

PARISH -OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE, WHITSTABLE CT5 2EY
with St. Joseph's, Chestfield CT5 3LD

www.rcourladywhitstable.org.uk



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Parish Secretary:	Mrs Bernadette Martin:	Tues./Wed./Fri. 9 am to 4.30 pm
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Parish Website:	www.rcourladywhitstable.org.uk	
Notices for the Bulletin:	To be submitted please by 7.30 pm on Wednesday	

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY (Yr A) Mass Book page 111

4th January 2026

SATURDAY: 3rd Jan: Confessions: 11.30am to 12noon; 5.15pm to 5.45pm 6.00 pm: Well-being of Jennifer Austin (E Sloan) SUNDAY: 4th Jan: 2nd Sunday after the Nativity 8.30 am: Alan Paul, RIP (E Hampshire) 10.30 am: All Our Parishioners <i>Followed by refreshments</i> TUESDAY: 6th Jan: The Epiphany of the Lord 10.00 am: Johanna Gregory, RIP (K O'Rourke) 7.00 pm: All Our Parishioners WEDNESDAY: 7th Jan: St Raymond of Penyafort 12.30 pm: Gladys Sutton's Intentions	THURSDAY: 8th Jan 10.00 am: Peggy Maher, RIP <i>Followed by Adoration and Benediction</i> FRIDAY: 9th Jan: 10.00 am: Dec'd members of Diamond Family SATURDAY: 10th Jan: Confessions: 11.30am to 12noon; 5.15pm to 5.45pm 6.00 pm: Joy Eapen, RIP (M Joy) SUNDAY: 11th Jan: The Baptism of the Lord 8.30 am: All Our Parishioners 10.30 am: Marion Hanley, RIP (A Boland) <i>Followed by refreshments</i> End of the Christmas Season
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My thanks... to everyone who so kindly contributed to the Christmas offering, those who gave gifts and cards. I am very grateful to you, and realise how blessed I am to be part of this wonderful Parish! Particular thanks to all who helped the Parish by Christmas church cleaning, church decoration, and the flower arranging, and also to those who supporting the Christmas Liturgies in many different ways.

2026: The Church started its new Liturgical year on the 30th November, the start of Advent, however the calendar new year does mark a significant moment in our own personal and cultural mindset. How many of us have set "New Year" resolutions? How many of these (if any) specifically included God and a spiritual element? It's not too late! As well as individuals, our Parish community *should* pause & reflect on 2026. What is the Lord calling us to, as a local community of believers, as missionary disciples? Read on...

CALLED TO BEAR FRUIT: The consultation that the Archbishop commissioned in 2025 has had a response published. The Archdiocese gives thanks to thousands of people who took part: "*We are grateful to you all for sharing so openly your hopes for the life of the Church in our Archdiocese.*" The response, which includes 15 actions points for renewal, is available at rcaos.org.uk/calledtobearfruit and a small number of hardcopies have been sent to the parish. "*The consultation revealed a burning desire within our parishes to be missionary and evangelising disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, who work together to help people encounter His love. So, as we move forward on the next steps together, let's build up the Body of Christ in Southwark with faith and confidence, becoming ever more a community of missionary disciples filled with joy and hope for the future. As an Archdiocese, we will continue to discern the process of renewal, and further updates will be provided in due course.*"

The 'Consultation Response' is a step on a journey, not an end in itself. It is a document for the Parish as well as for the Diocese; a 'gift' (and a challenge) from the Lord Jesus to each of us, not only to me as Parish Priest. I would ask you to read this with an open heart and an open mind, to talk about it in the family and with other parishioners... and to share that which the Holy Spirit inspires you, with me and others.

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD: On Tuesday 6th January we celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord; a Holy Day of obligation in our country. The word “epiphany” comes from the Greek *epiphainen*, which means “to manifest”, “appear”, or “make known.” The Gospel of St Matthew recounts the wise men arriving from the East bearing gifts to the new born Jesus. This is seen as a tangible sign of the revelation of Jesus, the Son of God and saviour of the world, to the wider world. May the manifestation of the Christ child help us grow closer to Him. As a Holy Day of obligation there will be Mass at 10 am and 7 pm.

Wishing you, your families & friends, a continuing blessed Christmas Season. *Canon Philip*

CRIB OFFERINGS: During the Christmas season we are encouraged to visit the Nativity scene. Offerings placed by the Crib will be given equally to the Friends of the Holy Land and the Southwark Fund administered by the Catholic Children’s Society.

BURNS NIGHT: Parish Supper & Quiz Night: Saturday 24th January, 7.15 pm (after 6 pm Mass). A quiz & poems night from the great man himself! With our take on ‘Neeps & Tatties’. Come along & join us for a warming meal & a fun evening. Tickets £10 on sale from this weekend.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2026: The weekly preparation sessions, starting later this month, take place in the hall at 9.15am for about an hour. Forms to apply for the programme are available after Weekend Mass from Canon Philip, and from the Parish Office, they should be returned by 11th January. The programme starts with a session for the children **and parents** at 9.30am, 18th January, in the Social Centre.

WEDNESDAY TEA CLUB restarts this coming Wednesday (7th Jan.) meeting 2pm to 4pm in the Parish Social Centre. All welcome. Entry only £1 which includes a raffle ticket, refreshments and cake.

POPE LEO’S JANUARY PRAYER INTENTION: that praying with the Word of God may be nourishment for our lives & a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal & missionary Church.

RECENTLY DECEASED: Please pray for the repose of the soul of Marian Ahern, who passed away on 31st December; we pray for Anthony and the family, her many friends in the parish and further afield. *May she rest in peace and rise in glory.* Arrangements are now in place for the funeral of Jo Melis, who passed away before Christmas. The Funeral Mass will be at 11.30 am, Thursday 15th January, followed by cremation. Please also pray for Caroline Tupper, daughter of Margaret McVicar, passed away recently.

ANNIVERSARIES: Please remember in your prayers those whose anniversaries occur about this time: Rev Patrick Lonergan, Mary Haines, Frances Davis, Eugene Thompson, George Andrews, Leslie Parson, Bert Waldock, George Catt, Ellen Ware, Franco Carboneri, Ted Whittle, George Mealy, David Caulfield, Catherine Renihan, “Bill” Williams, John Reynolds, Marian Turlo, Frank Casey, Sally Sheppard, Vera Newlyn, Stanley Hughes, Molly Solly, Elda Branchley, Keggy Diamond, John Campbell, Marcelle Harman, Avis Wiles, Brendan Deere, Christina Martin, Veronica Leach, Peter Salvatori, Thomas Redman, Johanna Lacey, Walter de la Hoyde, Sister Theodara Daley, Alfred Austen, Millie Tracey, Desmond Willis and John Green.

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, & let perpetual light shine upon them; may they rest in peace. Amen.

SICK: Your prayers are asked for: Claire Christie, Duncan Forrester, Suzie Fowler, Katherine Harris, Amanda Maclean, Diarmuid O’Sullivan, Oscar O’Sullivan, Dominic Punch, Pauline Summers, David Rose, Nicholas Watson, Margaret Webb, Leah Sheehan, Roman Sheehan, Colin Henson, Catherine Richardson, Reita Mugford, Jack Murphy, Gillian & David Black, Teresa Way, Nigel Bates, James Shepherd, Tina Bezer, Margaret Morgan, Gillian Lampard, Neil Lawson, Pamela Bavington-Brown, Shelia Slater, Les Hill, Graham Hill, Paul Regan, Christopher McDonnell, Terry & Ellie Kemp, Julliete Beaumont, Karenza Craven, Dave Chambers, Nora Vaz, Jennifer Austin, Collette MacDonald, May Dengate, Rose Link, Shirley Mayhew, & Maureen Saddleton. We pray for all who are sick or in hospital, their carers and all staff.

<i>Collections</i>	<i>Gift Aid</i>	<i>Non-Gift Aid</i>	<i>Total</i>
20 th & 21 st December 2025	£443.35	£196.24	£639.59
Christmas Flowers– Retiring Collection		£216.04	£216.04
Standing Order and other regular giving: Weekly average for December 2025*	£381.38	£18.46	£399.85

Thank you for your continued support of our parish, and for the Christmas Flower offerings.

*This is the calculated ‘weekly equivalent’ of contributions received direct to the Parish account from parishioners for December.

The Catholic Parish of Our Lady Immaculate, Whitstable, is part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark CIO Registered Incorporated Charity No.: 1173050

ONLINE NEWSLETTER EXTRA...

Some items that we receive or find won't fit on two sides of A4 but we can still share them with you here on the e-edition of the newsletter on the website. This can be information we have been asked to share, but that may not be of immediate import to the parish; it might be interesting information, or it may be items that can be useful to look up. Additionally, some items can be repeated.

NEW TO THE PARISH? If you have moved to the parish since 2019 (when the last parish census took place) please let us know via email. We can email our 'new parishioner form' and add you onto our parish database; information provided only used for Church purposes.

Weekly Parish Email: Canon Philip sends an email each week to let parishioners know the Newsletter is on the website. If you would like to be added to the list please email whitstable@rcaos.org.uk

CHURCH CLEANING: A number of our volunteers have had to hang up their dusters, as they are unable to continue with church cleaning; *thank you for all you have done for our community!* Now is the time for new volunteers: Your Parish needs **YOU!** If you are able to spare an hour to clean sometime during the week or on a Saturday morning please email the Parish Office. There is a rota & you will be paired with someone else.

FIRST FRIDAY ROSARY: Pupils from St Mary's School will lead the rosary on Friday 6th February at 9.30am. The prayers are offered particularly for the children and staff of the school, & their families.

SCAM EMAILS: The Parish recently received an email from someone impersonating a parishioner. The criminal hacked the email account & sent messages to purchase items on their behalf. A few parishioners received the same message. Please ignore & delete it, as it is a scam. Do keep personal data safe and be vigilant.

CATHOLIC LEGACY: Leaving a lasting legacy is a thoughtful way to make a difference. Please consider including a gift in your will for Catholic causes and projects, especially our own parish. Your generosity can leave a big impact for future generations worshipping in our church. There are brochures at the back of the church from the Diocese to help you and as well as information on free will writing services.

WEDNESDAY TEA CLUB: meet most Wednesdays (*September to July*) 2pm to 4pm in the church hall. £1 entry gets you a raffle ticket, refreshments and cakes, plus frequent bingo, games, music, and lots more!!!!

"PARISH MASS BOOKS": There is an opportunity to arrange a prayer 'dedication' in a copy of the Parish Mass books while also donating towards their cost, enabling prayer for our families, departed family or friends. Forms for dedications & donations are available, from the back of the church.

MISSION 'RED BOXES': In England and Wales, Missio & the Mill Hill Missionaries work together through the Red Box partnership. For over 80 years now the 'Red Box' has been a symbol of faith, hope and love in people's homes. The income from the Red Box is shared 60/40 between Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries. Missio supports faith communities in dioceses where the Church is still young or poor overseas. The Mill Hill Missionaries' share supports formation and training of its future missionaries. In England & Wales there are Red Boxes in over 200,000 homes; together we have collected millions of pounds for the missionary Church. Do you remember a 'Red Box' in your home? Do you still have one? Canon Philip would like to reenergise in our parish this way of helping the missions. On World Mission Sunday, please pray that we may be inspired to help pray for those missions evangelising overseas and to support them financially. Many parishes have a 'red box coordinator' – would you be willing to do this for our parish?

GIFT AID: If you a UK Tax payer and are able to 'Gift Aid' donations, please let us know as for every £1 donated, the parish can claim 25p at no extra cost to the donor. Standing orders can be gift aided. If you need help or more information email: whitstablegac@rcaos.org.uk or the parish office.

Volunteers welcome for roles in the parish...

Canon Philip writes: I am sure many of you help in many different ways of outreach; may God bless you for all that you do! However, it would be wonderful to see even more parishioners getting involved in various parish ministries and activities. There are so many things that happen to keep the Parish flourishing, and we need volunteers (existing **and new**) to keep everything going. Rather than give a long list here, there is a sheet (in church) listing (most) of the various roles, ministries & tasks of our volunteers.

*"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts.
Use them well to serve one another" 1 Peter 4:10.*

Volunteer roles include:

CHURCH FLOWERS: Our teams of arrangers help us by looking after church flowers on a rota about once a month. Thank you for all you do! We are looking for new volunteers to join the rota – help and direction provided, no experience required. Also, the parish needs help with collecting flowers (twice a week) from the Whitstable High Street branch of Sainsbury's; a group willing to make a rota would be ideal; let us know!

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION: They assist by helping to distribute the Sacred Host or the Precious Blood. This will often be during Mass but may also be taking Holy Communion to those in the wider parish community who are housebound due to health, age or disability. If you know a parishioner who might be able help with this work (or if you might like to offer) please let Canon Philip know. There is preparation, first in the parish (including safeguarding clearance) and commissioning at the Cathedral.

ALTAR SERVERS: Our altar servers assist during Mass and at other liturgies. It is a role open to young & old, normally after making First Holy Communion. Altar Servers help prepare the church before Mass, have particular tasks during Mass, and finally assist with clearing the altar afterwards. If you would like to join in please speak to Canon Philip.

BIDDING PRAYER Writers: Volunteers kindly help by writing bidding prayers for weekend Masses. Some new members have joined the rota and so the workload is now spread out further, but we would still be very grateful if more people would join the rota. Please contact the office if you are interested (guidance given).

CHURCH CLEANING: With so many people coming to Mass each weekend, plus visitors praying during the week, it is important for the church to be spruced up each week. Volunteers give time, an hour or two, once every four weeks to help with the church cleaning. Thank you to all involved in keeping the church so smart. Could you spare some time to help & join the rota? Volunteers are usually paired up with someone else.

READING AT MASS: If you would like to join the teams of readers at our weekend Masses, speak to Canon Philip and also contact the parish office via whitstable@rcaos.org.uk

SUNDAY TEA & COFFEE: Volunteers help to 'host', (on a rota basis) the T&C's after 10.30am Mass. If you are interested in helping or want to know more, contact Sarah Hinchliffe after Sunday 10.30 Mass, or by email sarahhinchliffe1610@gmail.com, or phone 07788 671213. Additionally, a different group of volunteers arrange an "occasional breakfast" after the 8.30am Mass; they too would welcome any offers of help – contact the Parish Office.

Items from past newsletters

ANNUAL MASS COUNT: Thank you to all who helped with during the 4 weeks of the official Mass count, and also for the work of counting during the Summer. The figures show an average of 209 attending Mass this year, slightly smaller than the 216 average in 2024.

Date	6pm	8.30am	10.30am	Total	Date	6pm	8.30am	10.30am	Total
20/21 Sept	52	52	116	220	4/5 Oct	48	38	114	200
27/28 Sept	49	48	110	207	11/12 Oct	44	58	108	210

LISTENING TO THE READINGS AT MASS: When we read or listen to the bible it is almost always in a translation – unless you are gifted enough to understand Hebrew, Aramaic and ancient Greek! We rely on the gifts and talents of translators and scholars to bring us a more widely understood text. It was been decided by our Bishops that the 'translation' we listen to during Mass would change and we will use a new version of the Lectionary (the book used to read from in Mass). This started on the 1st December 2024, the First Sunday of Advent. The Parish has received its ordered copies of the books to be used in the Sanctuary by the Readers and Clergy. Described as "*Exquisitely bound... adorned with gold-blocking, gilded edges and multiple ribbon markers, these [4] volumes are both sturdy & worthy for the proclamation of the Word of God.*" Additionally, the "Parish Mass Book" we use has been replaced. In our parish we deferred replacement of these books at the end of 2010 when the Mass prayers changed, presumably anticipating the future change of the Lectionary, and so Advent was the time to replace these books. Other options exist but, although having a significant up-front cost, the weekend 'Parish Mass Book' seem to be more environmentally friendly and financially cost effective over the long term. (updated 15th Nov '25)

ORDINATIONS, of parishioners or people associated with Whitstable: Fr Chris Benynon, a priest of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton (retired), visited the parish as he is an ‘old boy’ of the parish. In the course of a conversation he was asked how many priests had come from the parish, and he thought, including himself, about fifteen. This is an impressive number and Canon Philip would like to draw a list up of all Ordinations with connections to Whitstable. If you can supplement the list below please get in touch:

Bishop Michael Evans,	Fr Hatchard (<i>Christian name?</i>)	Fr John Slater
Mgr Pat Wall,	Fr Bruce Keller,	Deacon Dan Mulcahy
Fr Chris Benynon,	Fr Anthony Pile	<i>also:</i> Fr Richard Calcutt MHM
Fr Tim Forbes-Turner,	Fr Jack Pledger,	<i>whose mother lived in the parish.</i>
Fr Barry Grant,	Fr Maurice Pledger,	<i>possibly also:</i> Fr Tony Hughes?

CATHOLIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: One of the early ‘missions’ the Church in this country engaged in, when Catholicism began to re-establish, was the provision of education to young people, often supported by Religious Sisters and Brothers; in our Parish the Mercy Sisters. As the State began to make more provision for education, the Church worked in partnership: State funding was provided and the Church maintained influence through its involvement in school governance. This is still the case today. The Archbishop is able to appoint Governors to Diocesan schools, and has the right to maintain a majority of ‘Foundation Governors’. He can only do this if parishioners are willing to volunteer their time for this highly important role. Our own local Catholic School, St Mary’s, has vacancies for appointments to its Local Governance Committee (LGC), as does the Ursuline College in Westgate. Would you be willing to aid the Archbishop, the Parish, the Schools, and especially the pupils by being a member of a LGC? Governors meet usually six times a year, make a few formal visits to the school each year and endeavour to keep abreast of the life of the School community. Their role is strategic – not day to day management of the School (the role of the Headteacher) – and one that has been described as being a “critical friend” to the school, with a particular focus on maintaining & developing the Catholic life and ethos. Is this something you could help with? Speak to Canon Philip in the first instance.

VOCATIONS TO THE DIACONATE: Is God calling you to become a Deacon? If you are considering a vocation to serve at the altar & profess God’s gospel ministry as a Deacon, visit rcaos.org.uk/TheDiaconate. Let us pray for all Deacons and those in formation.

Long Term Parish Items – for information

PARISHIONERS IN HOSPITAL: It is important to let Canon Philip and the Parish know if you or any parishioner is admitted to Hospital, or due for a stay in hospital. Due to Data Protection rules most hospitals will not pass on information about religious practice... sometimes even to an official chaplain. If you would like a visit from a priest in hospital you need to specifically ask the staff to arrange this for you. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to receive the Sacrament of the Sick before going into hospital. Please get in touch if you would like to receive this Sacrament, often appropriate before significant surgery.

A LEGACY IN YOUR WILL: If you are kind enough to be considering making a legacy donation through your will to the parish please contact Canon Philip or the Parish Office. The Parish community is very grateful and acknowledges such kind donations which can help develop the Parish, assist with its running and support the practice of our Catholic Faith for future generations. *Thank you*

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE: The Parish has a Book of Remembrance in the church, found in the display case in the St Mary’s Transept. If you would like names of your loved ones displayed in it then please complete our parish form, available at the back of the church, or contact the parish office for a form. These are gathered and the book updated by a parish volunteer from time to time.

REQUESTING MASS FOR A PARTICULAR INTENTION: A laudable Catholic custom is to have a Mass said for a specific intention. All Masses, of course, are offered to the glory of God and for the salvation of the whole world, but often there is also a specific intention; here in the Parish the intentions are usually printed in the newsletter. Anyone may request a Mass to be said for their particular intention and these can be offered for a variety of intentions. We often see Masses offered for the welfare of an individual or family, or for the repose of a soul; It is customary, when requesting a Mass, to make an offering as a way of being especially associated with that Mass. However, it is not necessary to make an offering. The suggested donation is £10; some give less, some give more, some give nothing. Please never feel that you cannot have a Mass said for your intentions due to lack of funds. A Mass costs nothing – except, of course, the life-saving death and resurrection of Jesus. Mass Intention envelopes and forms are available by the entrance of the church.

SAFEGUARDING: *The Diocesan Safeguarding Team include the following in every email they send:*

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or adult at risk, do not delay in contacting the police, using 999 if a child or adult is believed to be in immediate danger. It is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales to report all allegations of abuse to statutory authorities, regardless of whether the abuse occurred recently or in the past, or whether the accused person is living or deceased. If you are in any role within the Catholic Church in England and Wales, you must refer allegations directly to the safeguarding office for your diocese or religious congregation, or directly to the Police. If you are a member of the public, please refer allegations directly to the police and also to the safeguarding office in your diocese. You can contact the Southwark Safeguarding Office by phone 020 7261 1606 or email safeguardingoffice@rcaos.org.uk