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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



*'For where two or
three meet in my
name, I shall be
there with them.'*

Matthew 18:20

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

First 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.

Psalm: the psalm recalls the disobedience of the ancestors ('Meribah' means 'strife' and 'Massah' means 'testing'). Instead we must obey God ('listen to his voice').

Second Reading: love is the fulfilling of the law. St Paul lists the very sins about which Jesus speaks in the Gospel.

Gospel: 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 times:

Saturday
6:00pm

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

Weekday Mass times:

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

Adoration:

Monday **8:00am - 12noon**
8:00pm - 9:00pm
Tuesday **10:00am - 12noon**
Thursday **11:00am - 3:00pm**
Saturday **8:30am - 10:30am**

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday
10:00am - 10:30am,
5:15pm - 5:45pm



**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: 01732 454177

Parish Priest: Fr David Gibbons, KHS
frdavid@sevrparish.org.uk

Assistant Priest: Fr Paul Okora
frpaul@sevrparish.org.uk

Retired Priest: Canon John Bailey, KHS
Tel: 01474 852223

Parish Secretary: Mrs Ingrid La Trobe parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk

Presbytery and Parish Office: 12 Granville Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ER

Parish Office hours: 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.*



MOST HOLY TRINITY OTFORD

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

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

*High Street, Otford
TN14 5PH*

Church contacts:

*Rosemary Curtis 01959 522624
(Sacristan)
Anne Knight 01959 524488
(Acting Secretary)
parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk*



St Joseph's BOROUGH GREEN

Mass times: *Sunday 9:30am*

*Western Rd, Borough Green
TN15 8AG*

Church contact:

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



St Bernadette's West Kingsdown

Mass times: *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

*Fawkham Rd, West Kingsdown
TN15 6JP*

Church contact:

*Jill & John Gobel
Tel: 01474 853676
parish.office@sevrparish.org.uk*

St Thomas' catholic primary school



**South Park,
Sevenoaks, TN13 1EH**

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

St Thomas' Pre School

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

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

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

Catenians: The Catenians 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:

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 Aid: Sean Corrigan

sean.corrigan@sevrparish.org.uk

Lectio Divina: Kathie Gonzalez

Tel: 01732 761253

Mothers' Prayers: Mondays, 11.00am at Star House, Star Hill Road, Sevenoaks. Tel: 01959 532500

Readers, Ministers & Welcomers Rota, St Thomas's
Tony Capozzi: st.thomas.rota@gmail.com

Parents & Toddlers: Emma McGovern 07786 219742,
Lourdes Marinetto-Travers 07900 591527
Tuesdays 9.30am - 11.30am, Parish Centre

RACET (Rural Africa Children's Education Trust)
MaryAnn Perasso 01959 522337, www.racet.org

The Pilgrims: Teas or lunches, four times a year, held at St. Thomas's 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 (SVP): Kathie Gonzalez -
ugonzalez@btinternet.com (01732 761253)
Frances Smith - francesrsmith@hotmail.com
Joan Perkins - perkins_aj@hotmail.com

Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM)

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?

- ♦ intended for those who are not members of the Catholic Church;
- ♦ intended for those who wish to explore and understand the faith of the Church;
- ♦ 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;
- ♦ 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

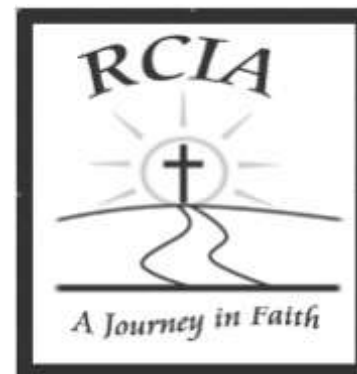
To become a Catholic can take some time. It is a journey of faith and like any journey the route is marked by various stages. In RCIA these stages, which might be thought of as turning points, are marked by special rites or liturgies in the church. They are signs of a growing and deepening relationship. 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-Catholics

Begins with the *Why?* Course on Monday evenings at 8:00pm in the Parish Centre, starting on 25th 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 because this Solemnity 'outranks' a Sunday in Ordinary Time, the 6:00pm Mass on Saturday will be a Mass of the Consecration Anniversary, not the 24th Sunday.**

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) **this week** 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 places left.** We will have 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.

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@sevrccparish.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.

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 of the Lord** will now be observed on 6th January (unless it falls on a Saturday or Monday when it is transferred to the Sunday). The **Ascension of the Lord** 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

*What return can I make to the Lord
for his generosity to me? Psalm 116*

Offertory - 2/3 September

| | |
|--------------|------------------|
| St Thomas | 1,462.18 |
| Otford | 194.65 |
| B Green | 170.50 |
| W Kingsdown | 123.99 |
| TOTAL | £1,951.32 |

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



Look, talk and listen

Trace the letters below

I am with you

When someone has a problem, what can we do?

Step by Step

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (A)

Matthew 18:15-20



How many people praying can you count? Circle the answer

2 3 4

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

Mass intentions

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

Sunday 10th 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 11th Feria

| | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| 8:00am | Natasha Caisley (Speedy recovery) |
|--------|-----------------------------------|

Tuesday 12th Feria

| | |
|--------|------------------|
| 9:30am | Howard Brain RIP |
|--------|------------------|

Wednesday 13th S John Chrysostom, BD

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

Thursday 14th The EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS

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

Friday 15th Our Lady of Sorrows

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

Saturday 16th CONSECRATION ANNIVERSARY

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

Sunday 17th 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:

Iustus 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.