



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:

Parish Priest: Father Geoffrey Pointer: 01622 736100, email: parishpriest@catholic-bearsted.org.uk

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

THIRD SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

26th January 2014

FAITH IN FOCUS: QUITE A SURPRISE

We all have our own prejudices. Some of us wouldn't touch a German white wine if it were on prescription. Others would always go for a week's bed and breakfast at Mrs Higginbottom's boarding house in Eastbourne rather than a luxury holiday abroad in the sun. A new fashion design business would have an uphill struggle if it opened in Scunthorpe and a gourmet restaurant would have to prove itself to survive in West Bromwich. (Apologies to anyone who lives in these towns!) The same was true in Jesus's day. Of all the chic places to be found, the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, in northern Palestine, was not exactly at the top of the list. It had been attacked by the Assyrians and many people had been deported.

So it's with a sense of irony that Matthew remembers Isaiah's prophecy about how God would make these places great. And now the eyes of the world look to Zebulun and Naphtali as the place from which God's promised Messiah has come.

We have to fight against letting our prejudices get the better of us. For our God is a God of surprises. Just when we think we have got it all sewn up and we know what to expect, God pops up in the most unusual of circumstances and makes a nonsense of our best predictions. The pages of religious history are littered with the underdog proving victorious.

That's because God doesn't march to the same beat as we do. God is bigger than we can ever imagine and he chooses to work things out in his own way and not in ours. It's only our puny expectations that prevent us from doing great things. We have learned not to expect much, even of God. And although God tells us to pray for the Holy Spirit in our lives so that we will accomplish wonders and marvels, we sometimes need some convincing.

As this year of Matthew's gospel unfolds we will be invited to set no limits on what God can do in our lives, to expect the un hoped for, to await more than we could ever dream of. Alternatively we could put our faith on hold and try another week at Mrs Higginbottom's. There are no surprises there. (Author unknown)

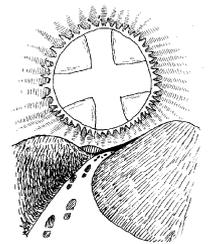
NEXT SUNDAY is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to God his Father in the Temple at Jerusalem, hailing him as *light to enlighten the gentiles*. Candles will be blessed at all the Masses.

LOURDES PILGRIMAGE Thanks to everyone who has responded - we now have 26 pilgrims from the parish signed up to join our Lourdes Pilgrimage, flying from Stansted, from 1st to 5th September, 2014. Please would you all join us for a brief initial meeting about the Pilgrimage at St Peter's immediately after **Sunday Mass on 2nd February**? It's not too late for anyone else to join us - if you are interested come along to the meeting, or give Terry Kinsman a call (01622 730119).

DEANERY PASTORAL COUNCIL meets this Wednesday at 7.30pm at St Peter's.

CHURCHES TOGETHER Coming up: Bearsted Churches Together Lent Lunches, 14th March to 11th April, beginning at Bearsted Methodist Church. (St Peter's, 28th March.) More information soon.

ADVENT APPEAL 2013 The Advent Appeal this year was for the **Maidstone Churches' Winter Shelter**. It's not too late to donate, given that the provision continues through to next month.



DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 26th JANUARY 2014
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **THIRD SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (A)** ✕

Sun 26th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Rita d'Incoronato RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Noel Millbrook RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
Mon 27th	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass
Tues 28th	St Thomas Aquinas	10.00am	✕ Mass: A Special Intention
Wed 29th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Barbara Amos RIP
Thu 30th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 31st	St John Bosco	10.00am	✕ Mass (usually followed by Exposition)
Sat 1st February	Our Lady	<i>5:00-5:30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ The PRESENTATION of the LORD ✕ <i>Candlemas</i>			
Sun 2nd	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: John Ratcliffe RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

CHOIR NEWS Next rehearsal: Tuesday 28th January, 8 - 9pm. All are welcome! Sung Mass **today**.

YOUTH GROUP is back! Monday evenings 7 - 8.30pm. This week: Papier-mâché and jewellery making. Open to young people aged 10 - 15 years; older teenagers welcome to join in as young leader. New members welcome!

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2014 Please remember the children and their families in your prayers, especially as they prepare for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation in March.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for January:** *That all may promote authentic economic development that respects the dignity of all peoples; and that Christians of diverse denominations may walk toward the unity desired by Christ.*
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes, especially, Cyril Adam, Barbara Casey and Mornington Hale; for those recently dead; and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now. For all our relatives and friends. For those commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion yesterday (Saturday) at the Cathedral.
- **For those priests working in our diocese who have come from abroad.** We thank God for their ministry and ask him to bless them for their generosity. May their missionary spirit encourage the young people of our parishes to consider their own vocation.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£445.95** (Gift Aided, **£266.70**. Weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£121.00**). ♦ Contributions to the work of *Pax Christi*, the International Catholic Movement for Peace, raised **£137.75** last weekend.

A CALL TO ACTION (ACTA) in Southwark Diocese invites you to an Open Meeting on Saturday 8th February at Amigo Hall, next to St George's Cathedral, from 10.30am (registration) to 3.30pm. The guest speaker will be Canon Michael Cooley MA STL PhL. The main theme of the day will be on building collegiality in "missionary communities" across the Southwark diocese. Please bring a packed lunch. There will be a collection on the day to help cover costs. Please register in advance at www.sites.google.com/site/actasouthwark and visit www.acalltoaction.org.uk to find out more details about ACTA and its objectives.

NATIONAL DAY of PRAYER and FASTING FOR LIFE On Monday 10th February, the Vigil of the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. The Good Counsel Network invites us to join them in a day of prayer and fasting for the end of abortion and the threat of euthanasia in this country. Your prayer and fasting is urgently needed. See www.goodcounselnet.co.uk for more information.

SPECIAL DEANERY DAY Saturday 15th February from 10.30am to 1.00pm, Holy Family Parish Hall, Park Wood. This is a follow up to the very successful Deanery Day of last year. It is hoped that all who attended the meeting last year will come and bring more of their parish teams with them to share good practice and experience within our deanery.

TAIZÉ "Lenten Prayer around the Cross" is being held on Friday 14th March, 7:45pm (song practice from 7:15pm) at St George's Cathedral, Southwark. See poster for more information.