



Parish of St Peter, Bearsted
and
The Good Shepherd, Harrietsham
Newsletter



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

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

Parish Priest: 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

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)

Parish Website and YouTube:

www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk

Year B

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

15th November 2015

FAITH IN FOCUS: *The Right to Choose.* You don't hear much about hell these days. Many preachers prefer to stay away from talking about it, opting instead to concentrate on the more positive side of our lives in Christ. And on one level this is perfectly good. No one wants to hear fire and brimstone sermons intended to frighten people into being Christians. And despite reports to the contrary, the bible is not full of pages detailing dire threats to those who don't believe. It's full of scenes that seek to depict and reveal the love and tender concern of our God. For God promises a life of eternal bliss to those who trust in his promises. But he doesn't force himself on anyone. He allows each of us the right to choose. We can accept his way of life for us or we can decide to reject it in favour of some other way of living that we decide is more convenient.



So when people are confronted with the idea of hell they seek to neutralise it. If God is such a loving person, they say, then he will never "send" anyone there. He'll just embrace everyone in one great act of forgiveness and friendship. So there's no need to be concerned with how we behave here on earth since God will take care of things when we eventually die. This is very comforting. But it's not what the bible says and it ignores what Christ teaches his disciples on many occasions. Jesus makes it very clear that God accepts the choices we make either for him or against him, and that we must learn to live with them. Eternally. If God allowed us to do whatever we liked without consequence and simply overrode our decisions then we would be nothing more than pawns in a grotesque game of divine chess. We would be like robots, thinking that our choices were important when all the while we were simply acting in a play whose ending we cannot shape. Our free-will and our liberty would have been compromised. But God has more respect for us than this. He lets us make our free choices. And he tells us that they matter. Eternally.

Author unknown.

✘ **NOVEMBER** ✘ is the month of the Holy Souls when we commemorate and pray for our beloved dead. Envelopes are available for you to enclose a list of your deceased loved ones. These may be placed in the box as you enter church. The envelopes remain in front of the altar throughout the month. Any donations in the envelopes are used as stipends for Masses for the Holy Souls during November and throughout the year. *Remember to Gift Aid your offering if appropriate.*

IN ADVANCE Benediction and Litany of the Sacred Heart on the feast of Christ the King, next Sunday, **22nd November, 3.30pm** at St Peter's. • The annual mission appeal will this year be given by Fr John Roche of the St Patrick's Missionary Society, over the weekend of **28th and 29th November**. That weekend that we begin to webcast our Sunday Masses from St Peter's. † Bible Sunday is on the Second Sunday of Advent, **5th and 6th December**. It highlights the importance of the sacred scriptures in Christian living. We will be asking our Ministers of the Word (Readers) to renew the commitment to their ministry that weekend. If you feel you would like to offer your service as a Minister of the Word please let Fr Geoffrey or Deacon Cyril know. • **Year of Mercy:** Mass at St Francis for the opening of the Holy Year, 7.30pm, Tuesday **8th December**. *Walk with Me* and a *Pilgrimage Companion* available - £1 each.

PARISH PASTORAL TEAM If you would like to join this group which meets occasionally to discuss parish events, please have a word with Fr Geoffrey or Deacon Cyril. This includes those who attend Mass at both Good Shepherd and St Peter's.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE Meeting **this Tuesday** evening at the usual venue.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 15th NOVEMBER 2015
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY** ✕

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Sun 15th | Saturday | 6.00pm | ✕ Vigil Mass: John Donnelly RIP |
| | Sunday | (H) 8.45am | ✕ Mass: Pro Populo |
| | | 10.30am | ✕ Mass: Gienek Parecki RIP |
| Mon 16th | Feria | 7.00pm | ✕ Mass: Christopher Mahon RIP |
| Tues 17th | Feria | 10.00am | ✕ Mass: Holy Souls |
| Wed 18th | Dedication of SS Peter & Paul | (H) 10.00am | ✕ Mass: Holy Souls |
| Thu 19th | Feria | NO MASS | |
| Fri 20th | Feria | 10.00am | ✕ Mass: Holy Souls |
| Sat 21st | Presentation of BVM | <i>5.00-5.30pm</i> | <i>Confessions</i> |
| ✕ OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE (B) ✕ <i>National Youth Sunday</i> | | | |
| Sun 22nd | Saturday | 6.00pm | ✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo |
| | Sunday | (H) 8.45am | ✕ Mass: Kathleen and Anthony McParland RIP |
| | | 10.30am | ✕ Mass: Tom Lawson RIP |
| | | 3.30pm | Benediction and Litany of the Sacred Heart |

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2016 Preparations will be on Friday afternoons, begin **8th January** with an initial parents' meeting **4th December**. Application forms are now available from Fr Geoffrey and must be returned by **29th November**. Parents with children who are baptized and in school Year 3 or above are invited to apply.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for November:** that pastors of the Church, with profound love, may accompany their flocks and enliven their hope.
- **For the victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris:** for those who died, for the injured and traumatized, and for those faced with the grim task of recovering the dead; for peace in the hearts and minds of those capable of such atrocities.
- **For all the sick** especially Stephen Hannant and Barbara Casey and 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 beloved dead; for all our relatives and friends; and for the intentions on the notice board.
- **That the Church will be continuously blessed** with wise and holy priests, deacons, and especially religious brothers and sisters, chosen by Christ to lead souls to the glory of heaven.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£442.04** (Gift Aided, **£287.50**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£134.00**). ♦ The collection for the Archbishop's Fund for Diocesan Administration amounted to **£171.82**. ♦ **Next Sunday** there will be a retiring collection for the **Catholic Youth Services** to help support youth work in the diocese and beyond.

PRISONERS' WEEK (15th – 21st November) The CTS is fundraising for those in prison so that they can send them booklets and bibles. They are working with prison chaplains across the country. If you wish to donate see: <http://campaign.justgiving.com/charity/catholictruthsociety/prisonappeal>.

HARVEST FAST See the thank you letter for our **£450.35** sent to CAFOD.

COFFEE AFTER MASS We customarily serve coffee after Mass every Sunday at St Peter's, but our ability to continue to offer this service is dependent on volunteers. **If you can help please let us know.**

A REQUEST On **Tuesday 17th November**, Vigil of the Dedication of the Basilica of Saints Peter & Paul, please pray and fast for the end of abortion and euthanasia. Your prayer and fasting is urgently needed. For information on the days of Prayer and Fasting see www.goodcounselnetwork.com.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ Saturday **28th November**, 7pm in the hall at St Peter's. Tickets, along with raffle tickets for our Christmas Draw, are available after Mass (or ring 736811).

ADVENT APPEAL 2015 This year's Advent Appeal will be in aid of The Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. The Winter Shelter offers a warm welcome overnight for homeless people during the coldest months. Envelopes will be attached to newsletters w/e **29th November**. Please return by the end of Advent. Thank you.