

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 March 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!



1. The Psalms

On 8 March local Old Testament scholar the Revd Dr Melinda Cousins gave a fascinating talk on the Psalms, and specifically on the "Songs of Ascent" (Psalms 120-134) which will be sung at our final Fringe concert this Sunday afternoon.

With Dr Cousins' agreement, we here reproduce part of an article published in the St Mark's Review, March 2017

Conversing with the God of the Pilgrimage Psalms

The Psalms are prayers and songs, words spoken by the people of God to their God. Their dialogical nature invites the community of faith to sing, pray, speak, and enact these words so that we too might enter into conversation both with and about God. The Psalms are also Scripture, part of the canon through which the church seeks to discern the divine discourse, to hear the voice of God. The Psalms are thus both the words of the people to God, and the word of God to the people. How are these two perspectives to be held in tension? How can participating in psalmic conversations about and with God enable us also to hear God speak?

Many theological approaches to the Psalms have considered these texts primarily as a source of information about God with the intent of then arriving at an accurate description of the God the psalms present. They consider what statements the Psalms make about God's character and activities and what metaphors they use to express God's attributes and actions. But should the Psalms be treated primarily as a sourcebook for doctrine about the nature of God?

The Psalms invite us into an experience of conversing with God, and with one another about God, and it is from this conversational experience that our theology is shaped.

The Psalms are inherently performative, preserved so they can be enacted by future communities of faith. Their use is deeply connected to liturgy and ritual. Psalms are not intended to be merely read, recited, or sung; they are to be performed or, perhaps better, enacted. They are to be embodied. Those who participate in their use thereby have their understanding of the world in which they live reframed or reshaped.

The Songs of Ascent (Psalm 120-134) have existed as a collection of pilgrimage songs for the Judeo-Christian faith for over two millennia. They are a unique collection of psalms that were sung by Jewish pilgrims as they travelled up to Jerusalem for the great feasts.

The collection as a whole reveals that God is present with his people and yet there is an invitation to experience more of him as they walk the journey with and toward him. He is near them and with them, yet above them and awaiting them. He yearns to dwell with them even as they make their way closer to him. The relationship enactors are invited into is thus reciprocal and responsive as they discover and understand God not by learning about him but by engaging relationally with him.

Enactors of the Psalms of Ascents trust in a God who is both known and continuing to reveal more of himself. He is the maker of all that is and the one who calls the community into the journey of pilgrimage. He is present in every part of the journey, guiding and walking with us, willing to listen to our cries, and drawing us ever onwards. He desires and longs for us to dwell with him and as pilgrims we are called to believe that he has even more of himself to offer as we move onwards.

The Psalms of Ascents, like the whole of Scripture, do not present us with a God who can be so easily contained in one image alone. Each of these metaphors captures something of God's role in the pilgrimage and yet each has limitations. It seems best then to leave this as another open metaphor, allowing the community of faith to experience what it means for God to be their God throughout the pilgrimage as they undertake that pilgrimage and converse with that God themselves.

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://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. Fasting and Abstinence in Lent

Ash Wednesday is a day of fast and abstinence, and sets the tone for Lent through the call to turn away from sin and to be faithful to the gospel. (Fasting is understood, these days, to consist of one substantial meal a day, or for small meals to be taken in the morning and evening. Abstinence includes not consuming meat, and avoiding luxurious foods generally.)

Archbishop Geoff invites the people of the diocese to join him, this year, in fasting and prayer on the Wednesdays during Lent. His prayers will focus on two aspects of the "Calls" that arose from the recent Lambeth Conference of Bishops. The Archbishop's prayer, which he invites us to join, is that we as a Diocesan community, and as individual members of it, might discern **how to bear faithful witness to Christ** and **authentically proclaim the gospel** in our Adelaide context.

Archbishop Geoff reminds us, "The point of fasting with prayer is not to change God's mind about something (or to lose weight) but to sharpen our awareness of God and our openness to God and to prompt us to pray."

6. Worship During Lent

During Lent we have for some years made additional opportunities for worship available as part of our Lenten discipline. This year, the regular weekly pattern will include

Sunday	10 am, Sung Mass
Wednesday	8 am, Reflection and Prayer
Thursday	12 noon Angelus, 12.10 pm Mass
Friday	6.15 pm, Stations of the Cross

The **Reflection on Wednesday mornings** will be based on Fr Philip Carter's series called "Thin Places" that will also be the blog content for Lent. You can see these reflections on the blog at stmarymagdalenesadelaide.org.

The **Stations of the Cross on Friday** is a 14-step devotion that commemorates Jesus's last day on earth, beginning with the condemnation before Pontius Pilate. The stations are commonly

used as a pilgrimage as the individual moves from station to station. At each station, we recall and meditate on a specific event from Christ's last day. Specific prayers are recited, then we move to the next station until all 14 are complete.

The Stations of the Cross are commonly found in churches as a series of 14 small icons or images. The stations are most commonly prayed during Lent on Wednesdays and Fridays.

The text of the Stations is on our web page at <https://stmarymagdalenes.weebly.com/the-stations-of-the-cross.html>

7. This Week in the Calendar

This week in the church's calendar we remember the Anglican religious Sister Emma SSA, superior of the Society of the Sacred Advent (d. 1939)

Emma Crawford (c.1864-1939), teacher and mother superior, was born in England to a prosperous family. Well-educated and probably with some teaching experience, she came to Queensland shortly before her admission to the Anglican Society of the Sacred Advent in September 1896. Its founder, Sister Caroline, worked among the poor and neglected in Brisbane as she had in England; at the time of Emma Crawford's profession on 28 December 1897 the society had accepted Bishop Webber's invitation to manage an orphanage and a 'rescue' home for women and babies.

Under the provisions of the State Education Act of 1875, religious instruction was banned in Queensland state schools. To satisfy demands for Anglican teaching, Webber asked the society both to open a primary day school and to manage the Eton High School for girls. In becoming sister-in-charge of the latter (later St Margaret's) Emma Crawford made Anglican girls' schools in Queensland viable.



Though she did not become superior until 1905, she was influential from the late 1890s when Mother Caroline sought money and helpers in England. After developing an industrial school for wayward girls in Brisbane, the community took charge of a school in Stanthorpe in 1909 which was later moved to Warwick and named St Catharine's.

During World War I, Mother Emma accepted the invitation of Bishop Feetham to establish boarding schools for country girls in his diocese. St Anne's, Townsville, was opened in July 1917; St Mary's Herberton, in 1918 and St Gabriel's, Charters Towers, in 1921. After the war she acquired All Saints Hostel, Charleville, for far-west children attending the local state school, and in 1922 she accepted responsibility for St Martin's War Memorial Hospital in Brisbane. Her last major Brisbane venture was the foundation of St Aidan's School at Corinda in February 1929. She took the society to the diocese of Rockhampton in 1932 by accepting an invitation to manage St Faith's School at Yeppoon.

When Mother Emma died of cancer on 9 March 1939, the society was working in three of five Queensland dioceses. Its schools, based on English models, formed a definite system with similar uniforms and badges, high academic standards and an insistence on trained staff. The society never had more than thirty professed sisters. Mother Emma commented ruefully in 1906 that 'responses to the call to the life of a sister are still very rare in Australia'. On her death, Bishop Feetham described her as 'the principal benefactress of this diocese'. Her most

significant contribution was in moderating materialism and secularism in many aspects of Queensland life. A contemporary in the society described her as every inch a lady who could be icy if displeased, but always remained calm, even under great stress. Once, she managed to persuade the Archbishop to her point of view on issues on which his opinions had been equally firm.

8. “Every Remembrance”: By a Sister of the Society of the Sacred Advent

Mother Emma, Superior of the Society of the Sacred Advent. *Church Chronicle*, May 1, 1939

It was a friend of 35 years' standing who wrote that he could “thank God for every remembrance” of our Mother, and those 35 years go back to the day on which, all unwittingly, she accepted the burden which she has only just laid down. For nearly every one of us that occasion is a matter of hearsay, not of remembrance, but we can picture with our minds eye the little group of Sisters with ‘Sister Emma’ in ‘temporary charge.’ In rare moments of confidence she would recall the trials of those early times, and the joy when Archbishop Donaldson felt able to profess two novices in what had seemed so weak and unstable a foundation.

From that moment the S.S.A. has gone steadily forward, and if it seems impossible to separate the Mother’s life from that of the community, that is as she herself would have wished it to be.

As our own remembrances take shape it is writing at her desk that we see her, gathering the threads of all our hopes and interests in unrelenting correspondence, failing no one in spite of the continuous “interruptions” that her patient sympathy took up in turn as the major concern of the moment.

We see her, too, framed in the verandah doorway of the Community House in ‘motherly’ welcome to the Sisters at their home-coming, or more sadly bidding them farewell at their departure.

And we see her, regularly, in her stall in chapel, strict with herself, when many and many a time, ill-health or discomfort might have excused her absence. The atmosphere in chapel after Compline while the Mother lingered in prayer is one of my earliest impressions of Community life. No one who knew our Mother could be unaware of the sincerity and simplicity of her spiritual life, and most markedly she carried self-discipline and thoughtfulness for others into a field where many feel they should be permitted some indulgence. Concerning the lack of certain spiritual privileges she once said: “I feel it is part of our vow of poverty to share in the spiritual poverty of this country.”

Her influence extended far beyond the bounds of the Community and this as due far more to the force of spiritual power than to any outstanding gifts of nature. “A life that is lived in Christ” it has been said, “Does not surrender to weariness or discouragement,” and these words form an apt summary of all that will remain with us as the clearest remembrance of our Mother. They give the secret of the mental and spiritual vigour with which she not only guided the Community but grew with its growth all through the years, of the tender charity which countered each blow of trust betrayed, and the unflinching courage which rose to meet inevitable disappointment and loss.

Some personal sorrow there must be at a dearly-loved presence withdrawn from our sight, but far more really the most profound gratitude for a life lived so fully and richly to its earthly close.

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 Renk (South Sudan). In our national church, pray for the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn; and within the Diocese of Adelaide, for the South Sudanese Congregation, Elizabeth.

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, Edward, Neil, Joan and Thelma.

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, especially Joan Neal, 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, 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.

