



This parish is served by the Spiritans

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A Mass Book A Vol 1 page 139

REFLECTION ON ASH WEDNESDAY 2023

In 2023, like in every year, Ash Wednesday is the first day of the liturgical season of Lent. It always falls six and half weeks before Easter, beginning the Lenten season of preparation for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Ash Wednesday dates back to the 11th century. Yet, the tradition of receiving ashes has even earlier roots to the ancient Hebrew custom of clothing oneself in sackcloth and dusting oneself with ashes as a sign of penance.

The Bible does not explicitly detail this first day of Lent, but there are many instances of this repentant act in the Old Testament, such as Job 16:15 'I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and have laid my strength in the dust', and the New Testament, such as Luke 10:13 'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.'

Across many religious traditions, ashes signify the mortality of our human bodies. Genesis 3:19 tells us, 'By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return'. In the early Christian Church, public penance for people who had sinned included wearing ashes and sackcloth. As the Church grew and evolved, this practice lessened. This long tradition of externally recognizing ourselves as sinners seeking renewal with God ultimately transformed into what we now know as Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

As the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday awakens us to Jesus' entry into the desert preceding his death. Before Easter, however, we must prepare our hearts for his Resurrection. We begin our season of preparing our hearts for Easter by recognizing our brokenness and need for conversion a turning of our hearts to God.

The ashes symbolize our mortality. They are a physical reminder that our bodies will decay, but our souls will live on in eternal life. The cross of ashes means that we are making a commitment, that we are undertaking Lent as a season of prayer and penitence, of dying to ourselves. It also describes our human condition: it says that we are broken and need repair; that we are sinners and need redemption.



THE CHURCH IS OPEN

Tues-Fri 8.45am-4.00pm

Sat 10.00am-6.30pm

Sun 7.45am-12noon

SUNDAY MASS

Sat 18th February

Vigil Mass 5.30pm

Int People of the parish

Sun 19th February

8.30am

10.15am

WEEKDAY MASS

Tues 21st February

9.30am

THE SEASON OF LENT

Wed 22nd February

ASH WEDNESDAY

9.30am: Mass with

Distribution of Ashes.

7.30pm: Distribution of Ashes **(No Mass)**

Thurs 23rd February

9.30am: Int. Marian

Kneller, R.I.P.

Fri 24th February

9.30am Int. Felin

Welch, 96th birthday

Thanksgiving.

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

Most importantly, it tells us that, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are to carry our crosses.

Fasting on Ash Wednesday: There are only two obligatory days of fasting and abstinence in the Catholic Church: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Catholics are also instructed to abstain from meat on each Friday during Lent. Fasting is a sign of repentance and helps us embody our spiritual hunger for Christ, who himself fasted in the desert for forty days preceding his death and Resurrection.

The Catholic Church requires able members from age 18 to 59 to fast on Ash Wednesday. The obligation to abstain from meat applies to those 14 and older. Fasting allows for one full meal and two smaller meals (that combined do not equal a full meal), with an expectation to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday. Exemptions are available for those with special physical needs.

Ash Wednesday, as the first day of Lent, is a great time to begin a renewed commitment to prayer. In addition to fasting and attending Mass (or a service where ashes are distributed), you can recognize Ash Wednesday through prayer and almsgiving—the other two pillars of Lenten observance.

TEXTS FOR SUNDAY MASS

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18 You must love your neighbour, as yourself

PSALM RES. *The Lord is compassion and love*

1 Corinthians 3: 16-23 All are your servants, but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God

MATTHEW 5: 38-48 Love your enemies

TEXTS FOR NEXT SUNDAY MASS

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT (A)

Genesis 2: 7-9, 3: 1-7 The Creation and sin of our first parents

PSALM RES. *Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned*

Romans 5: 12-19 However great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater

Matthew 4: 1-11 Jesus fasts for forty days and is tempted

FOR DAILY PRAYERS AND MASS READINGS

ONLINE, VISIT <https://www.universalis.co.uk>

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.

PARISH NOTICES

PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN LENT

Commencing Friday February 24th at 7.30pm, in the church. All are welcome to attend.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS BOOKLET

A set of reflections on the Stations of the Cross, incorporating writings from the great mystics of the Church, including St. Francis de Sales, is now available for purchase (£3.50) from Alive Publishing See: <https://alivepublishing.co.uk/catalogue>

‘Anne Inman explores comparisons between the plagues and the wars that ravaged Europe and our own times. There are two consistent features to the revelations of the mystics as they contemplate the cross: they recognise in the figure of the suffering, human Jesus, the divine Person, who was present and active at the creation of the world; and they experience an overwhelming sense of the love of God, and the assurance that all will be well.’

PARISH BARN DANCE CEILIDH ON SATURDAY 4th MARCH 2023, with live music from the Aqueducts

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF VENUE This parish social will now take place in All Saints Church Centre, Ash Rd, Hartley, DA38DB from 7.30pm-10.30pm. Bring your family and friends. **For tickets & further information please contact Kate 0785431948 or Anna 07703475720. Thankyou.**

‘EASYFUNDRAISING’ - DO YOU SHOP ONLINE?

Please use **easyfundraising** every time you shop online! Over 7,000 brands will donate, so you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you’re buying. **It’s easy and FREE!**

These donations really help us out, so please sign up if you haven’t yet. **You can get start by clicking:** https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/oratoryofsaintfrancisdesalesutm_campaign=raise-more&utm_medium=email&utm_content=rm-en-n2 Or Visit www.easyfundraising.co.uk for more.

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 adults or children for Sacramental programmes must be registered parishioners, attending Mass.**

BAPTISM FOR BABIES AND INFANTS

Parents of infants and those seeking Baptism, please attend weekend Mass and speak with Fr. Alphonsus afterwards to register for the Baptism course.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY – FOR CHILDREN IN YR TO Y2

The next Children's Liturgy will be on **Sunday 26th February**. Please bring your child into the Meeting Room before 10.15am Mass begins.

SACRAMENTS OF FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION - 2023 PROGRAMME

Preparation Classes take place on Fridays during term time, 3.30-4.30pm in the meeting room.

CONFIRMATION IN 2023

Confirmation preparation classes take place on Tuesdays during term time in the church meeting room 6.30-8.00pm, unless otherwise notified.

RECEIVING COMMUNION

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

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) 2023.

Lessons take place on Saturday mornings in the church meeting room, unless otherwise notified.

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 introduce yourself to the parish priest and register yourself/your family on the Parish Registration Database.** Forms are available in the porch, or on the parish website to complete and return. Please consider how you can support the parish community with your time, talents and resources.

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 one of the Food Bank Boxes, in the Meeting Room or in the porch.

'SEEKING SANCTUARY' - support for migrants

Donations of warm clothing and toiletries, can be placed into the blue box in the Meeting Room. Please visit <https://seekingsanctuary.weebly.com/>

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

ST FRANCIS DE SALES 200 CLUB

Membership for the 200 club is open. To become a member, you will find information and forms in the porch area of the church or on the parish website. Please speak to Tina Shirley or Kate Whittaker for assistance. **Our February Draw** will take place on Sunday 26th February, after the 8.30am Mass.

DIOCESAN NOTICES

ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK LENT RETREAT 2023 - 'RENEWED IN HOPE'

Make some space to develop your relationship with God this Lent. Sign up for the Diocesan Lent Retreat "Renewed in Hope". Every week you will receive an email with links to a 20-minute video in which Archbishop John will introduce the theme and the reading, you will also receive materials to use in your own prayer and reflection. Just sign up here <http://eepurl.com/hVT7Dv>

CLERGY SUPPORT FUND SECOND COLLECTION

Next weekend, 26th February, we will be holding the Clergy Support Fund Appeal Collection. This fund enables the Archdiocese of Southwark to care for priests in their retirement, old age, and at their time of ill health, after their lifetime of service and devotion to Christ, His Church and His people. Please pick up an envelope and return it next Sunday for our 2nd Collection. You may also donate directly online at <https://rcaos.org.uk/donate/csf> Or scan the QR code on the noticeboard outside. Please continue to pray for our sick and elderly priests and consider supporting this worthy cause.

CAFOD Family Fast Day Friday 3rd March (Lent Appeal)

This Lent, your donations to CAFOD's Family Fast Day Appeal will help families fighting the climate crisis and ensure that our Church network can quickly respond to emergencies, like the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey. **Return the envelope provided on Sunday 5th March for our 2nd Collection** or give directly via cafod.org.uk/give

If you'd be interested in some fundraising this Lent, see <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Parish-fundraising>

PARISH GROUP MEETINGS

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

We have a small, friendly group whose members can visit to chat or just to lend a listening ear. Please speak to Fr. Alphonsus and he will put you in touch with us. Meetings/visits are held in strict confidence.

YOUTH GROUP

Meetings take place in the meeting room. Contact: Laura Bourne through the office.

ADULT CHOIR

Thursdays at 7:30pm in the church. New members are welcome. Contact: Yvonne at yhegarty@talktalk.net

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (SVP)

Contact us confidentially via 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)

'Last week a few guests came along and we all enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon. Our esteemed veteran member Felin sent cakes so we could join the celebration for her 96th birthday! Congratulations Felin! Please come to our next afternoon meeting on Wednesday 8th March, you will be most welcome.'

CWC Meetings are on 2nd Wednesday of the month in the church meeting room at 2:00pm unless otherwise stated. Contact: Margaret Walsh.

CATENIANS (Meopham Circle)

First Wednesday each month at 7.30pm at Hartley Country Club. Contact: Les Bober, Membership Officer 07811407386/Steve Lewis, Secretary, 07305 360305.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION 12th FEBRUARY 2023

Envelopes: £54.00 Loose Plate: £72.80

Standing Order: £466.50 Contactless: £10.00

2nd Collection CAFOD APPEAL: £55.60

You can still donate directly at cafod.org.uk

Thankyou all for your support to the parish

Our 2nd Collection this weekend 19th February:

Urgent repair works at the presbytery

THATCH FUND

Our funding stands at £36,516.39 of the £45,000.00 Target to reach by the end of 2023.

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 donate via our *JustGiving* page www.justgiving.com/St-Francis-de-Sales-Hartley

'PLANNED GIVING' and GIFT-AIDED DONATIONS

The parish relies on contributions to maintain the church building and presbytery, supporting the priest in his ministry which is the Church's Mission.

If you have not already, please consider setting up a Monthly Bank Standing Order. This is most helpful to the parish for budgeting and planning projects for the future – it is non-binding and you may cancel at any time.

Other ways to contribute are: (i) Weekly Gift Aid Envelopes (ii) Use the Contactless Machine in the church (iii) Cash or Cheque payable to RCAS Hartley (iv) One-off Donation envelopes (v) Online transactions to Nat West Bank, Account: RCAS Hartley. Acc 34143580 sort code: 60-06-33 If you are a taxpayer, all donations can be Gift-Aided at no cost to you by joining the Gift Aid Scheme– for every £1 you contribute, an extra 25p can be claimed back for the parish.

Bank Standing-Order and Parish Gift-Aid Scheme information can be found on the parish website www.stfrancisdesales.org.uk Hard copies are on the shelf in the porch. Thankyou

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

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

CIO Registered Incorporated Charity Number 1173050