

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 2022

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 during the holy season of Lent, the church will also be open on Wednesday morning for prayers at 7.30 am; Thursday between 11.30 am and 1 pm, with the Angelus at noon and Mass at 12.10 pm; and for Stations of the Cross on Friday at 6.15 pm.

These newsletters are intended to support the spiritual life of the community as we continue to cope with and respond to the pandemic.



1. From Fr Steven – Taking a Stand

“The people who are loyal to their God shall stand firm and take action” (Daniel 11:32)

Ukraine is under siege. And it is symptomatic of the resurgence of the strongman. Certainly, there are other factors relating to culture and history. However, Vladimir Putin exploits all these factors. Moreover, we face the likelihood of an increasingly violent world under the control of strongmen like Bolsonaro, Erdoğan, Xi Jinping, Putin, and Trump. What are we to make of all this?

Palm Sunday reminds us about who we really are. In a word, we belong to God. We are grounded in the life of God. This is where we belong. This gives us courage for the day and hope for the future. It begins with us making a stand. In fact, the root meaning of the word *resistance* is to make a stand. This does not necessarily mean placards and barricades, but it does entail collective action. This is the action that comes from conviction, a conviction moved by the spirit, giving voice to our ethical commitments. This, of course, is related to the prophetic movement.

The prophetic practice of resistance came to a head in 167 BCE, when the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanies issued an edict that tried to annul the ancestral laws of Judea, forbidding Jewish religion, authorizing new religious practices. The people of God resisted by preaching, teaching, praying, fasting, and dying. This was about resistance to empire in the name of God, compassion, and justice. Palm Sunday also raises the problem of empire.

On the surface, Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. But there is more to this than meets the eye. Beneath the surface Jesus, and his friends from Galilee, have entered a Roman *heartland*. Under the client-state system of Rome, client-states like Judea had restricted autonomy. Ultimately, Rome was in charge. This was symbolized by

Pilate's presence in Jerusalem. Rome also appointed the chief priest and chief tax collector. In the end, Rome executed Jesus, and this was authorized by Pilate. Critically, Jesus was killed because he resisted the abuse of power. Resistance then is built into our Christian DNA. And so, the sacrament of baptism is central.

Baptism raised questions about allegiance. In fact, the church's practice of baptism represented an alternate claim of allegiance, demanding loyalty to an alternative realm, that is, "the basileia of God" (reign of God). It is noteworthy that the use of the term *basileia* (reign/kingdom) was a signal to Rome that here is an *alternative*. In addition, the church's use of the term *sacramentum*, which is the Roman soldier's oath, underlines that Christianity would be seen as presenting an alternative.

The early churches lived under the spectre of Rome. Baptism, however, fostered a healthy sense of resistance, where individuals and communities were conscious of their faith commitment. So, in years to come, Christian martyrs expressed a form of insubordination.

The newly baptised belonged to a new group. So, then, the body of believers is an inherently political body by virtue of its faith commitment. This is what it means to be part of the Jesus movement. In this vein, it makes sense to see "baptism-as-declaration-of-resistance" (Ched Myers).

On Palm Sunday, Jesus enters the lions' den riding on a donkey. Clearly, this is not triumphalism, but rather, it is an expression of non-violent resistance. Of course, the situation was complicated. On the one hand, the Jesus movement had to be careful. On the other hand, they were not compliant. Like the prophets, Jesus and his friends were committed to making a stand.

Steven Ogden
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 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.

3. Reflections and Meditations

Reflections for our two weekly newsletters will continue for the time being, and our Thursday "Spiritual Resources" newsletter will continue to be uploaded to the web page. Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections have resumed with a series on the teachings of Julian of Norwich, and 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. Devotions During Lent

Each **Wednesday** in Lent, prayers will be said in the Church at 7.30 am. The format will be a short reading, 20 minutes of silent prayer/meditation, and a song to conclude, finishing promptly at 8 am.

On **Thursday**, in addition to the Lenten study, the regular Thursday Mass will also be said at 12.10 pm, following the Angelus at 12 noon. The exception is next Thursday, Maundy Thursday, when the only Mass of the day will be sung at 7.30 pm

On **Friday**, the Stations of the Cross will be celebrated at 6.15 pm.

5. In the Church's Calendar

This week the church commemorates a great name in the history of the church in Western Australia, Georgiana Molloy, the 18th century priest and teacher William Law, the great 20th century theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Bishop George Augustus Selwyn, first missionary bishop of New Zealand.

Georgiana Molloy (1805-1843) was an early settler in Western Australia. 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 family 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.



Sadly, recent research has found that Georgiana's husband John Molloy, a distinguished army officer who was among the prominent early settlers in Western Australia, was involved in the tragedy known as the Wonnerup "Minninup" massacre in which many Waadandi Noongar people were killed by European settlers in reprisal for the murder of a local farmer.

The shadow of Colonial oppression casts a long historical shadow. It is right that we pause and reflect on these terrible moments in our shared history, to pray for all those who died, and all those whose lives continue to be shaped by oppression and injustice.

William Law (1686-1761) was a priest and spiritual writer. Son of a prosperous businessman, Law had received an excellent education at Cambridge and had a solid future as a scholar or clergyman ahead of him. Then Queen Anne died without an heir. On the ascension of the German George I to the English throne, Law refused to swear an oath of allegiance. As a "nonjuror," Law was forced to give up his fellowship and was denied further advancement in the Church of England or in any academic institution. From a professional perspective, his career seemed to be over when he was just 28 years old.



Yet Law lived for another 47 years. For many years, he served as tutor to Edward Gibbons, father of the renowned historian. When Edward left home, Law retired to his family home where he devoted his life to writing. Celibate, rigorous, and solitary, Law honed his writing skills, aimed at uncovering shallow devotion and stirring up readers to renewed moral vigour and holiness. Most of his works were in the area of Christian spirituality, which he refused to relegate to a comfortable corner of life.

Law's most widely known book, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, pulls together many of his thoughts in a lucid work addressed to the "average" Christian. It challenged Christians to wake up from their spiritual stupor and apply all their energy to the holy life: "He therefore is a devout man who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God, who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything, who makes all the parts of his common life parts of piety by doing everything in the name of God."

Dietrich 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.

Bonhoeffer graduated from the University of Berlin in 1927 and then spent some months in Spain as an assistant pastor to a German congregation. Then it was back to Germany to write a dissertation, which would grant him the right to a university appointment. He spent a year in America, at New York's Union Theological Seminary, before returning to teach at the University of Berlin.



As Hitler rose to power Bonhoeffer, together with other pastors and theologians, organized the Confessing Church, which announced publicly as early as 1934 its allegiance first to Jesus Christ: "We repudiate the false teaching that the church can and must recognize yet other happenings and powers, personalities and truths as divine revelation alongside this one Word of God ..."

In 1937 Bonhoeffer wrote *The Cost of Discipleship*, a call to more faithful and radical obedience to Christ and a severe rebuke of comfortable Christianity: "Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession ... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."

Bonhoeffer continued to staunchly resist the rise of Nazism, and was imprisoned in 1943. He was executed on 9 April 1945.

6. 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

7. 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*

8. 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.

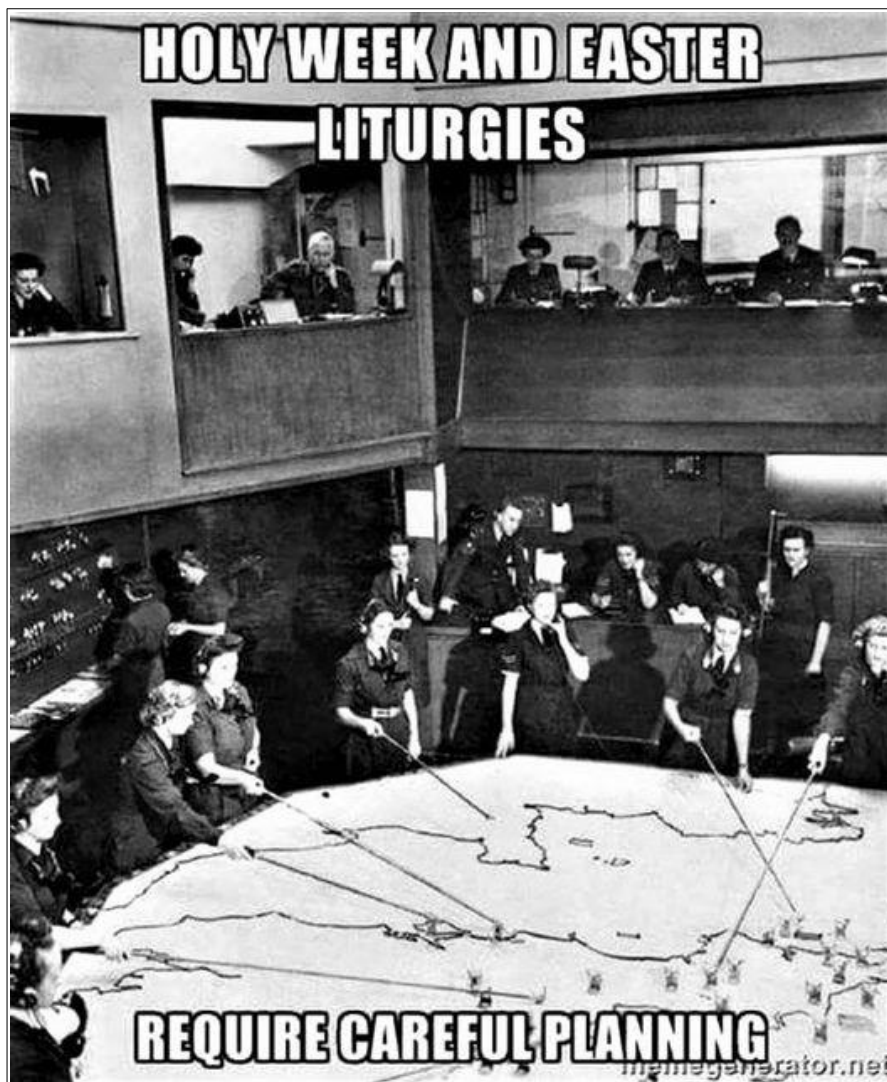
For the church. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Western Kowloon (Hong Kong). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Brisbane; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Chaplain to Surf Lifesaving Clubs and Lifeguards.

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, Clarice, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), Mark, Neil, Olivia 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, 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.