

ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC PARISH NEWSLETTER

17th November 2024 Thirty Third Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)

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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 75455



CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ENGLAND, WALES AND SCOTLAND STATEMENT CONCERNING THE BILL ON ASSISTED SUICIDE

As Catholic Bishops in England and Wales, and in Scotland, we believe that genuine compassion is under threat because of the attempts in Parliament to legalise assisted suicide. 'Compassion' means to enter into and share the suffering of another person. It means never giving up on anyone or abandoning them. It means loving them to the natural end of their life, even if and when they struggle to find meaning and purpose. Compassion means accompanying people, especially during sickness, disability, and old age. This kind of genuine compassion is witnessed through the care and respect we show to people with terminal illness as they complete their journey in this life. We appeal to those who share our Catholic belief in human dignity and sanctity of life, including fellow Christians, other religious people, and people of reason and good will, to join with us in defending the weakest and most vulnerable who are at risk through this proposed legislation. Life is a gift to be protected, especially when threatened by sickness and death. Palliative care, with expert pain relief, and good human, spiritual, and pastoral support, is the right and best way to care for people towards the end of life. More adequate funding and resources for hospices and palliative care teams authentically serve and honour our shared human dignity. In the discussion around assisted suicide, so much is made of freedom of choice and autonomy; but autonomy is not absolute and must always be placed within the context of the common good of society as a whole. People who are suffering need to know they are loved and valued. They need compassionate care, not assistance to end their lives. Assisted suicide raises serious issues of principle. Although the Bill indicates safeguards will be in place, the experience of other countries where assisted suicide has been introduced shows

that such promised safeguards are soon forgotten. In Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, and parts of the USA, the criteria for assisted suicide have been expanded significantly, in law or in practice, often to include people with mental illness and others who have no terminal diagnosis. We are alarmed by the impact that legalisation will have on the most vulnerable members of our society. The option to end life can quickly, and subtly, be experienced as a duty to die. Some may well feel their continued existence is a burden to others, and, implicitly or explicitly, be pressured into assisted suicide. This includes people who are elderly, infirm, and living with disabilities. The protection of such people is the foundation of civilised society. It is at the heart of good government. We are also concerned that this Bill will fundamentally damage the relationship between medical practitioners and their patients. It will potentially lead to pressure on medical staff to recommend or facilitate such procedures. Will the right to conscientious objection for individuals and institutions be guaranteed? The impact on hospices, care homes, and those who work in social and community care cannot be underestimated. It will radically alter the ethos of trust and support which underpins our service to those in need and their families. We urge all people of good will to oppose this legislation and, instead, to advocate for better funded palliative care which is consistently available to everyone in need in England, Wales, and Scotland. Please inform yourself and others about this issue and contact your Member of Parliament to make your opposition known, asking him or her to oppose or not support the Bill. As Catholic Bishops, we call upon all Catholics, and invite all those who share our Christian faith, to turn in prayer to God our Father. Please pray that the dignity of human life will be protected and defended. On the cross, Christ united Himself to every form of human suffering and every person who suffers. In Him, life is changed, not ended. He shows us, in His own crucified and risen body, that love is always stronger than death.

LETTER: A copy of the letter that Canon Liam has written to Helen Grant, MP of Maidstone and Malling can be found in the Church porch. We have been all encouraged to contact our local MP either by letter or scanning the QR Code on the poster in the porch.

FLAME AND FLEDGLINGS BAKE SALE: Members of Flame and Fledglings, our parish youth groups, have been practising and they are excellent at baking. They have baked and are selling cakes and biscuits along with great coffee, tea and hot chocolate and small gifts for you to buy after the 10am and 11.30am Masses this weekend (17th).

THE CHURCH SHOP will also be displaying cribs and other Advent/Christmas merchandise. Please support our young people as they raise money for their activities.

ADVENT WREATHS: Our beautiful Advent wreaths, made by the Fledglings group may be pre-ordered from this weekend and available on Saturday and Sunday 30th/1st December after the Masses. Due to the high cost of materials, these will be priced at £6 this year and MUST be pre-ordered with Geraldine, Lorraine, Cathie at PRESTON HALL, Liz in the repository or one of the clergy. Many thanks.

RAFFLE TICKETS: These will be available, to win some great prizes, at all Masses from this weekend (16th/17th) and are priced at £1 per strip.

FEED THE HUNGRY AT CHRISTMAS: Many thanks to our generous donors of food, throughout the year. Last year, St Francis parishioners were extremely generous in donating food and gifts to the parish Christmas appeal. Your generosity made a massive difference to local families in difficulty, to the homeless, the clients of the day centre. Please, if you are able, donate a gift for a child or adult, preferably unwrapped and new. Collections of gifts will be taken until Sunday 15th December, and then distributed over that week. Also, we will be making up Christmas hampers for families, and donations may be brought to the musicians at Mass on the weekends of 16th/17th December. Anytime before that, they may be dropped at the presbytery during office hours. Please, no mince pies, as we get a bulk donation for free! If anyone wants to donate meat (esp. turkey) and/or vegetables and fruit, between 16th and 21st December to help make up the turkey dinners, please let one of the choir members know or one of the clergy. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

COLLECTION:

First Collection last week (cash)	£1,054.87
Second Collection last Sunday	£363.69
Second Collection this Sunday: Orphaned Children in the Philippines	
Second Collection next Sunday: Catholic Youth Services	

Direct Debits – October 2024

Standing Order Gift Aid	£3,136
Standing Order Non-Gift Aid	£2,093.96
Collection Card	£2,109.68
Collection On-Line	£190.07
TOTAL	£7,529.71

LOTTERY: Week Number 20 Lottery Number 92 Prize £25

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

Sunday 17th November	6.00pm (Sat)	Eileen Tighe RIP
	8.30am	Martin and Sean Coleman RIP
	9.00am (PH)	John Richards RIP
	10.00am	Thomasina (Zena) Hales RIP
	11.30am	Dorothy Eales RIP
	6.00pm	People of the Parish
Monday 18th November	10.30am	In reparation for abortions from Brewer St
Tuesday 19th November	10.30am	Zena Hales RIP
Wednesday 20th November	10.30am	Alexander/Helen/John/James McCardle RIP
Thursday 21st November The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	10.30am	Health and Wellbeing
Friday 22nd November St. Cecilia	10.30am	Stuart McLeod RIP
Saturday 23rd November	10.00am	Terry Ruaux RIP
Sunday 24th November	6.00pm (Sat)	People of the Parish
	8.30am	Ray Williamson RIP
	9.00am (PH)	In reparation for abortions from Brewer St
	10.00am	Dennis Coatsworth RIP
	11.30am	Joseph and Margaret Brooks RIP
	6.00pm	Erlinda RIP

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

Michael Watson, Bernard Ingle, Rose Jenkins, Joseph Bearcroft, Elizabeth Sewell, Kathleen Fosher, Alice Pannett, Michael Conroy, Harry Morrissy, Ada O'Connor, Paul Casey, Lucy Thorogood, Denise Wilmshurst, Kathleen Taylor, Helen Sedgebeer, Josie Numan, Susanne Szolnoki, Patricia Moran, Amy Simmonds, Francis Simmonds, Douglas Evans, Reginald Gower, Margaret Willett, Alan Baker, Ted Higgins, Josepha Letchford, Alfonso Finelli, Marjorie Beeching, Agnes Evans, Margaret Tuscon, Kathleen Gunner, Angela Woodland-Wallis, Teresa Bosman, Beatrice Everett, Nino Pereira, Elena Ford, Margaret Woodard.

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

ADORATION: 9.30am – 10.15am every Friday morning.

SECOND COLLECTION. PHILIPPINES. ORPHANED CHILDREN.

The Second Collection on 17th November is to help orphaned children in the Philippines. This is run with great care by Sr Nicanora. May we thank parishioners for your continued generosity during these challenging times. May God bless you. *The Dew Association.*

CAROL SERVICE/NATIVITY/MULLED WINE: Advance notice of the date to put in your diary, so you don't miss this great parish event. Saturday the 14th December is the date.