

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

Thursday 9 September 2021

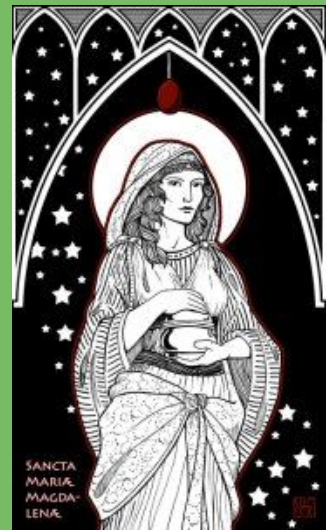
Spiritual Resources & Reflections

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 Sister Juliana – Mother Esther CHN



Sisters Esther, Christina and Ellen, first three sisters in the Community of Holy Name, prior to taking religious vows. Courtesy of the Community of the Holy Name

On September 11, the Anglican Church in Australia remembers Mother Esther, founder of the Community of the Holy Name.

Emma Caroline Silcock was born on 26 May 1858 at Stalham, Norfolk, UK. The strong attraction of the Oxford Movement led her to baptism on 1877. She was clothed as Novice Esther Emma in the Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage, near Oxford in 1884 and 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 the warmer climate in Australia where she had relatives.

In "Marvellous Melbourne", in 1885, Bishop Moorhouse established the Church of England Mission to the Streets and Lanes of Melbourne to minister to those living in the infamous city slums. There were no sickness benefits, no dole or pensions for the aged. Sister Esther saw the great need and in 1888 she began her work for the Mission. Two women came to help her, Sr Christina and Sr Ellen. The conditions at the Mission House in Little Lonsdale Street left much to be desired. The Sisters were to get up at 5 a.m. and with the help of a couple of Scouts with

a wheelbarrow, would go to the city market to buy meat and vegetables. This was made into soup and given to over four hundred men, women and children.

The three Sisters formed the nucleus of a permanent community, though not yet a recognised religious order. 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 the soup kitchen.

For a long time Esther longed to return to Wantage, and had no plans to found a community herself. Religious Communities in the Church of England – including Australia, at that time – were still widely regarded with fear and suspicion. Nevertheless, deeply committed to serving the poor and suffering, Sister Esther believed the work needed an established religious community.

Sr Ellen and Sr Christina became deaconesses in 1890 in Ballarat. However Esther did not take this step, holding to her desire to take religious vows. She had to wait several years before a sympathetic Bishop in Ballarat received her vows in Profession and so came into being the Community of the Holy Name. Esther was designated to be their Mother in 1898. The Community was to be Australian: its roots were to be deep within the soil of this country.

By the end of Mother Esther's life, twenty-five professed sisters and six novices staffed nine houses in two States. Her foresight and business acumen through the purchase in 1917 of St Ives, a private hospital in East Melbourne, had already guaranteed future financial security for the community

Although Mother Esther sometimes spoke of herself as a reluctant pioneer, her diary shows how deeply she had come to accept and identify with her work in Australia and with the community she had founded. The Community grew in numbers and respect. Sister Esther was admired by many and loved. She died in Melbourne on 11 September 1931 after a brief illness, and was buried in Cheltenham cemetery.

The influence of the Community of the Holy Name has been for the most part a hidden thing, known by so few and yet it has had a great influence on the Anglican Church in Australia.

The Community of the Holy Name, (whose Sisters ran the Retreat House in Belair) still continues in Cheltenham Melbourne, running a Spirituality Centre.

Juliana SI

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

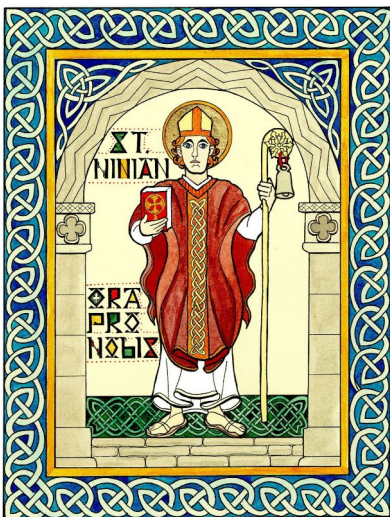
Fr Gwilym and others within our community will continue to prepare Reflections for Sundays and Holy Days for posting on the web page. Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections are presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>.

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 we celebrate the Mother Esther CHN, founder of the Community of the Holy Name, Melbourne, St Cyprian (d.258), the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and the Australian bishop and bush brother John Oliver Feetham (d.1947). Mother Esther is the subject of this week's reflection, by Sister Juliana.



The earliest written records about **St Ninian** were produced in the eighth century. They included a long poem which tells the stories of the miracles performed by the saint, and the account by the Venerable Bede. Both are believed to be based on an earlier lost 'Life' of St Ninian written at Whithorn.

There has always been doubt about the origin of St Ninian. However, there is no doubt that an early monastic settlement was established at Whithorn and that it was connected to St Ninian.

By the seventh century the shrine of St Ninian was probably situated in a church at Whithorn. A monastery had been established that had become an important centre of learning, with a library and scriptorium. In the eighth century the church and shrine of St Ninian came under the control of the kingdom of Northumbria. The story of St Ninian spread throughout Northumbria and the cult of St Ninian began. During this time the site developed to include a church, monastery and buildings to house pilgrims, and from this time pilgrims travelled to Whithorn to seek healing and pray at the shrine. In the twelfth century, Whithorn came under the rule of the king of Scotland and about 1175 canons of the Premonstratensian order came

to Whithorn from the Abbey of Prémontré in France. They built the great cross-shaped cathedral, which unusually served as both the priory church and the diocesan cathedral, and cloisters on the site of the earlier church. St Ninian's shrine was re-sited in the crypt of the cathedral and a new age of pilgrimage began. In 1560, this time came to an end when the Scottish Reformation began. Like all churches and shrines in Scotland, St Ninian's shrine was destroyed, the cathedral stripped of its wealth and lands and by 1600 the church lay in ruins.

St Ninian is generally credited as the first Christian missionary to Scotland, responsible for widespread conversions among the Celts.

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.

John Oliver Feetham (1873-1947) was born in England and was ordained in the UK where he ministered in the Diocese of London in the slums of the East End. A friend of his, who had come to Australia, had founded the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd, known almost universally as the Bush Brotherhood. Feetham was interested in the work and followed him in 1907. Love of the Australian bush and its people and belief in the importance of the Brotherhood became distinctive marks of his subsequent ministry.

Feetham was bishop of North Queensland from 1913 to 1947, and throughout the enormous Diocese, he promoted a vigorous, joyful faith. He infected others with his own enthusiasm, and his personality, into which his Christianity was fully integrated, was colourful, attractive and eccentric.



The immense number of letters and telegrams at the time of Feetham's death show the regard in which he was held. The clergy wrote in glowing terms of his effects upon them, and the enthusiasm still present in the diocese is unmistakable. The anecdotes of his exploits and eccentricities stress his remarkable impact: with a long neck and big clerical collar, he was 6 ft 2 ins (188 cm) tall; his trousers usually showed an expanse of white socks and enormous feet in large shoes. He drove an early model Ford, 'Ermintrude', with panache, and usually refused to sleep in a bed.

5. 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.

6. 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 Esan (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn; and within our own Diocese, for our Assistant Bishops Denise Ferguson, Tim Harris and Chris McLeod.

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. For all those affected by COVID-19: the sick, and all who care for them; those whose employment has been affected, and who are afraid and worried about what the future holds. For those who are commended to our prayers, especially Paull, Valerie, Sim, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, Fr Gary Priest, Fr Bart O'Donovan, Beth, Linda, Fr Peter Garland, Helen Carter and Fr Samson Asirvatham.

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, especially Deva Asirvatham John, 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, Mother Esther, St Cyprian, John Oliver Feetham, 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.

