

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 7 April 2021

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions makes it possible to once again worship on Sunday, when Mass is sung at 10 am. The church is also open for private prayer and public worship on Thursday from 11.30 am to 1 pm, and Mass is offered at 12.10 pm after Regina Coeli at 12 noon.

The decision to return to worship in community, even for private prayer, is not a straightforward matter, so we will continue to produce these newsletters for now.

In these Thursday newsletters, we offer ideas and opportunities for nourishing our personal and communal spiritual lives.

1. From Fr Gwilym – Signs: The Stations of the Cross



Have you noticed that since road worker safety has been privatised, how signs saying "ROAD WORK AHEAD" have become more and more frequent? And they are quite often followed by another sign saying, "END ROAD WORK" with no evidence of anybody working on the road!

When we see a sign, we expect to be able to find the thing it refers to. Footprints in the sand imply that somewhere ahead there is a person walking. "Port Augusta 63" makes us expect to reach the town in about 63 kilometres.

The church is full of signs, but not everybody notices or understands them these days. In days gone by church buildings could be read by people who were never taught to read a book. One example is the Stations of the Cross. There is a set of Stations at St Mary Magdalene's. They tell the story of Jesus' last earthly day and they are signs for people to follow in Jesus' Good Friday footsteps. There are usually 14 Stations, 14 signs.

They are, in order,

1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus takes up his Cross
3. Jesus falls for the first time
4. Jesus meets his Mother
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls for the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls for the third time
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments
11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross
12. Jesus dies on the Cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

The original Way of the Cross is, of course, in Jerusalem and it is called the Via Dolorosa, meaning the Sorrowful Journey. The first pilgrims who followed the route were trying to relive the events of Good Friday. Over time, the brief Biblical account was expanded to include other traditions. The three falls of Jesus (Stations 3, 7 and 9), the meeting with Jesus Mother (Station 4) do have scriptural verses which can be attached to them, while St Veronica is a tradition of the church. However, all of them can be usefully used as signs along the way. They are, after all, signs which point towards a reality, not the reality itself.

For all sorts of reasons, it happens that it may be neither convenient or possible for people to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. So Stations have been set up in churches or outside. There is a very beautiful open-air Way of the Cross at Sevenhill, for example. The Stations are available for private prayer and devotion and also for congregational use. A minister may lead a procession from one Station to another, with appropriate prayers, chants and music. Alternatively the congregation may remain seated while one or more ministers proceed from Station to Station.

In churches where this pilgrimage is made, it is often made on Fridays, especially during Lent and above all, on Good Friday.

And, unlike those road signs with no work happening between them, the Stations of the Cross are signs that something real is happening as the faithful walk the Way of the Cross.

Peace be with you,

Fr 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. The Easter Sequence – *Victimae Paschali*

On a few special festivals in the Church's year, a special hymn called a Sequence is sung or recited before the proclamation of the Gospel as part of the exclamation "Alleluia". (The name "sequence", from the Latin *sequi, to follow, arose because it came after the Alleluia.*)

The Sequence sung at the Mass of Easter Sunday is one of the oldest of all, dating from as early as the 11th century.

*Victimae paschali laudes
immolent Christiani.*

*Christians, to the Paschal Victim
Offer your thankful praises!*

*Agnus redemit oves:
Christus innocens Patri
reconciliavit peccatores.*

*A Lamb the sheep redeemeth:
Christ, who only is sinless,
Reconcileth sinners to the Father;*

*Mors et vita duello
confluxere mirando:
dux vitae mortuus,
regnat vivus.*

*Death and life have contended
In that combat stupendous:
The Prince of Life, who died,
reigns immortal.*

*Dic nobis Maria,
quid vidisti in via?*

*Speak Mary, declaring
What thou sawest wayfaring:*

*Sepulcrum Christi viventis,
et gloriam vidi resurgentis*

*"The Tomb of Christ, who is living.
The glory of Jesu's Resurrection;*

*Angelicos testes,
sudarium, et vestes.*

*Bright angels attesting,
The shroud and napkin resting.*

*Surrexit Christus spes mea:
praecedet suos vos in Galilaeam.*

*Yea, Christ my hope is arisen:
To Galilee he goes before you."*

*Scimus Christum surrexisse
a mortuis vere:
tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere.
Amen. Alleluia.*

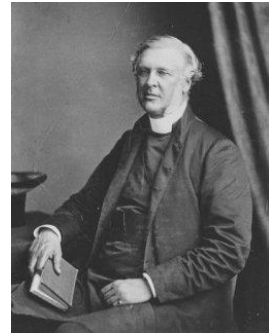
*Christ indeed from death is risen,
our new life obtaining.
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!
Amen. Alleluia.*

• *Victimae Paschali* has often been described as the Church's most beautiful sequence, the hymn by which the Church sings the glory of Christ's triumph over death. *Victimae Paschali* presents the simple yet profound faith of believers from the first century to the twenty-first, a faith based on one person, fully human and yet fully God, who was crucified, raised from the dead, and who will one day return to judge both living and dead. Without Christ, there is no hope, but through Christ, and through Christ alone, we have hope – we have access to the Creator. To Christ be praise forever.

5. In the Church's Calendar

The Church's calendar this week we celebrate some pioneering church leaders in our own nation, and a modern-day martyr.

Frederic Barker (1808-1882) was the second Bishop of Sydney. He came to Australia from England in 1855 and in the 27 years of his episcopate, he was instrumental in promoting theological education not only in his own diocese but in the many new dioceses formed during his tenure, and also the establishment of the General Synod. Barker was a firm Evangelical, and his nickname (of which he disapproved) 'the High Priest' was as much a comment on his low churchmanship as on his great height, 6 ft 5½ inches. He is commemorated in the Calendar for the Anglican Church of Australia on 6 April, the date of his death.



Georgiana Molloy (1805-1843) was an early settler in Western Australia where she became known as a pioneering church leader, as well as a noted amateur botanist. A deeply religious person, much influenced by the Christian Revival movement in England before coming to Australia in 1829, her short life was a remarkable witness of faith, service and justice. She developed an interest in botany, and together with her husband, and local indigenous women, she spent nearly all of her leisure time in collecting, collating and documenting botanical specimens of the south west of Western Australia, a legacy which even in her time gained international notice. She is commemorated on 8 April, the date of her death.



George Augustus Selwyn (1809-1878) was the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand. He oversaw the establishment of the church in New Zealand, the creation of its General Synod, and the establishment of dioceses across the nation. He began to learn Māori on the voyage to New Zealand – he became fluent, and regularly preached in both English and Māori – and was highly esteemed in the Māori community, not least for his advocacy of a settler society "without distinction of persons" and his readiness to frame rules for the church to suit the circumstances of both the settlers and the Māori people. He is commemorated on 11 April, the date of his death.



The others commemorated this week are **William Law** and **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**.

Law (1686-1761) was a priest and spiritual writer who, as a non-Juror, was deprived of the ability to teach or preach, but did so through his books, which are among the great monuments of Christian devotional writing.



Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a German evangelical pastor and theologian, whose prolific writings on Christianity's role in the secular world continue to influence theology today. He staunchly resisted the rise of the Nazism, and was imprisoned in 1943. He was executed on 9 April 1945.



6. Rowan Williams on Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was in no way a theologian who wished to be defined by negations. In his prison letters, he deplores the tendency of religious apologists to concentrate on the weaknesses of the secular world-view. The gospel must address people in their strength not only their weakness, he says, and the Word of God is too 'aristocratic' to take advantage of weakness. Nor was he in other ways a man of negation or (in the traditional sense) asceticism. His watchword, even in his early theology, was involvement. Yet it may be that we best understand his challenges to us now by reflecting on some of what he did, after all, say no to.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a man immersed in a specific cultural heritage, and untroubled by the fact; he was a person of profound and rigorous (and very traditional) personal spirituality; he was someone committed to the ecumenical perspective from very early on in his adult life. But his witness involved him in raising some very stark questions about the value of a culture when it became part of a tyrannous and racist ideology; in challenging the ways in which traditional piety could be allowed to become a protected and private territory, absolving us from the need to act, or rather to let God to act in us; and in insisting that the search for visible unity as an ideal independent of truth and integrity could only produce a pseudo-church.

He stands as an example of just that 'yes and no' to his environment which St Paul sketches in I Corinthians, and it is why his example is both so widely effective and so little bound to any one programme in the Church, why he does not easily let himself be claimed by any party.

The resolution of these tensions was, for him, not a theoretical matter, but the bare fact of witness. And this means that we who celebrate his memory cannot extract from it a 'Bonhoefferian orthodoxy' that will tell us what policies we are to adopt now at a time when the churches face profound division. The temptation ... is that we borrow Bonhoeffer's language to give dignity and seriousness to some of our current controversies, when the truth is that it is only in the face of a real anti-church that these matters come fully into focus, when there is an active programme aimed at destroying the Church's integrity and expelling or silencing those who hold to that integrity. And Bonhoeffer himself warns us about being too ready in advance to spell out what would constitute an anti-church. What is essential is the work that prepares us for discernment: the common life of adoration and confession, the struggle to bring acts and policies to the judgement of Scripture, the freedom, above all, to stand against what actively seeks, inside or outside the Church, to prohibit the proclamation of the Gospel, confident in what God has irrevocably given to the community of faith.

In October 1938, Bonhoeffer addressed a conference of younger pastors associated with the Confessing Church and serving in illegal pastorates; his subject was the question of what obedience to Scripture meant. He warns against using Scripture to demonstrate the rightness of an action or policy, making Scripture serve a programme of our own, a conception of our righteousness. It is not that we can solve the dramatic personal question, 'What shall I do?' by a simple appeal to the Bible, so that we are relieved of the burden of human ambiguity and even human sinfulness and error. The Bible, says Bonhoeffer, is not interested in resolving personal dramas of choice. What matters is that what we say or do or choose points to the truth of Christ. In itself it is always going to be in some degree in need of forgiveness; but it is 'right' to the extent that it displays the truth of Christ. 'It is our way to let Jesus Christ find us in this way. Christ is the truth. The sole truth of our way is that we should be found in this truth' (*The Way to Freedom*, 176). As a programme, as a set of solutions, this is not going to be the answer to our divisions and quarrels as churches today. But if this is the language in which we are prepared to think about and pray about our struggles, we shall have learned from Bonhoeffer what above all he has to teach us: Christ equips us to say no to those falsehoods

which allow us to ignore the places where he is to be found. Christ can lead us through culture and piety and ecumenism to a place where we must say no to any aspects of them that make falsehoods easier. Christ will find us as and when we are ready to be found by him, and not when we are certain that we can make him speak for our party or our programme, left or right. Inexorably, we are led to that twofold commendation of prayer and justice with which the Prison Letters leave us -- a commendation not of abstract spirituality and busy activism, but of immersion in Christ through Scripture and the struggle to act so that God's act will be visible.

It is a legacy that will not easily let us be satisfied with ourselves; which is why it is a gift from Bonhoeffer's Lord and ours.

*Speech at the opening of the International Bonhoeffer Congress
University of Wroclaw, Poland*

7. William Law's Mystical Writings

As a mystic, William Law reflects the essence of Christian mystical thought in his writings. Early in his life, Law was affected by many important mystics; among them were: a Kempis, Fenelon, Madame Guyon, Madame Bourignon and Father Malebranche ... Of all the mystics, however, none spoke to him more profoundly than Jakob Bohme. Law first became seriously acquainted with the German mystic around 1734. Bohme was not educated theologian but a cobbler by trade. He was given to religious visions and strange and wild hallucinations in which he was to have experienced God. Bohme's basic message to Law was to know himself in order to root out all sin. As self is sin, self was to be mortified, denied, so that God's love could prevail. None of these thoughts were new to Law. Such ideas were already reflected in his writings prior to his encounter with Bohme. However, he found Bohme to be a man after his own heart. Bohme was able to spur Law's thoughts on to a greater depth, giving him new insights into mysticism.

According to Law's theology, God is an "infinity of mere love." God is love and love is God. Therefore, nothing in God's character can be contrary to love. Although human cannot see God's essence, that God exists is self-evident because we bear the stamp of divine nature. Any positive ability or quality we have in ourselves is a reflection of God's essence. We form our idea of God by "adding Infinite to every perfection that we have any knowledge of."

The love of God is the basic premise upon which Law's theology is based. Because God is total love, He is completely good. God's desire to communicate His love and goodness is the ultimate purpose behind creation. Consequently, it is the perfect will of God that humans experience God's love and goodness. We are all in the image of God. Being in God's image, we, like God, have a free will. Law then sees this will as the key that will open Pandora's box of evils or that will open the door of heaven. It is clear that Law's thinking was very much at odds with Calvinism. Predestination was not a compatible factor in his theology as it was inconsistent with God as love. Humans are held highly responsible for their actions as they have free will. The fall of man and evil then is the result of humanity's misuse of free will, i.e. a person deliberately and wilfully chooses against God. Moreover, Law puts the blame on humans for sin and suffering because a loving God could not possibly will sickness. We bring pain, sickness and suffering upon ourselves by our deliberate sinning. Law also sees the self and will as being closely related. Self comes into being when a person asserts his will against God's will. Hence, self is the perverted use of the will and is the "sum total of all sin."

In dealing with the wrath of God, Law has an interesting way of handling this theological issue. As God is love, there cannot be wrath in God as that would be contrary to God's nature, Law argues. However, this puts Law in a difficult position as Scripture clearly speaks of God's wrath.

He agrees that Scripture is literally correct. Rather than deny Scripture though, Law redefines wrath. It is not God who is the source of wrath. Instead, wrath has its source in us. God has not changed; we are the ones who have altered our nature. Hence, the wrath of God is the projection to God of our own corrupt state. Because we have wilfully opposed God, we see God as being against us. Sin so corrupts our minds and "vision" that we cannot perceive God as love. Instead in our corrupted state we see God as wrath.

As a result of his view on God's love and wrath, Law does not agree with the common theories of the atonement such as the propitiatory or penal satisfaction theories. As with his theology on God's wrath, Law has a different way of explaining the meaning of a Christian's death and resurrection. According to him, Christ entered the human race, participating with us in our human nature in order that through his sinless life, death and resurrection, he could restore the fallen faculties of human nature to the state God intended. In short, the Atonement is simply the reclaiming of human nature.

Salvation to Law, then, is the realisation of Christ's atoning work in us. It is up to us to activate this restoration. God doesn't force it on us. Conversion, however is not a momentary experience. Rather, conversion is synonymous with repentance. It is the realisation of our fallen state and need of reconciliation to God. Again, Law places a heavy emphasis on human responsibility in salvation. Salvation, or as Law calls it, regeneration, is the death of self. We deliberately choose to deny the self, which is corrupt and instead submit ourselves to God: will, body, mind and spirit. Regeneration then is the surrendering of ourselves to God so that Christ's atoning work can be realised in us. This regeneration, however, is not achieved in an instant, Law emphasises. It is a process of giving ourselves to God and a resulting gradual transformation of our old nature. Hence, to Law, there is no instantaneous work of grace by conversion. Salvation is a process that is very dependent on human responsibility.

William Law's Character, Works, and Influence
Cheryl Hendrix

8. Intentions for Your Daily 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 medical researchers, that they may be granted knowledge and wisdom as they search for a vaccine and cure. 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 Benin (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Brisbane; and within our own Diocese, for the South Sudanese Congregation at Ingle Farm.

For our local community. For the Collective as it resumes its ministry to the community in the Drop-In Centre is suspended, and for its guests as they seek places to eat and rest. 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, Bishop David McCall, Sym, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, Diane, Fr Gary Priest, Fr Bart O'Donovan, Beth, Chris, and Linda Braby.

For those who have died. For those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us; all those who have died recently, including Ruth Carter those who have died as a result of COVID-19; and those whose anniversaries of death occur at about 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, Frederick Barker, Georgiana Molloy, William Law, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, George Augustus Selwyn, and holy women and men of every time and place.

An Order for Easter Evening

After coffee, some worshippers approach the priest.

People Do you have some time to get together on
Monday morning?

Celebrant No.

The Priest goes home.

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

