



St James – A shining light in Petts Wood



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

27th July 2025

Seventeenth Sunday



Fr David says...

A story is told of a mother whose only child, a son, was confined in a hospital, seriously ill. She cared for him as best she could. When some relatives or friends dropped by, she asked them to attend to her son whilst she went to the Chapel. On her knees and in tears before the Blessed Sacrament, she began by acknowledging God as the Source of life and thanked Him for the gift of her son who had brought so much joy to her life. Then she begged Him to spare him. The worse his condition became, the harder she prayed. But her prayers notwithstanding, her son died. Her relatives and friends were worried how she would take this turn of events. They were surprised to see her son's death in peace. When asked how come, she answered, "What I prayed for was what I wanted. But during my prayer, there was something in me that said, "Let go and let God". Thus at one point, I finally said, "Your will be done, Lord" with my child's death, it was obvious that God did not go along with what I wanted. Though extremely painful and I will grieve my son all my life, I accepted his will wholeheartedly. He knows best. One day a colleague asked CS Lewis, if he really thought he could change God with his prayer for the cure of his wife's cancer. Lewis replied "Prayer does not change God, it changes me". The value of persistent prayer is not that God will hear us but that we will finally hear God.

There is also a place for persistent prayer. A nun in an Education order once said that one summer she witnessed a powerful lesson in persistence. It was the week before the school's annual picnic and excitement filled the air. The buses were booked, the list of attendees posted, and students could barely contain their joy. Then one afternoon, a girl knocked. A quiet humble student stood at the door of the convent office. "Sister" she said softly, "I really want to go for the picnic, but my parents said they can't afford it". The sisters listened with compassion and like the nuns had told others in similar situations, gently explained, "You may have to sit this one out unless you can find a sponsor". She nodded, thanked the nuns and left. But the next day, she came again. And the next. Always kind. Always hopeful. Never demanding. Just a child with a simple wish, knocking not only on the door but on the door of the nun's hearts. Her gentle persistence moved the nuns. In community, we reviewed their picnic budget, made a few cuts here and there, and made room for one more child. When we gave her the news, her face lit up with joy. It was as if heaven had answered. Her quiet steady knocking had become a living gospel right in front of the nun's eyes.

Today's readings echo that same spirit. In Genesis, Abraham dares to intercede for the people of Sodom. He comes before God with holy boldness – not arrogance, but courage rooted in relationship "what if there are fifty righteous people? Forty five? Forty?" He keeps going, down to ten. He is not bargaining,

he is pleading with the heart of a father.

In Luke, Jesus reinforces this same message. He teaches his disciples to pray not just with words but with persistence. He tells a story of a man who knocks at midnight asking for bread. At first the door remains shut. But the man keeps knocking. Eventually, the door opens not because of friendship but because of persistence.

Jesus's words today are unforgettable – Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. These are not empty promises. They are invitations to relationship. Jesus knows we sometimes feel like we are knocking on heaven's door in the dark, unsure if anyone is listening. But he assures us – keep knocking. God is not indifferent. God is near. God hears and responds not always though in the way or time we expect. He always responds with love.

This is not about receiving things. it is about receiving God. When we persist in prayer, we are not just reaching for blessings. We are reaching for a relationship. And God responds with his presence, peace and power.

So keep on knocking. Whether you are a student with a dream. A teacher seeking wisdom. A parent interceding for your child or a leader facing difficult decisions. Don't give up. Knock with hope ask with faith. Seek with love.

Modern Christians give lame excuses for not praying. The first excuse we give is that we are too busy. Often the first thing that is given up by busy Christians is the prayer life. The other excuse is that we do not believe that prayer does much good other than giving us psychological motivation to be better persons. However it also augments our relationship with God the source of our power. The third excuse is that we believe that a loving God should provide for us and protect us from the disaster of life such as disease or accidents without out asking him. In fact Prayer expresses our awareness of our need for God and our dependence on him. Lastly we think that prayer is boring. One cannot have a close relationship with anyone including God without persistent and intimate relationship. Since our society concludes that prayer doesn't work, it turns to other things like sex, violence and unhealthy addictions, psychological problems and spiritual poverty.

Through prayer we are nourishing our soul. Not more than 10 minutes a day can keep this relationship with God going – resulting in a peaceful resilience for the day. Try it if you have not got that rhythm yet in your life. It surely sustains me all through the day.

God bless you all. Have blessed holidays and come back safe and sound to the parish community.



All the Masses being said at St James' will be live streamed
<https://www.churchservices.tv/pettswood>
For the protection of all attend St James we request that you do not video live Masses using your phone during services.
 You can also take part in Adoration and Benediction by live stream.
 All events for live streaming are listed on the streaming site.

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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,
 or by appointment.

Seventeenth Sunday Saturday 26th July	06:00pm Peter Gudge RIP (R Scott)
Sunday 27th July	09:15am Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) 11:00am Betty Upton & Richard Keller RIP (B Keller)
Feria Monday 28th July	10:00am Requiem Mass for Anna (Patsy) Lovell
Saint Mary Magdalene Tuesday 29th July	10:00am Pope Leo (CWL)
Saint Bridget Wednesday 30th July	10:00am Joseph Carey RIP (S Doyle) 10:45am Eucharistic Adoration
Feria Thursday 31st July	10:00am Angela and Ken Evans (H Marvell)
Saint James Friday 1st August	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham 6pm Eucharistic Adoration
Seventeenth Sunday Saturday 2nd August	06:00pm Elizabeth Vass RIP (Madeleine)
Sunday 3rd August	09:15am People of The Parish 11:00am Thanksgiving for 50 years of happy marriage (Jo & Toby Brommage)

The second collection on 17th August will be for The Building Fund.
 The Parish Office is collecting any unwanted sleeping bags so we can donate them to a homeless charity.



The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Soup/Vegetables/ Potatoes
- Sweets/chocolate
- Cooking Sauce
- Fruit Juice (Long Life)
- Tinned Puddings/Desserts
- UHT / Powdered Milk
- Shaving foam/gel

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>