

# 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 13 January 2022

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.

These newsletters are intended to support the spiritual life of the community as we continue to cope with and respond to the pandemic.



### 1. From Fr Steven – A Sacramental View of Life

What does it mean to say we have a sacramental view of life? Theologically, there are two aspects to this question. First, a sacramental view of life is premised on the belief that all life dwells in God. God is not a remote despot in the sky. Instead, we live and breathe and move in God. So, God is like the ocean of life in which we live. This way of thinking is evident in the works of Evelyn Underhill, Richard Hooker, Thomas Aquinas, and the Gospel of John. Second, the sacraments of bread and wine embody and express divine reality. In this way, all of life resonates with divine energy and vitality.

In this vein, the Gospel of John has a sacramental view. The gospel emphasis is on *eternal life* here and now. In this context, Jesus, the holy one of God, manifests this divine reality. Of course, there was a sense of urgency for the Johannine community, living in the shadow of the Roman empire. They were in crisis. Subsequently, the gospel writer underlines the divine possibilities Jesus brings.

This coming Sunday, I will focus on the wedding at Cana. The story itself is a brilliant theological sign that something special is happening in and through this Jesus. And this has transformative possibilities. The theme of transformation is critical in John's gospel. To underline the importance of transformation, the writer threads the gospel with the story of Nicodemus.

The three-part story of Nicodemus (John 3:1-21, 7:45-52, 19:38-42) is a story of transformation. Here is a summary. In the first panel, Nicodemus seeks out Jesus. In the second panel, Nicodemus intervenes to the chagrin of the strongmen (cf. chief priests). In the third panel, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea receive the body of Jesus. Let's unpack this now.

In the first panel (Jn 3:1-15), Nicodemus seems conflicted. On the one hand, Nicodemus expresses respect and admiration for Jesus, addressing him as Rabbi saying “we know that you are a teacher who has come from God” (Jn 3:3). On the other hand, there is a note of caution, because he “came to Jesus by night” (Jn 3:1). Is this the caution of privilege?

In the second panel (Jn 7:45-52), we see signs of the transformation of Nicodemus. So, from approaching Jesus cautiously (Jn 3:1-15) Nicodemus now challenges the strongmen of his day (Jn 7:45). He challenges them carefully, but with resolve. This is calculated resistance. It is important to note the entrance of the temple police, who proclaim of Jesus that “Never has anyone spoken like this”. It seems that the police have had a transformative experience. In response, the strongmen issue a rebuke. In the face of threat, however, Nicodemus challenges them (Jn 7:50).

In the third panel (Jn 19:38-42), Jesus has been crucified. Joseph of Arimathea (“a disciple of Jesus”) approaches Pilate, and so, “Pilate gave him permission” to receive the body of Jesus (Jn 19:39). The transformed Nicodemus is also there. With Joseph, they enact a critique of Roman violence by receiving the body of Jesus with generosity and tenderness in a remarkably feminine gesture.

In the movement from the second panel to the third, Nicodemus moves from measured intervention against entitled men to an open and compassionate gesture. The life of Nicodemus then has been transformed by an encounter with Jesus the sacrament of God.

In hope and love,

Steven Ogden  
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 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.

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### 3. Reflections and Meditations

Reflections for our two weekly newsletters will continue for the time being, and our Thursday "Spiritual Resources" newsletter will continue to be uploaded to the web page. Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections (in recess for January) 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.

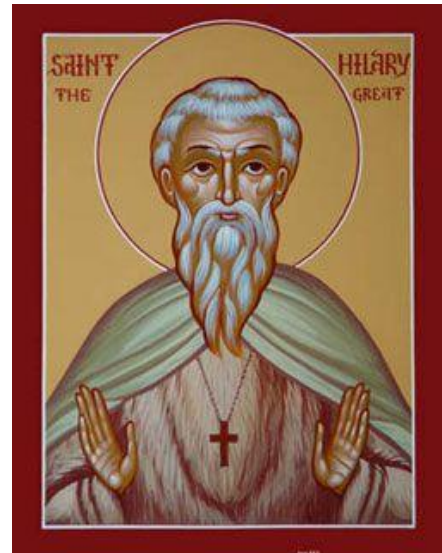
Service booklets as PDF files are still available for Sunday and weekday services on the web site and on the Parish's Facebook page.

### 4. In the Church's Calendar

This week the Church celebrates two heroes of the early church, Hilary Bishop of Poitiers, and the abbot Antony of Egypt, along with St Sava, the first archbishop of the Serbian Church; and a feast of the whole church, the Confession of Peter.

**St Hilary** (c.310-c.367) was a staunch defender of the divinity of Christ. His writings include some of the greatest theology on the Trinity, and while he was well regarded as a wise and gentle soul, he was, like his Master, labeled a "disturber of the peace."

Raised a pagan, he was converted to Christianity when he met his God of nature in the Scriptures. His wife was still living when he was chosen, against his will, to be the bishop of Poitiers in France. He was soon taken up with battling what became the scourge of the fourth century, Arianism, which denied the divinity of Christ. The heresy spread rapidly. Saint Jerome said "The world groaned and marvelled to find that it was Arian."

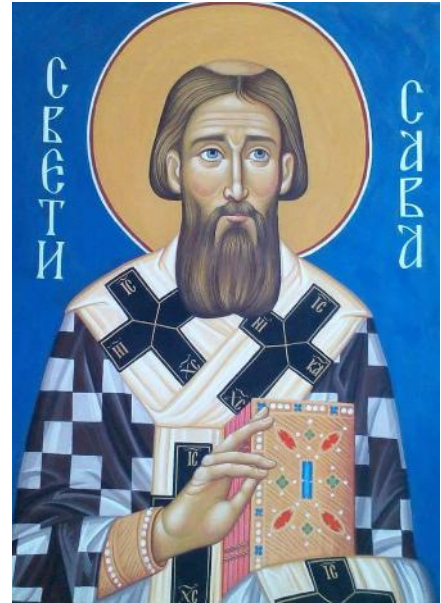


When Emperor Constantius ordered all the bishops of the West to sign a condemnation of Athanasius, the great defender of the faith in the East, Hilary refused and was banished from France to far off Phrygia.

While writing in exile, he was invited by some semi-Arians (hoping for reconciliation) to a council the emperor called to counteract the Council of Nicea. But Hilary predictably defended the Church, and when he sought public debate with the heretical bishop who had exiled him, the Arians, dreading the meeting and its outcome, pleaded with the emperor to send this troublemaker back home. Hilary was welcomed by his people.

Christ said his coming would bring not peace but a sword (see Matthew 10:34). The Gospels offer no support for us if we fantasize about a sunlit holiness that knows no problems. Christ did *not* escape at the last moment, though he did live happily ever after—after a life of controversy, problems, pain and frustration. Hilary, like all saints, simply had more of the same.

Nobly born, **St Sava** travelled at a young age to Mount Athos in Greece to lead a monastic life. There he was later joined by his father who assisted him in establishing a monastery which became a focal point of medieval Serbian culture and ecclesiastical leadership. In about 1208 he returned to Serbia to become superior of the monastery of Studenica, a centre of influence in the emerging Serbian church.



The southern part of the Serbian nation wavered for long periods in their ecclesiastical allegiance between Rome and Constantinople, and the matter came to a head when in 1217, Sava's brother Stefan was appointed king of the Serbian nation by the Pope. To counter the affinity to the Roman Catholic Church, Sava travelled in 1219 to Nicaea, the refuge of the exiled patriarch of Constantinople, where he received the title of autocephalous archbishop of Serbia. Upon his return to Serbia, he crowned his brother again.

Sava organized the Serbian church into bishoprics headed by his former monastic colleagues and students. He then embarked on a cultural and ecclesiastical renaissance that included the establishment of schools and the beginnings of a medieval Serbian literature.

Having finished his work in his native land, the saint appointed a successor, then set off on a journey of no return, desiring "to end his days as a wanderer in a foreign land." He passed through Palestine, Syria and Persia, Babylon, Egypt and Anatolia, everywhere visiting the holy places, conversing with great ascetics, and collecting the holy relics of saints. Sava finished his wanderings at Trnovo in Bulgaria, where he died in 1237. The legacy of Saint Sava lives on in the Orthodox Church traditions of the Slavic nations.

The life of **St Anthony** will remind many people of Francis of Assisi. At 20, Anthony was so moved by the Gospel message, "Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor", that he actually did just that with his large inheritance. He is different from Francis in that most of Anthony's life was spent in solitude. He saw the world completely covered with snares, and gave the Church and the world the witness of solitary asceticism, great personal mortification and prayer. But no saint is antisocial, and Anthony drew many people to himself for spiritual healing and guidance.



At 54, he responded to many requests and founded a sort of monastery of scattered cells. Again, like Francis, he had great fear of "stately buildings and well-laden tables."

At 60, he hoped to be a martyr in the renewed Roman persecution of 311, fearlessly exposing himself to danger while giving moral and material support to those in prison. At 88, he was fighting the Arian heresy, that massive trauma from which it took the Church centuries to recover. "The mule kicking over the altar" denied the divinity of Christ.

Anthony is associated in art with a T-shaped cross, a pig and a book. The pig and the cross are symbols of his valiant warfare with the devil—the cross his constant means of power over



evil spirits, the pig a symbol of the devil himself. The book recalls his preference for “the book of nature” over the printed word. Anthony died in solitude at age 105.

**The Confession of Peter** is a celebration of the role and office of Peter within the Church. The Catholic Church has long celebrated this festival as the “Chair of St Peter”, making a more direct reference to the Papacy.

We celebrate the feast for several reasons. Principally, it is a celebration of the authority of the bishop in the universal church, the authority which episcopal churches (including the Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches) hold was given by Jesus to Peter to lead and guide the Church in Jesus’ place. For Jesus told Peter that “you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ...” (Mt 16:18). In the Letter to the Galatians, we see St Paul acknowledging this fact by seeking Peter’s approval for his ministry, for he recognized Peter as the first among the apostles (Gal 1:18).

The feast is also a celebration of the historic primacy of the Bishop of Rome. This has been a source of schisms and indeed wars throughout history, though in our time the work of bodies such as the Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission and the Orthodox-Catholic Consultations convened on several continents have all come to acknowledge the historic role of the Bishop of Rome as the “first among equals”. It is a celebration of the role of shepherd or bishop of the world-wide Church.

Finally, we are celebrating the unity that the Chair of Saint Peter symbolizes. Since apostolic times, the various Churches founded by the original apostles were somewhat independent—partly due to distance and the lack of communication systems—yet united in faith under the leadership of Saint Peter.

Ecumenically speaking, many of the churches have come to accept the value of the Confession of Saint Peter and all that it stands for, especially as a sign of unity without uniformity. It is a unity that does not depend on the person who presently holds the office of Pope, for it is an authority and a unity that is bigger than any one person. Everything pointing to the fact that it is the Holy Spirit who truly runs the Church, but through various human beings who, of course, have their gifts and foibles.

We celebrate the feast of the Confession of Saint Peter rejoicing in the guidance and the role of the Holy Spirit, thanking Jesus for the authority he shares with we mere humans.



## 5. St Leo the Great on the Confession of St Peter

*The Church of Christ rises on the firm foundation of Peter's faith*

Out of the whole world one man, Peter, is chosen to preside at the calling of all nations, and to be set over all the apostles and all the fathers of the Church. Though there are in God’s people many shepherds, Peter is thus appointed to rule in his own person those whom Christ also rules as the original ruler. Beloved, how great and wonderful is this sharing of his power that God in his goodness has given to this man. Whatever Christ has willed to be shared in

common by Peter and the other leaders of the Church, it is only through Peter that he has given to others what he has not refused to bestow on them.

The Lord now asks the apostles as a whole what men think of him. As long as they are recounting the uncertainty born of human ignorance, their reply is always the same.

But when he presses the disciples to say what they think themselves, the first to confess his faith in the Lord is the one who is first in rank among the apostles.

Peter says: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"*. Jesus replies: *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven"*. You are blessed, he means, because my Father has taught you. You have not been deceived by earthly opinion, but have been enlightened by inspiration from heaven. It was not flesh and blood that pointed me out to you, but the one whose only-begotten Son I am.

He continues: *And I say to you*. In other words, as my Father has revealed to you my godhead, so I in my turn make known to you your pre-eminence. *You are Peter*: though I am the inviolable rock, *the cornerstone that makes both one*, the foundation apart from which no one can lay any other, yet you also are a rock, for you are given solidity by my strength, so that which is my very own because of my power is common between us through your participation.

And upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. On this strong foundation, he says, I will build an everlasting temple. The great height of my Church, which is to penetrate the heavens, shall rise on the firm foundation of this faith.

The gates of hell shall not silence this confession of faith; the chains of death shall not bind it. Its words are the words of life. As they lift up to heaven those who profess them, so they send down to hell those who contradict them.

Blessed Peter is therefore told: *To you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth is also bound in heaven. Whatever you lose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.*

The authority vested in this power passed also to the other apostles, and the institution established by this decree has been continued in all the leaders of the Church. But it is not without good reason that what is bestowed on all is entrusted to one. For Peter received it separately in trust because he is the prototype set before all the rulers of the Church.

Now the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles too had accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem the circumcised believers confronted him, saying, "You entered the house of uncircumcised people and ate with them."

Peter began and explained it to them step by step, saying, "I was at prayer in the city of Joppa when in a trance I had a vision, something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered from the sky by its four corners, and it came to me. Looking intently into it, I observed and saw the four-legged animals of the earth, the wild beasts, the reptiles, and the birds of the sky.

I also heard a voice say to me, 'Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat.' But I said, 'Certainly not, sir, because nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time a voice from heaven answered, 'What God has made clean, you are not to call profane.' This happened three times, and then everything was drawn up again into the sky.

Just then three men appeared at the house where we were, who had been sent to me from Caesarea. The Spirit told me to accompany them without discriminating. These six brothers

also went with me, and we entered the man's house. He related to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, saying, 'Send someone to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, who will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved.'

As I began to speak, the holy Spirit fell upon them as it had upon us at the beginning, and I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water but you will be baptized with the holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift he gave to us when we came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to hinder God?"

When they heard this, they stopped objecting and glorified God, saying, "God has then granted life-giving repentance to the Gentiles too."

## 6. **St Hilary of Poitiers on the Holy Trinity**

*May I serve you by making you known*

I am well aware, almighty God and Father, that in my life I owe you a most particular duty. It is to make my every thought and word speak of you.

In fact, you have conferred on me this gift of speech, and it can yield no greater return than to be at your service. It is for making you known as Father, the Father of the only-begotten God, and preaching this to the world that knows you not and to the heretics who refuse to believe in you.

In this matter the declaration of my intention is only of limited value. For the rest, I need to pray for the gift of your help and your mercy. As we spread our sails of trusting faith and public avowal before you, fill them with the breath of your Spirit, to drive us on as we begin this course of proclaiming your truth. We have been promised, and he who made the promise is trustworthy: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Yes, in our poverty we will pray for our needs. We will study the sayings of your prophets and apostles with unflagging attention, and knock for admittance wherever the gift of understanding is safely kept. But yours it is, Lord, to grant our petitions, to be present when we seek you and to open when we knock.

There is an inertia in our nature that makes us dull; and in our attempt to penetrate your truth we are held within the bounds of ignorance by the weakness of our minds. Yet we do comprehend divine ideas by earnest attention to your teaching and by obedience to the faith which carries us beyond mere human apprehension.

So we trust in you to inspire the beginnings of this ambitious venture, to strengthen its progress, and to call us into a partnership in the spirit with the prophets and the apostles. To that end, may we grasp precisely what they meant to say, taking each word in its real and authentic sense. For we are about to say what they already have declared as part of the mystery of revelation: that you are the eternal God, the Father of the eternal, only-begotten God; that you are one and not born from another; and that the Lord Jesus is also one, born of you from all eternity. We must not proclaim a change in truth regarding the number of gods. We must not deny that he is begotten of you who are the one God; nor must we assert that he is other than the true God, born of you who are truly God the Father.

Impart to us, then, the meaning of the words of Scripture and the light to understand it, with reverence for the doctrine and confidence in its truth. Grant that we may express what we believe. Through the prophets and apostles we know about you, the one God the Father, and

the one Lord Jesus Christ. May we have the grace, in the face of heretics who deny you, to honour you as God, who is not alone, and to proclaim this as truth.

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## 7. Hymn to St Sava

The first "Life of St Sava" written by Domentijan tells us that a disciple of St Sava named Atanasije delivered a eulogic hymn to the Saint on the occasion of the return of his relics from Trnovo to the Monastery Mileševa in Raška where the commander of the Ottoman army ordered his bones to be burnt, in the hope that the emerging desire for Serbian freedom might be extinguished.

*O divine, O beloved,  
O sweet and most holy voice,  
O God-glorifying Sava,  
you have firmly promised  
to be with us until the end of this world,  
O divinely-adorned Sava,  
and we, your beloved children,  
who have you as our strength  
and our divinely inspired hope,  
are rejoicing now.  
O what a wonder, brethren,  
more splendid than any other wonder,  
awesome and filled with ineffable amazement.  
O, great is the power of God  
and ineffable are His wonders,  
so that one who loves God  
and abides by His will  
cannot be destroyed even by the grave  
and the earth cannot imprison him.*

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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.* In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Jebba (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Archdeacon for Multi-cultural Ministry, Mee Ping Lau.

*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, especially Paull, Valerie, Sim, Clarice, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest) and Mark.

*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 Graham Cooling (priest), 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 Hilary, St Anthony, St Sava, St Peter, and holy women and men of every time and place.

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This newsletter will normally be distributed weekly on Thursday. 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.

