



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

✠ SECOND SUNDAY of EASTER ✠

28th APRIL 2019

(or of Divine Mercy)

FAITH IN FOCUS: FINDING FAITH Poor old Thomas! Condemned to go down in history as 'Doubting Thomas', for demanding proof of the risen Jesus. Yet how many of us would admit to a sneaking sympathy for Thomas. How many of us would have done exactly the same thing in his shoes? In our defence we come to the story from a slightly different angle to that of Thomas's; we come with a twenty-first century agenda. We have been brought up in a culture where science rules the day and physical proof is all important. We live in a society where belief in the spiritual is viewed as naive; eccentric even. Yet we are expected to believe.

The story of 'Doubting Thomas' is comforting to our twenty-first century ears and perhaps that's what John, the gospel's writer, intended. Surely John must have known that faith, or lack of it, would be an issue especially for those without the benefit of first hand evidence. So what are those of us who are struggling with our faith to take from this story?

The most important thing to notice is that Jesus doesn't condemn Thomas for not believing. He simply offers himself as proof. He helps Thomas to believe. Perhaps Jesus does not rebuke Thomas because he knows how much Thomas loves him, and how badly he wants to believe. Doubt might feel like a very negative emotion, but in actual fact, doubt is a sign that we are struggling to find answers and that has to be better than apathy or outright disbelief. Very often doubt is a prelude to firm faith. In fact, a faith besieged by doubt but based in a deep train of thought can be ultimately better than a faith built on little or no thought whatsoever.

In our struggle to find faith we should first take heed of today's story and acknowledge that doubt is 'normal' and not necessarily a bad thing. Next, we should acknowledge that the faith others have isn't just some warm and fuzzy feeling, but a conviction and a commitment. It's all too easy when we cannot determine a faith of our own to decry the faith of others as delusion, but this is to simply dismiss out of hand the thinking of centuries of intelligent and gifted men and women.

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Jesus applauds those who have arrived at their faith, but for those of us who are still struggling we are promised the Holy Spirit to point us in the direction of a well-founded and enduring faith.



EASTER COFFEE Back yet again (by popular demand): coffee and tea after Mass at Good Shepherd **today, 28th April**. Many thanks to our organizers!

SEASON of EASTER Easter isn't just one day; it's a 'season'. The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one "great Sunday". The gospel readings for the first three Sundays recount the appearances of the risen Christ. The readings about the Good Shepherd are assigned to the Fourth Sunday. On the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Sundays, there are excerpts from the Lord's discourse and prayer at the last supper. ✠ The Solemnity of **St George**, which would have been celebrated last Tuesday, is transferred liturgically to this **Tuesday, 30th April**.

BEARSTED PRAYER VISITING **This Monday, 29th April**. Please speak to Bob if you wish to get involved in this valuable and well-received outreach ministry to our community.

CHARITY BOOKSTALL There will be a charity bookstall at St Peter's on Sunday **5th May**. Please leave any donations of books in the parish room at St Peter's from the weekend before. Thank you.

FIRST COMMUNIONS The First Communion Mass will be on Sunday **19th May** at St Peter's with a rehearsal the day before.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION We hope to introduce Adoration in our parish in the near future. A speaker from the Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration will be speaking soon at our weekend Masses to explain how it works. Do think about if you can spare a little time to adore Our Blessed Lord. Many graces flow from the practice of Eucharistic Adoration.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 28th APRIL 2019
(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **SECOND SUNDAY of EASTER** (or of Divine Mercy) **(C)** ✕

Sun 28th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Margaret Richardson RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass
Mon 29th	St Catherine of Siena	7.00pm	✕ Mass
Tue 30th	St GEORGE (<i>transferred</i>)	10.00am	✕ Mass: Special Intention
Wed 1st May	St Joseph the Worker	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass
Thu 2nd	St Athanasius	7.00am	✕ Mass: Clare Lansdale RIP
Fri 3rd	SS Philip and James	10.00am	✕ Mass: Celebrant's Intention
Sat 4th	The English Martyrs	<i>5-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>

✕ **THIRD SUNDAY of EASTER** **(C)** ✕

Sun 5th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Christine Jeyes RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass

LIFE as a REFUGEE in the SIBERIAN GULAGS Bozena Sain will speak to us in St Peter's Church on **Wednesday 15th May at 7pm**, about her experience as a wartime refugee in the Gulags of Siberia. To help with catering, please let us know if you are coming. Ring Father Geoffrey (01622 736100) or Terry Kinsman (01622 730119), or sign up on the notice on the parish noticeboard.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for May:** *for the Church in Africa, that through the commitment of its members, it may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for the continent.*
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes;** *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 baptized and received into the Church at Easter; and for our children preparing for First Communion.*
- **One week ago today in Sri Lanka, as men, women and children came together to celebrate Easter, their lives were destroyed or changed forever by the actions of a few people.** *Let us pray that those who died might receive eternal life; that the bereaved, traumatised and injured might find comfort and healing; and that those who work for peace might find the courage to continue their lifesaving work.*
- **Anniversaries** (St Peter's Chapel memorial): ✕ Ursula Schreiber, Mary Duerdon, Patrick Mulloy, Lydia Iloenyosi, Alan Betts and Audrey Allan. ✕

Thank you: the sum received on Good Friday for the Holy Places was **£203.54**. (Weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank account now amount to **£159.00**.) • Fr Geoffrey is very grateful for the offerings last Sunday which amounted to slightly under **£2,000**. He also thanks people for their cards and gifts. • **Today** there is a second collection to help meet the cost of the upkeep and maintenance of St George's Cathedral, the mother church of the diocese.

GIFT AID SCHEME Thank you to all donors for your continued support of the Gift Aid Scheme. If any donor has not paid sufficient tax to cover the amount being reclaimed for tax year 2018-2019 can they please advise myself or Fr Geoff. We always welcome new donors and if any parishioner who is a tax payer would like to join the scheme please see myself or Fr Geoff. Mark Smith, Gift Aid Organizer

DEANERY PASTORAL COUNCIL Meeting this **Tuesday** evening at Goudhurst.

CONFIRMATIONS If you are in year 9 or above, and would like to be confirmed, please speak to Fr Geoffrey or Deacon Cyril. Deanery confirmations are expected to be in **October**.

MARCH for LIFE This year on **Saturday 11th May**, starting outside Westminster Church House, 25 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BN at **2pm**. There will also be events in the morning from 9.30am until 1.30pm. For more details and local coach information, see www.MarchForLife.co.uk. See poster for details.

MASS in CELEBRATION of the SACRAMENT of MARRIAGE at St George's Cathedral **13th July**. If you are celebrating your 1st/10th/25th/40th/50th/60th + wedding anniversary this year, please apply as soon as possible. Get in touch with the parish office and provide your names, the anniversary you are celebrating, your home address, email address and telephone, so you can receive an invitation from the Archbishop. Alternatively, get in touch direct at mfise@rcaos.org.uk so you can receive an invitation from the Archbishop. Please let them have the location of your parish in the title of your email.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE to LOURDES Some places are still available on this annual event, led by Bishop Paul Hendricks. Dates: **23rd-30th August**. For details please see: www.tangney-tours.com/CA and its special section for Southwark.