

# THE MAGDALENE



From the Desk of Fr. Neil...

## REASONS FOR NOT ATTENDING CHURCH, Part 3

We are up to answer number three in our four-part series on a survey of why people don't go to church\*. To refresh our memories, the original question was: "Why are you reluctant to visit a church?" The third answer was, "The church is more interested in my money than in me. All they care about is getting my money—and who knows how they spend it!" My first reaction to this is that these assertions are quite bold and simply not universally true. A church must be pretty blatant to give off the impression that ALL THEY CARE ABOUT is money, or that they are MORE interested in money than people. As I have said in the last two articles, this may very well be true in certain churches. If it is, shame on them. If a church even gives off a hint of being money centered, rather than Gospel centered, shame on them.

Like before, we have to approach this issue addressing both sides. First, to those who don't go to church because you believe that churches - **all** churches - are only interested in your money, you might try first expanding your horizons. Make sure you **have** checked into **all** churches yourself before you make a universal assertion like that. Money is not a central issue to **all** churches. I know it is not at St. Mary Magdalene Church. It's probably not a central issue in any church. It may be central to certain persons in a church. But to assert that all churches care about is money and not the people is false.

It is simply a fact that the church has bills to pay, just like you do at home. The church has to keep the lights on and the air or the heat on. The church has certain offices that require someone to be paid. I would be interested in hearing from those who believe that churches are only interested in money. I'd like to hear the reasons what role they believe money **should** play in a church. If a church appears to have its sights set on only growing bigger and enriching the clergy, then you are well within your rights - and have my support - to walk out the door. But as I have said in the last two articles and will say again; don't give up. Not all churches are focused primarily on money. Find a church that has its financial priorities straight. The last part of the answer was, "who knows how they spend it." If a church is responsible, they will show you where the money goes. Look into what sorts of outreach programs they do. Some churches may spend a lot of time emphasizing money and asking for it because their needs for spreading the Gospel require it.

*St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church  
205 So. Glassell Street  
Old Town Orange, CA 92866  
[www.stmarymagdaleneacc.org](http://www.stmarymagdaleneacc.org)*

*Rev. Fr. Neil Edlin, Rector*



*Sunday Services:  
8am Mass  
10am Choral Mass &  
Children's Sunday School*

*Wednesday Service: 9am*

Maybe they have a huge budget aimed at helping veterans programs or drilling wells in foreign countries. Perhaps they send a large group of missionaries out to spread the Gospel to foreign lands. All of this requires money. Sadly there *has* been corruption and scandal. We are all aware of televangelists and clergy of large and small churches who have abused their power and have unfortunately given a bad name to the rest. They get all of the attention in the media. Missions and outreach is not all that interesting to the secular press. You might not hear about all of the good and honest and responsible things a church does silently and without fanfare because it's boring to the secular press. The only way you will get a clear picture of how a church operates and how it handles finances is to attend regularly enough to know.

One Sunday the focus might be on missions, so finances will be a central theme that day. This is a pitfall the innovative non-denominational churches fall into because they are not liturgy driven, but topic driven week by week, they unfortunately tend to overemphasize one thing and give off the impression that is all they focus on. The next week the topic will have completely changed and so will the direction of the service. St. Mary Magdalene Church and other historical and liturgical Churches on the other hand, are not subject to these pitfalls because we are kept within the confines of a liturgy and a lectionary (prescribed lessons) from week to week, that don't allow the pastor to drift off on to selected topics, hobbyhorse issues and programs. Once the service begins and right up to the end the focus is on worship, not money, not programs, not the pastor, not issues or politics. It is focused on worshiping God.

Now, to those in the church who understand that money is a vital part of church life and necessary for its existence and growth, we must be constantly on our guard not to allow it to drive the mission of the Church. I have seen a number of times where money and building and

beautification all come together and become a driving force of a church. If room becomes a problem and the church votes to build an addition, this can be a godly project. If the church has nothing better to do than to build with no good reason behind it, then perhaps we need to check our priorities. Those decisions are to be made prayerfully by responsible members so that the best decisions can be made to honor God and the money He has supplied.

God has obviously given us the use of currency to engage in transactions with one another. How we behave ourselves should be a direct result of what we know to be biblical, ethical and fair. Many things can be abused. Money is no exception. Many misquote the Bible, saying, "Money is the root of all evil." This is incorrect. The actual quote is, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.** It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (1 Timothy 6:9-10 ESV) From just this verse we can see that money in-and-of itself is not evil or even the root of evil. The *love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.* The *love of* it is wrong. The proper use of it is right. Improperly used, money is one of many roots leading to evil, and its improper use leads not to evil, but to *all kinds* of evils. This is what the church should be on guard against. Money is not a source of true contentment.

"Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish." (Deuteronomy 8:17-19 ESV)

Let us pray that God will always preserve us as we use the gifts He has generously given us.

\*To read Part 1 & 2, please see the February and March issues of *The Magdalene* found on our website [www.stmarymagdaleneacc.org](http://www.stmarymagdaleneacc.org). Click the Newsletter tab on the home page.

## SHORT STUDIES

### THE COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH, Pt. 3

Continuing with our look at the Church Councils, we come to the Second Ecumenical Council called The Council of Constantinople held in 381AD. Recall that at the last Council, held in Nicea, the Church wrestled with the heretic Arius. Arius taught wrongly that Jesus was the first creation of the Father and was therefore not eternally God with the Father. We saw that the Church was beginning to clarify what it understood and believed God was, who He was, and who Jesus was. In other words, the doctrine of the Trinity or the triune nature of God was beginning to be concisely written about. Before this, Christians knew God to exist as three persons and yet there was only one God, but they did not need to be concise.

At the Second Council, the Church continued to define the nature of God. Arianism had not gone away despite the decisions of Nicea. Many still held to his false understanding of God. Orthodox Christians suffered persecution over this issue from Arian emperors in the decades after Nicea up to this Council.

A more central issue of this Council was, **who or what is the Holy Spirit?** Is the Holy Spirit a person? Is the Holy Spirit just a force or a power? All parties could agree and confess that they **believed** in the Holy Spirit, which is where the Nicene Creed in its current form at the time left it. Orthodox Christians believed that the Holy Spirit was a person. Arians and Semi-

Arians believed that the Holy Spirit was not personal.

Arians and Semi-Arians believed that when they read Scripture verses such as, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people, they asked, "If the Holy Spirit is a person, how can he be *poured out*?" In Psalm 51 when David prays to God and says, "Take not your Holy Spirit from me" how can the Spirit be a person that God the Father can take from someone?" This makes the Holy Spirit seem more like something that God uses. Also, the Holy Spirit is mentioned much less frequently than the Father and the Son. Arians questioned, "Would He be less mentioned if he was just as important as the Father and the Son?"

On the other hand, Orthodox Christians pointed to their own scripture passages that they believed taught that the Holy Spirit was indeed a person. In Isaiah 63:10, the Holy Spirit can be grieved. In Acts 5:3 the Holy Spirit can be lied to. In Mark 13:11 the Holy Spirit speaks. If the Holy Spirit is just a power or a force, how can 'it' be grieved or lied to?

Orthodox Christians also argued that the Holy Spirit is someone that is given to us so that God can guide us. The Holy Spirit leads us to godliness and salvation. We are baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. "Theologian Tertullian had explained the meaning behind the triple name: "(when we are baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit) by saying that baptism is not a way of gaining a new superpower but the process in which believers purify their bodies so that they would be fit for God to live there: 'Not that in the waters we obtained the Holy Spirit, but in the water... we are cleansed and prepared **for** the Holy Spirit'".<sup>1</sup>

The Council of Constantinople was convened. Emperor Theodosius gave the decree for the

---

<sup>1</sup> Holcomb, J. Know the Creeds & Councils. Zondervan Publishing. 2014. P. 76-77.

Council to convene but interestingly he recused himself from being part of it. This took political pressure off of the Church and allowed it to deal strictly with theological issues rather than having it tainted by politics. One of the major players of the council was Gregory of Nazianzus. He argued eloquently that the Holy Spirit is a person, not a force. He said the Holy Spirit "...is the one that reveals, He illumines, quickens, or rather is the very Light of life; That makes temples; That deifies; That perfects so as even to anticipate baptism yet after baptism is to be sought as a separate gift".<sup>2</sup>

The final decision of the council favored the orthodox Christian position over against the Arian position. Those such as Gregory of Nazianzus and others, managed to argue successfully from the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit is in fact a person just like the Father and the Son. The Nicene Creed consequently was expanded to say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; (a later Council of Western Churches only added 'and the Son') who with the Father and the Son, is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets."

The final decision of this council was that the Holy Spirit was indeed a person. He is the giver of life, both physical and spiritual. He is closely connected with the Father in an intimate way but is not a separate deity. He is to be worshiped. He is understood to be involved in the salvation of man in both the Old and the New Testaments. "Arianism was finally and officially at this point banned from the church."<sup>3</sup> The decision of this Council gave us a very clear teaching of the Holy Trinity. We have these men to thank for fighting for orthodoxy and handing down to us this great truth that we still confess 1600 years later. As we will see in upcoming Councils, the Trinity will be further clarified.

---

<sup>2</sup> IBID p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> IBID p. 78.

## CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

Do you need information about what's happening during **Holy Week**? Pull out the insert and tack it on your refrigerator.

**Ascension Day** will be celebrated on Ascension Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at both the 8am and 10am services.

Whitsunday or better known as **Pentecost** will be celebrated on May 25<sup>th</sup>. A potluck luncheon in celebration of the birth of the church will be held immediately after the service.

### BEST LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

This year's soup suppers were fantastic! With three kinds to choose from, it was almost sinful. There were almost as many compliments about the soup as there was about Fr. Neil's Lenten sermons. Thanks to all our cooks.

### COMMEMORATIVE FISH DINNER

Thanks to the Men's Group, and our volunteer cooks, the Fish Grill was a great success. We had a packed house. Afterwards Fr. Neil gave a short sermon on the "Miracle of the Fishes" followed by the Litany to prepare us for Holy Week.

## GUILDS, GROUPS & EVENTS

### NEW2YOU BREADBOX SALE!

The Women's Guild is holding a New2You Breadbox Sale on April 25<sup>th</sup> from 8am-2pm.

**So what is a Breadbox sale? Giftware and trinkets** that are smaller than a breadbox. We will also be selling a **wonderful new collection of clothes** for both men and women. We have Coldwater Creek, Chicos, and other quality name brands of clothing. If you are a consignment or estate sale junkie, this is a sale

you don't want to miss. All proceeds go to Outreach.

If you have a trinket that you don't want to dust or polish anymore, please consider donating it to New2You. Just drop it off upstairs on the landing. Please no everyday kitchen items.

### **THE CRAFT GUILD**

The Craft Guild is off to a rousing start. In February, our Crafters have selected the "Infinity Scarf" as their next project. Bright colors and unique yarns or cloth knitted, crocheted or sewn in any fashion are completely acceptable. Our goal is to have 20 scarves to sell by October 25th. All proceeds, of course, will be given to our Outreach missions. **April's meeting on Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup>** is the gathering of women who are making the infinity scarves.

If you like to cook, make floral arrangements, quilt, etc. and want to share your craft with the women, please sign up in the Narthex to give us a demonstration.

### **WOMEN'S DEVOTIONAL GROUP**

The Women's Devotional Group meets on the first Sunday of the month at 9:15am in the Parish Hall. The women meet to understand God's Word as it relates to our daily lives from a woman's perspective. The topic for April and May is, "**Repentance – The Joy Filled Life**". All women are invited to come anytime.

### **MEN'S CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP DISCUSSION GROUP**

Join the MCF on the first Sunday of the month at 9:00am in the Church Sanctuary as they discuss the Book of James, Chapter 2 in the context of the role of men in society. Being warned about having "respect of persons", the Scripture guides us to perfect faith by saying: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

Following the meeting, the men participate in Morning Prayer.

### **LOTS OF SOCKS FOR THE POOR**

Thank you to all who have supported this Lenten Giving Program. We gave over 400 pairs of socks to Mary's Kitchen to be distributed to their poor and homeless.

## **NEWS, NOTES & REMINDERS**

### **ANDREW MAUZEY, ARTIST AND MUSIC DIRECTOR**

Many of us know Andrew as our Music Director, Becca's Hubby or Amelia's Dad. All around he is just a great Christian, but there is another side of Andrew that may surprise you. He is a degreed professional writer and musician. The number of songs he has written is incredible. He is a founding member of Circle the Earth, an LA based indie folk band. Andrew's new project drew upon the imagery, themes and language of poems written by Jeff Stillion, and has adapted them to song. If you are intrigued, visit <http://treehouseartists.me> and search on "Andrew Mauzey". You will be wonderfully entertained.

### **A DIFFERENT SHADE OF BLUE**

Michael LeVan, jazz pianist "extraordinaire", (and our organist!!) put on an exhilarating performance with David Enos and John Ferraro at Steamers to cameo the release of his new CD, *A Different Shade of Blue*. It was a 'straight ahead' night with a lot of kicks in the middle. It was a great time for all of us who went. Thanks Michael for a great evening. See you Sunday on the organ bench!

**MEN'S CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING**

Meets on the second Sunday of the month at 11:30am in the Narthex. At this meeting the men discuss upcoming work and implementation of the assigned church calendar events.

**OFFERING UP OUR PRAYERS**

During the mass, Fr. Neil leads us in prayer for our friends and family who are deceased, sick or other needs in the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church. **Just fill out a prayer request card from the pew rack, and place it in the offering plate as it comes by.**

**FOURTH SUNDAY BRUNCH**

Mark your calendar! We will be going to Marie Calendar's on Glassell St. in Orange on April 26th. Reservations will be at Noon. Sign up in the Narthex. No host.

**PENTECOST POTLUCK**

Come celebrate the birth of the church with us. Mark your calendar and sign up for the Potluck luncheon immediately following the 10am service on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Any questions? Please contact Karen Carlson.

**WOMEN'S DAY RETREAT**

A Women's Day Retreat will be held on Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 2pm at The Lakes Recreational Center, 2628 Shadow Lake, Santa Ana. It will be a nice day of fellowship, prayer and reflection. Food will be provided for a nominal fee.

The theme is **Women as Vessels in the Hand of God.**

**CALENDAR AT A GLANCE**

| APRIL                               |      |                           |
|-------------------------------------|------|---------------------------|
| Maundy Thursday                     | 4/2  | 7:00pm                    |
| Good Friday Mass                    | 4/3  | 12 Noon                   |
| Good Friday (Stations of the Cross) | 4/3  | 7:00pm                    |
| Easter Services                     | 4/5  | 8:00am & 10:00am (choral) |
| Vestry                              | 4/8  | 7:15                      |
| Men's Christian Fellowship (MCF)    | 4/12 | 11:30am                   |
| Women's Guild                       | 4/12 | 11:30am                   |
| Craft Guild                         | 4/19 | 11:30am                   |
| New2You Sale                        | 4/25 | 8:00am – 2:00pm           |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday Brunch       | 4/26 | Marie Calendars           |
| MAY                                 |      |                           |
| Men's Fellowship                    | 5/3  | 9:00am - 9:30am           |
| Women's Devotional                  | 5/3  | 9:15am - 9:50am           |
| Men's Christian Fellowship (MCF)    | 5/10 | 11:30am                   |
| Women's Guild                       | 5/10 | 11:30am                   |
| Vestry                              | 5/13 | 7:15pm                    |
| Ascension Day Mass                  | 5/17 | 8:00am & 10:00am (choral) |
| Craft Guild                         | 5/17 | 11:30am                   |
| Pentecost Mass                      | 5/24 | 8:00am & 10:00am (choral) |
| Church Potluck                      | 5/24 | 11:30am                   |



