



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 B

FIFTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

4th February 2018

FAITH IN FOCUS: The Greater Point

When we read about Jesus' miracles, two big questions spring to mind. Does Jesus still cure people today? And ... why does Jesus cure some people but not others? Surely with his power he could cure everybody!

Jesus behaves unexpectedly in today's gospel. Having cured Simon's mother-in-law, the whole town turns up at his door eager for miracle cures, and Jesus obliges. This it would seem is his golden opportunity. This is his chance to have everybody eating out of the palm of his hand. Instead, Jesus gets up early and goes off to a deserted place, and when Simon comes looking for him, Jesus suggests that instead of returning to his new-found fans, that they move on to the next village. This might seem odd to many, but it is to become apparent that curing the sick was not top of Jesus' agenda.

In some schools today, children are rewarded for a hundred percent attendance. Children come rushing home at the end of term waving certificates to prove that sickness has not kept them away from the classroom for one single day. But there are critics who would suggest that being in school every single day is not the important bit: it's what the pupil achieves whilst in the classroom that is of true importance. So it is with our lives. Our bodies are merely vehicles in which to get us through life. It is important to look after a vehicle, but what point is there in looking after a vehicle that isn't heading anywhere?

To achieve anything in this world our health of course is important, but Jesus didn't heal people simply to promote some health and fitness regime. Healing was only part of his primary ministry to teach. Jesus' healing miracles were signs of his identity and of God's power and compassion. His acts of healing were often to teach the importance of faith and discipleship.

Does Jesus still cure today? Perhaps the question is irrelevant. In asking it, are we missing the greater point? As mere mortals, our health is of paramount importance to us, but is it top of God's agenda? Saint Bernadette made a prayer that we could do well to adopt. She said "Lord, I do not ask that I never be afflicted, but only that you never abandon me in affliction." *Chapel Bell.*

FAMILY FAST DAY this Lent (which begins on 14th February) is on Friday **23rd February**. *Match Funding* means that the government will double any donations to CAFOD, so please be sure to donate online or by using the envelopes provided between **13th February** and **12th May**.

CAFOD How you are making double the difference: Since 2012, your generous donations have been doubled three times with match funding from the UK government. Together, we have improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across the world. Match funding has helped to...bring drinking water to 400,000 people, support 11,000 families to grow a new crop, provide toilets for 166,000 people, teach 174,000 people good hygiene such as hand washing, bring weather forecasts to 99,000 families to keep themselves safe from extreme weather, train 35,000 farmers to change their farming techniques in response to weather forecasts. Thank you for your donations and prayers. For more news go to

<https://cafod.org.uk/News/Latest-news>



DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 4th FEBRUARY 2018 (Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)			
✕ FIFTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (B) ✕			
Sun 4th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Len Richardson RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Jovita Schumann's intention
Mon 5th	St Agatha	Sorry, no parish Mass	
Tues 6th	St Paul Miki and Companions	10.00am	<i>Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion</i>
Wed 7th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	<i>Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion</i>
Thu 8th	Feria	Sorry, no parish Mass	
Fri 9th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Donor's Intention
Sat 10th	St Scholastica	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ SIXTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (B) ✕			
Sun 11th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: The Wilkinson family
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Barbara Amos RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Brian Smith RIP

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2018 Preparations for those parents who have enrolled their children continue on **Fridays** at 4pm. Parents will be updated by email.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for February** – saying “No” to corruption: that those who have material, political or spiritual power may resist the lure of corruption.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes**, Dorothy Wittwer and Fr. David Fox
- **Anniversaries this week** (St Peter's Lady Chapel memorial): Edna Macklin, Truda Ryans, Peter Ahearne, Leonard Richardson, Barbara Casey, Edward Bullock

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£378.23** (Gift Aided, **£227.50**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£158.00**). ♦ The collection for Racial Justice Sunday amounted to **£122.33**. ♦ Next weekend there will be a collection for **Poor Parishes** (formerly Needs of the Diocese). This collection enables the Archbishop to make grants to some of the smaller parishes in the Diocese.

✕ **ASH WEDNESDAY** ✕ the start of Lent, is **14th February**.

RECOMMENDED FOR LENT (“PRAYER : FASTING : ALMSGIVING”) ✕ Try to get to Mass 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 (especially of Lent Fast Day, **23rd February**) or our parish Lenten Appeal. ✕ 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:

23rd February:	Holy Cross:	<i>Action for children</i>
2nd March:	Bearsted Methodists:	<i>Mencap</i>
9th March:	St Peter's:	<i>Age UK</i>
16th March:	St Mary's, Thurnham:	<i>Guide dogs</i>
23rd March:	St Mary's, Langley:	<i>Royal British Legion</i>

A date for your diary - St Patrick's Day, Saturday 17th March

Get ready for the craic!

Celebrate the feast day of Ireland's favourite saint with an evening of feasting, music and dance, all with an Irish flavour, on Saturday 17th March at 7 pm.

Tickets will be on sale after Masses, from next week, at only £10 per adult and £25 per family (2 adults plus 2 children) and will include a 2 course supper (bring your own drinks). Early-birds can reserve their own table.

Oi, ceol, bia agus craic!