



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

Parish Deacon: Reverend Cyril Durbin: **01622 630055**

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

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

21st September 2014

FAITH IN FOCUS: JACK-IN-THE-BOX GOD

As she sat in the doctor's waiting room Mabel was telling Gladys about how God had told her not to get the number 63 bus that morning but to wait for the 42. The 63 had in fact broken down and if she hadn't listened to what God had been telling her, she would have been late for her appointment. Meanwhile Tom was ensconced in his favourite chair at home, watching the TV news.

More tragic pictures of innocent civilian victims of the war on terror, followed by harrowing images of the latest African famine. Yes, he believed in God, but he didn't expect God to do anything about it. After all God lived miles away and was more concerned with cosmic issues. Mabel's God was constantly intervening, whereas Tom's was a distant God who had created the world but left us to get on with things.

We all have different images of God. For some of us God is like a grandparent, old and kindly. For others he's more of a wizard who challenges us to get to know more and more about him. Many people's idea of God is that of a mother: God gives us birth, nourishes us and then spends her time patching us up when we take the knocks that life gives us.

You have to admire the closeness of relationship that Mabel has with God, even if we may be a bit sceptical about his travel advice. And you can't help thinking that Tom is trying to avoid making God into some sort of Super-Fixit character with little concern for human free-will. Whatever image of God we have, it's tempting to make him into a Jack-in-the-Box God: calling on him to act just as we think he ought to and whenever we need him, and then putting him away again until the next time he is required.

Today's scriptures remind us that God is infinitely greater than we can ever imagine, and we cannot control or even predict how God will act. God tends not to behave in the way we would behave, for, as he says, his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are above ours. *(Author unknown)*



HOME MISSION SUNDAY The Bishops of England and Wales ask that every parish pray for the work of Home Mission (evangelisation) **today**. The second collection is to support the development of new ways of reaching out to the estimated 4 million non churchgoing (lapsed) Catholics. Please be as generous as you can. The collection enables the bishops to pursue a breadth of projects in service of Home Mission – websites, outreach projects, research initiatives, campaign materials, and much more. Please do pick up the free Home Mission Sunday postcard as you leave church today. Your support through prayer and generous giving, will make a difference to people's lives.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 21st SEPTEMBER 2014
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY (A)** ✕

Sun 21st	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Henry and Marjorie Poole RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Terry Connor RIP
Mon 22nd	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass
Tues 23rd	St Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)	10.00am	✕ Mass: Norah O'Neill RIP
Wed 24th	Our Lady of Walsingham	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Vera Weston RIP
Thu 25th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass: H Charles Keeley RIP
Fri 26th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: For our benefactors
Sat 27th	St Vincent de Paul	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY (A)** ✕

Sun 28th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Charles Ubogu RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Caitlin Lynch RIP

LOURDES PILGRIMAGE, 1st – 5th SEPTEMBER Father Geoff led 28 of our parishioners and friends on a pilgrimage to Lourdes, in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the building of St Peter's Church in our parish. We set off by air (thankfully not by coach as in times past) and arrived relaxed in this quaint but bustling old town to begin our pilgrimage. Some of us had been unsure of what to expect, but these thoughts were all banished the moment we crossed the threshold of this holy site - the atmosphere changed completely, into one of prayerful but joyful anticipation as we joined others from all countries and backgrounds. All had in common hope and celebration as they prayed, rejoiced and delighted in the supportive atmosphere of the sick and able bodied alike – we were all making this journey together! On arrival we walked across the



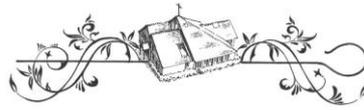
threshold of the basilicas, seeing the Upper Basilica, and in front but below it, the Basilica of the Rosary, built when the crowds outgrew the higher church. Next morning we were up early for Mass at the grotto itself, concelebrated by Fr Geoff with all the other English speaking priests. We toured the town, seeing where St Bernadette lived, and the statue in the old parish church which she said was 'most like the lady' in her visions. Then the excitement of the candlelit procession. Our little band made its way to the grotto, to be joined by other groups, and more, and more - turning into a flood of pilgrims as the daylight faded. Then the candles were all lit, with a sea of flame across the whole area, led by an enormous convoy of wheelchairs, beds and any other conveyance to help the sick and incapacitated join in with us. The crowd swelled to thousands as we marched round the concourse until we all arrived in front of the Basilica of the Rosary to join in prayer and light, celebrating the wishes of the Virgin Mary: that pilgrims should come to the grotto in prayer. Next morning we joined the International Mass in the Underground St Pius X Basilica; when the second basilica also overflowed, this enormous structure was built, but underground to maintain the tranquil nature of the pilgrimage site. This basilica is so big it can take 25,000 pilgrims! And we had thousands joining us from all around the world. We also had time to relax, and visited the foothills of the Pyrenees, delightfully peaceful! But then back to one of the spiritual highlights of the trip – the outdoor Stations of the Cross. Father Geoff led us round the stations - a 2km path up the side of the mountain, stopping to pray at each of the inspiring tableaux which took us through Jesus' last journey, the steep climb reminding us of his ordeal, and what he endured for us. At the end of the pilgrimage, were we changed? Maybe not physically, but every one of us was moved to greater contemplation by this amazing experience in the footsteps of St Bernadette. *Terry Kinsman* ✦ There will be Benediction followed by tea and slide show at St Peter's on **Sunday 19th October** at 3pm.

CHURCH WEBSITE Please take the opportunity to look at our parish website. We have included some picture of our recent very successful pilgrimage to Lourdes: www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk.

FLOWER FESTIVAL THIS WEEK!

St Peter's 30th anniversary Festival of Flowers, **26th–28th September**.

✿ The festival will run from 10am (Mass on Friday)–4pm on the Friday and Saturday and from 12noon–4pm on the Sunday. Entry will be free with refreshments available. The church will be decorated with floral displays reflecting the diversity of parish life over the years. See the notice in the *Harrietsham* and other village magazines. Children are reminded to let us



have their drawings of Jesus decorated with paper flowers. Our thanks to all the organizers and those who have arranged

advertising and publicity, not least the poster at the top of Cavendish Road! Please tell your family and friends not to miss this special occasion (a FIRST for our parish)! ✕ The 30th Anniversary Mass is **Tuesday 4th November** at 7pm followed by refreshments. Bishop John Hine, our first parish priest, will be celebrating the Mass.

CONFIRMATION Sessions continue **this Sunday** at St Francis' during and following the 6pm Mass: *Living as a member of the Church*. On **Friday** (26th) there is a prayer and reconciliation evening starting at 8 o'clock at St Francis', and the Deanery Day in preparation for Confirmation day will be on Sunday 5th October at Holy Family, Park Wood. Please remember the candidates both from our parish and from the deanery. Confirmation Mass, which we always jointly celebrate with West Malling, St Francis and Holy Family parishes, will be on **Sunday 12th October at 3pm at St Thomas More, West Malling**.

YOUTH GROUP is back again: 7 - 8.30pm, Mondays in the Church Hall. **This week**, please come and help decorate the 3 flower festival windows in the church; your help and great ideas are much appreciated, thank you! Open to young people aged 10 – 15; older teenagers are welcome to help as young leaders. New members welcome!

CHOIR NEWS Sung Mass, Flower Festival, Sunday **28th September** at 10.30am. Rehearsal: Tuesday **30th September**, 8 - 9pm. Come and have fun and learn some new rounds. Please come and help get our music ready for our anniversary Mass on **4th November**. Thank you - all are very welcome!

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for September:** *That the mentally disabled may receive the love and help they need for a dignified life; and that Christians, inspired by the Word of God, may serve the poor and suffering.*
- **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 especially Jeanne Adam - Requiem Mass, **Tuesday 30th September**, into church the evening before; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; for all our relatives and friends.
- **On this Home Mission Day**, we pray for ourselves as people called to share our faith where we live and work. For the gift of courage so that we may use the opportunities that present themselves.
- **For the young people of our Archdiocese faced with choices about GCSEs and A Levels.** We pray that as they make decisions that will affect their future they will also be open to the possibility that God may be calling them to priesthood or consecrated life.

Thank you: the sum received last weekend at Mass was **£412.12** (£301.15 was Gift Aided). ♦ The retiring collection for the Catholic Association for Racial Justice brought in **£162.71** ♦ **This Sunday** is Home Mission Sunday; there is an optional collection for the Bishops' Conference Home Mission Team (see above).

DAY for WEST KENT CATECHISTS Saturday **4th October** at West Malling. See poster.

CANON LUKE SMITH Canon Luke's induction as parish priest of St Francis', Maidstone, is at 7pm on Friday **17th October**.

DIARY DATE for READERS There is to be a deanery day for readers at St Andrew's, Tenterden, on **Saturday 29th November**. It will start at 10.30am and finish at 1.30pm. The day will be lead by Fr David Gibbons, the Director of the Southwark Diocese Centre for Catholic Formation. It is planned as a day of reflection and guidance and whilst it is aimed specifically for parish readers - it is open to everyone.