

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](mailto:bearsted@rcaos.org.uk)

Parish Deacon: Reverend Cyril Durbin: 01622 630055

St Peter's Hall Bookings: 07919 084730

Webmaster: [webmaster@catholic-bearsted.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk)

Year B

✠ TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY ✠

3rd OCTOBER 2021

**FAITH IN FOCUS: What God Has Joined Together.....** Today the Pharisees ask Jesus in their usual barbed fashion, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" Jesus' answer is a resounding 'no!' "What God has joined together, let no one separate." At a time when divorce was rife, this must have been a difficult thing for Jesus' audience to digest. It isn't much easier for our twenty-first century ears.

What should we take from this gospel? What should church goers who have been through painful divorces make of these words? What should church goers who have suffered unhappy first marriages and then re-married make of Jesus' teaching?

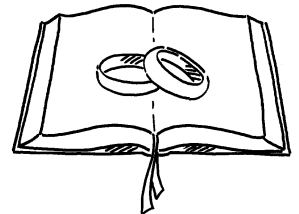
One thing is for sure. Any interpretation of this gospel should err on the side of compassion rather than condemnation. Another thing is for sure, without twisting Jesus' words to suit our own modern lifestyle, we have to look at why Jesus spoke these words in the first place and the spirit in which they were spoken. At the time Jesus spoke these words marriage was very one sided. It was the man's prerogative to choose divorce and he could choose this option for little or no good reason. At a time where women were financially dependent on their husbands, divorce could leave them pretty much destitute. Marriage was something easily entered into and easily broken. When Jesus spoke to the Pharisees in today's gospel he was doing something ground breaking. He was elevating the importance of marriage and raising the status of women.

So were Jesus' words relevant then but not now? Well no! Marriage is still something that many don't take seriously. Many go into marriage without really considering their vows. Many go into marriage not thinking much beyond the big white dress or the fabulous reception. There are far too many who are ready to give up on marriage at the first hint of hard times or at the onset of boredom. There are far too many quick to bury a marriage that is only sick or injured. It is to these people that Jesus is speaking in today's gospel.

On the other hand, if Jesus was here today could he really condemn people to stay put in marriages where physical or mental abuse threatens the wellbeing of a spouse or a child? Would Jesus insist on people soldiering on in loveless or deeply unhappy marriages? Some people choose divorce as an easy option, but for the majority divorce is rarely embarked upon happily. It is nearly always painful for all involved. Could Jesus really condemn these people?

"What God has joined together, let no one separate." It has the ring of law, yet as with all laws, it is the spirit of the law that is all important. We find the clue to Jesus' words in his declaration that Moses permitted divorce "...because of the hardness in man's heart." The answer to the debate is held in our own heart. If we make decisions based on our own self-gratification or self-interest we become hard hearted and are in real danger of making poor decisions. If we make decisions grounded in love and compassion, God will surely be there to help us through.

*Chapel Bell*



DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 3rd OCTOBER 2021 (Masses and Devotions marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)			
✠ TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (B) ✠			
Sun 3rd October	Saturday	6.00pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Michael Cowie's welfare
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✠ Mass: Sylvia Farley RIP
		12noon	Baptism: Aoife Ainsworth
Mon 4th	St Francis of Assisi	10.00am	✠ Mass: Michael Whyte RIP
Tue 5th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass: Holy Souls (followed by Adoration until 11.30am)
Wed 6th	Feria	(H) 10.00am	✠ Mass: In thanksgiving
Thu 7th	Our Lady of the Rosary	No Mass	
Fri 8th	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass:
Sat 9th	St John Henry Newman	5-5.30pm	Confessions
✠ TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (B) ✠			
Sun 10th October	Saturday	6.00pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✠ Mass
		10.30am	✠ Mass: Holy Souls
<i>Prisoners' Sunday</i>			

**THIS WEEKEND** The third of four National Mass Counts will be taken. *Last week:* 6pm, **22** (129); 8.45am, **15**; 10.30am, **51** (222). The figures in (brackets) represent those joining or catching up on YouTube.

**PARISH SOCIAL** Saturday 9th October at 7.30pm, St Peter's Parish Hall. Tickets, costing £5 per person, will be on sale after Mass or ring Jenny on 01622 734908. Please bring your own drinks and nibbles.

**ALFRED (FREDDIE) NIEBERGALL RIP** Freddie's funeral will provisionally take place at 10.30am on **Thursday 14th October** at St Peter's. ✠ May he rest in peace. ✠

**COLLECTION** Last weekend our door collections at all Masses amounted to **£168.50**. CAFOD made **£20.00**. We also gratefully acknowledge donations to our St Peter's Roof Fund amounting to **£1,000.40**. Thank you so much to everyone for your thoughtfulness, whether at home or away! To donate please see: [https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/brollyandbucketproject?utm\\_term=kGVMzG7qe](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/brollyandbucketproject?utm_term=kGVMzG7qe). ♦ UK taxpayers are reminded that we can claim gift aid on their donations via Gift Wise.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2022** Information for parents who have enquired will be available soon.

**CALLING ALL MUSICIAN** The choir at St Peter's would love to hear from anyone who plays a musical instrument to join their parish music group. We play about once a month at Sunday Mass as well as the Christmas Carol service. All ages and levels very welcome. If you are interested please speak with Bob or Dan



**OCTOBER: MONTH of the ROSARY** The month of October each year is dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary. The liturgical feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated annually on 7th October. It was instituted to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary in gratitude for the protection that she gives the Church in answer to the praying of the Rosary by the faithful.

**CAFOD** Don't forget your donation: Friday 1st October was CAFOD's Harvest Fast Day. Once again, supporters around the UK came together to raise money for people hungry for change. This weekend or soon after, please return your donation envelopes. If you are a UK tax payer don't forget to fill out the gift aid slip on the back. Alternatively, donate online through the CAFOD website (<https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-CAFOD>).

**COP26 or COP-OUT** There will be a discussion evening in anticipation of the COP26 world summit on Sunday 24th October, 6 – 7.30pm. Follow booking event link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cop26-or-cop-out-a-solution-focused-evening-preceding-cop26-summit-tickets-175805939297> or see poster.

## PLEASE PRAY...

- ***With the Holy Father for October:*** evangelization - Missionary disciples. That every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel.
- ***For the people of La Palma as the volcanic eruption destroys their homes and livelihoods.*** May they, and all those who are caught up in natural disasters, find the courage and help that they need to rebuild their lives.
- ***For the safety of our citizens,*** especially women, on our streets at night.
- ***For those who have asked prayers:*** for Aoife being baptized this Sunday, and for her parents and godparents; for the sick, especially Amanda; in thanksgiving for prayers answered; for those who have died recently, especially Les Preston; and for all those troubled in heart, mind and body.
- ***Anniversaries*** (St Peter's Chapel memorial): ✠ Maurice Ryan. ✠

## DEANERY CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME

Parishioners will be aware that the Covid pandemic meant that the Confirmation programme in 2020 was postponed. In an effort to try and catch up with our outstanding Confirmations we will be running a deanery course for young people between November and February, with the Confirmation Mass being towards the end of February. The programme will be run by Deacon Ian and the Confirmation catechists at St Francis' parish. Young people in Year 10 or above who would like to join the programme are invited to email a request for an application form to:

[confirmation@stfrancisparish.org.uk](mailto:confirmation@stfrancisparish.org.uk). You will then receive the application form, which contains details of all the course dates, to apply to join the programme.

Please note:

- Applicants must be in school Year 10 or above.
- It is the applicants themselves who have to apply.
- They are required to attend all of the sessions on the programme.
- They must have made their First Holy Communion.
- They will be required to provide a copy of their Baptism Certificate (or proof of Baptism).
- They must live in one of the parishes in Maidstone Deanery - Bearsted, Maidstone, Maidstone South, West Malling and Cranbrook, Goudhurst or Tenterden.

If you have any questions, then please contact the Confirmation mail box as above and someone will get back to you.

Thank you.

Deacon Ian Black.

**St SIMON STOCK CATHOLIC SCHOOL** *Open Evening & Open Mornings.* For entry in September 2022. **OPEN EVENING: Thursday 7th October**, 4.30pm – 7.00pm. *School tours followed by a presentation by the Academy Principal.* **OPEN MORNINGS: Tuesday 12th October & Thursday 14th October.** *School tours between 9am – 10.30am.* Please book for the Open Events on the school website: [www.ssscs.co.uk](http://www.ssscs.co.uk).

## Bitesize

Love does not consist of gazing at each other, but in looking together in the same direction.

*Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

## SUNDAY MASS

*The following will probably be used:*

**Preface:** IV of Sundays

**Eucharistic Prayer:** III

**Mystery of Faith:** When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup . . .