



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 A

THIRD SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

22nd January 2017

FAITH IN FOCUS: GOOD NEWS AT LAST Generally speaking, is your life full of joy and light, or darkness and despair? Do you wake up in the morning with a bounce or with a leaden weight? The people of Zebulun and Naphtali, in the Galilee area, lived with a dark memory. Their ancestors worshipped idols and were slaughtered and deported by the Assyrians. This ran deep in their psyche. We're all a bit like them. There are things from our past that haunt us and that we never fully shake off. Then there is the daily struggle of just keeping body and soul together. Not to mention the dismal news that constantly greets us from the newspapers and TV.

Isaiah tells the people of Zebulun and Naphtali that their time of mourning is over because God is about to send the Messiah who will put an end to their troubles. And this is what St Matthew quotes when he introduces the public preaching of Jesus. We may be tempted to think that idolatry is something that we needn't worry about. Surely it's something that is long dead and buried? Yet our lives can easily become clogged up with worshipping the inessential, the false gods. How many of us live our own lives through the comings and goings of "celebrities", eagerly awaiting news of their latest love affairs? How many of us worship on the altar of other people's opinion of us? How many sacrifices do we make in order to seek after that elusive fortune? Sometimes life can be lived at such a shallow level that we become unaware of how really joyless it has become. We long for meaning in our lives and we yearn for fulfilment, yet all we seem to find is the spectre of what's gone wrong in the past and the tinsel invitation to the future. The teaching of Christ breaks this cycle by being good news. It offers fulness of life to those who believe and live by it. It brings light.

(Author unknown)



TODAY is HOMELESS SUNDAY (<http://homeless-sunday.uk/>) Through prayer and reflection *Homeless Sunday* offers an opportunity to listen to what God has to say about homelessness, and to consider what action we are being called to take.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY From 18th until 25th January the Church observes eight days' prayer for Christian Unity. The theme this year, developed by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, is *Crossing Barriers* – see <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2017/> for more information. There is a service for Christian Unity at Holy Cross Church, Bearsted, at 3pm this **Sunday, 22nd January**. Please make every effort to attend.

St PETER'S The chain-post fencing at the top of the entrance drive was successfully extended last week.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2017 Applications have now closed. Preparations for those parents who have enrolled their children have now begun; we have a group of 11 this year meeting on Friday afternoons at St Peter's. We will continue to be in touch with parents by email.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM In Bearsted and Thurnham we are marking the centenaries of those from our villages who died in World War One. Wherever possible we meet outside their home on the anniversary of their death and hold a short act of remembrance and lay a wreath. All are invited to join us. We next meet to commemorate and pray for JOHN ALBERT WISDOM: A naval rating on HMS *Laurentic* who died at sea, his ship having been hit by an enemy mine off Co Donegal. He was the second naval

teenager to die from our community and the third man from Acacia Villas. We will meet on **Wednesday**

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 22nd JANUARY 2017 (Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)			
✕ THIRD SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (A) ✕			
Sun 22nd	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Peter Capon RIP
	Sunday At Holy Cross:	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Tim O'Shea RIP
		10.30am	✕ Sung Mass: Rita Kimber
		3.00pm	Service for Unity
Mon 23rd	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
Tues 24th	St Francis de Sales	10.00am	✕ Mass: Special Intention
Wed 25th	Conversion of St Paul	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: For the unity of all Christians
Thu 26th	SS Timothy and Titus	No Mass	
Fri 27th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
Sat 28th	St Tomas Aquinas	5.00-5.30pm	Confessions
✕ FOURTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (A) ✕			
Sun 29th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: George and Mary Combes RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Barbara Amos RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: James McMahan RIP

25th January at 12noon at Acacia Villas, Willington Street, opposite the entrance to Park and Ride.

ADVENT APPEAL 2016 Thank you to those who have made contributions. **Maidstone Day Care Centre** would be very grateful if you could donate any of the following to help the homeless in Maidstone, mainly for men but also some women: • winter clothes, including shoes and boots, coats, pants and socks, gloves, scarves, hats; • sleeping bags and blankets; • toiletries. Please leave any donations, clearly marked, in the parish room at St Peter's; Marie Quarman will continue to collect until next week ending, **29th January**. Thank you.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for January:** that all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving to restore ecclesial communion through prayer and fraternal charity by working together to overcome the challenges facing humanity.
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes, especially Brian Smith; for those who have died recently, and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now; for all our relatives and friends, for Stewart and Rachel, preparing for their wedding at St Peter's next month; and the intentions on the notice board.
- **As we pray for Christian unity**, that Christians across the world will be eager and willing to take the gospel message of love to the ends of the earth.
- **For the victims of the avalanche tragedy** in Italy, and for those helping with rescue and recovery.
- **For the homeless** in our communities this weekend.

<p>Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: £370.25 (Gift Aided, £216.00; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to £134.00).</p>

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY, 27th JANUARY *How can life go on?* The aftermath of the Holocaust and of subsequent genocides continues to raise challenging questions for individuals, communities and nations. HMD 2017 asks audiences to think about what happens after genocide and of our own responsibilities in the wake of such a crime. How do we deal with displacement, the rebuilding of communities, facing hate and coming to terms with the past?

MASS FOR THE SICK A Mass for the sick for the Maidstone area parishes will be at 10am on **Saturday 11th February**, World Day of Prayer for the Sick, at St Francis' Maidstone, and will include the rite of Anointing of the Sick. There will also be a Mass for the Sick at Aylesford Priory at 12noon.

A LIFETIME OF LOVING A day exploring spouses' relationships in the light of Pope Francis's Apostolic Exhortation 'The Joy of Love', **Saturday 4th March** at St Teresa's, Ashford. See poster or contact Carole: 07983 525727, or email mflkent@gmail.com.

BITESIZE We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.

William E. Gladstone