

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

1. From Fr Graeme – Coping and Dealing with Wrong Ideas

Coping and dealing with wrong ideas. I have chosen this topic because Good Friday is almost upon us ... tomorrow. I think that most Christians have been persuaded to believe that Christ's death on the cross, despite the fact that we make so much of it at church, was not enough to take away our sins. We continue to believe that we need to make ourselves good enough for God and we shall be punished if we don't.

Our Christian Faith ought to bring us much joy, relief and hope yet instead many Christians feel constantly guilty, self-critical and sometimes very critical of others. They do not really believe that they are forgiven but that Christ came to give us a new set of rules and standards up to which we must strive to live in order to be acceptable to God. This is a tragedy yet it is quite understandable.

It is as if many of have been brought up to believe that we need to make ourselves good enough for God. Good Friday is “good” because it was unbelievably good on the day and continues to be good for every one of us today. If Good Friday needed a different name to reflect the wrong thoughts of many Christians, it could be called “The Last Friday” (of Jesus' life on earth.) or something less deceptive than “good”. Nevertheless, it is called “Good Friday” for good reason.

Even when we know that our ideas about God are false, it can be very difficult to change our thinking. Our wrong thinking becomes part of us. Even our parents may have taught us wrong ideas about God and these have stayed with us over the decades.

Tragically, over the years, too many Christians have passed on bad ideas about God through intolerance of difference, or of whatever we are ignorant about. Often we are afraid of others who seem to be different, too. It is very important to pass on feelings of encouragement and

affirmation to other people and even if we cannot agree with them or what they are doing, not to “judge” them. It is not insignificant that many people outside the Church think they have been judged by Christians and this has fuelled their hatred of the Christianity. Could it be true that there is far more that is good in people than we can possibly see? Let us encourage that good.

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 alternate between the two poles of *activity* – speaking, searching, working – and *receptivity* – listening, perceiving, being. These rhythms bring a sense of normality, especially in times of crisis. This is true of our physical and emotional lives and also true of our spirituality. From the perspective of the spiritual life these poles can be understood as *action* and *contemplation*.

We are created for a loving relationship with God that is renewed and strengthened by the rhythm of prayer. This includes action – holding out a hand while in supplication – and receptivity, praying, “Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will.” Both are ways to express the intention to consent to God’s presence and action.

We know 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.

Contemplative Prayer

We may think of prayer as thoughts or feelings expressed in words. But this is only one expression. In the Christian tradition contemplative prayer is considered to be the pure gift of God. It is the opening of mind and heart - our whole being - to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions. Through grace we open our awareness to God whom we know by faith is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing, closer than consciousness itself.

Centring Prayer

Centring Prayer is a method designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer by preparing our faculties to receive this gift. It presents ancient Christian wisdom teachings in an updated form. Centring Prayer is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer; rather it casts a new light and depth of meaning on them. It is at the same time a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship. This method of prayer is a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with him.

Theological Background

The source of Centring Prayer, as in all methods leading to contemplative prayer, is the indwelling Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The focus of Centring Prayer is the deepening of our relationship with the living Christ. It tends to build communities of faith and bond the members together in mutual friendship and love

The Root of Centring Prayer

Listening to the word of God in Scripture is a traditional way of cultivating friendship with Christ. It is a way of listening to the texts of Scripture as if we were in conversation with Christ and he were suggesting the topics of conversation. The daily encounter with Christ and reflection on his word leads beyond mere acquaintanceship to an attitude of friendship, trust, and love. Conversation simplifies and gives way to communing. Gregory the Great (6th century) in summarising the Christian contemplative tradition expressed it as “resting in God.” This was the classical meaning of contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition for the first sixteen centuries.

Wisdom Saying of Jesus

Centring Prayer is based on the wisdom saying of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: “When you pray, go to your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you”(Matthew 6:6). It is also inspired by writings of major contributors to the Christian contemplative heritage including John Cassian, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Francis de Sales, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Thérèse of Lisieux, and Thomas Merton.

Guidelines

1. Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God’s presence and action within. Use a word of one or two syllables, such as: *God, Jesus, Abba, Father, Mother, Mary, Amen*. Other possibilities include: *Love, Listen, Peace, Mercy, Let Go, Silence, Stillness, Faith, Trust*.
2. Sitting comfortably – with your back straight – and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God’s presence and action within.
3. When engaged with your thoughts – body sensations, feelings, images, reflections – return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes

Some Practical Points ...

The minimum time for prayer should be 20 minutes, and many people find it helpful to allocate a half an hour at the beginning and the end of each day.

The end of the prayer can be indicated by a timer, but not one that ticks or has an obtrusive alarm. A ‘gentle’ alarm on a smart phone set to a low volume, or a phone on silent set to vibrate on a table nearby, is often suitable – but put the phone in flight mode before beginning, to avoid interruptions.

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 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 9 April Maundy Thursday		Psalm 136 Exodus 24.1-11 Colossians 2.8-15
Friday 10 April Good Friday	Psalm 40 Genesis 22.1-18 Mark 15.21-41	Psalm 116 Exodus 24.1-11 Hebrews 9.11-26
Saturday 11 April Holy Saturday	Psalm 30 Genesis 2.1-3 Mark 15.42-47	Psalm 31.21-27 Micah 7.14-20 Hebrews 4.1-11
Sunday 12 April Easter Sunday	Psalm 114 1 Corinthians 5.6b-8 Luke 24.13-49	Psalm 113 Exodus 12.1-14 Romans 6.3-14
Monday 13 April Monday in Easter Week	Psalm 2 Isaiah 60.1-11 John 20.1-18	Psalm 110 Exodus 12.1-20 1 Peter 1.1-9
Tuesday 14 April Tuesday in Easter Week	Psalm 112 Isaiah 60.12-21 John 20.19-31	Psalm 113 Exodus 12.21-36 1 Peter 1.10-17
Wednesday 15 April Wednesday in Easter Week	Psalm 114 Isaiah 61 John 21.1-14	Psalm 115 Exodus 12.37-51 1 Peter 1.18-2.3
Thursday 16 April Thursday in Easter Week	Psalm 116 Isaiah 62 John 21.15-25	

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).

4. Sunday and Weekday Mass

You can also see the prayers for the Mass of the Day (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday) on the web page, along with a copy of the Order of Service for each day.

Orders of Service will also be available on our new blog, stmarymagdalenesadelelaide.org, featuring prayers and readings recorded by members of the congregation.

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. The Great Three Days – Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday

Reflections for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday will be posted on the web page. Please visit <https://stmarymagdalenes.weebly.com/prayers-and-reflections.html>.

Full Orders of Service will be available on the [web page](#) and also, in interactive form, featuring recorded readings, prayers and reflections from members of our congregations, on the blog at <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org/>.

Blog posts for Holy Week will be uploaded at the following times:

9 April Maundy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper, 5 pm
 Stations of the Cross, for Meditation and Reflection, 7 pm

10 April Good Friday, The Liturgy of the Day, Thursday night

The timing of the Easter Sunday post is not yet confirmed, but we anticipate it will be posted by sunset on Easter Eve, Saturday 11 April.

6. 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. There will be special reflections for the Great Three Days this week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. To read these, visit the [blog](#) or the [web page](#).

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.

7. 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.

8. Redefining Community – a reflection from Church leaders

On Friday 3 April, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, met online with the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, and the UK Chief Rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis

RABBI MIRVIS: [Our meeting is] a very special occasion in the midst of extraordinary times and for us within the Jewish faith as I'm sure it is for you the absence of the house of prayer as being right at the centre of our life of faith presents for us a fresh challenge because we now really need to reconfigure the definition of community. Every single one of our homes needs primarily now to be a house of God and our faith is so crucially important to us all

CARD NICHOLLS: With churches closed, the rootedness of faith now lies much more within each one of us. I don't think we should underestimate how difficult this is for many people but It's teaching us those deeper roots of our relationship with God. There's something quite positive beginning to emerge

ABP WELBY: One of the things we've been discussing here is to recover the idea that the Church is the people of God regardless of whether they have a building, beautiful and wonderful as those buildings are

CARD NICHOLLS: I'm amazed at the creativity of so many groups and individuals. There's a burgeoning of spirituality, a burgeoning way of helping each other to pray.

RABBI MIRVIS: What I find to be so inspiring is the extent to which people see the selflessness that is so important now as being an integral part of our religious identity. This is religion in its finest hour. Since 1945 we've been living in the post war era. I believe that from 2020 we'll be living in the post virus era.

...

ABP WELBY: There is a very deep anxiety which is sometimes behind the question, 'Where is God in this?'

CARD NICHOLLS: It poses the question, 'What should change in my way of life?' 'What am I being challenged to look at afresh?'

RABBI MIRVIS: And it shows the extent to which, actually, as smart as we think we are, we're not in control, and we look to the Almighty for our guidance. But at the same time the Almighty is also looking to us. In our Jewish tradition we have the concept of "my implicit and deep rooted faith in God" and to be responsible with regard to our own health and our responsibility to those around us.

CARD NICHOLLS: We might finish by reciting a verse or two of the Lord's my shepherd. Any version you like!

ABP WELBY: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures.

RABBI MIRVIS: בְּנֵאֻת דְּשֵׂא יִרְבִּי צִי עֲלֵי מִנְחֹת יְהוָה

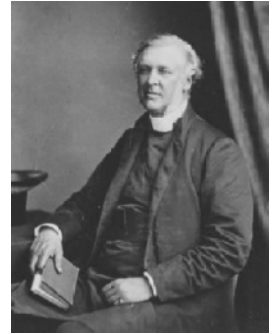
CARD NICHOLLS: For you are there with your crook and your staff: with these you give me comfort. Amen.



9. Those who have gone before us ...

You will see in the intercessions for each week that in our prayers for those who have died, we also remember the Saints and other holy women and men who appear in the church's calendar. This week includes the commemorations of a number of people of some significance in the history of Anglicanism.

Frederic Barker (1808-1882) was the second Bishop of Sydney. He came to Australia from England in 1855 and in the 27 years of his episcopate, he was instrumental in promoting theological education not only in his own diocese but in the many new dioceses formed during his tenure, and also the establishment of the General Synod. Barker was a firm Evangelical, and his nickname (of which he disapproved) 'the High Priest' was as much a comment on his low churchmanship as on his great height, 6 ft 5½ inches. He is commemorated in the Calendar for the Anglican Church of Australia on 6 April, the date of his death.



Georgiana Molloy (1805-1843) was an early settler in Western Australia where she became known as a pioneering church leader, as well as a noted amateur botanist. A deeply religious person, much influenced by the Christian Revival movement in England before coming to Australia in 1829, her short life was a remarkable witness of faith, service and justice. She developed an interest in botany, and together with her husband, and local indigenous women, she spent nearly all of her leisure time in collecting, collating and documenting botanical specimens of the south west of Western Australia, a legacy which even in her time gained international notice. She is commemorated on 8 April, the date of her death.



George Augustus Selwyn (1809-1878) was the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand. He oversaw the establishment of the church in New Zealand, the creation of its General Synod, and the establishment of dioceses across the nation. He began to learn Māori on the voyage to New Zealand – he became fluent, and regularly preached in both English and Māori – and was highly esteemed in the Māori community, not least for his advocacy of a settler society “without distinction of persons” and his readiness to frame rules for the church to suit the circumstances of both the settlers and the Māori people. He is commemorated on 11 April, the date of his death.



The others commemorated this week are **William Law** and **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**.

Law (1686-1761) was a priest and spiritual writer who, as a non-Juror, was deprived of the ability to teach or preach, but did so through his books, which are among the great monuments of Christian devotional writing.

Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a German evangelical pastor and theologian, whose prolific writings on Christianity's role in the secular world continue to influence theology today. He staunchly resisted the rise of the Nazism, and was imprisoned in 1943. He was executed on 9 April 1945.



10. 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 Milwaukee and West Virginia (SA) and Western Ison (Nigeria). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn; and within the Diocese, pray for the Parish of Port Adelaide. Pray also for Archbishop Geoff Smith as he begins his appointment as Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia.

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 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. For the saints, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph, St Mary Magdalene, Frederic Barker, Georgiana Molloy, George Augustus Selwyn, William Law, Dietrich Bonhoeffer 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.