

**St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church**  
Moore Street, Adelaide

**An open, welcoming and inclusive community  
in the heart of the City of Adelaide**



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## **Keeping Community Spiritual Resources & Reflections**

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**Thursday 20 July 2023**

Dear friends,

This newsletter was developed as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold and our ability to gather for worship was so severely challenged. Thanks be to God, we are now able to gather together to celebrate the Word and Sacraments, and to come to church for private prayer. But the demand for and appeal of these newsletters has continued.

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 provide some resources for prayer and reflection: enjoy!



### **1. Fr Steven writes ... A Very Special Vestry**

Thank you to all those who contributed to the Special Vestry Meeting on 9 July. Thanks, once again, to our wonderful catering and cleaning-up team. Moreover, if you were not able to be there on Sunday, this is your chance to join in.

At the Special Vestry, we began to develop our parish's theology, where theology is about our shared reflections on life and faith. It is important to do this for its intrinsic worth, but it will also help in the future with planning and priorities.

In technical terms, we are developing an ecclesiology. Ecclesiology is a theology about what it means to be a church. It comes from the word *ecclesia*, which means *assembly*, and it is derived from ancient Greek democratic gatherings in the public square. The apostle Paul uses the term as a way of describing the church, where *church* means an open assembly rather than a building (e.g., Galatians).

Our theology encompasses our experience and our questions, as well as Scripture, tradition, and reason. In the spirit of Rahner's notion that God works from the inside out, we began on Sunday by sharing our values and our passions. Specifically, I was asking about our core values. Here are the key ideas/themes from Sunday:

- Acceptance, an open space, a multi-space, welcoming, learning, sacramentality, inclusion, questioning, clarity, service, volunteering, reflection, advocacy, challenging, witnessing, mystery, divine other, liturgy, music, arts, past-present, capacity to make public statements.

I am putting these ideas/themes in a format (below) we can work build on. I am also inviting you to reflect on this, passing on to me your questions, comments, and suggestions as this is a living document. I have added some theological commentary: -

- St Mary Magdalene's is a welcoming and inclusive Anglican faith community. We follow Jesus, the human one, who worked and died for others in the name of love. His humanity, compassion, and courage shape our faith and practice.
- As a faith community, we are part of a (holy) open space. This is a space for learning, sharing, growing, caring, grieving, and celebrating. We are committed to a life of care, generous service in the church and the wider community. This care is grounded in a commitment to love, social justice, challenging injustice, and advocacy in the public square.
- We are grounded in the life of divine mystery, the divine other, which is disclosed to us in the life of Jesus, and his friends from Galilee. We know and celebrate this mystery in daily life, in friendship and in solitude, in our liturgies, our music, and the arts. All this represents, what we call our sacramental view of life, which is honoured in our sharing of bread and wine.

Please let me know what you think.

Fr Steven

## 2. Fr Steven writes ... "The Conversation" Discussion Group

The Conversation is a discussion group, where the group's questions and aspirations set the agenda. It is based on adult-learning principles, with theological and biblical input from me.

In the first week (6 July), we canvassed a range of issues, focusing on the complexity of human experience, the nature of suffering, and our shared humanity. From this, we came up with discussion points for rest of the series. The remaining topics are:

### July 20

The importance of good ritual. The role of story and symbol in the life of a faith community. How does this relate to the liturgical year? Good ritual is sustaining and renewing, so, what does it take to surprise us? What does it mean to say ritual is premised on divine mystery?

### July 27

What about the Church? In the fourth century, under Constantine, it became "institutionalized" amplifying problems of power and politics in the church. How do we live creatively with our institution? The importance of church as an *ekklesia* (an open space). How do we relate to other denominations? Other faiths?

### August 3

An exploration of mystery. The importance of "Aha!" experiences. What is holiness then? Understanding the limits of monotheism? New concepts: *an-arche* and *aleph*. Understanding the Trinity as symbol and story. What about love, forgiveness, and new beginnings?

**Thursday mornings at 10 in the mission hall. All welcome.**

Fr Steven

### 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 *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are available in either a fixed form (pp 3-33) or a form for each day of the week (pp 383-424).

#### Online Resources

There is an 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, especially 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. Celebrating Mary Magdalene in 2023 - 22-23 July

The Feast of St Mary Magdalene falls each year on 22 July. This year that is a Saturday, and there will be commemorations both on the day and on the following Sunday.

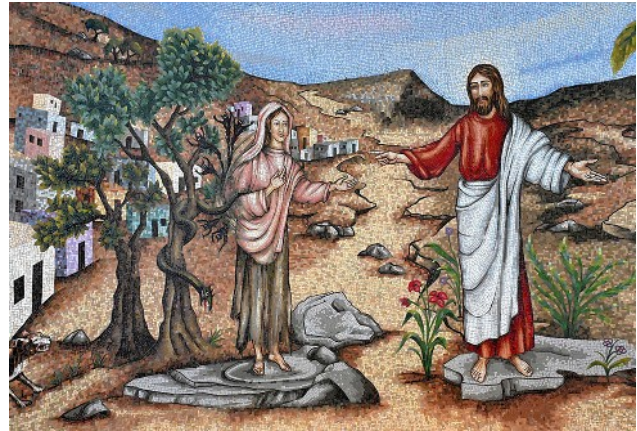
On **Saturday 22 July** the Parish is rostered to provide the meal at the Mary Mags Dinner. The arrangements for cooking and volunteering on the night are in hand, but some additional donations of cash would be welcome. Please see Heather Carter on Sundays after Mass.

On **Sunday 23 July** we celebrate the Feast of St Mary Magdalene. Mass will be at the usual time of 10 am, and will be followed by a slap-up morning tea, as befits the occasion. We plan to have some special music on the day, as we celebrate Mary Magdalene and her pioneering witness to the Resurrection.

## 6. This Week in the Calendar

This week, we remember three saints from the time of Our Lord: St Mary Magdalene, St James the Apostle, and St Anne, mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

What do we really know about **St Mary Magdalene**? Mary first appears in the Bible around A.D. 25 in Capernaum, a fishing town on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus is rapidly gaining a reputation as a healer. A few years older than Jesus and Jewish as well, she has made her way from Magdala (the origin of her name Magdalene), and came across, or perhaps sought out, Jesus and his followers. Jesus exorcised the demons that afflicted her, ending her psychological torments.



Although Luke speaks of Mary as one of the women who provide for Jesus "out of their means," the Gospel does not say she is rich, like Joanna, another follower, who is married to King Herod's steward. It is certainly possible, as Magdala had long been the most important city on the western bank of the lake, though by the time of Jesus' ministry it was in decline, after Herod built Tibertias on the other side of the lake. But it is equally likely that she was of modest means, for much of the population of Magdala were relatively poor fishermen.

After Jesus cures her, Mary becomes the most influential woman in his movement. She is unquestionably one of Jesus's most faithful followers, witnessing the Crucifixion with his mother, Mary, while the male apostles flee to avoid arrest. In all four New Testament Gospels, Mary Magdalene is the first (either alone or with a group of women) to arrive at Jesus's tomb, where she encounters an angel (or a pair of angels) who instructs her to go tell the disciples that Jesus has risen.

In John, she later encounters the resurrected Christ, who warns her not to touch him, perhaps because he is an intangible spirit, not flesh and blood. In works by Giotto, Fra Angelico, and others, a joyous but frustrated Mary reaches to Christ with intense longing, so near yet so far.

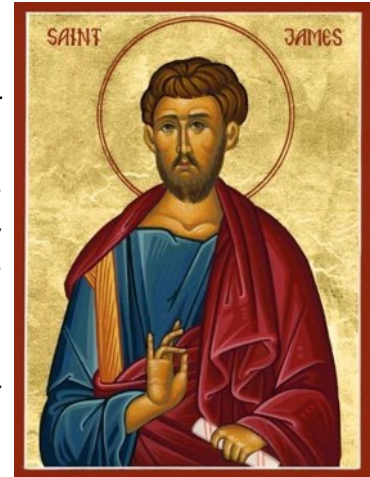
It is not by chance that Mary Magdalene is among the first to learn of Jesus's rebirth. Surely, the divine prophet who foresaw his own crucifixion also foresaw the witnesses of his resurrection; in a sense, Jesus chose Mary Magdalene as the herald of his return. For her pivotal role in the Resurrection, she became known as "the apostle to the apostles," a figure powerful enough to chide the apostles to follow Jesus's command to preach to nonbelievers, despite the risks.

Mary Magdalene's importance as the first witness and proclaimer of the resurrection was for centuries overshadowed by her mis-identification with an unnamed "sinner" in Chapter 7 of St Luke's Gospel. In that story, a woman bathes Jesus' feet with her tears, anoints them with ointment from her alabaster jar, and dries them with her hair. The waters get even muddier when this unnamed sinner gets lumped in with another Mary—Mary of Bethany, Martha and Lazarus' sister—who also anoints Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair.

The penitent, reformed Mary Magdalene is a symbol that's proven difficult to abandon. But the visionary Mary, full of faith at the foot of the cross and messenger of the Resurrection, a founding disciple entrusted by Jesus with a special mission to spread God's word, carries the greater ring of truth.

**St James** is the brother of John the Evangelist. This James, sometimes called James the Greater, is not to be confused with James the Lesser or with the author of the New Testament Letter of James, who was a leader of the Jerusalem community.

James and John were called by Jesus as they worked with their father in a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had already called another pair of brothers from a similar occupation: Peter and Andrew. “Jesus walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him” (Mark 1:19-20).



James was one of the favoured three who had the privilege of witnessing the Transfiguration, the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus, and the agony in Gethsemani.

Two incidents in the Gospels describe the temperament of this man and his brother. St Matthew tells that their mother came—Mark says it was the brothers themselves—to ask that they have the seats of honour in the kingdom. “Jesus said in reply, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?’ They said to him, ‘We can!’” (Matthew 20:22). Jesus then told them they would indeed drink the cup and share his baptism of pain and death, but that sitting at his right hand or left was not his to give—it “is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father” (Matthew 20:23b). It remained to be seen how long it would take to realize the implications of their confident “We can!”

The other disciples became indignant at the ambition of James and John. Then Jesus taught them all the lesson of humble service: The purpose of authority is to serve. They are not to impose their will on others, or lord it over them. This is the position of Jesus himself. He was the servant of all; the service imposed on him was the supreme sacrifice of his own life.

On another occasion, James and John gave evidence that the nickname Jesus gave them —“sons of thunder”—was an apt one. The Samaritans would not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to hated Jerusalem. “When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, ‘Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?’ Jesus turned and rebuked them...” (Luke 9:54-55).

James was apparently the first of the apostles to be martyred. “About that time King Herod laid hands upon some members of the church to harm them. He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also” (Acts 12:1-3a). According to medieval legend, James was not permitted to be buried in his own land, and his remains were brought to north-western Spain for burial, where they were lost. In the year 813, the light of a bright star guided a shepherd to his burial site in Compostela. A magnificent shrine was built, and the city itself became known as Santiago (Santa Iago/St James). Today, his remains can still be found in the cathedral that bears his name.

The way the Gospels treat the apostles is a good reminder of what holiness is all about. There is very little about their virtues as static possessions, entitling them to heavenly reward. Rather, the great emphasis is on the Kingdom, on God’s giving them the power to proclaim the Good News.



**St Anne and St Joachim.** In the Scriptures, Matthew and Luke furnish a family history of Jesus, tracing ancestry to show that Jesus is the culmination of great promises.

Not only is his mother's family neglected, we also know nothing factual about them except that they existed.

Even the names of Mary's parents, "Anne" and "Joachim" come from a legendary source written more than a century after Jesus died.



Of the two, St Anne has been by far the greater subject of devotion, presumably because of her maternal association with the Blessed Virgin Mary. The two are, nonetheless, commemorated together.

The heroism and holiness of these people however, is inferred from the whole family atmosphere around Mary in the Scriptures. Whether we rely on the legends about Mary's childhood or make guesses from the information in the Bible, we see in her a fulfilment of many generations of prayerful persons, herself steeped in the religious traditions of her people.

The strong character of Mary in making decisions, her continuous practice of prayer, her devotion to the laws of her faith, her steadiness at moments of crisis, and her devotion to her relatives—all indicate a close-knit, loving family that looked forward to the next generation even while retaining the best of the past.

Anne, and her husband Joachim—whether these are their real names or not—represent that entire quiet series of generations who faithfully perform their duties, practice their faith, and establish an atmosphere for the coming of the Messiah, but remain obscure.

This is the "feast of grandparents." It reminds grandparents of their responsibility to establish a tone for generations to come: they must make the traditions live and offer them as a promise to little children. But the feast has a message for the younger generation as well. It reminds the young that older people's greater perspective, depth of experience, and appreciation of life's profound rhythms are all part of a wisdom not to be taken lightly or ignored.

## 7. **St Mary Magdalene - from a Homily on the Gospels by St Gregory the Great**

*She longed for Christ, though she thought he had been taken away*

When Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and did not find the Lord's body, she thought it had been taken away and so informed the disciples. After they came and saw the tomb, they too believed what Mary had told them. The text then says: "The disciples went back home," and it adds: "but Mary wept and remained standing outside the tomb."

We should reflect on Mary's attitude and the great love she felt for Christ; for though the disciples had left the tomb, she remained. She was still seeking the one she had not found, and while she sought she wept; burning with the fire of love, she longed for him who she thought had been taken away. And so it happened that the woman who stayed behind to seek Christ was the only one to see him. For perseverance is essential to any good deed, as the voice of truth tells us: "Whoever perseveres to the end will be saved."

At first she sought but did not find, but when she persevered it happened that she found what she was looking for. When our desires are not satisfied, they grow stronger, and becoming stronger they take hold of their object. Holy desires likewise grow with anticipation, and if they do not grow they are not really desires. Anyone who succeeds in attaining the truth has burned with such a great love. As David says: "My soul has thirsted for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?" And so also in the Song of Songs the Church says: "I was wounded by love;" and again: "My soul is melted with love."

"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" She is asked why she is sorrowing so that her desire might be strengthened; for when she mentions whom she is seeking, her love is kindled all the more ardently.

"Jesus says to her: Mary." Jesus is not recognised when he calls her "woman"; so he calls her by name, as though he were saying: Recognise me as I recognise you; for I do not know you as I know others; I know you as yourself. And so Mary, once addressed by name, recognises who is speaking. She immediately calls him "rabboni," that is to say, "teacher," because the one whom she sought outwardly was the one who inwardly taught her to keep on searching.

## 8. **St James – from a Homily on the Gospel of Matthew by St John Chrysostom**

### Sharers in the suffering of Christ

The sons of Zebedee press Christ: "Promise that one may sit at your right side and the other at your left." What does he do? He wants to show them that it is not a spiritual gift for which they are asking, and that if they knew what their request involved, they would never dare make it. So he says: "You do not know what you are asking," that is, what a great and splendid thing it is and how much beyond the reach even of the heavenly powers. Then he continues: "Can you drink the cup which I must drink and be baptised with the baptism which I must undergo?" He is saying: "You talk of sharing honours and rewards with me, but I must talk of struggle and toil. Now is not the time for rewards or the time for my glory to be revealed. Earthly life is the time for bloodshed, war and danger".

Consider how by his manner of questioning he exhorts and draws them. He does not say: "Can you face being slaughtered? Can you shed your blood?" How does he put his question? "Can you drink the cup?" Then he makes it attractive by adding: "which I must drink," so that the prospect of sharing it with him may make them more eager. He also calls his suffering a baptism, to show that it will effect a great cleansing of the entire world. The disciples answer him: "We can!" Fervour makes them answer promptly, though they really do not know what they are saying but still think they will receive what they ask for.

How does Christ reply? "You will indeed drink my cup and be baptised with my baptism." He is really prophesying a great blessing for them, since he is telling them: "You will be found worthy of martyrdom; you will suffer what I suffer and end your life with a violent death, thus sharing all with me. "But seats at my right and left are not mine to give; they belong to those for whom the Father has prepared them." Thus, after lifting their minds to higher goals and preparing them to meet and overcome all that will make them desolate, he sets them straight on their request.

"Then the other ten became angry at the two brothers." See how imperfect they all are: the two who tried to get ahead of the other ten, and the ten who were jealous of the two! But, as I said before, show them to me at a later date in their lives, and you will see that all these impulses and feelings have disappeared. Read how John, the very man who here asks for the first place, will always yield to Peter when it comes to preaching and performing miracles in

the Acts of the Apostles. James, for his part, was not to live very much longer; for from the beginning he was inspired by great fervour and, setting aside all purely human goals, rose to such splendid heights that he straightway suffered martyrdom.

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## 9. St Anne and St Joachim – from a Homily by St John Damascene

### *By their fruits you will know them*

Joachim and Anne, how blessed a couple! All creation is indebted to you. For at your hands the Creator was offered a gift excelling all other gifts: the woman, Mary, who alone was worthy of him. And so rejoice, Anne, rejoice, Joachim, because from your daughter *a child is born for us, a son is given us, whose name is Messenger of great counsel and universal salvation, mighty God*. For this child is God.

Joachim and Anne, how blessed a couple! You will be known by the fruit you have borne, as the Lord says: *By their fruits you will know them*. The conduct of your life pleased God and was worthy of your daughter. For by the holy life you led together, you have fashioned a true jewel.

Joachim and Anne, how blessed a couple! You achieved with God's help something which transcends nature in giving the world the Virgin Mother of God as your daughter. While leading a holy life in your human nature, you gave birth to a daughter nobler than the angels, whose queen she now is. Girl of utter beauty and delight, daughter of Adam and mother of God. Blessed the arms that carried you, and blessed your parents in their life and in their love. *Rejoice in God, all the earth. Sing, exult and sing hymns*. Raise your voice, raise it and be not afraid.

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## 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.*

*Pray for the world.* For the leaders of the world as they seek to respond to the challenges that beset the international community. For refugees and asylum seekers, that they may find places of safety and welcome. For all who work for peace and justice. For reconciliation with the first custodians of this land.

*Pray for the church.* For all those who are striving to be church in the modern world, that we may be alert to the signs of the times and their interpretation in the light of the Gospel. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of the Virgin Islands (Episcopal Church). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Riverina, for Anglican Chaplains in Private Hospitals including the Adelaide Clinic, Burnside Hospital, St Andrew's Hospital, Philip Kennedy Centre.

*Pray for our local community.* For the Collective as it manages the delivery of the Saturday Night Mary Mags Dinner. For the Magdalene Centre, its customers, staff and volunteers, as they minister in God's name among those in crisis and in need of support and assistance.

*Pray for those in need.* Pray for all those who are troubled in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Sim, Jasmin, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Olivia, Nance, Neil, Elaine, Neil, Hugh, Bart O'Donovan (priest) and Prue O'Donovan (Priest).

*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 Jennifer Wilson, Jane Wilson, and James King, 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 James, St Anne, St Joachim, and holy women and men of every time and place.

This newsletter will normally be distributed weekly on Tuesday. 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.

#### Directory

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Hon Assisting Priests	Revd Sr Juliana SI, Fr Philip Carter, Fr Graeme Kaines
Churchwardens	Peter Burdon ☎ 0414 471 894, Alison McAllister ☎ 0433 551 267
Parish Council	The Priest and Wardens <i>ex officio</i> ; Catherine Freriks, Alison McAllister, Hamish McLachlan, Peter Turner.
Nomination Committee	John Dow, Catherine Freriks, Annemarie Van Putten
Synod Representatives	Ashley Durham, Catherine Freriks