



# 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)).

Date	Time & Location	Intentions
Saturday 7th March St Felicity	6pm Vigil Mass	Eternal repose of Patrick Graham and Ken Parsley
Sunday 8th March Third Sunday in Lent	9am Mass St Nicholas	Eternal repose of Jean Chapman
Sunday 8th March Third Sunday in Lent	11am Mass Halstead	Health and healing of Karen Pym
Monday 9th March St Francis of Rome	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for the repose of Pat Evans
Tuesday 10th March	No Mass	
Wednesday 11th March St Angus	No Mass	
Thursday 12th March	No Mass	
Friday 13th March	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction @ 8.30am and Mass @ 9.30am Stations of the Cross @ 18:30	

*First reading: Exodus 17: 3-7*

*Second reading: Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8*

*Gospel: John 4: 5-42*



**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.
  - There will be a Second Collection for St Vincent de Paul this weekend. Membership is very welcome. Speak to Deborah Hendy.
  - 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: £0.00
  - Weekend collection: £545.65
  - Halstead coffee: £43.31
  - 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 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2026
  - Coffee morning on Friday from 10am to midday

**W**ould you do a favour for someone who snubbed you or treated you like an enemy? Jesus did just that and more! He treated the Samaritans, the sworn enemies of the Jews, with great kindness and respect. The Samaritans who lived in middle region of Israel between Galilee and Judaea and the Jews who lived in the rest of the land of Israel had been divided for centuries. They had no dealings with one another, avoiding all social contact, even trade, and inter-marriage. If their paths crossed it would not be unusual for hostility to break out.

When Jesus decided to pass through Samaria he stopped at Jacob's well because it was mid-day and he was both tired from the journey and thirsty. Jacob's well was a good mile and a half from the nearest town, called Sychar. It wasn't easy to draw water from this well since it was over a hundred feet deep. Jesus had neither rope nor bucket to fetch the water.

When a Samaritan woman showed up at the well, both were caught by surprise. Why would a Samaritan woman walk a mile and a half in the mid-day heat to fetch her water at a remote well rather than in her local town? She was an outcast and not welcomed among her own townspeople. Jesus then did something no respectable Jew would think of doing. He reached out to her, thus risking ritual impurity and scorn from his fellow Jews. He also did something no strict Rabbi would dare to do in public without loss to his reputation. He treated the woman like he would treat one of his friends - he greeted her and spoke at length with her. Jesus' welcoming approach to her was scandalous to both Jews and Samaritans because this woman was an adulteress and public sinner as well. No decent Jew or Samaritan would even think of being seen with such a woman, let alone exchanging a word with her!

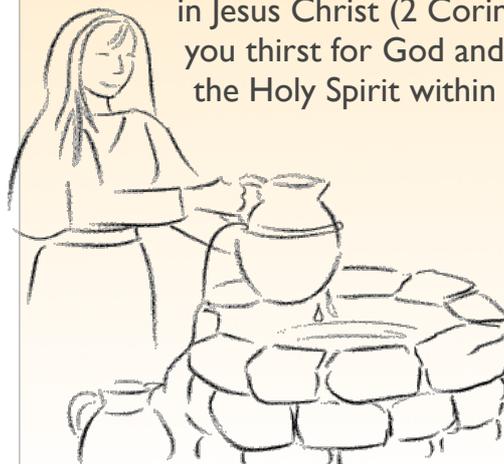
Jesus broke through the barriers of prejudice, hostility, and tradition to bring the good news of peace and reconciliation to Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles alike. He demonstrated the universality of the gospel both in word and deed. No one is barred from the love of God

and the good news of salvation. There is only one thing that can keep us from God and his redeeming love - our stubborn pride and wilful rebellion.

What is the point of Jesus' exchange with the Samaritan woman about water? Water in the arid land was scarce. Jacob's well was located in a strategic fork of the road between Samaria and Galilee. One can live without food for several days, but not without water. Water is a source of life and growth for all living things. When rain came to the desert, the water transformed the wasteland into a fertile field.

The kind of water which Jesus spoke about was living, running, fresh, pure water. Fresh water from a cool running stream was always preferred to the still water one might find in a pool or reservoir. When the Israelites complained about lack of water in the wilderness, God instructed Moses to strike the rock and a stream of fresh living water gushed out (Exodus 17:6). Even though the Israelites did not trust God to care for them in the wilderness, God, nonetheless gave them abundant water and provision through the intercession of his servant Moses.

The image of "living water" is used throughout the scriptures as a symbol of God's wisdom, a wisdom that imparts life and blessing to all who receive it. "The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life" (Proverbs 13:14). "Living water" was also a symbol for the Jews of thirst of the soul for God. The water which Jesus spoke of symbolised the Holy Spirit and his work of recreating us in God's image and sustaining in us the new life which comes from God. The life which the Holy Spirit produces in us makes us a "new creation" in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Do you thirst for God and for the life of the Holy Spirit within you?



## First Holy Communion @ St Francis of Assisi

Last Saturday we held the latest session for our 2026 First Holy Communion group.

🙏 Our session started with a prayer where the children were able to appreciate that they were all special with talents and gifts that they could share. We read the prayer together and we included each individual name in the prayer. 🙏

We spent part of the session looking at how we celebrate our Eucharist based on the words our Priest says about "do this in memory of me" as part of the Mass liturgy. The group participated in a "memory" game where they looked at a series of pictures and then answered a question that related to one of the images - based on a quiz round from Richard Osman's House of Games. The children all got involved and it proved to be a good starting activity with everyone scoring points.

We focused on our Eucharist as a "special" occasion and we looked at other such events such as birthday parties, weddings, baptisms, Christmas - we linked them to other kinds of meals including barbecues, picnics and then a family meal. We wanted to illustrate the point that our Eucharist is a "thanksgiving" where we come together as a family to share the body and blood of Christ through our Communion. It is perhaps worth noting that McDonalds proved to be very popular choice as a meal, a sandwich was seen as a good lunch item, Coca Cola an enjoyable drink but nobody wanted to share my choice of coffee!!

The children had the chance to think on the idea of "the Real Presence" in the Eucharist and why sharing Communion is such an important Sacrament in our Church.

We are looking forward to sharing a Passover / Seder meal together when we meet next on Saturday 14th March at 9.30 am in the Presbytery.

A really big thank you to the families who have been involved in the group this year and are attending our Masses at St Francis of Assisi and at St Nicholas' - Fr Felix, Miriam and I thank you for your support - it is really appreciated 🙏

Fr Felix, Miriam & Nigel

## 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.



# Medjugorje Web