

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

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**THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
Sunday 5th January 2025**

Spiritual Reflection:

Jesus came to bring light to our darkened world. Today's Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the unveiling of this light to the Gentiles. Our scene is set during the reign of that brutal king, Herod. Herod had been appointed king by the Roman Senate in 40 BC. He was a tyrannical despot with a penchant for the parricide (he murdered his wife, 3 sons, uncle, and mother-in-law). His taste for bloodshed, as we shall see, extended beyond his family circle.



The Magi, who may have been astrologers from Persia or southern Arabia, followed the star (some scholars suggest it was the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn). In feigning to be interested in the birth of the Messiah, Herod reveals his duplicity and cunning. In fact, his heart was bent on extinguishing the light

of the world. The Magi on the other hand, were bent on worshipping the light of the world.

Pope John Paul II saw in the Magi's journey in search of a king a parallel to the human journey: *'Whatever the age, culture, civilisation or nation, people are always searching for God. Like the wise men, they glimpse him through the eyes of faith, then set forth in faith in the desire to*



draw closer to him in the eternal Bethlehem. However, if they have not found him through faith, in looking for the truth they seek this faith, and so seek God. As Saint Augustine put it: 'I would not have sought you, if I had already found you.' Before starting to seek God, each person has in fact found him in a particular value that then provides the basic starting point for a future search.'

As we celebrate the beginning of this New Year, we unite our hearts to the vision of the Church, which is to proclaim the light of Christ to the world. We play a vital part in making Christ known - his love, mercy and compassion overwhelm the coldness and extinguish the darkness in our hearts.

A Happy, Holy & Prosperous New Year for 2025

Dear Friends in Christ

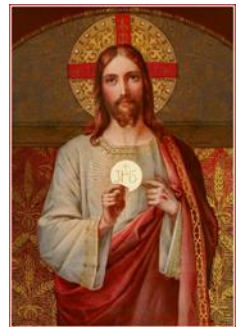
I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Fr Matúš and myself of wishing you and all your loved ones a very Happy New Year for 2025. Last Sunday Bishop Alan inaugurated the New Holy Year 2025 with the theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope'; I am linking this theme with that of the Holy Eucharist throughout the whole of the year. There will be various events both spiritual and social capturing these



themes, and hopefully it will give every parishioner an opportunity to really immerse themselves into the Spirit of the Holy Year. The Holy Year Door is behind the Choir Stalls, and any groups that come to the Cathedral will gain a Plenary Indulgence when entering the Cathedral through this door.

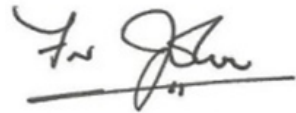
The New Year nearly always evokes within us the desire for resolutions and aspirations for a better future. Whatever our resolutions may be, may I advocate that the Lord Jesus is also included within them. Perhaps we can all make an extra special effort to deepen our faith. If we have been a little lax in the practice of faith, we can make that extra special effort to attend Holy Mass weekly; to pray regularly; to practice acts of charity and kindness wherever possible; to spend time teaching our children about the faith, (the home is the best school of faith). That children accompany their parents to Holy Mass each week, (once a child has reached the age of reason and received Holy Communion, the obligation applies to them as well as their parents).

For the Catholic Christian, the Eucharist is the most important thing that we do on regular basis, fulfilling the Lord's command to "Do this in memory of me". There will be a series of **Lenten Talks on the Holy Eucharist** on **12th, 19th, 26th March, and 2nd April**. Please put these dates in your diaries. There will also be '40 Hours of Eucharistic Adoration', from Thursday 26th June to Saturday 28th June 2025. The 'Real Presence' of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist is fundamentally at the heart of our Roman Catholic Faith. There will be regular Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during the Holy Year, I would like to encourage the whole parish community to really make an extra special effort attend on a regular basis, and really come to love and worship Jesus Christ in the eternal gift of his body, which he left at the table of the Last Supper for all generations. The more we know and understand about the Eucharist, the deeper our faith and commitment becomes.



This is an incredibly generous parish, I have never known in all my years of Priesthood such generosity of spirit in so many different ways, the number of parishioners who volunteer in all aspects of parish life, from the cleaning of the Cathedral, to the various sodalities and groups in the parish who reach out to the poor and homeless; the various missionary activity in raising funds for Maria Ratschitz; the Friday Lunches which are open to anyone who wishes to participate; the Love in Action Committee; PACE and more. This year I was completely overwhelmed by the incredible support from all who were involved in the Parish Christmas Bazaar. It was such a wonderful success; I think we surprised ourselves at how successful it was! Thank you to everyone who was involved and to all the parish for your incredible support and generosity.

Fr John & Fr Matúš wish you all a very Happy, Holy & Blessed New Year.

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

NEW CRIB IN THE CATHEDRAL I would like to thank all those parishioners who have given such wonderful feedback about our new Crib this Christmas. It really is beautiful, and the decoration of the Crib for Christmas really has evoked an incredible response. Once again, my thanks to Joe O'Sullivan who arranged for the new crib to be built. The beautiful Nativity Statues come from Holy Cross Church and have truly been admired by everyone. I would like to thank all those parishioners who kindly donated Poinsettias in memory of deceased loved ones, to decorate around the Crib. The Crib will remain in the cathedral until the 2nd February, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

YOUR CRIB OFFERINGS Everything donated at the Crib goes to the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society which functions in our diocese. It mainly runs off the charity of people throughout the diocese and



the Annual Crib Collection and helps thousands of children and families each year. Please be generous in your giving. Thank you!

A VERY WARM WELCOME I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the Deacons and Seminarians from the Pontifical North American College, who are only here for a few days at the conclusion of their Christmas Break; lectures resume again on Tuesday 7th January. My thanks to the Parish Community for providing sweets and desserts while the Seminarians have been here, I truly appreciate the generosity of you all; a very big **THANK YOU!**



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 Brian Kelleher, David Cutter, Tony Bortoli, Sr Sarah Higgins and Sr DePaul Maher who died recently; funeral details are as follows:

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.

Details of David's funeral are not yet known.

Details of Brian's funeral are not yet known.

May they rest in the peace of Christ.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS today will be hosted by the PACE (Parish And Community Events) group; next week will be the turn of the Scouts.

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 or message / call 07733 103588.

JOURNEY IN FAITH COURSE The next meeting will be on **Thursday 9th January 2025** and the theme will be: **MARRIAGE & HOLY ORDERS.**

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.

THE 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 that there will be **no Friday group on 10th January** as the halls will be otherwise occupied.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY will resume again 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).

VESPERS FOR UKRAINE There will be a special Vespers in the Cathedral on **Wednesday 26th February at 6.00 p.m.** to pray for peace in Ukraine on the eve of the third anniversary of the Russian invasion. The service will feature a mixture of Ukrainian music and familiar English church music, including a contribution by Ukrainians who are now part of our community. We will be privileged to be joined by the Ukrainian Eparch (Bishop) for Great Britain, Rt Rev Kenneth Nowakowski, who will preach at the service. There will be refreshments available in the Parish Hall after the service. All welcome.

250 CLUB WINNERS Our congratulations go to the following 2024 winners: Rita Johnson (August draw), Deacon Simon & Sarah Conrad (September draw) and Patricia Barbour-Bourne (October draw).

CONGRATULATIONS TO ROMEL ODQUIER, a member of Brentwood Cathedral Choir and a former student at the Campion School, who read a lesson in Carols from King's, which was broadcast on BBC2 on Christmas Eve, and which may still be seen on BBC iplayer. Romel is in his second-year reading mathematics at King's College, Cambridge.

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 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, Dermot Dalton, David, Iris Davis, Jenny Dean, Patricia Decup, Charlotte Donnelly, Margaret F, Rebecca Florendo, Julian Goode, Deacon Nicholas Holmes, Wong Su Hwa, Jess, 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

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.

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 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/>

THE DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE, led by Bishop 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.

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.

VACANCY The Governors of St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Romford are seeking to appoint an inspirational, dedicated and dynamic Head Teacher, from September 2025. St Peter's is a caring, friendly, supportive and diverse school: a spiritually enriched community where our Catholic ethos is central to all that we do. Following our existing Head Teacher's decision to retire in July 2025, we are seeking a new Head Teacher who will work with the governors to shape the strategic direction of the school, and will be responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of St Peter's. For further details call the school on 01708 745506. Deadline for applications: **Friday 31st January 2025** at 12.00 noon.


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
			