

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 11 August 2022

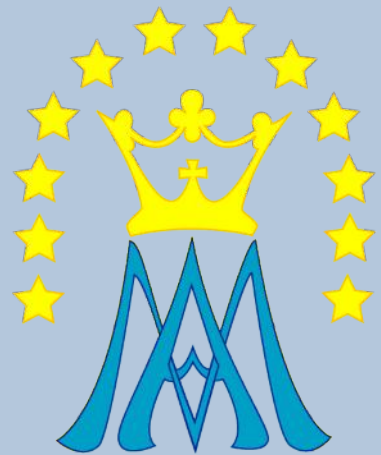
Dear friends,

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 – A Journey of Mystery and Discovery

Dear parishioners

Over the next few Sundays, we are using the letter to the Hebrews as a touchstone. The letter is a celebration of faith, where faith is "the assurance of things hoped for". The Greek word, which we translate as "assurance", means the underlying substance or essence. In this vein, the presence of divine mystery is the essence of our faith.

In this context, then, faith is a gift of grace. It is a transformative experience, renewing us, making us into a community. So, faith is not something we have to earn, it is not a set of beliefs, or the dogmatic teachings of the church. It is a divine gift to be received with joy.

Jesus, and his friends from Galilee, had a keen sense of awareness of the mystery of God, and the joy it brings. This is what sustained them. On our journey, then, there are no simple answers, but there is a faith community, which is enlivened and sustained by divine mystery. But it is not a straightforward process.

There have been lots of changes taking place all around us. We are older (and wiser). There has been a rise in global conflict. And poverty is on the increase. And we are all trying to deal with COVID. All this takes place under the threat of climate change.

In the West, church attendance is declining. Institutions, in general, are no longer held in esteem. Individualism is rising. Unsurprisingly, then, loneliness is a growing problem. Ironically, there are signs of a deep yearning for community. What's more, and this is critical, there is also a growing interest in spirituality, and ethics.

In terms of this growing interest in spirituality and ethics, it is worth remembering that this has to do with how we are made. We are spiritual and ethical beings. For us then, all persons are created in the image of God. This means we have an innate capacity for divine mystery. This changes the way we look at ourselves and others.

In terms of our shared vocation, then, it is about being in the marketplace, creating friendships, discerning new ways of working with others. So, what is the first step?

The first step begins with discernment. That is, an attentiveness to each other and the world. In terms of Sunday's Vestry meeting, then, we are engaging in a process of discernment. It is premised on the mystery of God. It entails a deep appreciation of our heritage. It is tinged with the excitement and the anticipation of making new discoveries.

On the way, there will be moments of grace, as we discover things about ourselves, others, and the world. This also means that wherever we are, and whatever we do, we are in the realm of mystery.

Fr Steven

2. COVID-19 Update from Tuesday 24 May

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 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 the church cannot be open every day, you may like to join the wider community 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.

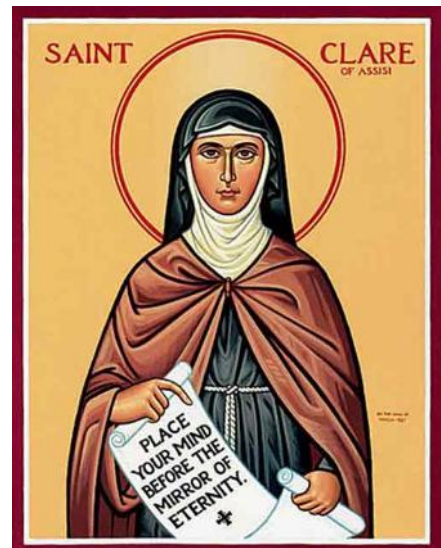
5. This Week in the Calendar

In the coming week we celebrate the medieval religious Clare of Assisi, St John Henry Newman, the Twentieth Century Martyrs, and the principal festival of Mary, Mother of our Lord.

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.

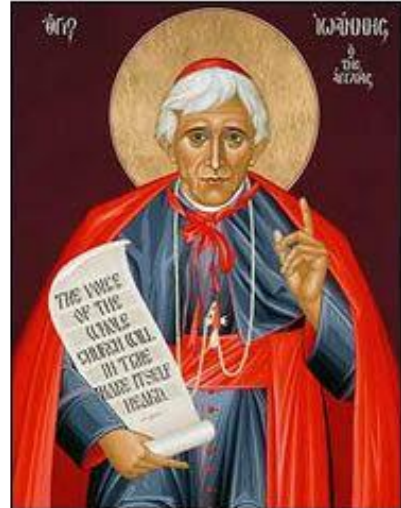


To this day, the "Poor Clare" nuns live a simple life of great poverty, austerity, and complete seclusion from the world. They are often called "a powerhouse of prayer".

St John Henry Newman is still commemorated in the Anglican church on 11 August, the date of his death, though since his canonisation in the Catholic Church, his feast is now celebrated in October.

Newman spent the first half of his life as an Anglican priest, when he was a prominent member of the Oxford Movement, and later as a Roman Catholic. He was an eminent theologian, preacher and writer in both.

Newman's writings on conscience, religious liberty, Scripture, the vocation of lay people, the relation of Church and State, and other topics were extremely influential in the shaping of modern ecclesiology, especially after Vatican II. He is often called the "absent Father" of the Council.



The Twentieth Century Martyrs

St Maximilian 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 Maximilian 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 20th 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. Pope Francis 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 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. 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.



6. 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.

7. From a sermon of Saint John Henry Newman

True faith is not shown here below in peace, but rather in conflict; in passing out of the country of sin, we necessarily pass through it.

The continual results, as I may call them, of [the Christian's] faith, are righteous and holy, but the process through which they are obtained is one of imperfection; so that could we see his soul as Angels see it, he would, when seen at a distance, appear youthful in countenance, and bright in apparel; but approach him, and his face has lines of care upon it, and his dress is tattered. His righteousness then seems, I do not mean superficial, this would be to give a very wrong idea of it, but though reaching deep within him, yet not whole and entire in the depth of it; but, as it were, wrought out of sin, the result of a continual struggle,—not spontaneous nature, but habitual self-command.

True faith is not shown here below in peace, but rather in conflict; and it is no proof that a man is not in a state of grace that he continually sins, provided such sins do not remain on him as what I may call ultimate results, but are ever passing on into something beyond and unlike themselves, into truth and righteousness. As we gain happiness through suffering, so do we arrive at holiness through infirmity, because man's very condition is a fallen one, and in passing out of the country of sin, he necessarily passes through it. And hence it is that holy men are kept from regarding themselves with satisfaction, or resting in any thing short of our Lord's death, as their ground of confidence; for, though that death has already in a measure wrought life in them, and effected the purpose for which it took place, yet to themselves they seem but sinners, their renewal being hidden from them by the circumstances attending it. The utmost they can say of themselves is, that they are not in the commission of any such sins as would plainly exclude them from grace; but how little of firm hope can be placed on such negative evidence is plain from St. Paul's own words on the subject, who, speaking of the censures passed upon him by the Corinthians, says, "I know nothing by myself," that is, I am conscious of nothing, "yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." As men in a battle cannot see how it is going, so Christians have no certain signs of God's presence in their hearts, and can but look up towards their Lord and Saviour, and timidly hope.

We have much to be forgiven; nay, we have the more to be forgiven the more we attempt. The higher our aims, the greater our risks. They who venture much with their talents, gain much, and in the end they hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" but they have so many losses in trading by the way, that to themselves they seem to do nothing but fail. They cannot believe that they are making any progress; and though they do, yet surely they have much to be forgiven in all their services. They are like David, men of blood; they fight the good fight of faith, but they are polluted with the contest.

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 YSAX (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.

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 Meath & Kildare (Ireland). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Gippsland; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for St Barnabas' College.

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, especially Dulcie McAllister, 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 Clare, St Maximillian Kolbe, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Maria Skobtsova, Martin Luther King Jr, St Oscar Romero, 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.

