

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:

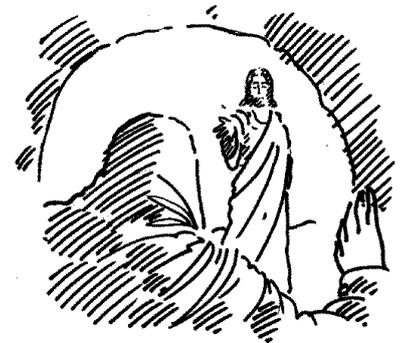
www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk

Year A

FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT

29th MARCH 2020

FAITH in FOCUS: Life Changing The most unsettling parts of the bible are the bits where Jesus doesn't do exactly what we expect. Today Jesus' good friends Mary and Martha send him a message to come quickly because their brother Lazarus is dying. We would expect Jesus to drop everything and go quickly to their house. Instead, he hangs around for a couple of days and does nothing. What can he be thinking of? In truth, the delay is an essential part of the story. If Jesus had simply raised Lazarus from feeling unwell the story would have lacked poignancy, and no one would have had their faith significantly deepened that day. That Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead has a dramatic and profound impact on all not least Lazarus himself.



We might have expected Lazarus to have more to say on the matter. We might wish that he had shared a couple of life after death experiences with us, but it seems that Lazarus and his experiences are not really the point of the story. The main point of the story is Jesus' ability to transform the meaning of life and death for those who trust in him. Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." In bringing Lazarus back to life, Jesus shows the crowds that death need hold no fear for those who place their trust in him. It is truly life changing to know that we are invited to place this much faith in God. It is life changing to know that God can handle any situation in which we find ourselves, and that he knows how to lead us through it. All we have to do is focus our faith on God rather than our own imagined solutions. Expect surprises. Expect delays. Expect a God who can guide us through life with all its challenges. *Chapel Bell*

FR GEOFFREY WRITES It grieves me to confirm that measures to combat the threat posed by the corona virus have forced us to close both our churches, in keeping with all churches throughout the country. This means that **all public acts of worship** in our churches are suspended. The **Sunday Mass obligation is also suspended**. Mass will be celebrated every day at St Peter's, **but without a congregation**, i.e. sadly behind closed and locked doors. However counterintuitive this may seem please stay at home and, where possible, join me in the celebration of Mass **at your laptop, PC or smartphone device**. The times of those webcasts are detailed below. Also, on our website, resources to enable you to participate in Mass are now available. Other resources are available on the diocesan website: <http://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/>. **I wish to emphasise that visiting the church at any point during the day is just not allowed**. And may I repeat that, although reasonably 'fit and healthy', since I fall into the 'vulnerable' category myself, my availability will be limited, although I will always be at the end of the telephone or email. ✂ Let us support each other as we look forward to the day when we can celebrate Mass and 'break bread' together again as the loving, caring community that we are. Although the 'Church' *appears* to have abandoned you. remember that you are the Church, and where 2 or 3 are gathered in the Lord's Name, so church life goes on.

ARCHBISHOP PETER SMITH RIP Archbishop Peter's funeral will be this **Monday, 30th March** at St George's Cathedral, Southwark. Sadly it will no longer be open to the public due to current public health concerns. It is hoped that it will be possible to hold a Mass In Memoriam later this year. Please continue to pray for the repose of the soul of our much loved Archbishop Emeritus. ✂ May he rest in peace.

✠FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT (A) ✠

Sun 29th	Sunday	10.30am	✠ Mass online: Pro Populo
Mon 30th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass online: Archbishop Peter Smith RIP
Tue 31st	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass online: Darren Webb RIP <i>Private Adoration from 11am until 12noon</i>
Wed 1st April		10.00am	✠ Mass online: Fr John Castelli RIP
Thu 2nd	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass online: Fr Henry Reynolds RIP
Fri 3rd	Feria <i>Day of Prayer for Survivors of Sexual Abuse</i>	10.00am	✠ Mass online: For Survivors of Sexual Abuse
Sat 4th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass online: "Wellbeing"
✠PALM SUNDAY of the PASSION of the LORD (A) ✠			
Sun 5th	Sunday	10.30am	✠ Mass online: Pro Populo

THE REDEDICATION of ENGLAND as THE DOWRY of MARY This Sunday, **29th March**, at 12noon, The Rededication will take place throughout the country. As King Richard II once gave England as a gift to Our Lady, so we are invited to give ourselves, as the people of this country, to Mary. We respond to this invitation on the day of Rededication in two ways; by making a personal promise and a communal entrustment. Our personal promise brings us closer to Mary, the first disciple of Christ. In this we unite in her joy by following her openness to God's call. Our communal entrustment unites us together as the people of our country in prayer, by renewing the vows of dedication made to Mary by our ancestors. For more about this see: <https://www.behold2020.com/the-rededication>.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for March:** for Catholics in China. We pray that the Church in China may persevere in its faithfulness to the Gospel and grow in unity.
- **For all those troubled by the current health situation;** and for those in isolation as a result.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes;** for those who have died recently; for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); and for all our relatives and friends and those who have asked for prayers.
- **Anniversaries (St Peter's Chapel memorial):** ✠ Robert Dring, Joseph Ryans, Tom Moses, Madeleine Worsley, Margaret Richardson, Lars Hakansson, Kathleen O' Keefe, John Byrne and Carl Bramwel. ✠

Like so many of us, the church is deprived of its income during these weeks; however, weekly standing orders paid direct into our bank amount to **£200.00**. If any parishioners who would like to consider setting up such an arrangement please see below for details of how to do this, **but only if you can afford it: your needs come first.**

STANDING ORDER SETUP If you would like to donate to the parish by standing order the details are:

Account name: RCAS ST PETERS CHURCH
 Bank: NatWest
 Account number: 03138925
 Sort code: 51-70-55

THANK YOU to those who have been in contact offering support and help to those who are self-isolating and vulnerable. During these uncertain times we must keep in touch with each other, either by simply picking up the phone, or using the various social media means that are available to most of us.

FIRST COMMUNIONS and OTHER SACRAMENETS Parents will be aware that we will probably need to reschedule the First Communion Mass this year. If you have a **baptism** or **wedding** booked in the near future please contact Fr Geoffrey.

HOLY WEEK and EASTER These celebrations cannot be transferred to a later date. Details of how they will be celebrated this year this will be announced in due course.