

# St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church

Moore Street, Adelaide



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

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## Keeping Community                      Thursday 3 September 2020

### Spiritual Resources & Reflections

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Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions makes it possible to once again worship on Sunday, when Mass is sung 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 – The True Purpose of Worship

People in general come to church for many different reasons. People of religious faith often think about the true purpose of worship which is what we offer God while in church – our hymns of praise, the psalm and the attitude we have towards God. But it is important that we offer to God something which is directly worthy of him (worth-ship), something which expresses God's purpose for the world.

For example, we might pray for peace in the world or in our nation. But in praying for this peace we have to understand that the seeds of peace need first to be sown. The seeds of peace are usually justice and love. It is we who need to sow these seeds if we are to pray for peace authentically.

People of Christian Faith believe that the Holy Spirit is within each of us. We may know this intellectually but it is vital that we try to make this something real in our lives. It is as if the Holy Spirit lives within us like a bird in a cage, making its home within us. The Holy Spirit is there to express himself but we have to give the Spirit the chance to come out in expression otherwise nothing may happen.

One situation where the Spirit can come out in expression is while we are at worship. The Spirit can help us to worship well and help us to have the right sense of purpose when we come to church. It helps that when we are at prayer away from church, we can open ourselves to the Holy Spirit and embrace the gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit, too, helps us to be aware of our own personal sense of purpose in the world as we offer our prayer - knowing what we must do or be to make our intercessory prayer authentic. The Holy Spirit helps us to sow the seeds of love, joy, peace, beauty, wisdom, and so on as we think about the Holy Spirit's qualities and gifts.

It is difficult to think about the Holy Spirit creatively if we never or seldom spend any time just thinking about God. The more we can think about God and God's goodness, God's longing for

justice, God's calmness and joy, the difference we may come to notice in our prayer. Prayer is more that we offer worship (worth-ship) to God than ask God to do things for us. It is correct to ask God for the help we or others need but there is more to prayer than that by itself.

It is significant that in the Lord's Prayer, the first petition is "Hallowed be your Name." Not a request that God do something but rather an act of adoration. The requests for help come later in the prayer.

When we come to Mass it is rightly good to see people we know well and rightly good to have things in mind for which we can ask God's help. But most importantly we come to Mass to give thanks for all that Jesus did for us on the cross and to worship God.

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:

|   | <b>Morning Prayer</b>                              | <b>Evening Prayer</b>                                      |
|---|--|--|
| Thursday 3 September<br><i>St Gregory the Great</i><br><i>Eliza Darling</i> | Ps 9<br>Zephaniah 1.14 – 2.3<br>Acts 25.1-12       | Ps 10<br>Judith 8.4-27<br>1 John 2.18-29                   |
| Friday 4 September  | Ps 11, 12<br>Zephaniah 1.14 – 2.3<br>Acts 25.13-27 | Ps 13, 14<br>Judith 8.28 – 9.14<br>1 John 3.1-10           |
| Saturday 5 September  | Ps 15, 16<br>Zephaniah 3.1-10<br>Acts 26.1-18      | Ps 17<br>Judith 10.1-13<br>1 John 3.11-24                  |
| Sunday 6 September<br><i>14th Sunday after Pentecost</i>                    | Ps 74<br>Matthew 18.1-9                            | Ps 95<br>Exodus 13.11-22<br>Romans 13.11-14                |
| Monday 7 September  | Ps 19<br>Zephaniah 3.11-20<br>Acts 26.19-32        | Ps 119.1-16<br>Judith 10.14 – 11.6, 20-23<br>1 John 4.1-12 |
| Tuesday 8 September<br>The Birth of the Virgin Mary                         | Ps 20, 21<br>Obadiah 1.14<br>Acts 27.1-12          | Ps 24, 26<br>Judith 12.16 – 13.16<br>1 John 4.13-21        |
| Wednesday 9 September   | Ps 22.1-22<br>Obadiah 15-21<br>Acts 27.13-32       | Ps 22.23-32, 23<br>Judith 14<br>1 John 5.1-12              |
| Thursday 10 September   | Ps 25<br>2 Chronicles 36.1-14<br>Acts 27.33-44     | Ps 27<br>Judith 15<br>1 John 5.13-21                       |

### 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.ibrevariary.com](http://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. 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.

### **3. Reflections and Meditations**

Fr Graeme and others within our community will continue to prepare Reflections for Sundays and Holy Days for posting on the web page.

Fr Philip Carter's meditations and spiritual reflections will in the future be presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>. To access the tab, 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.

The blog provided services for the parish during the COVID lockdown and through to the end of July, when we celebrated our patron saint, Mary Magdalene. We will keep publishing services, but not every Sunday. The plan is to publish one service a month on a special feast day: in mid August we celebrated the Blessed Virgin Mary; in September, we will celebrate the Holy Cross; and in October, the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church.

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

### **4. Obadiah – the most forgotten book in the Bible**

In the daily office this week, at morning Prayer next Tuesday and Wednesday, we read the Book of the Prophet Obadiah. Hidden away between Amos and Jonah, it is just 21 verses long. Has anyone ever heard a sermon on Obadiah? Probably not.

But it is not only because Obadiah is such a small book, so easily overlooked. It is because Obadiah is hard to understand. It is a confusing prophecy about a mysterious nation called Edom.

To uncover the profound truth within Obadiah that makes it stand out from the rest of Scripture, we first need to understand what was happening in Israel at that time that caused this prophecy to take shape. The book itself does not directly tell us what was going on, but there are good historical and literary reasons to believe that Obadiah was written in the aftermath of the Philistine-Arabian invasion of Jerusalem around 850 B.C, recorded in 2 Chronicles 21:16–17. King Jehoram dragged the entire nation of Judah into such terrible idolatry that God stirred up the Philistines and Arabians to attack Jerusalem and plunder its possessions.

Judah's defeat also allowed for a new player to enter the game. For the first time in its unimpressive history, the small nation of Edom overpowered Judah. They let the Philistines and Arabians do the heavy lifting and then shared in the spoil once the city was overrun. They pillaged its property and murdered its survivors.

This was a new low for Judah. They may not have liked what the Philistines and Arabians did to them, but they took what Edom did to them much more personally. That's because, Edom, unlike Philistia or Arabia, has always been Israel's archenemy.

We have heard something of this in the readings at Mass in the past few weeks. Hundreds of years prior to the invasion, this rivalry was born. Isaac's wife Rebekah gave birth to twins and named the older son, Esau, and the younger son, Jacob (Gen 25:21–26). Jacob would become the nation of Israel, but Esau would become the nation of Edom. God prophesied this would happen before they were born, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23).

For nearly 1,000 years, this prophecy held true: Israel dominated Edom, and Edom despised Israel for it (Numbers 20:14–21). But Jehoram's wickedness opened the door for Edom to close the gap. They rebelled against Judah's rule and never returned to their yoke of slavery (2 Chronicles 21:8, 10).

Judah feared that Edom was evidence that God no longer loved them, God demonstrates in Obadiah that on the contrary, it proves that God loves them far more than they ever imagined.

The book is organized around this theme by answering three key questions Judah would be asking: How far will God's love go (vv. 1–9), how long will God's love last (vv. 10–16), and how good will God's love get (vv. 17–21)?

How far will God's love go? *There is no extent to which God's love will not go.* How long will God's love last? *There is no test of time God's love will not endure.* How good will God's love get? *There is nothing better God's love will not give.*

Jame Street  
The Master's Seminary

## 5. In the Church's Calendar

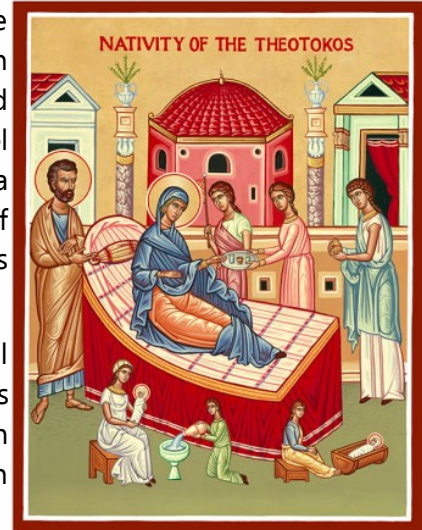
This week we have just one celebration of the saints, but one that has a very long history: the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Church has celebrated Mary's birth since at least the sixth century: the September date relates to the historical commencement of the Church's year.

Scripture does not give an account of Mary's birth. However, the apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James* fills in the gap. This work has no historical value, but it does reflect the development of Christian piety. According to this account, Anna and Joachim are infertile, but pray for a child. They receive the promise of a child who will advance God's plan of salvation for the world. Such a story, like many biblical counterparts, stresses the special presence of God in Mary's life from the beginning.

Saint Augustine connects Mary's birth with Jesus' saving work. He tells the earth to rejoice and shine forth in the light of her birth. "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth the nature inherited from our first parents is changed."

We can see every human birth as a call for new hope in the world. The love of two human beings has joined with God in his creative work. Loving parents show hope in a world filled with travail. Every new child has the potential to be a channel of God's love and peace to the world. This is all true in a magnificent way in Mary. If Jesus is the perfect expression of God's love, Mary is the foreshadowing of that love. If Jesus has brought the fullness of salvation, Mary is its dawning.

Birthday celebrations bring happiness to the celebrant as well as to family and friends. Next to the birth of Jesus, Mary's birth offers the greatest possible happiness to the world. Each time we celebrate her birth, we can confidently hope for an increase of peace in our hearts and in the world at large.



## 6. From the Early Church Fathers – St Andrew of Crete

Andrew of Crete was an 8th century bishop, theologian, preacher and author. His writings remain prized in both the Eastern and Western church. The following is an extract from his *Sermon on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary*.

*'The fulfilment of the law is Christ himself, who does not so much lead us away from the letter as lift us up to its spirit. For the law's consummation was this, that the very lawgiver accomplished his work and changed letter into spirit, summing everything up in himself and, though subject to the law, living by grace. He subordinated the law, yet harmoniously united grace with it, not confusing the distinctive characteristics of the one with the other, but effecting the transition in a way most fitting for God. He changed whatever was burdensome, servile and oppressive to what is light and liberating, so that we should be enslaved no longer under the elemental spirits of the world, as the Apostle says, nor held fast as bond-servants under the letter of the law.*

*This is the highest, all-embracing benefit that Christ has bestowed on us. This is the revelation of the mystery, this is the emptying out of the divine nature, the union of God and man, and the deification of the manhood that was assumed. This radiant and manifest coming of God to men most certainly needed a joyful prelude to introduce the great gift of salvation to us. The present festival, the birth of the Mother of God, is the prelude, while the final act is the fore-ordained union of the Word with flesh. Today the Virgin is born, tended and formed and prepared for her role as Mother of God, who is the universal King of the ages.*

*Justly, then, do we celebrate this mystery since it signifies for us a double grace. We are led toward the truth, and we are led away from our condition of slavery to the letter of the law. How can this be? Darkness yields before the coming of the light, and grace exchanges legalism for freedom. But midway between the two stands today's mystery, at the frontier where types and symbols give way to reality, and the old is replaced by the new. Therefore, let all creation sing and dance and unite to make worthy contribution to the celebration of this day. Let there be one common festival for saints in heaven and men on earth. Let everything, mundane things and those above, join in festive celebration. Today this created world is raised to the dignity of a holy place for him who made all things. The creature is newly prepared to be a divine dwelling place for the Creator.*

## 7. 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 Ogbomoso (*Nigeria*); Caledonia (*Canada*); and Calgary (*Canada*). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Armidale; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the chaplaincy to the Women's and Children's Hospital, and the staff of the Synod Office.

*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, Chris, and Clarice.

*For those who have died.* For all those who have died recently; 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, 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](mailto:omarymag@anglicaresa.com.au), by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

