



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: bearsted@rcaos.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

FOURTH SUNDAY ✕ of LENT

31st MARCH 2019

FAITH IN FOCUS: TRUE LOVE NEVER GIVES UP It doesn't matter how far we've travelled from God, there is always a way back. The parable of the Prodigal Son is great comfort for those of us whose lives are in such a mess that we can see no glimmer of hope. But does that mean that the parable is not relevant for the rest of us?

The wonderful thing about the seemingly simple parable that Jesus tells us today, is that it is really two parables rolled into one. Whichever part of the story speaks loudest to us is dependent upon the son with whom we most identify. The story of the wayward son, who squandered his father's money and then returns home for forgiveness, speaks to anyone who has turned away from God but wants to put his or her life on track again. This parable is for anyone who has made bad decisions without much thought of the consequences. Bad decisions take us in the wrong direction and we might only realise it when we finally hit rock bottom. Only then might we admit the truth to ourselves; only then might we confess "I can't carry on like this... something has to give... something must change!"

If our sympathies lie with the prodigal son's older brother, then this parable speaks to us from a different point of view. The parable is for all who judge others as unworthy of our respect or companionship. This parable is for all those who lack empathy. Like the older son who resents his brother's welcome home party, we disappoint God when we resent others being given a second chance, or when we are unable to forgive.

The one character in the story that is beyond reproach is the father. Like God, the father is loving and compassionate. The father's love enables him to look beyond the transgressions of his younger son. Similarly, the father is patient and understanding towards his self-righteous son. The father is ready to forgive even before he is asked to forgive. The father doesn't give up on either son. His love is exemplary.

Today we can further our Lenten journey by not putting ourselves above others, by not being judgmental and by allowing others their second chance in life just as we may one day need our second chance. *(Chapel Bell)*

CAFOD EMERGENCY CYCLONE IDAI APPEAL Please support our impromptu **Parish Red Bucket Appeal** collection for this cause as you leave Mass. Your donation will give food, clean water and healthcare to people in desperate need. Gabriel, CAFOD's expert working with the Church in Mozambique at this time, reports: "We know that Idai has wiped out crops and livestock, damaged water supplies and wrecked sanitation facilities, leaving vulnerable families even more exposed. With the support and generosity of the Catholic community, we can reach the people who really need urgent emergency aid."

RECOMMENDED FOR LENT ("Prayer : Fasting : Almsgiving") ✕ Try to get to Mass at least once during the week. ✕ Attend Stations of the Cross (this week at **St Peter's**) on **Friday evenings**. (If any parishioners would once again like to take a turn leading the Stations, please let Fr Geoffrey know.) ✕ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. ✕ Contribute to CAFOD, 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 Bearsted area **Lent Lunches** on **Fridays** from 12.15, with a talk at 1pm from the following agencies:

5th April:	St Mary's, Thurnham:	<i>Maidstone Christian Cancer Support Group</i>
12th April:	St Mary's, Langley:	<i>Anna Chaplaincy (in partnership with the Heart of Kent Hospice)</i>

LENTEN LITURGY (*from the directory*) During Lent the Gloria is not used, except on Feasts and Solemnities; it is not permitted to decorate the altar with flowers, and the use of musical instruments is allowed only so as to support the singing (Laetare Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent; Solemnities and Feasts are exceptions to this rule); Alleluia is not said, even on Feasts and Solemnities.

GOOD SHEPHERD Following the painting at Harrietsham it became clear, on closer inspection, that some of the wood panelling needed replacing, hence the scaffolding. For this to happen it was necessary to remove the bees, but we are pleased to report that they were successfully relocated. It is hoped to finish the work by the end of April.



DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 31st MARCH 2019
(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT (C)** ✕
Laetare Sunday

Sun 31st <i>Mothering Sunday</i>	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Irene and Newport Horne RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: For all our Mothers
Mon 1st April	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Bridget Majdoub RIP
Tue 2nd	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Welfare of Yvonne Rowe
Wed 3rd	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass
Thu 4th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 5th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass
		7.30pm	Stations of the Cross
Sat 6th	Feria	<i>5-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT (C)** ✕

Sun 7th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Finn Egan RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Elizabeth Adibe RIP

St PETER'S CHOIR Next rehearsal, Tuesday, **16th April**, 8pm.

BEARSTED CHURCHES EASTER EGG HUNT To be held before Easter on Holy Saturday (**20th April**) at the Woodland Trust. It is free to enter, and Bearsted churches are asked to contribute the eggs that are the prizes. Could parishioners please support by buying one or two large eggs (not Creme Egg size) and leave in the sacristy at St Peter's.

FIRST COMMUNIONS Our next session will be on Friday **26th April**. Our congratulations to the children for their prayerful work and commitment. The First Communion Mass will be on Sunday **19th May** at St Peter's with a rehearsal the day before.

BEARSTED PRAYER VISITING Week commencing **29th April**. More information as we get it (or speak to Bob). Please get involved with this valuable and well-received outreach ministry to our community.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for April:** for doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes;** for all our mothers, living and dead; for those who have died recently and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); for all our relatives and friends; for the intentions on the notice board; for those who are preparing for baptism and reception into the Church at Easter; and for our children preparing for First Communion.
- **For the victims of cyclone Idai in Mozambique;** for those who lost their lives and for stranded citizens and their families and for all who have lost loved ones.
- **Anniversaries (St Peter's Chapel memorial):** ✕ Robert Dring, Joseph Ryans, Tom Moses, Margaret Richardson, Lars Hakansson, Kathleen O'Keefe, John Byrne and Carl Bramwell. ✕

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£439.86** (of which, **£192.64** was **Gift Aided**; in addition, weekly standing orders paid direct into our bank, amount to **£158.00**). ♦ We have been able to send off another **£67** to CAFOD thanks to you generous giving. *See above for today's special collection.* ♦ **Next Sunday** there will be a retiring collection to help cover the cost of **flowers for Holy Thursday and Easter.**

MOTHERING SUNDAY is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent. Centuries ago it was considered important for people to return to their home or 'mother' church once a year. So each year in the middle of Lent, everyone would visit their 'mother' church - the main church or cathedral of the area. Inevitably the return to the 'mother' church became an occasion for family reunions when children who were working away returned home: a day off to visit their mother and family, usually taking gifts of cake or flowers. Nowadays it's a day to show our mothers that we appreciate and love them. Happy Mothering Sunday!

MARMALADE MORNING at St Nicholas' Church, Otham, from 9.30, Saturday **13th April**. Probably the best marmalade and chutney in Kent! See poster or contact Joan Palmer, 202239.

FROM THE ARCHBISHOP *Chrism Mass:* We warmly encourage all parishes to send a small group of representatives to the popular Chrism Mass in St George's Cathedral, which will take place on Wednesday **17th April** at 11.30 am. ♦ **Lent Talks:** The CCF will be hosting Lent Talks on Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving and The Passion over four consecutive Tuesdays, continuing at Holy Ghost Parish in Balham. The talks will be streamed live on the CCF Facebook page.

