

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 June 2022

Dear friends,

The relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions means it possible to again open the church for private prayer and public worship.

The regular schedule of worship is as usual, with the Angelus at noon and Mass at 12.10 pm (Thursday) and Sung Mass (Sunday at 10 am)

These newsletters are intended to support the spiritual life of the community as we continue to cope with and respond to the pandemic.



1. From Fr Steven – Something Wonderful

I am delighted to have received the Archbishop's invitation to be Parish Priest at St Mary Magdalene. I am grateful for the confidence shown in me by the Nomination committee. And I am looking forward to the Commissioning on 29 June. Above all, I consider it a privilege to be part of this compassionate faith community. So, let's do something wonderful together.

Now, I am now sure what that *wonderful* is, but it has to do with the mystery of God. On that note, it is worth returning to the figure of Moses. Of course, Moses is arguably the central character in the Hebrew Scriptures. He is an iconic dreamtime figure, who towers over others. Traditionally, we think of Moses as law giver. By focusing on the law, however, we risk missing the point of his ministry. We must put the law in context.

The context is God's liberation of the Hebrew slaves, which God inaugurated through Moses' leadership. In other words, God's liberating act is more important than law. Alternatively, the law does not make sense, unless it is interpreted in the context of an experience of liberation. Moreover, we are reminded of this every time we share in the Mass, which has its roots in the Passover tradition, as we use unleavened bread.

In an informal setting, like a youth camp, it is okay to use other forms of bread. Unleavened bread, however, is the archetypal symbol of liberation. This is because the Hebrew slaves, following their release, had no time to leaven bread (Exodus 12:39; 13:9). Unleavened bread reminds us that God cares, and cares deeply. Subsequently, New Testament writers saw Jesus as the new Moses, who sets us free. The apostle Paul saw freedom, and setting free, as integral parts of the Christian story (Galatians 5:1). But let's return to Moses.

The burning bush story is remarkable (Exodus 3:1-6). It is where Moses encounters the presence of God in the flames of a burning bush. Significantly, God is present, but God cannot be seen or touched. God is not a thing. God is mystery. For example, when Moses raises the issue of God's name, God replies emphatically with "I am who I am" (Exodus 13:14). Initially,

Moses makes a series of excuses. It is all too much. Eventually, transformed by mystery, he trusts God with his life, his people, and his future.

This Sunday is Trinity Sunday. The concept of the Trinity is a profound and fundamental symbol of God, expressing something of the dynamic nature of the divine. Consequently, we celebrate the deep connection between God, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit. In practical terms, this means the Holy Spirit, the very being of God in the world, continues Christ's work of liberation in and through us.

We are not alone. The Spirit has drawn us to this place, made us one, and given us the gift of freedom. In community, and through the Spirit, we can do something wonderful.

Fr Steven

Stop press. The History and Mystery of Anglicanism: Owing to the recent water damage at *Bici Espresso*, the morning study group will now be meeting this Thursday at Bocelli's Caffè

2. COVID-19 Update from Tuesday 24 May

The Declaration that enabled COVID-19 related directions to be made was revoked on Tuesday 24 May, but there are still some restrictions on public activities associated with the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-Safe Plans are no longer required, though everyone is encouraged to follow SA Health guidance about infection control and community safety, especially if there is a risk of over-crowding.

It is worth remembering the advice of the Australian Medical Association that a face masks continue to be an effective way of minimising the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases, especially in crowded or indoor settings, and anyone who wishes to continue to wear a face mask is at liberty to do so. We will continue to make face masks available, along with the other hygienic measures that have been in place for much of the past two years.

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 a fixed form (pages 3 – 33) or a different form for each day of the week (pages 383 – 424).

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. 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).

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. While the church cannot be open every day, you may like to join the wider community in praying the *Angelus* at 9 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

4. Reflections and Meditations

Reflections for our two weekly newsletters will continue for the time being, and our Thursday “Spiritual Resources” newsletter will continue to be uploaded to the web page. Fr Philip Carter’s meditations and spiritual reflections are presented on our blog, <https://stmarymagdalenesadelaide.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. Fr Steven’s Appointment

The Wardens were delighted to announce on Sunday that the Archbishop has invited Fr Steven Ogden to be our next Parish Priest.

Fr Steven will be commissioned by Bishop Denise Ferguson during Mass on Wednesday 29 June, the Feast of St Peter and St Paul, at 7 pm.

Please remember in your prayers Fr Steven and Anne, and our parish community, as we prepare for this new season of ministry.

6. This Week in the Calendar

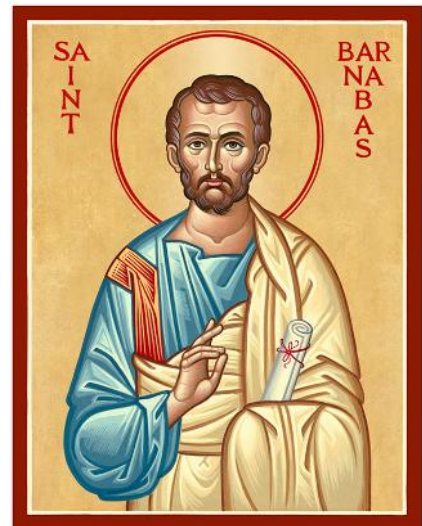
Today we celebrate figures in the church from its earliest days, in the Apostle Barnabas, through the 6th century abbot and missionary St Columba, the 13th century missionary St Antony of Padua, and the 20th century spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill.

Barnabas, a Jew of Cyprus, comes as close as anyone outside the Twelve to being a full-fledged apostle. He was closely associated with Saint Paul—he introduced Paul to Peter and the other apostles—and served as a kind of mediator between the former persecutor and the still suspicious Jewish Christians.

When a Christian community developed at Antioch, Barnabas was sent as the official representative of the church of Jerusalem to incorporate them into the fold. He and Paul instructed in Antioch for a year, after which they took relief contributions to Jerusalem. Later Paul and Barnabas, now clearly seen as charismatic leaders, were sent by Antioch officials to preach to the gentiles. Enormous success crowned their efforts.

After a miracle at Lystra, the people wanted to offer sacrifice to them as gods—Barnabas being Zeus, and Paul, Hermes—but the two said, “We are of the same nature as you, human beings. We proclaim to you good news that you should turn from these idols to the living God” (see Acts 14:8-18).

But all was not peaceful. They were expelled from one town, they had to go to Jerusalem to clear up the ever-recurring controversy about circumcision, and even the best of friends can have differences. When Paul wanted to revisit the places they had evangelized, Barnabas



wanted to take along his cousin John Mark, author of the Gospel, but Paul insisted that since Mark had deserted them once, he was not fit to take along now. The disagreement that followed was so sharp that Barnabas and Paul separated: Barnabas taking Mark to Cyprus, Paul taking Silas to Syria. Later they were reconciled—Paul, Barnabas and Mark.

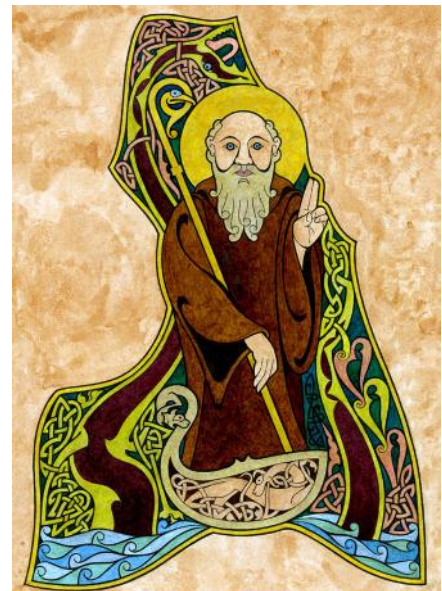
When Paul stood up to Peter for not eating with gentiles for fear of his Jewish friends, we learn that “even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy” (see Galatians 2:1-13).

Barnabas is spoken of simply as one who dedicated his life to the Lord. He was a man “filled with the Holy Spirit and faith. Thereby, large numbers were added to the Lord.” Even when he and Paul were expelled from Antioch in Pisidia—modern-day Turkey—they were “filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.”

We have an image of St Barnabas on the reredos behind the High Altar. The two images on the reredos are St Paul (on the left, holding a sword) and St Barnabas (on the right, holding a stone). The stone is meant to be a symbol of his martyr’s death at the hands of his fellow Cypriot Jews.

St Columba (521-597) was born of a royal family in Donegal, Ireland, but he is best known as one of the most famous Scottish saints. He became a monk at an early age and founded monasteries in different parts of Ireland. He was forced to leave Ireland because of a personal feud that turned into a war. Bishops and abbots exiled him from Ireland, and twelve companions from his monasteries went with him.

The missionaries settled on Iona, an island off the west coast of Scotland. Under Columba’s direction, a monastery was built and, from there, Columba brought Christianity to much of Scotland. He devoted himself to training monks, making peace between the warring groups in Scotland, and copying sacred manuscripts. Legend tells us that Columba himself hand-printed 300 copies of the Gospel. Iona became known as a centre for learning in that part of the world.

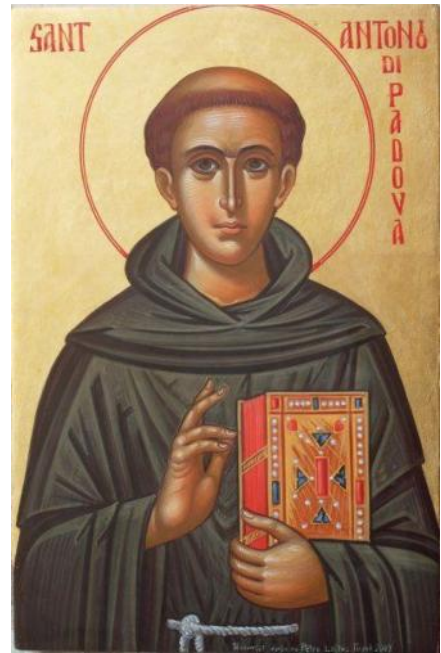


Another famous legend is about a miracle God worked through Columba. He and several of his monks traveled to Northern Scotland, where the people were known as the Picts. Their goal was to preach the Good News and to convert and baptize the Picts. The missionaries went immediately to the castle of King Brude, the ruler of the Picts, who would not allow them to enter the castle. Tradition says that Columba then made the Sign of the Cross in front of the castle doors. Immediately, the bolts fell from the doors and the doors opened wide. King Brude was awed by such a powerful sign from God and listened respectfully to Columba. He then asked Columba to baptize him. Many of his subjects followed his example.

We remember St. Columba for his great faith. He lived the cardinal virtue of fortitude. He taught the pagan and war-like people of Scotland about Jesus even though it was dangerous.

St Anthony of Padua is often invoked as a finder of lost things, but he might better be proposed as the patron saint of those who find their lives completely uprooted and set in a new and unexpected direction. He is a perfect example of turning one's life completely over to Christ. God did with Anthony as God pleased—and what God pleased was a life of spiritual power and brilliance that still attracts admiration today.

Anthony's journey as a servant of God began as a very young man when he decided to join the Augustinians in Lisbon in Portugal. He later joined the Franciscans, and after many years of private prayer and study he emerged as one of the great evangelists of his day, teaching theology to his monks, and ministering widely across France and Italy. His sermons are an astounding legacy to the church and the world.



Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)

In 1911 an unknown author published a 500 page book on the little known topic of mysticism. Accessible in its writing, it was nonetheless a work of scholarship, based as it was on some one thousand sources. The book, *Mysticism*, was a huge success, and twelve editions appeared.

Because its erudition, the suspicion was that the author, one Evelyn Underhill, must have been a man! Who else would have the academic training or ecclesiastical knowledge to produce such a work? In fact the author was a self-trained writer, wife of a London barrister, one who would go on to write or edit a total of thirty-nine books and some 350 articles and reviews.



In an era when women were unknown in theological circles, she would go on to lecture at the University of Oxford, speak at Canterbury Cathedral, and gain fame as a highly respected as a retreat leader and spiritual advisor.

Few people studied prayer in theory and practice—Christian and non-Christian—to the extent the Evelyn Underhill did. At the end of her life, after having considered many options, she concluded that prayer was about availing oneself to the purposes of God, not invoking the activity of God for either spiritual assurance or earthly benefit, but for conformity to the life and ministry of the one through whom we pray: Jesus Christ, the crucified. This understanding is not popular today, and while Underhill's early writings are still readily available, her later writings are difficult to find. In the world today, what sort of people of prayer would God ask us to be? Ones who strive for spiritual development alone, or ones who offer their lives as living intercessions, empowered by the Spirit, sent by Christ, to do God's will? Might the latter define all of our lives of prayer.

7. From a Sermon by St Anthony of Padua

Actions speak louder than words

The man who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages. These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ, such as humility, poverty, patience and obedience; we speak in those languages when we reveal in ourselves these virtues to others. Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak. We are full of words but empty of actions, and therefore are cursed by the Lord, since he himself cursed the fig tree when he found no fruit but only leaves. Gregory says: "A law is laid upon the preacher to practice what he preaches." It is useless for a man to flaunt his knowledge of the law if he undermines its teaching by his actions.

But the apostles *spoke as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech*. Happy the man whose words issue from the Holy Spirit and not from himself! For some men speak as their own character dictates, but steal the words of others and present them as their own and claim the credit for them. The Lord refers to such men and others like them in Jeremiah: *So, then, I have a quarrel with the prophets that steal my words from each other. I have a quarrel with the prophets, says the Lord, who have only to move their tongues to utter oracles. I have a quarrel with the prophets who make prophecies out of lying dreams, who recount them and lead my people astray with their lies and their pretensions. I certainly never sent them or commissioned them, and they serve no good purpose for this people, says the Lord.*

We should speak, then, as the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of speech. Our humble and sincere request to the Spirit for ourselves should be that we may bring the day of Pentecost to fulfilment, insofar as he infuses us with his grace, by using our bodily senses in a perfect manner and by keeping the commandments. Likewise we shall request that we may be filled with a keen sense of sorrow and with fiery tongues for confessing the faith, so that our deserved reward may be to stand in the blazing splendour of the saints and to look upon the triune God.

8. From the conclusion to *Mysticism*, by Evelyn Underhill

Every person ... who awakens to consciousness of a Reality which transcends the normal world of sense—however small, weak imperfect that consciousness may be—is put upon a road which follows at low levels the path which the mystic treads at high levels. The success with which they follow this way to freedom and full life will depend on the intensity of their love and will, their capacity for self-discipline, their steadfastness and courage. It will depend on the generosity and completeness of their outgoing passion for absolute beauty, absolute goodness, or absolute truth. But if they move at all, they will move through a series of states which are, in their own small way, analogous to those experienced by the greatest contemplative on the journey towards that union with God which is the term of the spirit's ascent towards its home ...

... To be a mystic is simply to participate here and now in that real and eternal life; in the fullest, deepest sense which is possible. It is to share, as a free and conscious agent—not a servant, but a child—in the joyous travail of the Universe: its mighty onward sweep through pain and glory towards its home in God. This gift, this power of free co-operation in the world-process, is our greatest honour. The ordered sequence of states, the organic development, whereby his consciousness is detached from illusion and rises to the mystic freedom which conditions instead of being conditioned by, its normal world, is the way we must tread if that sharing is to be realized. Only by this deliberate fostering of our deeper self,

this transmutation of the elements of our character, can we reach those levels of consciousness upon which we hear, and respond to, the measure "whereto the worlds keep time" on their great pilgrimage towards the Father's heart. The mystic act of union, that joyous loss of the transfigured self in God, which is the crown of our conscious ascent towards the Absolute, is the contribution of the individual to this, the destiny of the Cosmos.

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 Madhya Kerala (South India). In our national church, pray for our own Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the parish of Hawthorn.

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. For all those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, especially Paull, Sim, Dulcie, Jasmin, Henry, John Edwards (priest), Peter Garland (priest), Robert Whalley (priest), John Parkes (bishop) Mark, Neil, Olivia, Elaine and David,

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. ✠ *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 Columba, St Barnabas, St Antony, 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, StMMAdelaide.Parish@outlook.com, by Tuesday evening at 5 pm.

