

# 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      Thursday 10 September 2020

### Spiritual Resources & Reflections

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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 Tuesday and 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 Graeme – Knowing Where God Is ...

It is amazing to consider just how much our scientific knowledge has influenced the ways in which we think of God. For example, the theory of evolution which is now widely accepted in society has encouraged the idea of God's continuing work in creation (at least by those who believe in God) - a work which never ceases. When people used to be wedded to the notion that God created the universe in six days this limited the idea of God's continuing work. It is now easier to think of God at work in various ways everywhere, making a difference, imparting ideas, healing what is broken or sick, reconciling estranged people. God is dynamic and so is life.

This makes our prayer much easier, I think. It is significant that one of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer is "May your kingdom come on earth ... as in heaven." In other words, Jesus is saying that the Kingdom of God is something which is not yet completed. The Kingdom is coming steadily. It is possible to think, then, that we all have parts to play in the coming of the Kingdom. Further we can relate this to our God-given purpose in the world. God needs us to be and do in our lives. It is also possible to relate all this to evolution, too, and our earth and the universe gradually changing as their development continue.

The creation stories in the Scriptures were not the first parts of the Bible to be written. They do, however, suggest a progressive and creative activity. In the time before evolution was conceptualised and described, we could never have thought of God in this way. I think our forebears were all the poorer in their understanding back then. They imagined everything happening suddenly and quickly. In real life, we know only too well that most things of substance tend to happen gradually and steadily. Reconciliation, for example, can take place on one happy occasion ... but much happens, normally, which leads up that occasion. It is a process with a culmination.

When we pray we need to seek God's help with a range of personal and other matters. Much of this prayer is to do with people's attitudes and that they will 'come' to see or do things differently. When someone is sick in hospital our prayer is for a steady recovery over a period of time. When a new bishop comes to a diocese, our prayerful expectations may be that he or she will make a certain difference over the course of time. Most people need time to do the work for which they have been called.

God is at work everywhere in everything. This can seem impossible to believe until one remembers how often the smallest parts of something can be absolutely crucial to the performance.

Fr Graeme Kaines  
Locum Priest

## 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). The Bible readings for each day can be found in *The Australian Lectionary*, and for reference the readings for the coming week are:

	<b>Morning Prayer</b>	<b>Evening Prayer</b>
Thursday 10 September	Ps 25 2 Chronicles 36.1-14 Acts 27.33-44	Ps 27 Judith 15 1 John 5.13-21
Friday 11 September <i>Mother Esther CHN</i>	Ps 28, 29 2 Chronicles 36.15-23 Acts 28.1-16	Ps 30, 32 Judith 16.1-12 2 John
Saturday 12 September	Ps 33 Isaiah 34 Acts 28.27-31	Ps 31 Judith 16.13-25 3 John
Sunday 13 September <i>15th Sunday after Pentecost</i>	Ps 122 Matthew 19.1-12	Ps 103.8-13 Exodus 15.19-26 Romans 14.13 – 15.6
Monday 14 September <i>Holy Cross Day</i>	Ps 34 Habakkuk 1.1-11 Matthew 4.12-22	Ps 119.17-40 1 Maccabees 1.1-19 Ephesians 1.1-14
Tuesday 15 September <i>John Oliver Feetham</i>	Ps 98 Deuteronomy 21.22-23 Philippians 2.5-11	Ps 56 Isaiah 63.1-9 John 12.20-36a
Wednesday 16 September <i>St Ninian of Galway</i>	Ps 37.1-17 Habakkuk 1.12 – 2.5 Matthew 4.23 – 5.12	Ps 37.18-41 1 Maccabees 1.20-40 Ephesians 2.1-10
Thursday 17 September <i>St Hildegard of Bingen</i>	Ps 38 Habakkuk 2.6-17 Matthew 5.13-26	Ps 39 1 Maccabees 1.41-64 Ephesians 2.11-22

### 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 (App Store or Google Play).

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. Volunteers are attending at St Mary Magdalene's most days to ring the church bell while praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

### **3. Reflections and Meditations**

Fr Graeme 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 will in the future be presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>. To access the tab, 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.

The blog provided services for the parish during the COVID lockdown and through to the end of July, when we celebrated our patron saint, Mary Magdalene. We will keep publishing services, but not every Sunday. The plan is to publish one service a month.

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

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

This week the church's calendar again affords great variety in its special daily celebrations. There are great saints of ancient times like St Ninian of Galway, through to the 20th century religious Mother Esther, founder of the Community of the Holy Name. We also celebrate the great feast of the Exaltation, or Triumph, of the Holy Cross.

On 11 September we remember **Mother Esther CHN**, founder of the Community of the Holy Name, the Anglican religious order founded in Melbourne in 1888.

Emma Caroline Silcock (1858-1931) was born in England and had been clothed as a Novice in the Community of St Mary the Virgin at Wantage in 1884. She worked for a time in London but following a serious back injury, she was sent to Australia to recuperate.

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 by Bishop Moorhouse 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.

The order operated relatively informally for the first years of its life, finally receiving a charter in the Diocese of Melbourne in 1912. The Sisters continue to work in parishes, as Chaplains in hospitals and nursing homes, as well as in spiritual direction and leading retreats.

**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.

**St Ninian of Galway** (16 September) is acknowledged as Scotland's first saint, with the year 397 celebrated as the beginning of his mission.

That said, there is very little that we know about him. No written references to St Ninian from the period he was alive have been found, and in common with many early English saints, what we know of him relies mainly on the history by the Venerable Bede.

We do know that from the 7th century people made a pilgrimage to visit the shrine of St Ninian in Whithorn believing in his power to cure illness and perform miracles. Devotion waned after the Reformation, but in recent years pilgrims have returned to Whithorn to discover the history of the town and its role in shaping the history of Scotland.



**St Hildegard of Bingen** (17 September) is surely one of the most remarkable women in Christian history. Living from 1098 to 1179, she was a Benedictine abbess, writer, composer, philosopher, mystic, visionary, and polymath.

Her sacred music is remarkable for being one of the earliest surviving bodies of music where the composer and author were one and the same. Her music, which has gained immensely in popularity in recent years, has made her one of the most recorded church composers.

While Hildegard has been venerated in the church almost continuously since her lifetime, the extension of her cult to the whole church was formalised only in 2012, when Pope Benedict XVI named her a Doctor of the Church in recognition of the holiness of her life and the originality of her teaching.



## 5. Hildegard – Holy and Courageous

Various female figures stand out for the holiness of their lives and the wealth of their teaching even in those centuries of history that we usually call the Middle Ages. Today I would like to begin to present one of them to you: St Hildegard of Bingen, who lived in Germany in the 12th century. She was born in 1098, probably at Bermersheim, Rhineland, not far from Alzey, and died in 1179 at the age of 81, in spite of having always been in poor health.

Hildegard belonged to a large noble family and her parents dedicated her to God from birth for his service. At the age of eight she was offered for the religious state, and, to ensure that she received an appropriate human and Christian formation, she was entrusted to the care of the consecrated widow Uda of Gölklheim and then to Jutta of Spanheim who had taken the veil at the Benedictine Monastery of St Disibodenberg. A small cloistered women's monastery was developing there that followed the Rule of St Benedict. Hildegard was clothed by Bishop Otto of Bamberg and in 1136, upon the death of Mother Jutta who had become the community magistra (Prioress), the sisters chose Hildegard to succeed her. She fulfilled this office making the most of her gifts as a woman of culture and of lofty spirituality, capable of dealing competently with the organizational aspects of cloistered life.

A few years later, partly because of the increasing number of young women who were knocking at the monastery door, Hildegard broke away from the dominating male monastery of St Disibodenburg with her community, taking it to Bingen, calling it after St Rupert and here she spent the rest of her days.

During the years when she was superior of the Monastery of St Disibodenberg, Hildegard began to dictate the mystical visions that she had been receiving for some time to the monk Volmar, her spiritual director, and to Richardis di Strade, her secretary, a sister of whom she was very fond. As always happens in the life of true mystics, Hildegard too wanted to put herself under the authority of wise people to discern the origin of her visions, fearing that they were the product of illusions and did not come from God. She thus turned to a person who was most highly esteemed in the Church in those times: St Bernard of Clairvaux. He calmed and encouraged Hildegard.

However, in 1147 she received a further, very important approval. Pope Eugene III, who was presiding at a Synod in Trier, read a text dictated by Hildegard presented to him by Archbishop Henry of Mainz. The Pope authorized the mystic to write down her visions and to speak in public. From that moment Hildegard's spiritual prestige continued to grow so that her contemporaries called her the "Teutonic prophetess". This is the seal of an authentic experience of the Holy Spirit, the source of every charism: the person endowed with supernatural gifts never boasts of them, never flaunts them and, above all, shows complete obedience to the ecclesial authority. Every gift bestowed by the Holy Spirit, is in fact intended for the edification of the Church and the Church, through her Pastors, recognizes its authenticity.

Hildegard's mystical visions resemble those of the Old Testament prophets: expressing herself in the cultural and religious categories of her time, she interpreted the Sacred Scriptures in the light of God, applying them to the various circumstances of life. Thus all those who heard her felt the need to live a consistent and committed Christian lifestyle. In a letter to St Bernard, she confesses: "The vision fascinates my whole being: I do not see with the eyes of the body but it appears to me in the spirit of the mysteries ... I recognize the deep meaning of what is expounded on in the Psalter, in the Gospels and in other books, which have been shown to me in the vision. This vision burns like a flame in my breast and in my soul and teaches me to understand the text profoundly".

Hildegard's mystical visions have a rich theological content. They refer to the principal events of salvation history, and use a language for the most part poetic and symbolic. For example, in her best known work entitled *Scivias*, that is, "You know the ways" she sums up in 35 visions the events of the history of salvation from the creation of the world to the end of time. With the characteristic traits of feminine sensitivity, Hildegard develops at the very heart of her work the theme of the mysterious marriage between God and humanity that is brought about in the Incarnation.

Hildegard is also the author of other writings, two of which are particularly important since, like *Scivias*, they record her mystical visions: they are the *Liber vitae meritorum* (Book of the merits of life) and the *Liber divinorum operum* (Book of the divine works), also called *De operatione Dei*. In the former she describes a unique and powerful vision of God who gives life to the cosmos with his power and his light. Hildegard stresses the deep relationship that exists between man and God and reminds us that the whole creation, of which man is the summit, receives life from the Trinity. The work is centred on the relationship between virtue and vice, which is why human beings must face the daily challenge of vice that distances them on their way towards God and of virtue that benefits them. The invitation is to distance themselves from evil in order to glorify God and, after a virtuous existence, enter the life that consists "wholly of joy". In her second work that many consider her masterpiece she once again describes creation in its relationship with God and the centrality of the human being, expressing a strong Christo-centrism with a biblical-Patristic flavour. The Saint, who presents five visions inspired by the Prologue of the Gospel according to St John, cites the words of the Son to the Father: "The whole task that you wanted and entrusted to me I have carried out successfully, and so here I am in you and you in me and we are one".

Finally, in other writings Hildegard manifests the versatility of interests and cultural vivacity of the female monasteries of the Middle Ages, in a manner contrary to the prejudices which still weighed on that period. Hildegard took an interest in medicine and in the natural sciences as well as in music, since she was endowed with artistic talent. Thus she composed hymns,

antiphons and songs, gathered under the title: *Symphonia Harmoniae Caelestium Revelationum* (Symphony of the Harmony of Heavenly Revelations), that were performed joyously in her monasteries, spreading an atmosphere of tranquillity and that have also come down to us. For her, the entire creation is a symphony of the Holy Spirit who is in himself joy and jubilation.

The popularity that surrounded Hildegard impelled many people to seek her advice. It is for this reason that we have so many of her letters at our disposal. Many male and female monastic communities turned to her, as well as Bishops and Abbots. And many of her answers still apply for us. For instance, Hildegard wrote these words to a community of women religious: "The spiritual life must be tended with great dedication. At first the effort is burdensome because it demands the renunciation of caprices of the pleasures of the flesh and of other such things. But if she lets herself be enthralled by holiness a holy soul will find even contempt for the world sweet and lovable. All that is needed is to take care that the soul does not shrivel". And when the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa caused a schism in the Church by supporting at least three anti-popes against Alexander III, the legitimate Pope, Hildegard did not hesitate, inspired by her visions, to remind him that even he, the Emperor, was subject to God's judgement.

With the spiritual authority with which she was endowed, in the last years of her life Hildegard set out on journeys, despite her advanced age and the uncomfortable conditions of travel, in order to speak to the people of God. They all listened willingly, even when she spoke severely: they considered her a messenger sent by God. She called above all the monastic communities and the clergy to a life in conformity with their vocation. She harshly reprimanded them for seeking to subvert the very nature of the Church, reminding them that true renewal is obtained with a sincere spirit of repentance and a demanding process of conversion, rather than with a change of structures. This is a message that we should never forget.

Let us always invoke the Holy Spirit, so that he may inspire in the Church holy and courageous women, like St Hildegard of Bingen, who, developing the gifts they have received from God, make their own special and valuable contribution to the spiritual development of our communities and of the Church in our time.

Pope Benedict XVI, 1 and 8 September, 2010

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## 6. Hildegard's Writings – saved by a miracle

In 1942, Gustav Struck, the director of the state library in Wiesbaden, Germany, became worried about local air raids. Following many European institutions, he decided that his library's manuscripts needed to be sent elsewhere for safe keeping.

Two of the library's most valuable possessions were manuscripts of Hildegard's works. One was a beautifully illuminated copy of *Scivias*, a collection of 26 religious visions. The other manuscript, known as the *Riesencodex*, is the most complete compilation of her works, including the visionary writings, letters and the largest known collection of her music.

The manuscripts sat in a bank vault in Dresden for three years until the attack on Dresden. After the Dresden bombings, the Soviet Army seized and inspected the surviving vault. The first bank official to enter the vault afterwards found it pillaged, with only one manuscript remaining. The bank could never confirm if the vault was emptied in an official capacity or if it was plundered.

The *Riesencodex* made its way back to its original home of Wiesbaden, on the other side of Germany, through the extraordinary efforts of two women who, with the connivance of concerned librarians, substituted another medieval manuscript for the original, thus ensuring its safe return.

The missing manuscript, that of *Scivias*, has not been seen since. Fortunately, for posterity, photographs of the original manuscript had been taken in 1925 as part of a series of exhibitions in Cologne, while in 1933 a duplicate manuscript had been created and stored at the Abbey of St. Hildegard in Eibingen. The duplicate remains at the abbey, the same place where four Benedictine nuns inspired by Hildegard dutifully produced it.

## 7. Intentions for Your Daily 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 medical researchers, that they may be granted knowledge and wisdom as they search for a vaccine and cure. 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 Dioceses of Osun (Nigeria); Cape Town (South Africa); and Carlisle (England). In our national church, pray for the Bishop to the Armed Forces; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the support chaplains working with Anglicare SA.

*For our local community.* For the Collective as it considers alternative ways of serving the community while the Drop-In Centre is suspended, and for its guests as they seek other places to eat and rest. 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, Bishop David McCall, Sim, Chris, and Clarice.

*For those who have died.* For all those who have died recently; those who have died as a result of COVID-19; and those whose anniversaries of death occur at about this time. For those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us. ✠ 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, John Oliver Feetham, St Ninian, St Hildegard, 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.

