

# ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC PARISH NEWSLETTER

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2024 Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)**

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Website: [www.stfrancisparish.org.uk](http://www.stfrancisparish.org.uk)

**Parish Priest:** Canon Liam Gallagher

**Assistant Priest:** Fr Simon Peter Lubuulwa

Also Resident: Fr Peter Norris (Retired)

**Deacon:** Rev. Ian Black

**Parish Office hours:** 10am – 12 noon Tuesday 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

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## **THE FEELING OF TWENTY FIVE YEARS**

So, does it feel like twenty five years? This is a question I was asked a lot when reaching the milestone of the Anniversary of my silver jubilee. It is a natural question but the only answer I can honestly think of is 'I don't know – what is twenty-five years supposed to feel like?' Certainly, on the day of Ordination nobody is wondering where they will be in twenty-five years time – it seems a life time away. In fact, twenty-five was almost my age doubled when I was Ordained to the priesthood. It has been seven years that I have been Parish Priest here at St. Francis, the longest I have ever been anywhere. It would be interesting if I asked you, 'does it feel like seven years that I have been your Parish Priest?' – but I wouldn't expect you to answer.

There is no doubt that twenty-five years sounds a very long time – a big chunk of our lives and an even bigger portion of what my priesthood years will be. The question I need to ask myself is perhaps 'Do I believe I have lived those twenty-five years of priesthood the best I can?'. If I answered that by saying I have never made a mistake, showed no failings, expressed no words or action that filled me with regret, you would be right to disbelieve me. But I have never experienced a day when I have been filled with regret or doubt about the calling to priesthood – and I can look back with much thanksgiving on the things I have done well, the lives that I have served, encouragement I have provided, joy I have brought, all with God's help. That is much to be thankful for. This is accompanied by the support and prayers that have come my way too. So, on reflection, I can say, 'yes, it does feel like twenty-five years – not because I feel it has dragged. On the contrary, it has been a very rich quarter of a century, encountering many experiences, involved in so many lives in so many ways and helping them encounter Christ's presence, healing and love.

Well, the next twenty five has already begun. There is still more of God's work to do where that all came from. And so far, still no regrets with still many joys to come.

**CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES, COME ON:** This opening line to the party disco classic by Kool and the Gang is the most appropriate I can think of to describe the wonderful time I had and we all had on the night of my 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June. I realise it is over a month ago but as I departed for my holiday almost immediately afterwards, there just wasn't time to write a proper message to you all. Sorry for anybody who wanted to come but was unable to, you missed a cracking night. First of all, to the large gathering who came to the Mass, (I know Wednesday evening isn't easy for a lot of people) a huge thank you for your attendance, prayers and worshipping with me. Monsignor Matthew Dickens gave such a touching homily and so generous in his kind words – one friend of mine asked afterwards, 'Who was that priest he was talking about in his homily – didn't recognise him at all?'. I think we can presume he was joking. What are friends for? I want to thank the ministry of readers including our youngsters who continue to read so beautifully at Mass. The Altar Servers who came in good number to allow everything flow always so well. And the music and choir who lead us to happily in our musical worship but were especially accommodating to my personal choice. Thank you.

The party that followed was amazing – St. Francis parish at its best. A wide representation of the whole parish family all coming together providing a feast fit for royalty and feed the whole of Week Street – I think we almost did. The best part, of course, is that my words of advice were taken seriously – 'Dance' it's the most wonderful thing we ever do with our bodies. And we can all do it. A whole group of us grooving into the night. As your Parish Priest I was so glad to be able to lead the way and show you how it's done. Thank you for an evening filled with memories I will continue to enjoy sharing.

I can see that there was an awful lot of planning and scheming going on behind my back – that must have taken some doing with such a ubiquitous Parish Priest. Thank you to everybody for the generosity that was given with many cards and gifts. All beautiful and all very kind.

The gifts from the parish included an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis: an icon of the Jesus, Good Shepherd; A prayer bouquet, filled with promises made by the people of all the Masses they attend and the prayers they shall offer up for me – I need all help and grace from God I can get. A booklet of drawings and messages from children and youngsters of our parish – the drawings often look better than I do in real life. And a cheque of the total that you collected for me as a parish - you did well to hide the collection from me.

So, to all the parish family of St. Francis, lay and clergy, a milestone well celebrated as I would have wanted it. Cannot wait for my 50<sup>th</sup> where we can do it all again. God bless you all.

**CALLED TO BE A PERMANENT DEACON:** Are you a man between 21 years to 58 years, prayerful, with the desire to love God and God's people within the Archdiocese as well as the wider church community? Are you involved in services within your parish and/or community? Do you feel called to be a Permanent Deacon? Do you have the gift to help members of the Church to discover and put into action their gifts and talents and the ministry of Christ? Have you tried many things and still feel drawn to a closer relationship with Christ and His Church?

If you have answered 'yes' to one or more of the questions above, and require further information about the Permanent Diaconate, then contact Deacon Ian who is the Director of Formation for our Diocese. [ianblack@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:ianblack@rcaos.org.uk)

**We congratulate Deacon Ian Black who celebrated 10 years of Ordination on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July. We pray God will continue to strengthen him in his service to us all.**

**PARISH WALK** All are invited and welcome next Sunday 28th July to come on a parish walk - starting at 2:00pm. A 4.5 mile circular walk through the vineyards, fields and woods around Boxley. We meet in front of the tennis courts at Penenden Heath, Maidstone, ME14 2DH. There is parking by the children's play area or in front of the tennis courts. It is important to leave your contact details and confirm that you are coming so that we can inform you of any last minute changes or cancellation.

Please let us know if you are coming via email: [news@stfrancisparish.org.uk](mailto:news@stfrancisparish.org.uk)

#### **COLLECTION:**

First Collection last week (cash)	£1,121.55
Second Collection last Sunday Sea Sunday (Stella Maris)	£268.82
Second Collection this Sunday Young children in Kenya	
Second Collection next Sunday	

#### **Direct Debits – June 2024**

Standing Orders - Gift Aid & Non Gift Aid	£3,940.96
Collection CARD Offerings	£2,023.53
Collection ONLINE Offerings	£885.27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,849.76</b>

**LOTTERY:** Week No. 26    Lottery No. 74    £1,000

## MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

<b>Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July</b>	6.00pm (Sat)	People of the Parish
	8.30am	Matthew Otaigbe RIP
	9.00am (PH)	John Ballagher RIP
	10.00am	Thanksgiving
	11.30am	Canon Liam Anniversary
	6.00pm	Maria Emerson RIP
<b>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July</b> St Mary Magdalene	10.30am	Marion Esther Corfe RIP
<b>Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July</b> St Bridget	10.30am	In reparation for abortions from Brewer St
<b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July</b>	10.30am	Pablo and Lola Navarro RIP
<b>Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July</b> St James	10.30am	Eileen Sinclair RIP
<b>Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July</b> Sts Joachim and Anne	10.30am	Eileen Sinclair RIP
<b>Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July</b>	10.00am	Kevin Paul Ruaux RIP
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July</b>	6.00pm (Sat)	Private Intention
	8.30am	People of the Parish
	9.00am (PH)	Bernard Atkinson RIP
	10.00am	Eileen Sinclair RIP
	11.30am	Luis and Rosario D'Silva RIP
	6.00pm	Tom Kelly RIP

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

Louisa Price, Bert Hand, Maria Emerson, Bobby Cooper, Elsie Wickens, Elizabeth Kitney, Theresa O'Connor, Mary Ashurst, Patrick Corridan, John Hales, Rosemarie Jayaraj, Helen Kitney, Pamela Blackley, Kathleen Fisher, George Bishop-Potter,, John McElligott, Hugh Brannigan, James Tolan, John Barry, Isobel Howard, Joseph Grant, Tony Richardson, Robert Bailey, Patricia Christie, Brian Crolla, Jane McKinley, Margaret O'Neill, Kathleen Jarvis, Kathleen Powis, Paul Marshall, Flora Winter, Ethna McCready, Margaret Ravensdale, Francis Knight.

**CONFESSIONS:** Friday 11.00am – 11.30am; Saturday 10.45am - 11.30am

**ADORATION:** 9.30am – 10.15am every Friday morning.

### **SECOND COLLECTION, DEW ASSOCIATION:**

The Second Collection on 21st July is to help educate young children in Kibiko, Kenya. The mission is run by Carmelite Sisters, some of whom were previously at Aylesford Priory. May we thank parishioners for your continued generosity during these challenging times. May God bless you. The Dew Association

**SUMMER SERVICE:** We welcome Fr. Lawrence Opio who has arrived and will be with us for two months to help over the Summer period. I know that we will make him very welcome.