



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

SIXTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

16th February 2014

FAITH IN FOCUS: SURFACE RELIGION

In our society, if you don't break the law then no one can touch you. You can't be imprisoned, fined or given some other punishment. That's because you've done nothing wrong. So you won't get a criminal record. But neither will you get a public medal of honour. You have to do something worthwhile to be awarded an honour. Simply obeying the law doesn't make you a good citizen. Similarly with our religion, it's not enough to keep the rules. We have to have that something extra; we have to have a loving relationship with God, a relationship that shows itself in the way we live our lives.

In today's gospel Jesus criticises the religious leaders for doing just enough to comply with the religious law while their hearts are in a different place. Minimalism is not the same as virtue. And so he points out that a "how far can I go?" mentality is unacceptable to God. I may not kill someone but if I harbour anger against them then I am guilty of sin. I may not commit adultery but if I lust after someone then I've already shown that I'm trying to bend the rules. And how can we approach God in worship when we are at odds with others at home or in the community? It's simply hypocrisy, says Jesus.

How alive is my faith? Do I give my all or do I simply keep the rules? Is coming to church on a Sunday the sum total of my contribution to the local Christian community? Do I rather resent the rules and regulations that my faith places upon me? Do I think that they put me at a disadvantage compared with friends who have no faith or do I see them as a God-given way of getting the most out of life? Do I see God's law as restrictive or as life-enhancing? Does it curb my liberty or is it a charter for human freedom?

Christians believe that God's law brings life whereas acting contrary to it only results in a destructive existence. Today's scripture is even blunter; it tells us that we have a choice between life and death: choosing to ignore the wisdom of God means opting for a pattern of life that is ultimately unfulfilling and life-depriving.

Today Ecclesiasticus (a preacher) reminds us that if we wish we can keep God's commandments for it is within our power to do so. You have life and death before you, he says, and whichever you like better will be given to you. Life and death on both sides of the grave. That's quite a choice!

(Author unknown)

TODAY is Education Sunday It offers an opportunity for schools and parishes to work together to promote Catholic education in the local community. The relationship between parish and Catholic school has been central in preserving the Catholic ethos of the education. Following the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850 the building of schools was often prioritised over the building of Churches, a clear indication of the Church's commitment to education and its role in the formation and development of the whole person. These schools were often used as the main place of worship with the whole Catholic community gathering together to support each other. A collection will be taken after Mass for the Catholic Education Service.

MARIST MISSIONS Next weekend our annual diocesan appeal this year will be given by the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers). Fr Reginald Riley will give the appeal. Please give him a warm welcome.

SPECIAL MESSAGE While Fr Geoffrey is away on his pre-Lent break to focus on preparing the 2015 diocesan calendar, there will be no weekday Masses. As mentioned above, next weekend's Masses will be said by Fr Reginald Riley who is also giving the annual appeal.

LOURDES PILGRIMAGE The next meetings will be on Sundays **11th May** and **6th July** at St Peter's at 3.30pm for Benediction in the church followed by tea / coffee and discussion in the church hall.



DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 16th FEBRUARY 2014
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **SIXTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (A)** ✕
Education Sunday

Sun 16th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Donald Scully RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Eric Smith RIP
Mon 17th	Feria	Monday - Friday Sorry, no parish Masses	
Tues 18th	Feria		
Wed 19th	Feria		
Thu 20th	Feria		
Fri 21st	Feria		
Sat 22nd	The Chair of St Peter	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions
✕ SEVENTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (A) ✕			
Sun 23rd	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Crispin Champion RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Sara Western's Recovery
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

DOORS at St PETER'S We have had both the church and hall main doors repaired recently, but they have warped over the years and they are a bit bent in the middle. The church door needs a bit more of a pull, while at the hall the warping means that the key seems difficult to turn in the lock: just push a little on the wood near the lock and it will turn easily.

CHOIR NEWS Next rehearsals: Sunday 16th (today) after 10:30 Mass. Sung Mass: Sunday 23rd February. Tuesday practice: TBC. All are welcome!

YOUTH GROUP No meeting this **Monday 17th February (half term)**. Back again on Monday 24th February: 7 - 8.30pm. **Table tennis and football**. New members welcome! Open to young people aged 10 - 15 years; older teenagers welcome to join in as young leaders.

MURDER in the 'CAFÉ RESISTANCE' 'Allo, 'Allo! In 1945, a murder most foul was committed in Rene's Café. This dreadful event will be re-enacted in St Peter's Hall on Saturday 15th March at 7.30 pm. Will the murderer be brought to book this time? See poster for full details including prices.

PARISH CaFE Three Wednesday evenings during Lent: 19th, 26th March and 2nd April, another series of DVDs, talks and discussions on aspects of our faith in an informal atmosphere. More information soon.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for February:** *That the Church and society may respect the wisdom and experience of older people; and that priests, religious, and lay people may work together with generosity for evangelization..*
- **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 especially Fathers Cyril Williams and Alphonsus Brennan; and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now. For all our relatives and friends.
- **For those who teach in or schools:** *may they take seriously their responsibility to give an example of Christian life to the children and young people they teach.*

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£401.54** (Gift Aided, **£224.29**. Weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£121.00**). **This weekend** there is a retiring collection after all Sunday Masses for the **Catholic Education Service**. ♦ Next weekend our retiring collection will be for or annual appeal (see above). ♦ We received a letter from Cabrini Children's Society thanking parishioners for the money raised over Advent and Christmas through the crib offerings. However, owing to legislation, Cabrini have had to cancel their Annual, Good Shepherd and Crib appeals this year.

WILLING TO SERVE as a SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEAL PANEL MEMBER? On behalf of the governing bodies of Catholic Schools in the Diocese, the Education Commission is currently seeking volunteers to sit on Appeal Panels, which hear appeals from parents who have not been offered places for their children at their preferred school. Please contact the Commission for an application form and further information as soon as possible either by phone: (01689) 829331 or email: office@educationcommission.org.uk. Completed application forms should be sent back to the Commission by 7th March 2014.

CHANGES to KENT FREEDOM PASS Kent County Council has revised its plans and now intends to remove the £350 cap on the Freedom Pass, limit its usage and raise the initial charge from £100 to £200.

CAFOD UPDATE See the poster in the narthex for an update on what CAFOD have been doing recently, and their plans for the future. Watch out for **Fairtrade Fortnight** (24th February - 9th March).