

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 29th March	6pm Vigil Mass	Health and Healing of the sick
Sunday 30th March Fourth Sunday in Lent Mother's Day	9am Mass St Nicholas	Eternal of repose of Declan Sandwall
Sunday 30th March Fourth Sunday in Lent Mother's Day	11am Mass Halstead	Eternal of repose of Bishop Ayo Maria and Birthday blessings on Maureen Ogbolu
Monday 31st March	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for the eternal repose of Lawrence Leader
Tuesday 1st April	No Mass	
Wednesday 2nd April	No Mass	
Thursday 3rd April	No Mass	
Friday 4th April	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament @8am and Mass / @9.30am Stations of the Cross @ 6pm	<u>50th Birthday Mass of Maureen Ogbolu at 7pm</u>

First reading: Joshua 5:9, 10-12

Second reading: 2 Corinthians 5: 17-21

Gospel: Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

- There will be a special Mass of thanksgiving for Maureen Ogbolu one of our choristers who is celebrating her 50th birthday on Friday @7pm after the Stations of the Cross.
- The Wedding of Nathan and Rebecca will be taking place next Saturday April 12 2025 at 12 noon. We are all invited
- Our Parish Youth club takes place at the last Saturday of the month. The next one is coming up on the 19th April 2025 at 11am because of the Jumble sale next Saturday. 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/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: £372.49**
- **Mass stipends for March: £75.00**
- **Votive candles: £52.91**
- 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:

- **2025 Lenten Fast collection is ongoing till end of Lent**
- **Youth Club: Every Last Saturday of the Month. Next one is coming up on 29th of March 2025**
- **Wednesday May 14th 2025: Deanery meeting to be held at St Francis Halstead@11am.**

Father Felix Adiele



Mothers...a reflection

Traditionally mothers have been symbols of love and care, the patient nurturer who is always there for you when you need her. This is an idealised version of the more mundane truth - that all mothers are only human. Mothers can be wonderful, but they can also be more difficult, have traits that are selfish, be uncaring and even unpleasant. As you grow older and wiser you realise that your mother was not perfect, as you look at yourself do you ever see patterns that played out in her life turning up in yours? This is what the church calls original sin; we inherit characteristics from both of our parents - the most important question is what do we do with this inheritance? Have you ever been disappointed by your mother? If so, look to Our Lord's Mother, Mary, for inspiration, she will never disappoint...Through all of Christ's earthly life she was there by His side, and saw him take His final breath, "Hail Mary, full of grace..."

Jonathon



How can we know if our prayer is pleasing to God or not? The prophet Hosea, who spoke in God's name, said: "I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). The prayers and sacrifices we make to God mean nothing to him if they do not spring from a heart of love for God and for one's neighbour. How can we expect God to hear our prayers if we do not approach him with humility and with a contrite heart that seeks mercy and forgiveness? We stand in constant need of God's grace and help. That is why Scripture tells us that "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6; Proverbs 3:34).

Jesus reinforced this warning with a vivid story of two people at prayer. Why did the Lord accept one person's prayer and reject the other's prayer? Luke gives us a hint: despising one's neighbour closes the door to God's heart. Expressing disdain and contempt for others is more than being mean-minded. It springs from the assumption that one is qualified to sit in the seat of judgment and to publicly shame those who do not conform to our standards and religious practices. Jesus' story caused offence to the religious-minded Pharisees who regarded "tax collectors" as unworthy of God's grace and favour. How could Jesus put down a "religious person" and raise up a "public sinner"?

Jesus' parable speaks about the nature of prayer and our relationship with God. It does this by contrasting two very different attitudes towards prayer. The Pharisee, who represented those who take pride in their religious practices, exalted himself at the expense of others. Absorbed with his own sense of self-satisfaction and self-congratulation, his boastful prayer was centred on his good religious practices rather

than on God's goodness, grace, and pardon. Rather than humbling himself before God and asking for God's mercy and help, this man praised himself while despising those he thought less worthy. The Pharisee tried to justify himself before God and before those he despised; but only God can justify us. The tax collector, who represented those despised by religious-minded people, humbled himself before God and begged for mercy. His prayer was heard by God because he had true sorrow for his sins. He sought God with humility rather than with pride.

This parable presents both an opportunity and a warning. Pride leads to self-deception and spiritual blindness. True humility helps us to see ourselves as we really are in God's eyes and it inclines us to seek God's help and mercy. God dwells with the humble of heart who recognise their own sinfulness and who acknowledge God's mercy and saving grace. *I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit* (Isaiah 57:15). God cannot hear us if we boast in ourselves and despise others. Do you humbly seek God's mercy and do you show mercy to others, especially those you find difficult to love and to forgive?

Lord Jesus, may your love and truth transform my life - my inner thoughts, intentions, and attitudes, and my outward behaviour, speech, and actions. Where I lack charity, kindness, and forbearance, help me to embrace your merciful love and to seek the good of my neighbour, even those who cause me ill-favour or offence. May I always love as you have loved and forgive others as you have forgiven.

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Easter Lilies

At this time of the year we remember loved ones. Buy a lily for £5.00. Place the money in an envelope with the names of those you wish to remember at Easter time. Pass the envelope on to Father Felix.



QUIZ NIGHT

Annual Quiz

The Annual Quiz, one of our main annual fund raising events will be held in the Church Hall on Saturday 5th April, 7pm start. £10 per head to include a two course home cooked meal and we would like teams of up to six people. We can make up teams if you submit your names to Father Felix, Lynda or Alex as soon as possible, so we can begin the planning. There will be two different raffles, so any prizes you can donate would be greatly appreciated. Space limits the number of teams so please book early to avoid disappointment. All monies raised will go to the betterment of the church. Phone or text Lynda on 07855464876 to book your place.