

**CATHEDRAL OF ST MARY & ST HELEN
HOLY CROSS AND ALL SAINTS**

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FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT (B)

Sunday 3rd December 2023

Spiritual Reflection:

Our English word Advent derives from the Latin word *adventus*, which means 'coming'. Through the liturgy of the Church, in prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, the ancient expectancy for the coming of the Messiah is made real and present in our lives and hearts. Each Advent celebration holds out to us the opportunity to share in the drama of Christ's first coming and at the same time renews within us an ardent desire for his second.



Christmas invites us all to rediscover the child within and to become a child in relation to God, for this is the condition of entering the kingdom of heaven. This means humbling ourselves before the Christmas mystery: through the poverty of the manger the glory of God was revealed, and simple shepherds were the first witnesses. This is why we never tire of celebrating the birth of the Saviour when God became man, revealing himself as 'God with us', Emmanuel.

For years CS Lewis, who was a professor of English Literature at Oxford University, rejected the Christian message

because he believed it to be one among many myths for the ancient world. However, through conversations he had with JRR Tolkien, himself a professor of English Language, and the work of the Holy Spirit, he came to see that the Christian message and especially the birth of Christ was a 'true myth' - both historically and by virtue of the fact that it revealed God's plan of salvation.



The giving and receiving of gifts are a wonderful and fun part of Christmas. The giving of Christmas gifts mirrors God's giving of the greatest gift of all; the gift of Jesus, through whom we are born again and become children of God. The marvellous exchange, this indescribable gift, is the meaning of Christmas and the source of our joy and peace: 'For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given.' The beautiful words of Antiphon 1, from January 1st Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God Evening Prayer, captures this truth: 'O marvellous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity.'

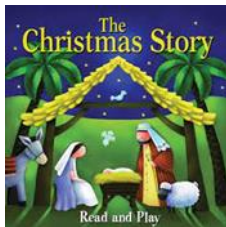
MARANATHA, COME LORD JESUS!

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My Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

As the Holy Season of Advent begins once again, we direct our thoughts and minds to our spiritual preparation for Christmas. We have nearly four weeks to prepare ourselves, our families and our community for the greatest event in the whole of human history; at a moment in time God deigned to share our human condition in the Christ-child of Bethlehem. The Incarnation was the climax of God's plan of Salvation for the whole of humanity. The innocence of the child born in Bethlehem will be overshadowed by the Cross, which will



become the means whereby God would redeem the world through his Son, Jesus Christ. As we enter the special season once again, we are reminded of our part in God's on-going invitation to share in his life through Jesus Christ. The true meaning of Advent can often be lost in the commercial and materialistic aspect of the season, but it's our duty to keep our eyes focused on the Lord.



This is truly a wonderful time of preparation. Parents, I would ask you to explain to your children the whole Nativity Story; your greatest source of reference is the Infancy Narratives at the beginning of St. Matthew & Luke's Gospels. If you read these to your children over the next few weeks, this will be a truly wonderful preparation for Christmas. We also have little 'Walk with Me' booklets at £1 each. These are little daily reflections for the whole of Advent leading us to Christmas. Ladies you can keep them in your handbags, and gents you can put them in your inside pocket. Daily prayer, even just a little pious prayer, such as, 'Come Lord Jesus' or 'Jesus, I love you', can really help in looking forward to Jesus' birth once again into our lives this Christmas.



**COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS** There are many people who do not attend church anymore; Sadly, many did not return after Covid. During this Advent season, if you know of any Catholics in your street who are not regular Church-goers, as a form of evangelisation, just pop a Parish newsletter through their doors, you don't have to knock or even make yourself known, but it's a way of keeping contact going. These are our brothers and sisters in faith, and they are part of our family, and we miss them. This could be done weekly, and at least it will give them some idea of what's happening in the parish, and also the times and details of our Christmas Services.

May God Bless You All

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Fr. John'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

## **INAUGURATION OF ADVENT 2023**

This weekend we begin the holy Season of Advent. The Church gives us these wonderful liturgical seasons to help us prepare in a special way for the great saving events in Jesus' life. We prepare during Advent for his birth at Christmas through the Incarnation. Here at the Cathedral each year we are invited, along with the people of our Diocese of Brentwood to a very beautiful Inauguration Liturgy of Advent Carols and Readings. We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful choir, and I've had a preview of the music, which is magnificent. I would like to invite the whole parish to this very beautiful service. What more fitting way to begin this holy Advent season! Bishop Alan will preside at the Liturgy at 4.00pm. There will be a retiring collection at the end of the Service.



**CHRISTMAS CARDS** If you send Christmas cards, please try and send religious Charity cards that will witness to the fact that this is a Christian festival with its origin in the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. This is a simple act of unashamedly witnessing to our faith. Please do also ask for religious stamps at the post office.

**WALK WITH ME BOOKLETS** are available for purchase in the narthex. These provide day-to-day reflections that will help you remember the real meaning of this sacred time of preparation for Christmas. Price £1 each. Please place money in wall safe marked 'Publications/Booklets'.

**COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS** today will be hosted by the Altar Servers; next week will be the turn of the Brownies. Why not come along for a cuppa and a chat?

**JOURNEY OF FAITH PROGRAM:** Our next meeting, Session 9, will take place on **Thursday 7th December** at **7.30 p.m.** in Clergy House. The Theme: What is authority? Canon Law / Church Law.

**BCYS YOUTH MASS** in the Cathedral on **Thursday 7th December**. Beginning with pizza and refreshments in the Parish Hall from 6.00 p.m. and an Advent Reconciliation service in the Cathedral before Mass. Youth Mass will then be celebrated in the Cathedral at 7.30 p.m. Absolutely everyone is welcome, please bring instruments, and sing, serve or read if you wish! No need to book, but do let us know if you have a group coming - just email [info@bcys.net](mailto:info@bcys.net)

**THE NEXT CHAPTER OF CANONS MASS** will take place in the Cathedral on **Monday 11th December** at **10.30 a.m.** All are very welcome to attend. Please note, this Mass will be in place of the morning Mass.

**NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE** will take place in the Cathedral on **Sunday 17th December** at 4.00 p.m. A celebration of prayers, readings and carols presided over by Bishop Alan Williams. With music by the Brentwood Cathedral Choir. Please do join us for this very special celebration.

**THE PARISH ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE** will take place in the Cathedral on **Monday 18th December** at **7.30 p.m.** Prepare spiritually for Christmas. Come and experience the mercy and healing of God.

**THE HOLY HOUR** of prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament takes place every Monday evening from 6.30 - 7.30 p.m. and will be preceded by the **ROSARY** for Ukraine and peace in our world at 6.10 p.m.

**PLEASE PRAY** for the repose of the soul of Frances Denham and Maureen Hewett (formally of the parish, latterly of Norwich) who died recently.

*Frances's funeral service will be celebrated in Bentley Crematorium on Wednesday 6th December at 11.30 a.m.*

*Maureen's funeral service has already taken place.*

May the souls of the faithful rest in the bosom of all God's saints and one day dwell in the land of the living.

**CHORAL VESPERS** is celebrated in the Cathedral on Wednesdays and Fridays at 6.00 p.m. (during term time). Everyone most welcome.

**THE CHILDREN'S LITURGY GROUP** would welcome some new team members to join the rota to help lead the Liturgy for the children at the 9.30am Mass. This is a voluntary role that would require an enhanced DBS check. If you are able to help on a monthly basis, please contact Clergy House; we would be very pleased to hear from you.

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS** are Monday to Thursday from 8.30 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

**THE NEW DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2024** is now available for purchase from the narthex - £2.95 per copy. Please place money in the wall safe marked "Publications / Booklets". Many thanks.

**NEW CTS SUNDAY MISSAL** We still have a few remaining copies of the new CTS 2024 Sunday Missal available to purchase from the parish office at a price of £9.00 each.

**REPOSITORY** We have a number of Christmas items such as religious cards, statues etc available for purchase from the repository; please do stop by and have a look.

**FRIDAY LUNCHESES** every Friday from 12-2.00 p.m. everyone is welcome to come along to the parish hall for a light lunch and chat. Why not come along and give it a try? All ages are welcome and please pass the word on to anyone else who might be interested (e.g., neighbours, friends, colleagues). All are very welcome!

**CALLING ALL RED MISSIO BOXES** Please leave the red boxes at Clergy House on or before **Sunday 3rd December**. Replacement boxes will be available to collect in the new year. Thank you.

**CATHEDRAL CAR PARK** We are fortunate to have a reasonably sized car park for our parishioners to use during Mass times, however we know it can become very full, very quickly. During our busy Advent period and particularly as the weather may become more adverse over the coming months, we ask you to be extra mindful of your parking and would request that if you are able to park elsewhere and walk, you might consider leaving the spaces within the carpark for those who need them the most.

If you are using the car park, please do not block any exits or thoroughfares including the drive between the entrance gates - this is to ensure emergency vehicles can gain access at any time. Please also be respectful to all other drivers.

In the New Year we will be looking to remark the parking bays - if you are able to assist with this in any way, please contact the Parish Office. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

**IRREGULAR MARRIAGES:** What is an irregular marriage? Every Roman Catholic is bound by Church Law by virtue of their Catholic baptism to celebrate all the Sacraments within the context of the Roman Catholic Faith. If a marriage contracted by a Roman Catholic outside of this context, e.g. in a Non-Catholic Church without dispensation from the Bishop, in any secular venue, in Las Vegas, on a beach, or a hotel. These marriages, though Civil, are not recognised the Church. If a person wishes to rectify this situation with the Church and their faith, we have a process called Convalidation. If there are no preventative measures for Convalidation, e.g. a previous marriage that needs annulment; we can offer couples this very private and confidential service. Both Fr John & Fr Gary are Canon Lawyers and will be able to explain the whole process to you if you want to know more. Please contact Clergy House for an appointment. Tel No: 01277 265235 or speak personally to one of the priests.

**PLEASE REGISTER TODAY AS A CATHEDRAL PARISHIONER:**

It is very simple. Each adult parishioner should either go to “Parish Census” at [www.cathedralbrentwood.org](http://www.cathedralbrentwood.org) or use the QR code:



For those of you who cannot complete the registration form online, forms are available in the narthex of the Cathedral. Once you have filled in the form, please return it to Clergy House.

**MASS TIMES** in the Cathedral:

**SATURDAY VIGIL MASS** at 6.30 p.m.

**SUNDAY:** 8.00 a.m. / 9.30 a.m. / 11.30 a.m. & 6.30 p.m.

**WEEKDAY MASSES** Monday to Friday at 9.15 a.m.

**SATURDAY:** 9.15 a.m.

**SICK AND HOUSEBOUND PARISHIONERS** If you know anyone who is unable to come to Mass but would still like to receive Holy Communion in their home, contact Clergy House so we can put them on our Sick Communion list.

**THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK** is available to anyone who is gravely ill or about to have an operation, so if you know someone who should receive this important sacrament then please speak to a member of the clergy or ring the parish office on 265235.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** is available in the Cathedral on Saturdays from 10.00 - 11.00 a.m. Confessions in Italian are also offered.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK** and housebound parishioners and friends, including: Merle Anderson, Alistair Bailey, Yvonne Ball, Hermine Bayley, Madeleine Bevan, Eda Bright, Phil Carr,



Roisin Cassels, Keith Chester, David, Iris Davis, Jenny Dean, Patricia Decup, Sheena Docherty, Charlotte Donnelly, Margaret F, Rebecca Florendo, Julian Goode, Deacon Nicholas Holmes, Wong Su Hwa, Jess, Brian Kelleher, Lisa Landy, Lawrence, Susan Maskall, Romek Matyszczyk, Tony Maule, John McCarthy, Mary McCarthy, Carmel Micallef, Harry Newman, Barney O'Driscoll, Joe O'Herlihy, Steven Poole, Anne Rowe, Helena Rowe, Geraldine Sheehan, Robin Shenton, David Spring, Mary Stretch, Tim, TCT and all our sick.

## GENERAL NEWS

**BISHOP'S CERTIFICATE IN CATECHESIS AND YOUTH MINISTRY** is an online course is designed to be an entry level qualification to help in the ongoing formation of adults involved in sacramental preparation (First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation) or youth ministry in the Diocese of Brentwood. It includes both the development of practical skills and the deepening of theological knowledge. For more information or to register your interest please email [clairebailey@brcdt.org](mailto:clairebailey@brcdt.org) or see the website <https://bcys.net/bishops-cert/>

**CAFOD's ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CRISIS APPEAL** Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at [cafod.org.uk/ipc](http://cafod.org.uk/ipc) or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers.

**SILENT WEEKEND RETREAT 'Be Still My Soul'. 8th - 10th December 2023** at the Sion Community, Brentwood. Our theme focuses on the need to learn the 'art' of being still and at rest in the midst of a busy and noisy society. Guest speaker: Grace Nowakowska, full-time lay missionary member of Sion Community. This silent weekend retreat during Advent offers us the opportunity to spend time with the Lord in quiet prayer and reflection. 40-HOURS of CONTINUOUS Adoration, spiritual

guidance and prayer ministry included. For more information or to book, visit <https://sioncommunity.org.uk/adults/> or email [allegra.mutanda@gmail.com](mailto:allegra.mutanda@gmail.com)

**BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S SOCIETY - TREE OF ANGELS** BCCS is pleased to re-launch their virtual Tree of Angels which will allow you to light up a symbolic angel on a virtual Christmas tree in memory of a loved one who has died while making a donation to the work of BCCS. Please visit [www.bccs.org.uk](http://www.bccs.org.uk) and click on the Christmas tab where you will see 'Tree of Angels'. You can read more about this initiative and can click onto the Tree of Angels portal to make your dedication and secure donation. If you have any questions about lighting an angel, please contact Damian [ddillon@bccs.org.uk](mailto:ddillon@bccs.org.uk).

**BCYS SUMMER LOURDES YOUTH PILGRIMAGE** - July 2024 (exact dates TBC in due course) Bookings are now open online for the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service pilgrimage to Lourdes in July. The week is spent serving the main Diocesan pilgrimage, assisting the elderly and infirm, alongside times of retreat, reconciliation, visiting the baths, taking part in the beautiful Processions, an afternoon in the mountains, party and social nights - all with other young Catholics from around our Diocese. The pilgrimage is open to all those in school year 10 - 13, with all those of school leaver age (18+) invited to join us as young leaders (subject to attending a training weekend). All details and applications can be found on the website [www.bcys.net/events/sl24](http://www.bcys.net/events/sl24)

**VACANCY** for an Office Clerk; required to provide effective and efficient support in relation to administration requirements at Cathedral House. 21 hours per week 09.00 until 17.00 (Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays). Start Date: December 2023 /January 2024, salary- £13 per hour. Apply by sending a CV and covering letter (no longer than A4) [hr@brcdt.org](mailto:hr@brcdt.org). Closing date for applications is **5th December 2023**.

**VACANCY** Interim Co-ordinator for the Parish Centre, Romford. The role is essential to help the smooth beginning and running of the new facilities, for the first year of operation. Hours: 7 hours per week. (Including some unsociable hours; note, there is potential for the number of hours to grow during the year). Start Date: January 2024. Salary- £11.95 per hour. Apply by sending a CV and covering letter (no longer than A4) to [frdominic@brcdt.org](mailto:frdominic@brcdt.org). Closing date noon on **8th December 2023**.





**VACANCIES IN DIOCESAN SCHOOLS:**

<https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/vacancies/school-vacancies/>

**QR CODES and CONTACTLESS GIVING** A new online donation system has been set up so that parishioners and visitors are now able to donate by using a QR code directly to the Parish; donations can be made either with or without gift aid using the QR codes below or by scanning those displayed around the Cathedral:

*giftaid it*

Please treat as gift aid donation, all qualifying gifts of money made from the date of this declaration. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that, if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

| Donate £3.00                                                                      | Donate £5.00                                                                      | Donate £10.00                                                                     | Donate £20.00                                                                     |
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*Donate without Giftaid-it*

If you are unable to donate with Giftaid-It then please use the codes below.

| Donate £3.00                                                                        | Donate £5.00                                                                        | Donate £10.00                                                                       | Donate £20.00                                                                        |
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