



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

Webmaster: webmaster@catholic-bearsted.org.uk

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

7th FEBRUARY 2021

FAITH IN FOCUS: *A Matter of Life and Death.* Now more than ever in living memory we are all consumed by the need to stay well and to keep our friends and family well too. It's great news that our scientists have come up with a vaccine that will eventually help beat Covid. It's great news that we now have developed the means to save thousands of lives. Surely if Jesus was around today in person, he would give those scientists a big pat on the back. But perhaps Jesus would have something to add. A vaccine might save us from getting ill and dying, but it cannot add to our lives. Our bodies are merely vehicles in which to get us through life. It is important to look after a vehicle, but what greater point is there in looking after a vehicle that isn't heading anywhere? What we do with our lives is more important than how long we can stay fit and well, however important that is to us as humans.



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.

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.

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*

St JOSEPHINE BAKHITA 8th February: *Day of Prayer for the Prevention of Human Trafficking.* Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims. Trafficking is when a person is recruited or transported or harboured, by means of threat or coercion for the purpose of exploitation. The easiest thing we can do to combat trafficking and slavery is to be conscientious consumers. That's something we can all do. By buying 'Fairtrade' food and making sure the clothes we buy are ethically sourced we help eliminate trafficking in the supply chains.

ASH WEDNESDAY (17th February) In view of ongoing restrictions, the Vatican (the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments) has issued the following regarding Ash Wednesday: *Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic.* The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel", or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him. The Priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 7th FEBRUARY 2021
(Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✠ FIFTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (B) ✠

Sun 7th	Saturday	6.00pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Len Richardson RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✠ Mass: Truda Ryans RIP
		10.30am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
Mon 8th	St Josephine Bakhita <i>Day for Victims of Trafficking</i>	10.00am	✠ Mass: Naomi Tipper RIP
Tue 9th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass: Edward Bullock RIP <i>(followed by Adoration until 11.30am)</i>
Wed 10th	St Scholastica	(H) 10.00am	✠ Mass: Eric Smith RIP
Thu 11th	Our Lady of Lourdes	No Mass today	
Fri 12th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass: In thanksgiving, Joanna
Sat 13th	Our Lady	5-5.30pm	<i>Confessions</i>

✠ SIXTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (B) ✠
Day for the Unemployed

Sun 14th	Saturday	6.00pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Brooke, birthday
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✠ Mass: Graham Prowse RIP

PARISH LENT PROGRAMME Since there will be no Lent Lunches this year, Stations of the Cross will be scheduled for midday on the Fridays of Lent, alternating between our 2 churches, beginning 19th February at St Peter's.

A SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN RETREAT FOR LENT (*Message from the diocese.*) Archbishop John and the Diocesan Spirituality Commission are offering a retreat for Lent. We appreciate that in these times of lockdown, it is not possible to offer 'live' Lent courses, so this is a flexible, online resource for all the parishes. This retreat will enable you to deliver a Lent programme with minimal effort on your part. Each week we will: • Release a video that parishioners can view from their homes via a link in the newsletter; or they can sign up independently to have it directly emailed to them. • Release resources for individual prayer and reflection. These can be accessed online by parishioners, or hard copies can be printed and distributed for those who do not have the internet. • Provide resources for weekly online parish groups, using Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or face to face if this becomes possible. We have prepared some simple guidelines for facilitating a Lenten sharing group, drawing on the video and prayer and reflection material provided for the week. We envisage these meetings would last between 45 minutes and an hour. The Diocese can also assist you in finding someone to facilitate a group online for you, if this is preferred. Information about the retreat and resources for groups: <http://www.southwarkdsc.org.uk/followme>. If you want help or advice please email Chris: spirituality@rcaos.org.uk.

WORLD DAY of the SICK 11th February, Our Lady of Lourdes. In his world message for World Day of the Sick Pope Francis concludes:- "The commandment of love that Jesus left to his disciples is also kept in our relationship with the sick. A society is all the more human to the degree that it cares effectively for its most frail and suffering members, in a spirit of fraternal love. Let us strive to achieve this goal, so that no one will feel alone, excluded or abandoned." Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage and healing, but even more of faith. Church authorities have recognized over 60 miraculous cures, although there have probably been many more. To people of faith this is not surprising. It is a continuation of Jesus' healing miracles, now performed at the intercession of his mother. Some would say that the greater miracles are hidden. Many who visit Lourdes return home with renewed faith and a readiness to serve God in their needy brothers and sisters.



American Catholic

PARISH SHORT STORY COMPETITION Entries are now in from as far afield as New Zealand, USA and Bearsted, amongst others. The judging process has started and we hope to release the results in next week's newsletter. Thank you to everyone who entered.

PLEASE PRAY...

- *With the Holy Father for February: For women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.*
- *For those struggling to put food on the table and feeling depleted and hungry. May they gain access to the services they need to survive and thrive.*
- *For those who have asked prayers; for the sick, especially, Fr Kevin Alban O.Carm.; for those who have died recently, especially Fr Paul Sanders and Sister Michael; and for all those troubled in heart, mind and body.*
- *Anniversaries (St Peter's Chapel memorial): ✠ Edward Bullock, Maurice Walsh, Marie Cryer and Peter Barrett. ✠*

A PRAYER for the PEOPLE of MYANMAR (BURMA)

God whose love knows no borders, give us grace and courage to respond amidst strife and oppression.

Open our minds to engage with the pain borne by the peoples of Myanmar.

Open our eyes to see you in the troubled places of your world.

Open our arms to embrace our brothers and sisters enduring loss and hardship.

We pray for our world, our humanity, our peace.

In the pain of the tortured and in the loneliness of the refugee.

In the arrogance of the strong and in the security of the powerful.

Turn us again Lord, to drink the cup of salvation

That we may die to self and live for you.

Help us to remember today Lord,

That there is nothing we cannot face together in solidarity, prayer and action.

May all your children regardless of ethnic identity, creed or gender.

Find dignity and life in all its fulness – for we believe in Life Before Death.

Amen

THANK YOU to those who have been contributing to our food bank. We were able to deliver more to the Maidstone centre this week. The bank remains open since there will almost certainly be a need for some time to come.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION For those at home. Prayer of St Alphonsus

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul

so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.

STANDING ORDER / BANK TRANSFER If you would like to donate to the parish by BACS bank transfer or standing order the details are:

Account name:	CATHOLIC SOUTHWARK ST PETERS
Bank:	NatWest
Account number:	03138925
Sort code:	51-70-55
IBAN (for international transfers):	GB22 NWBK 5170 5503 1389 25

Please include a hint in the transfer "reference" so it's easy to know what your donation is for (e.g. Mass offering, weekly collection). • The diocese has also set up a JustGiving page which may be helpful: www.justgiving.com/campaign/parishsupport.

Bitesize

You are as important to your health as it is to you.

Terri Guillemets