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**Keeping Community  
Spiritual Resources & Reflections**

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**Thursday 26 January 2023**

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!



*St Paul addresses the Corinthians*

**1. From Fr Steven - Only Love**

What do you need when you are feeling crushed? Sometimes we need time and space. Perhaps a listening ear. Eventually, wise advice may be helpful. In the end, however, it is love that makes the difference.

Ironically, it is often difficult for us to express our need for love, especially when we are feeling vulnerable. So, we shy away. Of course, those who know us, and love us, also know how to disarm us with kindness and good grace.

Love is the key to understanding the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In this Sunday's homily, I will be reflecting on Paul's understanding of the wisdom of God, which is the life that emerges in us in response to love.

In I Corinthians 1:18-31, Paul draws attention to the wisdom of God, in contrast to the wisdom of the world. In this light, the quintessential expression of the wisdom of God is found in Christ crucified. In Paul, Christ crucified is not a feeble sacrifice. Instead, Christ crucified is a generous and decisive act of love. It is a turning point.

Arguably, Paul's tribute to love in 1 Corinthians 13 represents the climax of the letter. It gathers in one all the pain and confusion of the people of God, offering a healing balm, prefiguring a transformative future (1 Corinthians 15).

Certainly, Paul's rhetorical flourishes can be a little abrasive. What's more, we recognize there are other opinions in Corinth besides Paul's. But the key is love.

Of course, there is more to love than this. This tradition of love finds its locus in the life and teachings of Jesus. It is the Church's source of resilience and integrity. It is the defining measure of all things Christian.

The theme of love shines through the story of Ruth, the Song of Songs, the lives of Mary Magdalene, our Celtic mystics, Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, the 17th century poets, modern mystics like Evelyn Underhill, and Christian leaders of our own time including Desmond Tutu, Carter Heyward, and Kwok Pui Lan.

In the real world, love is expressed in ordinary, complex, sometimes heroic, often, fragile lives. Love makes a difference. It is powerful. It is healing. It is our best hope. This personal face of love is not a distraction from the fruit of scholarly labor: on the contrary, this is the real deal. It is an incarnation of the wisdom of God.

Fr Steven

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## 2. COVID-19 - Where are we now?

The ongoing impact of COVID-19 in the community has 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 we have air conditioning, in case of extreme weather!—and Facemasks are obvious.

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

### Times of Prayer

Many people find it helpful to make a particular time daily for prayer and reflection. One option might be to join your prayer with those of the wider world at some special times during the day, especially in praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

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## 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://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>.

To access these meditations, simply go to the blog and select the "Spirit matters" tab on the top. If you would like to receive an email update when there is a new posting on the blog,

whether for a Sunday or weekday service, or for meditations and other supports for prayer, please subscribe to the blog using the box on the right-hand side of the page.

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

## 5. This Week in the Calendar

This week in the church's calendar we celebrate the early church teacher St John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople (d. 407), the medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), and Charles, King of England (d. 1649).

The ambiguity and intrigue surrounding **John Chrysostom** (c.347-407), the great preacher (his name means "golden-mouthed") from Antioch, are characteristic of the life of any notable citizen in a capital city.

Brought to Constantinople after a dozen years of priestly service in Syria, John found himself the reluctant victim of an imperial ruse to make him bishop in what was then the greatest city of the empire. Ascetic, unimposing but dignified, and troubled by stomach ailments from his desert days as a monk, John became a bishop under the cloud of imperial politics.

If his body was weak, his tongue was powerful. The content of his sermons, his exegesis of Scripture, were never without a point. Sometimes the point stung the high and mighty. Some sermons lasted up to two hours.

His lifestyle at the imperial court was not appreciated by many courtiers. He offered a modest table to episcopal sycophants hanging around for imperial and ecclesiastical favours. John deplored the court protocol that accorded him precedence before the highest state officials. He would not be a kept man.

His zeal led him to decisive action. Bishops who bribed their way into office were deposed. Many of his sermons called for concrete steps to share wealth with the poor. When it came to justice and charity, John acknowledged no double standards.

Aloof, energetic, outspoken, especially when he became excited in the pulpit, John was a sure target for criticism and personal trouble, and after many years, the authorities finally succeeded in having John exiled. He died in exile in 407.

John's preaching, by word and example, exemplifies the role of the prophet to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. For his honesty and courage, he paid the price of a turbulent ministry as bishop, personal vilification, and exile.

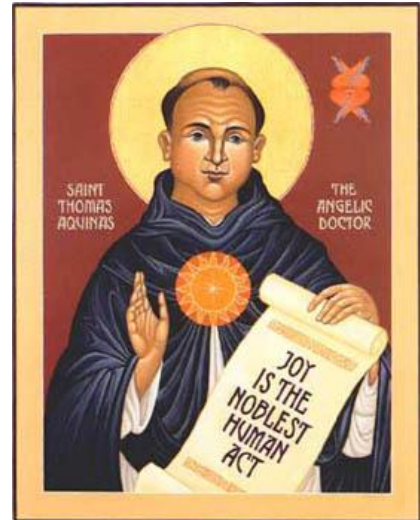
By universal consent, **Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274) is the preeminent spokesman of the Catholic tradition of reason and of divine revelation. He is one of the great teachers of the medieval church, honoured with the title Doctor of the Church.

A brilliant scholar, his greatest contribution to the Church is his writings. The unity, harmony, and continuity of faith and reason, of revealed and natural human knowledge, pervades his writings. One might expect Thomas, as a man of the gospel, to be an ardent defender of revealed truth. But he was broad enough, deep enough, to see the whole natural order as coming from God the Creator, and to see reason as a divine gift to be highly cherished.



The *Summa Theologiae*, his last and, unfortunately, uncompleted work, deals with the whole of Catholic theology. He stopped work on it after celebrating Mass on December 6, 1273. When asked why he stopped writing, he replied, "I cannot go on .... All that I have written seems to me like so much straw compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me." He died on March 7, 1274.

We can look to Thomas Aquinas as a towering example of catholicism in the sense of broadness, universality, and inclusiveness. We should be determined anew to exercise the divine gift of reason in us, our power to know, learn, and understand. At the same time we should thank God for the gift of his revelation, especially in Jesus Christ.



**King Charles the Martyr** was the last saint to be made by the Church of England.

The latter years of the reign of King James VI and I had seen the appointment of such figures as Lancelot Andrewes and William Laud to the episcopate in England, who saw the need for the restoration of the catholic ideals of the Church of England, ideals which were becoming swamped by the dominance of Calvinist theology and thought which so influenced the Church in the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign and the early years of King James.

Charles I was the first British monarch, unlike Elizabeth I or James I, to be raised from childhood as a member of the Church of England. He was regular and punctual in his private devotions, as well as public prayers in the Royal Chapel every Sunday. He made his Confession regularly, and was devoted to the Church's rituals, including prescribed prayers, the calendar of worship, and placing importance on observing Lent and fast days.

His reign saw the beginning of a revival of the Religious Life in the Church of England and the first attempt at Community Life (after the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII), which began at Little Gidding and was encouraged by S. Charles. The King visited the community and commissioned work.



He oversaw many schemes for the Church: the restoration and adornment of churches and cathedrals, the founding and advancement of charities, the improvement of the liturgy and the re-introduction of the episcopacy in Scotland.

Charles's execution was the culmination of political and military conflicts between royalists and parliamentarians in England during the English Civil War. Rather than a single battle, these years actually saw a series of battles and political machinations between royalists loyal to the king (Cavaliers) and the parliamentarians (Roundheads). Most of the latter had long sought a constitutional monarchy (rather than Charles's absolute monarchy) but in the later years of the Civil War, public antipathy towards the King was high enough to allow republican leaders such as Oliver Cromwell to push for the abolition of the monarchy, and the establishment of the Commonwealth.

On 27 January 1649, the parliamentary courts had declared Charles guilty of attempting to "uphold in himself an unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will, and to

overthrow the rights and liberties of the people" and he was sentenced to death by beheading.

Immediately upon the Restoration of Church and monarchy in May, 1660, the Convocation of Canterbury and York, now being free to assemble and act, added Charles's name to the Calendar of Saints at the revision of the Book of Common Prayer.

Charles attempted to foster his own vision of the Church's life. This was due to a sincere religious conviction that the Church of England was part of the "one holy catholic and apostolic church" we proclaim in the Nicene Creed, and that it needed to be restored to that position and, as King, anointed at his Coronation and committed to "defending the faith" he had to take the lead. Ultimately it was to cost him his life.

## 6. From a Sermon by St John Chrysostom

*Life to me means Christ, and death is gain*

The waters have risen and severe storms are upon us, but we do not fear drowning, for we stand firmly upon a rock. Let the sea rage, it cannot break the rock. Let the waves rise, they cannot sink the boat of Jesus. What are we to fear? Death? *Life to me means Christ, and death is gain.* Exile? *'The earth and its fullness belong to the Lord.* The confiscation of goods? *We brought nothing into this world, and we shall surely take nothing from it.* I have only contempt for the world's threats, I find its blessings laughable. I have no fear of poverty, no desire for wealth. I am not afraid of death nor do I long to live, except for your good. I concentrate therefore on the present situation, and I urge you, my friends, to have confidence.

Do you not hear the Lord saying: *Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst?* Will he be absent, then, when so many people united in love are gathered together? I have his promise; I am surely not going to rely on my own strength! I have what he has written; that is my staff, my security, my peaceful harbour. Let the world be in upheaval. I hold to his promise and read his message; that is my protecting wall and garrison. What message? *Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world!*

If Christ is with me, whom shall I fear? Though the waves and the sea and the anger of princes are roused against me, they are less to me than a spider's web. Indeed, unless you, my brothers, had detained me, I would have left this very day. For I always say "Lord, your will be done"; not what this fellow or that would have me do, but what you want me to do. That is my strong tower, my immovable rock, my staff that never gives way. If God wants something, let it be done! If he wants me to stay here, I am grateful. But wherever he wants me to be, I am no less grateful.

Yet where I am, there you are too, and where you are, I am. For we are a single body, and the body cannot be separated from the head nor the head from the body. Distance separates us, but love unites us, and death itself cannot divide us. For though my body die, my soul will live and be mindful of my people.

You are my fellow citizens, my fathers, my brothers, my sons, my limbs, my body. You are my light, sweeter to me than the visible light. For what can the rays of the sun bestow on me that is comparable to your love? The sun's light is useful in my earthly life, but your love is fashioning a crown for me in the life to come.

## 7. From a Conference by St Thomas Aquinas on the Nicene Creed

*The Cross exemplifies every virtue*

Why did the Son of God have to suffer for us? There was a great need, and it can be considered in a twofold way: in the first place, as a remedy for sin, and secondly, as an example of how to act.

It is a remedy, for, in the face of all the evils which we incur on account of our sins, we have found relief through the passion of Christ. Yet, it is no less an example, for the passion of Christ completely suffices to fashion our lives. Whoever wishes to live perfectly should do nothing but disdain what Christ disdained on the cross and desire what he desired, for the cross exemplifies every virtue.

If you seek the example of love: "Greater love than this no man has, than to lay down his life for his friends." Such a man was Christ on the cross. And if he gave his life for us, then it should not be difficult to bear whatever hardships arise for his sake.

If you seek patience, you will find no better example than the cross. Great patience occurs in two ways: either when one patiently suffers much, or when one suffers things which one is able to avoid and yet does not avoid. Christ endured much on the cross, and did so patiently, because when he suffered he did not threaten; he was led like a sheep to the slaughter and he did not open his mouth. Therefore Christ's patience on the cross was great. In patience let us run for the prize set before us, looking upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith who, for the joy set before him, bore his cross and despised the shame.

If you seek an example of humility, look upon the crucified one, for God wished to be judged by Pontius Pilate and to die.

If you seek an example of obedience, follow him who became obedient to the Father even unto death. For just as by the disobedience of one man, namely, Adam, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man, many were made righteous.

If you seek an example of despising earthly things, follow him who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Upon the cross he was stripped, mocked, spat upon, struck, crowned with thorns, and given only vinegar and gall to drink.

Do not be attached, therefore, to clothing and riches, because "they divided my garments among themselves." Nor to honours, for he experienced harsh words and scourgings. Nor to greatness of rank, for "weaving a crown of thorns they placed it on my head." Nor to anything delightful, for "in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

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## 8. King Charles's meditations in prison

As I have leisure enough, so I have cause more then enough, to meditate upon, and prepare for My Death: for I know, there are but, few steps between the Prisons and Graves of Princes.

It is Gods indulgence which gives me the space, but man's cruelty that gives me the sad occasions for these thoughts.

For, besides the common burden of mortality, which lies upon me, as a man; I now bear the heavy load of other men's ambitions, fears, jealousies, and cruel passions, whose envy or enmity against me, makes their own lives seem deadly to them, while I enjoy any part of mine.

I thank God, my prosperity made me not wholly a stranger to the contemplations of mortality.

Those are never unseasonable, since this is always uncertain: Death being an eclipse, which often happens as well in clear as cloudy days.

But my now long and sharp adversity hath so reconciled in me those natural antipathies between Life and Death, which are in all men, that I thank God, the common terrors of it are dispelled; and the special horror of it, as to my particular, much allayed: for although my Death at present may justly be represented to me with all those terrible aggravations, which the policy of cruel and implacable enemies can put upon it (affairs being drawn to the very dregs of malice) yet I bless God, I can look upon all those stings, as unpoisonous, though sharp; since my Redeemer hath either pulled them out, or given me the Antidote of his Death against them, which as to the immaturity, injustice, shame, scorn, and cruelty of it, exceeded what ever I can fear.

Indeed, I never did find so much, the life of Religion, the feast of a good Conscience, and the brazen wall of a judicious integrity and constancy, as since I came to these closer conflicts with the thoughts of Death.

I am not so old, as to be weary of life; nor (I hope) so bad, as to be either afraid to die, or ashamed to live: true, I am so afflicted, as might make me sometime even desire to die, if I did not consider, That it is the greatest glory of a Christians life to die daily, in conquering by a lively faith, and patient hopes of a better life, those partial and quotidian deaths, which kill us (as it were) by piece-meals, and make us over-live our own fates: while we are deprived of health, honour, liberty, power, credit, safety, or estate; and those other comforts of dearest relations, which are as the life of our lives.

Though, as a King, I think my self to live in nothing temporal so much, as in the love and goodwill of my People; for which, as I have suffered many deaths, so I hope I am not in that point as yet wholly dead: notwithstanding; my enemies have used all the poison of falsity and violence of hostility to destroy, first the love and loyalty, which is in my Subjects; and then all that content of life in me, which from these I chiefly enjoyed.

Indeed, they have left me but little of life, and only the husk and shell (as it were) which their further malice and cruelty can take from me; having bereaved me of all those worldly comforts, for which life it self seems desirable to men.

But, O my Soul! think not that life too long, or tedious, wherein God gives you any opportunities, if not to do, yet to suffer with such Christian patience and magnanimity, in a good Cause, as are the greatest honour of our lives, and the best improvement of our deaths.

## 9. 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 Paraguay (South America). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Wangaratta; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Parish of Gawler.

*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, Elaine and Edward.

*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 Agnes, St Vincent, St Timothy, 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, [StMMAdeelaide.Parish@outlook.com](mailto:StMMAdeelaide.Parish@outlook.com), by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

