

ST FRANCIS PARISH

NEWSLETTER



St Francis Parish Halstead online:
<http://stfranchishalstead.org/home/welcome/>

Mass @ 11.00 am St Francis of Assisi – Before Mass each Saturday @ 5.15 pm The Sacrament of Reconciliation – Parish Rosary at 5:30, (Please contact Fr Felix directly to book a date/time for reconciliation)
 (Tel 01787 472477 / halstead@brcdt.org).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time & Location</u>	<u>Intentions</u>
Saturday 7th December St Ambrose, Bishop	6pm Vigil Mass	Health and healing of Michael McKiernan & Eternal repose of Norah Hussey
Sunday 8th December Second Sunday in Advent	9am Mass Sible Hedingham	Health and wellbeing of all
Sunday 8th December Second Sunday in Advent	11am Mass Halstead	Health and wellbeing of all
Monday 9th December Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for the intentions of Julia and Jim Griffiths
Tuesday 10th December St John Roberts/Human Rights Day	No Mass	
Wednesday 11th December St Damasus, Pope	No Mass	
Thursday 12th December Our Lady of Guadalupe St Jane Frances de Chantal	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament @8am and Mass /@9.30am	Eternal repose of Bertie & Josephine Stokes
Friday 13th December St Lucy	No Mass	



First reading: Baruch 5: 1-9
Second reading: Philippians 1: 4-6, 8-11
Gospel: Luke 3: 1-6

- Going forward to our parish preparation for the First Holy for the year 2024/2025, there will be a meeting with parents on Saturday 7th December at 9.00 am at the Church / the aim of this meeting would be for the children to get involved in a practical activity in the Church and also give parents an opportunity to talk with Fr Felix regarding the programme.
- This Sunday 8th December we shall hold our First Holy Communion Enrolment Service at the 11.00 am Mass at St Francis of Assisi Halstead.
- We are asking for new volunteers for Eucharistic ministry. From the First Sunday of Advent, we shall begin to receive communion in both kinds from the chalice. There will be an option to dip from the chalice and to drink from the cup if you are happy.
- We need new choristers and youth club coordinators. If you feel disposed pleased speak with Fr Felix

The parish has a Facebook page that gets updated daily with Mass readings and other items of information.

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

- If you recently joined our parish, we would like to have your name registered in our records. Please pick up a form at the back, fill it and return it to me or drop it at the back of the church.
- It will be beneficial for you to identify with an aspect of our parish life by committing your time and resources to the good of our parish. We need reinforcements on our volunteer team. If you would like to join our Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Eucharist, please speak to Fr. Felix.
- We are still in need of new Mass readers, a fundraising team, social organisers, church cleaners, gardeners, and youth club organisers. If you can, please help us.
- It is a wholesome thought to pray for the dead (2 Maccabees 12:46). Consider

offering a Mass for your departed loved ones and also for the living. It seems the culture of offering Masses in our parish is fading. Pick a form at the church's back and fill out your intentions.

- There is a chance for communion of the sick at homes for the housebound. Please let me know if any parishioners require a visit.
- It costs approximately £4,000 monthly to run our parish. Please consider sending an offering or a standing order to the parish. You can also make a donation to St. Francis of Assisi Church. Sort code: 40-13-22. Account Number: 71387014
- Everyone is welcome to participate in the Sanctuary Light sponsorship for 2024. You have the option to contribute £5.00 towards our weekly prayers for your specific intentions. Many thanks to those who signed up last year.
- **Weekend collection: £429.59**
- **Candle & Votive: £0**
- **Sanctuary light donation: £20.00**
- **Mass intentions for November: £50.00**
- **Parish Christmas bazaar: £2,809.09**
- Many thanks for your generosity to the parish.
- The Holy Water font is now available for us to use. From the tap, take some home for your use. Before using, please let Fr. Felix know. Feel free to bless yourself with the Holy Water font; however, sanitise your hands before use to minimise the risk of possible infection.

A new parishioner Luisa is available for cleaning, food shopping, dog walking and assistance to elderly. Contact Luisa on 07380173719

For your diary

Sunday 15th December 2024: Volunteers Evening @5pm

Thursday 19th December St Francis of Assisi Parish Christmas Carol Concert/ Volunteers evening at 6.00 pm and 7.30pm at the hall.

Friday 20th December 2024: Funeral Mass @11am

Advent Reconciliation Service 6.00 pm

Saturday 21st December 2024: Mini Christmas party for altar servers & children @11am

Deanery Business

Friday 20th December 2024: Day of Mercy at Priory Street @10am

22nd January 2025: Clergy dinner @ Brightlingsea

30th January 2025: Parish partnership meeting @ Lexden St Teresa's @7pm

Wednesday May 14th 2025: Deanery meeting to be held at St Francis Halstead @11am

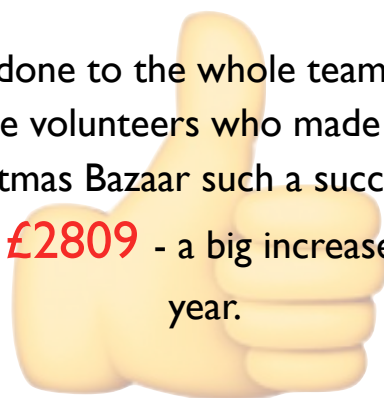
St. John Roberts, a Welsh Benedictine monk and priest, was canonised in 1970 as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. His sainthood recognises his steadfast commitment to his faith during a time of intense persecution in England. Roberts was martyred in 1610 for performing Catholic priestly duties in a country where this was considered treason. Despite multiple exiles and imprisonments, he repeatedly returned to England to minister to Catholics and aid those suffering from the plague.

His canonisation was part of a broader recognition by the Catholic Church of the sacrifices made by the Forty Martyrs, who stood for religious freedom and conscience. The process required evidence of miracles attributed to their intercession, and Pope Paul VI emphasised their relevance as examples of courage, human dignity, and faith in challenging times...



Zimbabwean Mass at 3pm on Saturday - lively dancing and wholesome worship at St Francis Church, Halstead!

Well done to the whole team and all the volunteers who made the Christmas Bazaar such a success. We raised **£2809** - a big increase on last year.



The Roman Catholic Church celebrates Human Rights Day (December 10) because it aligns with its teachings on the inherent dignity and rights of every human being, rooted in their creation in the image of God. The Church sees the defence and promotion of human rights as central to its mission, emphasising the following principles:

1. **Human Dignity:** The Church believes every person has inherent dignity as a creation of God. Human rights protect this dignity, ensuring that people can live with freedom, justice, and peace.
2. **Social Justice:** Through its social teachings, such as those in *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), the Church emphasises the importance of protecting the poor and marginalised and ensuring that everyone has access to basic rights like education, healthcare, and work.
3. **Global Solidarity:** Celebrating Human Rights Day highlights the Church's call for global solidarity and the common good, reminding Catholics of their duty to advocate for the oppressed and support justice worldwide.
4. **Peace and Reconciliation:** Respecting human rights fosters peace, which aligns with the Church's mission to promote harmony among nations and individuals.

Pope Francis and other Church leaders frequently link the observance of Human Rights Day to broader social and ethical concerns, urging action against modern challenges like poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and violations of religious freedom. This celebration underscores the Church's commitment to moral leadership and advocacy for universal human rights.



Christmas Landscape

Tonight the wind gnaws
With teeth of glass,
The jackdaw shivers
In caged branches of iron,
The stars have talons.

There is hunger in the mouth
Of vole and badger,
Silver agonies of breath
In the nostril of the fox,
Ice on the rabbit's paw.

Tonight has no moon,
No food for the pilgrim;
The fruit tree is bare,
The rose bush a thorn
And the ground is bitter with stones.

But the mole sleeps, and the hedgehog
Lies curled in a womb of leaves,
The bean and the wheat-seed
Hug their germs in the earth
And the stream moves under the ice.

Tonight there is no moon,
But a new star opens
Like a silver trumpet over the dead.
Tonight in a nest of ruins
The blessed babe is laid.

And the fir tree warms to a bloom of candles,
And the child lights his lantern,
Stares at his tinselled toy;
And our hearts and hearths
Smoulder with live ashes.

In the blood of our grief
The cold earth is suckled,
In our agony the womb
Convulses its seed;
In the first cry of anguish
The child's first breath is born.

Laurie Lee, MBE

