



PARISH OF THE HOLY FAMILY - THANET

**Growing In Faith Together (GIFT) – A New Initiative for the Formation of Families of Our Parish**

The home is the first and primary place where faith is learned and lived. The Catholic Church in her teaching refers to the family as the "Domestic Church" (Ecclesia domestica). In this regard, Pope St. John Paul II beautifully said: "Catholic parents must learn to form their family as a 'domestic church', a church in the home as it were, where God is honoured, his law is respected, prayer is a normal event, virtue is transmitted by word and example, and everyone shares the hopes, the problems and sufferings of everyone else."

As a parish we are stepping into intentionally forming our young families to truly make the home the domestic church; a place where disciples are indeed formed. We are therefore going to begin a process of accompanying our young families to equip them to live this out.

We will be using a process which a few parishes in our country are currently using called which is called Growing in Faith Together (GIFT).

GIFT is also a pathway to preparing children for their First Confession (Reconciliation) and First Holy Communion. Therefore, every family in the parish with a child aged zero to eleven are to be part of this process, not only because of its immense benefit but it will be the only way through which their child can prepare for the reception the two Sacraments mentioned above. Families whose children have already received the Sacraments are not left out of GIFT. It is for every young family in the parish.

As a family journeys in GIFT, the GIFT Team (which is composed of catechists and the priest) will discern the readiness of the child for the Sacraments. If both parties think the child is ready, he/she will have a more focussed First Confession and Holy Communion catechesis which is parent-led in preparation for the reception of the Sacraments. Also, a child receives the Sacraments as and when he/she is ready rather than the previous annual large group celebration of First Holy Communion.

GIFT entails monthly sessions of parents and children together with the GIFT Team. The team accompanies the families in between sessions. In discussion with some of the parents of the parish it has been proposed that the monthly meetings alternate between Saturday mornings and Sundays after the 10:30am Mass. Each session starts with Mass, followed by refreshments and formation which includes the GIFT Team delivering a short catechesis and each family working together as a unit. We gather to celebrate, learn and worship.

The first session will be on Saturday, 31st January 2026 from 10am to 12 noon. Future dates will be published soon. In the coming weeks, there will be more communication on GIFT but please feel free to speak to me if you require any further information or clarity.

As hinted above, I have spoken to more than half of the families of the parish, and they are positive and excited about GIFT. One of my own personal excitements about this apart from those benefits enunciated above is that it will create and strengthen the community of our parish families. Let us all contribute our part to make this fruitful.

Yours in Christ, Father Joe Owusu-Ansah (Parish Priest)

**Collections Last Weekend**

Collection Plate: £378.46 of which £203.46 was Gift Aided

Digital Collection Plate: £70.00 of which £35.00 was Gift Aided

Standing Orders: £330.00 of which £330.00 was Gift Aided

**Confession**

(Sacrament of Reconciliation)

**Sundays 8.00 am - 8.25 am & 9.30 am - 10.10 am**

Please speak to the priest in person or email/phone the office to make an arrangement outside of these times

Sunday, 18th January 2026

**Saturday 17th January**

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

**Vigil 6pm**

*Grace Hobbs, RIP*

**Sunday 18th January**

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

**Mass 8.30am**

*Holy Souls*

**Mass 10.30am**

*Margaret Coverdale, RIP*

**Tuesday 20th January**

Feria

**Mass 6pm**

*Holy Souls*

**Wednesday 21st January**

Saint Agnes Virgin and Martyr

**Mass 10am**

*Holy Souls*

**Thursday 22nd January**

Saint Vincent

**Mass 8am**

*Holy Souls*

**Friday 23rd January**

Feria

**Mass 10am**

*People of the Parish*

**Saturday 24th January**

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

**Vigil 6pm**

*Eddie Cooke, RIP*

**Sunday 25th January**

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

**Mass 8.30am**

*Andrew McLoughlin, RIP*

**Mass 10.30am**

*Theodore Coverdale - Thanksgiving*

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**Sunday of the Word of God - Sunday 25th January**

Next Sunday is the annual celebration of the Bible and the importance of the Word of God set up by Pope Francis in 2019. To mark this Sunday, Father Joe kindly asks that could all please bring along their Bibles to Mass at the weekend.

**The God who Speaks - Parish Bible Study**

Our Bible Study evening continues this week on Thursday. It was once again an enjoyable and enriching gathering of parishioners of all different ages last week. Please come along even if you missed these early sessions as all are welcome any week; it remains your space. We will continue to meet every Thursday in the parish hall from 7:15pm to 8:15pm.

**Parish Welcomers and Readers Workshop - Saturday 24th January**

In our ongoing effort to create a welcoming atmosphere within our church, we will be inviting the readers and welcomers together to a workshop that will aim to further equip their ministries to the serve the parish more effectively. This will be held next Saturday, 24th January from 10:00am to 11:30am.

Additionally, we are looking for newcomers who feel that they may be able to help in one of our ministries, whether that is reading, welcoming or something more social like serving teas and coffees after Mass. If you are interested please speak to Father Joe or simply come along to the workshop.

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

This Sunday 18th January commences the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Members of the different Christian Churches will gather together for coffee, conversation and reflection. Our church will be hosting this on Wednesday 21st at 10:30-11:30am. The dates for all the churches are as follows:

Mon 19th Church House, Kent Gdns  
Tues 20th St Thomas' Church  
Wed 21st Catholic Church, Minnis Road  
Thurs 22nd The Bay Church,  
Fri 23rd Baptist Church, Station Rd  
Sat 24th St Mildred's Church, Acol

**Please show your support at a final, united service which will be hosted on  
Sunday 25th January at the Methodist Church at 3pm**

**Chris' Winter Warmer**

One of our parishioners will be kindly opening her home for anyone who would like some company in these cold winter months. You are all warmly invited to come for a cuppa, cake and a chat with friends on the following dates at 11am:

January 29th  
February 26th  
March 26th

If you are interested, Chris can be reached on 07773576795

**Funeral for Sister Zela Proctor - 30th January**

The funeral for Sister Zela Proctor, a former Headteacher at the Ursuline Convent, will be held on January 30th at 11am at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Wanstead (E11 2PR) Our thoughts and prayers are with Sister Zela and the Ursuline Sisters.

**St. George's Cathedral Second Collection - 24th-25th January**

For many Catholics living and working across London and the South East of England, St George's has been a beacon of light. Today, St George's Cathedral continues to attract thousands of worshippers and visitors each year, as well as serving a lively local parish community which proudly reflects the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of South London. Your support can enable the Cathedral to remain open daily to those seeking a place of peace, prayer and worship. - Thank you!

**SVP Quiz - Saturday 7th February**

The Saint Vincent de Paul Society will be hosting their quiz on Saturday 7th February from 7pm for a 7:30pm start time. Tickets will be on sale after Mass on Sundays at 10:30am and are £5 per head. Please bring your own refreshments.