



# 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**

**Parish Priest: Father Geoffrey Pointer: 01622 736100, email: [parishpriest@catholic-bearsted.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk)

**Year C**

**FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT**

**6th MARCH 2016**

**FAITH IN FOCUS: PARTY MOOD** When the prodigal son came home they held a party to celebrate the fact that he was part of the fold once more. But there was an empty seat at the party; the older brother refused to come and take part. The liturgy, and especially the Mass, is the continuation of that party and festivity. At the eucharist we celebrate the fact that in Jesus Christ we have been redeemed and forgiven, that we are already experiencing a share in the eternal life that God has promised us and that one day we will enjoy seeing God face to face in the never-ending celebration of bliss and happiness in heaven. In the meantime, we eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus Christ that was given up and shed for us so that sins may be forgiven. As you sit in your pew in church, are there any empty seats? It would be surprising if there weren't! Most churches struggle to fill their seats except at the great feasts of the year. Who belongs in those seats? It's tempting to say that they are older brothers' seats, people who have had some sort of gripe with the church and have decided to give Sunday worship a wide berth. To an extent this is true. We are a fallible group of people and we're quite capable of failing each other at crucial times, and of even putting off people to the extent that they no longer darken our doors. What would happen if we reached out to family and neighbours, to friends who feel that the Church has failed them? Is it worth taking the risk of inviting them to the feast, or should we just write them off as a dead loss? Would it shock us if they said yes? And what about the person who's sitting in your seat? Yes, you. Are you the life and soul of the party or are you something of a party-pooper? We never find out whether the father finally managed to get the older brother to enter into the spirit. He could have just gone and sat there with a long face. Just turning up isn't enough. Are you glad to be able to celebrate with your whole being, singing and praying, giving thanks for the forgiveness that God has lavished upon you through no merit of your own? Or should we put the fatted calf on the back burner? *Author unknown*



**RECOMMENDED FOR LENT ("PRAYER : FASTING : ALMSGIVING")** ✂ Try to get to Mass during Lent **at least once** during the week. ✂ Attend Stations of the Cross either at St Peter's or Good Shepherd on **Friday evenings**. ✂ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. ✂ Contribute to CAFOD, which is our parish Lenten Appeal this year. ✂ Give up a favourite luxury *but keep it between you and the Lord (don't tell people what you have 'given up' for Lent)*! ✂ Try to get to the **Lent Lunches** in Bearsted: continuing at St Mary's, Thurnham, 12.30 this Friday, **11th March** with our own Fr John Roche of St Patrick's Missionary Society (Fr John gave our diocesan appeal last November), speaking about his work in Africa.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS** Please remember the children and their families in your prayers: the children recently celebrated the sacrament of reconciliation and are now preparing for their First Eucharist on **Sunday 22nd May**.

**St PETER'S CHOIR** Our next choir rehearsal is on **Wednesday 16th March**, 8pm to 9pm, practising for Holy Week and Easter.

**BEARSTED AREA CHURCHES TOGETHER** As usual we are looking for donations of Easter Eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt, which will take place *before* Easter on Holy Saturday, **26th March**. It seems that St Peter's share is in the region of 82 eggs. Thank you to those who have already donated. ♦ Holy Week and Easter Service times will need to be delivered as usual. **Please pick up a set for a road near you.**

**DIARY for the WEEK BEGINNING 6th MARCH 2016**  
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT (C)** ✕

Sun 6th	Saturday	<b>6.00pm</b>	✕ Vigil Mass: Irene and Newport Horne RIP
	Sunday	<b>(H) 8.45am</b>	✕ Mass: Eric Smith RIP
		<b>10.30am</b>	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
Mon 7th	Feria	<b>7.00pm</b>	✕ Mass
Tues 8th	Feria	<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass: Barbara Casey RIP
Wed 9th	Feria	<b>(H) 10.00am</b>	✕ Mass
Thu 10th	Feria	<b>7.00am</b>	✕ Mass
Fri 11th	Feria	<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass
		<b>7.30pm</b>	<i>Stations of the Cross</i>
Sat 12th	Feria	<i>5:00-5:30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT (C)** ✕

Sun 13th	Saturday	<b>6.00pm</b>	✕ Vigil Mass: Peter Downing RIP
	Sunday	<b>(H) 8.45am</b>	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		<b>10.30am</b>	✕ Mass: Tom Lawson RIP

**EASTER COFFEE** Back yet again (by popular demand): coffee and tea after Mass at Good Shepherd on Easter Sunday morning, **27th March**. Many thanks to our organizers!

**PLEASE PRAY...**

- **With the Holy Father for March:** *that those Christians who are discriminated against or are being persecuted on account of their faith, may remain strong and faithful to the Gospel, thanks to the incessant prayer of the whole Church.*
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes, especially Baby Fergus Ainsworth and Margaret Mason; 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.
- **For all mothers**, and those who have the care of children: *may the love and prayers of Mary the mother of Jesus always be with them.*
- **For all who are refugees;** for those people, both adults and children, forced to leave their homeland by violence, poverty and oppression: *may we welcome them with compassionate and generous hearts, and learn to value the gifts they bring.*

**Thank you** for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£388.22** (Gift Aided, **£220.50**). ♦ Throughout Lent we are encouraged to contribute to CAFOD: HM Revenue and Customs will match **every £1 we save but only if you are a taxpayer and provide your name and address** (use the 'Give Today' slip in the CAFOD envelope). ♦ This Sunday there is a retiring collection to help with the **cost of flowers** for Holy Week and Easter.

**FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 29th February -13th March.** This year's theme is BREAKFASTS.

In the supermarket, keep your eyes open for the Fairtrade logo.

**LENT REFLECTIONS** The Southwark Stewardship Team is offering 'online' daily meditations. Simply log on and sign up at <http://eepurl.com/bF0b6P>.

**DEANERY** There is to be a meeting of the Deanery Pastoral Council at Holy Family, this **Monday, 7th March**, at 7.30pm.

**BBC RADIO 4 LENT TALKS** Wednesdays in Lent 8.45-9.00pm. The Christian season of Lent is traditionally a time for self-examination and reflection on the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. Throughout Lent, six writers will reflect on these events through a variety of locations as they explore the theme of "**Lent in the Landscape**". The fourth of six episodes.

**CHRISM MASS** Wednesday **23rd March**, 11.30am at St George's Cathedral, Southwark.

**MARRIAGE MASS at St GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL** Saturday **18th June**, 3pm. If you are celebrating your 1st / 10th / 25th / 40th / 50th / 60th + wedding anniversary this year, please give in your names to the parish priest by **31st May** so you can receive an invitation from the Archbishop (booking is essential). This annual event fills the cathedral and is a great affirmation of the value of marriage. All are welcome to attend.

