

# 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 22 July 2021

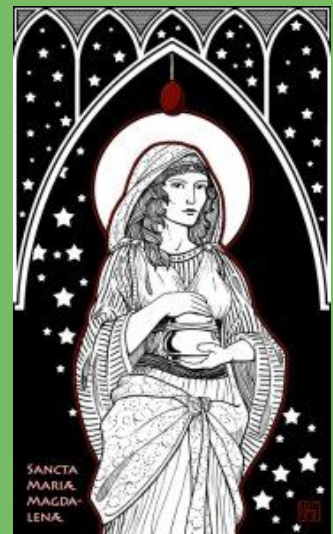
Dear friends,

**The Premier has announced that from 6 pm on Tuesday 20 July, SA will enter a 7 day snap lockdown to safeguard against the spread of COVID-19 in the community.**

These restrictions mean, in summary, that everyone except essential workers must stay at home; that community activities will cease; and that masks must be worn in all public places.

The church and hall and all activities, including public worship, will cease during this period. This means that our annual celebration of St Mary Magdalene sadly cannot be observed publicly.

We will respond to this challenge as we have done before. Please keep an eye on the [web page](#) and the [blog](#) for further information.



### 1. From Fr Gwilym – Looking for Mary Magdalene

Open your mind's eye and take a look at Mary Magdalene, whose feast day is today, 2 July. How do you see her? Imagine her as a woman standing in front of you. What is she like? What is her character? Who is she for you?



The first picture I have is a wonderful wooden statue by Donatello, made in 1550, which shows Mary as a repentant sinner.

She is very thin, her body wasted away with sin and suffering. She is dressed in rags which hang lifelessly around her as a sign of humility and repentance.

Her hair is lank and untidy, long and uncared for – repentant sinners have no pride.

Her face is bony and anguished, streaked with tears and racked with pain.

Her eyes are fixed, begging for mercy, and her hands are raised in prayer, her long, thin fingers touching each other lightly as if all her hopes now lie with Christ's mercy.

Fifty years after Donatello's statue, the great artist Caravaggio, painted a picture of the wealthy and influential Mary Magdalene talking to Martha (this relates to the assumption that the Mary who is the sister of Martha is the same person as Mary Magdalene, which we know is not the case, but the story stands.) Mary is dressed in luxurious clothing, with wonderful red sleeves where the artist was showing how clever he was at painting the folds of the material and the light and shade. Mary is a beautiful and young, her low cut bodice revealing smooth and perfect skin. Mary has her left hand on top of a large mirror, while with her right hand she holds a white flower up to her breast as if daring Martha to make the comparison between white flower and white skin.



The third picture is an icon written by Robert Lenz in 1988, for Christ church, New York, on the occasion of the consecration of Barbara Harris as bishop. Mary is shown as a Middle Eastern woman, holding and pointing to an egg. The Eastern Orthodox tradition tells us that after the Ascension, because of her high social standing, she journeyed to Rome to the court of Tiberius Caesar. She told Caesar that Jesus had risen from the dead. To help explain His resurrection she picked up an egg from the dinner table. Caesar responded that a human being could no more rise from the dead than the egg in her hand could turn red. The egg instantly turned blood red. The icon shows her serious, confident face, her eyes holding the gaze of the Emperor.

But there is another old story that Mary Magdalene went to France where she established a church and retired to live out her days in a grotto on the high hill of Saint Baume near Marseille. An unknown artist, working in the same century as Donatello and Caravaggio, painted a picture of Mary Magdalene preaching to the people. The artist has chosen to show Mary Magdalene as a mature woman. She is healthy, strong and utterly at ease with herself and the task of preaching. Her face is wise and comforting – she could be someone's mother. Her face is familiar with life and death, with crucifixion, burial and resurrection. And around her there are men and women of every age, listening to her words and talking about the message she has brought them. The scene is outside, surrounded by flowers and trees and the glories of nature. It is perfectly natural for this middle-aged woman to be telling the wonders of God's mercy to God's beloved children.



Over the centuries, Mary Magdalene has been a controversial figure. She has been depicted as a desperate and repentant sinner; a confident woman of power and privilege, a close intimate of Jesus (and according to one tradition, his wife.). She has been seen as the Apostle to the Apostles, first witness of the Resurrection. She is said to have visited Europe, where she became a noted preacher, preaching to the wealthy and powerful princes of the country which later became France. She has been used to denigrate women and she has become the champion of feminists.

For me, however, amongst all these vicissitudes, she has been for me a symbol of confident hope. Whether she turned to Christ for her salvation; became his supporter and companion; proclaimed the message of the Resurrection to the Apostles, the French Nobles or the Emperor in Rome, there is a confidence about Mary. She knew what she was doing and she knew where her hope and her future lay.

May we have that same confidence and hope on our journey of faith.

Gwilym Henry-Edwards  
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 we cannot attend at the church at the present time, 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

Fr Gwilym 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 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.

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#### 4. In the Church's Calendar

Today we celebrate our patron, St Mary Magdalene. As Fr Gwilym points out in his reflection, she has been characterised in many ways in the course of history. Much of this can be attributed to a great saint of the Christian church, Gregory the Great. But what do we know about 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. Afflicted with "seven demons," this single woman is probably 25 or 26. 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, 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.

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## 5. 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.* For all those who are challenged to be church in a different and unfamiliar way. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Diocese of Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Tasmania; and within our own Diocese, for the Parish of Tea Tree Gully.

*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. 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, Sym, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, Fr Gary Priest, Fr Bart O'Donovan, Beth, Linda, and Fr Peter Garland.

*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 Elly Bechaz, Joyce Walkley (late of Henley Beach), Fr Colin Mason, and Albert Brunstrom (late of Port Adelaide), 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, 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, [omarymag@anglicaresa.com.au](mailto:omarymag@anglicaresa.com.au), by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

