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Archdiocese of  
Southwark

## PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

Churches in Sevenoaks, Otford,  
Borough Green and West Kingsdown



Parish Newsletter

10th September 2017



Ɖ : c f ' k \ Y f Y ' h  
three meet in my  
name, I shall be  
h \ Y f Y ' k ] h \ ' h  
Matthew 18:20

### Today's Mass: Twenty Third Sunday (Year A)

**F**irst Reading: God speaking through Ezekiel, says that the appointed leader must speak out against evil. In the end, it is a matter of (eternal) life and (eternal) death.

**P**salm: the psalm recalls the disobedience of the ancestors Meribah means strife and Massah means testing. Instead we must obey God listen to his voice.

**S**econd Reading: Love as the fulfilling of the law. St Paul lists the very sins about which Jesus speaks in the Gospel.

**G**ospel: Christ here speaks forthrightly about the effect of unrepented sin on the community of faith. We tend to think of sin - and therefore forgiveness as well - as personal. But every sin badly wounds the whole community, the Church. The ultimate sanction against a sinner is exclusion (being treated like a pagan or tax collector).

The power to forgive sins to loose them or to withhold forgiveness to bind them is given to the church: thus the Sacrament of Penance is not an optional extra for especially pious people, but is a must for all followers of Christ. When did YOU last go to Confession?

Fr David

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## St Thomas of Canterbury Sevenoaks



Sunday Mass 8:00am  
Saturday 6:00pm  
Sunday 8:00am  
9:15am (Children's Liturgy of Word)  
11:15am  
6:00pm

Monday 8:00am  
Tuesday 9:30am  
Wednesday 8:00am  
Thursday 12:00noon  
Friday 8:00am  
Saturday 9:30am

Adoration: 8:00am - 12:00pm  
Monday 8:00pm - 10:00pm  
Tuesday 10:00am - 12:00pm  
Thursday 11:00am - 1:00pm  
Saturday 8:30am - 10:30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation:  
Saturday 10:00am - 12:00pm  
5:15pm - 6:45pm

Granville Road,  
Sevenoaks TN13 1ER  
Parish Office: Mrs Ingrid La Trobe  
Mon, Wed, Thurs & Fri  
9:00am - 12noon  
Tel: 01732 454177  
parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk  
www.sevrparish.org.uk

## Contacts & organisations

### Parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Sevenoaks

www.sevrparish.org.uk Parish Tel: 01474 852223

Parish Fr David Gibbons, KHS frdavid@sevrparish.org.uk  
Assistant Fr Paul Okora esRetred Canon John Bailey, KHS frpaul@sevrparish.org.uk

Parish Mes Ingrid La Trobe parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk  
Presbytery at 12 Granville Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ER  
Parish Office: Mon, Wed, Thurs & Fri 9:00am - 12noon

### Parish Safeguarding

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative is Isabelle Parsons 07873 953423.  
The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator can be contacted on 02072 611606. In an Emergency dial 999.



High Street, Otford  
TN14 5PH

### MOST HOLY TRINITY OTFORD

Mass: Sunday 9:30am  
Wed 10:00am

Adoration: Friday 11:00am - 1:00pm

#### Church contacts:

Rosemary Curtis 01959 522624  
(Sacristan)  
Anne Knight 01959 524488  
(Acting Secretary)

parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk



Western Rd, Borough Green  
TN15 8AG

### St Joseph's BOROUGH GREEN

Mass: Sunday 9:30am

#### Church contact:

Antoni Offert  
Tel: 07513 041075  
parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk



Fawkham Rd, West Kingsdown  
TN15 6JP

### St Bernadettes West Kingsdown

Mass: Sunday 11:00am  
Thurs, Fri & Sat 9:15am

Holy Days of Obligation 11:00am  
Rosary: 1st Wed every month at 7:00pm  
Adoration: Wed 7:30pm - 8:30pm  
Thurs 10:00 - 11:00am

#### Church contact:

Jill & John Gobel  
Tel: 01474 853676

parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk

### St Thomas Catholic primary school



Headteacher: Mrs Claudia Aquilina  
Tel: 01732 453921  
www.saintthomas.co.uk

Head: Mrs Debbie Whitehead  
Tel: 01732 779517  
info@stthomaspreschoolsevenoaks.org.uk

Adoration: Barry & Marie Authers  
adoration@sevrparish.org.uk

Altar: David Brunning Tel: 01732 465518  
davidabunning@btinternet.com

Catechists: The Catechists are a social club for Catholic men aged 18 to 108. We also help the parish with social events. We always welcome visitors to our meetings at Knole Park Golf Club on Seal Hollow Road. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.30pm followed by dinner at 8.30pm. For further information, please contact: aidan.omahony@btinternet.com or on 07834 259 229.

Children's Liturgy of the Word: St Vincent de Paul Society Sevenoaks, 9.15am Mass: Anne Murphy annemurphy2000@yahoo.com  
Otford, 9.30am Mass: Alex Wilson-Beales Tel: 07789 776602

Finance Committee:  
Chair: Bill Farren 07787 537350  
Minutes Secretary: Terry D Avrincourt 07812 054364

Gift: Sean Corrigan  
sean.corrigan@sevrparish.org.uk

Lector: Kathie Gonzalez  
Tel: 01732 761253

Mother's Mass: Mondays, 11.00am at Star House, Star Hill Road, Sevenoaks. Tel: 01959 532500

Readers, Ministers & Welcomers: Parish Handbook and on our website  
Tony Capozzi: st.thomas.rota@gmail.com

Parents & Emphasis: Emma McGovern 07886 219742,  
Lourdes Marinetto-Travers 07900 591527  
Tuesdays 9.30am - 11.30am, Parish Centre

RACET (Rural & Educational Child Development): MaryAnn Perasso 01959 522337, www.racet.org

The Pi Teag or lunches; four times a year, held at St. Thomas in the Parish Centre. All older parishioners are welcome and lifts are available. Contact: Jackie Pembroke 01732 450197  
ac.jbpembroke@gmail.com  
or Pat Harman 01732 453902  
bobandpat.harman@gmail.com.

St Vincent de Paul Society: Kathie Gonzalez  
ugonzalez@btinternet.com (01732 761253)  
Frances Smith - francesrsmith@hotmail.com  
Joan Perkins - perkins\_aj@hotmail.com

Union of Catholic Mothers  
Borough Green UCM: June Dinsmore (President)  
Tel: 01732 672602  
West Kingsdown UCM: Monica Biggs (President)  
per\_ardua\_ad\_astra@hotmail.com

Young Disciples: Two groups of informal catechesis for school years 4-6 and 7-9, Sundays after 9.15am Mass in the TV room upstairs. Term time only. Contact: Enia Adeleye at youngdisciples@sevrparish.org.uk

Further details of organisations are available in our Parish Handbook and on our website.  
Visit us at www.sevrparish.org.uk

# R.c.i.a

(rite of Christian initiation of adults)

## RCIA - What is it?

It is the process by which non-Catholics become Catholics. When the Church speaks about welcoming new people as members it says:

*The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free co-operation of the individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place. (RCIA 5)*

This may need a little unpacking:

*The rite of initiation* - is how the Church refers to the process of welcoming new members;

*is suited to a spiritual journey* - it is a time of growth for those seeking to know/experience God in their lives;

*of adults* - of any age or background;

*that varies* - there is not one blueprint;

*according to the many forms of God's grace* - for those who seek Him, God is already at work in their lives; an initial part of the process is to help people recognise this grace, God's blessings, in their lives;

*the free co-operation of the individuals* - people respond in different ways to God's call;

*the action of the Church* - to become a Catholic is to be a member of a universal body of believers which is grounded in local parish community;

*and the circumstances of time and place* - your life situation is an important factor within the process.

## RCIA - Who is it for?

z intended for those who are not members of the Catholic Church;

z intended for those who wish to explore and understand the faith of the Church;

z begins with a time of enquiry, for asking questions and for reflection. This may be done in a group: both with others who are also seeking and members of the local church;

z can be used by those Baptized a Catholic but who have lapsed and wish to re-connect with the Church.

## The Shape of the Rite

To become a Catholic can take some time. It is a journey of faith and like any journey the route is marked by various stages. In RCIA these stages, which might be thought of as turning points, are marked by special rites or liturgies in the church. They are signs of a growing and deepening relationship. Between these turning points are periods — time to get to know Jesus and the Church and appreciate that what we believe affects how we live our lives.

There is no overall timetable, though Baptism (Christening) usually takes place at Easter (in the spring). With that as a signpost you can take as long as you need. It is also possible to decide it is not for you.

## Our RCIA Course for non

Begins with the *Why?* Course on Monday evenings at 8:00pm in the Parish Centre, starting on 25<sup>th</sup> September. That is followed by the RCIA programme proper, continuing on Monday evenings. Initially it is just *Come and See* there is no commitment (that will come later). Both those who have never been Baptized (known as catechumens) and those who have been Baptized in another church candidates are invited to come along.

If you know someone who may be interested in becoming a Catholic, please issue a personal invitation to join this course, and please accompany them at least to the first session. Further information can be obtained from Andrew La Trobe via the Parish office.



# Parish NOTICES

## Today

### **St Joseph's, Borough Green**

The first Mass in the new St Joseph's church is today (Sunday) at 9:30am. Praise the Lord! Don't go to the school by mistake! Tea and coffee afterwards.

### **Second collection**

Today it is for the Catholic Education Service. The CES is the chief negotiating and advisory body on all aspects of Catholic education; it also provides financial assistance for school transport in rural areas.

### **Loaves and Fishes collection**

Donations of non-perishable items (food and toiletries) for the Sevenoaks foodbank should be placed in the baskets provided. No tea, pasta, soups, or baked beans this time, please.

## This Week

### **Parish Finance Committee**

Meets on Monday evening.

### **Lectio Divina Group**

All parishioners are invited to come to the upper room in the Parish Centre to watch the Seven Deadly Sins DVD, on Tuesday at 8:00pm. Followed by a discussion.

### **Ordinariate Mass**

Thursday at 7:30pm in St Thomas's.

### **Friday Adoration at Otford**

No Adoration this Friday; back to normal next week.

### **Saturday: Consecration Anniversary**

The Solemnity of the Anniversary of Consecration is on Saturday. Mass at 9:30am, followed by tea and coffee in the Parish Room. Please note that the Solemnity of the Anniversary of Consecration is on Sunday in Ordinary Time. Mass on Saturday Consecration Anniversary.

### **St Thomas's Parish Parenting Course**

Is parenting the hardest job in the world to get right? Would you like to be a happier parent and improve your relationship with your children? We look at communication skills, discipline, encouragement, resolving problems and other areas of parenting, using Family Caring Trust programmes.

This term we will be running the course for parents of 0-6 year olds. 9:15am to 11:15am starting this Friday. There are limited creche places; please contact Ann O'Sullivan (07826 527568 or annosullivan7oaks@gmail.com) for more information or to book a place.

## **Holy Matrimony**

The Marriage of Adam Barnes and Kerry Pinington is at 2:00pm at Holy Trinity, Otford on Saturday.

## Next Weekend

### **Second collection**

Next Sunday is Home Mission Sunday. The second collection provides the Bishops with resources to spread the Gospel in this country and to give grants for parish evangelization.

### **St Edith of Kemsing Devotions**

The annual Devotions are on Sunday 17th September: St Edith's Well, Kemsing (next to The Bell pub) at 3:00pm, Vespers in Kemsing Church at 3:30pm, and Afternoon Tea in The Bell at 4:15pm. These devotions are very suitable for children and families.

In addition, please do consider joining in a Pilgrimage Walk from St Thomas via Most Holy Trinity Otford. It leaves from St Thomas at 10.30am and from Otford at 1.30pm. Pick up a leaflet from the porch today. Further details from the Parish Office.

St Edith is the right hand saint in the mural behind the Altar in St Thomas's, with Kemsing Church behind her. She was born in Kemsing in 961, the daughter of King Edgar the Peaceful, and became Abbess of Wilton; she was famous for her learning, beauty, and sanctity.

## Notices

### **Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers**

Bishop Paul Mason will be here on Thursday 28th September for Mass at 8:00pm, at which he will Commission those Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who were never commissioned. All Extraordinary Ministers at all four churches are asked to attend this Mass.

### **The Pilgrims' Visit to Rochester - 15th September**

The parish group The Pilgrims is for retired and older parishioners. Our Autumn visit is by coach to Rochester Cathedral. There are a few refreshments on arrival, our own prayer time in the Crypt Chapel and a guided tour of the Cathedral by Jonathan Fenner, a parishioner. Lunch and sightseeing to follow in the town. The coach leaves Holy Trinity, Otford at 9:00am (where you can park) and 9:30am then from St Thomas's. We aim to be back by 5pm. For more info or to book contact Pat on 01732 453902 or Jackie on 01732 450197 or ac.jbpembroke@gmail.com.

# Parish NOTICES

## Parish Courses/Programmes

### The Why? Course

*Catholic answers to the big questions: Why God? Why Christ? Why the Church?*  
Each session lasts just one hour (inclusive of a 25 minute video), for those wishing to explore the Catholic faith, or just learn more about Catholicism. The course will run over three consecutive Monday evenings, at 8:00pm in the Parish Centre at St Thomas's Church, on 25th September, 2nd & 9th October. Bring your friends, all welcome.

This short course will be followed on Monday evenings by the RCIA Course, for non-Catholics interested in becoming Catholics. If you know anyone who may be thinking of becoming a Catholic please pass on a personal invitation to come on 25th September.

Contact Andrew La Trobe for more information or to register: [andrew.latrobe@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.latrobe@gmail.com).

### First Confession & Holy Communion 2018

Children turning 8 in the forthcoming academic year, 2017/18, are eligible for First Confession and First Holy Communion. The initial meeting for parents will be on Tuesday 3rd October, 8:00pm - 9:00pm, in church. Application forms available on the night; contact Ingrid La Trobe in the Parish Office for further information.

### Young Disciples

This group provides informal catechesis for children in Years 4 - 9, between the 9:15am and 11:15am Masses on a Sunday. We hope to resume in September but this important ministry is run by parishioners and we need more volunteers to help support the main catechist. Please contact Enia Adeleye at [youngdisciples@sevrparish.org.uk](mailto:youngdisciples@sevrparish.org.uk) for further details. Volunteers will need to have a DBS clearance before they can start. This is an important group in the parish, especially for post-First Holy Communion children and children not at Catholic school, so please volunteer if you can help.

### Family Mass Group

Would you enjoy singing or playing an instrument in a relaxed, fun and sociable choir? If so, the Family Mass Music Group would love to hear from you. We meet once a month to practice in a home environment and lead the music once a month at the 9:15am Mass as well as at the First Holy Communion Masses. As children grow up we do need new members to be able to carry on this contribution to the parish.

If you are interested contact Karen Owen: [karenreece@btinternet.com](mailto:karenreece@btinternet.com).

### Church cleaning

A new church at Borough Green, a new academic year marvellous, but some things never change, and that's church cleaning. The St Thomas's rotas need a boost. Can YOU spare an hour a month, on a Wednesday 10:00am - 11:00am, to polish or push a henry? Other times too have openings for helpers. Contact Pat: 01732 453902.

## Other Notices

### Diocesan Day for Catechists 23rd September

The annual Day for Catechists, organised by the diocesan Centre for Catholic Formation, is on Saturday 23rd September, at St George's Cathedral. The Day begins at 11:00am, and ends with Mass at 4:00pm, at which catechists will be sent out to catechise on the Archbishop's behalf. All parish catechists are urged to attend the Day; if you don't receive information about it contact Ingrid in the Parish Office asap.

### Holydays of Obligation

With effect from the First Sunday of Advent 2017, two holydays of obligation are being reinstated, and consequently transferred from the adjacent Sunday back to their proper day. The Epiphany will now be observed on 6th January (unless it falls on a Saturday or Monday when it is transferred to the Sunday). The Ascension will be on the Thursday after the Sixth Sunday of Easter (ie 40 days after the Resurrection). This decision was made by the Bishops of England & Wales and confirmed by the Holy See. See the diocesan website for the Vatican and Conference decrees.

## Parish Finances

### Offertory - 2/3 September

St Thomas	1,462.18
Otford	194.65
B Green	170.50
W Kingsdown	123.99
TOTAL	£ 1, 9 5 1 . 3 2

Thank you for your generosity and support. The totals for Standing Orders are not included and are notified monthly.

For newspapers and repository items please put your money in the correct wall box.



From the Desk of the Parish Priest

## Hard questions about the Old Testament



Some difficult questions remain. What about the portrayal of a violent, vengeful and frankly unappealing God? How can we reconcile the Genesis account of creation with Darwinism? What is the relevance to us today of certain passages, such as the cultic requirements in Leviticus which we no longer observe?

One answer is that we can't pick and choose which bits to retain and which bits to throw overboard; no two people would select the same bits. And in any case, human nature being what it is, we would be tempted to keep the easy, consoling parts and get rid of the challenging, difficult parts. The Hebrew scriptures have come down to us, wholesale, as part of our scriptures.

Secondly, we are dealing with a mystery, the mystery which is God and his covenant relationship with his people. Although we can appreciate some aspects of this, we should not expect that interpreting the scriptures will always be easy. Indeed, it should sometimes be hard, requiring struggling with the text by theologians over many years. We are not perfect yet, so we will not fully comprehend God yet.

How odd of God to choose the Jews. This famous saying should alert us to the fact that, thirdly, we need to understand the Jewish context in which the Old Testament books were written, and to recognise the different literary forms or genres in which they were written. We have to do this even for much more recent texts (such as Magna Carta or Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales). If we are to understand the Old Testament writers properly, we can't short circuit this.

This mistake is made by people such as Professor Dawkins, who claim that Genesis, being written so long ago, conflicts with our modern scientific knowledge. The creation account is a story asserting that God created the universe. It is not a scientific, physics treatise about the origins of the universe. (Incidentally, it is remarkable how Genesis, with its symbolic, picture language, is consistent with the modern scientific account of the Big Bang.) Just because something was written millennia ago does not mean that it cannot be a revelation about God, that it cannot be true.

Dawkins also writes *The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction*. The God Delusion (He does, at least, concede that Jesus is a huge improvement!) But a careful, close reading shows that although God is indeed wrathful when his people disobey him, and follow idolatry and wickedness, ultimately he is a God of love. His love for his people does not waver, however bad their transgressions.

We have to interpret the Old Testament carefully and holistically; then we will not misunderstand it by extracting only short sections out of context.

The old testament puts  
a spring in our step &  
a song in our hearts.

Fourthly, we are members of the New Covenant (of Jesus Christ). This means that some of the prescriptions of the Old Covenant – such as not eating shellfish or pork – have been superseded. They applied to the Jews then, but not to us today. Many of the old prescriptions do still apply, especially those which are part of basic divine law or where Jesus has restated them. Thus the Ten Commandments – which forbid murder, adultery and so on – do still form our basic moral code as Christians. See Galatians 3:17.

Stuart Blanch (a former Anglican Archbishop of York) wrote that the Old Testament is *a jungle of chaotic ideas, unfinished themes and tangled history*. Indeed it is. But he goes on to say *it is a book which is meant to throw some light on our path, to put a spring in our step and a song in our hearts*. It expresses the mind of God. *It is a book for all mankind, an ancient source of experience and wisdom*. And so it is.

# God loves his children

Blah, blah...

Are you OK?

OK!

**I am with you**

When someone has a problem, what can we do?

**Look, talk and listen**

Trace the letters below

2  
3  
4

**When two or three people meet to pray, Jesus is there with them**

How many people praying can you count?  
Circle the answer

**Step by Step**

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (A)

Matthew 18:15-20

# Mass intentions

All masses are at St Thomas's CHURCH unless otherwise stated

## Sunday TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (A)

6:00pm (Sat)	Miss H M McNabb RIP
8:00am	Intentions of the Rodrigues family
9:15am	Fr Peter Ryman RIP
11:15am	People of the Parish
6:00pm	Henrietta Temple RIP
9:30am Otford	Claire Smith - in thanksgiving
9:30am Borough Green	Sean O Loughlin RIP
11:00am West Kingsdown	Julia Taylor RIP

## Monday Feria 1

8:00am	Natasha Caisley (Speedy recovery)
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## Tuesday Feria 1 2

9:30am	Howard Brain RIP
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## Wednesday St John Chrysostom, BD

8:00am	Miss H M McNabb RIP
10:00am Otford	Lennon Harris RIP

## Thursday The EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS

9:15am West Kingsdown	Fr Leo Targett RIP
12:00noon	Miss H M McNabb RIP

## Friday Our Lady of Sorrows

8:00am	Gawldin D Souza RIP and Lily Rodrigues RIP
9:15am West Kingsdown	Roy Arthur RIP

## Saturday CONSECRATION ANNIVERSARY

9:15am West Kingsdown	Fred Hood RIP
9:30am	Holy Souls

## Sunday TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (A)

6:00pm (Sat)	For the People of Kemsing (St Edith's Day)
8:00am	Mrs Noelle March RIP
9:15am	Mrs Theresa Gould
11:15am	People of the Parish
6:00pm	Not yet booked
9:30am Otford	Bob & Ann Primarolo (57th Wedding Anniv)
9:30am Borough Green	Tom Hoey RIP & the comfort of his family
11:00am West Kingsdown	Leonard Joseph Gobel RIP

**Please remember the sick who have been commended to our prayers, especially:**

Thomas Healy, Rosemary Remnant, Hazel Pilorz, Maureen Way, Sue Chamberlain, Ana Pilar Santos

### Departed

Please pray for the soul of  
**Tony Biggs**  
who has recently died.

### Anniversaries:

Alan Davies, Cecil O Callaghan, Emma Flanagan, John Hickey, Gordon Gates, Doreen Levey, Colin Moss, Stanley Norfolk, John Asquith, Elizabeth Travers, Bernard Bishop, Lucile Conney, Frederick Brain, Desmond O Meara, Barbara Hawkins, George Jones, Maurice Still, Sidney Pemberton, Brian Emmerson, Joan Taylor, Daisy Norfolk, Flora Hopkins, Marguerite Matthews, Catherine Wood

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.**



### Sunday 8:00am Mass Antiphons

Entrance Antiphon:

lustus es, Domine, et rectum iudicium tuum; fac cum servo tuo secundum misericordiam tuam.

Communion Antiphon:

Ego sum lux mundi, dicit Dominus; qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris, sed habebit lumen vitae.