

ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC PARISH NEWSLETTER

10th January 2021 The Baptism of the Lord (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

'YOU ARE MY SON, THE BELOVED; MY FAVOUR RESTS ON YOU' (Mark1:7-11)



Today Christ entered the riverbed of the Jordan, to wash away the world's sin: Today the Holy Spirit floats over the waters in the form of a dove, so that by his sign it might be known that the world's universal shipwreck has ceased, as the dove had announced to Noah that the world's flood had subsided. Not does this dove carry a branch of the old olive, but it pours the richness of the olive on the head of the author of the new anointing. (St Peter Chrysologus)

WE ARE OPEN

At the last announcement from the Prime Minister about another lockdown, it may have come as a bit of a surprise to you as it did with us that places of worship are still allowed to remain open and gather for collective worship, when everything else seems to have had to close down. There are limited reasons given to be permitted to leave home and entering a place of worship is now one of them. What happy news that is, but have we wondered why? First of all it may have been influenced by the response in November when the Catholic community were encouraged to write to their MP's to keep places of worship open. Maybe the response was so overwhelming and convincing that they saw Churches as essential. Our argument was that it provides a comfort and a strength to people at this time when they can feel so despondent and anxious. Spiritual and emotional needs must be fed as well as our physical needs. Also, many Church communities are providing so much charity with food and clothing. This too is a great relief for the local authorities as more are crying out for this aid with decreasing income or uncertainty with their employment. A lot of giving has been demonstrated by our community of St. Francis at Christmas as it always is throughout the year. Well done and Thank you!

Despite all this, we're at a very serious situation with the virus and our Church would not be allowed to stay open if it wasn't meeting safety regulations. Many people have commented, 'This is the safest place to be.' Everything necessary has been provided - gel, sanitising spray, (we do ask people to bring their own face covering) but most importantly we have arranged the pews to give sufficient space, so people can worship in good assurance of their safety. Again, we owe much gratitude to all who volunteer as stewards and sanitisers to allow this to be maintained.

As has been mentioned before, this weekend will be the last in which we will provide livestream Mass. For anybody who cannot get to Mass then please see on our parish website the link to St. Peter's in Bearsted where they celebrate Mass at 10.30am. Even though the Sunday obligation continues to be suspended, this maybe a time to also consider if you might try coming back to Mass. Livestreaming is to serve the people who cannot come to Mass and not an alternative choice to coming to Mass if you can. We know that the instruction has been strongly noted again - 'stay at home to stay lives'. We also understand that there is a lot of anxiety and caution among people. Our prayers are always with you all. We stress again that we do not wish anybody who knows they are high risk or who are looking after anybody who is of that category, to take any risks in leaving their home unnecessarily. Yet we ask everybody else to strongly think about joining us again physically here at St. Francis for Mass. We miss you very much and cannot wait to welcome you back again. Even try coming to weekday

Mass if you can where the numbers are even that much fewer. We would not open our church doors if there was any reason to believe that risks were high. Whenever it may be, we pray it won't be long before we can all gather around the Eucharistic Table in safety and happiness as the parish of St. Francis and the people of God once again.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT: Fridays 9.30am – 10.15am

FEED THE HUNGRY: Our regular donations are still required and appreciated by families and the food bank. Donations of tinned food, toilet rolls, washing capsules, crisps, cereals etc may be left at the presbytery for collection several times each week. PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY CLOTHES, SHOES OR HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS as there is nowhere to store them at the moment and the main focus is on food. Thank you for your help and understanding.

STANDING ORDER: The ideal form of giving to the church, especially during these times, is by Standing Order. So many parishioners have placed themselves on this system and it has proved to be very helpful. If you wish to make a Standing Order (regular payments automatically from your bank account to the Church account) then please do not hesitate to contact the parish office.

TRACK AND TRACE FORMS: Please can we ask that you **fill in your track and trace forms at home** and deposit them in the box as you arrive at church. To make this easier we ask that you take with you a prepared pack of 12 in the side chapel as you leave Mass. Remember, you only need one per household, not for each individual. They can be downloaded on our parish website. You can even just deposit a piece of paper that has your name & contact details on. The options are great but please continue to do this at home and be prepared as you arrive for Mass so you don't hold people up as you arrive filling in a form at the Church porch.

NHS COVID-19 APP: You can now download this app onto your phone and use it to scan the QR Code that is on the Church doors or table as you enter. This will mean you do not have to fill in the Track and Trace forms anymore.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING: The total amounted to around £8,100. The priests are indeed deeply grateful for your generosity
December Standing Order: £4382.06

SECOND COLLECTION: There would usually be a Second Collection today for the Catholic Children's Society Southwark Crisis Fund, so we shall be giving 25% of what you give for the Church Offering.
Next week we shall do the same for DEW Association

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

Sunday 10th January	6.00pm (Sat)	Holy Souls
	8.30am	John Ratcliffe RIP
	10.00am	In reparation for abortions in Brewer St
	11.30am	Kathleen and Bob Lenzie RIP
	6.00pm	People of the Parish
Monday 11th January	10.30am	Charles Johnstone RIP
Tuesday 12th January	10.30am	Virgie and Fredrick D'Silva RIP
Wednesday 13th January	10.30am	Teresa Dias De Franca RIP
Thursday 14th January	10.30am	Private Intention
Friday 15th January	10.30am	Lena Ford and Kathleen Smith RIP
Saturday 16th January	10.00am	Stuart McLeod RIP
Sunday 17th January	6.00pm (Sat)	In reparation for abortions in Brewer St
	8.30am	People of the Parish
	10.00am	Private Intention
	11.30am	Holy Souls
	6.00pm	Holy Souls

We remember in our prayers those whose anniversaries occur at this time:

Annie Roche, Tony McCarthy, Jenty Millen, Noel Kirgan, Kenneth Wade, Catherine Collier, Jana Scholefield, John Ratcliffe, Peter Appleby, Clare Montague, Doris Bell, Alice Henderson-Bell, Jim Jaques, Emily Fisher, Baby Marcie Durban, Mabel Finn, Monica Casey, Teresa De Franca, Maria Fernandez, William Mendes, Francis Coates, Dorothy Savage, May Cousins, Florence Parker, Gilda Hughes, Elizabeth Chittleborough, Patric Harrington, Michael Ryan, Sheila Baker, Patrick Walsh, Tony Moran, Michael Ashdown, John Fabien, Leslie Wood, Robert Jackson, Mehranoush McNeilly, Haley Martin, Eileen Bream, Margaret Moore, Emily Parrett, Mary Borbone, John Woodger, Edgar Harber, Patrick Holmes, Bede Mullen, Maureen Smart, John Skinner, Alfons Szwarc, Christina Keane, John Cox.

CONFESSIONS: Saturday 10.45am – 11.30am

PARISH LOTTERY: The next draw shall take place at the end of January.