

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

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**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (B)
Sunday 21st April 2024**



Spiritual Reflection:

Pope Francis caused quite a stir when, at the beginning of his Pontificate, with a memorable turn of phrase he encouraged the clergy to be 'shepherds living with the smell of the sheep'. Later, in *Evangelii Gaudium* he said the same call extends to every believer because we are all called to be missionary disciples: 'Evangelisers thus take on the "smell of the sheep" and the sheep are willing to hear their voice'. Now we all know that sheep don't smell too good - come to think of it, neither does the shepherd. Herding, feeding, and watering livestock of any kind is hard, manual, sweaty labour, out in all kinds of weather braving the elements. Shepherds must be appropriately dressed and equipped - they are roughly dressed for rough work.

So, who is the shepherd and who are the sheep? The Chief Shepherd is Jesus - he described himself as the 'Good Shepherd' - and we are the sheep. To be likened to sheep isn't a very flattering comparison. In *Animal Farm* by George Orwell the sheep are easily led, in contrast to the pigs (very intelligent animals by all accounts) who are leaders. Sheep aren't known for being especially intelligent - they wander, they stray, they graze all day oh and they smell - but they are endearing, especially the baby lambs, and they provide us with wool.

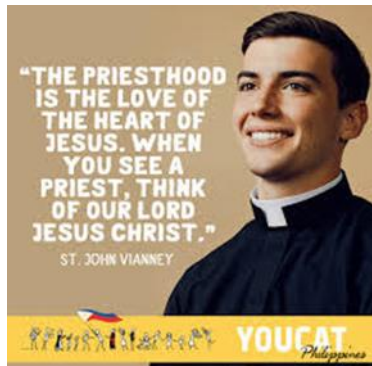
Nevertheless, we are like sheep because we all go astray. We all wander from the path of righteousness, we all follow the herd, and we all need the guidance of the Good Shepherd. We are all lost sheep and can only be found by the Shepherd. We have the smell of the sheep about us.

The Good Shepherd leads us out of our cold indifference into the warmth of God's merciful and compassionate love for everyone, but especially the little ones: the poor, the vulnerable, those who grieve and those facing difficult challenges. The Good Shepherd guides us to live, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit and to produce the good fruit of the Spirit: 'love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law’.

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday and is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. Here in the Diocese of Brentwood we have a Deacon Frank Westcott from St Edmund’s Parish in Loughton who will be Ordained to the Sacred Priesthood on Saturday 22nd June, the Feast of SS John Fisher & Thomas More. And we only have two other students for the priesthood. We really need to pray earnestly for more vocations to the priesthood here in our own Diocese. This must be a priority for the future of the Church. As you’re probably aware, the formation for Priests is several years, so we will have some very lean years ahead of us. The age of the clergy is now very top heavy, which is profoundly going to affect all our parishes in the future. Bishop Alan’s Vision Document is addressing all these issues, especially with regard to Partnerships. The emphasis will be on much more co-operation between parishes. This was also reflected in the Synod on Synodality last October, and which will continue in the Second session this October. It’s about journeying together in faith, listening to one another, working together, sharing resources. (Picture - Mosaic of the Good Shepherd - From Ravenna)



The Lord Jesus said, “that the harvest is rich, but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest.” I have always believed that the harvest is rich, men and women need more encouragement and courage to pursue Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. The world has changed dramatically

in the past 50 years, gone are the days where young men were encouraged to pursue a vocation, hence the diminishing numbers presenting themselves. With constant prayer and asking the 'Lord of the Harvest', I'm positive our prayers will be heard. Sometimes, it even means taking a leap of faith. If God wants you, he will certainly make it known to you!



PARISH GIFT AID SCHEME As the new Tax Year recently began, this is always a good time to review your Weekly Offertory. It is very encouraging to see that so many parishioners belong to the Parish Gift Aid Scheme. In using

the Gift Aid envelopes and your direct giving online, it allows the parish to claim back 25 pence in the pound. Our Weekly Offertory is our way of expressing gratitude to Almighty God for everything we have: our health, our happiness, our food, a roof over our heads, our children, our employment. There is so much to be thankful for! If you have already joined the Gift Aid Scheme and you give by direct debit, if you are able to increase your weekly offertory, you will need to do this either through your online banking or at the bank itself. If you do not belong to the Gift Aid Scheme, but would like to join, there are details on the parish website and forms in the narthex. The Cathedral thanks you for your generosity throughout the year, it truly does reflect your pride and love of your faith here at the Cathedral. Thank you once again!

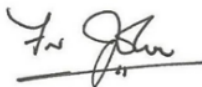
RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS: Journey of Faith. Is there anyone who may be interested in the RCIA Programme possibly with the view of being received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Faith? Every year we run this programme leading to a reception in the Church at the Easter Vigil. It is a systematic programme of every aspect of Catholicism, including Scripture, Sacramental Life, and The



Dogma's of our Faith, Catholic Practice & traditions, Christology & Mariology, Study of the Church. Please see Fr John who will explain the whole process to you. (Tel No: 01277 265235) Hopefully the new programme will begin in September 2024.

PARISH REPOSITORY: As you will have seen there is a large selection of religious goods now stocked in our Parish Repository; Statues, Rosaries, Religious Cards for all occasions, Prayer Books, Children's Books for Church, Holy Pictures, Medals, and there will also be a large collection of First Holy Communion gifts and cards as we approach the Holy Communion season. There will also be Confirmation cards available soon. Please do support our parish repository.

May God Bless You All,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fr John', with a horizontal line underneath.

THERE WILL BE A SECOND COLLECTION TODAY for World Day of Prayer for Vocations; the second collection supports the education and formation of our seminarians. Please be as generous as you are able.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS today will be hosted by the Spanish Speakers Community; next week will be hosted by the CAFOD team.

THE FIRST HOLY COMMUNION GROUP is hoping to offer pre-loved dresses/outfits to our parish families this year and are appealing for donations of dresses and outfits in good condition, which are no longer needed. If you can help, please contact the Catechists at brentwoodfhccatechists@gmail.com

LITTER PICK - why not join us to help care for our local environment as we litter pick around the Cathedral. We will meet after the 9.30 a.m. Mass on **Sunday 5th May**. Everyone is welcome (especially accompanied children) and all equipment is provided so we just need your willingness to lend a hand for less than an hour.

REFERENCES FOR WORK AND OTHER POSITIONS Fr John receives many requests for references which he is happy to write for people that he knows. However, it is not helpful to mention to him in passing that you have given his name as a referee or for him to receive unexpected reference requests. Therefore, before you give his name as a referee, please ensure that you make an appointment to meet with Fr John first to discuss the position you are applying for and the nature of the reference required. Thank you.

FRIDAY FRIENDSHIP LUNCH Every Friday all are welcome to come along to the parish hall (12 noon - 2.00 p.m.) for a light lunch, cakes and drinks and most importantly, friendly faces and an opportunity to meet up with others. All ages are welcome, there is no charge and you can just drop in. We look forward to welcoming you soon!

VACANCY St Helen's Catholic Infant School are seeking a Learning Support Assistant: 8.45 a.m. - 3.20 p.m. (term-time only). We are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic and well-motivated person to join our staff in June 2024. Please contact the school office for further information and an application pack: office@st-helens-inf.essex.sch.uk. Deadline: **Friday 29th April 2024.**

LUNCHTIME ORGAN RECITAL to be given by Barnaby Silverstone from the RCM on **Wednesday 1st May** at 1.00 p.m. All are welcome.

BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL We understand that Brentwood Council will be operating free parking on Sundays from April 2024 in the following car parks: William Hunter Way, Chatham Way, Multi-Storey Car Park and Town Hall Car Parks and a free 3-hour parking limit at the Shenfield Car Parks. Please do check carefully for information when you park in any of these car parks.

Visit <https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/free-sunday-car-parking-from-next-april-are-part-of-changes-to-car-parking-in-brentwood> for more information.

NEW GIFT AID BOXES Please do remember to pick yours up and take it home with you. If you do not use the envelopes, we cannot claim the Gift Aid!

JUST FOR INFORMATION Clergy days off are Tuesday (Fr John) and Wednesday (Fr Gary); if you need to contact them at these times, please leave a message and they will call you back when they are able.

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.

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

PLEASE REGISTER TODAY AS A CATHEDRAL PARISHIONER:

It is very simple. Each adult parishioner should either go to “Parish Census” at www.cathedralbrentwood.org or use the QR code below:



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.

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: 01277 265235 or speak personally to one of the priests.

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

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, Julia Blencowe, Eda Bright, Phil Carr, Roisin Cassels, Keith Chester, David Cutter, Dermot Dalton, David, Iris Davis, Jenny Dean, Patricia Decup, 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, Carmel Micallef, Harry Newman, Barney O'Driscoll, Joe O'Herlihy, Matthew Pegg, Steven Poole, Geraldine Sheehan, Robin Shenton, David Spring, Mary Stretch, Tim, TCT, Siobhan Vaughan and all our sick.

GENERAL NEWS

INTERESTED IN THE CATHOLIC RESPONSE to homelessness, welcoming refugees and migrants, assisting with the Cost-of-Living Crisis, or tackling the causes and effects of climate change? You are invited to the 2024 Caritas Brentwood Networking Day, **Saturday 27th April**, 10.00 a.m. - 2.30 p.m. at the St Edward the Confessor Church Hall, Romford. This day is a chance to be sustained, share ideas and good practices with people from parishes across Essex and East London and hear about charities and resources available. Details and Registration (for free!) at www.caritasbrentwood.org/network

YOUTH 2000 LONDON RETREAT DAY: COME AND SEE. Youth 2000 are running a retreat day for young adults (16-35) on **11th May** at Sacred Heart Parish in Wimbledon. It is jam-packed one day event, where people come together as a community of young adults in prayer and friendship. The retreat is an invitation to come as you are, and to come and see who Jesus is and what He can do in your life. The cost £25 and more information can be found at: <https://www.youth2000.org/events/london2024>

A DAY WITH MARY PILGRIMAGES Further information on 'A Day With Mary 2024' Pilgrimages to Fatima (7-14 June) and Italy (4-12 September) is available at www.adaywithmary.org or email adwmary.uk@gmail.com

CATHOLIC PARISH SUMMIT The Catholic Parish Summit is taking place in Harrogate from the **12th to the 14th June** with over 1,000 parish leaders from across the country. Our diocese has booked some places for the Summit which are available to anyone who is interested in attending. These places are free but they are limited and you will need to make arrangements for accommodation while you are in Harrogate. For more information about the Summit please visit their website: <https://catholicparishsummit.com/> If you would like to find out more, please email Father Dan Mason, the Episcopal Vicar for Parish Renewal at billericay@brcdt.org

REDISCOVER YOUR MARRIAGE Retrouvaille offers you the chance to rediscover yourself, your spouse, and a loving relationship in your marriage. 10s of 1000s headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending and using the tools provided. There is no group therapy or group work. The next programme commences with a weekend in Welwyn Garden City on **14-16 June 2024**. Call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443, email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

OPEN EVENING The Champion School would like to warmly invite parents/carers and year 5 boys to our Open Evening on **Wednesday 26th June** from 4.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. The Headteacher's talk will be at 5.00 p.m. and repeated at 6.30 p.m. Please visit our school website for more details www.thecampionschool.org.uk

VOLUNTEER AT THE ST JOHN BOSCO CHILDREN'S CAMP; from **27th July - 3rd August** help give 100 children a holiday. Helpers must be 18+, and the Camp will arrange for a DBS check, and appropriate training. To help at the Bosco Camp is a wonderful experience, and now is the time to apply. Details: www.boscocamp.co.uk

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES Join Bishop Alan on the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes (**Friday 19 - Friday 26 July**). To

book, please go online: Brentwood Lourdes - Lourdes - Tangney Tours (tangney-tours.com). If you wish to discuss any aspect of the pilgrimage, please e-mail Kathryn Young or Suzanne Reeves at Lourdes@brcdt.org

40 YEARS OF WALSINGHAM HOUSE TEAMS 2024 marks 40 years of retreat teams at Walsingham House. There will be a celebration Mass with Bishop Alan on **Saturday 31st August 2024** at Walsingham House at Abbotswick. Please save the date as it would be wonderful to see Walsingham House and BCYS alumni and friends gather together to mark this milestone. More information to follow in the new year.



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
			

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
			