



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

SECOND SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

17th JANUARY 2016

FAITH IN FOCUS: AN ALL-SINGING ALL DANCING SAVIOUR Someone once said that the definition of a puritan is a person who has a constant nagging feeling that someone, somewhere, is enjoying themselves! We laugh, but actually it's quite easy to be taken for a puritan when in fact you're simply a Christian. That's because we Christians have sometimes allowed ourselves to be painted into a corner where we're thought of as stuffed shirts or kill-joys. Rightly or wrongly we've taken on the image of censorious people who view pleasure with suspicion and whose first words are usually "Thou shalt not..." rather than "Oh, that looks good; can I have a go?" Why should we be thought of as disapproving when our saviour was quite clearly at home eating and drinking, singing and dancing? Why should we want to reduce the glorious Middle Eastern nuptial festivity to a grape-juice Temperance affair? Could it be because at heart we find it hard to believe fully in the incarnation? Yes, we accept that God took flesh in the person of the baby Jesus. But to accept that Jesus was identical to us in that he enjoyed a good day out, singing and dancing, eating and drinking...? Are we going too far here? Are we uncomfortable thinking that Jesus actually provided more wine when the guests had already quaffed what the family had provided? Wasn't that a bit irresponsible, encouraging alcoholism perhaps? Are we put off by the tone of voice that Jesus uses for his mother, something that only a son would be allowed to get away with, something that demonstrated familiarity and mutual understanding? Once God became a human being there was nothing about our human nature that was left unredeemed. The incarnation means that by becoming a man Jesus shows us how to become fully human. Jesus is God's way to be a man, God's way to be a woman. Sometimes we need to open our eyes wide to the good things that God has put around us. We need to thank God for the wonder of life and love, for the many gifts that bless our rising and resting. Sometimes we need to take off our hair shirts, to set aside our dictionary of disapproval and simply take pleasure in what God wants us to enjoy. Why drink only water when your God wants to give you wine?
Author unknown



PEACE SUNDAY: TODAY *Overcome indifference and win peace.* 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* works with all who share its members' 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. ★ **JUSTICE AND PEACE** Diary dates: ♦ **17th January – World Day of Refugees and Migrants:** *Praying in Solidarity with Refugees*; download prayer pack from Jesuit Refugee Service, website www.jrsuk.net, email uk@jrs.net or phone 020 7488 7310. ♦ **24th January – Homeless Sunday:** *Connect, Challenge and Commit*; see www.housingjustice.org.uk for more details. ♦ **21st May – Spring Assembly, 2016:** 10am – 4pm, North Barn, Aylesford Priory.

CHRISTIAN UNITY There is to be a service at Bearsted Methodist Church this Sunday, **17th January at 3pm** in advance of the Church Unity Octave (**18th to 25th January**). It will be followed by tea and cakes. A warm welcome is, as always, assured. ♦ The theme for this Annual Octave of Prayer is *Salt of the Earth*: <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2016/>.

DIARY for the WEEK BEGINNING 17th JANUARY 2016
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **SECOND SUNDAY (C)** ✕

Peace Sunday	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Anne Hamilton, <i>Foundation Mass</i>
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Michael Ashdowne RIP
		3.00pm	United Service at Bearsted Methodist Church
Mon 18th	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: For unity among Christians
Tues 19th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Fr Conleth Doyle O Carm RIP
Wed 20th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass
Thu 21st	St Agnes	7.00am	✕ Mass
Friday 22nd	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Sat 23rd	Our Lady	<i>5:00-5:30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ THIRD SUNDAY (C) ✕			
Racial Justice Sunday	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: George and Mary Combes RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Archibald Dunbar RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

CHILDREN'S LITURGY If you are interested in helping our children to get more out of the Liturgy of the Word at Sunday Mass at St Peter's, please have a word with Fr Geoffrey, Deacon Cyril or Angela Dixon. Angela coordinates the programme which helpers take it in turn to lead. We are always in need of additional leaders/helpers to join our team.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS Preparations continue this Friday afternoon at St Peter's.

LENT Stations of the Cross on the Friday evenings of Lent this year will alternate between St Peter's and Good Shepherd. Lent Fast Day is Friday **19th February**; gift-aided donations to CAFOD will again be doubled this year: the government has agreed match each £1 given.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for January:** *that through dialogue, fraternal charity and with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Christians may overcome divisions.*
- **For God's blessing on those who, even within their own homelands, live in fear** for their lives, in intolerable living conditions, amongst hunger and disease; *we pray that their suffering will be relieved and they will live to enjoy peace and comfort.*
- **In this Holy Year of Mercy,** *that in this coming year we may better reflect the love of God for our world, and open our hearts to show God's mercy towards all people.*
- **For all the sick** especially Barbara Casey and all who are unwell at home or in our care homes; *for those recently dead especially Fr Conleth Doyle O. Carm, for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; for all our relatives and friends; and for the intentions on the notice board.*

Thank you for your offerings last weekend which amounted to **£553.76** (Gift Aided, **£331.00**). ♦ **Crib offerings** have totalled **£78.03**; they will be divided between the "**Friends of the Holy Land**", offering help to the poorest families in Bethlehem, and "**Crisis Fund in Southwark**" to help support children, young people and families in immediate need. ♦ This 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 (see above), envelopes are available next to the newsletters. ♦ Next Sunday is **Racial Justice Day**, focusing this year on the refugee crisis in Europe: a collection will be taken to support the work of the Church to promote racial justice in our schools, parishes and in wider society.

MISSIO Red Box holders are invited to a talk given by Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka, followed by Mass, on Thursday **4th February** at the cathedral. See poster.

MASS OF HEALING Maidstone Deanery, Holy Year of Mercy: Mass of Healing and Anointing of the Sick Aylesford Priory, **Saturday 6th February** at 2pm. Principal Celebrant: Canon Luke Smith, Dean of Maidstone; homily: Rev. Fr Victor McClean Parish Priest of Goudhurst.