



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: parishpriest@catholic-bearsted.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 B

SIXTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

11th February 2018

FAITH IN FOCUS: The Power of Empathy

In the 1870s, the idyllic sunny island of Molokai might not have been one of your top holiday destinations. Molokai was a settlement where the government kept segregated all persons afflicted by leprosy. It was here that a young priest named Joseph Damien de Veuster (Fr Damien), at his own request arrived at the settlement to preside as its resident priest. There were then six hundred lepers many rendered helpless by the disease. For a long time Fr Damien was the only person to bring them the help they needed, both spiritual and practical. After twelve years of this heroic service he eventually contracted the disease himself. At the age of forty-five he stood before his brethren and addressed them, "My dear brethren my fellow lepers. ... I am one of you now."



In today's gospel Jesus is called upon to cure a leper. Jesus could have done this with a few words, but he does more than this ... he reaches out and heals the leper not only with words but the touch of his hand. This might seem a small detail, but the simple gesture speaks volumes. The gesture tells us that Jesus was setting aside the stigma that accompanied this terrible disease. Jesus is able to take on the leper's condition and know his needs. We call it empathy, an empathy essential for true compassion. This is the example that we see Fr Damien live to the letter.

To learn from Jesus' example we do not have to rush off and find a leper colony as Fr Damien did. There are plenty of social lepers everywhere we look. There are all sorts of social misfits that we stigmatise and push to the edges of our society. If we are to learn by Jesus' example, we have to employ all our powers of empathy before we can even begin to make changes.

That Jesus uses his powers to cure leprosy is amazing, but more important is how we can learn from this miracle in changing the lives around us. *Chapel Bell.*

✘ **ASH WEDNESDAY** ✘ the start of Lent, is this week: **14th February.**

RECOMMENDED FOR LENT ("PRAYER : FASTING : ALMSGIVING") ✘ Try to get to Mass at least once during the week. ✘ Attend Stations of the Cross* either at St Peter's or Good Shepherd on **Friday evenings.** ✘ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. ✘ Contribute to CAFOD (especially on Lent Fast Day, **23rd February**) or our parish Lenten Appeal. ✘ Give up a favourite luxury *but keep it between you and the Lord (don't tell people what you have 'given up' for Lent).* ✘ Try to get to the Bearsted area **Lent Lunches** on **Fridays** at 12.30:

23rd February:	Holy Cross:	<i>Action for children</i>
2nd March:	Bearsted Methodists:	<i>Mencap</i>
9th March:	St Peter's:	<i>Age UK</i>
16th March:	St Mary's, Thurnham:	<i>Guide dogs</i>
23rd March:	St Mary's, Langley:	<i>Royal British Legion</i>

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2018 The children are on half term at the moment. They celebrate First Reconciliations on **Saturday 24th February** at 10.00am.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 11th FEBRUARY 2018
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **SIXTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME (B)** ✕

Sun 11th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: The Wilkinson family
	Sunday <i>World Day of the Sick</i>	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Barbara Amos RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Brian Smith RIP
Mon 12th	Feria	7.00pm	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
Tues 13th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Canon Francis Harrington RIP
Wed 14th	✕ Ash Wednesday ✕ <i>Day of Fasting and Abstinence</i>	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass: Truda Ryans RIP
		7.30pm	✕ Mass: Canon Terence Healy RIP
Thu 15th	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass:
Fri 16th	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Deacon Samuel Gyepi-Garbrah RIP
		7.30pm	<i>Stations of the Cross</i>
Sat 17th	Feria	<i>5.00-5.30pm</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
✕ FIRST SUNDAY of LENT (B) ✕			
Sun 18th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Pasquale D'Incoronato RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
10.30am		✕ Mass: Tom Lawson RIP	

***STATIONS of THE CROSS** As part of our Lent prayers we have some volunteers to lead Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings. Patrick Harrison will lead the first ones on Friday 16th February at St Peter's. It will be on the theme of Justice and Peace; please join us.

PEACE ACTIONS for FEBRUARY • **Family Fast Day** this Lent is on Friday **23rd February**. *Match Funding* means that the government will double any donations to CAFOD, so please be sure to donate online or by using the envelopes provided between **13th February** and **12th May**.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for February** – saying “No” to corruption: that those who have material, political or spiritual power may resist the lure of corruption.
- **For all the sick and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes**; for those who have died recently especially John Welchman; and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now (see below); for all our relatives and friends and for the intentions on the notice board.
- **On this World Day of the Sick**, we ask God's blessing on all those who are sick and all who care for them.
- **Anniversaries this week** (St Peter's Lady Chapel memorial): ✕ Peter Barratt, Maurice Walsh, Marie Cryer, Barry Boyden, Dorothy Oxford, Colin Dring, Charles Ryan, Finbar Hudson, Mary Sanders and Enid Greenrod. ✕

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£377.45** (Gift Aided, **£177.00**; weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£158.00**). ♦ This week there is a retiring collection for **Poor Parishes** (formerly Needs of the Diocese). This collection enables the Archbishop to make grants to some of the smaller parishes in the Diocese.

CAFOD How you are making double the difference: Since 2012, your generous donations have been doubled three times with match funding from the UK government. Together, we have improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across the world. Match funding has helped to...bring drinking water to 400,000 people, support 11,000 families to grow a new crop, provide toilets for 166,000 people, teach 174,000 people good hygiene such as hand washing, bring weather forecasts to 99,000 families to keep themselves safe from extreme weather, train 35,000 farmers to change their farming techniques in response to weather forecasts. Thank you for your donations and prayers. For more news go to <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Latest-news>.

ADVENT APPEAL The final total for the recent Advent Appeal for The Maidstone Churches' Winter Shelter amounted to **£1,102**. This sum included donations in envelopes and profits from the Christmas parish social. Thank you.