



This parish is served by the Spiritans

**THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD Parish Mass Book Year A Vol 1, Pg 95(Vigil), 98(Midnight), 103(Day)**

**REFLECTION ON CHRISTMAS**

One must not forget that the reason we celebrate Christmas is because “God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” This is the good news that we were a given thousands of years ago, for all people, and still holds true up today. Christmas teaches us that God is always present and does not abandon his people in moments of trials and difficulties. Our faith in the Infant Jesus assures us that, no matter what happens, “God-is-with-us”. His name is 'Immanuel', the Holy Scripture tells us. Let us adore baby Jesus in the manger. A baby easily wins the heart and love of anyone with human feelings, but how much more does this baby win our heart and love. Let us kneel before baby Jesus and thank him for coming to save us. Thank baby Jesus now in your own words.

Imagine, Jesus, the Son of God and our Saviour, born in a stable and placed in a manger instead of in a cot! When God comes, he usually comes in humility, silently, and peacefully, without causing a great disturbance. God’s humble coming in Jesus would not surprise us if we knew God better. But of course, we will never know God sufficiently to understand. So, no matter how much we try to understand God becoming human in Jesus, we will not be able to comprehend; it will remain a mystery. The best reaction is that of the shepherds—simply to praise God. Let us praise God now in our own words.

As we look on baby Jesus, we think of the mystery of God’s love for us. Why did God who is almighty and all-powerful become small and powerless as a baby? Quite simply, out of love for us. God became human so that we might become more like God. Jesus if you had not come as a human like us, we might have had difficulty in believing that God really loved us. But now we know for sure. John the Evangelist says, “This is the revelation of God’s love for us, that God sent his only Son into the world that we might have life through him.” (1 John 4:9) Let us thank God for revealing his love for us in Jesus, that he who is so big and powerful became so small and weak for us, that he became one of us, to help us be more like him, to have life through him.

As we see baby Jesus in the manger, we reflect on God’s way being a way of gentleness and tenderness; God’s way is not one of violence but gentleness. ➔

**THE CHURCH IS OPEN**

**Tuesday-Friday**

08.45am-4.00pm

**Sat** 10.00am-6.30pm

**Sun** 7.45am-12noon

**SUNDAY MASSES**

**Sat 24th DECEMBER**

**CHRISTMAS EVE**

**5.30pm: Vigil Mass**

**8.00pm: Midnight**

**Mass (adult Choir)**

**Sun 25th DECEMBER**

**CHRISTMAS DAY**

**ONE MASS AT 9.30am**

**WEEKDAY MASSES**

**Tues 27th: 9.30am**

Int:

**Wed 28th : 9.30am**

Int:

**Thurs 29th: 9.30am**

Int:

**Fri 30th: 9.30am**

Int:

**SUNDAY MASSES**

**Sat 31st DECEMBER**

**5.30pm: Vigil Mass**

**Sun 31st DECEMBER**

**08.30am & 10.15am**

**CONFESSIONS**

**Tues-Fri 8.40 -9.20am**

**Sat 4.30-5.20pm**

or by appointment

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS: TUES, THURS, FRI 10.00am-2.00pm - Tel 01474705361**

**Parish Priest: Fr Alphonsus Beni CSSp**

**Email:** [alphonsusbeni@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:alphonsusbeni@rcaos.org.uk) (**Day off: Mon**)

**PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL THE PRIEST**

**DIRECTLY FOR AN APPOINTMENT**

**Tel: 07500262446**

**Parish Secretary:** Jane Pemberton

**Parish Council Chair:** Chris Pieroni

[hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk)

**Safeguarding representative:** Judith Stephens

**Email:** [hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk)

There is a lack of goodness and love in the world, but God is tender and loving. As we look on baby Jesus in the manger, we see that he is the answer to today's problems. Instead of violence, in baby Jesus in the manger we see gentleness; instead of hatred, in baby Jesus in the manger we see tenderness; instead of selfishness, in baby Jesus in the manger we see love for us. Let us ask baby Jesus to help us to be gentle, tender, and loving with those around us as he was in the manger. Jesus, in the manger you give us hope. In the darkness of our world, your light has shone. Your coming in gentleness encourages us to hold out the hand of reconciliation, to help one another, to work for peace. We remember the message of the angels: "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace." Baby Jesus, help us to be people of peace and to spread peace everywhere we go. Let us pray now for peace in our hearts, families and our trouble world as we celebrate Christmas.

### **PARISH NOTICES**

#### **CHRISTMAS OFFERING TO THE PARISH PRIEST**

As is customary, our Offertory Collection on 24th and 25th December will be our Christmas gift to our parish priest. There are special envelopes on the table in the entrance porch. If you will not be attending Christmas Mass in the parish, you may leave your offering in the Collection basket or post it through the door at the presbytery. If you use Gift aid envelopes for your donations, please write your GA number on the envelope. Alternatively, you may donate by bank standing order, Nat West 60-06-33 Acc 34143580, noting **Christmas Offering** to your donation. Thankyou for your kind support.

#### **FR. ALPHONSUS' INDUCTION AS PARISH PRIEST AND CELEBRATION ON 28th JANUARY 2023**

Bishop Paul Hendricks will be coming to our parish to perform the ceremony of Fr Alphonsus' induction as parish priest on Saturday 28th January. **The Mass will be at 4pm**, and will be a joint celebration for the feast of our Patron Saint, Francis de Sales. After the Mass, we will have a celebration meal in the school hall and all parishioners, adults and children, are warmly invited to come along. After next weekend, 1st January, we will be sending out more details and encouraging everyone to accept the invitation. There will not be a 5.30pm Mass on 28th January.

#### **ST FRANCIS DE SALES 200 CLUB**

**December Draw: 1st Prize: S. Gregory £100, 2nd Prize M. Whittaker £70, 3rd Prize Y. Hegarty £50.** Membership for the 200 club is open. To become a member, the relevant information is available in the church porch and on the website, to download.

#### **OUR LADY OF HARTLEY RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

For the latest information and school news, visit us at [www.ourladyhartley.kent.sch.uk](http://www.ourladyhartley.kent.sch.uk)

#### **PARISH SAFEGUARDING VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

If you could assist Judith Stephens in the area of Parish Safeguarding and would like to discuss the role, please speak with Fr Alphonsus for guidance.

### **CATECHETICAL PROGRAMMES**

Parishioners are asked to first check the **SACRAMENTS** section on the parish website; it has general information on the programmes. Please speak with Fr Alphonsus for any further advice. Sacramental programmes for school-aged children are lead by the parish, and are not school lead programmes. **Families wishing to enrol for Sacramental programmes must be registered parishioners of St Francis de Sales.**

#### **SACRAMENTS OF FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION - 2023 PROGRAMME.**

Parents whose children who have reached school Year 3 or above, and who are **registered parishioners attending Mass at St Francis de Sales**, are invited to enrol their child on the parish programme which will begin on Friday 20th January 2023. Lessons will take place in the church meeting room on Fridays 3.30-4.30pm, during term time. Weekly Mass attendance is a requirement for enrolment on this programme and throughout. Application forms are available in the church after Mass, please see Fr Alphonsus to be given a form.

**Completed Forms to be returned in person, and not online, when you attend a weekend Mass with your child, by Sunday January 8th, 2023 at the latest.**

#### **BAPTISM FOR BABIES AND INFANTS**

Parents of infants and those seeking Baptism, please attend a weekend Mass and speak with Fr. Alphonsus afterwards to register for the Baptism course. **If you have not yet registered your family**

**on the parish database, you need to complete and submit a Parish Registration Form, thankyou.**

### **CHILDREN'S LITURGY – FOR CHILDREN IN YR TO Y2**

Children's Liturgy will resume at the 10.15am Mass on Sunday 15th January 2023. Thankyou

### **CONFIRMATION IN 2023**

**Confirmation Classes will continue in January 2023** for any young person in school YR8 or above who would like to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Parents should please speak with Fr Alphonsus if your child would like to join the class.

### **RECEIVING COMMUNION**

Any adult who does not receive Communion, please do speak with Fr Alphonsus for guidance.

### **RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)**

Are You Interested in Becoming a Catholic? If you have never been baptized, if you were baptized in another Christian denomination and would like to become Catholic, or if you were baptized Catholic, but never received the Sacraments of Eucharist or Confirmation, you are welcome to join the RCIA programme, the process by which adults become Catholic. Likewise, if you are Catholic and interested in learning more about the Faith, you are welcome to join. **Lessons will resume in January 2023 on Saturday mornings in the church meeting room.**

## **REGULAR NOTICES**

### **PARISH REGISTRATION**

We welcome all new parishioners to St Francis de Sales, Hartley. We want you to feel at home in the parish. **The first thing to do is to register yourself/ your family on the Parish Registration Database.** Parish Registration Forms are available in the porch, or on the parish website to complete and return to the parish office.

### **PLANNED GIVING AND GIFT AIDED DONATIONS SUPPORTING THE RUNNING COSTS OF THE PARISH**

Please choose one of the following options:

- i) Set up a Bank Standing Order
- ii) Donate Online
- iii) Use Weekly Envelopes
- iv) Cash/Cheque payable to RCAS Hartley
- v) One off Donation
- (vi) Contactless Giving.

**Online donations to: Nat West Account RCAS Hartley: 34143580 sort code: 60-06-33**

*If you are a taxpayer, please consider joining the Gift Aid Scheme, 25p in every £1 can be claimed back by the parish. You can use our JustGiving page [www.justgiving.com/St-Francis-de-Sales-Hartley](http://www.justgiving.com/St-Francis-de-Sales-Hartley)*

### **DONATION BOX FOR GRAVESEND FOODBANK**

Non perishable items can be left in the Food Bank Box in the Meeting Room or in the porch.

Thankyou for your kindness and support to those who are struggling at this time. God bless you.

### **ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (SVP)**

'We are a small group of people who offer confidential support through phone calls, house visits, accompany to local medical/dental appointments. We also offer confidential financial support to families. Contact via the parish office'.

### **VISITING THE SICK AND HOUSEBOUND**

If you or someone in your family is housebound and would like a priest to visit, please do contact Father Alphonsus directly or call the parish office, thankyou

## **PARISH GROUP MEETINGS**

### **BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP**

We have a small, friendly group here at St. Francis de Sales whose members can visit to meet up and chat or maybe just to lend a listening ear. Contact Fr. Alphonsus and he will put you in touch with us.

### **YOUTH GROUP**

Leaders' meetings take place in the meeting room. Contact: Laura Bourne through the parish office.

### **ADULT CHOIR**

Thursdays at 7:30pm in the church, unless stated in the newsletter. New members are very welcome. Contact: Yvonne Hegarty [yhegarty@talktalk.net](mailto:yhegarty@talktalk.net)

### **ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (SVP)**

Contact can be made confidentially through the parish office.

### **KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBA**

Third Wednesday each month at 7:00pm in the church meeting room. New members welcome. Contact: William Rons [williamrons@hotmail.com](mailto:williamrons@hotmail.com)

### **CATHOLIC WELCOME CIRCLE (CWC)**

Second Wednesday of the month in the church meeting room at 2:00pm unless stated other wise. **NB. Our next meeting will be in February 2023.** Contact Margaret Walsh for more details.

## DIOCESAN NOTICES

### **Marriage and Family Life**

The MFL Team are running several online Sycamore *Growing in Faith Together* courses in 2023, consisting of 4 one hour-long sessions via Zoom, a wonderful opportunity for **Engaged couples**, who have completed their marriage preparation course and for **Married couples**, to enrich their friendship and love. The course runs on Tuesday evenings from 8-9pm beginning **10th January 2023** and continuing on **17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> Jan.** To register click on the link below:

[Growing in Faith Together — Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis \(rcaos.org.uk\)](https://www.rcaos.org.uk/growing-in-faith-together)

### TEXTS FOR CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASS

**Isaiah 62: 1-5** The Lord takes delight in you

**Psalm Response** *I will sing forever of your love O Lord*

**Acts 13: 16-17** Paul spoke of Christ, the Son of David

**Matthew 1: 1-25** The ancestry of Jesus Christ, the son of David

### TEXTS FOR CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS

**Isaiah 9: 1-7** A Son is given to us

**Psalm Response** *Today a saviour has been born to us, he is Christ the Lord*

**Titus 2:11-14** God's grace has been revealed to the whole human race

**Luke 2:1-14** Today a saviour has been born to you

### TEXTS FOR CHRISTMAS DAY MASS

**Isaiah 52: 7-10** The maiden is with child

**Psalm Response** *All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God*

**Hebrews 1: 1-6** God has spoken to us through His Son

**John 1: 1-18** The Word was made flesh and lived among us.

### TEXTS FOR NEXT SUNDAY'S MASS:

#### **The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

**Numbers 6:22-27** They are to call down my name on the sons of Israel, and I will bless them.

**Psalm Response:** *O God be gracious and bless us.*

**Galatians 4: 4-7** God sent His Son born of a woman

**Luke 2: 16-21** They found Mary and Joseph and the baby...When the eighth day came they gave him the name Jesus.

## **FOR DAILY PRAYERS AND MASS READINGS**

ONLINE, VISIT <https://www.universalis.com/>

### **OFFERTORY COLLECTION 18th DECEMBER 2022**

**Envelopes: £38.50 Loose Plate: £30.00**

**Contactless: £0.00**

**2nd Collection 18th December: £106.20**

**December Bank Standing Orders will be published in January**

*Thankyou for your contribution*

**Offertory Collections on 24th/25th December:  
Christmas Offering to the parish priest**

**NO 2nd Collection 24th/25th December**

**2nd Collection 1st January: Maintenance**

### **'Christmas Crib' Donations 2022**

The Christmas Crib box will be placed by our Nativity Scene at the Altar during the Christmas Season, until January 8th 2023. All donations will go to The Catholic Children's Society, to help families in need. Thankyou for your support

### **THATCH FUND**

**Our funding stands at £35,581.96 of the £45,000.00 Target to reach in 2023. Thankyou for your £1 weekly donation.** You may deposit your £1 in one of the Thatch Fund Boxes at the back of the church OR set up a £4 monthly/ £52 annual standing order at: **Nat West RCAS Hartley Acc 34363181 Sort Code 60-06-33.** If you are a tax payer using the parish Gift Aid scheme, *please* note your GA number to your donation.

### **PRAYER FOR THE SICK & HOUSEBOUND**

*Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son in the Eucharist. We now place before you all the sick and housebound of our parish.*

*As they share in this Eucharist with us, we pray that they may come to know the depth of your love for them and, the joy, the peace, and healing of your presence.*

*We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

For a newsletter emailed weekly, or to suggest articles/additions, contact the parish secretary: [hartley@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:hartley@rcaos.org.uk). **Newsletter items received after 11:00am Friday may not be included that week.**

Editor reserves the right to edit articles. A parish of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark.

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