

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 Thursday 20 August 2020

Spiritual Resources & Reflections

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 – God's Purpose in Our World

One of the crucial aims in life for people of religious faith is to seek a deeper knowledge of God. One of the outcomes of this is to enable us to more easily identify God's purposes for the world, and for ourselves as people of the world. In the scheme of things, God is dependent on our co-operation for God's purposes to be realised. In order to identify God's purpose, we have to think about it just as we have to think about most important things before us which we need to address.

So we need to think about God and to wonder, in a thoughtful way, what God's purpose could be for the world. A starting point for this thought is that every single person in our world is a child of God. Does this not mean that every person has to share what God offers us in this world? This kind of thought leads us to think of the human race as a family on earth – there is a unity between us all. Then we can remember Jesus' teaching, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

How often do we try to think about God's concern for every single person in our world? Can God be fully concerned for everyone - or even about the sort of world in which we live? The answer is a resounding yes. God, like us, grieves the horrors of the world - the cruelty, the wars, the hunger and the appalling range of sickness, including Covid 19.

In our prayer we can remember that God is waiting for us to co-operate with making the world a far better place. God never forces anyone to act. God longs for us to decide to act. This is the way God chooses to work. But there is so little that we can do individually. Nevertheless, we can all think about the task and thought is the beginning of all good action.

Drawing on our knowledge of the Scriptures we can think prayerfully about suffering children and apply Jesus' teaching that he is in every person who suffers. How, if at all, does this change our attitude to a suffering child, wherever the child might be? "In as much as you have done it to the least of these you have done it to me." This can be a haunting teaching about which to pray. It can help us to make any suffering person more personal for us.

No one much will do anything major about the world's troubles and scandals until there has been much thought in prayer about whatever is needed. We need to pray for all the leaders in the world that they may learn justice and love and actively bring this into their thinking about their nation's response to suffering.

So many leaders do not know of God and it is very important for all of us to keep them in our prayers that they may make room for God to find them in their lives. As usual we need to be bold and hopeful in prayer.

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:

	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
Thursday 20 August <i>St Bernard of Clairvaux</i>	Ps 114, 115 2 Chronicles 30.13-27 Acts 19.21-41	Ps 116, 117 Song of Songs 7 Romans 12.9-21
Friday 21 August	Ps 121, 122, 123 2 Chronicles 3.1-12a Acts 20.1-16	Ps 119.129-152 Song of Songs 8 Romans 13
Saturday 22 August	Ps 118.1-18 2 Chronicles 31.17 – 32.8 Acts 20.17-38	Ps 118.19-29; 120 Tobit 1.1-20 Romans 14.1-12
Sunday 23 August 12th Sunday after Pentecost	Ps 72 Matthew 16.1-12	Ps 138 Genesis 50.15 – Exodus 1.7 Romans 11.28-36
Monday 24 August <i>St Bartholomew</i>	Ps 86 Isaiah 43.8-17 Matthew 10.1-15	Ps 97 Deuteronomy 30.11-16 Matthew 10.16-22
Tuesday 25 August	Ps 135 2 Chronicles 32.24-33 Acts 21.15-26	Ps 136 Tobit 4 Romans 15.1-13
Wednesday 26 August	Ps 137, 138 2 Chronicles 33.1-20 Acts 21.27-39	Ps 139 Tobit 5 Romans 15.14-21
Thursday 27 August <i>St Monica</i>	Ps 140 Prayer of Manasseh (see p.xx) Acts 21.40 – 22.16	Ps 141, 142 Tobit 6.9-12; 7.1-15 Romans 15.22-33

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.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. 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. Responding to the COVID Challenge: Please Give Us Your Feedback!

We are living in extraordinary and uncertain times – there is no doubt about that. Everyone of us has had to make changes to the way we live, work, and interact with other people. At St Mary Magdalene's we have adapted to the COVID world by introducing some approaches to worship and pastoral care that we envisage will continue for the foreseeable future.

There has been a lot of positive feedback about the way our community has held together, and indeed even been able to flourish, during this difficult time. We are thankful for the abundance of generosity in the extra or different work people have taken on and for the positive and caring relationships that support everyone in the parish.

We are seeking your feedback on the way the parish is supporting you. This will assist with planning for the future and help us to maintain flexibility as we move forward.

Could you please respond to the following three questions in as full and detailed way you are able to.

1. *Tell us about the things the parish is doing that are helpful to you in your worship and in your spiritual life.*
2. *Tell us your ideas for anything that is currently happening that you think could be tweaked to make it work better.*
3. *Keeping in mind the limitations of our parish in personnel and finances, and the limitations of COVID, do you have any suggestions about things we could do to further enrich the life of the parish?*

As a prompt, some things you may like to write about include

- The Sunday and weekday services – how we celebrate, music, communion, COVID distancing rules,
- Hospitality – Sundays after church, ideas for community meals and other activities
- Blog – to support worship and the current move to use it to publish Fr Philip's meditation writings
- The pastoral care network and pastoral care both formal and informal

- Keeping in touch with people who are not able to come on Sundays
- The Art Group

How to give us your feedback

EITHER – send your responses by email to alison.mca@gmail.com

OR – if you prefer to remain anonymous, or don't have access to email, pick up a printed sheet at the back of the church and return it to the marked box

Final date for responses

Please have your responses to us **by Sunday 23 August** so we can have a report ready for Annual Vestry Meeting on 30 August.

4. 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.

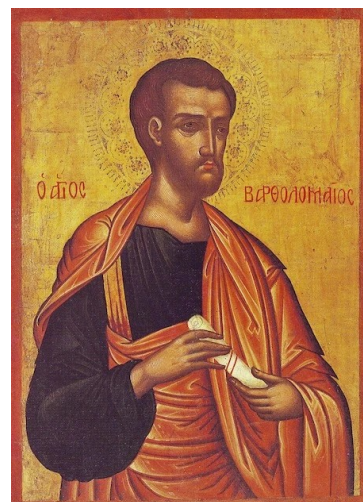
The blog has provided services for the parish during the COVID lockdown and through to the end of July, when we celebrate our patron saint, Mary Magdalene. We will keep publishing services, but not every Sunday. The plan is to publish one service a month on a special feast day - for example, this Sunday we celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary; in September, the Holy Cross; and in October, the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church.

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

5. In the Church's Calendar

This week we celebrate two saints of the early parts of the Christian era, St Bartholomew the apostle, and St Monica, mother of the early church theologian St Augustine.

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" (John 1:49b). 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 1:50b).



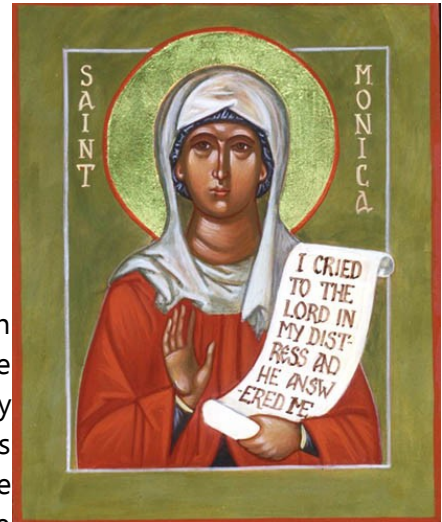
Nathanael did see greater things. He was one of those to whom Jesus appeared on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias after his resurrection (see John 21:1-14). They had been fishing all night without success. In the morning, they saw someone standing on the shore though no one knew it was Jesus. He told 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.

St Monica was born in the city of Tagaste in North Africa. St Augustine was the oldest of her children, and for a time he led an immoral life. For a while, she refused to let him eat or sleep in her house. Then one night she had a vision that assured her Augustine would return to the faith. From that time on, she stayed close to her son, praying and fasting for him.

When he was 29, Augustine decided to go to Rome to teach rhetoric. Monica was determined to go along. One night he told his mother that he was going to the dock to say goodbye to a friend. Instead he set sail for Rome. Monica was heartbroken when she learned of Augustine's trick, but she still followed him. She arrived in Rome only to find that he had left for Milan. Although travel was difficult, Monica pursued him to Milan.



In Milan, Augustine came under the influence of the bishop, Saint Ambrose, who also became Monica's spiritual director. She accepted his advice in everything and had the humility to give up some practices that had become second nature to her. Monica became a leader of the devout women in Milan as she had been in Tagaste.

She continued her prayers for Augustine during his years of instruction. At Easter 387, Saint Ambrose baptized Augustine and several of his friends. Soon after, his party left for Africa. Although no one else was aware of it, Monica knew her life was near the end. She told Augustine, "Son, nothing in this world now affords me delight. I do not know what there is now left for me to do or why I am still here, all my hopes in this world being now fulfilled." She became ill shortly after and suffered severely for nine days before her death.

Almost all we know about St. Monica is in the writings of Saint Augustine, especially his *Confessions*.

6. The Prayer of Manasseh

The Prayer of Manasseh, set in the lectionary as the first reading at Morning Prayer on Thursday in the 12th week after Pentecost, is a penitential prayer attributed to king Manasseh of Judah. It is an apocryphal work, and a reference to the prayer, but not the prayer itself, is made in 2 Chronicles 33:19, which says that the prayer is written in "the annals of the kings of Israel".

- 1 Lord almighty and God of our ancestors,
you who made heaven and earth in all their glory:
 - 2 All things tremble with awe at your presence,
before your great and mighty power.
 - 3 Immeasurable and unsearchable is your promised mercy,
for you are God, Most High.
 - 4 You are full of compassion, long-suffering and very merciful,
and you relent at human suffering.
 - 5 O God, according to your great goodness,
you have promised forgiveness for repentance to those who have sinned against you.
 - 6 The sins I have committed against you
are more in number than the sands of the sea.
 - 7 I am not worthy to look up to the height of heaven,
because of the multitude of my iniquities.
 - 8 And now I bend the knee of my heart before you,
imploping your kindness upon me.
 - 9 I have sinned, O God, I have sinned,
and I acknowledge my transgressions.
 - 10 Unworthy as I am, you will save me,
according to your great mercy.
 - 11 For all the host of heaven sings your praise,
and your glory is for ever and ever.
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7. From the Confessions of St Augustine – on St Monica

Let us gain eternal wisdom

The day was now approaching when my mother Monica would depart from this life; you know that day, Lord, though we did not. She and I happened to be standing by ourselves at a window that overlooked the garden in the courtyard of the house. At the time we were in Ostia on the Tiber. And so the two of us, all alone, were enjoying a very pleasant conversation, "forgetting the past and pushing on to what is ahead.." We were asking one another in the presence of the Truth - for you are the Truth - what it would be like to share the eternal life enjoyed by the saints, which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, which has not even entered into the heart of man." We desired with all our hearts to drink from the streams of your heavenly fountain, the fountain of life.

That was the substance of our talk, though not the exact words. But you know, O Lord, that in the course of our conversation that day, the world and its pleasures lost all their attraction for us. My mother said, "Son, as far as I am concerned, nothing in this life now gives me any pleasure. I do not know why I am still here, since I have no further hopes in this world. I did have one reason for wanting to live a little longer: to see you become a Catholic Christian before I died. God has lavished his gifts on me in that respect, for I know that you have even renounced earthly happiness to be his servant. So what am I doing here?"

I do not really remember how I answered her. Shortly, within five days or thereabouts, she fell sick with a fever. Then one day during the course of her illness she became unconscious and for a while she was unaware of her surroundings. My brother and I rushed to her side, but she regained consciousness quickly. She looked at us as we stood there and asked in a puzzled voice: "Where was I?"

We were overwhelmed with grief, but she held her gaze steadily upon us, and spoke further: "Here you shall bury your mother." I remained silent as I held back my tears. However, my brother haltingly expressed his hope that she might not die in a strange country but in her own land, since her end would be happier there. When she heard this, her face was filled with anxiety, and she reproached him with a glance because he had entertained such earthly thoughts. Then she looked at me and spoke: "Look what he is saying." Thereupon she said to both of us, "Bury my body wherever you will; let not care of it cause you any concern. One thing only I ask you, that you remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you may be."

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 Okrika (Nigeria) and Bungoma (Kenya). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of the Riverina; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Sudanese congregation in the Parish of Elizabeth.

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 and Chris.

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, St Bartholomew, St Monica, 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, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

