



Parish of St Peter & The Good Shepherd Bearsted & Harrietsham

A Member of Bearsted Area Churches Together



Newsletter

St Peter's Church, Button Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME15 8NJ

Church of The Good Shepherd, Rectory Lane (off East Street), Harrietsham, ME17 1HS

Contact us:

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Parish Deacon: Reverend Cyril Durbin: **01622 630055**, email: cyrildurbin@btinternet.com

St Peter's Hall Bookings: 07919 084730

More information:

Parish Website: www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk

Diocesan Website: www.rcsouthwark.co.uk

The Catholic Church in England and Wales: www.catholicchurch.org.uk

Prayer: www.life4seekers.co.uk; www.holyspiritinteractive.net

Catholic Schools in our local area:

St Francis' Primary, Queen's Road, Maidstone ME16 0LB (Telephone: 771540)

The Holy Family Primary, Bicknor Road, Park Wood, Maidstone ME15 9PS (Telephone: 756778)

St Simon Stock Catholic Secondary, Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP (Telephone: 754551)

Year A

FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT

30th March 2014

FAITH IN FOCUS: THROW AWAY YOUR WHITE STICK The internet's a fascinating thing. Just connect to it, type in a word or phrase and suddenly you have access to hundreds of thousands of sites all vying for your attention and offering the solution to your questions. Of course, it's not quite as simple as that, is it? You want to find out about the queen who ruled in 19th century Britain and so you type in "Victoria". However, all you get is page after page of tourist guides to Canada, or Australian Chamber of Commerce web sites. Information is a wonderful thing but it needs a certain ability to see through it and sift the evidence before it becomes really useful. And too much information simply blinds us; we don't know which avenue to go down to find our answer.

Today's long gospel passage from St John presents us with the man who has been blind since his birth. He has always had to rely on others to describe the physical world to him, always had to ask directions from strangers, always lived off second hand accounts of what people and places were like. Today he would carry a white stick. When Jesus gives him his sight back it transforms his world. Not only do his eyes work correctly but his vision of reality is transformed. So sure is he of the power of Jesus that he even begins to argue and taunt the religious leaders. These same leaders had previously blamed him and his parents for his blindness.

As we move towards Easter and the renewal of our baptismal promises, the Church gives us this gospel passage to remind us that our faith in Christ has opened our eyes to see clearly what we must do to live the life God wants of us. No longer are we blindly searching for meaning and fulfilment. We need feel no fear when faced with so many shallow and pale imitations of what life is about, so many people who pretend to have the secret of happiness, so much junk information that offers us the world. When Jesus calls us out of darkness into light he offers us the gift of faith, the ability to discern, to see clearly, to journey without stumbling. Throw away your white stick, he says, and see how wonderful the world can be!

(Author unknown)

OUR LENT PROGRAMME Remember: try to get to at least **one weekday Mass during Lent** and **Stations of the Cross on Fridays**. ✱ Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place before Mass on Saturday evenings for the remainder of Lent (during Confessions, Reconciliation). ✱ **EASTER EGGS** Thank you for donations towards this year's Easter Egg Hunt on Holy Saturday, 19th April (see notice at St Peter's). More eggs needed, please. ✱ **Holy Week and Easter Service sheets** with information on all the services in the Bearsted churches are available and need to be distributed as usual. Please help if you can.

PARISH CaFE Concluding this Wednesday, 7.30 to 9pm at St Peter's: another series of DVDs, talks and discussions on aspects of our faith in an informal atmosphere. We join Michelle Moran, Director of Training, Sion Catholic Community for Evangelisation: the relevance of the Gospel message (<http://faithcafe.org/collections/pass-it-on>).

CHURCHES TOGETHER Bearsted Churches Together **Lent Lunches** continue this week, hosted by St Mary's, Thurnham but held at the Bearsted Methodist Church because of road works at Thurnham, **Friday 4th April at 12.30**: a speaker from CAP. Shared lunch followed by talk and short service. Do join us!

CHOIR NEWS Today: Sung Mass. Last rehearsal before Easter: next Sunday, 6th April after our 10.30am Mass.

YOUTH GROUP This Monday, 31st March: bowling! Consent forms are needed, please. Thank you.

LENTEN APPEAL 2014 This year our parish Lenten appeal will support a future priest in Cambodia.

MISSIO RED BOXES are due in once again please; thank you.



**DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 30th MARCH 2014
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)**

✕ **FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT (A)** ✕
Laetare, Mothering Sunday

Sun 30th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Luis and Conchita Vecino RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Mornington Hale RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
Mon 31st	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass
Tues 1st April	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 2nd	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass
Thu 3rd	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 4th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
		7.30pm	<i>Stations of the Cross</i>
Sat 5th	Feria	<i>5.00-5.45pm</i>	<i>Confessions with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament</i>

✕ **FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT (A)** ✕

Sun 6th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Irene and Newport Horne RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Mornington Hale RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

CHURCH CLEANING We now have a new vacuum cleaner for church use, stored in the (left) store room behind the altar. Instructions are also hung up there. It works best if emptied every time after use (no bags needed).

EASTER COFFEE Back by popular demand: coffee and tea after Mass at Good Shepherd on Easter Sunday morning (20th April). Many thanks to our organizers!

NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES In response to requests from parishioners to make previous weeks' editions of the parish newsletter available in addition to the current one, our Webmaster, David Combes, has been working hard and over the next few weeks, past newsletters will be added to the website as well as the current week's edition.

JUSTICE & PEACE Meeting this Tuesday evening at St Peter's. See the annual report attached.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for April:** *that governments may foster the protection of creation and the just distribution of natural resources; and that the Risen Lord may fill with hope the hearts of those who are being tested by pain and sickness.*
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes, especially, Pierre Niebergall, Cyril Adam and Barbara Casey; **for those recently dead;** for all those whose anniversaries occur about now and for all our relatives and friends especially **our children** preparing to celebrated their First Holy Communion in June.
- **That like the man born blind,** we will allow Jesus to open our eyes and our hearts to his will and that he will bring more men and women to respond to his call to serve him in our Archdiocese as priests, religious and consecrated lay people.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£479.22** (Gift Aided, **£305.65**. Weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£121.00**). • Please continue to hand in your Fast Day savings and Lent Appeal contributions as you leave Mass.

THE JOY of the GOSPEL DVDs and discussions on the Tuesdays of Lent at 7.30pm in St Francis' Church, Maidstone. • 1st April: Passion for Jesus; • 8th April: Making Mission Possible.

STRESS / DISTRESS A half-day, Saturday workshop will help to provide welcome and inclusion in our churches for people at risk or suffering from poor mental health. This is suitable for parishioners willing to provide help and support in the parish or carers and concerned friends or family. **5th April**, 10am to 1.00pm at Aylesford Priory; minimal charge. See notice board. Booking essential, ring 07808 299628, email jan.mfl@uwclub.net.

SENSE and NONSENSE on 'ASSISTED DYING' An Assisted Dying Bill to legalise assisted suicide is currently before Parliament. There is often confusion about what 'assisted dying' means. The Bishops' Conference has compiled a briefing note which explains simply and clearly what the issues are, and what the Church says. Copies of this short briefing note from the Bishops Conference of England and Wales are available at the back of the Church or on the website www.catholicnews.org.uk/assisted-suicide-information.

MARRIAGE MASS at St GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL Saturday 21st June, 3pm. If you are celebrating your 1st / 10th / 25th / 40th / 50th / 60th + wedding anniversary this year, please give in your names as soon as possible. Please use the form provided and write very clearly so you can receive an invitation from the Archbishop. This annual event fills the cathedral and is a great affirmation of the value of marriage. All are welcome to attend.