

ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC PARISH NEWSLETTER

12th January 2025 Baptism of the Lord (C)

126 Week Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14

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Website: 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



A PASTORAL LETTER FROM OUR ARCHBISHOP JOHN WILSON

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This Jubilee Year calls us to remember that we journey together as ‘Pilgrims of Hope’ who look to Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life. Therefore, we place our hope in God’s Word. The Jubilee Year offers each of us, and all of us, a profound opportunity to reflect prayerfully on the future of our Archdiocese. We face some significant challenges - nearly half of our diocesan priests will reach the canonical retirement age of 75 by the end of 2025; Mass attendance has declined by a third over the past 25 years; and many parishioners have yet to return to parish life since the pandemic. But – and importantly - these realities do not need to define us. Financial uncertainties in many of our parishes may feel daunting, but they are also an invitation to rediscover our mission, and to dream boldly about what God can achieve through us. My hope is for our parishes to be places of profound joy and healing, where lay men and women experience the transformative love of Christ; where they are equipped to carry forward the Church’s mission with renewed purpose. I invite you to dream with me and to make this dream a reality. In 2023, we embarked on a process entitled *Called to Bear Fruit*. It’s a journey of listening, collaboration, and renewal in a spirit of synodality. We began by listening to the hopes and concerns of our clergy. Now, I would like

also to hear from you, my sisters and brothers in Christ. What signs of vitality do you see flourishing in your parish? Where do you perceive the challenges to be? How can we work together, as clergy, laity and consecrated people, and neighbouring parishes, to make the Church's mission more effective in our local communities? Today, I would like to ask for your help in two ways: **First of all, please pray for the renewal of our Archdiocese** during this Jubilee Year of Hope. **Secondly, to engage in the *Called to Bear Fruit* consultation.** A booklet is available at Mass today which outlines six key themes for reflection. I encourage you to gather in small groups, as works best in your community. Come together prayerfully to reflect on these themes, and share your insights with the *Called to Bear Fruit* team. The booklet explains everything about how to do this. This Jubilee Year of Hope is our chance to open ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to work together towards a revival of Christian life, witness, and mission in our Archdiocese. Together, we can re-imagine our parishes as thriving centres of faith, healing, and evangelisation. As Pilgrims of Hope, therefore, let us walk this journey together with faith, courage, and joy. With every blessing and with the assurance of my prayers and gratitude. Yours devotedly in Christ + John Wilson Metropolitan Archbishop of Southwark

LOTTERY: Now January is here, we shall be asking people to renew their Lottery subscription either by standing order or payment in the porch after Mass. We would very much like to welcome new participants in our parish lottery. Its only £13 per number for six months - which is not bad considering that you could win £1000 next Summer. www.stfrancisparish.org.uk/parish-lottery

REQUIEM MASS: We pray for the repose of the souls of Anthony (Tony) Wallwork and Margaret Cunningham. The Requiem Mass for Tony Wallwork will be celebrated on Wednesday 15th January 10.30am and the Requiem Mass for Margaret Cunningham will be celebrated on Friday 17th January 12.30pm. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

BISHOP JOHN HINE: The funeral for Bishop John Hine was celebrated at St. George's Cathedral last month. Bishop John Hine had served the Deanery of Maidstone for many years; as a curate here at St. Francis, as the first Parish Priest of St. Peter's, Bearsted and his final years at St. Andrew's, Tenterden. Everybody is welcome to attend a Memorial Mass for Bishop John Hine on Wednesday 22nd January 12pm midday. This shall be at St. Peter's, Bearsted, the church that Bishop John Hine was responsible for building. All the clergy of the Deanery shall be gathered with Canon Liam Gallagher presiding.

A FULFILLING AND ENJOYABLE DAY: This is guaranteed for all married couples who attend a day hosted by the Marriage and Family Life Team called 'Building a Better Marriage'. To celebrate this Jubilee year of 2025, a one day Building a Better Marriage opportunity will be on 25th January at St Stephen Church, Welling or 1st February at Our Lady Star of the Sea, Broadstairs. These are very popular and fill up quickly so please, without delay, book your place on such a wonderful opportunity and explore more how blessed you are in your marriage. Not to mention how blessed the Church is with your dedicated love to one another.

To join one of these day's please contact Carole on 07983 524 727 or email mflkent@rcaos.org.uk

CHURCH SHOP: Open every Sunday 9 am to 11.30 am.

WHAT IS A JUBILEE YEAR?: A Year of Hope: 2025 is a Jubilee year, but what does that mean? Catholic talk show host and author Nana Churcher, and CAFOD's Simon Giarchi will be hosting Fr Jan Nowotnik (Director of Mission for the Bishop's Conference), Christine Allen (CAFOD's Director) and Kayode Akintola (CAFOD's Head of Africa) and more for a lively start to the Jubilee. With a special appearance by Catholic band Ooberfuse. Saturday 18 Jan, 10:30am-midday, online. All welcome. Register here for free: cafod.org.uk/jubilee

COLLECTION:

First collection last week (cash) £1,284.17

No Second Collection last week: £185.01

Second Collection this Sunday Catholic Children's Society Crisis Fund

Second Collection next Sunday

Standing Orders for December:

Standing Order Gift Aid £3,311

Standing Order Non-Gift Aid £841.96

Collection Card £1,551.46

Collection On-Line £259.70

TOTAL £5,964.21

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

Sunday 12th January THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD	6.00pm (Sat)	Bernard Burns RIP
	8.30am	Private Intention
	9.00am (PH)	Leslie Wood RIP
	10.00am	Virgie and Frederick D'Silva RIP
	11.45am	Private Intention
	6.00pm	Sister Mary Agnes RIP
Monday 13th January	10.30am	Private Intention
Tuesday 14th January	10.30am	Teresa Dias De Franco RIP
Wednesday 15th January	10.30am	Requiem Mass Anthony Wallwork
Thursday 16th January	10.30am	Annunziata Zita RIP
Friday 17th January St. Anthony	10.30am	Mallinda family RIP
	12.30pm	Requiem Mass Margaret Cunningham
Saturday 18th January	10.00am	Bill and Nancy Neil RIP
Sunday 19th January	6.00pm (Sat)	Private Intention
	8.30am	Holy Souls
	9.00am (PH)	Holy Souls
	10.00am	Sean Toneycliffe RIP
	11.45am	Wanda Lapham RIP
	6.00pm	Private Intention

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

Francis Coates, Dorothy Savage, May Cousins, Florence Parker, Gilda Hughes, Elizabeth Chittleborough, Patrick 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 Parrott, Mary Borbone, John Woodger, Edgar Harber, Patrick Holmes, Bede Mullen, Maureen Smart, John Skinner, Aleons Szwarc, Christina Keane, John Cox, Gladys Hamlyn, Nancy Gubbins, Terence Hegarty, John O'Leary, Kathleen Simmonds, Msg Canon Joseph Callanan, John Nantle, Celsa Soares, Jack Jones, Ernest Willey

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

ADORATION: Every Friday 9.15am – 10.15am

First Friday only: 6.15pm – 7.15pm followed by 7.30pm Mass