



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 12th April	6pm Vigil Mass	Eternal Repose of Richard Mintern Courtauld
Sunday 13th April Palm Sunday	9am Mass St Nicholas	Blessings on Newman, Tsvakai Muzinda
Sunday 13th April Palm Sunday	11am Mass Halstead	Helena's special intention
Monday 14th April	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for the remembrance of Doris Willie Keenan
Tuesday 15th April	Exposition and Lenten Reconciliation service @6pm	
Wednesday 16th April St Bernadette	Chrism Mass @ Brentwood at 11am	
Thursday 10th April Holy Thursday	Solemn Mass of the Lord's Supper @6pm	
Friday 18th April Good Friday	Good Friday Walk of witness @10am, Liturgy of the Lord's Passion@3pm	

First reading: Isaiah 50: 4-7

Second reading: Philipians 2: 6-11

Gospel: Luke 22:14, 23:56



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

- Please remember to pick an envelope for Easter Clergy support and return on Easter Sunday.
- There will be walk of witness on Good Friday at 10am
- We shall take a collection for Holy Places on Good Friday.
- 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/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 back of the church 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.
- **Candles/ votive: £**
- **Weekend collection: £551.67**
- **Halstead coffee: £25.52**
- **Lenten Fast collection: £267.53**
- **Quiz night: £1,136.00**
- 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.

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.**

Meditation: Does the King of glory find a welcome entry in your home and heart? Jesus went to Jerusalem knowing full well what awaited him - betrayal, rejection, and crucifixion. The people of Jerusalem, however, were ready to hail him as their Messianic King! Little did they know what it would cost this king to usher in his kingdom. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem astride a colt was a direct fulfilment of the Messianic prophecy of Zechariah (9:9):

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, and riding on a donkey and upon a colt the foal of a donkey.

Those who believe, hope, and love receive Christ's kingdom of peace and eternal life

The colt was a sign of peace. Jesus enters Jerusalem in meekness and humility, as the Messianic King who offers victory and peace to his people. That victory and peace would be secured in the cross and resurrection which would soon take place at the time of Passover.

Augustine, the great 5th century church father, comments on the significance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem:

"The master of humility is Christ who humbled himself and became obedient even to death, even the death of the cross. Thus he does not lose his divinity when he teaches us humility... What great thing was it to the king of the ages to become the king of humanity? For Christ was not the king of Israel so

that he might exact a tax or equip an army with weaponry and visibly vanquish an enemy. He was the king of Israel in that he rules minds, in that he gives counsel for eternity, in that he leads into the kingdom of heaven for those who believe, hope, and love. It is a condescension, not an advancement for one who is the Son of God, equal to the Father, the Word through whom all things were made, to become king of Israel. It is an indication of pity, not an increase in power." (*Tractates on John 51.3-4*)

Psalm 24 is another prophetic passage which echoes this triumphal procession of the King of glory:

Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in.

Jesus Christ came to bring us the kingdom of God. He is the true King who offers peace, joy, and everlasting life for those who accept his kingship. Does the King of glory find a welcome entry in your heart and home? Do your walls echo with the praise of his glory?

Lord Jesus, be the King and Ruler of my heart, mind, life, and home. May my life reflect your meekness and humility that you may be honoured as the King of glory!



Saint Bernadette Soubirous was canonised on December 8, 1933, by Pope Pius XI, not merely for her visions of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes in 1858, but for her exemplary life of holiness, humility, and obedience. Born into poverty in 1844, Bernadette faced severe health issues, including cholera and asthma, yet displayed unwavering faith. At 14, she reported 18 apparitions of a "small young lady," later identified as the Immaculate Conception, a term she didn't initially understand, reinforcing her sincerity. Despite skepticism, ridicule, and interrogation from authorities, she remained steadfast, never seeking fame. Her obedience to Mary's messages—praying for sinners, performing penance, and uncovering a healing spring—transformed Lourdes into a global pilgrimage site. Bernadette's later life as a Sister of Charity in Nevers exemplified humility; she embraced suffering, saying, "All this is good for Heaven." Her body, found incorrupt after exhumations, symbolised her spiritual purity. Canonised for her virtuous response to grace, not the visions themselves, Bernadette's life inspires as a model of simplicity and trust in God, showing holiness is attainable through faithfulness in adversity.



Crowds are fickle because human emotions and group dynamics amplify impulsiveness and inconsistency. Driven by shared excitement, fear, or outrage, crowds often react without deep reflection, swayed by persuasive voices, vivid spectacles, or fleeting trends. Social psychology shows that individuals in groups prioritise conformity over reason, leading to rapid shifts in opinion—like cheering a hero one day and condemning them the next. Historical examples, such as Roman mobs or modern cancel culture, reveal how crowds chase novelty or scapegoats, lacking loyalty to principles. Anonymity in numbers further erodes accountability, making crowds unpredictable, as their mood swings with the loudest influence or freshest spark.

QUIZ NIGHT

A nnual Quiz
The Annual Quiz, one of our main annual fund raising events, raised £1136 for our church - well done to all who organised and took part, a special thanks to someone who we all know!