



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

## Keeping Community Spiritual Resources & Reflections

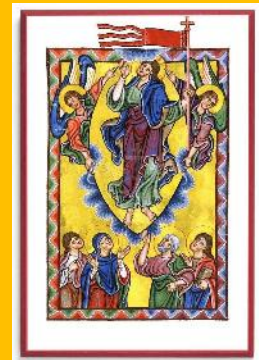
Thursday 26 May 2022

Dear friends,

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

The regular schedule of worship resumes in Easter time with Regina Coeli at noon and Mass at 12.10 pm (Thursday) and Sung Mass and Regina Coeli (Sunday at 10 am)

These newsletters are intended to support the spiritual life of the community as we continue to cope with and respond to the pandemic.



### 1. From Fr Steven – The World as Sacrament

I love Arthur Boyd's paintings. His range of subjects, combined with his bold and expressive use of colour, draw me into a deeper mystery. There is one painting in particular, part of his Nebuchadnezzar series, which is profoundly spiritual. It depicts a lion in the wilderness. The wilderness is dark, primeval, all-consuming. The lion is a ferocious burst of thick-gold paint, slightly left of centre. Clearly, the lion will not succumb to the darkness. In other words, in the midst of danger, there is courage. And if there is courage, there is cause for hope.

For me, art like nature is sacramental. By that, I am not saying that Boyd's painting is a sacrament. Moreover, I do not mean that every piece of artwork is sacramental, just like not every experience of nature mediates the divine. But art and nature have the capacity to manifest the spirit of God in the world. Now for some people, this will seem obvious, but for others it will seem novel. The clue to this enigma is our experience of the divine in the world.

In religious studies, it is common to describe spiritual encounters in terms of immanence and transcendence, where *immanence* refers to our sense of the intimacy or nearness of the divine, while *transcendence* refers to our sense of the incomprehensible holiness. For example, an immanent experience can occur in the company of friends, whereas a transcendent experience can occur while gazing at the stars.

The terms immanence and transcendence reflect something of the complexity and mystery of the divine-world relationship. Nonetheless, a full spiritual life needs both immanent and transcendent experiences of the divine. Historically, the Church has tended to emphasize the transcendent at the expense of the immanent. But they are not mutually exclusive. To the credit of the Anglican tradition, and going back to our Celtic roots, we have a strong sense of the immanent. The doctrine of the Incarnation is a case in point.

The Incarnation can be looked at from two perspectives: its focus and its framework. As in Boyd's painting, the encircling wilderness focuses our attention on the lion. With the

Incarnation, the focus is on God's self-disclosure in the life of Jesus (John 1:14-18), which is sharpened and intensified by a frame. The frame is God's relationship with the world. The character of this frame is described in broad brushstrokes in the Scriptures; where God is creator (Genesis 1; Psalms 8, 104) and creation longs for the redemptive embrace of God (Romans 8:22-23). God loves this world (John 3:16) and embraces the world through the Incarnation (John 1).

Our sense of the immanence of God helps explain, not only why the sacraments are vital for us, but why we have a sacramental view of the world. The sacraments use a tangible symbol to point toward and to evoke a sense of the divine. For example, in baptism, the use of water reminds us (points toward) the presence of the spirit of God. In addition, the water, in the context of the faith community and the Jesus story, evokes from within us God's spirit. In this light, the Catechism makes perfect sense when it describes a sacrament as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and visible grace given unto us".

Let me return to the Boyd painting. For me, looking at the painting, involves being drawn into the world of the painting and then returning to the real world renewed and inspired. Somehow, somehow, this experience has mediated the spirit of God. It's about art. Sure. But it's ultimately about how we see God's world; in fact, isn't the world a sacrament of God?

Fr Steven

---

## 2. COVID-19 Update from Tuesday 24 May

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 overcrowding.

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 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).

### 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. 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. While the church cannot be open every day, you may like to join the wider community in praying the Angelus at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

## 4. Reflections and Meditations

Reflections for our two weekly newsletters will continue for the time being, and our Thursday "Spiritual Resources" newsletter will continue to be uploaded to the web page. 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. Nomination Process

Bishop Denise Ferguson, the Assistant Bishop, is chairing the Nomination Committee that is considering the appointment of a permanent parish priest. The meetings so far have been very positive and productive.

Please keep the members of the Nomination Committee in your prayers as they engage in this vital work. You may like to pray for them by name: the members are Bishop Denise Ferguson (Chair), Archdeacon David Bassett (our Area Archdeacon), Annemarie van Putten, John Dow and Ashley Durham (the elected Parish representatives), Alison McAllister and Peter Burdon (the church wardens), the Revd Janet Phillips and Dr Geoff Bloor (the clerical and lay nominators elected by the Synod of the Diocese).

## 6. This Week in the Calendar

Today we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord, and in the course of the week we celebrate the great medieval St Augustine of Canterbury, the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, and the early church martyr St Justin.

In the year 596, some 40 monks set out from Rome to evangelize the Anglo-Saxons in England. Leading the group was Augustine, the prior of their monastery. Hardly had he and his men reached Gaul when they heard stories of the ferocity of the Anglo-Saxons and of the treacherous waters of the English Channel. Augustine returned to Rome and to Gregory the Great—the pope who had sent them—only to be assured by him that their fears were groundless.

Augustine set out again. This time the group crossed the English Channel and landed in the territory of Kent, ruled by King Ethelbert, who received them kindly, set up a residence for them in Canterbury and within the year, on Pentecost Sunday 597, was himself baptized.



After being consecrated a bishop in France, Augustine returned to Canterbury, where he founded his see. He constructed a church and monastery near where the present cathedral, begun in 1070, now stands. As the faith spread, additional sees were established at London and Rochester.

Work was sometimes slow and Augustine did not always meet with success. Attempts to reconcile the Anglo-Saxon Christians with the original Briton Christians—who had been driven into western England by Anglo-Saxon invaders—ended in dismal failure. Augustine failed to convince the Britons to give up certain Celtic customs at variance with Rome and to forget their bitterness, helping him evangelize their Anglo-Saxon conquerors.

Labouring patiently, Augustine wisely heeded the missionary principles—quite enlightened for the times—suggested by Pope Gregory: purify rather than destroy pagan temples and customs; let pagan rites and festivals be transformed into Christian feasts; retain local customs as far as possible. The limited success Augustine achieved in England before his death in 605, a short eight years after his arrival, would eventually bear fruit long after in the conversion of England. Augustine of Canterbury can truly be called the “Apostle of England.”

**The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth** is a relatively late feast, going back only to the 13th or 14th century. It was established widely throughout the Church to pray for unity. The present date of celebration was set in 1969, in order to follow the Annunciation of the Lord and precede the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist.



The feast commemorates a visit by Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. Both are pregnant in remarkable circumstances – Mary a virgin, and Elizabeth, past the age of child-bearing.

Like most feasts of Mary, it is closely connected with Jesus and his saving work. The more visible actors in the visitation drama are Mary and Elizabeth. However, Jesus and John the Baptist steal the scene in a hidden way.

Jesus makes John leap with joy—the joy of messianic salvation. Elizabeth, in turn, is filled with the Holy Spirit and addresses words of praise to Mary—words that echo down through the ages: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ... Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

Then comes the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55). Here, Mary herself—like the Church—traces all her greatness to God.

Elizabeth’s praise of Mary as “the mother of my Lord” can be viewed as the earliest Church’s devotion to Mary. As with all authentic devotion to Mary, Elizabeth’s (the Church’s) words first praise God for what God has done to Mary. Only secondly does she praise Mary for trusting God’s words.

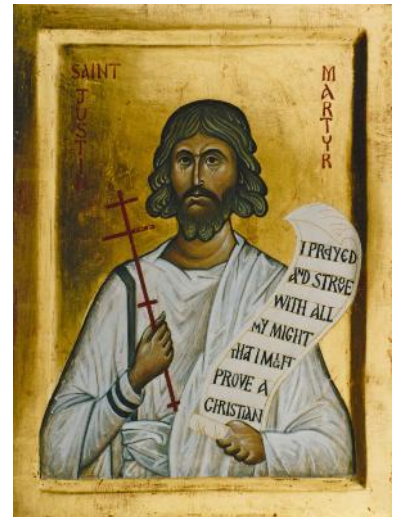
One of the invocations in Mary’s litany is “Ark of the Covenant.” Like the Ark of the Covenant of old, Mary brings God’s presence into the lives of other people. As David danced before the Ark, John the Baptist leaps for joy. As the Ark helped to unite the 12 tribes of Israel by being placed in David’s capital, so Mary has the power to unite all Christians in her son. At times, devotion to Mary may have occasioned some divisiveness, but we can hope that authentic devotion will lead all to Christ and therefore, to one another.



**St Justin Martyr** never ended his quest for religious truth even when he converted to Christianity after years of studying various pagan philosophies.

As a young man, he was principally attracted to the school of Plato. However, he found that the Christian religion answered the great questions about life and existence better than the philosophers.

Upon his conversion he continued to wear the philosopher's mantle, and became the first Christian philosopher. He combined the Christian religion with the best elements in Greek philosophy. In his view, philosophy was a pedagogue of Christ, an educator that was to lead one to Christ.



Justin is known as an apologist, one who defends in writing the Christian religion against the attacks and misunderstandings of the pagans. Two of his so-called apologies have come down to us; they are addressed to the Roman emperor and to the Senate.

For his staunch adherence to the Christian religion, Justin was beheaded in Rome in 165.

As patron of philosophers, Justin may inspire us to use our natural powers—especially our power to know and understand—in the service of Christ, and to build up the Christian life within us. Since we are prone to error, especially in reference to the deep questions concerning life and existence, we should also be willing to correct and check our natural thinking in light of religious truth. Thus we will be able to say with the learned saints of the Church: I believe in order to understand, and I understand in order to believe.

## 7. On the Feast of St Augustine of Canterbury – from a letter by Pope Gregory the Great

*The nation of Angles was bathed with the light of holy faith*

*Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth*, because the grain of wheat has fallen into the earth and has died. Christ has died in order to reign in heaven. Not only that: by his death we live; by his weakness we are strengthened; by his passion we are freed from suffering; impelled by his love, we are seeking in Britain brothers whom we do not know; through his help we have found those for whom we were searching, although we were not acquainted with them.

Who, dear brother, is capable of describing the great joy of believers when they have learned what the grace of Almighty God and your own cooperation achieved among the Angles? They abandoned the errors of darkness and were bathed with the light of holy faith. With full awareness they trampled on the idols which they had previously adored with savage fear. They are now committed to Almighty God. The guidelines given them for their preaching restrain them from falling into evil ways. In their minds they are submissive to the divine precepts and consequently feel uplifted. They bow down to the ground in prayer lest their minds cling too closely to earthly things. Whose achievement is this? It is the achievement of him who said: *My Father is at work until now and I am at work as well.*

God chose illiterate preachers and sent them into the world in order to show the world that conversion is brought about not by men's wisdom but rather by his own power. So in like manner God worked through weak instruments and wrought great things among the Angles. Dear brother, in this heavenly gift there is something which should inspire us with great fear and great joy.

For I know through your love for that people, specially chosen for you, that Almighty God has performed great miracles. But it is necessary that the same heavenly gift should cause you to rejoice with fear and to fear with gladness. You should be glad because by means of external miracles the souls of the Angles have been led to interior grace. But you should tremble, lest on account of these signs, the preacher's own weak soul be puffed up with presumption; lest, while seeming externally raised aloft in honour, it fall internally as a result of vainglory.

We should remember that when the disciples on their joyous return from their preaching mission said to their heavenly master: *Lord, in your name even devils were subjected to us*, he immediately retorted: *Do not rejoice about this but rather that your names are inscribed in heaven.*

## 8. On the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth - from a Homily by the Venerable Bede

*Mary proclaims the greatness of the Lord working in her*

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.* With these words Mary first acknowledges the special gifts she has been given. Then she recalls God's universal favours, bestowed unceasingly on the human race.

When a man devotes all his thoughts to the praise and service of the Lord, he proclaims God's greatness. His observance of God's commands, moreover, shows that he has God's power and greatness always at heart. His spirit rejoices in God his saviour and delights in the mere recollection of his creator who gives him hope for eternal salvation.

These words are often for all God's creations, but especially for the Mother of God. She alone was chosen, and she burned with spiritual love for the son she so joyously conceived. Above all other saints, she alone could truly rejoice in Jesus, her saviour, for she knew that he who was the source of eternal salvation would be born in time in her body, in one person both her own son and her Lord.

*For the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.* Mary attributes nothing to her own merits. She refers all her greatness to the gift of the one whose essence is power and whose nature is greatness, for he fills with greatness and strength the small and the weak who believe in him.

She did well to add: *and holy is his name*, to warn those who heard, and indeed all who would receive his words, that they must believe and call upon his name. For they too could share in everlasting holiness and true salvation according to the words of the prophet: *and it will come to pass, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.* This is the name she spoke of earlier: *and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.*

Therefore it is an excellent and fruitful custom of holy Church that we should sing Mary's hymn at the time of evening prayer. By meditating upon the incarnation, our devotion is kindled, and by remembering the example of God's Mother, we are encouraged to lead a life of virtue. Such virtues are best achieved in the evening. We are weary after the day's work and worn out by our distractions. The time for rest is near, and our minds are ready for contemplation.

## 9. On the Feast of St Justin Martyr - from an anonymous account of his martyrdom

*I have accepted the true doctrine of the Christians*

The saints were seized and brought before the prefect of Rome, whose name was Rusticus. As they stood before the judgement seat, Rusticus the prefect said to Justin: "Above all, have faith

in the gods and obey the emperors." Justin said: "We cannot be accused or condemned for obeying the commands of our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Rusticus said: "What system of teaching do you profess?" Justin said: "I have tried to learn about every system, but I have accepted the true doctrines of the Christians, though these are not approved by those who are held fast by error."

The prefect Rusticus said: "Are those doctrines approved by you, wretch that you are?" Justin said: "Yes, for I follow them with their correct teaching."

The prefect Rusticus said: "What sort of teaching is that?" Justin said: "Worship the God of the Christians. We hold him to be from the beginning the one creator and maker of the whole creation, of things seen and things unseen. We worship also the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was foretold by the prophets as the future herald of salvation for the human race and the teacher of distinguished disciples. For myself, since I am a human being, I consider that what I say is insignificant in comparison with his infinite godhead. I acknowledge the existence of a prophetic power, for the one I have just spoken of as the Son of God was the subject of prophecy. I know that the prophets were inspired from above when they spoke of his coming among men."

Rusticus said: "You are a Christian, then?" Justin said: "Yes, I am a Christian."

The prefect said to Justin: "You are called a learned man and think that you know what is true teaching. Listen: if you were scourged and beheaded, are you convinced that you would go up to heaven?" Justin said: "I hope that I shall enter God's house if I suffer that way. For I know that God's favour is stored up until the end of the whole world for all who have lived good lives."

The prefect Rusticus said: "Do you have an idea that you will go up to heaven to receive some suitable rewards?" Justin said: "It is not an idea that I have; it is something I know well and hold to be most certain."

The prefect Rusticus said: "Now let us come to the point at issue, which is necessary and urgent. Gather round then and with one accord offer sacrifice to the gods." Justin said: "No one who is right thinking stoops from true worship to false worship."

The prefect Rusticus said: "If you do not do as you are commanded you will be tortured without mercy." Justin said: "We hope to suffer torment for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so be saved. For this will bring us salvation and confidence as we stand before the more terrible and universal judgement-seat of our Lord and Saviour."

In the same way the other martyrs also said: "Do what you will. We are Christians; we do not offer sacrifice to idols."

The prefect Rusticus pronounced sentence, saying: "Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to obey the command of the emperor be scourged and led away to suffer capital punishment according to the ruling of the laws." Glorifying God, the holy martyrs went out to the accustomed place. They were beheaded, and so fulfilled their witness of martyrdom in confessing their faith in their Saviour.

---

## 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 Louisiana (USA). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Wangaratta; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the parish of Broadview-Enfield.

*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.* For all those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Sim, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), Mark, Neil, Olivia, Elaine and David,

*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 Augustine, St Justin, 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.

