

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 6 July 2023

Dear friends,

This newsletter was developed as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold and our ability to gather for worship was so severely challenged. Thanks be to God, we are now able to gather together to celebrate the Word and Sacraments, and to come to church for private prayer. But the demand for and appeal of these newsletters has continued.

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 provide some resources for prayer and reflection: enjoy!



1. Fr Steven writes ... "Queering the Church"

This Sunday we continue our July sermon series on love, and our investment in the practice of love with courage, generosity, and irrepressible hope.

I began last week by putting Jesus and his friends, like Mary Magdalene, in context. Forget about Jesus meek and mild, instead, this is Jesus the human one. The term "the human one" (previously translated "the Son of Man") is the term Jesus preferred to use to describe himself and his work. The human one, with his friends from Galilee, represented a resistance movement inspired by love. By "resistance movement", I am referring to the capacity to make a stand against injustice and exclusion.

This Sunday, the title of my reflection is "Queering the Church."

Our parish's commitment to social inclusion is heartfelt and longstanding. One of the key ingredients is not only our commitment to welcoming the stranger, but also our recognition that the outsider has a prophetic perspective we need to hear.

Of course, many other churches are inclusive communities, and I think this the case for three reasons.

First, compassion, we have seen others suffer because they were treated as outsiders based on their sexuality, gender, race, or disability. This includes family members, friends, and neighbours, as well as strangers. But compassion says, "this is not on". Second, in the Jewish and Christian traditions there is a deep commitment to welcoming the stranger in the name of divine love. Third, Jesus, the human one, and his friends from Galilee, embraced the outsider. All told, this includes a healthy dose of compassion, self-examination, and truth-telling. And this process is what I mean by the term 'queering the church'.

Historically, the term 'queer' was used in a derogatory manner. Of late, however, it has been adopted and adapted by many members of the LGBTQIA+ community to capture their unique perspective. In particular, the term queer "acquires its meaning from its oppositional relation to the norm" (David M. Halperin). For centuries, others defined the norm, designating LGBTQIA+ members directly, or by default, as abnormal. All this raises primary questions like what is the norm? Who decides? And what makes these decisions right? In the case of a contemporary church, these questions need to be addressed and challenged.

Personally, I have benefited greatly from queer friends and family members, within and without the church, as well as queer philosophers like Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, and theologians like Carter Heyward and Mark D Jordan. In Sunday's sermon, then, I will explore this tradition.

In this context, I am using the term 'queering' broadly to include the wisdom of outsiders. And there are many outsiders. In Australia, for example, we just celebrated the remarkable contribution of Aboriginal and Islander people (NAIDOC Week). Of course, dispossession made first nations people outsiders in their own land, but this has only added to the gravitas of First Nations wisdom. Thank God, then, we are looking to them now for new wisdom.

Fr Steven

2. The Conversation

As social beings, we need to belong. And to belong, we need welcoming spaces to be ourselves, ask the big questions, and glean new wisdom for living compassionately and courageously. This is the impetus behind *The Conversation*.

So, following the success of our recent Thursday morning discussion group, we have come up with a new version called *The Conversation*. It begins on **Thursday 6 July at 10 am and runs for 5 weeks finishing Thursday 3 August**. The venue will again be the Mission Hall.

At the first session, we will discuss and choose topics of interest. Successive sessions will be led by a volunteer, who will present a ten-minute overview on the topic as a discussion starter. So far, suggestions for discussion include:

- What is salvation? What does it mean?
- Rethinking hope. Rethinking community.
- All life is suffering. What more can we say?
- There is no such thing as the perfect family.

So, welcome to *The Conversation*.

Fr Steven

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 *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are available in either a fixed form (pp 3-33) or a form for each day of the week (pp 383-424).

Online Resources

There is an 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, especially 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.

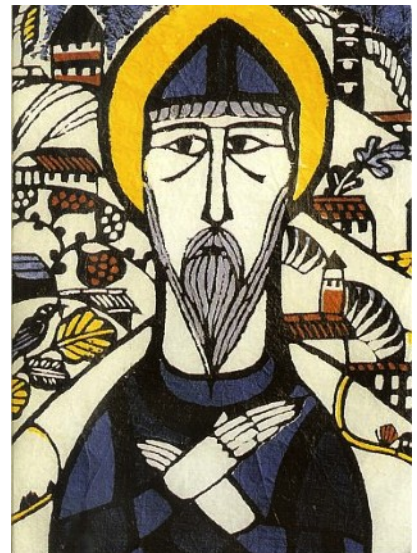
Service booklets as PDF files are still available for Sunday and weekday services on the web site and on the Parish's Facebook page.

5. This Week in the Calendar

This week we celebrate the so-called "Father of Western Monasticism" St Benedict of Nursia,

It is unfortunate that no contemporary biography was written of a man who has exercised the greatest influence on monasticism in the West. Benedict is well recognized in the later Dialogues of Saint Gregory, but these are only sketches which illustrate some of the miraculous elements of his career.

What little we know of Benedict is that he was born into a distinguished family in central Italy, studied at Rome, and early in life was drawn to monasticism. At first he became a hermit, leaving a depressing world—pagan armies on the march, the Church torn by schism, people suffering from war, morality at a low ebb. He soon realized that he could not live a hidden life in a small town any better than in a large city, so he withdrew to a cave high in the mountains for three years.



Some monks chose Benedict as their leader for a while, but found his strictness not to their taste. Still the shift from hermit to community life had begun for him. He had an idea of gathering various families of monks into one "Grand Monastery" to give them the benefit of unity, fraternity, and permanent worship in one house. Finally he began to build what was to become one of the most famous monasteries in the world—Monte Cassino, commanding three narrow valleys running toward the mountains north of Naples.

The Rule that gradually developed prescribed a life of liturgical prayer, study, manual labour, and living together in community under a common abbot. In the course of the Middle Ages, all monasticism in the West was gradually brought under the Rule of St. Benedict.

Today the Benedictine family is represented by two branches: the Benedictine Federation encompassing the men and women of the Order of St. Benedict; and the Cistercians (deriving from *Cistercium*, the Latin name for the locale of Cîteaux, near Dijon in eastern France, where a more strictly observant branch of the main order settled in the 11th century).

Benedictine communities are “enclosed” in that they strictly separate themselves from the affairs of the external world to prevent distraction from prayer and the religious life and to keep an atmosphere of silence. Indeed, the primary work of any Benedictine monk or nun is the worship of God in the Divine Office and the Mass and St Benedict says that nothing should be preferred to this. Nonetheless, Benedictines are active in the wider community as they live out the directions, in the Rule, to offer ministries of love and service in the name of Christ among visitors, pilgrims, and the world. (Cistercians, on the other hand, are strictly enclosed, seldom leaving their monastery, and keeping silence for much of the day.)

Today, the *Rule of St Benedict* is the basis for a spirituality that is much more than a set of regulations. Benedictine spirituality serves as a guide for communal living of the Gospel in a socially responsible way and as a pathway for personal spiritual development.

Benedictine spirituality is a fresh alternative in an increasingly fast-paced world. The typical person takes little time for personal renewal in the hectic daily round of activities. Benedict reminds us of our priorities: prayer, contemplation, balance and the importance of everything we do. The values lifted up by the Rule of Benedict make it a fruitful source of guidance for living the Christian life today.

By calling us back to prayer throughout the day, Benedict recognized that all time is holy and any time is a moment when we may encounter God. Benedictine spirituality attunes us to an awareness of the divine in the ordinary.

In a world where alienation and suspicion of the stranger runs deep, Benedict’s respect for all persons and valuing all persons equally can heal our enmity with one another. In a world torn by violence, Benedict’s emphasis on “right relationships” can put us a path toward justice and peace.

6. On St Benedict: From a homily by Blessed Gueric of Igny

Through his faith and gentleness the Lord sanctified him. These words were written of Moses, but they may today be applied not unfittingly, I think, to blessed Benedict. For since he was filled with the Spirit of all the saints, it is reasonable to believe that he had not a little of Moses' spirit. If the Lord took some of the spirit of Moses and put it upon the whole group of elders who assisted him and were chosen to share his ministry, how much more must he have put that spirit on a man who more truly and more spiritually carried out every ministry in its fullness? Moses led those who came forth from Egypt; Benedict was leader of those who forsook the world. Moses was a legislator: so was Benedict. Moses was minister only of the letter that kills; Benedict was minister of the spirit that gives life. Moses wrote much that is difficult to understand and inapplicable today or impossible to put into practice; Benedict is the author of a very sound rule of life that is clearly written and remarkable for its discretion. Finally, the leader of the children of Israel did not bring into the promised rest those he had led out of Egypt. Our leader, as the standard bearer of an army of monks, has gone before us by the straight way, the way stretching east, into the kingdom of heaven. It is therefore not unreasonable to think that he equalled in merit one whom he actually surpassed in ministry. Nor does it seem unfitting to apply to him what scripture says of Moses: *Though his faith and gentleness the Lord sanctified him*, especially since Benedict, who lived what he taught, teaches us those two virtues in particular.

Brothers and sisters, it is the command of our gentle and peace-making Master that we should be at peace with one another. Yet before that he says: Have salt in yourselves. He knows well that peaceful gentleness nourishes vices unless the severity of zeal has first sprinkled them with the sharp taste of salt, just as mild weather causes meat to grow wormy unless the heat of salt has dried it out. Therefore be at peace with one another, but let it be a peace that is seasoned with the salt of wisdom; try to acquire gentleness, but let it be a gentleness filled with the warmth of faith.

7. 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.

Pray for the world. For the leaders of the world as they seek to respond to the challenges that beset the international community. For refugees and asylum seekers, that they may find places of safety and welcome. For all who work for peace and justice. For reconciliation with the first custodians of this land.

Pray for the church. For all those who are striving to be church in the modern world, that we may be alert to the signs of the times and their interpretation in the light of the Gospel. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Manchester (England). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Bendigo; and within our Diocese, for the Parish of St Peters.

Pray for our local community. For the Collective as it manages the delivery of the Saturday Night Mary Mags Dinner. For the Magdalene Centre, its customers, staff and volunteers, as they minister in God's name among those in crisis and in need of support and assistance.

Pray for those in need. Pray for all those who are troubled in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Sim, Jasmin, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Olivia, Nance, Neil, Elaine, Neil, Hugh, James, Bart O'Donovan (priest) and Prue O'Donovan (Priest).

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 Bev Mitchell and Anne-Marie McCann, and those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time, especially Spencer Dunkerley and Stuart Mockridge.
✠ *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 Benedict, and holy women and men of every time and place.

This newsletter will normally be distributed weekly on Tuesday. Any appropriate items should be emailed to the Parish Office, StMMAelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

Directory

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| Parish Priest | Revd Dr Steven Ogden ☎ 0408 817 147, ✉ stevengogden@gmail.com |
| Hon Assisting Priests | Revd Sr Juliana SI, Fr Philip Carter, Fr Graeme Kaines |
| Churchwardens | Peter Burdon ☎ 0414 471 894 Alison McAllister ☎ 0433 551 267 |
| Parish Council | The Priest and Wardens <i>ex officio</i> ; Catherine Freriks, Alison McAllister, Hamish McLachlan, Peter Turner. |
| Nomination Committee | Awaiting Appointment |
| Synod Representatives | Ashley Durham, Catherine Freriks |