

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 2 April 2020

Dear friends,

One of the ways in which we are able to maintain a community spirit in this time of physical separation is to unite ourselves in acts of prayer and reflection – a “communal solitude” which may well prove to be a seedbed for growth in holiness and wholeness, for communion and connection, for resistance and renewal.

In the suddenly altered pace of our lives, we might discover the stillness we all crave, the stillness from which all true wisdom and justice issue. What we love rather than what we fear may come into sharper focus.

Each Thursday, we plan to offer ideas and opportunities for nourishing our personal and communal spiritual lives in the coming months.

1. From Fr Graeme – Overcoming Negative Thoughts

In strange, difficult seasons such as at present, it is easy at times to begin to think negatively about life and the way people are treating us. This is quite understandable but there are steps we can take to reign in negative thinking. We can become more alive to God's thinking.

It is good to remember, for a start, that God's Spirit is always at work and will be enough to satisfy our real needs. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to stop negative thinking. This is because we have formed habits of thinking over many years and they lie deeply within our minds. So if something happens which frightens or unsettles us we shall automatically feel frightened. Or if someone treats us unkindly or unreasonably it is too easy to feel resentful. Feelings of fright and resentment have become normal for many of us over the years. They are our habits of thought and we accept them. To try to change our habits is very difficult even with a will to change.

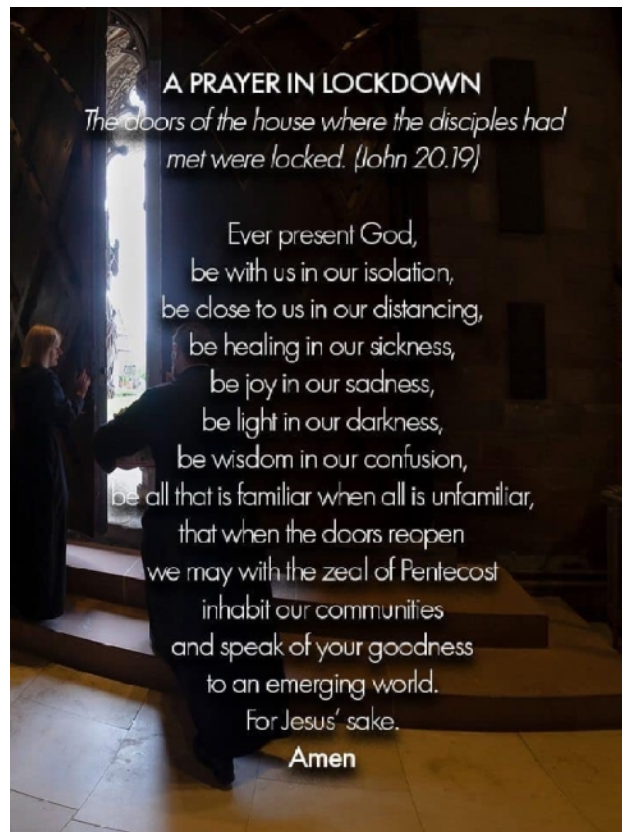
Negative feelings affect our characters and sometimes even our physical bodies. Is there anything we can do about this? If we remember to think about God's creative Spirit at work and that part of his work is to develop our characters until they more closely reflect God's character, love, calm and forgiveness, we realise that fright, resentment, and other negative feelings, are exactly the opposite of God's way of thinking. If we allow it God's Holy Spirit can heal us and redirect our thoughts in more positive directions.

We all suffer from negative thinking and we can all overcome negativity. It is helpful to think of people who show us how marvellous we can be. It is good to hold on to ideals for ourselves which are very high - much higher than our negativity - remembering that God is always at work helping us.

If we allow ourselves to change there is much joy about ourselves and others to be discovered. We begin to see life very differently.

A very sad reflection of society's negative way of thinking is to look consistently for someone to blame when things do wrong. We can all do much better than that.

Fr Graeme Kaines
Locum Priest



2. The Rhythm of Prayer

Rhythms define our lives. The habits we adopt and the patterns we repeat form our daily existence, direct our decisions and feed our motivations. The rhythms of life bring some sense of normality, especially in times of crisis. This is true of our physical and emotional lives and also true of our spirituality. We are created for a loving relationship with God that is renewed and strengthened by the rhythm of prayer.

By "rhythm of prayer" we mean regular, fixed times of the day. Fixed-hour prayer had its origins in the Judaism out of which Christianity came. Centuries before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Psalmist wrote the 'Seven times a day do I praise you' (Ps 119: 164). By the time of Christ, the people of God responded to ringing of forum bells that called them to prayer.

We know too from Scripture that Jesus in his earthly life followed a rhythm of prayer. Often he rose early in the morning to pray. As the early church saw in the lives of Old Testament saints and in Jesus a rhythm of daily prayer, they incorporated into their lives this same practice. Throughout church history, though the wording of the prayers has changed, the rhythm of prayer has remained a spiritual constant necessity for growing believers.

3. Learning to Pray

We often take it for granted that everyone knows how to pray. In the company of our friends at corporate worship, the words as well as the structure of worship is familiar. But when we are alone, we need to find ways and means of making the practice of prayer equally meaningful.

Millions of people of every age pray every day. Remember that God hears every prayer—but not all prayers are answered in the way we might expect or desire: we don't always pray for God's will to be done! Prayer is a discipline - it can be difficult at times. But also remember that no prayer, however inadequate you may feel it to be, is ever wasted or of no value.

When should I pray?

Traditionally, prayer times have been morning and evening, but you can choose a time which is best for you. It helps to be somewhere quiet, where you can have some time for yourself.

What do I need?

You might like to set up a special place in which you pray regularly. You might also place an open Bible, a cross, a candle, an icon or another picture, a bunch of flowers or, on Palm Sunday, a branch of palm or olive, to give the time and space special significance.

You don't have to know any prayers if you want to pray - in fact, words can often get in the way. But you may wish to write down or memorise some prayers that speak to you, especially the Lord's Prayer. You could build up a collection of favourite prayers and sayings and keep a scrapbook. Or you could use a collection of prayers in a prayer book or a devotional collection.

Do I have to kneel?

Kneeling is the traditional posture for penitence and standing for praise, but you can pray any way - walking, standing, sitting, whatever feels comfortable.

Structure

Sometimes we need to offer prayers that ask for God's immediate help in a particular situation. But thankfully we don't live all our lives in moments of extreme crisis. What about day-to-day praying?

Use your hand as a model

Your fingers can be used to bring to mind different things to pray for.

Thumb

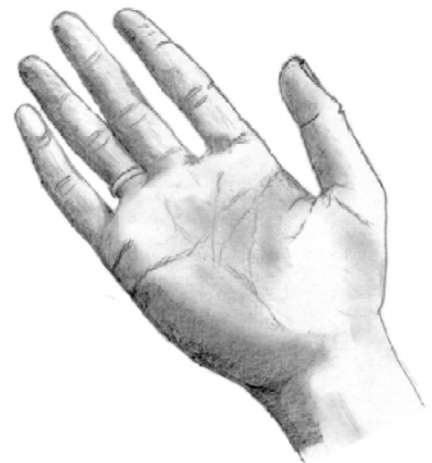
This is the strongest digit on your hand. Give thanks for all the strong things in your life, like home and family, relationships that support and sustain you.

Index finger

This is the pointing finger. Pray for all those people and things in your life who guide and help you. Friends, teachers, doctors, nurses, emergency services and so on.

Middle finger

This is the tallest finger. Pray for all the important people who have power in the world, like world leaders and their governments, members of Federal, State and Local Governments, especially those with responsibility for health and welfare.



Ring finger

This is the weakest finger on your hand. It can't do much by itself. Remember the poor, the weak, the helpless, the hungry, the sick, the ill and the bereaved.

Little finger

This is the smallest and the last finger on your hand. Pray for yourself.

Find a prayer that speaks to you and meditate on each word one by one

For instance the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner".

Read a psalm

Dietrich Bonhoeffer refers to the Psalms as "the Prayer Book of the Bible". They are both personal poems, and the songs of a whole community. The Psalms connect with the human condition, and speak to us about what humanity is like – the good, and the bad. You may like to meditate on a Psalm that is important to you, or you might select the psalms set for reading at various times of every day in the table below.

Use a prayer book

The next section gives information about resources for structured prayer.

4. 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 an unchanging 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 2 April		Psalm 78-1-15 Exodus 9.13-35 Ephesians 2.11-22
Friday 3 April	Psalm 78.16-38 Jeremiah 43 Matthew 23.27-24.2	Psalm 78,39-70 Exodus 10.1-20 Colossians 1.18-23
Saturday 4 April	Psalm 80 Jeremiah 45 Matthew 26.1-16	Psalm 81 Exodus 10.21-11.10 1 John 5.3-12
Sunday 5 April Palm Sunday	Psalm 70 Galatians 3.10-14	Psalm 118.1-18 Exodus 13.1-3, 7-9 John 12.20-32
Monday 6 April Monday in Holy Week	Psalm 21 Lamentations 1.1-12 Mark 11.27-12.12	Psalm 25 Lamentations 2.8-19 2 Corinthians 5.14-21
Tuesday 7 April Tuesday in Holy Week	Psalm 27 Lamentations 3.1-30 Mark 12.13-34	Psalm 69.1-21 Lamentations 3.40-51 Philippians 3.7-16
Wednesday 8 April Wednesday in Holy Week	Psalm 88 Isaiah 63.1-9 Mark 12.35-13.2	Psalm 31 Jeremiah 11.18-20 1 Peter 2.19-25
Thursday 9 April Maundy Thursday	Psalm 55 Leviticus 16.2-24 Mark 14.1-11	

Online Resources

There is a complete online version of Daily Prayer from *A Prayer Book for Australia* for each day available at Australian Daily Prayer <https://dailyprayer.ampers.x10.mx/>. There is also a free app for mobile devices from the App Store or Google Play.

The Church of England provides an online version of its orders for Daily Prayer at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>. This is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

The Divine Office of the Catholic Church is available online at www.ibreviary.com and is also available as a free app (App Store or Google Play).

If you are a member of Facebook, there is a daily livestream of Morning Prayer from St Luke's, Toowomba at <https://www.facebook.com/StLukesParish/>.

4. Sunday and Weekday Mass

You can also see the [prayers for the weekly Sunday Mass](#) on the web page, along with a copy of the [full Order of Mass with readings for the day](#). We plan to produce daily orders of Mass throughout Holy Week, beginning next Sunday (Palm Sunday).

If you are a Facebook member, you can watch livestreams of Sunday and Weekday Masses at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne <https://www.facebook.com/StPaulsCathedralMelbourne/>. Recordings of past celebrations are also available.

5. 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. In the coming week, there will be special reflections for the Great Three Days, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. To read these, visit the web page at <https://stmarymagdalenes.weebly.com/prayers-and-reflections.html>.

St Peter's Cathedral is producing 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.

6. 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](#) (or in Easter Time, [Regina Caeli](#)) at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm; as well as on Friday morning at 8 am, which is a time that is being widely observed by the churches as a time of united prayer for all those affected by COVID-19.

7. Solitude

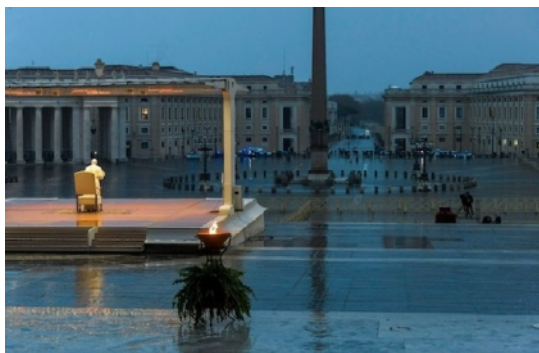
One of the most striking images of recent days was the sight of Pope Francis, standing alone in the vast St Peter's Square, addressing the world in a service of prayer:

Faith begins when we realise we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side.

Embracing the cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognise that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By the cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

The service of prayer concluded with a special blessing "to the city and to the world": *"Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: 'Do not be afraid' (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, 'cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us' (cf. 1Pet 5:7)."*



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 all who work for peace and justice.

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 Meath & Kildare (Ireland), West Ankole (Uganda) and West Buganda (Uganda). In our national church, pray for our won Diocese of Adelaide; and within the Diocese, pray for the Parish of Mitcham, and the Diocesan Council.

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, and Sim.

For those who have died. For all those who have died recently, especially Dawn Rutter, and those whose anniversaries of death occur at about this time. For those who have worked and worshipped in this place before us. For the saints, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph, St Mary Magdalene, St Richard of Chichester and holy women and men of every time and place. ✠ Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.



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.