

# THE MAGDALENE

## From the Desk of Fr. Neil...



### “GRIEVOUS AND INTOLERABLE”

We are just beyond the half-way point of Lent. We are looking forward to Easter. But before we get there, we continue the time of Lent with hearty repentance and true amendment of life. But as most, if not all know, each week in our regular Sunday services, we engage in a small Lent-like practice of acknowledging not only the righteousness of God but also confessing our sins to God, asking for His ongoing mercy and forgiveness. In our General Confession in the Prayer Book on page 75 we say at one point, “We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings. ***The remembrance of them is grievous unto us. The burden of them is intolerable.***”

This is an important admission. Recalling our sins ***should*** bring grief and sorrow. The idea of actually carrying them or paying for them

ourselves ***is*** intolerable. The burden of our many sins ***is*** too much for us to bear.

The first admission, namely, that the remembrance of the sins we have committed is ***grievous unto us***, says that even though we have confessed our sins or are currently confessing them, there is part of us that remembers them. One of the things the Bible tells us many times over is that God forgives our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive them, and that He removes even the very memory of them from His judgment. So we are clean. We are absolved and God will not bring them back at some point in the future and throw them in our face and ask for a reckoning. He poured His wrath out on His Only Son, Jesus Christ instead of on us. There is no wrath left to be poured out on us because Jesus took that wrath upon Himself. There very well might be consequences for the sins we commit from time to time. But the wrath and the judgment and the memory of them has been taken away the minute we come before God and confess them truly and heartily.

The fact of this truth is still difficult for us to grasp and accept. We would rather, at times, remain upset with ourselves. We try to atone for our own sins through our own actions. We try to think about them or worry about them until we think we might reach a point when we are satisfied, then we can let it or them go. But the fact is that we are not ever completely satisfied because we know in our hearts we cannot atone for our own sins.

This is not how God deals with sin. This is not how the Bible says God works. Paul asks the rhetorical question in Romans 8, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” God is for us and

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10am Choral Mass &  
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*Wednesday Service: 9am*

has promised to cleanse us from all unrighteousness whenever we ask for cleansing. He is not against us, waiting, holding on to our sins that we have confessed and anxious to pounce at any time, demanding we deal with them.

Our sins should be grievous unto us, but only because they offend our Holy and loving Father, not because they are still out there lurking, waiting to be brought up again and dealt with once again.

The second part is: ***“The burden of them is intolerable.”*** The burden of our sins is intolerable in a number of ways. One way to understand this is to see that we alone cannot bear the weight of them. Think of how steel is tested for tolerance. How strong is it? How flexible is it? How much heat or cold can it take before it is in some way compromised? Sin is not just slipping up, or making little mistakes or fudging a story or exaggerating or telling white lies or stealing something very small and insignificant... (though it includes all of these). Sin is an offense against God in the worst way. The burden of them is intolerable in that we cannot possibly bear the weight of God’s justice that should be measured out on it.

The burden of our sins is also intolerable in that we should not have an attitude toward our sins as if to brush them off or diminish their offense or make light of them. We should be intolerant of the sins we commit, not just those of our neighbor...though they are much easier to point a finger at. We are to always to pray that hatred and distaste for sin grows in us. In the Family Prayer section of our Prayer Book on page 590 we ask God to “Reform whatever is amiss in the temper and disposition of our souls; that no unclean thoughts, unlawful designs, or inordinate desires, may rest there.” We don’t want any part of sin and we are to pray that this attitude grows in us.

Our sins are also intolerable to God. God cannot sin and He does not look lightly at sin.

Habakkuk 1 says: “You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong...”(Habakkuk 1:13 ESV) God, though all-seeing, is too holy to tolerate sin. Because He is righteous, He has dealt with the ugliness of sin by pouring out His justice on our substitute, Jesus Christ.

As we look to Easter and the resurrection celebration let us do so with an eye to the great gift God has given us in that Jesus bore our penalty on the cross, paid for our sins and took away both the grief and the intolerant offense of sin. Let us remember that “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV)



**St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lugdunum, Gaul (130-202).**

“We have known the method of our salvation by no other means than those by whom the gospel came to us; which gospel they truly preached; but afterward, by the will of God, they delivered to us in the Scriptures, to be for the future the foundation and pillar of our faith,” (Adv. H. 3:1).

## SHORT STUDIES

### REDISCOVERING THE DAILY OFFICE, PART 2

Last month we looked at how Christians are called to follow a **rule of life** so that we might better run the race (1 Cor 9). The essential, formative practice of the healthy soul is prayer. Accepting that we are to engage in some kind of regular prayer life, we now must ask **how then should we pray?** As mentioned in last month's study, the Benedictine spirituality we have inherited lays out a threefold rule of prayer: Daily Office, Mass, and personal prayer. St. Benedict taught that the Daily Office was *opus Dei*, the Work of God, shared by our Christian community.

The English ascetical theologian Fr. Martin Thornton has much to say about the importance of praying the Daily Office. Thornton teaches that though it might be the most difficult of the three practices, saying Morning and Evening Prayer is vital for spiritual growth. Not only is the Daily Office important in its own *rite*, it also provides an important balance to the rest of our spiritual practice.

Balance in our prayer life is important in properly encountering our Triune God. Consider the axiom **lex orandi, lex credendi**, meaning *how we pray is how we believe* - or simply, practice leads to belief. Thornton writes that although all prayer is to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, "the Office tends to emphasize the *first* objectively". All orthodox Christian prayer is Trinitarian, but in the Daily Office we are offering praise to the Father Almighty; in the Eucharist we are celebrating the redemptive work of the Son; and in personal prayer we are relying on the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Thornton warns us that without regularly encountering God as transcendent Father we run the risk of falling into a false mysticism or

"spiritual eudemonism". Examples of unorthodox theology correlating with poor worship are abundant.

The *lex orandi* principle is important for another reason. The psalms, canticles, and collects of the Daily Office don't express how we might actually feel every day, but they do express how we *should* think and feel, and it is this objectivity in our daily prayers which is so often missing yet so important and that we hope will lead to our spiritual maturity through regular practice.

By grounding ourselves in daily prayer, beginning and end, we come to see our whole day's work as an extension of that prayer, and come to truly believe that we heartily do all things in service to the Lord (Col 3:23-24). Moreover we are encouraged to realize that as we lift voices in the *Te Deum* or our hands "as an evening sacrifice" God's people all around the world join with us.

Rediscovering the need to pray the Daily Office involves recognizing that it is theologically orthodox and historically catholic. In our third and final study next month we will offer some suggestions on how a rule of saying Morning and Evening Prayer daily can also be **practical** even in our busy modern world.

*Sean Cochran, Aspirant*

**Ascetical theology** is the study of the practice of virtue and the means of attaining holiness and perfection. The English term **asceticism** means "the practice of self-discipline". Fr. Martin Thornton was an Anglican priest and author on Ascetical Theology. He served for 10 years as the Chancellor of Truro Cathedral, England. He died June 1986 and was buried in the Townsend Cemetery in Somerset, England. His epitaph on his tombstone is "The word of God his Rule / The Glory of God his Aim / And to God the Holy Trinity / was all his guiding."

# ORDO CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

## February 25<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday Services 12noon & 7pm

Good Friday is the Friday proceeding Easter Sunday and is the day Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross. We celebrate on Good Friday because Christ's death was a sacrifice so that we could receive the gift of eternal life. Jesus bore our sins, shame, and burden on the cross. The results changed the course of humanity and what man meant for evil through killing Jesus, God meant for good! There were 28 Biblical prophecies fulfilled on Good Friday with the death of Jesus.

After Pilate told his soldiers that he found no fault in Jesus they placed a crown of thorns on His head. The soldiers laughed and said "Hail, King of the Jews". The Jews stated that even though Pilate had found no fault, Jesus should still be crucified because he made Himself the Son of God.

Jesus was then led away, bearing his own cross and went to Golgotha. He was crucified with a criminal at each side. After hours of suffering He said, "I thirst" and was given vinegar on a sponge to drink. His final words were, "It is finished", and then he died.

**Read Romans 5:6-10 and John 3:16-17**

## GUILDS, GROUPS & EVENTS

### A GREAT SESSION ON LAZARUS

The Men's Group kicked off their Studies on the Parables, lead by Brian Lee, with "Lazarus and the Rich Man" (Luke 16:19-31). What a great

discussion and application of "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

In March, the men will be tackling "The Pearl of Great Price", (Matt. 13:45-46).B

We look forward to seeing you on the **first Sunday of each month from 9:00am to 9:30am** in the Church followed by Morning Prayer.

### "WORRY", WHAT CAN A GIRL DO?



All women are invited to join together to share in prayer, and study together. Join us as we explore what is written in Bible concerning the worrisome things in our lives.

We look forward to seeing you on the **first Sunday of February from 9:15am to 9:55am** in the Parish Hall.

### THERE IS STILL TIME TO CHANGE

Don't let your busy lifestyle change your priorities. Easter is just around the corner.

**Lenten Friday Soup Suppers are held in the Parish Hall at 6:30pm until March 18 ending with a Fish Grill.**

Private Confessions will be heard by appointment only. Contact Fr. Neil at [Frneil@stmarymagdaleneacc.org](mailto:Frneil@stmarymagdaleneacc.org).

### THE LAST PASSOVER

Maundy Thursday is the name given to the day on which Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples, known as the Last Supper. We celebrate Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples through the sacrament of Communion (Luke

22:19-20). The Mass draws to completion as the Tabernacle is emptied and the Sacrament is moved. The Altar is stripped and washed. The priest reenacts Jesus washing the feet of His Disciples as an act of humility and service. All exit the church in silence.

**Service will be held on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.**

### **RELIVE THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST**

Can you imagine walking with Christ on the day of his crucifixion?

During Lent, we recreate His walk down the “Via Dolorosa” or “Way of Sorrows”, using a series of pictures (or Stations) that line the walls of the church to represent certain scenes in the Passion of Christ. Each one corresponds to a particular incident or a special devotion connected with such representations. These Stations have been used to replace the ancient tradition of taking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to walk the Via Dolorosa starting at Pilate’s House to the end at Golgotha since the 1600s.

#### **Why do we do this?**

“The Stations of the Cross” is the most intimate and spiritual journey you can participate in. Each of us who walk, experiences their own journey of thoughts and feelings provoked by the narrative and prayers recited. In the end, most feel a deeper more meaningful connection to Our Lord Jesus, Son of Man, who struggled down the Via Dolorosa and was crucified for us.

**The Stations of the Cross will be held on March 4<sup>th</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup>.**

### **PROCESSION & PASSION PLAY**

**“Hosanna to the Son of David!”**

**“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”**

**“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”**

**(Matt21:9)**

**Palm Sunday Services will be held on March 30<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am and 10:00am.** The 10:00am service will include an interactive reenactment of the Passion Narrative.

### **CHRIST IS RISEN, ALLELUIA!**

**“On the third day he rose again according to the scriptures...”**

Hundreds of people saw Jesus after he rose from the tomb. (I Cor. 15:6)

We are excited to announce the 10:00am Easter Service will be enriched with specially selected music surrounding the service from early composers. Our special thanks to these talented vocalists for making this day an uplifting and beautiful musical celebration of our Lord’s Resurrection. See you there!

**Easter Service will be held at 8:am and 10:00am on March 27<sup>th</sup>.**

A stupendous Easter Egg hunt will be held at both 8:00am and 10:00am services. Easter baskets will be provided.

## **THE NEWS REPORT.....**

### **PAKISTAN MISSION GETS THEIR RIDE**



Our special thanks to everyone who supported the fundraising events of 2015 and contributed to the Pakistan Mission fund that raised \$15,000 for a van to transport food, supplies and

parishioners. The van has been purchased and is in use.

To the anonymous woman who called in late February, I completed agree! Fr. Neil

**LUNCH WAS GOOD BUT THE CONVERSATION WAS GREAT!**

About a dozen men got together to break bread and talk on the affairs of the day as their first fellowship event of the year. No projects to complete, no couches to move. Just an all around “good time”. Any questions about how to join in, talk to Lou Carlson.

**AN EXERCISE IN DISCIPLINE**

Our special thanks to Karen Carlson for giving a wonderful demonstration on coil basket making. Everyone who attended the demonstration and tried their hand at basketry had a great time creating. Also, thanks to Jennifer DeFusco for making those delicious Calico Beans.

**WHO WON THE PANCAKE TOSS?**

What a great turnout for Shrove Tuesday. We all stuffed ourselves with totally fattening foods, and the kids had a great time with the games. Even the big ones!

Can you guess who won the annual pancake toss? Nope it wasn’t Fr. Neil..... See you there next year.

**CALLING FR. NEIL**

St. Mary Magdalene Church is a conservative, traditional Anglican church. We report only to Archbishop Mark Haverland, head of the Anglican Catholic Communion. If you want to call and talk, please leave a message with a name and phone number. All calls are welcome.

**CALENDAR AT A GLANCE**

<b>MARCH</b>		
Fri Soup Supper/ Stations of the Cross	3/4	6:30pm
Men’s Fellowship	3/6	9:00am - 9:30am
Women’s Devotional	3/6	9:15am – 9:50am
Vestry Meeting	3/9	7:15pm
Fri Soup Supper/ Evening Prayer	3/11	6:30pm
Men’s Group	3/13	11:30am
Women’s Guild	3/13	11:30am
Fish Grill/Stations of the Cross	3/18	6:30pm
Craft Guild- Knitting	3/20	11:30am
Palm Sunday – Procession. & Passion Play)	3/20	10:00am
Maundy Thursday	3/24	7:00pm
Good Friday Mass(Blended Mass)	3/25	12 Noon
Good Friday – Stations of the Cross	3/25	7:00pm
Easter Service – Solemn High Mass	3/27	10:00am
Easter- Children’s Egg Hunt	3/27	9:00am & 11:15am
<b>APRIL</b>		
Men’s Fellowship	4/3	9:00am – 9:30am
Women’s Devotional	4/3	9:15am - 9:50am
Bible Study Wednesday	4/6	6:30pm Start NT Book
Men’s Group	4/10	11:30am
Women’s Guild	4/10	11:30am
Vestry	4/13	7:15pm
Craft Guild-Knitting	4/17	11:30am
New2You Sale	4/23	8:00am – 2:00pm
Sunday Brunch	4/24	Noon, Katella Grill
Bible Study Wednesday	04/20,	6:30pm NT Book
Bible Study Wednesday	4/27	6:30pm NT Book