



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

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

FIFTH SUNDAY of EASTER

24th April 2016

FAITH IN FOCUS: SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW Often the closer we are to something, the less clearly we see it. We might go on holiday to a beautiful island paradise only to find that the locals take the sunshine, the palm trees and the gentle pace for granted. It's not uncommon for Parisian or Roman taxi drivers to consider the Arc de Triomphe or the Colosseum as mere traffic islands to be negotiated with difficulty at rush hour. We tend not to appreciate the wonders around us when we see them every day. The same can be true for Christians who live cheek by jowl with their faith. We can end up downsizing the importance of what we believe because we package it into sound-bites such as "God is love" or "Love your neighbour as yourself". And if our faith and religion is reduced to maxims then it has to compete with all other political, commercial and recreational claims on our time and talent. And thus it becomes relativized. So Christianity is in danger of being seen as just one way of spending our spare time, along with party politics, sport, caravanning, birdwatching or knitting. And we get sucked into thinking that tolerance demands of us that we make no greater claim for our faith than we do about our hobbies and our interests. After all,

it would be indecent to make a lot of noise about our faith, wouldn't it? Especially if faith is a private thing. But Christians don't think like that. We don't consider our belief in Jesus Christ to be a take-it-or-leave-it affair. It's not merely like being a member of a wine club or a social networking group. For Christians, faith in Jesus is massive; it is the single most important factor in our lives because it determines who we are and how we behave. To be a Christian is not simply a "nice" thing; it's totally consuming because it informs every aspect of our living and breathing. In today's scripture God says, "Now I am making the whole of creation new". The resurrection of Jesus changes everything. The old order is wiped away, death and evil have lost their power to keep us held captive, and we are offered a radically new and eternal life that has already begun now and that will come to fulfilment the other side of the grave. There is nothing "same-old" about our Christian faith. It's something that can transform the whole of creation. (Author unknown.)



CHURCH ACCOUNTS Mr Ian Fraser is presenting the church accounts to us **this weekend**.

RED BOXES Would all Red Box holders please bring them in to church: it's time for them to be emptied again. (Thank you to those who have done so.)

DELICES de FRANCE 7pm, next Saturday, **30th April**, in St Peter's Hall. Tickets for this extravaganza of French wine, food and song (with a very easy quiz, too!) will be available after Masses or can be obtained from Ian Bruce-Russell on 736811 or Jenny Lovelock on 734908. A family ticket, including food and wine or soft drink, will cost £20 (2 adults and 2 children), adults £8 and children £4. Please see the poster on the noticeboard for all other details.

HEART of KENT HOSPICE See the notice board for details of the annual Bluebell Walk around Harrietsham and the North Downs in aid of our local hospice next **Sunday, 1st May** (<https://www.hokh.org/>).

CHOIR PRACTICE Second Tuesday of each month, 8pm to 9pm, at St Peter's. Next practice, **10th May**. All are welcome.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION MASS Sunday **22nd May**, 10.30am (The Most Holy Trinity). Please keep the children and their families in your prayers: **Elizabeth, Malachy, William** and **Joseph**.

PRAYER VISITING Churches Together in Bearsted will hold this event during the week of **4th July**. More information nearer the date.

CONFIRMATIONS Maidstone area Confirmations will take place on Sunday **9th October**, with a retreat at Whitstable on **8th to 10th July**. The preparation day will be on Sunday **2nd October**. As before we are inviting those who are not confirmed (School Year 9 or above) to apply. If you wish to be confirmed see Fr Geoffrey or Deacon Cyril.

**DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 24th APRIL 2016
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)**

✕ **FIFTH SUNDAY of EASTER (C)** ✕

Sun 24th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Margaret Richardson RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Fr Bart's Intentions
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		12noon	Baptism: Sofie Lea Zatyrazc
Mon 25th	St Mark	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Noemi & Christopher Pearson, recently wed
Tues 26th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 27th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass
Thu 28th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 29th	St Catherine of Siena	11.00am	Funeral Service: Olivia May Venner
Sat 30th	Our Lady	5.00-5.30pm	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **SIXTH SUNDAY of EASTER (C)** ✕

Sun 1st May	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Eliza Martin RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Eliza Martin RIP

SPRING CONCERT Valley Park School, Maidstone, will be holding a 'concert' in St Peter's this **Wednesday, 27th April**, in the evening. The programme will include some sacred pieces.

CHRISTIAN AID Next month (**15th-21st May**) there will be a house to house collection in Bearsted and Thurnham asking people to make donations to Christian Aid's work. If anyone can help, please give your contact details to Father Geoffrey who will pass them on to the organizer. There will also be an ecumenical Christian Aid Week Service on **Sunday 22nd May** at 5pm at Holy Cross Church to which all are warmly invited.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for April:** *that amid political and religious conflicts, Christians in Africa may give witness to love and faith in Jesus Christ.*
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes; for Sofie, being baptized today and for her parents and godparents; for those recently dead especially John Delahunt; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; for all our relatives and friends and the intentions on the notice board.
- **For all those who are persecuted for their faith:** *that they may be protected and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit.*
- **For all students facing exams** at this time of year: *may they be enabled to face this important time calmly and confidently, and achieve the success they deserve.*

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£390.30** (Gift Aided, **£201.00**; weekly standing orders amount to **£149**). ♦ Last Sunday's collection for **Ecclesiastical Education** amounted to **£146.85**. ♦ There is a retiring collection this weekend for the **maintenance of St George's Cathedral**, the mother church of the diocese. This collection helps with the upkeep of the cathedral. ♦ Pope Francis asked that all Catholic Churches in Europe take up a special collection for those who are suffering the consequences of **violence in Ukraine**. Archbishop Peter asks that all parishes take a second collection at Masses on **next weekend**. *Listen and Read soundcloud.com*. In this Catholic News podcast, Bishop Hlib Lonchyna, Eparchial Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family of London, explains the Holy Father's appeal and reminds us of the painful human suffering that continues two years after the conflict started.

GIFT AID SCHEME Thank you to all donors for your continued support of the Gift Aid Scheme. The Gift Aid tax reclaim will be submitted soon and if any donor has not paid sufficient tax to cover the amount being reclaimed can they please advise myself or Fr Geoff. We always welcome new donors and if any parishioner who is a tax payer would like to join the scheme please see myself or Fr Geoff. *Mark Smith, Gift Aid Organiser*

ALTAR SERVERS' RALLY Aylesford Priory, **Monday 2nd May**. See poster.

MERCIFUL MINISTRY A day for the people of the diocese: **Sunday 8th May**, 2.30 – 5pm (afternoon tea provided), Little Sisters of the Poor, 2a Meadow Road, Vauxhall, London, SW8 1QH; parking available. To Book, email: father.john@finance-rcdsouthwark.org by 30th April. See poster.

MARRIAGE MASS at St GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL Saturday **18th June**, 3pm. If you are celebrating a significant wedding anniversary this year, **please give in your names by the end of April** so you can receive

an invitation from the Archbishop. This annual event fills the cathedral and is well received; all are welcome to attend.