



This parish is served by the Spiritans

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD Parish Mass Book page 109

REFLECTION ON MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Happy New Year! As we continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we turn our attention today to his mother Mary, but we continue to focus on Jesus as well. We give various titles to Jesus such as Saviour, Christ, Messiah, Lord, Son of Man, and each of these titles expresses an aspect of our understanding of Jesus. Similarly, we give many titles to Our Lady—there is a long list of them in the Litany of Our Lady of Loreto—and the title we celebrate today, “Mother of God,” and the title “Blessed Virgin,” are the two oldest titles given to Our Lady. In one sense, the title Mother of God says more about Jesus than it does about Our Lady. That is why I said we continue to focus on Jesus today also. What does the title Mother of God say about Jesus? It means that the humanity and divinity of Jesus are united in Jesus. There is not a separate human Jesus and a separate divine Jesus; there is one Jesus with a human nature and a divine nature, true God and true man, and because there is one Jesus, we say Mary is Mother of God.

Mother of God! Some would like to know if there is anything in Sacred Scripture, in the Bible, to support the title Mother of God. Yes, just as for so many of our Catholic beliefs, there are statements in Scripture that give us the background. We could begin with the second reading today, an excerpt of Paul’s letter to the Galatians, one of his earliest letters, written only about two decades after Jesus and even before the Gospels were written. In today’s excerpt we heard: “God sent his Son, born of a woman.” (Gal 4:4) God the Father sent his Son Jesus into the world and Jesus was born of a woman. This statement from St. Paul supports the title Mother of God, “God sent his Son, born of a woman.” Another helpful statement in Scripture supporting the title Mother of God is in Luke’s Gospel when Mary visits Elizabeth and Elizabeth cries out, “How does it happen that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:43) Elizabeth proclaims Mary to be the “Mother of my Lord.” This is indeed very close to Mother of God.

God had specially prepared her to be the perfect mother for Jesus to grow for the nine months before he was born. We call this special preparation of Our Lady to be the perfect mother of Jesus her Immaculate Conception which we celebrate on December 8th. We thank Our Lady for becoming the Mother of God.



THE CHURCH IS OPEN

Tues-Fri 8.45am-4.00pm

Sat 10.00am-6.30pm

Sun 7.45am-12noon

SUNDAY MASS

Sat 31st DECEMBER

5.30pm: Vigil Mass

Int. Sullivan & Selby
family members R.I.P.

Sun 1st JANUARY

08.30am: Int. Edith

Goodfellow, R.I.P.

10.15am: Parishioners

WEEKDAY MASSES

Tues 3rd: 9.30am

Wed 4th : 9.30am

Thurs 5th: 9.30am

Fri 6th: 9.30am

**The Solemnity of The
Epiphany of the Lord,
Holy Day of Obligation**

SUNDAY MASS

Sat 7th JANUARY

5.30pm: Vigil Mass

Sun 8th JANUARY

8.30am: Int. Dr Trevor

Jones, deceased, R.I.P.

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 (Day off: Mon)

PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL THE PRIEST

DIRECTLY FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Tel: 07500262446

Parish Secretary: Jane Pemberton

Parish Council Chair: Chris Pieroni

Email: hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk

Safeguarding representative: Judith Stephens

Email: hartleysg2safeguard@rcaos.org.uk

We are very happy to venerate Our Lady especially today as Mother of God because we know of her love for us as she comes again and again to help us in places such as Lourdes and Fatima, and we love her in return.

A very good way to show our love for Our Lady in return is to pray the Rosary which would be a beautiful gift to give to Our Lady every day.

As we begin this New Year, we venerate Mary the mother of God who was specially prepared by God to be the perfect sinless mother for Jesus while he grew in her womb for the nine months before he was born, "our tainted nature's solitary boast." It is indeed correct to call her mother of God because there is one Jesus with a human nature and a divine nature. We ask God to bless our year ahead in the words which God himself asked priests to use in the temple: **The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace (Num 6:24-26) in 2023. Amen**

MASS FOR THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

On Friday 6th January, the Universal Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, which is a Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics to attend Mass. We will celebrate our Mass at 9.30am and will be joined by the school children of Our Lady of Hartley. All are welcome.

PARISH NOTICES

CHRISTMAS OFFERING TO THE PARISH PRIEST

If you did not attend Christmas Mass here in the parish, and would still like to give a Christmas Offering, you can place your envelope in the Collection basket this weekend or post it through the door at the presbytery. If you use the Gift Aid Scheme, please write your GA number on the envelope. Alternatively, you may use the Contactless machine in the porch or use online bank transfer to Nat West 60-06-33 Acc 34143580, noting **Christmas Offering** to your payment. Thankyou so much for your kind generosity.

CATHOLIC DIRECTORY 2023

There are 3 copies of the Archdiocese of Southwark Directory available for purchase in the porch, next to the newsletters. The cost is £5 per copy. Please leave any money in the 'Papers and Publications' wall box by the meeting room door.

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. Next week 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.

WORLD CUP 2022 SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

1st Prize - £50.00 - Ticket Number 107 - Argentina

2nd Prize - £20.00 - Ticket Number 15 - France

3rd Prize - £10.00 - Ticket Number 254 - Croatia

Thank you to all who took part, for your support. You raised £330.00, which is greatly appreciated.

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE WINNING TICKETS

Hamper 1 - Grey Ticket Number 27

Hamper 2 - Grey Ticket Number 305

Panettone - Grey Ticket Number 365

Tub of Rose's - Grey Ticket Number 13

Crackers - Grey Ticket Number 341

Congratulations to you all & thankyou to everyone who took part. You raised £610.00 for the parish.

ST FRANCIS DE SALES 200 CLUB

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

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. Parents whose children have been accepted onto the program will be notified on 10th January.

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

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, to arrange a visit. 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

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (SVP)

Contact 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

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.**

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 **17th, 24th & 31st Jan.** To **register** click on the link below:

[Growing in Faith Together — Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis \(rcaos.org.uk\)](http://rcaos.org.uk)

TEXTS FOR SUNDAY 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/>

CHRISTMAS OFFERING 2022

Christmas Offering and December Bank Standing

Orders will be published next weekend

Thankyou all for your contributions

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 £35,895.50 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. Thankyou for your continuing generous support.

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. **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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