



This parish is served by the Spiritans

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD Parish Mass Book page 118 (The end of the Season of Christmas)

REFLECTION ON BAPTISM OF THE LORD

In the synagogue in Nazareth Jesus had often heard this passage from Isaiah: "Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am well pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit" and Jesus, advancing in wisdom, age, and grace, as time went on heard them more personally, more insistently, because they resonated in Him as in no one else. One wonders: did He share this with Mary and Joseph? I believe He did.

In addition to these words of election, He heard an intimacy as well, a closeness like no one else: "I, the Lord, called you. I grasped you by the hand. I formed you as a covenant of the people, a light to the nations to heal, to free, to save." Surely, these words of power, of anointing lived in His heart and anointed His soul like no one else, deeply rooted within Him.

And one day, moved by the Spirit of His Father, He approached John to be baptized – Jesus, the Incarnate Word, having no need of repentance, in His Sacred Humanity "stood in line with sinful humanity" (words of Pope Benedict XVI). He willingly identified with the people and at the same time was the living Good News to them.

As we heard in the Gospel, the aftermath of His baptism by John was astonishing, fearsome to those who witnessed it and heard "the voice". Overshadowed by the Holy Spirit in bodily form like a dove, He heard a voice from heaven: "You are my beloved Son, with You I am well pleased." Jesus, in His Sacred Humanity is embraced, affirmed, loved and He will carry this with Him not just as a beautiful memory of a wondrous experience but as a present reality – it will be for Him always here and now because God is the "I AM" – the One always present, always here and now.

On this day as we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, what truth, what message can you, I take for our own lives? In this reflection, I present what I have heard and offer it to you. Perhaps, hopefully, it will be a help, a word for you.

What strikes me is that even before Jesus has proclaimed any word, any message, before He has performed any miracle – before any of these – God the Father and the Holy Spirit reveal their approval, if you will – without any word or action on Jesus' part. The voice of the Father proclaims for all to hear, "You are my beloved Son, with You I am well pleased" – ➔

THE CHURCH IS OPEN

Tues-Fri 8.45am-4.00pm

Sat 10.00am-6.30pm

Sun 7.45am-12noon

SUNDAY MASS

Sat 7th January

5.30pm: Vigil Mass. Int Michael Brick (Knights of St Columba) R.I.P.

Sun 8th January

08.30am: Int. Dr

Trevor Jones, recently deceased, R.I.P.

10.15am: Int. People of the Parish

WEEKDAY MASSES

Tues 10th: NO MASS

Wed 11th : 9.30am

Thurs 12th: 9.30am

Fri 13th: 9.30am

NEXT SUNDAY MASS

Sat 14th January

5.30pm: Vigil Mass

Sun 15th JANUARY

8.30am: Int. People of the Parish

10.15am: Int wellbeing of Brigid Whitaker

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

pleased because You are who You are – My Beloved!

In our own Baptism, there is the ritual of water, oil, white robe, candle, prayer – what one sees and hears and there is the divine action one does not see yet receives – the gift of the Holy Spirit – the acceptance of us as the Father's beloved – in whom He is well pleased simply because you/I are His beloved, too.

All our days, we bear the Spirit; all our days, we are the Father's beloved and His love, His pleasure, His favour is upon us because we are His sons, daughters whether we believe it or not, whether we deny or not – it is reality, not fantasy, not some pious sentiment; we can refuse His love, ignore it, sin against it but it remains. In the

letter to the Romans, St. Paul put it this way: "For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future...neither height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8)

By our Baptism, we carry this as a relationship of grace, as a power to live, a reality at all times. The love of God remains steadfast, faithful; of course, our failures, our sinfulness affect how we respond, can blind us to this reality – yet it stands and will stand because of our God the "I AM". Nothing can separate us from His love, such is our Baptism into Christ – a sacrament we receive in time yet remains for all time.

In being baptized Jesus, as God and Man identified Himself with us totally and will never deny that. He is the One who ate with sinners, prostitutes, outcasts – who came to the defence of a woman taken in adultery – who forgave a crucified thief. He hated the sin and loved the sinner no matter what. His love received them, blessed them as He does us.

On this feast of the Lord's Baptism, let us praise and thank Our Lord for His solidarity, identification with us, with you and me. Let us pray for the conviction, the grace, the courage to live identified with Him all our days.

PARISH NOTICES

TAKING DOWN THE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Brendan and Tina Shirley will be taking down the decorations on Monday 9th January from 10.00am.

If you can spare some time to come along and help, it would be greatly appreciated. Thankyou

CELEBRATION OF FR. ALPHONSUS' INDUCTION AS PARISH PRIEST, SATURDAY 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 in the school hall and all parishioners, adults and children, are warmly invited to come along. Invitation slips will be given out after Masses this weekend, if you could please fill in and return by next weekend to help us plan for the catering.

There will not be a 5.30pm Mass on 28th January.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 11th JANUARY

If there are any matters you would like to be raised at the meeting, please contact Chris Pieroni at hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk. Thankyou

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.

HART MAGAZINE

The January edition of the Hart is available in the Church Porch. Please contact Carol if you would like to take up an annual subscription of £5 carolwilton0@gmail.com

CATECHETICAL PROGRAMMES

Parishioners are asked to first check the **SACRAMENTS** section on the parish website for 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. **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 are in Yr3 or above, and who are **registered parishioners, attending Mass at St Francis de Sales** can enrol their child on the parish programme which will begin on Friday 20th January 2023 3.30pm in the meeting room. Weekly Mass attendance is a requirement for this

programme. Application forms are available in the 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, thank you.**

CHILDREN'S LITURGY – FOR CHILDREN IN YR TO Y2

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

CONFIRMATION IN 2023

For young people currently in school Yr8 or above, Confirmation preparation classes take place on Tuesdays in the meeting room 6.30-8.00pm. 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 take place 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 SUPPORT THE RUNNING COSTS OF THE PARISH PLEASE CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING

(i) Set up a Bank Standing Order (ii) Use Weekly Envelopes (iii) Cash or Cheque payable to RCAS Hartley (iv) use One-off Donation envelopes with Gift-Aid option (v) Use Contactless Machine in the porch. Make any Online donations to Nat West Account: RCAS Hartley. Acc no: 34143580 sort code: 60-06-33 If you are a taxpayer, please join the Gift Aid Scheme, as 25p in every £1 can be claimed back by the parish, at no extra cost to you. Thankyou.

ST FRANCIS DE SALES 200 CLUB

Membership for the 200 club is open. To become a member the relevant information and forms are available in the church porch or on the parish 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

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

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (SVP)

'We are a small group of people who offer confidential support through phone calls, house visits, accompanying 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 to arrange a time. Thankyou

MARRIAGE PAPERWORK PROCESS

You are required to give 6 MONTHS NOTICE of MARRIAGE – whether it is taking place HERE or ABROAD. Couples or individuals should speak to a Priest VERY EARLY IN THE PROCESS . Thank you.

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 us 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.

TEXTS FOR SUNDAY MASS

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 Here is my servant in whom my soul delights

PSALM RESPONSE *The Lord will bless his people with peace.*

Acts 10: 34-38 God anointed him with the holy spirit.

Matthew 3:13-17 As soon as Jesus was baptised he saw the Spirit of God coming down on him.

TEXTS FOR NEXT SUNDAY MASS

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

Isaiah 49: 3, 5-6 I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth

PSALM RESPONSE *Here I am Lord! I come to do your will*

1 Corinthians 1: 1-3 May God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace

John 1: 29-34 Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world

FOR DAILY PRAYERS AND MASS READINGS ONLINE,
VISIT <https://www.universalis.com/>

OFFERTORY COLLECTION 1st JANUARY 2023

Envelopes: £33.00 Loose Plate: £55.45

Contactless: £25.00

2nd Collection 1st January: £39.30

Total Christmas Offering: £1,675.00

December Bank Standing Orders: £2,222.00

Thankyou all for your contributions

2nd Collection this weekend 8th January:
WHITE FLOWER APPEAL (SPUC)

'Christmas Crib' Donations 2022

The Christmas Crib Donations Box will be removed after the 10.15am Mass on January 8th 2023. All donations received will go to support the work of The Catholic Children's Society's Southwark Crisis Fund, providing immediate practical support to families in need. Thankyou

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.

Or go to our JustGiving page:

www.justgiving.com/St-Francis-de-Sales-Hartley

Thankyou to each and everyone for your continued commitment and support in raising these funds.

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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