

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 September 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 ... "Mystery, Community, Creativity"

The **Season of Creation** is an annual global movement where Christian communities pray and act to care for God's creation. It arose out of a proclamation in 1989 by the Ecumenical Patriarch that September 1 would be the "Orthodox Day of Prayer for Creation".

Subsequently, the World Council of Churches extended the celebration until October 4, the feast day of St Francis of Assisi. Then in 2015 Pope Francis formalised the observance of the "Season of Creation" in the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in the light of his Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* "on care for our common home."

We will reflect on the themes of the Season of Creation throughout September. Last Sunday, I preached in the Cathedral (as Convenor of the Diocese of Adelaide's Climate Action Task Group), and on the next three Sundays 10, 17 and 24 September, I will present a three-part series of reflections at St Mary Magdalene's during the 10 am Mass.

"Mystery, Community, Creativity" - Developing a theology and practice of adaptation

We are over doom-saying climate statistics. We need new ways of thinking and living. In challenging times, then, we need to be grounded in the mystery of love, building compassionate communities, and working together with creativity. This series of reflections on mystery, community and creativity will be based on the following themes:



10 September – Grounded in mystery

17 September – In Community: Lone heroes do not apply

24 September – With Creativity: A spirituality about love, curiosity, and trees

As ever, all are welcome.

Fr Steven

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 *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.

3. 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://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. This Week in the Calendar

In the coming week we celebrate the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the founder of the Australian Anglican Community of the Holy Name, Mother Esther CHN, and the early church bishop St Cyprian.

The Church has celebrated **Mary's birth** since at least the sixth century. Scripture does not give an account of Mary's birth. However, the apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James* fills in the gap. This work has no historical value, but it does reflect the development of Christian piety. According to this account, Anna and Joachim are infertile, but pray for a child. They receive the promise of a child who will advance God's plan of salvation for the world. This story, like many biblical counterparts, stresses the special presence of God in Mary's life from the beginning.

Saint Augustine connects Mary's birth with Jesus' saving work. He tells the earth to rejoice and shine forth in the light of her birth. "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth the nature inherited from our first parents is changed."

We can see every human birth as a call for new hope in the world. The love of two human beings has joined with God in his creative work. Loving parents show hope in a world filled with travail. Every new child has the potential to be a channel of God's love and peace to the world. This is all true in a magnificent way in Mary. If Jesus is the perfect expression of God's love, Mary is the foreshadowing of that love. If Jesus has brought the fullness of salvation, Mary is its dawning.

Birthday celebrations bring happiness to the celebrant as well as to family and friends. Next to the birth of Jesus, Mary's birth offers the greatest possible happiness to the world. As we celebrate her birth, we can confidently hope for an increase of peace in our hearts and in the world at large.



Mother Esther CHN (1858-1931) was born Emma Caroline Silcock in England. Born into a protestant family, the strong attraction of the Oxford Movement led her to baptism on 22 April 1877. Clothed as Novice Esther Emma in the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage, on 8 October 1884, she spent a year of her novitiate in London's slums.

After a serious back-injury she was sent on twelve months leave to recuperate in Australia. Shortly after her arrival in Melbourne, Sister Esther gave direction and impetus to the Church of England Mission to the Streets and Lanes of Melbourne initiated in 1885 to minister to those living in the infamous city slums.



In 1888 she moved into the mission's house in Little Lonsdale Street. Two workers joined her in 1889, forming the nucleus of a permanent community. Under Esther's leadership they engaged in home, factory, hospital and prison visiting, and attendance at police courts. They established a House of Mercy for 'fallen girls' at Cheltenham (1892) and a Home for Neglected Children at Brighton (1894). At the mission house they held evening classes and church services, and set up a soup kitchen.

Deeply committed to serving the poor and suffering, Sister Esther believed the work needed a religious community with episcopal support and recognition. The bishop, however, favoured an order of deaconesses like those in London and Winchester, and many of her fellow workers became deaconesses in 1890. Sister Esther persisted, and the women who subsequently joined her took religious vows privately prior to their public ordination as deaconesses, and went so far as to designate Esther as their Mother in January 1898.

The first draft of her Rule for the community reflected the expectations of the Church by emphasizing 'deeds of Christian Charity' almost to the exclusion of formal prayer. Successive

revisions established a balance more in accord with Esther's training and inclinations. The next Bishop of Melbourne favoured the new community, and gave the charter to the "Community of the Holy Name" to the nine professed sisters in 1912.

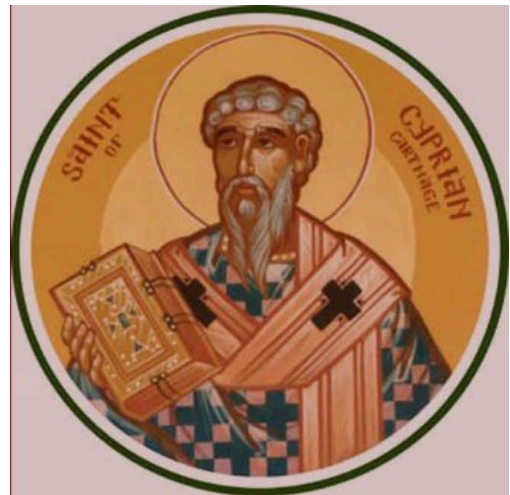
The community's activities continued to expand. They took over two inner-city schools and ran a free dispensary at their city premises, now in Spring Street. In 1912 they opened St George's Hospital, Kew. They also operated a babies' home at Brighton (later transferred to Darling) and helped to manage three other homes in Newcastle diocese, New South Wales. By the end of Mother Esther's life, twenty-five professed sisters and six novices staffed nine houses in two States, while her foresight and business acumen had already guaranteed future financial security for the community through the purchase in 1917 of St Ives, a private hospital in East Melbourne.

Although Mother Esther sometimes spoke of herself as a reluctant pioneer, an exile by choice but not by preference, her diary shows how deeply she had come to accept and identify with her work in Australia and with the community she had founded. She died in Melbourne on 11 September 1931 after a brief illness, and was buried in Cheltenham cemetery.

St Cyprian of Carthage is important in the development of Christian thought and practice in the third century, especially in northern Africa.

Highly educated and a famous orator, he became a Christian as an adult. He distributed his goods to the poor, and amazed his fellow citizens by making a vow of chastity before his baptism. Within two years he had been ordained a priest and was chosen, against his will, as Bishop of Carthage.

During a plague in Carthage, Cyprian urged Christians to help everyone, including their enemies and persecutors.



A friend of Pope Cornelius, Cyprian opposed the following pope, Stephen, who was prepared to recognize the validity of baptism conferred by heretics and schismatics. This was not the universal view of the Church, but Cyprian was not intimidated even by the Pope's threat of excommunication.

He was exiled by the emperor and then recalled for trial. He refused to leave the city, insisting that his people should have the witness of his martyrdom.

Cyprian was a mixture of kindness and courage, vigor and steadiness. He was cheerful and serious, so that people did not know whether to love or respect him more. He waxed warm during the baptismal controversy; his feelings must have concerned him, for it was at this time that he wrote his treatise on patience. Saint Augustine remarks that Cyprian atoned for his anger by his glorious martyrdom.

The controversies about Baptism and Penance in the third century remind us that the early Church had no ready-made solutions from the Holy Spirit. The leaders and members of the Church of that day had to move painfully through the best series of judgments they could make in an attempt to follow the entire teaching of Christ and not be diverted by exaggerations to right or left.

5. St Andrew of Crete's Sermon on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary

'The fulfilment of the law is Christ himself, who does not so much lead us away from the letter as lift us up to its spirit. For the law's consummation was this, that the very lawgiver accomplished his work and changed letter into spirit, summing everything up in himself and, though subject to the law, living by grace. He subordinated the law, yet harmoniously united grace with it, not confusing the distinctive characteristics of the one with the other, but effecting the transition in a way most fitting for God. He changed whatever was burdensome, servile and oppressive to what is light and liberating, so that we should be enslaved no longer under the elemental spirits of the world, as the Apostle says, nor held fast as bond-servants under the letter of the law.

This is the highest, all-embracing benefit that Christ has bestowed on us. This is the revelation of the mystery, this is the emptying out of the divine nature, the union of God and humanity, and the deification of the manhood that was assumed. This radiant and manifest coming of God to the world most certainly needed a joyful prelude to introduce the great gift of salvation to us. The present festival, the birth of the Mother of God, is the prelude, while the final act is the fore-ordained union of the Word with flesh. Today the Virgin is born, tended and formed and prepared for her role as Mother of God, who is the universal King of the ages.

Justly, then, do we celebrate this mystery since it signifies for us a double grace. We are led toward the truth, and we are led away from our condition of slavery to the letter of the law. How can this be? Darkness yields before the coming of the light, and grace exchanges legalism for freedom. But midway between the two stands today's mystery, at the frontier where types and symbols give way to reality, and the old is replaced by the new. Therefore, let all creation sing and dance and unite to make worthy contribution to the celebration of this day. Let there be one common festival for saints in heaven and people on earth. Let everything, mundane things and those above, join in festive celebration. Today this created world is raised to the dignity of a holy place for the One who made all things. The creature is newly prepared to be a divine dwelling place for the Creator.

6. From a letter by St Cyprian to his brother Cornelius

A faith that is ready and unshaken

My very dear brother, we have heard of the glorious witness given by your courageous faith. On learning of the honour you had won by your witness, we were filled with such joy that we felt ourselves sharers and companions in your praiseworthy achievements. After all, we have the same Church, the same mind, the same unbroken harmony. Why then should a priest not take pride in the praise given to a fellow priest as though it were given to him? What brotherhood fails to rejoice in the happiness of its brothers wherever they are?

Words cannot express how great was the exultation and delight here when we heard of your good fortune and brave deeds: how you stood out as a leader of your brothers in their declaration of their faith. You led the way to glory, but you gained many companions in that glory; being foremost in your readiness to bear witness on behalf of all, you prevailed on your people to become a single witness. We cannot decide which we ought to praise, your own ready and unshaken faith or the love of your brothers who would not leave you. While the courage of the bishop who thus led the way has been demonstrated, at the same time the unity of the brotherhood who followed has been manifested. Since you have one heart and one voice, it is the Roman Church as a whole that has thus borne witness.

Dearest brother, bright and shining is the faith which the blessed Apostle praised in your community. He foresaw in the spirit the praise your courage deserves and the strength that could not be broken; he was heralding the future when he testified to your achievements; his praise of the fathers was a challenge to the sons. You unity, your strength have become shining examples of these virtues to the rest of the brethren.

Divine providence has now prepared us. God's merciful design has warned us that the day of our own struggle, our own contest, is at hand. By that shared love which binds us closely together, we are doing all we can to exhort our congregation, to give ourselves unceasingly to fasting, vigils and prayers in common. These are the heavenly weapons which give us the strength to stand firm and endure; they are the spiritual defences, the God-given armaments that protect us.

Let us then remember one another, united in mind and heart. Let us pray without ceasing, you for us, we for you; by the love we share we shall thus relieve the strain of these great trials.

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 Zaria (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Brisbane and Bishop Jeremy Greaves, Archbishop-elect; and in our own Diocese of Adelaide, for the Parish of Holy Trinity, Adelaide.

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), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Nance, Neil, Elaine, Edward, Neil, Hugh, Bart O'Donovan (priest) and Prue O'Donovan (Priest).

Pray for those who have died. Those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us; 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 Cyprian, 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, StMMAdeelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

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Parish Council	The Priest and Wardens <i>ex officio</i> ; Catherine Freriks, Alison McAllister, Hamish McLachlan, Peter Turner.
Nomination Committee	John Dow, Catherine Freriks, Annemarie Van Putten
Synod Representatives	Ashley Durham, Catherine Freriks