



ST FRANCIS PARISH

NEWSLETTER

St Francis Parish Halstead online:

<http://stfrancishalstead.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).

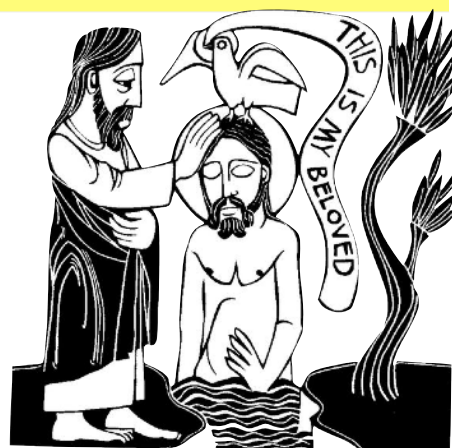


Date	Time & Location	Intentions
Saturday 11th January	6pm Vigil Mass	Eternal repose of Rev George Greasley & Janet Stenner
Sunday 12th January Baptism of the Lord	9am Mass St Nicholas	Eternal repose of Ronald Beales
Sunday 12th January Baptism of the Lord	11am Mass Halstead	Health and wellbeing of all
Monday 13th January St Hilary, Bishop	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for Birthday blessings on Wilf Schunter
Tuesday 14th January	No Mass	
Wednesday 15th January	No Mass	
Thursday 16th January	No Mass	
Friday 17th January St Anthony, Abbot	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament @8am and Mass /@9.30am	

First reading: Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7

Second reading: Acts 10: 34-38

Gospel: Luke 3: 15-16, 21-22



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

- We are calling for sponsorship for the sanctuary lights for 2025. Write your intention and hand over to Fr Felix
- We need new choristers and youth club coordinators. If you feel disposed please 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: £387.54
- Candles/votives: £63.79
- Halstead coffee: £40.22
- Hedingham coffee: £8.00
- 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.

Deanery Business

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

Father Felix

Saint Anthony the Great, also known as Anthony of Egypt or Anthony of the Desert, is not formally canonised in the sense we understand in the modern Catholic Church. Canonisation as an official process was only instituted in the 12th century. Instead, early saints like Anthony were recognised by the Church through popular acclaim, widespread veneration, and acknowledgment of their holiness and miracles by church authorities.

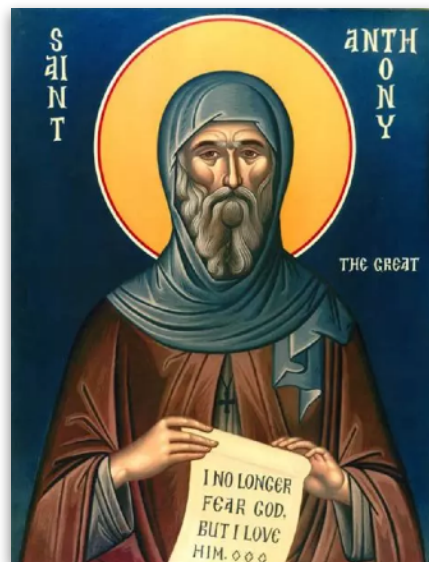
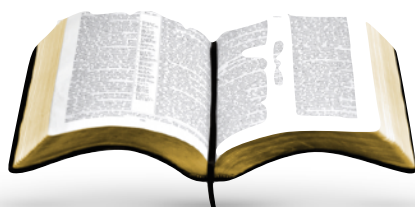
Why Saint Anthony the Great is Venerated:

1. **Life of Holiness and Asceticism:** Anthony is considered the founder of Christian monasticism. He withdrew to the desert around 270 AD to lead a life of prayer, fasting, and solitude, setting an example for future monks and hermits.
2. **Inspiration for Monasticism:** His life story, recorded by Saint

— Saint Athanasius of Alexandria in the *Life of Anthony*—

Daily Readings

Monday	Hebrews 1: 1-6	Mark 1: 14-20
Tuesday	Hebrews 2: 5-12	Mark 1: 21-28
Wednesday	Hebrews 2: 14-18	Mark 1: 29-39
Thursday	Hebrews 3: 7-14	Mark 1: 40-45
Friday	Hebrews 4: 1-5, 11	Mark 2: 1-12
Saturday	Hebrews 4: 12-16	Mark 2: 13-17



Athanasius of Alexandria in the *Life of Anthony*, inspired countless others to pursue ascetic and monastic practices. This text played a critical role in spreading his reputation throughout the Christian world.

3. **Spiritual Warfare and Teachings:** Anthony was known for his battles against demonic temptations, which became emblematic of spiritual warfare. His teachings emphasised prayer, humility, and detachment from worldly goods.
4. **Miracles and Healing:** Stories of his miraculous healings and intercessions contributed to his widespread veneration as a saint.
5. **Patron of Monastics:** As the "Father of All Monks," Anthony became a spiritual figurehead for monastic communities.

His sanctity was universally recognised, and he is celebrated on his feast day, January 17, in both the Eastern and Western Christian traditions. While he was never formally canonised, his legacy and contributions to Christian spirituality firmly established his status as a saint.

Today's Feast: The manifestations of Christ that we celebrate during Christmas Time culminate in the Baptism of the Lord. On the last day of the Christmas season, may we think of how we will be open to allow Christ to be manifested in our lives. Let us resolve to consciously choose to follow Christ more closely and take seriously our baptismal call to live as disciples.



How do people lose their faith?

We all know people who once were strong believers and who gradually stopped attending Mass and finally 'lost' their faith. How does this happen? It is quite simple, they stopped praying.



St Nicholas Church Castle Hedingham

Last Sunday, 5th January, saw our first Mass at St Nicholas following our move from St Peter's in Sible Hedingham. We are very grateful to all who have helped to make the transition as smooth as possible and making sure all of our resources have found a new home at St Nicholas. Fr Felix, along with the 30 or so parishioners who attended, has created a little bit of history - it seems very likely that this was the first Catholic Mass held in the Church in some 500 years. The original Church was built in the late 1100's (around 1180) - although there was an even earlier wood built Church in 1138. The Church was further developed and became an important centre for the Catholic Church. It seems likely that there was a Priory associated with St Nicholas Church and Hedingham Castle and it was seen as a pilgrimage site on the route to Bury St Edmunds. John De Vere, the 15th Earl of Oxford, was a great supporter of Henry VIII and so was an active participant in ensuring the Reformation changes, that created the Church of England with the Act of Supremacy in 1534, were fully implemented.

The Parish has now helped create a little bit of Church history with Catholic Masses at both Hedingham Castle and St Nicholas. It really is a magnificent building and well worth a visit just to take in the architecture, the famous wheel window above the altar and the tomb of John De Vere and his second wife.

Mass will be held at St Nicholas on Sunday at 9.00 am and parking is available at the Castle Hedingham Memorial Hall and at the Wheatsheaf public house.

Nigel

Medjugorje Web
medjugorje.org

