



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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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 B

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

11th January 2015

FAITH IN FOCUS: THE BABY AND THE BATH WATER

It might sound a strange thing to say, but baptism isn't really for babies. We baptize them to include them in the household or family of faith. We initiate them into the community of believers where they will have a chance to hear what God asks of them and offers them in return. Our prayer is that gradually they will come to make their commitment to Jesus as we ourselves have done. Although we acknowledge that the faith of a child is a precious thing, we do not equate this with the adult tussle that is required for a Christian to profess belief in Jesus and agree to a radical and alternative lifestyle from that of secular society. But while we put the baby aside for a moment we must not throw out the bath water.



When Jesus was baptized by his cousin John it was no empty gesture intended to make them both look good. It was at his baptism that Jesus took on the task of revealing the good news that would end in his death. The baptism was Jesus' way of accepting his mission and of being sealed by the Spirit for what lay ahead.

So if we think of our own baptisms as things that happened years ago when we were babies, then we are missing the point. Baptism is not simply an admission ticket; it's the programme notes that help us enjoy the show. We have to renew and live out our baptismal promises in a fresh way each day. Nobody can tell you how this is to be done. That's because when God accepted you at baptism he gifted you with a mission that is unique to you. No one else has ever been made in the same mould as you, and God will not ordain it that anyone else will ever encounter the same people and circumstances that you do in your life.

Celebrating the baptism of Christ means renewing our commitment to Jesus so that by our lives we bear unceasing witness to the gospel, no matter how demanding this may be. As we pray for guidance on how God is seeking to use us in his mission on earth, we draw strength from the gifts and promises of our baptism. And this is something that only an adult can do.

Author unknown

CHRISTMAS The Church's liturgical celebration of Christmas (the Nativity of the Lord) concludes this Sunday, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Ordinary Time before Lent begins this Monday, **12th January**, the First Week in Ordinary Time, ferial cycle 1 (weekday readings at Mass), psalter week 1 (Divine Office). Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, **18th February**.

UNITY OCTAVE From **18th until 25th January** the Church observes eight days' prayer for Christian Unity. The theme this year is: 'The Well is Deep' and challenges us to acknowledge that diversity is part of God's design, to approach one another in trust and to see the face of God in the face of all men and women. There is to be a service for Christian Unity at St Peter's at **2pm next Sunday, 18th January** (the beginning of the Church Unity Octave of Prayer) preceded by a shared lunch in the hall. ✨ **Coming up:** Bearsted Churches Together Lent Lunches: **27th February** to **27th March**, beginning at Holy Cross Church (St Peter's, **13th March**). More information soon.

DIARY for the WEEK BEGINNING 11th JANUARY 2015
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (B)** ✕

Sun 11th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Susan Newman
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Michael Ashdowne
Mon 12th	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Canon Michael John Reynell RIP
Tues 13th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 14th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Peter Fraser RIP
Thu 15th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 16th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Sat 17th	St Anthony	<i>5:00-5:30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ SECOND SUNDAY (B) ✕			
Sun 18th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Anne Clark RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Bernard Gane RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass Pro Populo
		2.00pm	United Service for Unity Octave

PEACE SUNDAY is next week. The work of *Pax Christi* is based on the gospel and inspired by faith. The vision of *Pax Christi* is of a world where people can live in peace, without fear of violence in all its forms. Rooted in Catholic Christianity, *Pax Christi* work with all who share their values to abolish war and create communities of peace and justice. In tribute to those innocent ones whose lives have been violently cut short in recent days please pick up an envelope and use it to put towards next week's collection.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2015 Preparations begin **this Friday**. Application forms are **still available**. Parents who live in the parish with children who are baptized and in school Year 3 or above are invited to apply. The welcome meeting for parents and children will now be this Friday, **16th January**, at 3.30pm. The First Communion programme will begin immediately after, resulting in a later finish that day, around 4.50pm. Subsequent meetings will begin at 3.45pm. 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 in this year dedicated to consecrated life, religious men and women may rediscover the joy of following Christ and strive to serve the poor with zeal.
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes; for those recently dead; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; and for all our relatives and friends.
- **For all those who died violently**, suddenly and unprepared in the terrorist attacks this week in Paris. May the Lord give them eternal rest and comfort their families.
- **That all those initiated by baptism as followers of Christ** may discern and live out the vocation to which Christ is calling them.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£386.63** (Gift Aided, **£274.00**). ♦ The **Advent Appeal** has so far raised **£140.00**. ♦ Next Sunday is **Peace Sunday**, a day of prayer for Peace on Earth. There is no official collection for this, but if you wish to contribute to the work of *Pax Christi*, the International Catholic Movement for Peace, envelopes are available.

READERS at GOOD SHEPHERD Please now introduce the entry antiphon at the beginning of Mass, and also the communion antiphon. We plan to have a parish readers' day in March.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE There is a meeting next Tuesday, **13th January** at 8pm at the usual venue. ♦ The Deanery Pastoral Council meets on Monday **19th January** after Mass at St Peter's.

VOCATIONS WEEKEND for OLDER MEN The diocesan Vocations Centre in Whitstable is hosting a weekend for men over forty to give them the chance to learn more about a vocation to the diocesan priesthood. It will take place from the evening of Friday **23rd** and will end with lunch on **Sunday 25th**

January. Places are limited and it is essential that those participating book beforehand. To book a place or for more information please contact the Vocations Director on info@southwarkvocations.com.