

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 24 August 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. "Mystery, Community, Creativity" - Developing a theology and practice of adaptation

The **Season of Creation** is an annual global movement where Christian communities pray and act to care for God's creation. It arose out of a proclamation in 1989 by the Ecumenical Patriarch that September 1 would be the "Orthodox Day of Prayer for Creation". Subsequently, the World Council of Churches extended the celebration until October 4, the feast day of St Francis of Assisi. In turn, in 2015 Pope Francis formalised the observance of the Season of Creation in the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in the light of his Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* "on care for our common home."

We will reflect on the themes of the Season of Creation throughout September. As Chair of the Diocesan Climate Action Working Group, I will be preaching in the Cathedral on Sunday 3 September. Then on Sundays 10, 17 and 24 September, I will present a three-part series of reflections at St Mary Magdalene's during the 10 am Mass.

We are over doom-saying climate statistics. We need new ways of thinking and living. In challenging times, then, we need to be grounded in the mystery of love, building compassionate communities, and working together with creativity. This series of reflections on mystery, community and creativity will be based on the following themes

10 September - Grounded in mystery

17 September - In Community: Lone heroes do not apply

24 September - With Creativity: A spirituality about love, curiosity, and trees

As ever, all are welcome.

Fr Steven

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 *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 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.

3. 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://stmarymagdalenesadeladeide.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.

4. *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*

"Laudato si', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord." These are the words that open Pope Francis' encyclical on ecology and care for God's creation. These words, quoting St. Francis of Assisi's beautiful canticle, remind us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

The Pope clarified the meaning of the encyclical in this way: *"This culture of care for the environment is not simply a 'green' — I say it in the true sense of the word — attitude, it isn't just a 'green' attitude, it's much more than that. Taking care of the environment means having an attitude of human ecology. That is, we cannot say that mankind is here and Creation, the environment, is there. Ecology is total, it's human. This is what I sought to express in the Encyclical Laudato Si': we cannot be separated from the rest; there is a relationship which is reciprocally influential, both the environment on the person, and the person in a way which affects the environment; and the effect bounces back to us when the environment is mistreated. For this reason, in response to a question I was asked I said: 'No, it's not a 'green' encyclical, it's a social encyclical'. For in society, in the social life of humankind, we cannot forget to take care of the environment. Moreover, looking after the environment is a social attitude, which socializes us, in one sense or another — each person can give it the meaning*

they choose—on the other hand, it enables us to welcome Creation, what we are given as a gift, namely, the environment”.

Pope Francis’ encyclical letter *Laudato Si’* was released in June 2015. Five years later, in 2020, Pope Francis invited all people of good will to celebrate its fifth anniversary by protecting families and future generations through action to care for our common home. Here are themes that Pope Francis highlighted in *Laudato Si’* which require our urgent response today.

- **A Moral and Spiritual Challenge.** The ecological crisis, Pope Francis writes, is a summons to profound interior conversion—to renew our relationships with God, one another, and the created world.
- **Care for God’s Creation.** God created the world and entrusted it to us as a gift. Now we have the responsibility to care for and protect it and all people, who are part of creation. Protecting human dignity is strongly linked to care for creation.
- **We are All Connected.** We are connected to the rest of the human family, to the created world, and to those who will come after us in future generations.
- **Impact on the Poor.** People in poverty have contributed least to climate change, yet they are disproportionately impacted by it. As a result of excessive use of natural resource by wealthy nations, those who are poor experience pollution, lack of access to clean water, hunger, and more.
- **Called to Solidarity.** We are one human family and have a shared responsibility for others and for creation. Wealthy countries have a responsibility to reduce consumption of non-renewal resources and should help poorer nations develop in sustainable ways.
- **Technological and economic development** must serve human beings and enhance human dignity, instead of creating an economy of exclusion, so that all people have access to what is needed for authentic human development.
- **Supporting Life, Protecting Creation.** Concern for nature is incompatible with failure to protect vulnerable human beings, such as unborn children, people with disabilities, or victims of human trafficking.
- **A Time to Act.** Pope Francis calls for a change in lifestyle and consumption. We can make important changes as individuals, families, and communities, and as civil and political leaders.
- **Hope and Joy.** “Injustice is not invincible” and we act knowing that we seek to live out God’s vision of renewed relationships with God, ourselves, one another, and creation.

Beyond *Laudato Si’*

Just this week, on Monday 21 August, Pope Francis said he is writing a second part of the *Laudato si’* encyclical to update it to “current issues”. It will focus in particular on the most recent extreme weather events and catastrophes affecting people across five continents.

A Prayer

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good,

advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out.

O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen.

5. This Week in the Calendar

In the coming week we celebrate the apostle St Bartholomew, the early church Saint Monica and her son, St Augustine of Hippo, bishop and teacher, and the death of St John the Baptist.

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.

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.

Monica arrived in Rome only to find that Augustine had left for Milan. Although travel was difficult, Monica followed him there. 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. Shortly following his departure, she became ill and died.

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

St Augustine of Hippo (28 August) is a prophet for today, trumpeting the need to scrap escapisms and stand face-to-face with personal responsibility and dignity. A Christian at 33, a priest at 36, a bishop at 41: Augustine lived his life with great intensity, whether his path led away from or toward God. The tears of his mother, his instruction at the feet of St Ambrose and, most of all, God himself speaking to him in the Scriptures, redirected Augustine's love of life to a life of love.

Augustine turned with a "holy fierceness" against the politically, socially, and morally corrupt leaders and institutions of his time. In his day, Augustine providentially fulfilled the office of prophet. Like Jeremiah and other greats, he was hard-pressed but could not keep quiet.

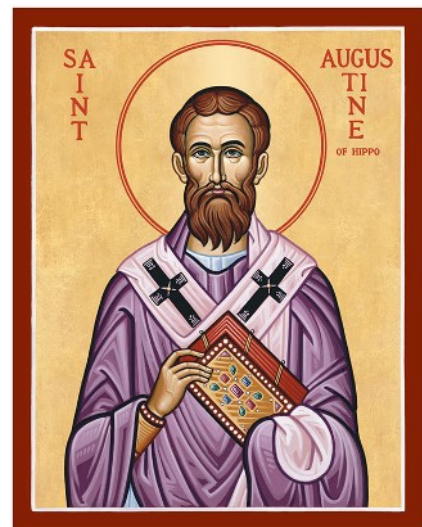
Augustine's writings are best known for their heroic assault on weak theology. But two of the most important subjects of Augustine's writings—at least in terms of subsequent history—were on the nature of the church and on grace.

St John the Baptist is among the few saints of the church who is celebrated both for his birth and his death.

The drunken oath of King Herod, with his shallow sense of honour, Salome's seductive dance and the hateful heart of Queen Herodias, combined to bring about the martyrdom of John the Baptist.

The greatest of prophets suffered the fate of so many Old Testament prophets before him: rejection and martyrdom.

The "voice crying in the desert" did not hesitate to accuse the guilty, did not hesitate to speak the truth. But why? What possesses anyone that they would give up their very life? John the Baptist, perhaps more than any other, points the way to Christ.



John's life and death were a giving over of self for God and other people. His simple style of life was one of complete detachment from earthly possessions. His heart was centred on God and the call that he heard from the Spirit of God speaking to his heart. Confident of God's grace, he had the courage to speak words of condemnation, repentance, and salvation.

6. On the Feast of St Bartholomew - from a homily on the apostles by St John Chrysostom

The weakness of God is strength

It was clear through unlearned people 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 the plain, the uneducated into philosophers. How the foolishness of God is wiser than God's people, and his weakness stronger than theirs!

In what way is it stronger? It made its way throughout the world and overcame all; countless people 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 God's 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 the weakness of God's people.* That the preaching of these people 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 those 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 and timid, 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 those, 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.

7. St Monica - from the Confessions of St Augustine

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." Once our mother had expressed this desire as best she could, she fell silent as the pain of her illness increased.

8. From the Confessions of St Augustine

O eternal truth, true love, and beloved eternity

Urged to reflect upon myself, I entered under your guidance into the inmost depth of my soul. I was able to do so because *you were my helper*. On entering into myself I saw, as it were with the eye of the soul, what was beyond the eye of the soul, beyond my spirit: your immutable light. It was not the ordinary light perceptible to all flesh, nor was it merely something of greater magnitude but still essentially akin, shining more clearly and diffusing itself everywhere by its intensity. No, it was something entirely distinct, something altogether different from all these things; and it did not rest above my mind as oil on the surface of water, nor was it above me as heaven is above the earth. This light was above me because it had made me; I was below it because I was created by it. He who has come to know the truth knows this light.

O Eternal truth, true love and beloved eternity. You are my God. To you do I sigh day and night. When I first came to know you, you drew me to yourself so that I might see that there were things for me to see, but that I myself was not yet ready to see them. Meanwhile you overcame the weakness of my vision, sending forth most strongly the beams of your light, and I trembled at once with love and dread. I learned that I was in a region unlike yours and far distant from you, and I thought I heard your voice from on high: "I am the food of grown men;

grow then, and you will feed on me. Nor will you change me into yourself like bodily food, but you will be changed into me.”

I sought a way to gain the strength which I needed to enjoy you. But I did not find it until I embraced *the mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, who is above all, God blessed for ever*. He was calling me and saying: *I am the way of truth, I am the life*. He was offering the food which I lacked the strength to take, the food he had mingled with our flesh. For *the Word became flesh*, that your wisdom, by which you created all things, might provide milk for us children.

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would not have been at all. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace.

9. The Death of John the Baptist – from a Homily by St Bede the Venerable

Precursor of Christ in birth and death

As forerunner of our Lord's birth, preaching and death, the blessed John showed in his struggle a goodness worthy of the sight of heaven. In the words of Scripture: *Though in the sight of all he suffered torments, his hope is full of immortality*. We justly commemorate the day of his birth with a joyful celebration, a day which he himself made festive for us through his suffering and which he adorned with the crimson splendour of his own blood. We do rightly revere his memory with joyful hearts, for he stamped with the seal of martyrdom the testimony which he delivered on behalf of our Lord.

There is no doubt that blessed John suffered imprisonment and chains as a witness to our Redeemer, whose forerunner he was, and gave his life for him. His persecutor had demanded not that he should deny Christ, but only that he should keep silent about the truth. Nevertheless, he died for Christ. Does Christ not say: *I am the truth*? Therefore, because John shed his blood for the truth, he surely died for Christ.

Through his birth, preaching and baptizing, he bore witness to the coming birth, preaching and baptism of Christ, and by his own suffering he showed that Christ also would suffer.

Such was the quality and strength of the man who accepted the end of this present life by shedding his blood after the long imprisonment. He preached the freedom of heavenly peace, yet was thrown into irons by ungodly people; he was locked away in the darkness of prison, though he came bearing witness to the Light of life and deserved to be called a bright and shining lamp by that Light itself, which is Christ. John was baptized in his own blood, though he had been privileged to baptize the Redeemer of the world, to hear the voice of the Father above him, and to see the grace of the Holy Spirit descending upon him. But to endure temporal agonies for the sake of the truth was not a heavy burden for such people as John; rather it was easily borne and even desirable, for he knew eternal joy would be his reward.

Since death was ever near at hand through the inescapable necessity of nature, people such as John considered it a blessing to embrace it and thus gain the reward of eternal life by acknowledging Christ's name. Hence the apostle Paul rightly says: *You have been granted the privilege not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for his sake*. He tells us why it is Christ's

gift that his chosen ones should suffer for him: *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us.*

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 Yewa (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of The Murray; and in our own Diocese of Adelaide, for retired clergy, remembering especially those in our own parish.

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), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Nance, Neil, Elaine, Edward, Neil, Hugh, Bart O'Donovan (priest) and Prue O'Donovan (Priest).

Pray for those who have died. Those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us; those who have died alone or in tragic circumstances; those who have died recently, especially Alison Cobbett, Robert Whalley (priest), 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, 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, StMMAdeelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

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Nomination Committee	John Dow, Catherine Freriks, Annemarie Van Putten
Synod Representatives	Ashley Durham, Catherine Freriks