

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 February 2023

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions will make it possible to 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!



Mary Magdalene, © Richard Stoddart
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1. From Fr Steven - Core Values

This coming Sunday, I will be focusing on Matthew 5:13-20 in the homily. The title of the homily is "Matters of the Heart: Vision, values, and vocation". So, let me put this in context.

In many ways, the church has sanitized the early Jesus movement, often depicting him as a lone hero. Historically, however, we now know that Jesus was not alone. Along with Mary Magdalene, and others from Galilee, it was very much a resistance movement. Ultimately, this is why the Romans executed him on the cross.

As a resistance movement, the early Jesus movement was motivated by two core values: compassion and inclusion. These values were articulated in a powerful way in Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. A different and shorter version occurs in Luke (i.e., the sermon on the plain). In Matthew, the fulfilment of these values lies at the heart of what it means to experience the creative impact of the reign of God (i.e., the kingdom of heaven in Matthew).

Our values are a gift. They define who we are and where we are going. Sometimes, it takes us years to identify our core values. Or, if we know them, it takes a long time to invest ourselves fully in them. In the present case, the Sermon on the Mount is a presentation of the core values of compassion and inclusion, as well as a profound challenge to embrace them.

In this spirit, Mahatma Gandhi said, "Christ's Sermon on the Mount fills me with bliss even today. Its sweet verses have even today the power to quench my agony of soul."

Fr Steven

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.

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.ibrevariary.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://stmarymagdalenesadelelaide.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 feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, as well as the first Anglican service held in Australia in 1788, the missionary bishop St Anskar, and the 16th century Martyrs of Japan.

In St Luke's Gospel (2:22-40) we are told that Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem forty days after his birth to complete Mary's ritual purification after childbirth, and to perform the redemption of the firstborn, in obedience to the Law of Moses. This is the event that we celebrate in the annual festival of the **Presentation of the Lord** (also called the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, or the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

At the end of the 4th century, a woman named Etheria made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. She wrote a long letter about her experience, which survives in fragmentary form in a later copy, discovered in 1884 in a monastic library in Arezzo. (Two more fragments were subsequently discovered as recently as 2005.) Her gives an unprecedented glimpse of liturgical life there. Among the celebrations she describes is a gala procession in honour of the Presentation in the Temple.



Under the Mosaic Law, a woman was ritually “unclean” for 40 days after childbirth, when she was to present herself to the priests and offer sacrifice—her “purification.” Contact with anyone who had brushed against mystery—birth or death—excluded a person from Jewish worship. And so this feast also came to be associated with Mary’s ritual purification – though as we see from this early account, the emphasis is much more on Jesus’ first appearance in the Temple than Mary’s purification.

The observance spread throughout the Western Church in the 5th and 6th centuries. Because the Church in the West celebrated Jesus’ birth on 25 December, the Presentation was moved to 2 February, 40 days after Christmas.

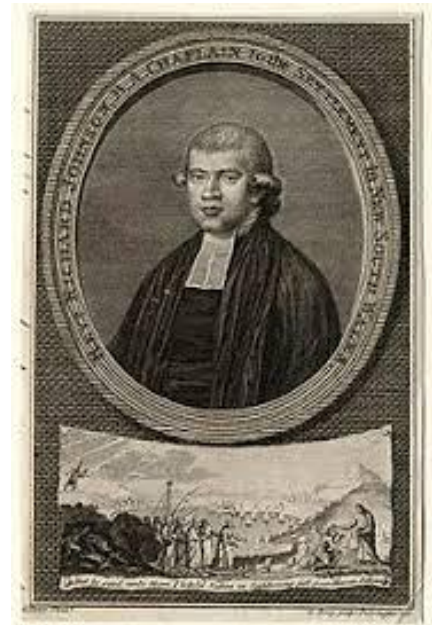
At the beginning of the 8th century, Pope Sergius inaugurated a candlelight procession; at the end of the same century the blessing and distribution of candles which continues to this day became part of the celebration, giving the feast its popular name: Candlemas.

In Luke’s account, Jesus was welcomed in the temple by two elderly people, Simeon and the widow Anna. They embody Israel in their patient expectation; they acknowledge the infant Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

The **First Anglican Service in Australia** was held at Sydney Cove on 3 February 1788. Conducted by the Rev Richard Johnson, Colonial Chaplain, it consisted of some 1500 people including the Governor Arthur Phillip, civil servants, soldiers, marines and convicts. It consisted of Morning Prayer, the Great Litany, a sermon, and Ante-communion.

The scripture text for the sermon was Psalm 116: 11-12: “How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.”

Richard Johnson was a product of the eighteenth century evangelical revival in the Church of England. He accepted the chaplaincy of a ‘penal colony’ because he had a great concern for the welfare of underprivileged people. The early evangelicals were people motivated by a strong sense of responsibility to the outcast.



Johnson was friendly toward the local Gadigal people, and he gave his daughter, born in 1790, the Aboriginal name ‘Milbah’. He was a farmer, and the survival of the people from the First Fleet depended on his ability to propagate crops. At his own expense of £67, Johnson built a church, Saint Phillip (spelt with two ‘l’ letters in honour of the Governor) on a ridge to the west of what is now known as Tank Stream. The simple ‘wattle and daub’ structure was burnt down in 1798, reportedly by those who disliked compulsory church attendance.

Johnson's work was intended to show that the Church exists for everyone, those who attend and those who do not alike, and a fundamental Gospel principle is the care of people who live on the margins of society.

St Anskar, the "Apostle of the North", had enough frustrations to become a saint—and he did. He became a Benedictine at Corbie, France, where he had been educated. When the king of Denmark became a convert to Christianity, Anskar went to that country for three years of missionary work, without noticeable success. Sweden asked for Christian missionaries, and he went there, suffering capture by pirates and other hardships on the way.

He was later recalled to become abbot of New Corbie (Corvey) and bishop of Hamburg. The Pope made him legate for the Scandinavian missions, but funds for the northern apostolate stopped with Emperor Louis's death. After 13 years' work in Hamburg, Anskar saw his cathedral burned to the ground by invaders from the far north; Sweden and Denmark returned to paganism.

He directed new apostolic activities in the North, travelling to Denmark and being instrumental in the conversion of another king. By the strange device of casting lots, the king of Sweden allowed the Christian missionaries to return.

Anskar's biographers remark that he was an extraordinary preacher, a humble and ascetical priest. He was devoted to the poor and the sick, imitating the Lord in washing their feet and waiting on them at table. He died peacefully at Bremen, Germany, without achieving his wish to be a martyr.

The Christian faith reached Japan by the efforts of the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier (1506-1552). Jesuit outreach to the Japanese continued after his death, and around 200,000 Japanese had entered the Church by 1587.

During 1593, Franciscan missionaries came to Japan from the Philippines by order of Spain's King Philip II. These new arrivals gave themselves zealously to the work of charity and evangelism, but their presence disturbed a delicate situation between the Church and Japanese authorities.

Suspicion against Catholic missionaries grew when a Spanish ship was seized off the Japanese coast and found to be carrying artillery. The empire responded by sentencing 26 Catholics to death by crucifixion and lancing.

The condemned men were first marched some 600 miles to the city of Nagasaki. The group was comprised of priests, brothers, and laymen, Franciscans, Jesuits, and members of the Secular Franciscan Order; there were catechists, doctors, simple artisans, and servants, old men and innocent children—all united in a common faith and love for Jesus and his Church.

Brother Paul Miki, a Jesuit and a native of Japan, has become the best known among the martyrs of Japan. While hanging upon a cross, Paul Miki preached to the people gathered for the execution: "The sentence of judgement says these men came to Japan from the Philippines, but I did not come from any other country. I am a true Japanese. The only reason



for my being killed is that I have taught the doctrine of Christ. I certainly did teach the doctrine of Christ. I thank God it is for this reason I die. I believe that I am telling only the truth before I die. I know you believe me and I want to say to you all once again: Ask Christ to help you to become happy. I obey Christ. After Christ's example I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain."

When missionaries returned to Japan in the 1860s, at first they found no trace of Christianity. But after establishing themselves they found that thousands of Christians lived around Nagasaki and that they had secretly preserved the faith. Beatified in 1627, the martyrs of Japan were finally canonized in 1862.

Although the number of Christians in Japan is not large, the Church is respected and has total religious freedom. The spread of Christianity in the Far East is slow and difficult. Faith such as that of the 26 martyrs is needed today as much as in 1597.

6. On the Presentation of the Lord: From a sermon by Saint Sophronius

Let us receive the light whose brilliance is eternal

In honour of the divine mystery that we celebrate today, let us all hasten to meet Christ. Everyone should be eager to join the procession and to carry a light.

Our lighted candles are a sign of the divine splendour of the one who comes to expel the dark shadows of evil and to make the whole universe radiant with the brilliance of his eternal light. Our candles also show how bright our souls should be when we go to meet Christ.

The Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, carried the true light in her arms and brought him to those who lay in darkness. We too should carry a light for all to see and reflect the radiance of the true light as we hasten to meet him.

The light has come and has shone upon a world enveloped in shadows; the Dayspring from on high has visited us and given light to those who lived in darkness. This, then, is our feast, and we join in procession with lighted candles to reveal the light that has shone upon us and the glory that is yet to come to us through him. So let us hasten all together to meet our God.

The true light has come, the light that enlightens every man who is born into this world. Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this light. Let all of us share in its splendour, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness. Let us be shining ourselves as we go together to meet and to receive with the aged Simeon the light whose brilliance is eternal. Rejoicing with Simeon, let us sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God, the Father of the light, who sent the true light to dispel the darkness and to give us all a share in his splendour.

Through Simeon's eyes we too have seen the salvation of God which he prepared for all the nations and revealed as the glory of the new Israel, which is ourselves. As Simeon was released from the bonds of this life when he had seen Christ, so we too were at once freed from our old state of sinfulness.

By faith we too embraced Christ, the salvation of God the Father, as he came to us from Bethlehem. Gentiles before, we have now become the people of God. Our eyes have seen God incarnate, and because we have seen him present among us and have mentally received him into our arms, we are called the new Israel. Never shall we forget this presence; every year we keep a feast in his honour.

7. A reflection on St Anskar – from *Ad gentes*, the decree of Vatican II on the missionary activity of the Church

We must boldly proclaim the mystery of Christ

Every disciple of Christ is responsible in his own measure for the spread of the faith, but Christ the Lord is always calling from among his followers those whom he wills, so that they may be with him and be sent by him to preach to the nations.

Through the Holy Spirit, who distributes gifts as he wills for the good of all, Christ implants in the hearts of individuals the vocation to be a missionary, and at the same time he raises up in the Church institutes which make their own the task of spreading the Gospel that belongs to the whole Church.

A special vocation marks out those ... who are prepared to undertake the missionary task in their own country or abroad, and have the right natural disposition for it, with suitable gifts and talents. Sent by lawful authority, they go out in obedience and faith to those who are far from Christ. They have been set apart for the task to which they have been called as ministers of the gospel, to make the Gentiles an acceptable offering, sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

Those whom God calls must answer his call in such a way that, without regard for purely human counsel, they may devote themselves wholly to the work of the gospel. This response cannot be given except with the inspiration and strength of the Holy Spirit. The person who is sent enters into the life and mission of him who emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave. He must be ready therefore to be true to his vocation for life, to deny himself, renouncing all that he had before, and to become all things to all men.

In preaching the Gospel to the nations he must boldly proclaim the mystery of Christ, whose ambassador he is, so that in Christ he may have the courage to speak as he ought, and not be ashamed of the scandal of the cross. He must follow in the footsteps of his Master, who was gentle and humble of heart, and reveal to others that his yoke is easy and his burden light.

By a life that is truly according to the Gospel, by much endurance, by forbearance, by kindness and sincere love, he must bear witness to his Lord ... He will pray to God for strength and courage, so that he may come to see that for one who experiences great hardship and extreme poverty there can be abundant joy.

8. From a contemporary account of the martyrdom of the Martyrs of Japan

You shall be my witnesses

The crosses were set in place. Father Pasio and Father Rodriguez took turns encouraging the victims. Their steadfast behaviour was wonderful to see. The Father Bursar stood motionless, his eyes turned heavenward. Brother Martin gave thanks to God's goodness by singing psalms. Again and again he repeated: "Into your hands, Lord, I entrust my life." Brother Francis Branco also thanked God in a loud voice. Brother Gonsalvo in a very loud voice kept saying the Our Father and Hail Mary.

Our brother, Paul Miki, saw himself standing now in the noblest pulpit he had ever filled. To his "congregation" he began by proclaiming himself a Japanese and a Jesuit. He was dying for the Gospel he preached. He gave thanks to God for this wonderful blessing and he ended his "sermon" with these words: "As I come to this supreme moment of my life, I am sure none of you would suppose I want to deceive you. And so I tell you plainly: there is no way to be saved except the Christian way. My religion teaches me to pardon my enemies and all who have

offended me. I do gladly pardon the Emperor and all who have sought my death. I beg them to seek baptism and be Christians themselves.”

Then he looked at his comrades and began to encourage them in their final struggle. Joy glowed in all their faces ... When a Christian in the crowd cried out to him that he would soon be in heaven, his hands, his whole body strained upward with such joy that every eye was fixed on him.

One brother looked toward heaven and called upon the holy names – “Jesus, Mary!” He began to sing a psalm: “Praise the Lord, you children!” (He learned it in catechism class in Nagasaki. They take care there to teach the children some psalms to help them learn their catechism). Others kept repeating “Jesus, Mary!” Their faces were serene. Some of them even took to urging the people standing by to live worthy Christian lives. In these and other ways they showed their readiness to die.

Then, according to Japanese custom, the four executioners began to unsheathe their spears. At this dreadful sight, all the Christians cried out, “Jesus, Mary!” And the storm of anguished weeping then rose to batter the very skies. The executioners killed them one by one. One thrust of the spear, then a second blow. It was over in a very short time.

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 Pennsylvania (USA). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Adelaide; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Parish of Ingle Farm and Para Hills.

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, especially Valerie Taylor. ✠ *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 Anskar, St Paul Miki, 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, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.