, wrought out of sin, the result of a continual struggle,—not spontaneous nature, but habitual self-command.

True faith is not shown here below in peace, but rather in conflict; and it is no proof that a man is not in a state of grace that he continually sins, provided such sins do not remain on him as what I may call ultimate results, but are ever passing on into something beyond and unlike themselves, into truth and righteousness. As we gain happiness through suffering, so do we arrive at holiness through infirmity, because man's very condition is a fallen one, and in passing out of the country of sin, he necessarily passes through it. And hence it is that holy men are kept from regarding themselves with satisfaction, or resting in any thing short of our Lord's death, as their ground of confidence; for, though that death has already in a measure wrought life in them, and effected the purpose for which it took place, yet to themselves they seem but sinners, their renewal being hidden from them by the circumstances attending it. The utmost they can say of themselves is, that they are not in the commission of any such sins as would plainly exclude them from grace; but how little of firm hope can be placed on such negative evidence is plain from St. Paul's own words on the subject, who, speaking of the censures passed upon him by the Corinthians, says, "I know nothing by myself," that is, I am conscious of nothing, "yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." As men in a battle cannot see how it is going, so Christians have no certain signs of God's presence in their hearts, and can but look up towards their Lord and Saviour, and timidly hope.

We have much to be forgiven; nay, we have the more to be forgiven the more we attempt. The higher our aims, the greater our risks. They who venture much with their talents, gain much, and in the end they hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" but they have so many losses in trading by the way, that to themselves they seem to do nothing but fail. They cannot believe that they are making any progress; and though they do, yet surely they have much to be forgiven in all their services. They are like David, men of blood; they fight the good fight of faith, but they are polluted with the contest.

10. 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. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Down & Dromore (Ireland). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Bendigo; and within our own Diocese, for the Bishop's Chaplain, Fr Stuart Langshaw.

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. For all those affected by the COVID-19 coronavirus and all who care for them. For those who are commended to our prayers, especially Paull, Valerie, Sym, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, Fr Gary Priest, Fr Bart O'Donovan, Beth, Linda, and Fr Peter Garland.

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 Elly Bechaz, Joyce Walkley (late of Henley Beach), Fr Colin Mason, and Albert Brunstrom (late of Port Adelaide), and those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time including John Gent (priest). ✠ 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, 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.



