

PRESBYTERY

37 Frindsbury Road,
Strood, ME2 4JA
01634717582

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(Mobile number for urgent pastoral
needs, including Anointing of the Sick
and Holy Communion)

PARISH PRIEST

Fr Mebrate Desalegn

mebratedesalegn@rcaos.org.uk**SYRO-MALABAR CHAPLAIN**

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*This parish is part of the RCAOS registered
Charity Number 1173050*

Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

ENGLISH MARTYRS**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Headmistress Ms Catherine Thacker

Frindsbury Road, Strood

ME2 4JA

01634 718964

A member of Kent Catholic Schools Partnership

LAST WEEK**ATTENDANCE****316****WEEKLY COLLECTION**

GIFT AID £244.40

NON-GIFT AID £470.90

TOTAL £715.30

ENGLISH MARTYRS' STROOD

August

Immaculate Heart of Mary**✠ HOLY MASS FOR THE WEEK 23RD AUGUST 2026****Missal: Prayers and readings PG. 389**SUNDAY 23RD**TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY**

8.30am Said Mass

Bernadette Foster intentions

10.30am Sung Mass

*People of the Parish*MONDAY 24TH**SAINT BARTHOLOMEW**

9.00am-9.30am Adoration & Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

*For all the children in our Parish*TUESDAY 25TH**FERIA**

9.00am-9.30am Adoration & Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

*Josef Krupka RIP*WEDNESDAY 26TH**FERIA**

9.00am-9.30am Adoration & Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

*Patrick Harte RIP*THURSDAY 27TH**SAINT MONICA, MEMORIAL**

9.00am-9.30am Adoration & Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

*Marian Ruth Salisbury RIP*FRIDAY 28TH**SAINT AUGUSTINE, MEMORIAL**

9.00am-9.30am Adoration & Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

*Fr Michael Adams Birthday intentions**(FRIDAY ABSTINENCE)*SATURDAY 29TH**THE PASSION OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, MEMORIAL**

9.30am Holy Mass

Holy Souls

6.00pm Vigil Mass

*Patrica Harte RIP*SUNDAY 30TH**TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY**

8.30am Said Mass

People of the Parish

10.30am Sung Mass

*Thomas and Catherine Fogarty RIP***Confessions**

Saturdays: 10.15 am–10.45 am and 5.15pm -5.45pm

First Friday of the Month: 10.00 am–11.am

Adoration and Holy Rosary: From Tuesdays to Fridays 9.00am-9.30am

Saturdays: 10.00 am–12.00 noon

Parish groups

(held in the John Fisher Room unless otherwise stated)

Monday

Mothers Prayers (monthly) at 7pm

Tuesday

Legion of Mary at 7 pm

Wednesday

Coffee Club after morning mass

Thursday

Padre Pio Prayer Group first Thursday at 7 pm

Friday

Mother and toddler's group at 9am (term time) Parish Hall

Youth Club – first Friday of the month at 6.30 pm (term time)

Saturday

Knights of St Columba, first Saturday of the month at 7 pm

Sunday

Tea and Coffee every Sunday at 11.30 am in the Parish Hall

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

In this weekend's Gospel, Jesus and his disciples travel to Caesarea Philippi, an area filled with shrines to pagan gods. Against this background of competing gods and beliefs, Jesus asks: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

This setting speaks to our world today. We may not worship statues, but money, success, power, possessions, pleasure and selfish interests can take God's place. Among these competing loyalties, Jesus asks each of us: "Who do you say that I am?" He invites us to reflect upon our relationship with him and the commitments made through Baptism, Christian marriage, religious life or priestly ordination. Some people carry pain because a marriage or vocation has become difficult or broken. Christ comes to meet us in our wounds, renew our faith and lead us forward. Is he still at the centre of our lives?

The disciples answer: "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." People recognise Jesus as a holy man, but their answers are incomplete. They think he has come to announce the Messiah without recognising that Jesus himself is the Messiah.

Jesus does not allow his disciples to hide behind other people's opinions. He asks: "But you, who do you say that I am?" Peter answers: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter has not simply given the correct answer; he has recognised the person before him. His confession does not come from human wisdom alone. Jesus tells him that "flesh and blood" has not revealed this, but the Father in heaven. Jesus then says: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." The Catholic tradition recognises Peter's confession of faith and the mission entrusted to him: to strengthen his brothers and preserve the Church in unity. The keys recall Eliakim in this weekend's first reading. Eliakim receives authority over the royal household and must use it as a father. In the same way, Peter's authority is given for service, not personal honour.

Through apostolic succession, Peter's successors continue this ministry. The Pope strengthens the faithful, safeguards the Church's teaching and serves as a visible sign of unity. When we recite the Creed, we stand with Peter and profess that Jesus is "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God." In the Gloria, we proclaim that Jesus Christ alone—not the gods of Caesarea Philippi or the idols of our age—is Lord, the Holy One and the Most High.

We see this ministry in Saint Pius X, whose memorial we celebrated on Friday. He promoted catechesis, priestly formation, the liturgy and frequent Holy Communion. By allowing children to receive First Holy Communion around the age of seven, he helped them encounter Jesus in the Eucharist. His example reminds us that the Church is renewed by leading people back to Christ. Before the Blessed Sacrament, we can make Peter's profession our own: "You are the Christ."

Friday's first reading from Ezekiel helps us understand how God renews his people. The prophet is taken into a valley filled with dry bones. They represent Israel in exile: broken, hopeless and spiritually lifeless. God asks, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Humanly, restoration seems impossible. Yet, when God's word is proclaimed and his Spirit enters them, the bones come together and stand alive.

The dry bones can also represent whatever has become wounded or lifeless within us: broken relationships, marriages without peace, abandoned Christian commitments and priestly or religious vocations facing difficulty or failure. Yet failure does not have to be the end. Even Peter, after professing that Jesus was the Christ, later denied him three times. The risen Lord did not abandon him. Jesus spoke to Peter again, restored him with love and renewed his mission: "Feed my sheep."

God continues to speak when relationships appear broken, vocations are wounded and faith seems lifeless. His word calls us to repentance, restores hope and breathes new life into dry bones. Saints Monica and Augustine, whose feasts we celebrate this week, show this power. Through Monica's faithful prayer and Saint Ambrose's preaching, God's word changed Augustine's restless heart. He discovered that our hearts remain restless until they rest in God.

Peter's ministry continues today. During Pope Leo XIV's visit to France, he will hold a youth prayer vigil at the Stade de France on 25 September. It has been reported that more than 80,000 places were reserved within an hour. This interest shows that many young people still desire prayer, Christian friendship and an encounter with Christ. Like Ezekiel's dry bones, what appears spiritually lifeless can be revived. The Holy Spirit is still breathing new life into the Church.

The same Lord asks us: "Who do you say that I am?" Whatever our wounds or failures, God continues to speak and call us back to life. With Peter, may we proclaim through our words and actions: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Amen.

MASSES AND CLERGY COVER

Fr Mebrate will be away from 6 to 28 August. Fr Shinoj will celebrate the weekday Masses, and Fr Geoffrey Pointer will assist with the weekend Masses for the final time. We thank them for their generous support.

Canon Victor Darlington will celebrate the 10.30 am Mass on Sunday 13 September as we begin our new pastoral year.

FORTHCOMING FUNERAL MASSES

When possible, let us attend the Funeral Masses of fellow parishioners or remember them in prayer on the day.

- Margaret Jablonska: Wednesday 2 September at 1.30 pm
- Gerard Cosgrove: Tuesday 8 September at 11.00

PILGRIM MADONNA

Welcome the parish Pilgrim Madonna into your home to encourage family prayer. Contact Chioma: 07411 112463 or sylvryn_chioma@yahoo.com.

READERS' MEETING

There will be a brief meeting for all current and new Readers on Saturday 5 September at 2.30 pm. Important changes and further training will be discussed. If you cannot attend, please contact Monica O'Brien on 07811 316029.

Interested in becoming Catholic? Seeking Baptism for your child? Enquiring about First Holy Communion or Confirmation? Please contact the parish: strood@rcaos.org.uk

PILGRIMAGE TO FATIMA

28 September–1 October, led by Fr Stephen Boyle. Cost: £419, including flights, transfers and half-board accommodation; single supplement £100. Insurance required. Book by 13 September: dartford@rcaos.org.uk or 07504 518262.

COURSE FOR MARRIED AND ENGAGED COUPLES

Growing in Faith Together is a four-session online course helping married couples enrich their relationship and engaged couples explore their faith together.

Sessions take place via Zoom at 8.30 pm on 8, 15, 22 and 29 September.

To book, contact Carole: mflkent@rcaos.org.uk.

Our sick parishioners and friends: Barbara Borthwick, John Paul Stoke, Betty Jones, Cathrin La Page, Lauren Allan, Tony Carroll, Sylvia Kemp, Billy Thomas, Marie Fassioms, Samantha Candeggi-D'Alonzo, Joe-Joe Dockrell, Carol Masey, Eileen Wells, Jenson Lambeth, Neo Taylor, Kathy Mogg, Anna Gawlik, Joanna Tidmarsh, Helen and Arthur Annal, Claire Baron, Rod Black, Michael New, Michael (Mick) Griffin, Adam Luck, Bonny (Bonifacio) Da Silva.

Of your charity – please pray for those whose anniversaries occur at this time: David Farrell, Simonne Leon, Terence Gardiner, Dorothy Hayden, Gregory McGlynn, Patrick Harte, Joseph Rodgers, Nellie Baldwin, Patricia Storey, Moyra Evans, Beverley Connolly, Leonard Duke, Marjori McManus, Patricia Harte.