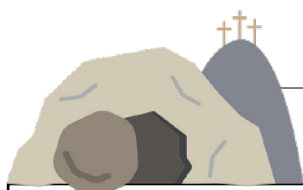


# ST FRANCIS PARISH

## 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](mailto:halstead@brcdt.org)).



<u>Date</u>	<u>Time &amp; Location</u>	<u>Intentions</u>
Saturday 19th April Easter Vigil	6pm Vigil Mass	Health and healing of Theresa Adams
Sunday 20th April Easter Sunday / Resurrection of the Lord	9am Mass St Nicholas	Wellbeing of all
Sunday 20th April Easter Sunday / Resurrection of the Lord	I am Mass Halstead	Successful operation and wellbeing of Marie Yen
Monday 21st April Easter Monday	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for the remembrance of the departed in our Easter lilies list
Tuesday 22nd April	No Mass	
Wednesday 23rd April	No Mass	
Thursday 24th April	No Mass	
Friday 25th April	Exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament @ 8am and Mass @9.30	RIP anniversary Pat Crush and Irene Crush and family

First reading: Acts 10: 34, 37-43

Second reading: Collosians 3: 1-4

Gospel: John 20: 1-9



**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:**

- Special thanks to all those who made our Easter celebration a success. And more thanks for your donation to the parish clergy.
- Our Parish Youth club takes place at the last Saturday of the month. The next one is coming up on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 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/>

- 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: £18.23
- Weekend collection: £427.95
- Hedingham coffee: £47.10
- Repository: £45.40
- 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:**

- Youth Club: Every Last Saturday of the Month. Next one is coming up on 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2025
- Wednesday May 14<sup>th</sup> 2025: Deanery meeting to be held at St Francis Halstead@11am.

- 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.

**Meditation:** What did the disciples of Jesus discover on the third day of Jesus' death? On Sunday morning the women who had stood with Jesus when he died upon the cross on Good Friday went to the tomb to pay their last tribute to a dead body. The disciples thought that everything had finished in tragedy. None of Jesus' followers were expecting to see an empty tomb and hear the angel's message, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise" (Luke 24:5-7). The angel urged them to believe that Jesus had indeed risen just as he had promised. This good news was not easy for them to grasp because their hearts were still weighed down with grief and doubt. In wonder they went to share the good news with the other disciples.

Is it any small wonder that it was the women, rather than the apostles, who first witnessed the empty tomb and then the appearance of the resurrected Lord (Matthew 28:8-10; Mark 16:9; John 20:15-18)? Isidore of Seville (560-636 AD), a great teacher and bishop, commented on the significance of the women being the first to hear the good news of the resurrection: "As a woman (Eve) was first to taste death, so a woman (Mary Magdalene) was first to taste life. As a woman was prescient in the fall, so a woman was prescient in beholding the dawning of redemption, thus reversing the curse upon Eve." The first to testify to the risen Lord was a woman from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons.

What is the significance of the stone being rolled away? It would have taken several people to move such a stone. And besides,

the sealed tomb had been guarded by soldiers! This is clearly the first sign of the resurrection. Bede (672-735 AD), a renowned scripture commentator from England, wrote: "[The angel] rolled back the stone not to throw open a way for our Lord to come forth, but to provide evidence to people that he had already come forth. As the virgin's womb was closed, so the sepulchre was closed, yet he entered the world through her closed womb, and so he left the world through the closed sepulchre" (from *Homilies on the Gospels* 2,7,24). Peter Chrysologus (400-450 AD), another early church father remarked: "To behold the resurrection, the stone must first be rolled away from our hearts." Do you know the joy of the resurrection?

It is significant that the disciples had to first deal with the empty tomb before they could come to grips with the fact that scripture had foretold that Jesus would die for our sins and then rise triumphant. They disbelieved until they saw the empty tomb. Bede (672-735 AD) explains why the Risen Lord chose to reveal himself gradually to the disciples:

"Our Lord and redeemer revealed the glory of his resurrection to his disciples gradually and over a period of time, undoubtedly because so great was the virtue of the miracle that the weak hearts of mortals could not grasp [the significance of] this all at once. Thus, he had regard for the frailty of those seeking him. To those who came first to the tomb, both the women who were aflame with love for him and the men, he showed the stone rolled back. Since his body had been carried away, he showed them the linen cloths in which it had been wrapped lying there alone. Then, to the women who

were searching eagerly, who were confused in their minds about what they had found out about him, he showed a vision of angels who disclosed evidences of the fact that he had risen again. Thus, with the report of his resurrection already accomplished, going ahead of him, the Lord of hosts and the king of glory himself at length appeared and made clear with what great might he had overcome the death he had temporarily tasted." (From *Homilies on the Gospels* 2,9,25)

One thing is certain, if Jesus had not risen from the dead and appeared to his disciples, we would never have heard of him. Nothing else could have changed sad and despairing men and women into people radiant with joy and courage. The reality of the resurrection is the central fact of the Christian faith. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord gives us "eyes of faith" to know him and the power of his resurrection. The greatest joy we can have is to encounter the living Lord and to know him personally. Do you celebrate the feast of Easter with joy and thanksgiving for the victory which Jesus has won for you over sin and death?

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### Supreme Court Rules!

The highest legal court in the UK has ruled that men and women are legally defined by their biology - reminds one of a Bible verse..."So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Genesis 1: 27



A big source of parish income are the proceeds from our regular jumble sales. The next one is on **Saturday 26th April at 10am** in the Church Hall outside St Francis on Colchester Road. Please consider donating anything that is clean, presentable and of some value: you can leave them with Father Felix or arrange to drop them off outside the hall: contact details are at the top of the newsletter. If you have a few minutes, come along and browse what's on offer and make a contribution - I have found some real bargains, such as pair of decent Logue suede desert boots for £2 last year!

If you have a few minutes to help set up the Hall on Friday from 9pm, that would be greatly appreciated. Most of the best stuff is snapped up by 11:30, so come early if you want to find a bargain!

Jonathon

