

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 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 - Grace makes all the difference

This Sunday, I will be looking closely at the 'antitheses' in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:21-37), which follow the pattern of "you have heard that it was said... but I say to unto you". So, what is happening here? Well, there are three key aspects to these antitheses.

First, Jesus is telling his listeners about the kingdom of heaven (i.e., the reign of God). The reign of God is the creative presence of God in the world, here and now, leading us into the future.

Second, the reign of God comes alive in the congregation of the faithful through its ethical commitments. In other words, how we treat each other, as well as marginalized others, is the decisive measure of Christian practice and faithfulness.

Third, these are radical demands. We can only achieve them with the help of the Holy Spirit, through our personal transformation, and with the love and goodwill of our travelling companions in Christ.

Sometimes, this all seems daunting. Life is complicated. And we all make mistakes. But this ethical demand brings out the very best in us.

All in all, this represents an insight into the precious gift of Christian community (i.e., koinonia). In other words, the communion we share means we are not a club or an interest group. Instead, we are the body of Christ.

As such, the reign of God in the world requires transparency, mutual accountability, passion, kindness, and a generous serve of grace.

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. Ash Wednesday – 22 February

Lent is fast approaching. **The first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, is on 22 February.** There will be two celebrations of the special liturgy of the day, the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes, during Masses at 12.10 pm (said) and 6.15 pm (sung). In addition, there will be a reflection and prayer at 8 am every Wednesday in Lent.

There will be a full list of extra opportunities for prayer and devotion during Lent produced in the coming weeks.

6. This Week in the Calendar

This week in the church's calendar we celebrate two early medieval missionaries to the Slavic nations, the brothers Cyril (d. 869) and Methodius (d. 885)

Because their father was an officer in a part of Greece inhabited by many Slavs, these two Greek brothers, Cyril (d.869) and Methodius (d.885) ultimately became missionaries, teachers, and patrons of the Slavic peoples.

After a brilliant course of studies, Cyril refused the governorship of a district such as his brother had accepted among the Slavic-speaking population. Cyril withdrew to a monastery where his brother Methodius had become a monk after some years in a governmental post.

A decisive change in their lives occurred when the Duke of Moravia asked the Eastern Emperor Michael for political independence from German rule and ecclesiastical autonomy (having their own clergy and liturgy). Cyril and Methodius undertook the missionary task.



Cyril's first work was to invent an alphabet, still used in some Eastern liturgies. His followers probably formed the Cyrillic alphabet. Together they translated the Gospels, the psalter, Paul's letters and the liturgical books into Slavonic, and composed a Slavonic liturgy.

Their free use of the vernacular in preaching led to opposition from the German clergy. The bishop refused to consecrate Slavic bishops and priests, and Cyril was forced to appeal to Rome. On the visit to Rome, he and Methodius had the joy of seeing their new liturgy approved by Pope Adrian II. Cyril, long an invalid, died in Rome 50 days after taking the monastic habit.

Methodius continued mission work for 16 more years. He was papal legate for all the Slavic peoples, consecrated a bishop and then given an ancient see (now in the Czech Republic). When much of their former territory was removed from their jurisdiction, the Bavarian bishops retaliated with a violent storm of accusation against Methodius. As a result, Emperor Louis the German exiled Methodius for three years. Pope John VIII secured his release.

Because the Frankish clergy, still smarting, continued their accusations, Methodius had to go to Rome to defend himself against charges of heresy and uphold his use of the Slavonic liturgy. He was again vindicated.

Legend has it that in a feverish period of activity, Methodius translated the whole Bible into Slavonic in eight months. He died on Tuesday of Holy Week, surrounded by his disciples, in his cathedral church.

Opposition continued after his death, and the work of the brothers in Moravia was brought to an end and their disciples scattered. But the expulsions had the beneficial effect of spreading the spiritual, liturgical, and cultural work of the brothers to Bulgaria, Bohemia and southern Poland.

7. From an old Slavonic Life of Constantine (Cyril)

Build up your Church and gather all into unity

Constantine, already burdened by many hardships, became ill. At one point during his extended illness, he experienced a vision of God and began to sing this verse: "My spirit rejoiced and my heart exulted because they told me we shall go into the house of the Lord."

Afterward he remained dressed in the vestments that were to be venerated later, and rejoiced for an entire day saying: "From now on, I am not the servant of the emperor or any man on earth, but of almighty God alone. Before, I was dead, now I am alive and I shall live for ever. Amen."

The following day, he assumed the monastic habit and took the religious name Cyril. He lived the life of a monk for fifty days.

When the time came for him to set out from this world to the peace of his heavenly homeland, he prayed to God with his hands outstretched and his eyes filled with tears: "O Lord, my God, you have created the choirs of angels and spiritual powers; you have stretched forth the heavens and established the earth, creating all that exists from nothing. You hear those who obey your will and keep your commands in holy fear. Hear my prayer and protect your faithful people, for you have established me as their unsuitable and unworthy servant.

"Keep them free from harm and the worldly cunning of those who blaspheme you. Build up your Church and gather all into unity. Make your people known for the unity and profession of their faith. Inspire the hearts of your people with your word and your teaching. You called us to preach the Gospel of your Christ and to encourage them to lives and works pleasing to you.

"I now return to you, your people, your gift to me. Direct them with your powerful right hand, and protect them under the shadow of your wings. May all praise and glorify your name, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen."

Once he had exchanged the gift of peace with everyone, he said: "Blessed be God, who did not hand us over to our invisible enemy, but freed us from his snare and delivered us from perdition." He then fell asleep in the Lord at the age of forty-two.

The Patriarch commanded all those in Rome, both the Greeks and Romans, to gather for his funeral. They were to celebrate his funeral as if he had been a pope. This they did.

8. 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 Peshawar (Pakistan). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the Parish of Magill.

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, especial Tonia Bahr, 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 Cyril, St Methodius, 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.

