



Saint Mark



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).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time & Location</u>	<u>Intentions</u>
Saturday 25th April St Mark the Evangelist	6pm Vigil Mass	Health and wellbeing of all parishioners
Sunday 26th April Fourth Sunday of Easter World Day of Prayer for Vocations	9am Mass St Nicholas	Health and wellbeing of all parishioners
Sunday 26th April Fourth Sunday of Easter World Day of Prayer for Vocations	I am Mass Halstead	Health and wellbeing of all parishioners
Monday 27th April	No Mass	The sanctuary light prayer intention is for Thanksgiving for the family of Maggie and for wellbeing of Peter and family
Tuesday 28th April St Peter Chanel, Priest St Louis Grignon de Montford	No Mass	
Wednesday 29th April St Catherine of Siena		
Thursday 30th April Pope Pius V, Pope	No Mass	<i>First reading: Acts 2: 14, 36-41</i> <i>Second reading: 1 Peter 2: 20-25</i>
Friday 1st May St Joseph the Worker	Exposition/Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament 8.30am and Mass@ 9.30am	<i>Gospel: John 10:1-10</i>



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

☀ There will be a second collection for Mission Sunday

➤ Youth Day at Castle Hedingham – Saturday, 20 June 2026

We're excited to invite all young people in the parish to a special Youth Day at Castle Hedingham on Saturday, 20 June 2026. This day is designed to help our youth connect with their peers, grow in faith, and gain valuable life skills such as CV writing and more. Thanks to the remaining portion of the Our Lady of Ransom Grant, which will subsidise the trip. Each young person is asked to contribute £5.00 to help cover operational and staffing costs. All food and venue expenses will be fully covered by the grant. It's going to be a meaningful, fun, and enriching day — we'd love to see our young people there.

➤ Our Parish Youth Club takes place on the last Saturday of the month. It is open to ages 5-18.

Deanery Business

➤ Feast day of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Light, spouse of the Holy Spirit
You are all invited to join Bishop Alan and the priests of the Colchester Deanery for Mass in celebration of the feast day of Our Lady of Light on Saturday 16th May 2026. The day will commence with a walking procession on the sea front commencing at 10.00am. Bishop Alan will preside at the Mass at 11.00am. All attending are invited to bring some flowers to place at the Shrine during the Penitential Rite. A reception will be held in the parish hall following the Mass.

➤ 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 2026. 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: £19.04
- Mass Stipend for April: £25.00
- Sanctuary candle donation: £10.00
- Weekend collection: £254.55
- Repository: £71.10
- Jumble sales : £503.91
- Online sales: £460.00
- 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:

- Youth Club: Every Last Saturday of the Month. Next one is coming up on Saturday 26th of April 2026
- Coffee morning on Friday from 10am to midday

A summary of Pope Leo XIV's reflection of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Dear brothers and sisters, and especially you, dear young people,

Today I invite you to reflect on vocation as a beautiful and deeply personal gift from God, discovered within your heart. We look to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who shows us that life becomes truly beautiful when we follow him. This beauty is not something we see outwardly, but something we discover through prayer, silence, and openness to his presence. When you walk with Christ, he transforms you and makes your life radiant with spiritual beauty.

Like Saint Augustine, you are called to look within, where God dwells more deeply than anything else. Your vocation is not imposed on you; it is an invitation of love, a unique path meant just for you. You will discover it when you learn to pause, listen, and pray.

God already knows you and loves you. But you must come to know him too—through his Word, the Sacraments, and acts of love. Like the young Samuel, learn to recognise his voice, even in a noisy world. Make time for prayer, for Eucharistic adoration, and for living your faith each day. In this way, you will understand how to give your life—whether in marriage, priesthood, or consecrated life.

Trust is essential. Look at Saint Joseph, who trusted God even in uncertainty. You too are called to trust, even when the path is unclear.

Remember, your vocation is not fixed—it grows over time. Stay close to Jesus, allow the Spirit to guide you, and nurture this gift daily.

If you listen, trust, and entrust yourself to God, your vocation will mature and bring joy—not only to you, but to the whole world.

[For the full version, please go to the Vatican website](#)



Raffle Prizes for the Quiz Night

Please could you donate prizes for the Quiz night prizes? A bottle of wine, box of chocolates ... anything *you* would like to win!

April Prize Draw Winners:

£50 Vincent Jones

£25 Joshua Hendy

£25 Marcus Hendy

A Story about Tradition.

A young recruit to the RAF was coming close to the passing out ceremony. The sergeant major addressed the squad, asking for volunteers to help prepare the parade ground. The recruit volunteered and was given the job of painting white lines to mark out where each squad would stand, where the senior officers would assemble and where the band would stand. The sergeant spoke sternly to the recruit "Make sure the lines are straight and, whatever you do, don't leave any drops of paint - it must be perfect, understand recruit?"

The recruit mixed the thick reflective white paint, added it to the line marker's tank, pegged out the cords to make sure his lines were perfect, and started to prepare the parade ground. After a morning's hard work the recruit stepped back to admire his work when his foot caught the paint tin and it left a large puddle of white paint. The paint couldn't be mopped up or watered down being oil based. What was he going to do? He would be put on a charge, the sergeant would have him peeling potatoes for a month and his work would bring shame on his squad. Then a light turned on and he knew exactly what he would do.... the best way to hide something is to place it in plain sight. The recruit went to the workshop and obtained four straight planks of wood, making a perfect square; after a few minutes he had a neat white square near the officers' stand. The recruit cleared away and eventually passed out and was sent away to another RAF base in the north. Nobody noticed the new square...

Forty years later the recruit was a retired widower when he received an invitation to attend a reunion of his training unit. He had a good meal, enjoyed the reunion and he wandered over to the old parade ground. To his amazement, the square, his mistake from the 1950s, was still there! He asked a sergeant, who was

getting the parade ground ready for another passing out ceremony, "What is the purpose of this square, sergeant?"

"I don't actually know sir, we repaint it every year because... well, because it's there. Was it here when you were in the service?"

The old recruit smiled and said, "Yes it was..."



Pilgrimage to Assisi 7 - 11 September 2026. Cost £695 not including extras from Stansted. Details at the back of the church or enquiries@johntours.com or 07859824279



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To hire the Church hall please contact Lynda Jackson on 07855 464876