



# ST FRANCIS PARISH

## NEWSLETTER



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 13th August St John Chrysostom	6pm Vigil Mass	10th birthday blessings on Kaoisochukwu Ukachukwu
Sunday 14th September Exaltation of the Holy Cross	9am Mass St Nicholas	Eternal repose of Daniel Chadwick
Sunday 14th September Exaltation of the Holy Cross	11am Mass Halstead Parish Garden Party	Blessings and wellbeing of our community on our Garden party
Monday 15th September Our Lady of Sorrows	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for the repose of Eunice & James Henry Gardener
Tuesday 16th September St Cornelius, Pope St Cyprian, Bishop	No Mass	
Wednesday 17th September St Robert Bellarmine, St Hildegard of Bingen	No Mass	
Thursday 18th September PPC Meeting	No Mass	
Friday 19th September St Januarius, Bishop St Theodore of Canterbury	Exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament @ 8am and Mass @9.30	



First reading: Numbers 21: 4-9

Second reading: Philippians 2: 6-11

Gospel: John 3: 13-17

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:**

- Our parish Garden Party will be today after 11am Going forward Mass. Please consider making a dish according to your continent for others to taste.
- Our Parish Retreat comes up on November 12 at Castle Hedingham. Mass begins at 10am.
- We shall be taking a second collection for Evangelii Gaudium.
- We have set up a group of St Vincent De Paul in the parish. Consider joining their apostolate and support their mission with your time and donations. There will be tea and cake and coffee every fortnight at the hall after Morning Mass till Mid-day.
- Our Parish Youth club takes place at the last Saturday of the month. The next one is coming up after the summer holiday. 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.
- Candles/ votive: £15.77
- Weekend collection: £362.04
- Mass stipend for August: £45.00
- Second collection for Catholic Education: £40.57
- 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 27<sup>th</sup> September 2025
- 'Friendly Friday' Coffee morning on Friday from 10am to midday 26<sup>th</sup> September
- Parish Garden Party on 14<sup>th</sup> September after 11am Mass
- Parish Retreat @ Castle Hedingham on November 12

# A summary of Evangelii Gaudium.

**Introduction The Gospel = source of joy.**

- Evangelisation is sharing that joy.

## 2. Missionary Transformation of the Church

- Reform parishes & dioceses to serve mission.
- Prefer a **Church on the streets** over one obsessed with self-protection.
- Encourage **decentralisation** (local responsibility).

## 3. Crisis of Communal Commitment

- Cultural problems:
  - Consumerism, individualism, violence, inequality.
- The poor must be defended, not ignored.

## 4. Proclamation of the Gospel

- Preaching should be **clear, short, and practical**.
- Homilies: warm, inspiring, not lectures.
- Catechesis: form both faith and life.

## 5. Social Dimension of Evangelisation

- Faith has social consequences.
- **Option for the poor** = non-negotiable.
- Work for justice, peace, and solidarity.

## 6. Spirit-Filled Evangelisers (259–288)

- Evangelisers must rely on the Holy Spirit.
- Mary as model of missionary discipleship.

# The father's extravagant love and mercy

What is the main point or focus of the parable of the lost (prodigal) son? Is it the contrast between an obedient and a disobedient son? Or is it a contrast between the warm reception given by a generous and forgiving father or the cold and aloof reception given by the eldest son who wanted to have nothing to do with his rebellious brother? Jesus contrasts the father's merciful love with the eldest son's harsh rejection of his errant brother and his refusal to join his father in welcoming his brother back home.

While the errant son had wasted his father's money, his father, nonetheless, maintained unbroken love for his son. The son, while he was away, learned a lot about himself. And he realised that his father had given him love which he had not returned. He had yet to learn about the depth of his father's love for him. His deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed on the husks of pigs and his reflection on all he had lost, led to his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father. While he hoped for reconciliation with his father, he could not have imagined a full restoration of relationship. The father did not need to speak words of forgiveness to his son - his actions spoke more loudly and clearly! The beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet symbolise the new life - pure, worthy, and joyful - of each and every person who returns to the merciful embrace of the waiting Father in heaven.

The prodigal could not return to the garden of innocence, but he was welcomed and reinstated as a beloved son. The errant son's dramatic change from grief and guilt to forgiveness and restoration express in picture-language the resurrection from the dead and a rebirth to new abundant life with God the Father through his beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Contempt and pride lead to division - mercy and forgiveness restores and unites**

The parable of the prodigal son also contrasts mercy and forgiveness with their opposites - an

unwillingness to forgive and to be reconciled. The father who had been wronged, was forgiving and merciful towards the younger son who recognised his need for forgiveness. But the eldest son, who had not been wronged, was unforgiving and refused to be reconciled with his brother. His refusal to forgive turns into contempt and pride. And his resentment leads to his isolation and estrangement from the community of forgiven sinners.

In this parable Jesus gives us a vivid picture of God the Father and what his character and attitude towards us is like. God is truly generous, kind, and forgiving towards us. He does not lose hope or give up when we stray from him and his commandments. He searches our hearts to show us where true love and mercy can be found and he lead us back to the way of everlasting joy and happiness (Psalm 139:1, 23-24). God the Father always rejoices in searching out those who have strayed and he welcomes them home with open arms. Do you know the joy of your heavenly Father who welcomes you home to his kingdom of everlasting righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit?



Medjugorje Web  
medjugorje.org



Please come and support our Jumble sale on Saturday 18th October 10am-3pm in the Church Hall.

Any clean and unwanted items to sell will be appreciated.



### Church Garden Party

Please bring along a national dish, a salad, home made bread, cakes - in fact anything edible and scrummy! It will start after the 11am Mass at St Francis 14th September - helpers needed to set up (Saturday 10am) and clear away (Sunday 2pm)



**PPC and Finance Committee Meeting 7pm, The Presbytery.** This is an open meeting, please do come along to find out how the church functions behind the scenes. If you have any items you want to be added to the agenda, please email me at [stennerjm@gmail.com](mailto:stennerjm@gmail.com)

Jonathon, chairman of the PPC