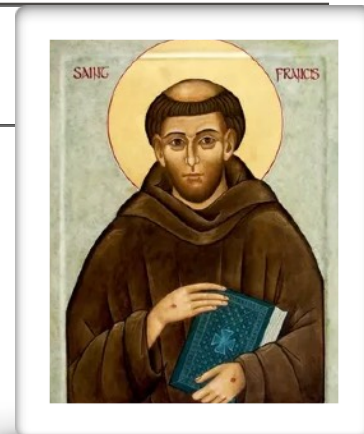


# ST FRANCIS PARISH

## NEWSLETTER



St Francis Parish Halstead online:

<http://stfrancishalstead.org/home/welcome/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Stfrancishalsteadparish/>

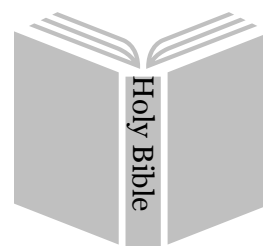
<u>Date</u>	<u>Time &amp; Location</u>	<u>Intentions</u>
Saturday 28th January St Thomas Aquinas, Priest	6pm Halstead Vigil Mass	
Sunday 29th January Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	9am Sible Hedingham	
Sunday 29th January Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	I lam Halstead	David Daniels RIP
Monday 30th January	NO MASS	
Tuesday 31st January St John Bosco	NO MASS	
Wednesday 1st February	NO MASS	
Thursday 2nd February Presentation of the Lord Candlemass day	NO MASS	
Friday 3rd February Ss Blaise, Ansgar, bishops	NO MASS	

**Mass readings**

First reading: Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13

Second reading: I Corinthians 1:26-31

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12



## **St Francis of Assisi First Holy Communion**

Roman Olivia Patsy Liam  
 Leona Immanuel Aniela Joshua  
 Zendeya Chloe  
 Nilavan  
 Eelavan

Our First Holy Communion group for 2023 now stands at 12 - our Meeting Room in the Presbytery is now too small to accommodate the group and we are trialling using the upstairs Chapel as an appropriate venue.

We held the latest session for our First Holy Communion group at St Francis last weekend. The focus was based on Chapter 5 of the "I Belong" book - giving thanks to God for everything we receive. The group were really keen to get involved and offered some fantastic answers to the questions we posed. We looked at our Eucharist as a very special occasion and at how we can prepare for our services by taking some time to think about, and say "thank you" for all we receive - from our families, our friends, our teachers and especially from God. We also spent some time looking at the Gloria as a thank you prayer that is integral to our Eucharist.

Thank you to Chloe and Aniela for reading our opening and closing prayers - we already have Reading volunteers for the next meeting in February.

Please do keep our young people in your thoughts and prayers - they really are the future of our Church and the Parish community is already benefiting from their involvement.

Many Thanks -

*Miriam & Nigel*

Baptism @ St Francis of Assisi  
 Sunday 29th January 12.00 pm

We offer our congratulations to the parents, Kelly and Xander, the godparents, families and friends of Athena and Ariana who will be baptised by Fr Frank Jackson at Halstead next Sunday.

On 5th February the Catholic Church in England and Wales celebrates Racial Justice Sunday. It's the day the Church focuses on the need to oppose racism and pursue racial justice with renewed vigour. The theme for 2023 is

"All are included in the mission of Christ and His Church. Let us walk together, pray together and work together"



### Prayer requests

Please pray for Lynda and Brian Jackson who are both experiencing health problems - pray for the Lord's upholding.

Pray for Father Felix as he completes his visit to his home in Nigeria - may he be refreshed and renewed and return safely to us.



Pray for Christians in education - that they may stand strongly for their faith in a very secular environment - that God is very close to them as they go about their important work

*As a Parish community we will try to do our very best to support the pastoral and sacramental needs of our parishioners. If you feel that we can be of help please do contact us by phone or email*

*Nigel Gardener: 07711252046*

*stewardofthegospel592@gmail.com*

*Jonathon Stenner: 01787 827184*

*stennerjm@gmail.com*

### Top tips for Mental Health

Select only positive or uplifting media to watch or listen to

*Father Frank Jackson has kindly offered his help with our parish whilst Father Felix is in Nigeria. If you are involved in services, such as music or arranging activities, please arrive a few minutes earlier than usual, so everything is in place for Father Frank and God's name is honoured by a calm and orderly Mass.*

**Are you looking for work? Click on this box to see if working for the church may be possible - this site is constantly updated**

How to study the lives of the saints? Firstly, do not *negatively* compare your own life to that of a saint. Secondly learn from their experiences positively. Thirdly - start to imitate them in small ways - showing courage and determination to overcome difficulties for example.

### **Thomas Aquinas 1225-1274**



Thomas is a towering figure in Medieval theology, known as a doctor of the church and key thinker of a school of theology known as Scholasticism. What kind of man was he?

Thomas came from a wealthy and influential family and was expected to become an abbot - a key role in the local church. He was educated in a local monastery and came into contact with the writings of Aristotle, a Greek philosopher who was born before Christ. Aristotle would have a great influence on the young Thomas, who he referred to as 'The philosopher'. Thomas decided at the age of 13 to become a Dominican monk, which was against the family's wishes. As he was journeying to join the monastery, Thomas was kidnapped by his family and held captive in order to stop him devoting his life to God. Two of his brothers hired a 'woman of the night' to seduce Thomas - he refused and was given the gift of chastity for the rest of his life. Eventually the family intervened and allowed Thomas to become a monk and scholar.

Thomas was a very quiet scholarly young man and became an assistant professor of theology at Cologne University and finally a full professor at the University in Paris. His most famous work was the Summa Theologica, which remained unfinished at his death.

Thomas was canonised because of the great impact his teaching and writing had had on so many Catholics. Thomas was said to have been given the gift of levitation during mystical experiences and there were many other miraculous events surrounding his life.

Thomas was travelling to Rome on a donkey when his head was hit by a fallen tree. He fell ill and eventually dies in 1274. Despite critics saying that Thomas' theology was too dependent on Greek philosophy, the Thomistic teachings became fully endorsed by the Vatican and he was canonised in 1323.

### **St John Bosco 1784-1817**

John was from a very poor family and he worked as a shepherd to make ends meet. He left home at 12 and begged for work - he knew suffering and had great sympathy for the poor all of his life. John was 'discovered' by a kind local priest who helped educate him, and at the age of 26 John was ordained as a priest himself.

His main concern was for the souls of young people, especially those who from the poorer classes who he felt were neglected by the church. Maybe because of his own experiences John had a special regard for boys abandoned by their families. He ensured that young apprentices in his care were treated fairly by their employers and organised humane lodgings for them where they would receive food, a bed and kindness. John was sometimes seen as a potential revolutionary who was stirring up trouble in the 'lower classes'. He had a special love for the poor in Argentina and set up the Salesian society to promote the teaching of St Francis de Sales.

Note If you look on the right hand side of the road near Aldham you will see a SVP St John Bosco sign - this is a summer camp which various dioceses use for summer activities - John's influence reaches all the way to us today in Essex.

