

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 8 September 2022

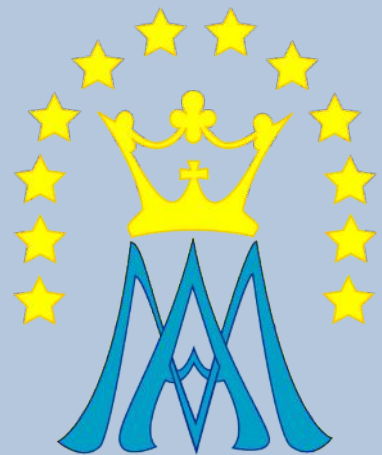
Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions will make 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 provide some resources for prayer and reflection: enjoy!



1. From Fr Steven – Anointing: The Sacrament of Connection

This coming Sunday, the Gospel reading is Luke 15:1-10, which contains the two related parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. Now the term 'lost' has great significance. It addresses and encompasses the experience of estrangement. This includes estrangement from ourselves, others, and the world. For example, Zacchaeus is estranged from his community (19:10). He is wealthy but alienated. Nonetheless, his life is transformed by the friendship of Jesus.

In this vein, the concept of estrangement is a useful way of seeing our world. Unfortunately, we live in a world that has lost its way. This Sunday, for example, will be the 21st anniversary of 9/11 and the terrorist attack on America. It was horrific. At that time, many of us had family, friends, and colleagues in the States, which made the horror more personal. Inevitably, it reminded us of the history of global violence. Yes, the endless cycle of an eye for an eye. And now, we are living under the cloud of Russia's brutal and illegal invasion of Ukraine, not to mention COVID and climate change. It is a lost world, and the only hope is found in changing culture.

The spiritual dimension is transformative. As such, the spiritual has a role in changing culture. The Spirit addresses matters of the heart, and the heart is the ground for change. In our tradition, the sacraments play a central role in our spiritual life.

The sacraments presume a certain way of seeing the world. They find their life in and through the life of God. In this view, the cosmos reflects the life of God. As such, the ecology represents

the material outworking of the inner life of God. This is not saying God is everything (pantheism), but that all things reside in God (pan-en-theism). So, then, a sacramental view is about finding all things in God, where all species are divinely interconnected.

A sacrament is a symbol, and a symbol is a particular kind of sign. Signs, of course, point to something (e.g., a street sign). Sacraments as symbols not only point to something, like the body and blood of Christ, but also, they evoke from within us the presence of Christ. In Karl Rahner's terms, this is because God works from the inside out.

Sacraments are like catalysts in the divine chemistry. In this manner, the sacrament of anointing holds a special place. It evokes a deep sense of connection. The holy oil, its fragrance, and the love of family and friends, conspire to surround and infuse the anointed person with a sense of divine connection.

In receiving the sacrament of anointing, then, we are found. In experiencing this sacrament, we overcome estrangement and our spirit is renewed.

Fr Steven

2. COVID-19 Update

The Declaration that enabled COVID-19 related directions to be made was revoked on Tuesday 24 May, but there are still some restrictions on public activities associated with the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-Safe Plans are no longer required, though everyone is encouraged to follow SA Health guidance about infection control and community safety, especially if there is a risk of over-crowding.

The current increase in cases of COVID-19 in the community have been considered by the Parish Council, which has agreed that we will continue to take a conservative approach for the time being, and to encourage precautions including Distancing, Ventilation and Facemasks: **DVM** for short. Distancing means maintaining a sensible distance of 1.5 metres between individuals or family groups; Ventilation means leaving some doors and/or windows open to allow a flow of air—and in this cold weather, we have air conditioning, so we won't freeze!—and Facemasks are obvious.

It is worth remembering the advice of the Australian Medical Association that a face masks continue to be an effective way of minimising the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases, especially in crowded or indoor settings, and anyone who wishes to continue to wear a face mask is at liberty to do so. We will continue to make face masks available, along with the other hygienic measures that have been in place for much of the past two years.

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 in praying 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://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.

5. This Week in the Calendar

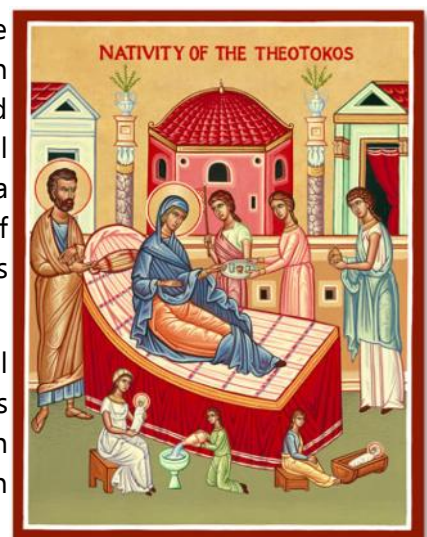
In the coming week we celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Early Church saint Cyprian, and Mother Esther, the founder of the Community of the Holy Name.

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. Each time we celebrate her birth, we can confidently hope for an increase of peace in our hearts and in the world at large.



On 14 September each year, the Church celebrates the Feast of the **Exaltation of the Holy Cross**. It is one of a number of feasts celebrating the cross in the course of the year – Good Friday, of course, being the most significant.

The story goes that early in the 4th century, Saint Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, went to Jerusalem in search of the holy places of Christ's life. She razed the 2nd century Temple of Aphrodite, which tradition held was built over the Savior's tomb, and her son built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre on that spot. During the excavation, workers found three crosses. Legend has it that the one on which Jesus died was identified when its touch healed a dying woman.

The cross immediately became an object of veneration. At a Good Friday celebration in Jerusalem toward the end of the fourth century, according to an eyewitness, the wood was taken out of its silver container and placed on a table together with the inscription Pilate ordered placed above Jesus' head. Then all the people would bow down and worship.



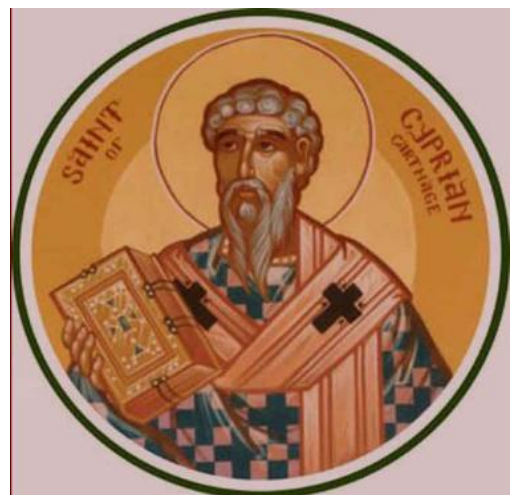
To this day, the Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox alike, celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the September anniversary of the basilica's dedication. The feast entered the Western calendar in the seventh century after Emperor Heraclius recovered the cross from the Persians, who had carried it off in 614, 15 years earlier. According to the story, the emperor intended to carry the cross back into Jerusalem himself, but was unable to move forward until he took off his imperial garb and became a barefoot pilgrim.

The cross is today the universal image of Christian belief. Countless generations of artists have turned it into a thing of beauty to be carried in procession or worn as jewelry. To the eyes of the first Christians, it had no beauty. It stood outside too many city walls, decorated only with decaying corpses, as a threat to anyone who defied Rome's authority—including Christians who refused sacrifice to Roman gods. Although believers spoke of the cross as the instrument of salvation, it seldom appeared in Christian art unless disguised as an anchor or the Chi-Rho until after Constantine's edict of toleration.

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.

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.

6. 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 man, and the deification of the manhood that was assumed. This radiant and manifest coming of God to men 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 men 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 him who made all things. The creature is newly prepared to be a divine dwelling place for the Creator.

7. On Holy Cross Day – from a Discourse by St Andrew of Crete

The cross is Christ's glory and triumph

We are celebrating the feast of the cross which drove away darkness and brought in the light. As we keep this feast, we are lifted up with the crucified Christ, leaving behind us earth and sin so that we may gain the things above. So great and outstanding a possession is the cross that he who wins it has won a treasure. Rightly could I call this treasure the fairest of all fair things and the costliest, in fact as well as in name, for on it and through it and for its sake the riches of salvation that had been lost were restored to us.

Had there been no cross, Christ could not have been crucified. Had there been no cross, life itself could not have been nailed to the tree. And if life had not been nailed to it, there would be no streams of immortality pouring from Christ's side, blood and water for the world's cleansing. The legal bond of our sin would not be cancelled, we should not have attained our freedom, we should not have enjoyed the fruit of the tree of life and the gates of paradise would not stand open. Had there been no cross, death would not have been trodden underfoot, nor hell despoiled. Therefore, the cross is something wonderfully great and honourable. It is great because through the cross the many noble acts of Christ found their consummation – very many indeed, for both his miracles and his sufferings were fully rewarded with victory. The cross is honourable because it is both the sign of God's suffering and the trophy of his victory. It stands for his suffering because on it he freely suffered unto death. But it is also his trophy because it was the means by which the devil was wounded and death conquered; the barred gates of hell were smashed, and the cross became the one common salvation of the whole world.

The cross is called Christ's glory; it is saluted as his triumph. We recognise it as the cup he longed to drink and the climax of the sufferings he endured for our sake. As to the cross being Christ's glory, listen to his words: *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and in him God is glorified, and God will glorify him at once.* And again: *Father, glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world came to be.* And once more: *"Father, glorify your name". Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it and will glorify it again".* Here he speaks of the glory that would accrue to him through the cross. And if you would understand that the cross is Christ's triumph, hear what he himself also said: *When I am lifted up, then I will draw all men to myself!* Now you can see that the cross is Christ's glory and triumph.

8. From a letter by St. Cyprian, bishop and martyr

A faith that is ready and unshaken

Cornelius, 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. Your 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.

9. 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 Mombasa (Kenya). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Bunbury; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Area Deanery of Gawler.

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. Pray for all those who are troubled in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Sim, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Olivia, Nance, Neil 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, St Cyprian, Mother Esther, 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.

