

St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church

Moore Street, Adelaide



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

Keeping Community Thursday 24 September 2020

Spiritual Resources & Reflections

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions makes it possible to once again worship on Sunday, when Mass is sung at 10 am. The church is also open for private prayer and public worship on Thursday from 11.30 am to 1 pm, and Mass is offered at 12.10 pm after the Angelus at 12 noon. (The Tuesday Mass is in recess until 6 October).

The decision to return to worship in community, even for private prayer, is not a straightforward matter, so we will continue to produce these newsletters for now.

In these Thursday newsletters, we offer ideas and opportunities for nourishing our personal and communal spiritual lives.

1. Joy is still possible in a world of injustice

While Fr Graeme is on leave we offer some reflections by one of the great theologians and teachers of our time, Bishop Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury from 2002-2012.

It is possible to experience joy and happiness in spite of difficult circumstances. Authentic happiness doesn't take away the reality of threat or risk or suffering; it's just there. This is one of the hardest things to grasp. How can I feel 'happy' in a world full of disaster and diseases, atrocity and injustice? How can I know joy when I'm aware of my own failure, my own shabbiness, my own depression? There are no answers in theory because this isn't a matter of theory.

Joy is not "feeling cheerful" or simply pretending that things are not so bad after all. And it's a grim reproach that that's all too often what people half-expect from Christians, a glib and dishonest cheerfulness. There is no "programme" for happiness. It's a perfectly good idea to test and tabulate the ways people measure their own happiness – but beware of thinking that it will yield a foolproof method for being happy.

Humankind will never find fulfilment in just loving ourselves. True joy is more than just a feeling or a self-conscious determination to put a brave face on things, and depends instead on something quite other than our efforts and our will power. What we can contribute by our will or effort is not a system for making ourselves happy but a habit of readiness to receive.

The disciples did not expect the empty tomb, and likewise, Christians should learn to disregard their own expectations. One of the things that makes the resurrection story so believable is the just that sense of unexpectedness. They arrive never having really believed that their Lord would return from death, and now they find themselves in a disturbing new world where anything is possible.

The disciples have been jolted out of the rut of what is usual and predictable – and joy springs on them without warning. And joy arrives, irresistibly. Christians might well develop a “habit of readiness to receive” and not let their minds be cluttered with the anxiety, self-absorbed worry or resentment that can rob us of moments of gift and surprise. For many of us, like the disciples at Easter, it takes something of a shock to open us up to joy, some experience that pushes its way through the inward clutter by sheer force and novelty.

Perhaps part of the message of Easter is very simply: be ready to be surprised. Try clearing out some of the anxiety and vanity and resentment so as to allow the possibility of a new world to find room in you.

Ultimately, joy is about discovering that the world is more than you ever suspected, and so that you yourself are more than you suspected. Christian joy might not guarantee a permanently happy society in the sense of a society free from tension, pain or disappointment, but it can nonetheless affirm that whatever happens in the world, love and reconciliation are still “ceaselessly at work”.

Easter Day, 2011

2. Daily Prayer

Most Christian denominations have forms for prayer in the morning and the evening, and at other times of the day. Morning and Evening Prayer in the Anglican church’s *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are available in either a fixed form (pages 3 – 33) or a different form for each day of the week (pages 383 – 424). The Bible readings for each day can be found in *The Australian Lectionary*, and for reference the readings for the coming week are:

	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
Thursday 24 September	Ps 54, 55-1-12 Nahum 3.8-19 Matthew 7.6-23	Ps 55.13-28 1 Maccabees 2.1-28 Ephesians 5.6-20
Friday 25 September <i>St Sergius of Moscow</i>	Ps 62, 63 Joel 1.15 – 2.11 Matthew 8.5-22	Ps 64, 67 1 Maccabees 2.49-70 Ephesians 6.1-9
Saturday 26 September <i>Lancelot Andrewes</i>	Pd 65, 70 Joel 2.12-24 Matthew 8.23-34	Ps 66 1 Maccabees 3.1-26 Ephesians 6.10-24
Sunday 27 September <i>17th Sunday after Pentecost</i>	Ps 96 Matthew 18.23-30	Ps 25.1-9 Exodus 18.5-24 Romans 15.14-33
Monday 28 September	Ps 71 Joel 2.25 – 3.8 Matthew 9.1-13	Ps 119.65-88 1 Maccabees 3.27-41 Colossians 1.1-8
Tuesday 29 September <i>St Michael & All Angels</i>	Ps 34 Isaiah 6.1-7 Acts 12.1-11	Ps 148 Daniel 9.21-26, 10.1-21 Revelation 8.1-6
Wednesday 30 September St Jerome	Ps 72 Ezra 1 Matthew 9.27-38	Ps 73 1 Maccabees 4.1-36 Colossians 1.21-29
Thursday 1 October	Ps 74 Ezra 2.64 – 3.8 Matthew 10.1-15	Ps 75, 76 1 Maccabees 4.37-61 Colossians 2.1-7

Online Resources

There is a complete online version of Daily Prayer from *A Prayer Book for Australia* for each day available at Australian Daily Prayer <https://dailyprayer.ampers.x10.mx/>. There is also a free app for mobile devices from the App Store or Google Play. The Church of England provides an online version of its orders for Daily Prayer at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>. This is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play). The Divine Office of the Catholic Church is available online at www.ibreviary.com and is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

Times of Prayer

Many people find it helpful to make a particular time daily for prayer and reflection. One option might be to join your prayer with those of the wider world at some special times during the day. Volunteers are attending at St Mary Magdalene's most days to ring the church bell while praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

3. Reflections and Meditations

Fr Graeme and others within our community will continue to prepare Reflections for Sundays and Holy Days for posting on the web page. Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections will in the future be presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>. To access the tab, simply go to the blog and select the "Spirit matters" tab on the top.

If you would like to receive an email update when there is a new posting on the blog, whether for a Sunday or weekday service, or for meditations and other supports for prayer, please subscribe to the blog using the box on the right-hand side of the page.

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

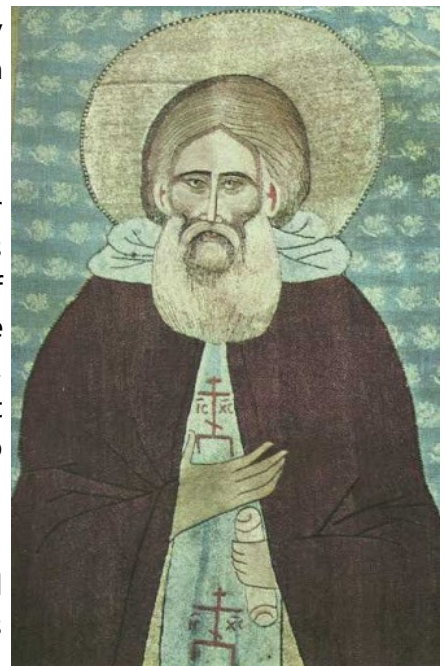
4. In the Church's Calendar

This week in the church's calendar we remember a great saint of the Eastern Church, Sergius of Moscow; the English divine Lancelot Andrewes; St Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and the holy Angels; and the early church historian St Jerome.

St Sergius of Moscow (25 September) is celebrated widely throughout Christendom as the greatest of the Russian saints and the patron of Russia itself. In fact, he has been referred to as the Russian Orthodox Francis of Assisi.

Sergius was baptized Bartholomew around 1315. It was after his parents' deaths that he withdrew in 1335 with his widowed brother, Istvan (Stephen), to the forests of Radonezh to take up a life of monastic solitude. The following year he built a chapel and soon attracted disciples. He became their abbot and was ordained a priest. It was at that time that his name was changed from Bartholomew to Sergius.

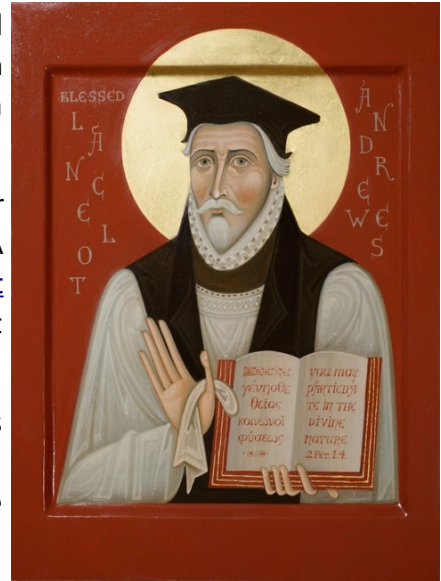
Sergius is said to have founded some 40 monasteries, and served as a mediator and peacemaker in various political disputes, having been credited with preventing four civil wars between princes.



Lancelot Andrewes (26 September) was a theologian and bishop who sought to defend and advance Anglican doctrines during a period of great strife in the English church.

He was consecrated bishop in 1605 and served in Chichester and Ely before being transferred to Winchester in 1619. A master of [rhetoric](#), he earned a reputation as an [eloquent](#) and learned court preacher. He was a critic of both Calvinist [dogmas](#) and Puritan reform platforms.

Andrewes's major writings, however, were apologetic works directed against the Roman Church, in which he combined a [critique](#) of distinctly Roman Catholic dogmas with a positive statement of Anglican teachings.



St Michael, St Raphael, St Gabriel and all the holy Archangels are celebrated each year on 29 September. Often called Michaelmas.

Rowan Williams suggests it is important to talk about angels in Christian teaching. "Odd as it may sound, thinking about these mysterious agents of God's purpose, who belong to a different order of being, can be at least a powerful symbol for all those dimensions of the universe about which we have no real idea."

"Round the corner of our vision, things are going on in the universe — glorious and wonderful things, of which we know nothing ... They do God strange services that we don't fully see; they provide a steady backdrop in the universe of praise and worship."



Most of the saints are remembered for some outstanding virtue or devotion which they practised, but **St Jerome** (30 September) is frequently remembered for his bad temper! It is true that he had a very bad temper and could use a vitriolic pen, but his love for God and his son Jesus Christ was extraordinarily intense; anyone who taught error was an enemy of God and truth, and St Jerome went after him or her with his mighty and sometimes sarcastic pen. Jerome was above all a Scripture scholar, and is particularly important for having made a translation of the Bible which came to be called the Vulgate. It is not the most critical edition of the Bible, but it was the accepted standard text for more than a thousand years.

Jerome spent five years in the desert so that he might give himself up to prayer, penance, and study. Finally, he settled in Bethlehem, where he lived in the cave believed to have been the birthplace of Christ. He died in Bethlehem.



5. From Bishop Lancelot Andrewes

From Andrewes's "Private Prayers"

Lancelot Andrewes considered prayer so important that he even wrote a prayer to pray before beginning his personal prayer. He wanted to be in the right frame of mind with the right spirit when he knelt to pray before God.

"... pour your Holy Spirit into me, which may adopt me into the number of your chosen ones; that it may teach me how I ought to pray, according to your holy will; that it may subdue all troublesome and wandering thoughts in me, while I offer up my prayers and praises to you. Don't let me serve you with my lips while having a heart that is far from you; but create a right spirit in me ..."

O my Lord, my Lord, I thank Thee for that I am, that I am alive, that I am rational: for nurture, preservation, governance: for education, citizenship, religion: for Thy gifts of grace, nature, estate: for redemption, regeneration, instruction: for calling, recalling, further calling manifold: for forbearance, longsuffering, long longsuffering towards me, many times, many years, until now: for all good offices I have received, good speed I have gotten: for any good thing done: for the use of things present, thy promise and my hope touching the fruition of the good things to come: for my parents honest and good, teachers gentle, benefactors always to be had in remembrance, colleagues likeminded, hearers attentive, friends sincere, retainers faithful: for all who have stood me in good stead by their writings, their sermons, conversations, prayers, examples, rebukes, wrongs: for these things and all other, which I wot of, which I wot not of, open and secret, things I remember, things I have forgotten withal, things done to me after my will or yet against my will, I confess to Thee and bless Thee and give thanks unto Thee, and I will confess and bless and give thanks to Thee all the days of my life. What thanks can I render to God again for all the benefits that He hath done unto me?

6. From St Jerome

From the prologue of Jerome's commentary on the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ

I interpret as I should, following the command of Christ: "Search the Scriptures," and "Seek and you shall find." Christ will not say to me what he said to the Jews: "You erred, not knowing the Scriptures and not knowing the power of God." For if, as Paul says, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of Gods, then ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.

Therefore, I will imitate the head of a household who brings out of his storehouse things both new and old, and says to his spouse in the Song of Songs: "I have kept for you things new and old, my beloved." In this way permit me to explain Isaiah, showing that he was not only a prophet, but an evangelist and an apostle as well. For he says about himself and the other evangelists: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news, of those who announce peace." And God speaks to him as if he were an apostle: "Whom shall I send, who will go to my people?" And he answers: "Here I am; send me."

No one should think that I mean to explain the entire subject matter of this great book of Scripture in one brief sermon, since it contains all the mysteries of the Lord. It prophesies that Emmanuel is to be born of a virgin and accomplish marvellous works and signs. It predicts his death, burial and resurrection from the dead as the Saviour of all men. I need say nothing about the natural sciences, ethics and logic. Whatever is proper to holy Scripture, whatever can

be expressed in human language and understood by the human mind, is contained in the book of Isaiah. Of these mysteries the author himself testifies when he writes: "You will be given a vision of all things, like words in a sealed scroll. When they give the writings to a wise man, they will say: Read this. And he will reply: I cannot, for it is sealed. And when the scroll is given to an uneducated man and he is told: Read this, he will reply: I do not know how to read."

Should this argument appear weak to anyone, let him listen to the Apostle: "Let two or three prophets speak, and let others interpret; if, however, a revelation should come to one of those who are seated there, let the first one be quiet." How can they be silent, since it depends on the Spirit who speaks through his prophets whether they remain silent or speak? If they understood what they were saying, all things would be full of wisdom and knowledge. But it was not the air vibrating with the human voice that reached their ears, but rather it was God speaking within the soul of the prophets, just as another prophet says: "It is an angel who spoke in me;" and again, "Crying out in our hearts, Abba, Father'," and "I shall listen to what the Lord God says within me."

7. Intentions for Your Daily Prayers

We continue to pray throughout the week for the world and the church. These intentions may be helpful in your private or family prayers.

For the world. The leaders of the world as they seek to respond to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. For medical researchers, that they may be granted knowledge and wisdom as they search for a vaccine and cure. For refugees and asylum seekers, that they may find places of safety and welcome.

For the church. For all those who are challenged to be church in a different and unfamiliar way. In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for the Dioceses of Panyana (South Sudan); Central Solomons (Melanesia); and Central Tanganyika (Tanzania). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of the Northern Territory; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for St Mark's College.

For our local community. For the Collective as it considers alternative ways of serving the community while the Drop-In Centre is suspended, and for its guests as they seek other places to eat and rest. For the Magdalene Centre, as it deals with the need to change the way it delivers services in order to safeguard the health of customers, staff and volunteers.

For those in need. For all those who are sick in body, mind or spirit. For all those affected by the COVID-19 coronavirus and all who care for them. For those who are commended to our prayers, especially Paull, Valerie, Bishop David McCall, Sim, Chris, Clarice, and Ossy Grotto.

For those who have died. For those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us; all those who have died recently, especially Caroline Pearce (priest) and Lauren Crowley; those who have died as a result of COVID-19; and those whose anniversaries of death occur at about 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 Sergius, Lancelot Andrewes, all the Holy Angels, St Jerome,, and holy women and men of every time and place.

This newsletter will normally be distributed weekly on Thursday. Any appropriate items should be emailed to the Parish Office, omarymag@anglicaresa.com.au, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

