

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

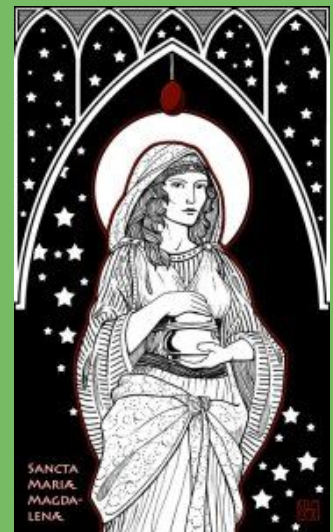
Thursday 12 August 2021

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions means it possible to again open the church for private prayer and public worship. Sunday Mass is offered weekly at 10 am, and the church will also be open on Thursday between 11.30 am and 1 pm, with the Angelus at noon and Mass at 12.10 pm.

The decision to return to worship in community, whether for private prayer, or the public celebration of the Word and Sacraments, is not a straightforward matter. These newsletters are intended to keep our entire community informed on events in the life of the Parish: we will continue to produce these news bulletins for now.

We will respond to this challenge as we have done before. Please keep an eye on the [web page](#) and the [blog](#) for further information.



1. From Fr Gwilym – The Census



The census is older than the Chinese, Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations, dating back to the Babylonians in 4000 BC who used a census as an essential guide to how much food they needed to find for each member of the population. But it has not always been welcomed: one of the many sins that King David committed against the Lord was to take a census of Israel. You will find the account in the Second Book of Samuel, chapter 24. God's response was to send a pestilence which killed seventy thousand people, a pandemic which was only stopped when David built an altar and offered a sacrifice.

Nobody today, I fervently hope, would connect a census with a pandemic, or regard a census as a sin against God. In fact, I expect most people will have dutifully completed the Census this week, trusting that the Government will use the data for planning a better future for the nation.

One question remains controversial, and that is the question of religion. The first choice is to say No Religion, and then there is a list of religions and a box to describe "Other Religion".

Heidi Nicholl, the CEO of Humanists Australia, has been urging people to think carefully about this question and to answer it honestly. I agree with that. So I was a little taken aback when I saw that next to the word Anglican in the census were the words "Church of England." The

term “Church of England” has not been officially used in Australia since 1962, nearly sixty years ago!

In days gone by, people who were vaguely Christian, or who had British connections with Christianity would put Church of England, or C of E, on their census as a sort of nominal claim to some sort of religiosity. A safety net, as it were. An “If God does exist, then I’d like to be included” sort of thing. And of course, the Church of England is, above all, respectable!

The Census asks the question about religion for two reasons. One is because it has done so for a very long time, and so the long-term data is valuable when considering trends in “religiosity” in the community over time; and also because Government inevitably deals with religious organisations as it deals with companies, bodies corporate, and similar entities on taxation, tax exemptions, legislation and regulation. Also, religion features prominently (and often controversially) in discussions of any so-called Freedom of Religion legislation and the like.

The Census does not, however, deal with spirituality, faith or faithfulness. It does not and cannot make any assessment of the strength or sincerity of a person’s adherence to their faith.

Heidi Nicholl wants the Government to have an accurate picture of the strength and influence of religious organisations. So do I. She and I are concerned about the influence that some churches have in political circles. A small but very influential minority is throwing its weight around, promoting beliefs and policies widely at variance with the vast majority of Australians, and, I dare say, with the majority of faithful Christians.

So, when I am asked, or when I ask myself about my religion, I am asking a different question from the Census question. A very different question in fact. I ask, how faithfully do I follow Christ? I ask, how truly does the Spirit of Christ live in me? Does the Holy Spirit, which loves and brings all things into being, graciously sustaining all life, inspire and guide me in all that I am and do?

What brings me to church? Is it a desire to grow close to God and to be truly a member of the Body of Christ? Is it the love I have for God and for all God’s people? These are the questions the Census doesn’t ask.

Oh yes, I put Anglican on the Census, and I did so sincerely, but I hope that my religion is more than just belonging to an organisation.

Gwilym Henry-Edwards
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).

Online Resources

There is a complete online version of Daily Prayer from *A Prayer Book for Australia* for each day available at Australian Daily Prayer <https://dailyprayer.ampers.x10.mx/>. There is also a free app for mobile devices from the App Store or Google Play.

The Church of England provides an online version of its orders for Daily Prayer at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>. This is also

available as a free app. The Divine Office of the Catholic Church is available online at www.ibreviary.com and is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

Times of Prayer

Many people find it helpful to make a particular time daily for prayer and reflection. One option might be to join your prayer with those of the wider world at some special times during the day. While we cannot attend at the church at the present time, you may like to join the wider community in praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

3. Reflections and Meditations

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

To access these meditations, simply go to the blog and select the "Spirit matters" tab on the top. If you would like to receive an email update when there is a new posting on the blog, whether for a Sunday or weekday service, or for meditations and other supports for prayer, please subscribe to the blog using the box on the right-hand side of the page.

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

4. In the Church's Calendar

In the coming week we celebrate some influential figures of the 20th century, the "Twentieth Century Martyrs", and the principal feast of Mary, Mother of the Lord.

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.

5. 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.

6. For your prayers

We continue to pray throughout the week for the world and the church. These intentions may be helpful in your private or family prayers.

For the world. The leaders of the world as they seek to respond to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. For refugees and asylum seekers, that they may find places of safety and welcome.

For the church. For all those who are challenged to be church in a different and unfamiliar way. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Durgapur (North India). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Grafton; and within our own Diocese, for the Chaplaincy to the Repatriation General Hospital.

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, Linda, and Fr Peter Garland.

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, 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, 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.

