

**St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church**  
Moore Street, Adelaide

**An open, welcoming and inclusive community  
in the heart of the City of Adelaide**



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**Keeping Community  
Spiritual Resources & Reflections**

**Thursday 10 August 2023**

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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 ... It is a mystery**

I am on study leave this week and next. All clergy are expected to take time for personal and professional development each year: how that is used varies. In my case, it is a chance to read some works in depth. I am also working on an article for a journal on political philosophy. There are five of us writing articles. I am the only theologian; the rest are philosophers. It began about 18 months ago, when a friend asked me to join a panel to review his latest book. The panel was a great success. In the process, we realized there was more to this than meets the eye. But let me put this in context.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a rumour going around in academic circles and the public square that religion was on the way out. Or at the least, religion was irrelevant. This was known as the secularisation thesis. But scholars found that it is hard to get rid of religious ideas. For example, populist leaders, the so-called strongmen, often present themselves in messianic terms as called personally to fulfil the destiny of their people. Trump's 2016 inauguration speech was a classic example of this religious embellishment. In other words, religion will not go away.

In our post-secular age, the obvious instance of incorrigible religion is the rise of religious fundamentalism and more generally the rise of the religious right. Even White supremacists are prone to claim that they are good faithful evangelical Christians (even if they have not been to church for decades, not to mention the appalling racism).

My interest is in the concept of *atheism*. On the one hand, atheism is generally understood as meaning that there is no God. On the other hand, and this is a more nuanced issue, it is not God *per se*, but certain interpretations of the divine that are repudiated. On this note, *theism*

is the view of God separate from the world, but with the capacity to intervene. Since WW2, this view of God has been challenged because of widespread violence and suffering.

In the Anglican tradition, however, we are conscious that faith begins and ends in mystery. From Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 4) to our Celtic and Medieval mystics, as well as our theologians, poets, musicians, and liturgists, the mystery of the divine is vital. The divine mystery created the cosmos and fills our lives with wonder and delight. Often, in the face of mystery, the best response is silence.

I see myself as in the tradition of negative theology. This is the tradition of *not-knowing*. That is, we cannot put divine mystery into a box. In some cases, moreover, it is a matter of taking the divine out of the box (e.g., God as judge). This is the practice of *un-knowing*. From this point of view, *a-theism* means not putting God in a box.

The older I get, the more I try to immerse myself in divine mystery. It is more about what Karl Rahner described as the mystagogical process. That is, the life of faith is where, in the footsteps of Christ and the apostles, we live in, and we are transformed by divine mystery. Of course, this is where being part of a compassionate and inclusive faith community, with its shared stories, symbols, music, and rituals, is so important. In fact, our Sunday liturgy has a lot to offer. It preserves and celebrates that past but is open to the new.

It is a mystery indeed.

Fr Steven

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## 2. Fr Steven is on Study Leave from, 8 – 19 August

Fr Steven is on study leave. In his absence, please direct any inquiries to Peter Burdon (tel 0414 471 894), who are able to answer your questions and to arrange for pastoral support if needed. Our thanks to Fr Graeme Kaines who is saying the Thursday and Sunday Masses during this period.

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## 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.ibrevariary.com](http://www.ibrevariary.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.

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#### 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://stmarymagdalenesadelelaide.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 early Church martyr St Laurence, the medieval religious St Clare of Assisi, along with the Twentieth Century Martyrs including Maximilien Kolbe, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King Jr, Janani Luwum and Oscar Romero, and the principal feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**St Laurence** was a martyr of the early church. We know little about his life, but a legend persists that as deacon in Rome, he was charged with the responsibility for the material goods of the Church, and the distribution of alms to the poor. When Laurence knew he would be arrested along with the pope, he sought out the poor, widows, and orphans of Rome and gave them all the money he had on hand.

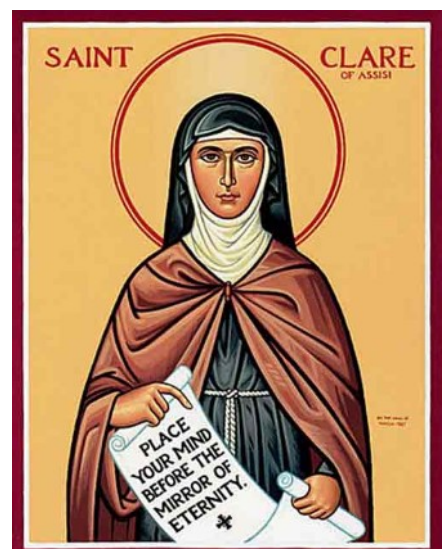
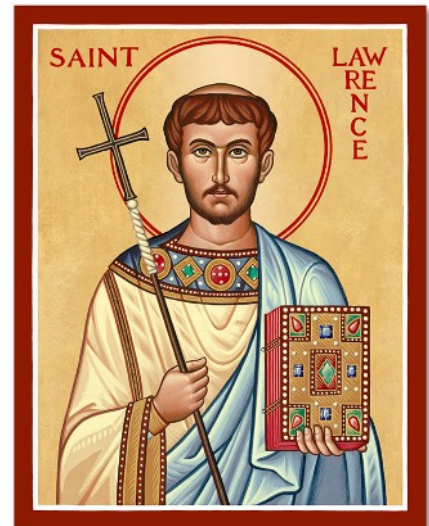
When the prefect of Rome quizzed him about the location of what was assumed to be a great treasure-trove, Laurence took him to the church, gathering together the blind, lame, maimed, leprous, orphaned, and widowed. Opening the doors, he said to the prefect, "These are the treasures of the church." He was put to death, suffering willingly for the poor.

**St Clare** was a disciple of St Francis of Assisi. Having refused to marry in an arranged marriage at the age of 15, she was profoundly moved by Francis's dynamic preaching. He became her lifelong friend and spiritual guide.

At 18, Clare escaped from her father's home one night, was met on the road by friars carrying torches, and in a poor little chapel received a rough woollen habit, exchanged her jewelled belt for a common rope with knots in it, and sacrificed her long tresses to Francis' scissors.

St Francis placed Clare in a Benedictine convent, which her father and uncles immediately stormed in rage. Clare clung to the altar of the church, threw aside her veil to show her cropped hair, and remained adamant.

To this day, the "Poor Clare" nuns live a simple life of great poverty, austerity, and complete seclusion from the world. They are often called "a powerhouse of prayer".



## The Twentieth Century Martyrs

**St Maximilien Kolbe** was a Polish Catholic priest who was imprisoned in Auschwitz during World War II. He volunteered to take the place of a stranger who had been sentenced to death. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** was a German Lutheran pastor who was a leading Anti-Nazi dissident, eventually being imprisoned in the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp where he died in the last days of the War. **Maria Skobtsova** was a Russian noblewoman, poet, and nun, who became active in the French resistance during the war. She was held captive in the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp where she, like Maximilien Kolbe, took the place of another who had been sentenced to death.

**Martin Luther King Jr** was the most visible leader in the American Civil Rights movement in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. An inspirational preacher, he advocated for civil rights through non-violent protest and civil disobedience, and delivered one of the most famous speeches in history, "I have a dream". He was shot and killed in Memphis, Tennessee, in April 1968. **Janani Luwum** was the Anglican Archbishop of Uganda, kidnapped and murdered during the dictatorship of Idi Amin. **St Oscar Romero** was the Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador, who (like Janani Luwum) stood against a corrupt Government: he was shot while celebrating Mass.

These people are representative of the thousands who die every year, who are oppressed or persecuted for their faith. Their numbers continue to grow every day, and the years to come will no doubt see them recognised for their witness to justice and reconciliation. The Catholic Church, during Pope Francis's papacy, has been very active in acknowledging the heroic virtues of holy women and men of our own time.

**15 August each year** is the principal festival of the **Blessed Virgin Mary**. This feast day is celebrated in many ways and under many titles – the Assumption of Mary, which holds that Mary's unique role in the history of salvation sees her share in God's divine glory – or in the Eastern churches, the "Falling Asleep" or "Dormition" which celebrate the end of Mary's earthly life and the beginning of a new life in the everlasting kingdom of God.

Devotion to Mary has always been a part of the Anglican tradition, from its earliest days in the 16th century. Mary stands before us as an exemplar of faithful obedience, and her "Be it to me according to your word" is the grace-filled response each of us is called to make to God, both personally and communally, as the Church, the body of Christ.



It is as figure of the Church, her arms uplifted in prayer and praise, her hands open in receptivity and availability to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that we are one with Mary as she magnifies the Lord. "Surely," Mary declares in her song recorded in the Gospel of Luke, "from this day all generations will call me blessed."

Anglicans, Catholics and the Orthodox share many of the same feasts associated with Mary, and indeed it is in the realm of worship that we realise our deepest convergence as we give thanks to God for the Mother of the Lord who is one with us in that vast community of love and prayer we call the Communion of Saints.

There are some who long to know for the sole purpose of knowing, and that is shameful curiosity; others who long to know in order to become known, and that is shameful vanity. ... There are others still who long for knowledge in order to sell its fruits for money or honours, and this is shameful profiteering; others again who long to know in order to be of service, and this is charity. Finally, there are those who long to know in order to benefit themselves, and this is prudence.

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## 6. St Laurence - from a Sermon by St Augustine of Hippo

*He ministered the sacred blood of Christ*

The Roman Church commends to us today the anniversary of the triumph of Saint Lawrence. For on this day he trod the furious pagan world underfoot and flung aside its allurements, and so gained victory over Satan's attack on his faith.

As you have often heard, Laurence was a deacon of the Church at Rome. There he ministered the sacred blood of Christ; there for the sake of Christ's name he poured out his own blood. Saint John the apostle was evidently teaching us about the mystery of the Lord's supper when he wrote: *Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* My brethren, Lawrence understood this and, understanding, he acted on it. Just as he had partaken of a gift of self at the table of the Lord, so he prepared to offer such a gift. In his life he loved Christ; in his death he followed in his footsteps.

Brethren, we too must imitate Christ if we truly love him. We shall not be able render better return on that love than by modelling our lives on his. *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps.* In saying this, the apostle Peter seems to have understood that Christ suffered only for those who follow in his steps, in the sense that Christ's passion is of no avail to those who do not. The holy martyrs followed Christ even to shedding their life's blood, even to reproducing the very likeness of his passion. They followed him, but not they alone. It is not true that the bridge was broken after the martyrs crossed; nor is it true that after they had drunk from it, the fountain of eternal life dried up.

I tell you again and again, my brethren, that in the Lord's garden are to be found not only the roses of his martyrs. In it there are also the lilies of the virgins, the ivy of wedded couples, and the violets of widows. On no account may any class of people despair, thinking that God has not called them. Christ suffered for all. What the Scriptures say of him is true: *He desires all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.*

Let us understand, then, how a Christian must follow Christ even though he does not shed his blood for him, and his faith is not called upon to undergo the great test of the martyr's sufferings. The apostle Paul says of Christ our Lord: *Though he was in the form of God he did not consider equality with God a prize to be clung to.* How unrivalled his majesty! *But he emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave, made in the likeness of men, and presenting himself in human form.* How deep his humility!

Christ humbled himself. Christian, that is what you must make your own. *Christ became obedient.* How is it that you are proud? When this humbling experience was completed and death itself lay conquered, Christ ascended into heaven. Let us follow him there, for we hear Paul saying: *If you have been raised with Christ, you must lift your thoughts on high, where Christ now sits at the right hand of God.*

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## 7. St Clare – from a letter of St Clare to Blessed Agnes of Prague

### His Indescribable Delights

Happy indeed is she who is granted a place at the divine banquet, for she may cling with her inmost heart to him whose beauty eternally awes the blessed hosts of heaven; to him whose love inspires love, whose contemplation refreshes, whose generosity satisfies, whose gentleness delights, whose memory shines sweetly as the dawn; to him whose fragrance revives the dead, and whose glorious vision will bless all the citizens of that heavenly Jerusalem. For his is the splendour of eternal glory, the brightness of eternal light, and the mirror without cloud.

Queen and bride of Jesus Christ, look into that mirror daily and study well your reflection, that you may adorn yourself, mind and body, with an enveloping garment of every virtue, and thus find yourself attired in flowers and gowns befitting the daughter and most chaste bride of the king on high. In this mirror blessed poverty, holy humility and ineffable love are also reflected. With the grace of God the whole mirror will be your source of contemplation.

Behold, I say, the birth of this mirror. Behold his poverty even as he was laid in the manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes. What wondrous humility, what marvellous poverty! The King of angels, the Lord of heaven and earth resting in a manger! Look more deeply into the mirror and meditate on his humility, or simply on his poverty. Behold the many labours and sufferings he endured to redeem the human race. Then, in the depths of this very mirror, ponder his unspeakable love which caused him to suffer on the wood of the cross and to endure the most shameful kind of death. The mirror himself, from his position on the cross, warned passersby to weigh carefully this act, as he said: All of you who pass by this way, behold and see if there is any sorrow like mine. Let us answer his cries and lamentations with one voice and one spirit; I will be mindful and remember, and my soul will be consumed within me. In this way, queen of the king of heaven, your love will burn with an ever brighter flame.

Consider also his indescribable delights, his unending riches and honours, and sigh for what is beyond your love and heart's content as you cry out: Draw me on! We will run after you in the perfume of your ointment, heavenly spouse. Let me run and not faint until you lead me into your wine cellar; your left hand rests under my head, your right arm joyfully embraces me, and you kiss me with the sweet kiss of your lips. As you rest in this state of contemplation, remember your poor mother and know that I have indelibly written your happy memory into my heart, for you are dearer to me than all the others.

## 8. From the last Sermon of St Oscar Romero, on the day before his death.

On 14 October 2018, Oscar Romero was canonized by Pope Francis. His life was and remains an example of strength and courage in the midst of a terrorizing, unjust, and corrupt government.

When Saint Oscar Romero was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador, he could not have known how radically his life, his heart, and his involvement with the people of El Salvador would change, placing him at the forefront of a lived theology of liberation. The people of El Salvador were living under an oppressive and violent military government that sought to silence, through torture and death, anyone who spoke out against its corruption. Saint Oscar was one who spoke out. He did this through his homilies which articulated his support and commitment for peace, non-violence, and human rights. He often delivered messages on the radio station of the archdiocese and, of course, from the pulpit.

In a homily preached by Saint Oscar on the Fifth Sunday of Lent, March 23, 1980, his following statements were met with applause from the congregation”

*“I would like to make an appeal especially to the men of the army, and concretely to the National Guard, the police, and the troops. Brothers, you are part of our own people. You are killing your own brothers and sisters. And against any order a man may give to kill, God’s law must prevail: Thou shalt not kill. No soldier is obliged to obey an order against the law of God ... The Church defends the rights of God, the law of God, and the dignity of the human person and therefore cannot remain silent in the face of such great abominations ... In the name of God, then, and in the name of this suffering people, whose laments rise up each day more tumultuously towards heaven, I beg you, I beseech you, I order you in the name of God: stop the repression.”*

These words, carried live on his own radio station to all the nation, are perhaps Archbishop Oscar Romero’s most well known. They constituted a heartfelt plea to members of the government security forces and their death squads who had been shooting and massacring El Salvador’s poor and dispossessed – men and women whose only crime was to ask that they have a more equitable share of the country’s land and wealth.

Effectively, the sermon was Romero’s death sentence. Within just over 24 hours of uttering these words, he was dead.

## 9. From a homily “In Praise of the Virgin Mother” by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

*The whole world awaits Mary’s reply*

You have heard, O Virgin, that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion; the sentence of condemnation weighs heavily upon us. The price of our salvation is offered to you. We shall be set free at once if you consent. In the eternal Word of God we all came to be, and behold, we die. In your brief response we are to be remade in order to be recalled to life.

Tearful Adam with his sorrowing family begs this of you, O loving Virgin, in their exile from Paradise. Abraham begs it, David begs it. All the other holy patriarchs, your ancestors, ask it of you, as they dwell in the country of the shadow of death. This is what the whole earth waits for, prostrate at your feet. It is right in doing so, for on your word depends comfort for the wretched, ransom for the captive, freedom for the condemned, indeed, salvation for all the sons of Adam, the whole of your race.

Answer quickly, O Virgin. Reply in haste to the angel, or rather through the angel to the Lord. Answer with a word, receive the Word of God. Speak your own word, conceive the divine Word. Breathe a passing word, embrace the eternal Word.

Why do you delay, why are you afraid? Believe, give praise, and receive. Let humility be bold, let modesty be confident. This is no time for virginal simplicity to forget prudence. In this matter alone, O prudent Virgin, do not fear to be presumptuous. Though modest silence is pleasing, dutiful speech is now more necessary. Open your heart to faith, O blessed Virgin, your lips to praise, your womb to the Creator. See, the desired of all nations is at your door, knocking to enter. If he should pass by because of your delay, in sorrow you would begin to seek him afresh, the One whom your soul loves. Arise, hasten, open. Arise in faith, hasten in devotion, open in praise and thanksgiving. Behold the handmaid of the Lord, she says, be it done to me according to your word.

## 10. 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 Winchester (England). In our national church, pray for the Bishop to the Armed Forces; and in our own Diocese of Adelaide, for Anglicare SA, especially its administrative staff.

*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 alone or in tragic circumstances; those who have died recently, especially Alison Cobbett, Robert Whalley (priest), James King and Christina Theseira, 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 Laurence, St Clare, St Maximilien Kolbe, St Oscar Romero, 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, [StMMAdelaide.Parish@outlook.com](mailto:StMMAdelaide.Parish@outlook.com), by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

### Directory

Parish Priest	Revd Dr Steven Ogden ☎ 0408 817 147, ✉ <a href="mailto:stevengogden@gmail.com">stevengogden@gmail.com</a> ( <i>on leave 8-19 August</i> )
Hon Assisting Priests	Revd Sr Juliana SJ, Fr Philip Carter, Fr Graeme Kaines
Churchwardens	Peter Burdon ☎ 0414 471 894, Alison McAllister ☎ 0433 551 267
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