

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 25 June 2020

Spiritual Resources & Reflections

Dear friends,

The relaxation of some Covid-19 restrictions makes it possible to once again worship on Sunday, and this week there will be a single Sung Mass for the whole community at 10 am. The church is also open for private prayer and public worship on Tuesday and Thursday from 11.30 am to 1 pm, and Mass is offered at 12.10 pm after the Angelus at 12 noon.

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. From Fr Graeme – If Visiting the Sick

There are people for whom visiting the sick is a daunting experience. What does one say? How can I possibly be of real help? The questions and doubts flood in. The most important thing to remember is that to visit the sick is a wonderful opportunity to bring happiness to a sick person. Just the fact that you have taken the time and trouble to see a sick person is greatly appreciated. What can we do to make the most of such visiting?

It is worthwhile preparing for such a visit. There are so many people among the sick who do not understand how much their thinking affects their health. Sometimes in sickness people become obsessed with their troubles and pains. You may arrive and find immediately, once the opening pleasantries are done, that the one who is sick launches straight into how negative he or she is feeling about life. An avalanche of complaint. Under these circumstances it is best, on a first occasion, to simply listen attentively and sympathetically to all that is said and understand that it will probably be an enormous relief for the person to find a friend or visitor who can listen quietly to all that they need to say. On this basis the first visit has been a success. You have listened.

A second visit will require more from you. You will have prayed for the sick person, holding him or her before God but not asking God to do anything specific but rather just imagining God's power and life at work within the person. In every sick person there are both the sickness and the power of God at work bringing about a healing.

This second visit will be different. We shall not allow a repeat of all the troubles and illness details being poured out non-stop. This time we shall try to achieve a positive attitude. The aim is to help the sick person realise that inside there is not only the illness and pain of sickness but as well there is the life of God's Holy Spirit working for healing.

Many sick ones need reminding of the presence of God's Spirit within them because they become infatuated with their discomfort or illness. It is open to you to challenge this and talk about God at work within them. We may need to think deeply about this before the visit.

A mind which is positive and hopeful complements what God is doing and helps whatever the doctors are doing, too.

Suppose the sick patient is not a Christian or religious at all. To speak of God at all may not be a good idea in a few cases. Is there another way of talking about God's healing Spirit at work? Can it be how wonderfully resilient and we can be and how healing is natural in our world? We can thank God that this is so ourselves but at least we may be giving the patient more positive themes to bear in mind when alone.

Fr Graeme Kaines
Locum Priest

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 25 June	Ps 130, 131, 132 2 Chronicles 13 Acts 13.13-25	Ps 136 Ezekiel 4 James 3
Friday 26 June	Ps 137, 138 2 Chronicles 14 Acts 13.26-41	Ps 139 Ezekiel 5 James 4
Saturday 27 June St Cyril of Alexandria	Ps 140 2 Chronicles 15 Acts 13.42-52	Ps 141, 142 Ezekiel 6 James 5
Sunday 28 June The 4th Sunday after Pentecost	Ps 17 Romans 6.12-13 Matthew 12.9-21	Ps 80 Jeremiah 1.4-10 John 20.1-10
Monday 29 June St Peter & St Paul	Ps 71 Ezekiel 2.1-7 Acts 9.32-43	Ps 116 Zechariah 4.1-6a, 10b-14 Revelation 11.1-4, 15-18
Tuesday 30 June	Ps 148, 149 2 Chronicles 17.1-3; 18.1-8 Acts 14.8-18	Ps 144, 150 Ezekiel 8.1-15 Titus 2
Wednesday 1 July	Ps 1, 2 2 Chronicles 18.9-27 Acts 14.19-28	Ps 3, 4 Ezekiel 8.16 – 9.11 Titus 3
Thursday 2 July	Ps 5, 6 2 Chronicles 18.28 – 19.11 Acts 15.1-11	Ps 7, 8 Ezekiel 10 Galatians 1.1-10

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.breviary.com](http://www. breviary.com) and is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

3. Sunday and Weekday Mass

A new phase of the relaxation of Covid-19 measures commenced last Friday, 19 June, with the number of people in church buildings (among other places) lifted to 75. All the now-customary cleaning, health and hygiene requirements, and physical distancing will continue to apply.

Capacity will nonetheless be dictated by the size of the space, as there needs to be sufficient room in the building to enable physical distancing. The official capacity of the church, which has an area of 210m², is 52, though in practice it will be somewhat less.

This means that Sunday worship can now recommence, beginning this Sunday, 28 June, with a single Sung Mass for the whole community at 10 am.

There are a number of implications associated with resuming Sunday worship. These are listed in detail below, but in summary, there will be no physical contact, Communion will continue to be received in one kind only, and the offering of money to support the work of the church will be made individually, not collected.

Most significantly, the treasured custom at the 9 am Mass of gathering around the altar will not be possible for now. We realise that this will be a wrench for many worshippers, as the importance of this action has often been affirmed by members of our community.

We are aware that some members of our community are hesitant to return to corporate worship so long as Covid-19 remains a live issue in the wider community. Indeed, we are all in unmapped territory. In recognition of the likelihood that numbers will be modest as people return over time, Parish Council has also decided that in addition to this Sunday, 28 June, that **for the whole month of July, Sunday worship will be a single Sung Mass at 10 am.**

All those who contribute to our worship week by week, and especially those who have made such a great effort during the enforced shut-down, are all working to ensure that these celebrations will be representative of our whole community.

Sunday Celebrations

Those who have been attending weekday masses are aware of the changes in the way in which the celebrations are ordered. These include:

- Individual Orders of Service are provided. Worshippers are invited to take these home or to dispose of them in the bin provided.
- At the Greeting of Peace, no physical greeting is to be exchanged; rather a spoken expression of fellowship or a suitable gesture.

- Before touching the bread and wine at the Preparation of the Gifts, and again before the distribution of Holy Communion, the Priest will use hand sanitiser.
- Communion will continue to be offered in one kind only for the time being.
- Communicants should approach the altar in single file, keeping an appropriate distance, and return to their seats via the side aisles.
- The offering of money to support the work of the church will be via collection bowls placed at the front and rear of the pews. People are invited to make their offerings either before or after Mass, or as they go to receive Communion.

These changes to the form and structure of Sunday celebrations will have its challenges, and we need to be mindful of these well ahead of time.

Another issue for Sunday worship is the offering of hospitality after services, which will not be possible for now. Physical distancing requirements mean the official capacity of the hall is much reduced, and in any event we do not yet have all the preparations in place to allow the building to re-open.

Communications

The decision to come back to church, whether for private prayer or public worship or both, is still not a straightforward matter for many people. It will be some time before it is possible, or even desirable, for some of us to once again physically gather for worship, whether in smaller or larger numbers.

Parish Council has given consideration to the ways in which resources like this newsletters, the blog, the website, and regular Facebook posts can support us in what is sure to be an extended time of transition.

For these newsletters, in particular, we are considering ways in which the weekly reflections from Fr Philip and the items on the lives and works of holy women and men throughout history might be continued using the blog, which is by its very nature a dynamic and partly interactive format. We would be delighted to receive comments on this proposal.

It is our intention that every member of our community be actively included in the life of this community of faith as best we can manage. We have sought to find creative solutions, and there is always room for improvement – let us know how we can help.

4. Reflections and Meditations

Fr Graeme and others within our community will be preparing Reflections for Sundays and Holy Days for posting on the web page. These will continue for the time being.

St Peter's Cathedral has produced videos including reflections and Sunday sermons under the title "Acts of Worship at St Peter's Cathedral in Extraordinary Times". These are available in a variety of formats. You can receive updates by subscribing to the Cathedral's e-news. Visit <http://www.stpeters-cathedral.org.au/community/sign-up-to-eneews/> to register.

5. 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.

6. Meditations from Fr Philip

Fr Philip Carter has offered a ministry of spirituality for many years, and has kindly supplied a series of meditations on some questions that we may well ask as we consider our life in God. The questions are *What?*, *How?*, *What if?*, *What do I want?*, and *Can I tell it how it is?*

Preparing for Meditation

- Find a place to sit comfortably. Mobile phone on silent.
- Take your time. Breathe in and out a few times, slowing down ...
- Don't try too hard. Relax. Be open.
- Prayer isn't telling what God should be doing but becoming aware of what God is already doing.
- "The best prayer is to rest in the goodness of God and to let that goodness reach right down to your lowest place of need." (Julian of Norwich)
- When you seem ready, begin. You don't have to finish the exercise now, or today. If and when something arrests your attention, stay there. Savour the words. Let them speak to you. That may be enough for the next few minutes.

Can I tell it how it is?

The point of disclosing to God what is on our minds is the act of disclosing, not what we disclose. Some of us will think immediately of revealing sins or faults, confessing to God. Others will think of telling God their problems. Disclosing whatever is on our minds, however- whether the matter we talk about makes us happy, saddens us, or causes us to furrow our foreheads in puzzlement- is a way of revealing ourselves to God. Setting out to disclose ourselves in this way, if only for a moment, promotes our relationship with God.

Madeline Birmingham and William Connolly

Prayer is "standing unprotected before God".

Sister Wendy Beckett

Christ likes us to prefer truth to him because before being Christ, he is truth. If we turn aside from him to go towards the truth, one will not go far before falling into his arms.

Simone Weil

We deal with reality, not fantasy: we find hope in how things are, not in how we would like them to be. Telling and facing the truth, sets us free. Such self-knowledge is wounding, a "loving wounding": it is a vulnerable and intimate place, where we are touched in the deepest core of our being' It is as if God is saying to us "I come to wound you and to heal the wound". Stay in this place: be gentle: accept: express in your own way your truth. And in all this hear yourself addressed, and in that encounter, find yourself.

Ignatius says: "It is not knowledge as such that fills and satisfies the soul, but the intimate understanding and relish of the truth". Our truth brings us face to face with God's truth: this is another way of knowing and being; it is a kind of living from the inside out, a participatory and relational knowing, a being-in-love, where I let go and surrender, through a fidelity to my inbuilt capacity for self-transcendence.

7. In the Church's Calendar

This week we we celebrate the annual memorials of St Cyril of Alexandria, and of St Peter and St Paul.

St Cyril of Alexandria

Saints are not born with halos around their heads. Cyril, recognized as a great teacher of the Church, began his career as archbishop of Alexandria in Egypt, with impulsive, often violent, actions. He pillaged and closed the churches of heretics, participated in the deposing of Saint John Chrysostom, and confiscated Jewish property, expelling the Jews from Alexandria in retaliation for their attacks on Christians.

Yet he was one of the great writers of the early church. He wrote seventeen books "On Adoration in Spirit and in Truth", and commentaries on the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Fragments of his many other writings survive, other works on the Old Testament, commentaries on the Gospels, and theological works including one of the earliest treatises on the Holy Trinity.



The life of St Cyril is a reminder that saints often grow out of immaturity, narrowness, and selfishness. It is because they—and we—do grow, that we are truly saints, persons who live the life of God.

St Peter and St Paul

The New Testament clearly shows Peter as the leader of the apostles, chosen by Jesus to have a special relationship with him. With James and John he was privileged to witness the Transfiguration, the raising of a dead child to life, and the agony in Gethsemane. His mother-in-law was cured by Jesus. He was sent with John to prepare for the last Passover before Jesus' death. His name is first on every list of apostles.

Yet Peter also has his human weakness, even in the presence of Jesus.

Paul's central conviction was simple and absolute: Only God can save humanity. No human effort—even the most scrupulous observance of law—can create a human good which we can bring to God as reparation for sin and payment



for grace. To be saved from itself, from sin, from the devil, and from death, humanity must open itself completely to the saving power of Jesus.

Peter is a striking example of the simple fact of holiness. Jesus says to us as he said, in effect, to Peter: "It is not you who have chosen me, but I who have chosen you. It is not human wisdom that makes it possible for you to believe, but my Father's revelation. I, not you, build my Church." Paul's experience of the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus was the driving

force that made him one of the most zealous, dynamic, and courageous ambassadors of Christ the Church has ever had. But persecution, humiliation, and weakness became his day-by-day carrying of the cross, material for further transformation. The dying Christ was in him; the living Christ was his life.

8. 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 North Ankoale (Uganda); Arochukwu/Ohafia (Nigeria); and Aru (Congo). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of The Northern Territory; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the parish of St Luke's, Whitmore Square.

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, and John.

For those who have died. For all those who have died recently, especially Raven Baylock; those who have died as a result of COVID-19; and those whose anniversaries of death occur at about this time. For those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us. ✠ 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 Cyril, St Peter, St Paul, 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.

