



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

FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT

Laetare Sunday

22nd MARCH

2020

FAITH in FOCUS: INSIGHTS Today Jesus cures a man who has been blind from birth, but it is not the blindness of the man himself that is central to this story but the blindness of those around him. The Pharisees are pretty sure they know who Jesus is and they are fairly certain that he is not of God. Consequently they are completely non-plussed by Jesus' miracle. They question the cured man over and over again as though seeking some other explanation. The Pharisees are unable to believe the evidence before their eyes. They are just as blind as the blind man once was. They are blind to the truth because they refuse to see it.



Jesus chose to cure the blind man, not simply because he felt a sympathy for him but because he wanted to display how God can work through any one of us. Jesus could see that the blind man would make a persuasive evangelist, and he was right. The cured blind man, unlike his frightened parents, spoke out boldly and persistently, first proclaiming Jesus as a prophet, and then as he gained more insight, that this man was the Son of God. Even so, the short-sighted Pharisees were not convinced. Their belief that only Moses could act as spokesman for God, rendered them totally myopic when it came to Jesus. Perhaps there is a lesson here for all of us. Are we so blinkered in what we believe and how we worship, that we are unable to see the broader picture that would allow our faith to move forwards?

Jesus' miracle and choice of subject, teaches that God can work through any one of us. In the circumstances of our lives we can show others how God works. In our skills and talents we too can be evangelists, we just need the vision and a little bit of lateral thinking. *Chapel Bell*

FR GEOFFREY WRITES It grieves me to have to tell you that both our churches are effectively closed to public congregational acts of worship, whether Mass or, during these days, Stations of the Cross. Our beautiful chapel at Harrietsham is effectively 'mothballed' until further notice. However, St Peter's will remain open as usual for private prayer and devotion. Please maintain social distancing and the usual hygiene precautions during your visit. In order to comply with the government's response to the threat posed by the corona virus pandemic, the bishops of England and Wales have ordered that, from now, and until further notice, **all public acts of worship** in our churches are suspended, **including Sunday Mass** and Stations of the Cross. The **Sunday Mass obligation is also suspended** during current public health concerns. Mass will be celebrated every day, except Thursday, at St Peter's, **but without a congregation**, i.e. sadly behind closed and locked doors. However counterintuitive this may seem, so as to avoid any gatherings, would parishioners please not attend during the usual Mass times, even on Sunday, but rather stay at home and, where possible, join me in the celebration of Mass at your laptop, PC or smart phone 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 those visiting the church at any point during the day, must observe the usual hygiene precautions and follow recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer as regards 'social distancing', and avoid being or sitting too close to others. And finally, 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 e-mail. ✂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.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 22nd MARCH 2020

✠**FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT (A)** ✠
Laetare (Mothering) Sunday

Sun 22nd	Sunday	10.30am	✠ Mass online: Joe Stynes RIP
Mon 23rd	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass online: Anne Barton RIP
Tue 24th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass online: Norah Taylor RIP <i>Private Adoration from 11am until 12noon</i>
Wed 25th	THE ANNUNCIATION of THE LORD	10.00am	✠ Mass online: Canon Brendan McCarthy RIP
Thu 26th	Feria	<i>No Mass: St Peter's open as usual</i>	
Fri 27th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass online: Hilda Gibson RIP
Sat 28th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass online: Archbishop Peter Smith RIP
		<i>5-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✠ FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT (A) ✠			
Sun 29th	Sunday	10.30am	✠ Mass online: Pro Populo

CANCELLED The following recently advertised local events have been cancelled:

- Marmalade Morning at Otham
- Bearsted Lent Lunches
- 'Death by Paintbrush' murder mystery night
- Santa Marta Modern Slavery training day
- First Communion classes

ARCHBISHOP PETER SMITH RIP Archbishop Peter's funeral will be on **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.

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, especially Norah Taylor ; 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):** ✠ John Hooker, Ann Keegan, John McCarthy, Hilda Gibson, John Brennan and Kevin Devlin. ✠

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£293.06** (of which, **£150.00** was **Gift Aided**; in addition, weekly standing orders paid direct into our bank **now amount to £200.00**). ♦ Last week, your fast day savings for CAFOD raised **£106.00**. Envelopes can be posted through the presbytery letter box throughout Lent, as can weekly offering envelopes, if convenient, **but only if you can afford it: your needs come first.**

GIFT AID SCHEME If you are in the scheme, please pick up a new pack of envelopes.

FROM NEXT SUNDAY Crucifixes and images are veiled for the remaining two weeks of Lent. Crucifixes remain so until the afternoon Liturgy on Good Friday; images of the saints are unveiled before the Easter Vigil.

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 SACRAMENTS 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 please contact Fr Geoffrey.