

# 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 10 June 2021

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions makes it possible to once again worship on Sunday, when Mass is sung at 10 am. The church is also open for private prayer and public worship on Thursday from 11.30 am to 1 pm, and Mass is offered at 12.10 pm after the Angelus at 12 noon.

The decision to return to worship in community, even for private prayer, is not a straightforward matter, so we will continue to produce these newsletters for now.

In these Thursday newsletters, we offer ideas and opportunities for nourishing our personal and communal spiritual lives.

### 1. From Fr Gwilym – The Bible



There is no other book in human history which has been looked at, read, studied, written about, argued over, fought over, caused so much dissension and bad feeling as the Christian Bible. And yet it remains one of the most influential books ever written. It has inspired countless people to do astonishing good works which have been of benefit to all people. The fields of education, medicine, science, sociology, botany, zoology, cosmology, law, politics and many others have benefited from people whose passion for learning and truth has come from their study of the Bible.

And, of course, it is the book of the Christian church. There are some who say that Christianity is the religion of A Book, but this is quite wrong, on many counts.

- First; The Bible is a whole library of books, 66 of them, written at many different times, by many different authors and in several different languages. Its Greek name, *ta biblia*, means "the books" (plural).
- Secondly: The Jewish scriptures, the earliest written, were compiled by Jewish scholars between 200 BC and 200AD. The Christian Scriptures, first gathered together in about 200AD, were not complete (including the Jewish Scriptures) until the 5th Century. The Bible, as we know it today was collected and compiled by the Church. The library has taken many centuries to compile and the argument about which books should be included and which left out was rekindled during the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Even today,

there is disagreement about the importance of the different books, and the discovery of extra-biblical writings such as the Nag Hammadi documents and Dead Sea Scrolls, have contributed to the debate.

- Thirdly: The Bible was not dictated by God to the writers. The Bible is inspired by God, that is; God's Holy Spirit lives and breathes in the Bible, but God's Spirit works through the minds and hearts and hands of humans. The Bible is written by humans, collected by humans, translated by humans, and finally read and interpreted by humans. The Bible is not totally free from error, but shares our human frailties.
- And finally, and most importantly, the Christian Church is built on a person, Jesus Christ, himself described as the Word of God. Christ is the enduring, unfailing and true heart of the Body of Christ, the Church to which all Christians belong.

The purpose of the Bible is to bring its readers into a Spirit-filled relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. When reading the Bible, Christians are not looking for definitive and binding rules to obey, but a person to be loved by and to love.

Gwilym Henry-Edwards  
Locum Priest

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## 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](http://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.

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## 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.

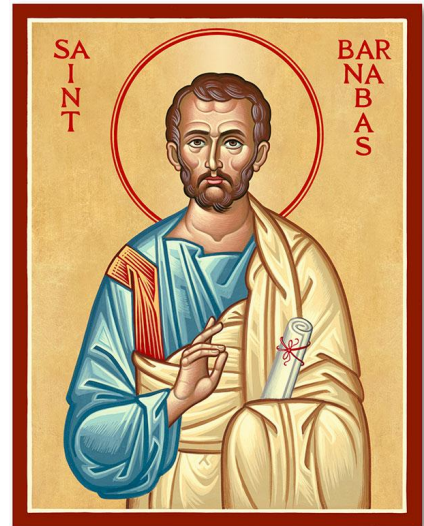
Service booklets as PDF files are still available for Sunday and weekday services on the web site and on the Parish's Facebook page.

#### 4. In the Church's Calendar

In the coming week we celebrate three holy people from across the Christian era. St Barnabas, one of Jesus most ardent followers, the medieval missionary Anthony of Padua and the 20th century spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill.

**Barnabas**, a Jew of Cyprus, comes as close as anyone outside the Twelve to being a full-fledged apostle. He was closely associated with Saint Paul—he introduced Paul to Peter and the other apostles—and served as a kind of mediator between the former persecutor and the still suspicious Jewish Christians.

When a Christian community developed at Antioch, Barnabas was sent as the official representative of the church of Jerusalem to incorporate them into the fold. He and Paul instructed in Antioch for a year, after which they took relief contributions to Jerusalem. Later Paul and Barnabas, now clearly seen as charismatic leaders, were sent by Antioch officials to preach to the gentiles. Enormous success crowned their efforts.



After a miracle at Lystra, the people wanted to offer sacrifice to them as gods—Barnabas being Zeus, and Paul, Hermes—but the two said, "We are of the same nature as you, human beings. We proclaim to you good news that you should turn from these idols to the living God" (see Acts 14:8-18).

But all was not peaceful. They were expelled from one town, they had to go to Jerusalem to clear up the ever-recurring controversy about circumcision, and even the best of friends can have differences. When Paul wanted to revisit the places they had evangelized, Barnabas wanted to take along his cousin John Mark, author of the Gospel, but Paul insisted that since Mark had deserted them once, he was not fit to take along now. The disagreement that followed was so sharp that Barnabas and Paul separated: Barnabas taking Mark to Cyprus, Paul taking Silas to Syria. Later they were reconciled—Paul, Barnabas and Mark.

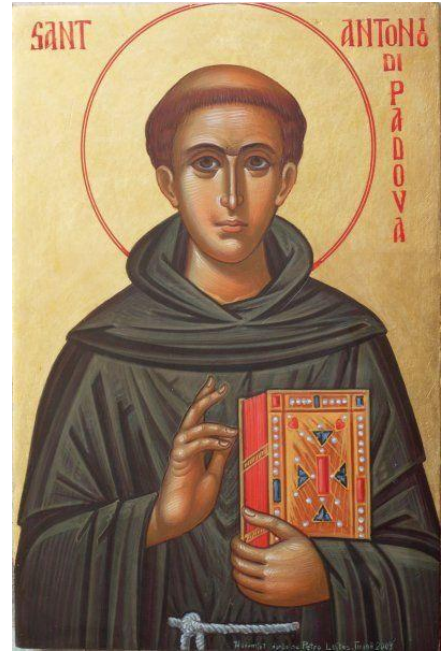
When Paul stood up to Peter for not eating with gentiles for fear of his Jewish friends, we learn that "even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy" (see Galatians 2:1-13).

Barnabas is spoken of simply as one who dedicated his life to the Lord. He was a man "filled with the Holy Spirit and faith. Thereby, large numbers were added to the Lord." Even when he and Paul were expelled from Antioch in Pisidia—modern-day Turkey—they were "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit."

We have an image of St Barnabas on the reredos behind the High Altar. The two images on the reredos are St Paul (on the left, holding a sword) and St Barnabas (on the right, holding a stone. The stone is meant to be a symbol of his martyr's death at the hands of his fellow Cypriot Jews.

**St Anthony of Padua** is often invoked as a finder of lost things, but he might better be proposed as the patron saint of those who find their lives completely uprooted and set in a new and unexpected direction. He is a perfect example of turning one's life completely over to Christ. God did with Anthony as God pleased—and what God pleased was a life of spiritual power and brilliance that still attracts admiration today.

Anthony's journey as a servant of God began as a very young man when he decided to join the Augustinians in Lisbon in Portugal. He later joined the Franciscans, and after many years of private prayer and study he emerged as one of the great evangelists of his day, teaching theology to his monks, and ministering widely across France and Italy. His sermons are an astounding legacy to the church and the world.



### **Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)**

In 1911 an unknown author published a 500 page book on the little known topic of mysticism. Accessible in its writing, it was nonetheless a work of scholarship, based as it was on some one thousand sources. The book, *Mysticism*, was a huge success, and twelve editions appeared.

Because its erudition, the suspicion was that the author, one Evelyn Underhill, must have been a man! Who else would have the academic training or ecclesiastical knowledge to produce such a work? In fact the author was a self-trained writer, wife of a London barrister, one who would go on to write or edit a total of thirty-nine books and some 350 articles and reviews.



In an era when women were unknown in theological circles, she would go on to lecture at the University of Oxford, speak at Canterbury Cathedral, and gain fame as a highly respected as a retreat leader and spiritual advisor.

Few people studied prayer in theory and practice—Christian and non-Christian—to the extent the Evelyn Underhill did. At the end of her life, after having considered many options, she concluded that prayer was about availing oneself to the purposes of God, not invoking the activity of God for either spiritual assurance or earthly benefit, but for conformity to the life and ministry of the one through whom we pray: Jesus Christ, the crucified. This understanding is not popular today, and while Underhill's early writings are still readily available, her later writings are difficult to find. In the world today, what sort of people of prayer would God ask us to be? Ones who strive for spiritual development alone, or ones who offer their lives as living intercessions, empowered by the Spirit, sent by Christ, to do God's will? Might the latter define all of our lives of prayer.

## 5. From a treatise on the Gospel of Saint Matthew by Saint Chromatius

### *You are the light of the world*

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp only to put it under a bushel basket; they put it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house.* The Lord called his disciples the salt of the earth because they seasoned with heavenly wisdom the hearts of men rendered insipid by the devil. Now he calls them the light of the world as well, because they have been enlightened by him, the true and everlasting light, and have themselves become a light in the darkness.

Since he is the Sun of Justice, he fittingly calls his disciples the light of the world. The reason for this is that through them, as through shining rays, he has poured out the light of the knowledge of himself upon the entire world. For by manifesting the light of truth, they have dispelled the darkness of error from the hearts of men.

Moreover, we too have been enlightened by them. We have been made light out of darkness as the Apostle says: *For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light. He says another time: For you are not sons of the night and of darkness, but you are all sons of light and of the day.*

Saint John also rightly asserts in his letter: God is light, and whoever abides in God is in the light just as God himself is in the light.

Therefore, because we rejoice in having been freed from the darkness of error, we should always walk in the light as children of light. This is why the Apostle says: *Among them you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life.*

If we fail to live in the light, we shall, to our condemnation and that of others, be veiling over and obscuring by our infidelity the light men so desperately need. As we know from Scripture, the man who received the talent should have made it produce a heavenly profit, but instead he preferred to hide it away rather than put it to work and was punished as he deserved.

Consequently, that brilliant lamp which was lit for the sake of our salvation should always shine in us. For we have the lamp of the heavenly commandment and spiritual grace, to which David referred: *Your law is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* Solomon also says this about it: *For the command of the law is a lamp.*

Therefore, we must not hide this lamp of law and faith. Rather, we must set it up in the Church, as on a lamp-stand, for the salvation of many, so that we may enjoy the light of truth itself and all believers may be enlightened.

## 6. From a Sermon by St Anthony of Padua

### *Actions speak louder than words*

The man who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages. These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ, such as humility, poverty, patience and obedience; we speak in those languages when we reveal in ourselves these virtues to others. Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak. We are full of words but empty of actions, and therefore are cursed by the Lord, since he himself cursed the fig tree when he found no fruit but only leaves. Gregory says: "A law is laid upon the preacher to practice what he preaches." It is useless for a man to flaunt his knowledge of the law if he undermines its teaching by his actions.

But the apostles *spoke as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech*. Happy the man whose words issue from the Holy Spirit and not from himself! For some men speak as their own character dictates, but steal the words of others and present them as their own and claim the credit for them. The Lord refers to such men and others like them in Jeremiah: *So, then, I have a quarrel with the prophets that steal my words from each other. I have a quarrel with the prophets, says the Lord, who have only to move their tongues to utter oracles. I have a quarrel with the prophets who make prophecies out of lying dreams, who recount them and lead my people astray with their lies and their pretensions. I certainly never sent them or commissioned them, and they serve no good purpose for this people, says the Lord.*

We should speak, then, as the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of speech. Our humble and sincere request to the Spirit for ourselves should be that we may bring the day of Pentecost to fulfilment, insofar as he infuses us with his grace, by using our bodily senses in a perfect manner and by keeping the commandments. Likewise we shall request that we may be filled with a keen sense of sorrow and with fiery tongues for confessing the faith, so that our deserved reward may be to stand in the blazing splendour of the saints and to look upon the triune God.

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## 7. From the conclusion to *Mysticism*, by Evelyn Underhill

Every person ... who awakens to consciousness of a Reality which transcends the normal world of sense—however small, weak imperfect that consciousness may be—is put upon a road which follows at low levels the path which the mystic treads at high levels. The success with which they follows this way to freedom and full life will depend on the intensity of their love and will, their capacity for self-discipline, their steadfastness and courage. It will depend on the generosity and completeness of their outgoing passion for absolute beauty, absolute goodness, or absolute truth. But if they move at all, they will move through a series of states which are, in their own small way, analogous to those experienced by the greatest contemplative on the journey towards that union with God which is the term of the spirit's ascent towards its home ...

... To be a mystic is simply to participate here and now in that real and eternal life; in the fullest, deepest sense which is possible. It is to share, as a free and conscious agent—not a servant, but a child—in the joyous travail of the Universe: its mighty onward sweep through pain and glory towards its home in God. This gift, this power of free co-operation in the world-process, is our greatest honour. The ordered sequence of states, the organic development, whereby his consciousness is detached from illusion and rises to the mystic freedom which conditions instead of being conditioned by, its normal world, is the way we must tread if that sharing is to be realized. Only by this deliberate fostering of our deeper self, this transmutation of the elements of our character, can we reach those levels of consciousness upon which we hear, and respond to, the measure "whereto the worlds keep time" on their great pilgrimage towards the Father's heart. The mystic act of union, that joyous loss of the transfigured self in God, which is the crown of our conscious ascent towards the Absolute, is the contribution of the individual to this, the destiny of the Cosmos.

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## 8. 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.

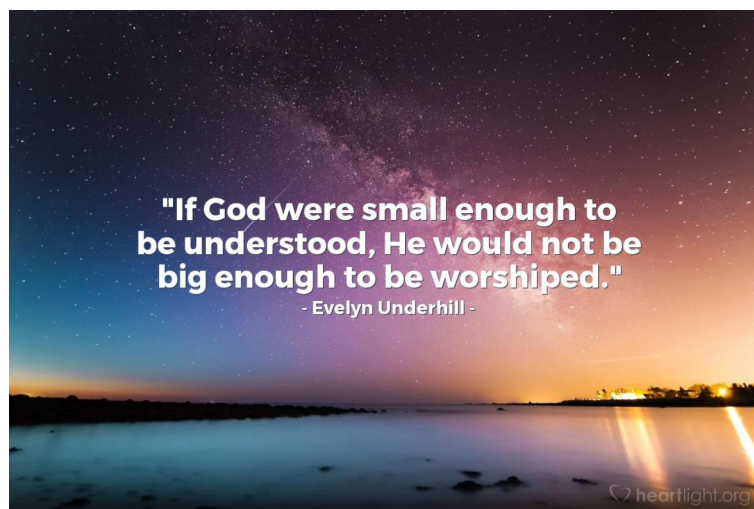
*For the church.* For all those who are challenged to be church in a different and unfamiliar way. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Upper South Carolina (USA). In our national church, pray for the Bishop to the Armed Forces; and within our own Diocese, for the Parish of Burnside.

*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 the COVID-19 coronavirus and all who care for them. For those who are commended to our prayers, especially Paull, Valerie, Sym, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, Fr Gary Priest, Fr Bart O'Donovan, Beth, and Linda Braby.

*For those who have died.* For those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us; all those who have died recently, including Graham Pater, those who have died as a result of COVID-19; and those whose anniversaries of death occur at about 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 Barnabas, St Anthony, Evelyn Underhill, 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, [omarymag@anglicaresa.com.au](mailto:omarymag@anglicaresa.com.au), by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.