



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

THE ASCENSION of THE LORD

8th May 2016

FAITH IN FOCUS: UP AND AWAY? The feast of the Ascension of the Lord is almost the Cinderella of Lent and Eastertide. While we give great weight to Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost, Ascension seems to belong to a second division of feasts that rarely get much of a mention. Traditionally the number 40 has a mystical significance in the bible. The Hebrew slaves wandered for 40 years in the desert, Jesus fasted and was tempted for 40 days in the desert, and the Ascension is said to have taken place 40 days after the resurrection. But what is this feast actually about? It celebrates more than the mere fact that Jesus did not stay on earth after his resurrection. Yes, he went back to heaven. But today's feast is not simply a historical memorial of that fact. It has a liturgical and spiritual meaning. Essentially today's feast is one of Easter hope. We rejoice in the fact that Jesus overcame the powers of darkness by rising from the dead.

These powers still threaten us today but we are confident that Christ has crushed evil's permanent hold over us, and that even death cannot hold us in its grasp for ever. That's something to celebrate! But Ascension goes further. It allows us to proclaim our confident hope that where Jesus has gone, we too hope to follow. The ancient Roman preface for today reminds us that although Jesus has passed beyond our sight he has done so not to abandon us but to be our hope. God might have gone up, but he's not gone away. In a very obvious way, Jesus' ascending into heaven is a way of saying that he has returned to his Father in order to claim for us a share in his divine life. In just a week's time this cycle of earthly trial and victory will reach its climax when we witness the sending of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus promised us. In the meantime, we are left contemplating a God whose care for us is such that he sent his only Son to clear away those obstacles which prevent us from sharing fully in the life he created us for, and who is with us till the end of time inviting us to follow him and proclaim the Good News to the whole world. That too is something to celebrate!

(Author unknown.)



MARY'S MONTH There is a sense amongst some people, that since the Second Vatican Council, Mary has been demoted, especially in the liturgy. A familiar lament is, "We don't sing hymns to Our Lady at Mass anymore, not even during her month of May." This may be true, but not without good reason. The Easter Season lasts from the Easter Vigil until Pentecost Sunday, and depending on the date of Easter, we can be celebrating this 50-day festival until at least mid-May. The music chosen for Eucharistic Liturgy would reflect the Easter Season scripture readings. A song like 'Immaculate Mary' probably would not fit. But this doesn't mean that Mary has been 'demoted'. Today the Church tells us that whilst honouring Christ's mother, these devotions should not overshadow her Son this after all, is the last thing Mary would have wanted. ✠ **This month Pope Francis asks us to pray the Holy Rosary for evangelization and peace**

THANK YOU to those who staged and supported our social last Saturday at St Peter's. It was by all accounts a resounding success. The editor is led to believe we made about £200 for parish projects.

FINANCE MEETING Monday 9th May, 7.30pm at St Peter's.

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

EASTER DUTIES The last day for fulfilling the precept of Easter Communion is the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, 22nd May. Canon 2042 of *The Catechism* states: The third precept ('You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season') guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and centre of the Christian liturgy.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 8th MAY 2016 (Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)			
✕ THE ASCENSION of THE LORD (C) ✕			
Sun 8th May	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Finn Egan RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
Mon 9th	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Fr Dominic Rolls RIP
Tues 10th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 11th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Holy Souls
Thu 12th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 13th	Our Lady of Fatima	10.00am	✕ Mass: Celebrant's Intention
Sat 14th	St Matthias	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ PENTECOST SUNDAY, WHITSUN (C) ✕			
Sun 15th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Anne Sheridan RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Mary Jenner RIP

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

CONFIRMATIONS "The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For by the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1285.*) 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. We hope to be able to run a short course in Bearsted later in the summer. If you wish to be confirmed see Fr Geoffrey or Deacon Cyril.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for May:** that families, communities and groups may pray the Holy Rosary for Evangelization and Peace.
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes; for those recently dead especially Bob Smith and Fr Dominic Rolls; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; for all our relatives and friends and the intentions on the notice board.
- **For the victims of the wildfires in Canada** who have lost everything; that they may be comforted, and receive all the help they need to rebuild their lives.
- **For those who are called to communicate the Gospel:** may they use wisely the technology at their disposal, so that all will hear the Word of God which is faithfully proclaimed.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£561.39** (Gift Aided, **£345.50**; weekly standing orders amount to **£149**). ♦ Last Sunday's collection for those who are suffering the consequences of violence in Ukraine amounted to **£200.56** ♦ This Sunday there is a retiring collection for **World Communications** which supports the work of the Catholic Communications Network, the media office of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Donate online: <http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/donate-wcd>.

FATHER PAUL MASON Pope Francis has appointed Father Paul Mason as the new Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark. Father Paul is currently Episcopal Vicar for Kent. His Episcopal Ordination will take place in Saint George's Cathedral, Southwark, **on 31st May**, at midday, the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He will join Bishop Patrick Lynch and Bishop Paul Hendricks as Auxiliary Bishops of the Diocese of Southwark, succeeding Bishop John Hine.

CHRISTIAN AID There will be a house to house collection in Bearsted and Thurnham (**15th-21st May**). If **anyone can help**, please give your contact details to Father Geoffrey or Deacon Cyril who will pass them on to the organizer. *They are still short on numbers and for this reason this will probably be the last year they hold this event.* 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.

PRAYER VISITING Churches Together in Bearsted will hold this event during the week of **4th July**. Please give your name to Bob Piggott (bob_piggott@hotmail.co.uk) if you are willing to give up a short time (45-60 minutes) on a weekday night that week.