

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

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**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)
Sunday 8th December 2024**

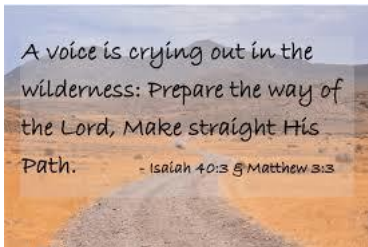
Spiritual Reflection:

Luke sets the historical scene at the start of John the Baptist's ministry. Pontius Pilate, Herod and his sons, and the high priests Annas and Caiaphas all failed to respond to God's word and its messengers. None of them welcomed Jesus; some were implicated in his death. Yet it was precisely into this unwelcoming world that God sent John the Baptist to inaugurate an age of mercy and salvation. God saves his people, despite their perversity and hardness of heart. God has the last word, not man. John's mission was to prepare the way of the Lord by 'preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.' John was a bridge who brought people to Jesus and his kingdom. He demanded from them both repentance and a renewal of their lives. He prepared their hearts to receive Jesus and his gospel.



The main emphasis of John's preaching - repentance, change and renewal - remain the way to Jesus and his kingdom. His message invites us, as individuals, to take on the same spirit of repentance, change and renewal: 'Man is the first agent of all social and historical change, but to be able to carry out this role he himself must be renewed in Christ, in the Holy Spirit. This is a direction that holds great promise for the future of the Church. (St. Pope John Paul II).

The message of repentance and renewal always speaks powerfully to the human heart, for it offers the possibility of forgiveness and a release from the burden, as well as the promise of healing, change and a new start. Into our world of sin, failure and broken promises, the Lord's word still comes with conviction and power, as it did in the time of John the Baptist, to set us free and save us.



The Gospel of mercy invites us into a new time of grace. During Advent God's word challenges us to repent and be renewed: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight...The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth'. As we respond with sincerity, we shall 'put on the robe of righteousness from God'.

Dear Friends in Christ

Our Parish Christmas Bazaar is only one week away. As we all enter the Christmas season with our preparations both socially and spiritually, I would like to make this final appeal to the whole parish community for any final gifts and items for the Bazaar which will take place next **Saturday 14th December** from **11.00 a.m. until 3.00 p.m.** I really want this to be a big event for the whole community. I know it's a very long time since there was a Bazaar



in the Parish, but I have been overwhelmed by the incredible response and the generosity of the community. So many parishioners have donated gifts and items for the various stalls; several people have donated beautiful Grand Draw Prizes; also, many of you have kindly taken Grand Draw Tickets to buy yourselves and / or sell to friends and family. **Please return raffle ticket stubs and monies to Clergy House by Friday 13th December at the latest.** Thank you!

I have included a special Christmas Bazaar insert in your Newsletters this week. Please do read it, and if you can help in any way whatsoever this will be truly appreciated. I would like to thank most sincerely all those parishioners who have volunteered and signed up to help us on the day; your kindness and generosity of spirit is truly appreciated.



We will begin to set up the Bazaar on Friday 13th December from 2.30 p.m. onwards. Obviously, stall holders will be responsible for their own stalls and the decoration of them. We will need a lot of help transporting all the gifts and items from the Upper Room in the Cathedral and from Clergy House (where bottles have been stored). At our last Bazaar Committee Meeting we allotted certain responsibilities to the various stall holders. Hopefully it should all run like clockwork! I cannot express my gratitude enough to the whole parish, and I reiterate what I have already said over the past weeks; **A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO YOU ALL!**

May God bless you all during this Holy Advent Season.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS - Parish Advent Penitential Service, Monday 16th December at 7.30 p.m. One of the best ways to prepare



ourselves spiritually for Christmas is by availing ourselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is our Catholic duty to celebrate the Sacrament of Confession at least once a year. There will be several priests coming to the Cathedral to assist with Confessions. Parents, I encourage you to come with your children. To all, I would say if it's been a long time since your last celebrated the Sacrament, please don't be fearful. Each of the visiting clergy will be only too happy to help you celebrate the Sacrament. What more fitting way to welcome the Christ child of Bethlehem than by freeing ourselves from the burdens of sin and the things that often weigh heavy on our lives. When He comes, the Lord Jesus will find a pure and sinless heart ready to receive him once again into our lives this Christmas.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS & THE CRIB

One of the most famous Christmas flowers is the Poinsettia. The vivid red and green, very much Christmas colours really make it stand out. You will be very interested to know that a New Crib

has been built for the Cathedral; my sincere and grateful thanks to Joe O'Sullivan and his friends. It's a lot bigger than our previous one, and as part of the decoration of the crib this year, it would be wonderful to place some poinsettias in and around the crib. If there are any individuals or families who would like to remember a deceased loved one at the Crib, please purchase a poinsettia and place the name of the individual to be remembered on the pot. I have always remembered my deceased parents in this way each Christmas. The new crib will not be decorated until Monday 23rd December. Thank you!

COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS If you know of anyone who has lapsed from the practice of their Catholic faith; it could be a family member or a friend or colleague, why not invite them to join you for one of the Christmas Masses. In this way, like John the Baptist, you are being a herald of the Gospel message. Covid had a devastating effect on the whole world, and every priest I know talks of the



many people that did not return to the practice of their faith. These are our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, and they are part of our spiritual family, and we miss them! Also, over these next weeks of Advent, perhaps you could drop off a parish newsletter at people's homes. Next weekend there will be a special Christmas Card with Christmas message and the times of all the Masses over the Christmas period up to St Stephen's Day. Please keep this in a very safe place as it will indicate the times of all additional Masses and the Penance Service.

VISITING PRIESTS & SEMINARIANS FOR CHRISTMAS

HOLIDAYS: There will be two priests and several seminarians from the Pontifical North American College in Rome, who will be visiting us over the Christmas /New Year holidays. For the past 19 years I have hosted seminarians from PNAC. At Christmas the students are not allowed to return to the USA, so they travel throughout Europe. It's always been a great pleasure to have been able to host them. I will cater for the students, but could I make an appeal to the parish community please for some desserts or Christmas goodies: chocolates, Christmas pudding, apple pies, trifle, mince pies, chocolate brownies or any other desserts (sadly, I can't touch any of these being diabetic 😞). Thanking you all in anticipation.



PLEASE PRAY for the repose of the soul of Peter Barlow and Kevin Gash who died recently; funeral details are as follows:

Peter's Requiem Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral on Friday 20th December 2024 at 11.00 a.m.

Kevin's Requiem Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral on Thursday 2nd January 2025 at 11.00 a.m.

May they rest in the peace of Christ.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS today will be hosted by the Love in Action group; next week will be hosted by the family of a Scout attending the Essex Scouts Expedition to Zanzibar 2026 to raise money to fund this trip.

JOURNEY IN FAITH COURSE The next meeting will be on **Thursday 12th December** and the theme will be: EUCHARIST (2) The need to worship God, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

SINCERE THANKS for your support of the Foodbank collection last weekend; four car loads of provisions were delivered along with £861.00 in cash donations; what a fantastic and generous parish community you are!

THE NEXT CHAPTER OF CANONS MASS will take place in the Cathedral tomorrow **Monday 9th December** at **10.30 a.m.** All are very welcome to attend. *Please note, this Mass will be in place of the morning Mass.*

READERS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS If you have not already done so, please could you let Ann know your availability for 11th January - 13th April 2025 by **Monday 9th December**. Many thanks - messina21@btinternet.com or 01277 231593.

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. **Please note, our last meeting of this year will be next Friday 13th December and we will resume again on Friday 3rd January 2025.**

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE will take place in the Cathedral on **Sunday 22nd 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 NEW DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2025 is now available for purchase from the narthex - £3.20 per copy. Please place money in the wall safe marked "Publications / Booklets". Many thanks.

HUTTON PARISH CHRISTMAS HAMPER Please help us raise some much-needed funds for our parish (St. Joseph The Worker Church), while also being in with a chance of winning this

magnificent hamper. Just pick up an envelope from the church, write your name and contact number on the envelope, put a £5 note inside, and hand in the completed envelope. That's all you need to do! The draw will be made on Sunday 22nd December after the 10.30 Mass.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

THE HOLY HOUR of prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament takes place on a 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.

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: Sylvia Allum, Merle Anderson, Alistair Bailey, Yvonne Ball, Hermine Bayley, Eda Bright, 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, Peter Madden, Romek Matyszczyk, Tony Maule, John McCarthy, Carmel Micallef, Stephanie Murray, 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

WALSINGHAM HOUSE TEAM 25/26 Applications are now open for the volunteer retreat team at Walsingham House. If you are in Yr13 or finishing university and enjoy working with young people, then a year on the retreat team could be the perfect next step. Live and work as part of a young Catholic Christian community, sharing your faith and helping to run retreats for the young people of Brentwood diocese. For more information then please see the website: www.bcys.net/whabbotswick/be-on-team/ or email clairebailey@brcdt.org

READINGS FOR THE SEASON OF ADVENT Fr Adrian Graffy, parish priest of Gidea Park and member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, has prepared reflections on all the Mass readings for the Season of Advent. To access these readings, go to www.whatgoodnews.org and click on 'Scripture Readings' and then 'Advent Readings'.

CAN YOU VOLUNTEER at the St John Bosco Children's Camp next summer? Applications are now open for anyone aged 17+ to volunteer for a week at the end of July 2025. From helping in the kitchen to running sports and other activities, your skills will mean that 100 children have a wonderful holiday. For most of the children, it is their only summer holiday. The Camp is a special work of Caritas Brentwood. More information - including training date and DBS requirements, along with volunteering FAQs - can all be found at www.boscocamp.co.uk. Applications for children to come to Camp will open in the spring.

TREE OF ANGELS This November, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society 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 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.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE STAFF AND TRUSTEES OF BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S SOCIETY We would like to wish everyone across Brentwood Diocese a very happy and blessed Christmas. As we come to the end of our 40th anniversary year, we would like to thank everyone who has supported our work by making a donation at one of the parish crib scenes across the Diocese over the years. This steadfast support has allowed us to give hope to thousands of children, young people and families by offering them the specialist care they need. Thank you all.

A DAY WITH MARY is taking place at St George's Cathedral, Southwark on **Saturday 14th December** (10.15 a.m. to 5.15 p.m.). Mass will be celebrated by the Archbishop of Southwark Diocese, John Wilson. For further information please visit www.adaywithmary.org/ or eventcatholic.com/

WORD ON FIRE UK BIBLE CONFERENCE Join Bishop Robert Barron and thousands of other Catholics from across the UK for Evangelisation & Culture: The Bible. Come to the Excel Centre in East London this February to gain a deeper appreciation of the Sacred Scriptures and their relevance to the Church's mission today. Date: **Friday 21st - Saturday 22nd February 2025** at the Excel Centre, East London. Speakers Include: Bishop Robert Barron, N.T. Wright, Professor Tracey Rowland and more. For more information and to register, please visit: [//wordonfire.org/the-bible-event](http://wordonfire.org/the-bible-event).

MENS' SPIRITUAL EXERCISES A 5-day version of the Ignatian Exercises offered specifically for men (whether lay or ordained) **31 March - 5 April 2025**; this retreat will be preached by the Benedictine Monks of St Joseph's Abbey, France. Founded in 1988, this community has retained its charism of a specific apostolate to men and of engaging them through a shortened version of the Ignatian Exercises. One-to-one direction will be offered alongside the talks. Priests are welcome to attend and

concelebrate or celebrate their own Mass. Information or to book visit: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/mens-spiritual-exercises/>

FOUNDATION GOVERNOR VACANCIES Vacancies for Foundation Governors have arisen at a number of Catholic schools across the Diocese and expressions of interests are being sought from practising committed Catholics for the ministry. The term of office is for four years from the date of appointment. Foundation Governors are personally appointed by the Bishop to Diocesan schools to represent his interests and those of the Catholic community as a whole. Our schools would benefit from people with a range of skills and experiences including Finance, Education, Special Needs, Legal and Administration. Anyone interested in the role and mission of Foundation Governor should not be put off by a lack of experience. Appropriate training is available during the period of service. If you are interested in becoming Foundation Governor, please email your expression of interest to governanceappointments@brcdt.org.

VACANCY St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School, Hutton are looking to appoint a deputy headteacher for April 2025. For more information and a full advert, visit our school website: <https://st-joseph-the-worker-catholic-primary-school.secure-primariesite.net/recruitment-1/> Closing date for applications: **Tuesday 28th January 2025** at 12 Noon. Visits welcome. Please contact Mrs Lesley Willats on 01277 227282 or admin@st-josephworker.essex.sch.uk for an application pack or to arrange a visit.

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:



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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