

ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC PARISH NEWSLETTER

3rd January 2021 Second Sunday after Nativity(B)

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Parish Priest: Fr. Liam Gallagher

Assistant Priests: Fr. Damian Esene, Fr Simon Peter Lubuulwa

Deacon: Rev. Ian Black

Parish Office hours: 10am – 12 noon Monday and Friday (email or telephone only)

Catholic Schools

St Francis Primary School: Queen's Road, Maidstone, ME16 0LB 01622 771540

St Simon Stock Secondary School: Oakwood Park, Maidstone, ME16 0JP 01622 754551

A NEW YEAR - A NEW HOPE

We have made a start to another New Year, 2021, a year that we feel didn't come quick enough. Even though we are in the midst of the same restrictions that we were in on 31st December, somehow even looking at a different Calendar gives us a breath of fresh air. We still have a difficult journey and sacrifices to make, but with hope in our hearts, with the vaccine, we can at least now have something to look forward to. Keep our faith and trust in God.

On a radio interview I heard before Christmas, a scientist stated that, 'If Christmas doesn't happen without hard choices, then we are not doing it properly.' We all prepared ourselves for a very different Christmas as best we could and had to make the most of the situation that we were in. For many, it just felt like a twist of the knife for what has already been an awful year for everyone. So whatever our experience, whoever we were with and whoever we were not able to be with, we pray that we do not have to experience such a restricted Christmas again. Despite this, can we say that there nothing joyful took place? Did we feel a complete absence of God? Certainly not at St. Francis this December.

Nothing can take away the power of Christmas and all Christ was born for. He came as the light in our darkness, our hope in our despair and our joy in our sadness. Much of these virtues were shining throughout the past few months - so much charity and awareness and generosity demonstrated to the people who were most vulnerable and afraid at this time.

So let us please express our deepest thanks to all who have done what they can to still make Christmas a time of happiness, belonging and joy. The overwhelming 'giving' that was shown by so many people by the donations for the Christmas Hampers was incredible. As the donations kept coming to the presbytery, it was almost impossible to get out of the house. Many blessings and thanks, too, for all who gave their time to put the hampers together - people's lives have certainly been touched even in these very small ways.