

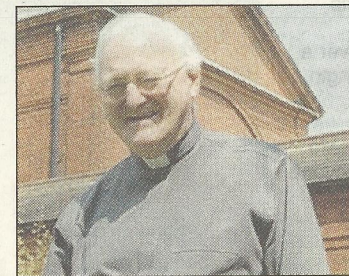
# First Mass for 400 years

By **Mary Bishop**  
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All Saints Church in East Meon is to host the first Catholic service in the building in over four centuries later this month.

The church will be hosting the parish priest of Petersfield's Catholic Parish, Canon Gerard Hetherington, on April 25, when he will say Holy Mass at 6pm.

With the goodwill and consent of the Anglican Bishop of Portsmouth and All Saints Parochial Church Council, Canon Terry Louden, the vicar of All Saints, has invited Petersfield RC Parish to celebrate what is probably the first



**Canon Gerard Hetherington**

Catholic service in the church since recusant priests were smuggled under the road from their hideaways in the Court House in the 1580s.

Both Catholics and Anglicans will attend the service and Petersfield Parish will provide the music - and they have chosen

hymns familiar to Anglicans. Responses will be sung during the service in the Roman Catholic tradition.

In Saxon and Norman times, All Saints was one of the most important churches in Hampshire. Its minster was at the heart of the monastic settlement in the village at a time when Petersfield was a tiny outpost of its parish and where the Bishops of Winchester administered justice.

Canon Louden said: "I am delighted to be able to welcome the Catholic Parish of Petersfield to our church as a sign that Christian churches are increasingly working together in Britain, and at a time when our faith needs to confront the challenge of modern scepticism."