

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

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**THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH (C)  
Sunday 29th December 2024**

Spiritual Reflection:

The opening sentence of Leo Tolstoy's masterpiece Anna Karenina is a striking one: 'Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.' We can be sure that the Holy Family was a happy family, but like all happy families their happiness was forged through trial and suffering and the ups and downs of domestic daily living. Today we cross the threshold into the tranquillity and holiness of Holy Family. Here we find the hearth at which Jesus lived his hidden years. Here we find the first domestic Church, a loving family devoted to God and to each other.

The Scriptures only speak of the birth of Jesus, the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt and the discovery of Jesus in the Temple. To learn more, we seek the wisdom and guidance of the Spirit. The Spirit leads us to understand that because the triune God is a communion of love, the family is its



living reflection. St. Pope John Paul II said: ‘Our God in his deepest mystery is not solitude, but a family, for he has within himself fatherhood, sonship and the essence of the family, which is love. That love, in the divine family is the Holy Spirit.’ The family is, then, a school of prayer, a school of service, a school of discipline, a school of formation, but most of all a school of love.

We thank God the Father for the Holy Family’s witness of love, we rejoice in the Son for the healing grace of salvation, and we give praise to the Holy Spirit whose love is poured out upon us so we can love and serve God in our families. The importance of the family has been the bulwark of Christian teaching since the beginning. It is the womb from which vocations are born, be that to the married or priestly of religious life. Jesus spent his hidden years deeply rooted in the day-to-day life of his family in Nazareth - here he learnt to love, serve and pray. Thank God for the family you were born into; each family member is a blessing and grace from God.

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Dear Friends in Christ

As we rapidly approach the end of this year 2024, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the whole parish community for your ongoing support of our Cathedral Parish. It has been a wonderful year, and there have been many graces and blessings bestowed on all of us. As we look forward to a New Year 2025, let us ask God’s blessings on our families and our parish. We have great plans for the Holy Year 2025 with various events, both spiritual and social.

**THANK YOU** Fr John & Fr Matúš would like to thank the whole parish community for your kindness and generosity over this Christmas season, for the many cards and gifts, and your Christmas offertory. We truly appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Also, a big thank you to those who have provided sweets and desserts and goodies for our American Priests and Seminarians. They have really enjoyed the variety of your offerings! We have four more seminarians joining us for the New Year 2025.

**HOLY YEAR 2025 - PILGRIMS OF HOPE** On Christmas Eve our Holy Father Pope Francis, initiated the Holy Year Door in St Peter’s

Basilica, marking the beginning of the Holy Year 2025. The concept of a Holy Year has deep roots in the history of the Catholic Church, and is centred around pilgrimage to Rome, spiritual renewal and the forgiveness of sins. This tradition originated in ancient Jewish custom and was revived for Christian communities in the Middle Ages by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300. The theme will be Pilgrims of Hope, and as a Parish we are



going to focus on the Holy Eucharist, giving everyone the opportunity to deepen their love of Jesus Christ through the Holy Eucharist. There will be Lenten Talks on the Eucharist, Forty Hours of Eucharistic Prayer, Life in the Spirit Seminars, Holy Year Concert in the summer, International Social Day, Flower Festival, and various other events.

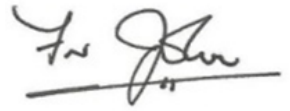
Bishop Alan will preside at the 11.30 a.m. Mass today, 29th December, the Feast of the Holy Family, to inaugurate the Holy Year in our Diocese.

**Fr John & Fr. Matúš would like to wish you and all your families a very Happy, Holy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year for 2025.**



**CHRISTMAS OFFERING** It's still not too late to make your Christmas Offering to the Parish Clergy, which forms the major part of their income and salary throughout the year. Please use your Gift Aid envelopes, or if you wish to give electronically, please transfer money to the Parish Account with Reference 'Christmas Offering' and your Gift Aid Number please: The details of the Bank Account

are Account name: Brentwood Cathedral, Sort Code 40-13-22  
Account Number: 30217492. With grateful thanks!



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**AFTER MANY YEARS OF MINISTERING AS CATHEDRAL USHERS,** Paul and Pat Redfearn are now retiring from this ministry. We give the sincere thanks of the whole parish community to Paul and Pat for their dedication to this role and wish them a long, happy and peaceful retirement. Fr John has appointed Peter Dowse as Chief Usher, who will be assisted by Martin Pye.

**PLEASE PRAY** for the repose of the soul of Kevin Gash, Tony Bortoli, Sr Sarah Higgins and Sr DePaul Maher who died recently; funeral details are as follows:

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

*Tony's Requiem Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral on Tuesday 7th January 2025 at 11.00 a.m. are not yet known.*

*Sr Sarah's Requiem Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral on Wednesday 8th January 2025 at 11.00 a.m.*

*Sr DePaul's Requiem Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral on Friday 10th January 2025 at 11.00 a.m.*

May they rest in the peace of Christ.

**PLEASE NOTE** the parish office will reopen again on **Thursday 2nd January 2025.**

**COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS** today will be hosted by the St Helen's Ladies Group; next week will be hosted by the PACE (Parish And Community Events) team.

**JOURNEY IN FAITH COURSE** The next meeting will be this **Thursday 2nd January 2025** and the theme will be: **RECONCILIATION Sin! Why the need to go to Confession.**

**THE FRIDAY FRIENDSHIP LUNCH** will resume again this **Friday 3rd January 2025**; please note that there will be no Friday group on 10th January as the halls will be otherwise occupied.

**CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP** will meet in the Upper Room of the Cathedral on **Thursday 9th January** from 7.00 p.m. Everyone is welcome so please do feel free to join us for prayer and praise. Contact Liz Hart on 07716 424043 if you have any queries.

**CHILDREN'S LITURGY** will resume again in the new year on **Sunday 12th January.**

**THE PARISH YOUNG ADULTS GROUP** will next meet on **Sunday 12th January 2025** after the 6.30 p.m. Mass and walk to a local pub to share a drink and conversation together. All aged 18-35 are very welcome, we will gather outside the Cathedral after Mass and walk down together. The group usually meets on the first Sunday of every month (the next meeting will be on Sunday 2nd February).

**250 CLUB - RENEWALS ARE DUE NOW** and new members are very welcome to join. This is an easy way to help raise funds for the Parish halls and every month a member of the club wins a prize! For those paying by ongoing standing order either monthly or annually, no action is required. If you pay in one annual instalment by cash, cheque or bank transfer, this will be **due by 31st January 2025** please. If I have your email address, I will be sending a renewal form by this method. Alternatively, forms are available from the Narthex, by email or I can arrange to post one to you. New and renewal forms, along with payment, can be returned to Clergy House for my attention. Should you receive an email in error, please advise me so that I can remove you from the mailing list. Please also contact me if you are unsure how to make your payment or have any other queries. Thank you for your continued support. Pat Austin - email [pat@familyaustin.co.uk](mailto:pat@familyaustin.co.uk) or message / call 07733 103 588.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CATHOLICS** between 16-25 years who volunteer on a project abroad or to assist a pilgrim to Lourdes is available; for more information, please visit [catenianbursary.com](http://catenianbursary.com) or alternatively, email [peterdowse69@gmail.com](mailto:peterdowse69@gmail.com).

**THE DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE**, led by Bp Alan, will be from **Friday 18 July - Friday 25 July 2025**. The flights will be Southend to Lourdes. Details, including how to book, will follow.

**DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2025** Copies of this are available for purchase from the narthex - £3.20 per copy. Please place money in the wall safe marked "Publications / Booklets". Many thanks.

**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](http://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/](http://www.bcys.net/whabbotswick/be-on-team/) or email [clairebailey@brcdt.org](mailto:clairebailey@brcdt.org)

**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](http://www.boscocamp.co.uk). Applications for children to come to Camp will open in the spring.

**ISLAM STUDY DAY** In 2025 we mark sixty years since the promulgation of Nostra Aetate, the inter-faith document of Vatican II. We are delighted to welcome Sidra Naeem, distinguished teacher and chair of Havering Interfaith, who will speak about Islam. The talk will take place on **Saturday 18th January 2025** from 11.00 (11.00 GMT) in the hall at the Catholic Church of Christ the Eternal High Priest, in Gidea Park. The talk will also be available by livestream free of charge at [www.whatgoodnews.org](http://www.whatgoodnews.org) and will be available subsequently on



the same website. The church is close to Gidea Park station (Elizabeth Line). Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee available from 10.30. Do join us.

**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/>

**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](mailto: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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