

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 25 August 2022

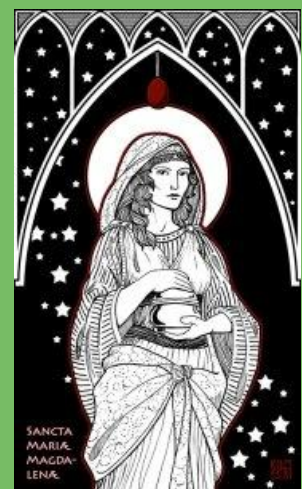
Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions will make it possible to again open the church for private prayer and public worship.

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.

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 provide some resources for prayer and reflection: enjoy!



1. From Fr Steven – Premised on Hope

These days, we do not burn people at the stake over matters of faith. Historically, as Anglicans, we have held the truth passionately, but exercised prudence in its interpretation. This is not because we are wishy-washy. On the contrary we have recognized, through reason and by experience, that the truth is a gift and not a weapon. As a gift, we hold the truth with humility and share it benevolently. The decisive thing is our relationship with our sisters and brothers in Christ. After all, what kind of truth is it that means we must win the argument at all costs, or burn opponents at the stake? In the national Church, however, terms like *orthodoxy* are being used increasingly to manipulate our conversations. For example, look at how the debate on sexuality has become politicized.

Today *orthodoxy* is played like a trump card, as if to say: "Here is the orthodox position." And that is the end of the matter. While the term *heretic* is rarely uttered, it is implied by using leading questions like "Of course, you support the orthodox position?" This divisive approach is related to the rise of fundamentalism in the Anglican Communion. *Fundamentalism* is different from the *evangelical tradition* (the Anglo-Irish writer Malise Ruthven gives some interesting background on this).

In Anglicanism, we have a valued and valuable evangelical tradition with its emphasis on the authority of scripture and Christian discipleship. Fundamentalism, however, is a different creature. The key features of fundamentalism include a rigid approach to biblical interpretation, a dogmatic moralism, the revival of ancient pollution fears. In Australia, some evangelicals have adopted fundamentalist tenets and patterns of behaviour. (Of course, some Anglo-Catholics can behave like fundamentalists).

The term *orthodoxy* means right opinion or true belief. This is a good thing and most of us like to live by right opinion. The problem, however, is three-fold: what is right, who says so and on what basis? On historical grounds, orthodoxy is not always clear. For example, the meaning of the Greek word for *substance*, as it appears in the creeds, is far from clear. So, without solving all the questions, orthodoxy sets out broad parameters for belief. It does not address all of life's contingencies. So, we hold the truth with humility, focused on essentials, respecting differences of theological opinion.

The term *orthodoxy* can be used in two broad ways: theological and rhetorical. The theological use of orthodoxy tells us about Christian belief and identity. It is the rhetorical use of orthodoxy that is problematic; the purpose of which is to persuade people about the rightness of a particular view regardless of the cost. It is often achieved at the expense of divergent views that are dismissed as liberal, humanist, or revisionist. The inference is that these views are heretical. At the least, the rhetorical use of orthodoxy to inhibit debate or discredit *opponents* is not a Christian way to hold a conversation. Besides, it is premised on fear.

Our faith is premised on hope. Faith is not a set of beliefs. It is not dogma. It is a gift. It is transformative, connecting us to the divine, to our true selves, and to others. It does not solve the reality of uncertainty, but instead, enables us to live creatively with uncertainty. So, anxiously trying to condense the mystery of God into a discrete, unambiguous, watertight proposition is not only impossible, but it is also counterproductive. We cannot force the Spirit into a dogmatic box. Moreover, we are not called to get our faith right, as though it is a test. And we are not expected to tick boxes in someone else's heresy test. We are called to follow the way of Jesus.

Fr Steven

2. COVID-19 Update

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.

The current increase in cases of COVID-19 in the community have been considered by the Parish Council, which has agreed that we will continue to take a conservative approach for the time being, and to encourage precautions including Distancing, Ventilation and Facemasks: **DVM** for short. Distancing means maintaining a sensible distance of 1.5 metres between individuals or family groups; Ventilation means leaving some doors and/or windows open to allow a flow of air—and in this cold weather, we have air conditioning, so we won't freeze!—and Facemasks are obvious.

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 *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 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

In the coming week we celebrate two remarkable figures of the early church in Africa, St Monica and her son St Augustine of Hippo, as well as the Irish monk and missionary St Aidan. We also commemorate the martyrdom of St John the Baptist.

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.

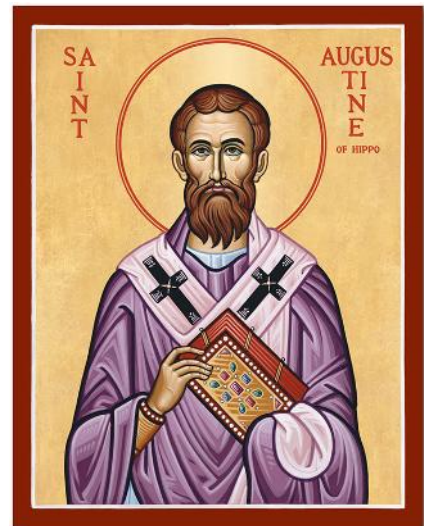


Monica arrived in Rome only to find that Augustine had left for Milan. Although travel was difficult, Monica followed him there. In Milan, Augustine came under the influence of the bishop, Saint Ambrose, who also became Monica's spiritual director. She accepted his advice in everything and had the humility 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. Although no one else was aware of it, Monica knew her life was near the end. She told Augustine, "Son, nothing in this world now affords me delight. I do not know what there is now left for me to do or why I am still here, all my hopes in this world being now fulfilled." She became ill shortly after and suffered severely for nine days before her death.

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.

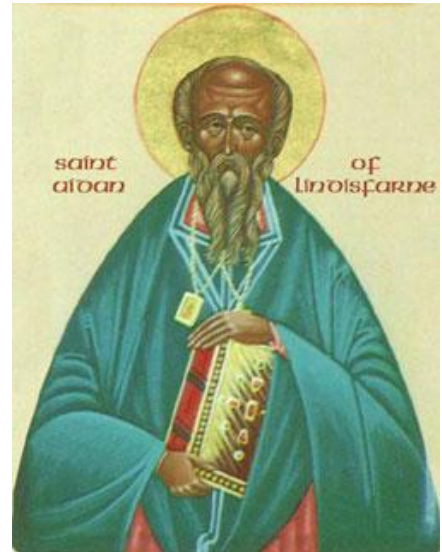


John's life and death were a giving over of self for God and other people. His simple style of life was one of complete detachment from earthly possessions. His heart was centred on God

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.

St Aidan (31 August) was the first bishop of the famous Lindisfarne monastery. He travelled ceaselessly throughout the countryside, spreading the gospel not only to the gentry, but to the poor and socially disenfranchised – including children and slaves. Under his direction and that of his successors, Lindisfarne flourished as a leading ecclesiastical centre until the Danish invasions began in 793.

From Lindisfarne, Aidan evangelized northern England. He founded churches, monasteries, and, on Lindisfarne, a school for the training of ministers, among whom were Chad (first bishop of Lichfield), his brother Cedd (who converted the East Saxons), and Eata, abbot of Melrose. The Venerable Bede praised Aidan for his learning, charity, and simplicity of life. Aidan is among the few English saints to be recognised in both the eastern and western churches.



6. 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.

7. 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 men, the man 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.

8. The Passion of St John the Baptist – from a Sermon by the Venerable Bede

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 men 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 men; 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 men 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, such men 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.*

9. From the History of the English Church by the Venerable Bede

Chap. V. Of the life of Bishop Aidan

From this island, then, and the fraternity of these monks, Aidan was sent to instruct the English nation in Christ, having received the dignity of a bishop. At that time Segeni, abbot and priest, presided over that monastery. Among other lessons in holy living, Aidan left the clergy a most salutary example of abstinence and continence; it was the highest commendation of his doctrine with all men, that he taught nothing that he did not practise in his life among his brethren; for he neither sought nor loved anything of this world, but delighted in distributing immediately among the poor whom he met whatsoever was given him by the kings or rich men of the world. He was wont to traverse both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity; to the end that, as he went, he might turn aside to any whomsoever he saw, whether rich or poor, and call upon them, if infidels, to receive the mystery of the faith, or, if they were believers, strengthen them in the faith, and stir them up by words and actions to giving of alms and the performance of good works.

His course of life was so different from the slothfulness of our times, that all those who bore him company, whether they were tonsured or laymen, had to study either reading the Scriptures, or learning psalms. This was the daily employment of himself and all that were with

him, wheresoever they went; and if it happened, which was but seldom, that he was invited to the king's table, he went with one or two clerks, and having taken a little food, made haste to be gone, either to read with his brethren or to pray. At that time, many religious men and women, led by his example, adopted the custom of prolonging their fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, till the ninth hour, throughout the year, except during the fifty days after Easter. Never, through fear or respect of persons, did he keep silence with regard to the sins of the rich; but was wont to correct them with a severe rebuke. He never gave money to the powerful men of the world, but only food, if he happened to entertain them; and, on the contrary, whatsoever gifts of money he received from the rich, he either distributed, as has been said, for the use of the poor, or bestowed in ransoming such as had been wrongfully sold for slaves. Moreover, he afterwards made many of those he had ransomed his disciples, and after having taught and instructed them, advanced them to priest's orders.

It is said, that when King Oswald had asked a bishop of the Scots to administer the Word of faith to him and his nation, there was first sent to him another man of more harsh disposition, who, after preaching for some time to the English and meeting with no success, not being gladly heard by the people, returned home, and in an assembly of the elders reported, that he had not been able to do any good by his teaching to the nation to whom he had been sent, because they were intractable men, and of a stubborn and barbarous disposition. They then, it is said, held a council and seriously debated what was to be done, being desirous that the nation should obtain the salvation it demanded, but grieving that they had not received the preacher sent to them. Then said Aidan, who was also present in the council, to the priest in question, "Methinks, brother, that you were more severe to your unlearned hearers than you ought to have been, and did not at first, conformably to the Apostolic rule, give them the milk of more easy doctrine, till, being by degrees nourished with the Word of God, they should be capable of receiving that which is more perfect and of performing the higher precepts of God." Having heard these words, all present turned their attention to him and began diligently to weigh what he had said, and they decided that he was worthy to be made a bishop, and that he was the man who ought to be sent to instruct the unbelieving and unlearned; since he was found to be endued preeminently with the grace of discretion, which is the mother of the virtues. So they ordained him and sent him forth to preach; and, as time went on, his other virtues became apparent, as well as that temperate discretion which had marked him at first.

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 Eastern Michigan (USA). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of the Northern Territory; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for Archbishop Geoff Smith.

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. Pray for all those who are troubled in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Sim, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), John Parkes (bishop), Stephan Clark (priest), Mark, Olivia, Nance, Neil and Elaine.

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, 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 Monica, St Augustine, St John the Baptist, St Aidan, 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, StMMAdelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

