

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 18 August 2022

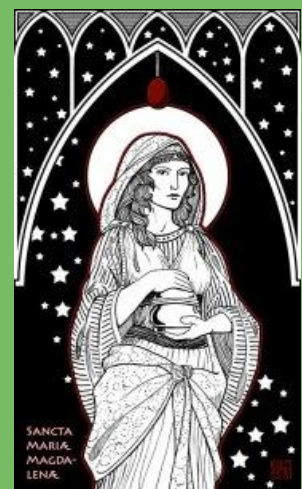
Dear friends,

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 – On The Way ...

Recently, we have had some delightful community events. From my Commissioning to our Patronal Festival and the Special Vestry Meeting last Sunday, they have all been wonderful, adding something special to the life and sheen of our faith community.

As always, these events have taken place because of a team of generous helpers, working industriously behind the scenes. The catering on Sunday was a great example of this. We know how to celebrate. Thanks to all of you for your support and presence.

The spirit of the discussion at the Special Vestry was inspiring. There was goodwill, good humour, and shared wisdom. Of course, there are no easy answers to the questions we face. The key, however, is the mystery of God sustaining the congregation of the faithful, and making new connections in the world.

In terms of shared wisdom, we discussed how the world has changed. This discussion was insightful. And, from time to time, we need to do this kind of analysis. Two examples will suffice here. First, there are many boomers who would welcome the ethos and spirit of our parish, our community, our music, and our worship. In this instance, it is often a matter of naming and dismantling the religious stereotypes that get in the way.

Second, with millennials, it is about us finding new ways of building connections in the world. Of course, this will involve the creative use of IT. Overall, however, this entails an enthusiasm to enter and embrace life in the marketplace, listening intently to the voices of young people, discerning and celebrating connections.

On this journey of mystery and discovery, we are entering a time of discernment. In our sacramental tradition, such faith is grounded in divine connections. And it is the work of the Holy Spirit - in our lives, our parish, and our city - who is preparing the way. So, then, we are truly on the way.

I look forward to travelling with you on this remarkable journey.

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://stmarymagdalenesadelade.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

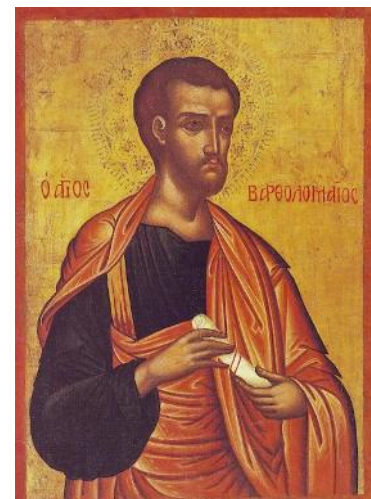
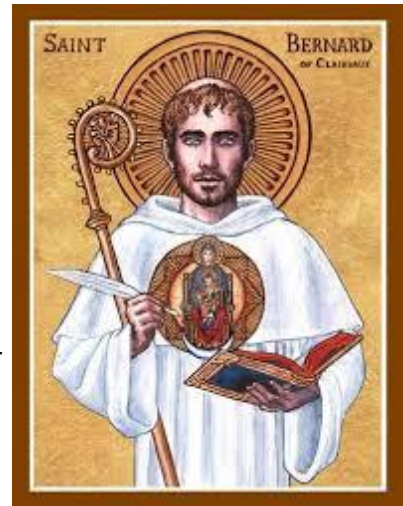
In the coming week we celebrate the medieval religious Bernard of Clairvaux, and the Apostle Bartholomew.

St Bernard of Clairvaux had a tremendous impact on the church of his day. He was a zealous reformer and crusader, preaching widely and influentially, but what Bernard is chiefly remembered for today is his mystical writings. His best known work is *On Loving God*, in which he states his purpose at the beginning: "You wish me to tell you why and how God should be loved. My answer is that God himself is the reason he is to be loved."

His other great literary legacy is *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, 86 sermons on the spiritual life that, in fact, only tangentially touch on the biblical text. One passage in particular speaks aptly to Bernard's lifelong passion to know God (and, likely, the temptations that troubled him):

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.

We know little about **St Bartholomew**. He is mentioned only in the lists of the apostles. Some scholars identify him with Nathanael, a man of Cana in Galilee who was summoned to Jesus by Philip. Jesus paid him a great compliment: "Here is a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him" (John 1:47b). When Nathanael asked how Jesus knew him, Jesus said, "I saw you under the fig tree" (John 1:48b). Whatever amazing revelation this involved, it brought Nathanael to exclaim, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel" But Jesus countered with, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this" (John 1:49-50).



Nathanael did see greater things. He was one of those to whom Jesus appeared on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias after his resurrection (see John 21:1-14). They had been fishing all night without success. In the morning, they saw someone standing on the shore though no one knew it was Jesus. He told them to cast their net again, and they made so great a catch that they could not haul the net in. Then John cried out to Peter, "It is the Lord."

Bartholomew or Nathanael? We are confronted again with the fact that we know almost nothing about most of the apostles. Yet the unknown ones were also foundation stones, the twelve pillars of the new Israel whose twelve tribes now encompass the whole earth. Their personalities were secondary—without thereby being demeaned—to their great office of bearing tradition from their firsthand experience, speaking in the name of Jesus, putting the Word Made Flesh into human words for the enlightenment of the world. Their holiness was not an introverted contemplation of their status before God. It was a gift that they had to share with others. The Good News was that all are called to the holiness of being Christ's members, by the gracious gift of God.

The simple fact is that humanity is totally meaningless unless God is its total concern. Then humanity, made holy with God's own holiness, becomes the most precious creation of God.

6. From a sermon by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

I love because I love, I love that I may love

Love is sufficient of itself, it gives pleasure by itself and because of itself. It is its own merit, its own reward. Love looks for no cause outside itself, no effect beyond itself. Its profit lies in its practice. I love because I love, I love that I may love. Love is a great thing so long as it continually returns to its fountainhead, flows back to its source, always drawing from there the water which constantly replenishes it. Of all the movements, sensations and feelings of the soul, love is the only one in which the creature can respond to the Creator and make some sort of similar return however unequal though it be. For when God loves, all he desires is to be loved in return; the sole purpose of his love is to be loved, in the knowledge that those who love him are made happy by their love of him.

The Bridegroom's love, or rather the love which is the Bridegroom, asks in return nothing but faithful love. Let the beloved, then, love in return. Should not a bride love, and above all, Love's bride? Could it be that Love not be loved?

Rightly then does she give up all other feelings and give herself wholly to love alone; in giving love back, all she can do is to respond to love. And when she has poured out her whole being in love, what is that in comparison with the unceasing torrent of that original source? Clearly, lover and Love, soul and Word, bride and Bridegroom, creature and Creator do not flow with the same volume; one might as well equate a thirsty man with the fountain.

What then of the bride's hope, her aching desire, her passionate love, her confident assurance? Is all this to wilt just because she cannot match stride for stride with her giant, any more than she can vie with honey for sweetness, rival the lamb for gentleness, show herself as white as the lily, burn as bright as the sun, be equal in love with him who is Love? No. It is true that the creature loves less because she is less. But if she loves with her whole being, nothing is lacking where everything is given. To love so ardently then is to share the marriage bond; she cannot love so much and not be totally loved, and it is in the perfect union of two hearts that complete and total marriage consists. Or are we to doubt that the soul is loved by the Word first and with a greater love?

7. The Apostles - from a homily on the 1st letter to the Corinthians by St John Chrysostom

The weakness of God is strength

It was clear through unlearned men that the cross was persuasive, in fact, it persuaded the whole world. Their discourse was not of unimportant matters but of God and true religion, of the Gospel way of life and future judgment, yet it turned plain, uneducated men into philosophers. How the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and his weakness stronger than men!

In what way is it stronger? It made its way throughout the world and overcame all men; countless men sought to eradicate the very name of the Crucified, but that name flourished and grew even mightier. Its enemies lost out and perished; the living who waged war on a dead man proved helpless. Therefore, when a Greek tells me I am dead, he shows only that he is foolish indeed, for I, whom he thinks a fool, turn out to be wiser than those reputed wise. So too, in calling me weak, he but shows that he is weaker still. For the good deeds which tax-collectors and fishermen were able to accomplish by Gods grace, the philosophers, the rulers, the countless multitudes cannot even imagine.

Paul had this in mind when he said: *The weakness of God is stronger than men*. That the preaching of these men was indeed divine is brought home to us in the same way. For how otherwise could twelve uneducated men, who lived on lakes and rivers and wastelands, get the idea for such an immense enterprise? How could men who perhaps had never been in a city or a public square think of setting out to do battle with the whole world? That they were fearful, timid men, the evangelist makes clear; he did not reject the fact or try to hide their weaknesses. Indeed he turned these into a proof of the truth. What did he say of them? That when Christ was arrested, the others fled, despite all the miracles they had seen, while he who was leader of the others denied him!

How then account for the fact that these men, who in Christ's lifetime did not stand up to the attacks by the Jews, set forth to do battle with the whole world once Christ was dead - if, as you claim, Christ did not rise and speak to them and rouse their courage? Did they perhaps say to themselves: "What is this? He could not save himself but he will protect us? He did not help himself when he was alive, but now that he is dead he will extend a helping hand to us? In his lifetime he brought no nation under his banner, but by uttering his name we will win over the whole world?" Would it not be wholly irrational even to think such thoughts, much less to act upon them?

It is evident, then, that if they had not seen him risen and had proof of his power, they would not have risked so much.

8. 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 Meru (Kenya). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of North-West Australia; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for St Peter's Collegiate School.

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 Bernard, St Bartholomew, 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.

