

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

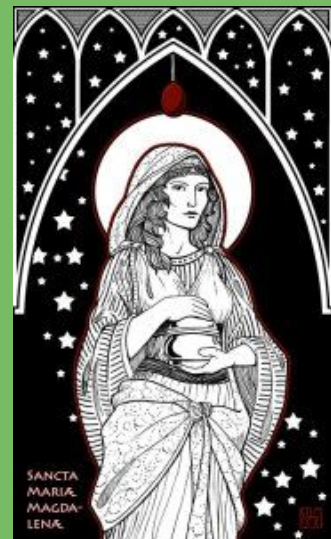
Thursday 7 October 2021

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 – Woe to those who die in mortal sin!

I do not claim to be a theologian, or a biblical scholar, and neither am I a particularly deep thinker. I try, by the kindness of God, and as much as it lies within my power, to be a sincere follower of Christ. I believe that God is calling me, as he is calling all his children to be holy and blameless before him in love. (Ephesians 1:4)



Like many serious Christians, I struggle to understand the relationship between God and those children, puzzling over concepts like sin, repentance, redemption and salvation.

Over the centuries, much scholarly ink has been poured out in the cause of this debate, and not a little human blood has been spilt. Moreover, the church is not united in its understanding of sin.

So when I came across the sentence "Woe to those who die in mortal sin!" in St Francis of Assisi's wonderful hymn of creation, *Laudato si*, I felt that I had to give it some thought.

One view of sin is to understand it in legal terms. Sin is disobedience to God's Holy Law. In this scheme, mortal sins are thoughts, words and actions which seriously imperil a person's immortal soul. Venial sins are less serious breaches of God's moral law. The process of Confession, and Absolution has been the church's way of dealing with this way of thinking about sins. Many people find this helpful, useful and a reassurance of God's love for them.

But this legal approach is questioned by the teachings of Jesus and St Paul. The Law of Moses, with all its requirements, has been fulfilled, or made complete, or superseded by the life, death

and resurrection of Christ. In our hymns and in our liturgy we refer to the Jesus as “dying for the sins of the whole world”, or “paying the price of sin”, “ransoming our souls from sin”, and other scriptural references.

A line of thought which I personally find helpful is that “righteousness” means “being in a right relationship with God” and that “sin” or “sinfulness” expresses a damaged relationship to God. Jesus’ stated purpose was to call sinners to repentance, recognising that righteous persons have no need of repentance. In Mark 2:17 Jesus says, “Those who are sick don’t need a doctor.” The forgiveness of sins is seen as a process of reconciliation and healing rather than a legal necessity. Paul describes this in Romans 5:8-11 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. This is about a restoration of a right relationship with God, with our neighbours and with ourselves. We would call it Restorative Justice, these days.

Our lives as Christians are to be lived as “ambassadors for Christ” as Paul puts it, “God making his appeal for reconciliation through us.” Our task is to be reconcilers, to work within ourselves and to work with others to restore the right relationships in people’s minds, in those to whom they are close, in their communities and in the entire Creation. For this reason, the Sacrament of Confession and Absolution is often called Reconciliation.

This is urgent now because there are so many antagonisms, distractions and sources of misinformation in our world. Compassion, empathy, kindness and reconciliation are needed as never before.

When St Francis spoke of those who die in mortal sin, he is referring to those people whose lives are at war within themselves, against their neighbours and against God. People, living with such an attitude, says St Francis, will approach death not as a natural end of life, but as a terrible adversary; part of the great war within them.

The fate of the righteous is well expressed in the book of Wisdom. Chapter 3, verses 1 and following. “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be an affliction, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace.”

Best wishes,

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 English prison reformer Elizabeth Fry.

Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) was a passionate campaigner for prison reform and social change in 18th and 19th century Britain. She was from a Christian family who followed the Quaker tradition, believing that all people are equal in God's eyes and worthy of equal treatment. She was the driving force behind legislation to improve conditions for prisoners and provide support for inmates after release. It earned her the nickname 'the angel of the prisons'.

Fry campaigned for the rights and welfare of prisoners being transported to Australia. She instigated an end to prisoners being taken in open carriages to transport ships, which had exposed them to public ridicule. She ensured they were kept in small groups on the ships, rather than massed together and that they were allowed on deck.



It was through her campaigning that prisoners were given some personal possessions including a Bible and better clothes. The women were allowed to sew. A school mistress taught children to read. Fry also arranged accommodation for women on arrival in Australia to stop them falling into destitution and slavery. Hundreds of women wrote to thank her.

Fry shunned the limelight, but had many admirers including Queen Victoria, who noted in her diary the social changes she felt Fry had helped bring about: the suppression of slavery; the diminution of capital punishment; the improvement of prisons; the spread of the gospel; and an increase in education.

5. 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 Gasabo (Rwanda). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Brisbane; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Parish of Clarence Gardens.

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, 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 Francis, Elizabeth Fry, 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.

