

NEWSLETTER

PARISH OFFICE: Mrs Ingrid La Trobe 01732 741693
 Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am - 12pm
 Parish Office email: parish.office@sevrccparish.org.uk
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PARISH PRIEST
 Fr. David Gibbons
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 ASSISTANT
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 01732 454177

**Today's Mass: MARY, the HOLY MOTHER of GOD**

This is the Octave Day of Christmas, the day on which Jesus received his name, hence the choice of today's *Gospel*. This Solemnity, the oldest feast of Mary in the Roman Calendar, is placed so soon after Christmas because it was Mary who brought forth the Saviour of the world and thus has a closer relationship with Him than any other human being.

The *First Reading* is more to do with the fact that today is New Year's Day in the secular calendar, and this is known as the Aaronic blessing. However, we should remember that 'name' in the Old Testament means God himself, and 'blessing' means the communication of a gift from God.

This is followed by the *Psalms* (66), with its expanded message of salvation ("your saving help").

The *Second Reading* (which is the only passage in all of Paul's letters which refers to Mary) continues the theme of salvation, for this salvation was brought to us by Jesus who is Saviour. By His saving and redeeming work He makes us sons and daughters of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, able to call God 'Abba, Father'.

Gospel: Mary is, of course, present at Christ's birth, and again a week later is present when He is named Jesus, which means 'God saves'.

Fr David

New Assistant Priest

We can announce that a new Assistant Priest will be coming to Sevenoaks parish: Fr Paul Okora, who is presently Assistant Priest at Sacred Heart, Camberwell. He will be joining us in mid January. Meanwhile Fr Gregory is waiting patiently until he can move to be Parish Priest of Hayes.

Crib Offerings

The donations placed by the Christmas Crib will, at the request of His Grace the Archbishop, be sent to **Friends of the Holy Land**. This ecumenical organisation helps the poorest Christians in the Holy Land, especially in Bethlehem and the West Bank and in Gaza. See www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk for more information.

This week:

Tuesday, Adoration at St. Thomas's will now start an hour earlier every week at **10.00 am until 12 noon** instead of the current 11 am until 1 pm. We would welcome additional Adorers; especially at St. Thomas's between 9 am and 10 am, and 11am and 12 Noon on Mondays, and between 1 pm and 2 pm on Thursdays. Please contact Barry & Marie if you can help on 01959 524362.

RCIA Introductory Meeting, Monday 9th January, 8pm

A meeting to explain and outline the parish RCIA programme for 2017 will take place in the upstairs room of the parish centre at St Thomas' Church at 8pm on 9th January. RCIA is a programme designed for adults who wish to be Baptised in the Catholic Church or (if already Baptised) Received into full communion with the Catholic Church. If you have any questions before the meeting, please contact Andrew La Trobe (andrew.latrobe@gmail.com; 07775 738485).

If you are interested in becoming a Catholic please come along to the meeting. If you know somebody who is interested in becoming a Catholic please pass on a personal invitation to them to attend.

Please remember the sick who have been commended to our prayers

Hazel Pilorz,
 Ana Pilar Santos

Anniversaries

Piotr Oscolowski, Miguel Mico, William Allen, Margaret Allen, Daniel McCarron, Eric Curtis, Sister Curtis, Philip Acton-Bostock, Peggy Lee, Cyril Norwood, Anthony Boswell, Kathleen Mortlock, Martha Frizelle, Joyce Crossman, Frank Quick, Mary Power, Emma Still, Clifford Sayers, Patrick O'Callaghan, Baby Patrick Melville-Jones, Clementina Leonard, Barry Boxall, Mary Beasley, A. Taylor, Gertrude Penny, Benjamin Rees, Margaret Piper, Richard Gaunt, Josephine Goldsmith, Eileen Frith, Kathleen Drumm, Pat McGowan, Sarah Parsons, Denes Pogany, Paul Bourquin, Fiona Knight, Ena Authers, Leslie O'Brien, Margaret Rawlins, Mary Mileham, James Conney, Mary Perriam, Lisa Taylor, Martha Jeffrey

PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, SEVENOAKS - NEWSLETTER

Catechists

If you are interested in registering for the *Diocesan Catechetical Certificate* (beginning Sat 7th January) please can you contact Ingrid by Wednesday 4th January (parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk) at the very latest. Please see <https://www.ccftootingbec.org.uk/centre-for-catholic-formation/catechesis> for further information and application forms.

Will all catechists and Children's Liturgy of the Word leaders please return their *Catechist Registration Form* to Ingrid La Trobe at the Parish Office (along with DBS application forms where needed)? Many thanks.

First Holy Communion Programme

Thank you for your applications. You should have received an introductory email this weekend. Please note this *Thursday 5th January is the First Holy Communion Parents' Evening - Introduction from 8.00pm to 9.30pm at St Thomas's Church.*

Sunday 8th January is the First Holy Communion Opening Celebration Mass at 3pm at St Thomas's Church.

Southwark Catholic Directory 2017

If Fr Richard or Cristobel gave you one of these each year, please can you let me know at the office and I will get a copy to you, thanks. Ingrid

New Year's resolution: Make a difference with CAFOD

Make 2017 the year you meet new friends, inspire others to act for social justice, and use your skills to help our sisters and brothers working to overcome poverty around the globe. Are you a good communicator who would enjoy speaking in churches? Are you a people-person who would relish involving and encouraging others in your local area? Are you a budding writer who could contribute to our blog and e-news?

Please get in touch with us on southwark@cafod.org.uk or 020 8466 9901 to find out more and book a place on one of our Understanding CAFOD information sessions: 11 January in Bromley, 28 January in Stratford and 4 February in Waterloo.

Loaves and Fishes Food Bank

Many thanks for the recent plentiful donations of mincepies. The next food collection is on 14/15 January, non-perishable foods and toiletries only, please. No baked beans, soups, pasta or tea this time please. Queries: 07487 652846. Thank you.

The Art of Dying Well - new website

The *Ars Moriendi* (or Art of Dying) was a very popular fifteenth century manuscript designed to bring Christian comfort and practical guidance to a dying person and his/her family. These works were popular because death was daily on the doorstep.

The Catholic Church has 2000 years' worth of experience of helping people to die in peace and a treasury of resources and reflections on death, dying and eternity that the Bishops of England and Wales would like to open up to everyone. Inspired by the comfort provided by this popular work, they have produced an innovative new digital space: www.artofdyingwell.org.

This new website offers a helping hand to those grappling with issues around death and dying. Based in the Catholic tradition but open to all, it features real-life stories, informed by professionals in palliative care, ethics, chaplaincy and history.

As a Catholic approaches death, there are a series of comforting rituals that can help him or her to prepare spiritually for the final journey. These rites and special Prayers for the Dying can be found in www.artofdyingwell.org.

The poet W.H. Auden said that death is "like the distant roll of thunder at a picnic". That sums up how many of us think about death. We know it is coming eventually, but we are rather more focused on the here and now. The Art of Dying Well aims to help people keep death in mind, so as to fully embrace life now.

Art of Dying Well cards are available in the porch.

The United Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - Sunday 15th January, 3.30pm, St Thomas's Church

This service will be held at St Thomas's this year. Singers from all churches are warmly invited to join the united choir. There will be a short rehearsal, led by Angela Simmonds, which will begin promptly at 2.45pm. Please let Valerie Rudd (01732 450355, valruddle7@hotmail.co.uk) know by January 8th if you would like to sing.

There will be tea for all afterwards. **Please see Ecumenical Noticeboard for further details** or contact Pat Harman (01732 453902, bobandpat.harman@gmail.com) or Isobel White (01732 461694, ctsdadmin@sevmail.co.uk).

Please also see Notice boards -

- Fr Richard and Sr Rosemary's addresses

FOR YOUR DIARY:

MOTHERS' PRAYERS: Mondays, 11.00am at Star House, Star Hill Road, Sevenoaks. Tel: 01959 532505

PARENTS & TODDLERS: Next meeting is 3 January 2017. Tuesdays 9.30am - 11.30am, Parish Centre (Contacts: Emma McGovern 07786 219742, Lourdes Marinetto-Travers 07900 591527)

BOROUGH GREEN UCM : First Thursday of each month, 7.30pm, St. Joseph's Borough Green

SEVENOAKS CATENIAN CIRCLE: (www.sevenoakscatenians.co.uk) Every Second Thursday of the month, Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Club, 7.30pm followed by Dinner. (Contact: Aidan O'Mahony 07834 259229 aidan.omahony@btinternet.com)

WEST KINGSDOWN UCM: Third Thursday of each month, 7.30pm at St Bernadette's West Kingsdown

YOUNG DISCIPLES: Informal catechesis school years 4-6, Sundays after 9.15am Mass, Big Angels' Room upstairs. Term time only. Contact: youngdisciples@sevrparish.org.uk