

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 21 July 2022

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions makes it possible to offer the church for private prayer and public worship. Sunday Mass is sung at 10 am; and on Thursday, the Angelus is said at noon followed by 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, so we will continue to produce these news bulletins for now.



1. From Fr Steven – Feedback Wanted!

Dear parishioners

This week we celebrate our patron, Mary Magdalene. Of that, more below, but first, a request for your feedback.

The two in-person and on-line courses we have had this year have been very well received and indicate a desire for free discussion and debate - so I am thinking about further offerings.

August discussions?

What about a four-week course on Thursdays in August on Genesis 1-11? It would be called "In the beginning". We would have an evening group on Zoom, and a morning group at Bocelli (Bici is under repair). With COVID concerns, Bocelli has outside tables with heaters. The 4 topics would be

- In the image of God (Gen 1)
- The getting of wisdom (Gen 2-3)
- Sibling rivalry (Gen 4)
- Insidious entitlement (Gen 11:1-9)

Monthly forum?

I have had a few parishioners express interest in a long-term monthly discussion forum. What about beginning in September? On the first Tuesday or Thursday morning of the month? You set the agenda, asking the big questions?

Your feedback on either or both of the above will be very welcome.

Mary Magdalene in context

Thanks in no small measure to the work of the Catholic feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, many Christians have reclaimed Mary Magdalene as a courageous leader (Jn 20:1-18). Indeed, we are a resurrection people.

Fiorenza is a brilliant New Testament scholar, who is interested in the transformation of individuals and communities, which is expressed in terms of emancipation and inclusion. In Fiorenza, the transformation is inclusive, recognizing the dignity of all persons. We are all persons with rights, like the right to equality and justice. We are persons with agency, who are capable of thinking, choosing, and acting.

In terms of her theology of transformation, then, Fiorenza does not necessarily refer to the term *transformation*, but the outcome of emancipation and empowerment reveals deep transformation at personal and cultural levels. For her, you cannot have personal transformation without cultural (political) transformation. So, the "structures of domination" must be named, and dismantled.

Fiorenza has a deep sense of conviction about our call to divine resistance. To this end, she has developed an integrated set of concepts. They are integrated by her theological vision for human and social transformation. The key theological premise in her work is found in the notion of the reign (Greek *basilea*) of God. This is the creative and emancipatory presence of God in world. Its central image is that of a festive meal. In fact, the symbolic realization of the *basileia* vision of Jesus is not the cultic meal, but the festive table of the wedding feast.

The category of empire becomes increasingly important for Fiorenza. With ancient Rome, for example, empire shapes our social structures. With modern Western culture, empire gives birth to the strongman, like Trump and Putin. In response, we are called to counter "the language of empire". This also has practical implications. That is, the church is called to incarnate a space of freedom as a radical alternative to empire.

In conclusion, by putting Mary Magdalene in context, we realize her significance as a prominent and courageous leader in the early church. She worked side by side with Jesus, and his friends, in the cause of emancipation. She brings good news of radical transformation, which has personal and social implications. She is first among the apostles.

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.

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

This week the church has its annual memorials of three figures from the earliest days of the Church: St Mary Magdalene (22 July), the apostle James (25 July), and St Anne and St Joachim, the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary (26 July).

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 figures prominently in rituals of healing and anointing, practices intended to invoke the Holy Spirit. In one episode in Mark, where she seems to foreshadow Jesus's burial, she incurs the wrath of some of the disciples for pouring expensive spikenard ointment over Jesus's head. We could have sold the ointment and used the money to help the poor, they complain. Sternly upbraiding them, Jesus praises Mary for her beautiful gesture. "For you always have the poor with you," he says, "but you will not always have me. She has anointed my body beforehand for burying."

Mary Magdalene 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.

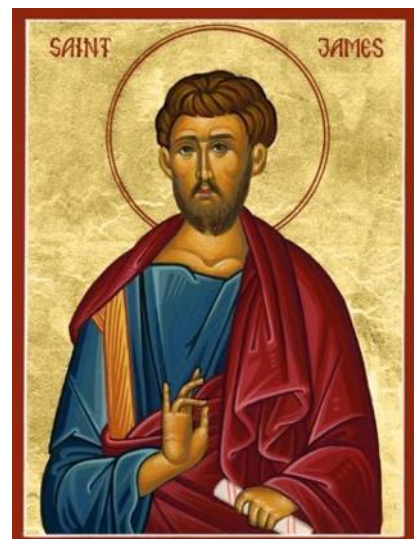
In John, she later encounters the resurrected Christ, who warns her not to touch him, perhaps because he is an intangible spirit, not flesh and blood. In works by Giotto, Fra Angelico, and others, a joyous but frustrated Mary reaches to Christ with intense longing, so near yet so far.

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.

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 Letter of James and the 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. Saint 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).

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. As far as their personal lives are concerned, there is much about Jesus’ purifying them of narrowness, pettiness, fickleness.

In the Scriptures, Matthew and Luke furnish a legal 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.

9. St Anne – 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! While safeguarding the chastity prescribed by the law of nature, 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.

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.

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 Maseno North (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Rockhampton, Chris McLeod; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Bishops' Pastoral Chaplain, Janet Phillips.

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, Sim, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Neil, Olivia, Elaine and David,

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 Margaret Banham, and those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time, especially Gillian Boyce, Jonathan Carter and May Edwards. ✠ *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 Thursday. Any appropriate items should be emailed to the Parish Office, StMMAdeelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.