



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).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time & Location</u>	<u>Intentions</u>
Saturday 22nd February Chair of St Peter	6pm Vigil Mass	Wellbeing of all
Sunday 23rd February Seventh Sunday	9am Mass St Nicholas	Health and wellbeing of Juliana and Obert Chipato and family
Sunday 23rd February Seventh Sunday	11am Mass Halstead	Wellbeing of all
Monday 24th February	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for birthday blessings on Ryan Van Dulken & J Schunter
Tuesday 25th February	No Mass	
Wednesday 26th February	No Mass	
Thursday 27th February St Gabriel, St Gregory of Narek	No Mass	
Friday 28th February	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament @8am and Mass /@9.30am	

First reading: 1 Samuel 26: 2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 15: 45-49

Gospel: Luke 6: 27-38



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

- Ash Wednesday will be on the 5th of March 2025. Mass @6pm.
- Stations of the Cross every Friday in Lent @6pm
- Our Parish Youth club takes place at the last Saturday of the month. The next one is coming up on the 29th March 2025 at 11am. It is open to ages 5-18.
- We are calling for sponsorship for the sanctuary lights for 2025. Write your intention and hand it 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/Stfranchishalsteadparish/>

- 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: £387.55**
- **Candles/votives: £37.96**
- **Second Collection for Racial Justice: £119.61**
- 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.

For your diaries:

- Ash Wednesday 5th March 2025 Mass @Halstead @6pm.
- Youth Club: Every Last Saturday of the Month. Next one is coming up on 29th of March 2025
- Wednesday May 14th 2025: Deanary meeting to be held at St Francis Halstead@11am.

Father Felix Adiele

Thought for the Week

I believe that the 23rd psalm is the most beautiful prayer in the Bible - which prayer is your favourite? Peter

**PSALM 23**

The LORD is my shepherd:
I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

guidance for spiritual growth, emphasising the transitory nature of worldly pleasures and the importance of surrendering to God's will.

À Kempis writes in a direct, contemplative style, encouraging readers to cultivate inner peace and virtue rather than seek external validation. His reflections on suffering, obedience, and divine love are deeply moving, making the book a source of comfort and challenge for believers across centuries. The recurring theme of Christ as the ultimate model for human life—marked by humility and unwavering faith—resonates powerfully throughout the text.

While the book's ascetic approach may feel strict or even harsh to modern readers, its insights on patience, prayer, and simplicity remain profoundly relevant. *The Imitation of Christ* is a must-read for those seeking spiritual depth and personal transformation. Whether read in small excerpts or as a whole, it continues to inspire and guide readers toward a life of devotion and inner peace.



Catholic Reading for a late winter evening

The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis is one of the most influential Christian devotional books ever written. Composed in the 15th century, it offers timeless wisdom on humility, self-denial, and the pursuit of a deeper relationship with God. The book is structured in four sections, each providing practical

Meditation: What makes Christians different and what makes Christianity distinct from any other religion? It is *grace* - treating others, not as they deserve, but as God wishes them to be treated - with loving-kindness and mercy. God is good to the unjust as well as the just. His love embraces saint and sinner alike. God seeks our highest good and teaches us to seek the greatest good of others, even those who hate and abuse us. Our love for others, even those who are ungrateful and selfish towards us, must be marked by the same kindness and mercy which God has shown to us. It is easier to show kindness and mercy when we can expect to benefit from doing so. How much harder when we can expect nothing in return.

Give and forgive - the two wings of prayer

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) describes Jesus double precept to *give and forgive* as two essential wings of prayer:

Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given you. These are the two wings of prayer on which it flies to God. Pardon the offender what has been committed, and give to the person in need (Sermon 205.3). "Let us graciously and fervently perform these two types of almsgiving, that is, giving and forgiving, for we in turn pray the Lord to give us things and not to repay our evil deeds" (Sermon 206.2).

Bless and do not curse

Our prayer for those who do us ill both breaks the power of revenge and releases the power of love to do good in the face of evil. How can we possibly love those who cause us harm or ill-will? With God all things are possible. He gives power and grace to those who believe in the Lord Jesus and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit. His love conquers all, even our hurts, fears, prejudices and griefs. Only the cross of Jesus Christ can free us from the tyranny of malice, hatred, revenge, and resentment and gives us the courage to return evil with good. Such love and grace has power to heal and to save from destruction. That is why Paul the Apostle tells those who know the love and mercy of Jesus Christ to "bless and not curse.. nor take revenge.. and to overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:14,17,21). Do you know the power of God's love, mercy, and righteousness (moral goodness) for overcoming evil with good?

Lord Jesus, your love brings freedom and pardon. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and set my heart free with your merciful love that nothing may make me lose my temper, ruffle my peace, take away my joy, nor make me bitter towards anyone.

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