

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).

Date	Time & Location	Intentions
Saturday 14th March	6pm Vigil Mass	Health of the sick
Sunday 15th March Fourth Sunday in Lent	9am Mass St Nicholas	Health and wellbeing of all
Sunday 15th March Fourth Sunday in Lent	11am Mass Halstead	Eternal repose of John Simon Stevens (10 th Anniversary)
Monday 16th March	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for the health and wellbeing of our parishioners
Tuesday 17th March	No Mass	
Wednesday 18th March St Cyril, of Jerusalem, Bishop	No Mass	
Thursday 19th March St Joseph	No Mass	
Friday 20th March	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction @ 8.30am and Mass @ 9.30am Stations of the Cross @ 18:30	

First reading: 1 Samuel 16: 1, 6-7, 10-13

Second reading: Ephesians 5: 8-14

Gospel: John 9: 1-41



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

- Donation for Easter lilies in memory of our loved ones is open. Speak to Mary Radcliffe with the names of people you wish to remember or Fr Felix.
 - We need volunteers for various ministries during the Holy Week. Let Nigel know.
 - The Lenten Fast is ongoing, consider making a sacrifice through CAFOD. Use the red bucket at the back for your offerings.
 - There is an Easter Youth Club event involving the Sisihi Debate Club in St Francis Church hall on Sunday the 22 March 2026 immediately after 11am Mass. The topic will be "Easter is more important than Christmas". Parents are encouraged to bring their children to attend.
 - Our Parish Youth Club takes place on the last Saturday of the month. It is open to ages 5-18.
 - We are calling for sponsorship for the sanctuary lights for 2026. Write your intention and "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.
 - 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. 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:£28.13
 - Weekend collection: £464.13
 - 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 Saturday 29th of March 2026
 - Coffee morning on Friday from 10am to midday

A Lenten Reflection on the TV series Chernobyl.

The HBO mini-series Chernobyl is good Lenten TV - it chastens and causes deeper reflection on the key issues of truth telling raised by the terrible accident 40 years ago. If you want TV to act as a distraction and entertainment, this series is probably not one for you. After the explosion at the nuclear plant the local Communist Party put out a message that there was nothing to be overly concerned about - the dosimeter readings of 3.6 Roentgens, *which all the meters confirmed*, were the equivalent of a few X-rays and quite harmless. Brave researchers took new readings and were threatened not to release them to the public because they may have caused a panic; lies are not always open or deliberate, withholding the full truth is another form of deception. The reason all the Geiger counters/dosimeters read 3.6 Roentgens was because that was the maximum number calibrated. It eventually became clear that the readings were much higher over 1000kms away in Byelorussia. The true reading in Pripyat was **15000 Roentgens**. When the truth was revealed, drastic action happened - whole communities were moved and a massive operation initiated to build a containment structure and underground heat exchangers to lower the core's temperature.

What are the Lenten reflections from these facts? Lies are not harmless, lies can result in real suffering and death. Lies are

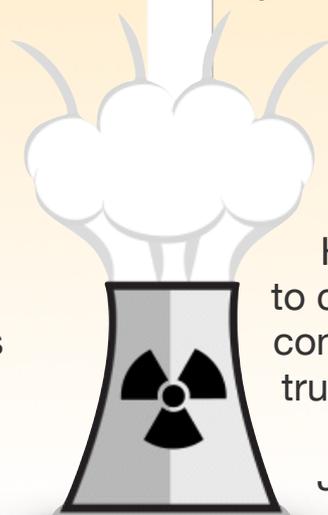
often supported and maintained by the powers that rule our world. Courageous scientists and truth tellers put their careers on the line to announce the truth. The leader of the truth tellers, Valery Legasov, suffered professional exile and social isolation, persecution so targeted and hurtful that he eventually hanged himself as a result two years after the accident.

Today, in our own country, similar pressures exist to 'go along to get along'. Lies are told and covered up by political leaders. Telling the truth is not easy and can have real suffering attached. Every time we look at our Lord crucified behind the altar and in our imaginations, we see a graphic image of suffering caused by persecution and injustice. Jesus himself was not "popular" in the way the world defines it. He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, and ultimately rejected and executed by the mob. He demonstrated that true authority and righteousness often result in being misunderstood, slandered, and marginalised. Our Lord said these words:

*"If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. **That is why the world hates you.**"*

Practices our world agrees are safe and of no concern may actually be very harmful. We have Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition to call us back at Lent to examine our consciences and begin to tell the truth, most of all, to ourselves.

Jonathon



Meditation: Do you recognise the light of God's truth and power in your life? God wants to remove every obstacle that might hinder us from recognising the light of his truth and wisdom for our lives. Saul, the first king of Israel, failed to recognise God's light and power to save him from his enemies. God replaced Saul with David, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons (1 Samuel 16). God saw something in David which Jesse and his other sons did not recognise - a man after God's own heart who delighted in doing what was pleasing to the Lord (1 Samuel 13:14). David was a man of courage and vision who defeated his enemies and united his people. His strength and success came not from himself but from God who anointed him with the power and wisdom of his own Spirit.

What can keep us from the light of God's truth, wisdom, and strength for our lives? Sin blinds us and causes us to stumble and fall - unable to rise on our own or to walk in the freedom of God's love and truth. Lies cloud the mind in moral confusion, and they grow in darkness and resist the light of God's truth. Only God's light can uncover the darkness of sin and free us to walk in the path of holiness and peace with God.



Annual Quiz

The annual quiz will take place in the Church hall on Saturday May 2nd at 7pm for a 7:30 start. £10 per head, teams of six - this includes a home cooked meal. Please book your places soon as we are limited to only 10 teams and we need to know numbers in order to plan it.



Please speak to Lynda or Alex if you need to know more or want to pay!

Easter Lillies



Remember your loved ones by purchasing an Easter Lilly. Please talk to Father Felix or Mary Ratcliffe to make a donation. Money and names, to be placed in an envelope and handed to Father, by 22nd March



Medjugorje Web