



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

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 B

FOURTH SUNDAY

1st February 2015

FAITH IN FOCUS: CAN YOU HEAR AT THE BACK? The priest was boring the congregation to death with a sermon that went on and on. By now a glazed look had come over many a face. The altar boy became so frustrated that he threw a hymn-book at the priest in the pulpit. It missed, and hit a sleeping man in the front pews. The man woke up with a jolt and moaned, "Hit me again; I can still hear him!" A bit far-fetched, maybe. But we've all had that feeling when listening to homilies and sermons that had nothing to say but the blatantly obvious. We've all heard the preacher who falls into the trap of simply moralising, telling stories, or giving unnecessary lectures on obscure points of doctrine.



When Jesus preached in the synagogue at Capernaum, St Mark recorded the scene for us. He said, "His teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority." Teaching with authority does not mean talking like a headmaster or a police officer. It does not mean coercing your audience. Most of all it does not mean shaming the congregation or making them feel bad. Teaching with authority is about preaching in such a way that your hearers are empowered. It's about enabling people to grow and develop. In fact, authority comes from a Latin word to do with increasing, augmenting and growing.

When Jesus preached, people heard good news. In fact, they heard the Good News, the gospel. The message of the gospel was about a God who loves us unceasingly and without condition. It was about a God who sent his Son not to condemn but to set us free, to heal wounds and unbind us from whatever ties us in knots. Although people chose to reject or ignore Jesus, there is no record in the gospels of people approaching Jesus only to be told that he could not help them in their situation. He spoke with authority because he recognised human need and offered what people knew to be a genuine way forward. And he does the same to us every time his word is proclaimed in the liturgy. You can be sure that when he preached, no one sat at the back. *Author unknown*

SPECIAL MESSAGE While Fr Geoffrey is away on his pre-Lent break to focus on preparing the 2016 diocesan calendar, there will be no weekday Masses. He is very grateful to Fr Michael Woodgate who is celebrating our Masses this weekend.

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.

DIARY for the WEEK BEGINNING 1st FEBRUARU 2015
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **FOURTH SUNDAY (B)** ✕

Sun 1st February	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Barbara Amos RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Marie Dolke RIP
Mon 2nd	The PRESENTATION of the LORD		Monday - Friday Sorry, no parish Masses
Tues 3rd	Feria		
Wed 4th	St Thomas Aquinas		
Thu 5th	St Agatha		
Fri 6th	St Paul Miki and Companions		
Sat 7th	Our Lady	5:00-5:30pm	
✕ FIFTH SUNDAY (B) ✕			
Sun 8th February	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Len Richardson RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2015 The programme has now commenced and we are not taking any further applications for this year. Please remember the children and their families in your prayers, especially as they prepare for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation in March.

CHURCH CLEANING From Anne Vanstone: 'I am emailing to ask if you would kindly ask for volunteers to help with the cleaning rota, we have lost several and desperately need more volunteers to help in St Peter's. My phone number is 01622 738605.'

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for February:** that married people who are separated may find welcome and support in the Christian community.
- **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; for all our relatives and friends and the intentions on the notice board.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: £ (Gift Aided, £). • **This weekend** there will be a retiring collection after all Sunday Masses for the **Catholic Education Service** (see above).

FROM THE CENTRE FOR CATHOLIC FORMATION Pope Francis has requested that all parishes observe a **24 Hours for the Lord** to take place on **Friday 13th** and **Saturday 14th March**. The Theme is **God rich in mercy** (*Ephesians 2:4*). He is asking that churches be open on those days, and make Confessions and Eucharistic Adoration available. See the poster.

STOP PRESS! Pray and Fast for the Climate with CAFOD and Justice and Peace at Romero House this coming Sunday, 1st February 7-9pm. We will pray and share a simple soup and bread meal, then explore our CAFOD Climate Campaign and what steps we can take leading up to the Paris Climate Talks in December this year. Contact Maria Elena Arana, tel; 020 7733 7900, CAFOD, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB. Nearest tube, Lambeth North.

A Date for your Diary!

Laetare Sunday in the middle of Lent, gives us all the opportunity to take a break from the rigours of Lent and have a little fun! So we will be marking this weekend by having a 'Lent-Lite Quiz Night' on Saturday 14th March in St Peter's Hall. Tickets will be on sale from next Sunday, and, as usual, you can bring your own team of 6-8 people or we will make up teams on the night. Please, also, bring your own food and drink. The cost will be £5 for adults, but there will be no charge for school-children.'