



# 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 A**

**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY ✕ ORDINARY TIME**

**23rd July 2017**

### **FAITH IN FOCUS SEED OR WEED?**

Today's parable is not about evil people getting their comeuppance at the end of time like the darnel (weeds) in the field. It's about ensuring that the genuine wheat is allowed to grow, mature and come to harvest. Jesus is speaking about the sovereignty of God. It is God who made the field, who created the seed and who sowed it in the ground so that it could yield a harvest. And as the weeds come up and start to affect the crop we are tempted to go and cut them up and burn them. Yet God tells us not to bother. Wait until harvest time, then it will be easier to see where the healthy wheat is.



If God really is sovereign, then nothing can frustrate his plans. No disaster, no war, no political machinations, no new order or accepted wisdom. God can sit and watch as all sorts of make-believe theories come in and out of fashion because he is a patient God. And our natural questioning of why God allows this and that to happen is a symptom of our desire to weed things out now rather than wait for the harvest.

So it's tempting to look around us today and try to pin the label of "weed" onto all sorts of people and situations in our world and even in the Church. The truth, of course, is that we do not ever know the real motives and understanding behind any other person's actions. And the truth is that the script is still being written on every creature created by God. In God's hand even a weed can come to blossom. God is in no hurry, and this works in our favour since there is always time for us to change. We have to presume that God allows us time to change, otherwise we have been created and doomed to be permanent weeds with no chance of ever being fruitful.

Is this parable, then, a way of Jesus telling us to be wary of the weeds that surround us? Possibly. But it's much more about making sure that we allow God's fertile Spirit to work in us to produce a harvest of good. Let's forget for the moment about putting tags and labels on other people and concentrate on being fruitful ourselves. For in our heart of hearts we know that our own wheat is not devoid of weeds. And if we're honest we have to take refuge in the fact that heaven is not full of good people. It's full of people who were given enough time to repent and be forgiven. *(Author unknown.)*

**PARISH PILGRIMAGE 2018** A reminder: please put your completed questionnaire on our possible 2018 pilgrimage choices into the box at the back of St Peter's Church, or give it to Fr Geoff. If you want another form you will find some pinned to the notice boards at our 2 churches.

**DON'T DITCH FAIRTRADE TEA** *Online Petition.* Sainsbury's are planning to ditch 'Fairtrade Tea' in favour of their own 'Fairly Traded' tea. A big difference with Sainsbury's proposed scheme is that, while the supermarket says it would continue to pay the social premium, the Sainsbury's Foundation would decide how it is spent, rather than the communities themselves. Producers would have to apply to the Sainsbury's foundations for grants to access the premium. Over 80,000 people have signed a petition asking Sainsbury's to reconsider their plans. A quarter of a million African farmers have protested against these changes in an open letter to Sainsbury's. They said, "As producers we believe that we have the best understanding of our local context and what is needed to make our businesses and communities thrive. Our destiny must be kept in our hands." Sign the online petition at [www.cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news/Sainsbury-s-blow-to-Fairtrade](http://www.cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news/Sainsbury-s-blow-to-Fairtrade).

**DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 23rd JULY 2017  
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)**

**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY ✕ ORDINARY TIME (A)**

Sun 23rd	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	✕ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>(H) 8.45am</b>	✕ Mass: James Hamilton (FM) RIP
		<b>10.30am</b>	✕ Mass: Trixie Hall RIP
Mon 24th	Feria	<b>7.00pm</b>	✕ Mass: Marjorie Poole RIP
Tues 25th	St James	<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass: Kathleen Byrne RIP
Wed 26th	SS Joachim & Anne	<b>(H) 10.00am</b>	✕ Mass
Thu 27th	Feria	<b>7.00am</b>	✕ Mass
Fri 28th	Feria	<b>10.00am</b>	✕ Mass: Therese Sophie Weedon (FM) RIP
Sat 29th	St Martha	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

**SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY ✕ ORDINARY TIME (A)**

Sun 30th	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	✕ Vigil Mass: John Iloenyosi and Christine Udeze RIP
	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>(H) 8.45am</b>	✕ Mass: Margaret Smith RIP
		<b>10.30am</b>	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

**NEWSLETTER** This is the last printed parish newsletter until Sunday **3rd September**. Mass intentions and other updates will be posted on the notice board and the website.

**PLEASE PRAY...**

- **With the Holy Father for July – for Lapsed Christians;** that through our prayer and witness to the Gospel, our brothers and sisters who have distanced themselves from the faith, may rediscover the merciful closeness of the Lord and the beauty of the Christian life.
- **For all victims of recent terror attacks and the Grenfell tower fire.** We place into God's hands the survivors and their families. that they may feel understood in their anger and brokenness and gradually find inner peace, experiencing God's love through the compassion of those who are helping them.
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes especially *Elsie Hampshire;* for those who have died recently, and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); for all our relatives and friends and for the intentions on the notice board.
- **Anniversaries this week** (from St Peter's Lady Chapel memorial): ✕ *Kathleen Tozer, Henry Ruffle, Frank Hampton, Theresa Schreiber, Margaret (Trixie) Hall, Desmond Baker Frederick Sanity and Marjorie Poole.* ✕

**Thank you** for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£436.87** (Gift Aided, **£221.50**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£149.00**).

**The TYBURN NUNS** Mother M. Ines, OSB, Prioress, has emailed to say they now have a YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCscVyMSSWGVLTjie29ZqjAw>.

**HIROSHIMA and NAGASAKI REMEMBRANCE** The annual remembrance of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings takes place in Aylesford Priory at 8.20pm on **Tuesday 9th August** (see poster). All are welcome, whether Catholics, of any faith, or none. Please invite others to attend.

**MIRACULOUS RELIC IMAGE** of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St George's. The relic image will visit St George's Cathedral, between **Friday 28th** and **Monday 31st July**. A service of reception will take place at 6.30pm on the Friday.

**DIOCESAN DAY for CATECHISTS** Saturday **23rd September**: for all catechists and those involved in Children's Liturgy of the Word. If you are involved in this way in our parish please pick up an information leaflet after Mass.

**NEW FOUNDATION DEGREE** for Catholics working in Healthcare and those seeking to be Chaplains. Starting in October, St Mary's University Twickenham is to offer a new foundation degree in Healthcare Ethics, Theology and Care. This is a part-time two-year programme for those seeking to be hospital chaplains and for people working in healthcare settings, from care homes, to hospices and hospitals. Lectures and seminars take place at St Mary's one evening a week and additional lectures and resources are available online. If people are interested in applying or finding out more, please contact [matthew.james@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.james@stmarys.ac.uk).