

PRESBYTERY
37 Frindsbury Road,
Strood, ME2 4JA
01634717582
07960 322259

(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

Fr Shinoj Francis
shinojfrancis@rcaos.org.uk

PARISH DEACON

Rev. John Letley
07958 677299

PARISH SISTER

Sr. Augustine Day
01474 569565

PARISH SECRETARY

Anna West
strood@rcaos.org.uk

SAFEGUARDING

Kate Taylor
stroodsg4@safeguardrcaos.org.uk
Anthea Kwaw
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PARISH WEBSITE

www.englishmartyrsrccstrood.org

DONATIONS

Nat West Bank
Sort code: 60-21-02
Account number: 55082904
Account Name: RCAS Strood

This parish is part of the RCAOS registered

**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

344

WEEKLY COLLECTION

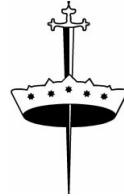
GIFT AID £188.90
NON-GIFT AID £705.12

TOTAL £894.02

**ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL
SECOND COLLECTION**
£277.96



ENGLISH MARTYRS' STROOD



FEBRUARY
The Holy Family

✠ HOLY MASS FOR THE WEEK 1ST FEBRUARY 2026 Missal: Prayers and readings PG.88

SUNDAY 1ST

FOURTH SUNDAY

8.30am Said mass
10.30am Sung mass

*Monica O'Brien Birthday intentions
Wellbeing of Linda Doran*

MONDAY 2ND

FO. THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

9.00am Holy Mass
7.00pm Holy Mass

*John Foster RIP
For all the volunteers in the EM Church*

TUESDAY 3RD

SAINT LAURENCE OF CANTERBURY

9.30am Holy Mass

John Foster RIP first anniversary

WEDNESDAY 4TH

SAINT HENRY MORSE

9.30am Holy Mass

*For the intentions of Fr Mebrate, the
Catechists and the parents of above*

THURSDAY 5TH

SAINT AGATHA

9.30am Holy Mass
10.00am–11.00am Adoration

For the forgotten souls in the Purgatory

FRIDAY 6TH

SAINTS PAUL MIKI AND COMPANIONS

9.30am Holy Mass

*For the First Communicants and for
confirmation and RCLIA candidates*

10.00 am–12.00 noon Adoration

5.30pm Adoration

7.00pm Holy Mass

*For the whole parish community, with a special
invitation to young people and their families*

SATURDAY 7TH

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

9.30am Holy Mass

Florette Lewis and Anika Mayfe

10.00am–12noon Adoration

6.00pm Vigil Mass

Baby William Mayfe

SUNDAY 8TH

FIFTH SUNDAY

8.30am Said mass

People of the Parish

10.30am Sung mass

Bonifacio and Tania Rose da Silva

Confessions

Fridays: 5.30 pm–6.30 pm, Saturdays: 10.15 am–10.45 am

First Friday of the Month: 10.00 am–12.00 noon

Thursdays: 10.00 am–11.00 am, Fridays: 5.30 pm–6.30 pm

Saturdays: 10.00 am–12.00 noon, First Friday of the Month:
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

Saturday

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

Sunday

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

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

“Non nisi te, Domine” — Nothing but you, Lord

Last Wednesday, we celebrated the feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas, priest, Dominican, and Doctor of the Church. Although he lived in the 13th century, his life and faith continue to speak powerfully to us today.

Saint Thomas was a man of extraordinary intelligence. He wrote extensively in theology, philosophy, Scripture, and teaching manuals for students. He tried, with great clarity, to explain the Christian faith, and he is well known for offering five ways of showing that belief in God is reasonable. His aim was never to reduce God to human logic, but to show that faith and reason belong together.

Yet Thomas knew something essential: God is always greater than our understanding. No matter how much we study or explain, the mystery of God remains beyond our grasp.

This became especially clear at the end of his life. In December 1273, after celebrating Mass, Saint Thomas had a profound spiritual experience. After that moment, he stopped writing altogether. He set aside the *Summa Theologiae*, unfinished, and became very quiet and deeply contemplative. He spent much more time in silence, prayer, and especially before the Blessed Sacrament.

When his secretary urged him to continue his work, Thomas replied with great humility:

“I can write no more. All that I have written seems like straw compared with what has now been revealed.”

This was not a rejection of theology, but a recognition that every human effort, however brilliant, is small when faced with the immensity of God’s mystery.

This humility was deeply connected to his love for the Eucharist. In 1264, when the Feast of Corpus Christi was newly established, devotion to the Eucharist was growing across the Church. Pope Urban IV asked Saint Thomas to compose the Office and hymns for this feast. From that request came some of the Church’s most loved Eucharistic hymns: *Pange Lingua*, *Tantum Ergo*, *Panis Angelicus*, and *O Salutaris Hostia*. These hymns reveal a man who did not only think about God, but who adored God.

At that time, perpetual adoration as we know it today did not yet exist. For both priests and people, the opportunity to gaze reverently upon the consecrated Host — especially during the celebration of Mass and the feast of Corpus Christi — was deeply important. People would remain in church, lingering in silence, simply looking upon the Host with faith and devotion. Saint Thomas lived and prayed within this growing Eucharistic love, learning that adoration begins with attention and stillness.

This helps us understand the mystery of the Mass itself. We may say that Mass begins at 10.30 am and ends at a certain time, and afterwards we go for tea and coffee or return home. But what takes place during the Eucharist is not limited by the clock. When we enter the Mass, we step into God’s mystery, into a moment that touches eternity. Heaven and earth meet. We are united with the angels and saints, and with all our loved ones who have gone before us. We pray for them, and they are close to us in this sacred mystery.

Saint Thomas teaches us something important for our own spiritual lives. We try our best to understand and explain the things of God, and that is good. But faith is not a subject we can fully master. It is a mystery we enter, especially in the Eucharist. Our children prepare for First Holy Communion by learning the foundations of faith, but contemplation of God is not reserved for childhood or old age. We are invited now — through attentive participation at Mass, through moments of silence, and through time before the Blessed Sacrament — to simply be before God.

As we begin this new week, Saint Thomas Aquinas offers us a simple but demanding prayer that sums up his life:

“Non nisi te, Domine.”

Nothing but you, Lord.

Before all our explanations — reverence.

Before all our activity, prayer.

And at the heart of everything — God Himself.

Non nisi te, Domine.

Masses this week

Monday 2 February – Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas)

Morning Mass at 9.00am. and evening Mass at 7.00pm, with the **Blessing of Candles**.

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, Elliott King.

Of your charity – please pray for those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Molly Smith, Joseph O’Kane, Arthur Padmore, Maureen Richards, James Doyle, Phillip Herberts, Dario Modena, Fr Arthur Porter, Matthew O’Connor, Albert Walter, Malachy Dowdall, Francis Hamill, Kevin Lynch, Margaret Gough, John Norris, Dick Nally, David Morris, Kevin Church, John Clarke.

SPUC Concert for Life THIS SATURDAY

The SPUC group are holding their annual **Concert for Life**, an evening of music and song on this **Saturday 31st Jan 2026 from 7pm until late at English Martyrs Parish Hall**. Please bring your own drinks, Light refreshments will be available. There is no entrance fee but donations will be greatly appreciated.

Tea and coffee

This Sunday we will have **Tea and Coffee** after the **10:30am Mass in the Parish Hall**, please do join us and get to know your brother and sister parishioners.

Mothers Prayer group

This **Monday 2nd February**, **Mothers Prayer group** will meet at **7 pm** in the church. **Church cleaning at 6pm**. Any help is highly appreciated.

English Martyrs Catholic Youth Club

English Martyrs Catholic Youth Club will meet on **Friday, 6th February, at 6.30 pm in the church**. It will start with prayers, Holy Mass, games and tuck shop. Children of ages from school Years 6 to 11 are welcome. Cost £2 per child.

Clergy Support Fund

Next weekend we will be holding the **Clergy Support Fund second collection**. The Clergy Support 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. A donation to this fund will ensure a dignified retirement for all of our priests. I kindly ask you to continue praying for our sick and elderly priests, and consider donating to this worthy fund. Thank you.

Parish Contact Details

We have a parish working mobile **(07960 322259)** for **urgent pastoral matters**, including the **Anointing of the Sick** and requests for **Holy Communion**. For **Mass intentions, certificates, documents, and other administrative enquiries**, please continue to use the **parish landline or parish email**.

Bishop-elect Gerard Bradley

Bishop-elect Gerard Bradley, appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark by Pope Leo XIV, will be ordained bishop on **Monday, 2 February 2026**, at St George’s Cathedral. We ask all parishioners to pray for him as he begins his episcopal ministry.

Help our school by becoming a Foundation Governor

English Martyrs’ RC Primary School is looking for new foundation governors. The school is looking for individuals from a range of backgrounds but particularly people who have either finance, health and safety or legal experience. If you, or anyone you know, are interested please email Chair of Governors, Phil Campbell at campp106@englishmartyrs.medway.sch.uk. Thank you.