



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 C

THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT

13th December 2015

FAITH IN FOCUS: What Must We Do?

How many times are we shamed into saying, "I'll never grumble again!" We watch children who have life threatening illnesses finding something to smile about. We see families living in poverty, seemingly happy when they have every excuse to be deeply unhappy. We read about the men and women, who despite disability or overwhelming odds, adopt a positive attitude and achieve great things. These people are living proof that happiness doesn't come from everything being right in our lives.



The third Sunday in Advent is traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday, Gaudete meaning to rejoice. Rejoicing, exulting, being happy and singing for joy are the themes in today's liturgy. But how are we to feel happy in a world where there isn't much to feel happy about ... what must we do? John the Baptist gives us the answer: "If anyone has two tunics," he says, "he must share with the man who has none." We have all experienced the joy of giving a gift... the inner glow that comes with knowing we have bought someone exactly what they always wanted. We experience this same pleasure in sharing what we have with those who have nothing. To the tax collector and the soldier John says, "Exact no more than your rate. Be content with your pay."

What joy is there in gain if it's at someone else's expense? Do we really get any satisfaction at saving a couple of pence at the supermarket knowing it is at the expense of a third world farmer working for virtually nothing at all? At this season in particular we remember not to exploit those who work hard for little profit. We remember whilst doing our Christmas shopping to look for the 'Fair Trade' labels. If we are employers, we remember not to make unreasonable demands in order to line our own pockets. Most importantly this Christmas, we remember that happiness comes from being content with what we have.

Chapel Bell

ADVENT The season of Advent has a twofold character: it is a time of preparation for Christmas, when Christ's first coming is remembered; and it is a time to direct mind and heart to await his second coming. Advent is, therefore, a time of devout and expectant delight. In the second phase of the season of Advent, from **17th December** (this coming Thursday), the liturgy is more directly addressed to preparing to commemorate and celebrate the birth of Our Lord, and the readings at daily Mass reflect this. ♦ Try to get to Mass during the week. ♦ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation (confession): there will be a penance service at Maidstone on **Monday 21st December** at 7.30pm. ♦ Pick up a copy of 'Walk With Me', a journey of prayer for Advent and Christmas. ♦ Download a daily meditation from the diocese: <http://eepurl.com/bF0b6P>.

JUBILEE OF MERCY Our deanery opened the Jubilee of Mercy with Mass at St Francis' last Tuesday evening concelebrated by all the priests of the Maidstone area of the deanery along with deacons and a good number of the people. The Jubilee offers us the opportunity to reflect on how we might better radiate and reflect the tender love of God in our world and to seek to draw others into experiencing that love and mercy. In Rome the Jubilee began with Pope Francis opening the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica, at which point it became a 'Door of Mercy'. In order that many people may pass through a Door of Mercy the Holy Father asked that every Cathedral have a Door of Mercy, and permitted Bishops to permit Shrines in their Diocese also to have a Door of Mercy. In Southwark we have four 'Doors of

Mercy': At the Cathedral to be opened on Sunday 13th December, during the 11.30am Cathedral Parish Mass; at St Augustine's Shrine, Ramsgate, opening in January. at St Jude's Shrine, Faversham, and at The Friars, Aylesford. Archbishop Peter encourages the people of the Diocese to make a Pilgrimage during the Jubilee to a Door of Mercy, as a tangible act of participation in the Jubilee. Several Deaneries and Parishes are planning visits to the Cathedral.

IN ADVANCE ★ Carols on the [Bearsted] Green, 7.30pm, this Wednesday, **16th December**. ★ **Christmas Mass During the Night** ('Midnight Mass') will again be at **10.30pm** this year on **24th December**.



ADVENT APPEAL 2015 This year's appeal is in aid of The Maidstone Churches Winter Shelter. The Winter Shelter offers a warm welcome overnight for homeless people during the coldest months. Please return your donations

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 13th DECEMBER 2015 (Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)			
✕ THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✕ <i>Gaudete Sunday</i>			
Sun 13th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pauline Sexton RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: In honour of St Lucy
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
Mon 14th	St John of the Cross	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
Tues 15th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Bernard Brennan RIP
Wed 16th	Feria	S O R R Y : N O M A S S	
Thu 17th	Feria • <i>O Sapientia: O Wisdom</i>	7.00am	✕ Mass: Fr Robert Mountford RIP
Fri 18th	Feria • <i>O Adonai: O Sacred Lord</i>	10.00am	✕ Mass: Jim Kelly RIP
Sat 19th	Feria • <i>O Radix Jesse: O Root of Jesse</i>	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✕			
Sun 20th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Wellbeing of Mrs Edwards
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Mossie Brosnan RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

in the envelopes provided by the end of Advent. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE TIMES Thank you to those who distributed the Christmas service sheets in the Bearsted locality.

CAROL CELEBRATION At St Peter's, **Sunday 20th December at 6.00pm**. Come and join us for this festive get-together, aimed at all members of the parish, young and old. If you would like to contribute in any way, please speak to Bob Piggott. If you play an instrument, talk to Bob Piggott or Daniel Cram and bring it along at 4.30pm on the day for a bit of a practice. Young parishioners are encouraged to get dressed up for a church parade as a nativity figure (cow, Mary, angel, shepherd, King, whatever you like) and all parishioners are asked to bring our traditional offering: a wrapped gift for the Women's Refuge in Maidstone, adults, bring female toiletries and children, toys.

ARTHUR HOGBEN A longstanding parishioner at Harrietsham, Arthur passes on his very good wishes to the parish. We are grateful to Ian and Truda Fraser who visited him in his new care home on the south coast where he has settled in very contentedly.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for December:** *that families, and especially those families who suffer, may find in the birth of Jesus a sign of certain hope.*
- **In this Jubilee of Mercy,** *that Pope Francis and all Church leaders might be effective role models of mercy in our world as it hungers for compassion and kindness.*
- **For all the sick** *especially 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.*
- **As so many people in Scotland and the North of England** *assess the effects of Storm Desmond on their lives and communities, that they might find the courage, strength and support that they need to rebuild and to repair the damage to their lives and property.*

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£431.83** (Gift Aided, **£247.50**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£134.00**). ♦ **This Sunday** there is a retiring collection to help with the **cost of flowers and decorations at Christmas.**

COFFEE MORNING at GOOD SHEPHERD After Mass, Sunday, **20th December**: back by popular demand, a rare chance to linger awhile, drink coffee and meet fellow parishioners.

CHRISTMAS DRAW Tickets will continue to be available after all Masses: various magnificent prizes. All proceeds to parish projects. **Draw takes place after Mass at St Peter's next Sunday morning.**

GREETING CARDS CAMPAIGN Amnesty International has launched its annual *Greetings Card Campaign* encouraging people across the UK to send a message of hope and support during the festive season to people facing persecution around the world. If you are interested there will be some printed information available at the back of the church or please look on the parish website. Thank you.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORIES A few are available for those interested in diocesan information; includes a weekly liturgical calendar.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2016 Applications have closed. Preparations for those parents who have enrolled their children begin in January.