

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

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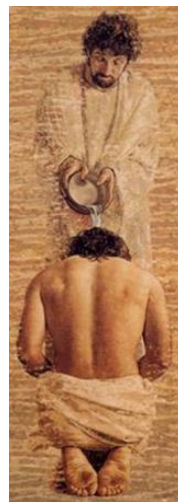
Website: www.brentwoodcathedral.org.uk

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Sunday 12th January 2025

Spiritual Reflection:

Today the season of Christmastide draws to a close. It reaches a wonderful climax in a definitive event in the Lord's life: his baptism in the Jordan. Jesus' baptism was a remarkable event because the baptism offered by John the Baptist was for repentance. The immersion in the waters of the Jordan was a sign of conversion, or a person changing direction in life. John's message was addressed to tax collectors, soldiers and ordinary men and women. It was a message of moral reform, of preparing for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus' baptism is a baptism of solidarity with sinners and began his public life and in this moment, God is revealed as Blessed Trinity.



The Trinity is unique to Christian faith. We are united to Muslims and Jews because we share a common belief in One God, but at this point our faith departs sharply from these two other faiths because we believe that God is three Persons in One God - The Holy Blessed Trinity. God is Father, God is Son and God is Holy Spirit. Jesus' baptism was the manifestation, of Jesus as

Messiah of Israel and the Son of God. The unveiling of Jesus' nature and mission brought forth from the Father a tender and heart-warming affirmation: You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

Jesus' baptism was the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's Suffering Servant. He allowed himself to be numbered among sinners - he is truly 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' In today's Gospel we are seeing unfolding before our very eyes the 'fulfilling of all righteousness.' We are witnesses of Jesus consenting to submit himself entirely to his Father's will, which was his death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

The coming down of the Spirit of Jesus' baptism looked forward to the coming down of the Holy Spirit on us - a prelude, if you like, to the new creation. We commit ourselves to entering more deeply into the mystery of our baptism, praying about it, seeking to understand it and growing in our appreciation of this wonderful grace.

Dear Friends in Christ

Do you know that date you were baptised? Pope St John Paul II, believed the day of his baptism was the greatest day of his life. Our initiation into the Christian life commences on the day of our Baptism. In the Gospel today we see Jesus' baptism. It actually wasn't necessary for him to be baptised as he was free from sin; but he uses it as a witness to those around, how he wishes to be associated with with sinful humanity, as Saviour. The sacred promises made by our loving parents on the day of a child's baptism are an eternal legacy to the child, that they will do everything in their power to keep that child on the path of Jesus Christ, and ultimately, leading to God. Baptism, is the gateway to the Sacramental Life; we begin that great journey



of discovery, and live out daily those promises so solemnly made on our behalf. Perhaps, you can look at your Baptismal Certificate today and memorise the date of your Baptism.

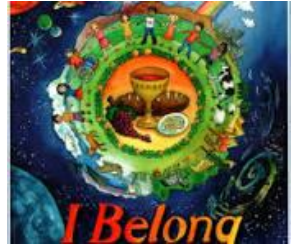
HOLY YEAR - PARISH OUTREACH As part of our Holy Year celebrations, as a Parish I would like to launch a Parish Outreach initiative. Judging by the incredible numbers we had here for our Christmas Masses, there are obviously a lot of parishioners who do not attend Sunday Mass regularly. Especially today, which is the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord, the sacred promises made to Almighty God on the day of a child's Baptism are certainly binding. I truly believe it is about our personal integrity before God, and importantly and especially for parents. When you make certain promises on behalf of the most precious person in your life, namely your child, it would be disastrous to think that that sacred promise was broken or even abandoned.



The consolation is, that God never gives up on any of us, and like the lost sheep, is always searching out and desiring us to return home to the fold. If you know of anyone who has seriously lapsed from the faith, and many did after Covid, please gently and encouragingly extend an invitation to return to the regular weekly practice. There are plenty of newsletters printed weekly, even if you pushed one through a neighbour's door or give one to someone you know who may not be attending anymore, at least it is an opportunity for them to keep in touch. Or if it is a family member, please encourage them to return. For less than an hour a week, we can give praise to God in thanksgiving for the many graces and blessing which he bestows on our lives, and those blessings are many and varied.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2025 Next **Saturday 18th January** our First Holy Communion Programme commences with as special **Mass of Welcome and Introduction**

to the programme at 9.15 a.m. The Mass is for the parents and children who will be preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. By now, you will have received information with regard the programme and the various sessions for the children. It is



imperative that the children **attend every session** of the programme; if a child has to miss a session, for whatever reason, you must speak to Fr John about this in person. This is one of the most important times in your child's life, and your support and encouragement is essential. The last time I spoke to parents, I asked you to speak to your child about their Baptism, to show them photos of the baptism, their shawl, their baptismal candle; tell them who was present on that special day and tell them what it meant for you as their parents. The most important part of this programme is your weekly attendance at Holy Mass; none of this makes any sense whatsoever, without your presence at Mass. You are teaching your child about the importance of the most Sacred part of our Faith through the Holy Eucharist.

IRREGULAR MARRIAGES What is an irregular marriage? One that has taken place outside of the Roman Catholic Faith, i.e. In a register office; on a beach, or at a secular venue; in another Christian Church without dispensation. These marriages are only recognised by the law of the land, and not by the Catholic Church. Once a person is baptised, you are bound by your Roman Catholic faith forever. If there is no reason why a person cannot be married in the Catholic Faith, we can provide the means to rectify this irregular situation through what is called Convalidation. This is very private service offered by the Church. If you want further information, please contact Fr John on 01277 265235.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr John". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a horizontal line.

PLEASE PRAY for the repose of the soul of Mary Owers, Ian Spencer, Brian Kelleher and David Cutter who died recently; funeral details are as follows:

Details of David's funeral are not yet known.

Details of Brian's funeral are not yet known.

Details of Mary's funeral are not yet known.

Ian died unexpectedly whilst visiting family in Canada; his funeral service has already taken place. A memorial service will be celebrated in the Cathedral but the date for this is not yet known.

May they rest in the peace of Christ.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS today will be hosted by the Scouts; next week will be the turn of the Spanish Speaker's Community.

DATE FOR YOUIR DIARY Fr John's 70th birthday celebration - **Saturday 15th February 2025**. Fr John will celebrate the 6.30 p.m. Mass, which will be sung, to be followed by a reception in the Parish Hall. To help give us an idea of numbers attending for catering purposes, please print your name and how many will be attending on the sign-up list in the narthex. All are welcome!

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.

READERS & EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS the new rota starts this weekend. Please make a note of your dates. Thank you for your continued support. Ann 01277 231593
messina21@btinternet.com

PILGRIMS OF HOPE PRAYER GROUP - for this special jubilee year why not join the parish Pilgrims of Hope prayer group? It couldn't be easier. The group pray every Monday evening at 8 .00 p.m. Prayers and reflections are shared on a WhatsApp group with each person praying privately wherever they find themselves. If you'd like to join the WhatsApp group then please give your mobile number and name to the parish secretary.

THE NEXT MARANATHA will be at the Sion Community, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, CM15 9BX on **Thursday 16th January** at 7.00 p.m. for Mass, Praise and Worship and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Everyone is welcome, so do join us for what has come to be a very blessed evening.

JOURNEY IN FAITH COURSE The next meeting will be on **Thursday 23rd January 2025** and the theme will be: **SACRAMENT OF THE SICK: Extreme Unction, Ministry of Healing / Suffering.**

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.

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.

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, Esmeralda Chester, 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 Matyszczuk, 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

CARITAS BRENTWOOD NETWORKING DAY You are warmly invited to the 2025 Caritas Brentwood Networking Day, taking place on **Sunday, 9th February**, from 2-6 pm at St. Edward the Confessor Church Hall, Romford. This event is an opportunity to explore the Catholic response to pressing issues such as homelessness, welcoming refugees and migrants, supporting those affected by the Cost-of-Living Crisis, and addressing climate change. Join us to find inspiration during this Jubilee year, exchange ideas and best practices with parishioners across Essex and East London, and learn about the charities and resources available to support your efforts. Registration is free - find more details at www.caritasbrentwood.org/network

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.

A YEAR OF HOPE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE JUBILEE YEAR with the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development: 2025 is a Jubilee year, but what does that mean? Catholic talk show host

and author Nana Churcher, and CAFOD's Simon Giarchi will be hosting Fr Jan Nowotnik (Director of Mission for the Bishop's Conference), Christine Allen (CAFOD's Director) and Kayode Akintola (CAFOD's Head of Africa) and more for a lively start to the Jubilee. With a special appearance by Catholic band Ooberfuse. Saturday 18th January, 10:30 a.m. - midday, online. All welcome. Register here for free: [//cafod.org.uk/jubilee](http://cafod.org.uk/jubilee)

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.

WHY DO PEOPLE NO LONGER COME TO CHURCH? The Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre are hosting a talk by Rev Dr Liam Hayes at New Hall School. The talk, followed by discussion, starts at 7.00 p.m. on **Wednesday 22nd January**. Refreshments will be served from 6.30 p.m. No cost to attend. All are welcome but need to register via the following link: <https://canonesses.co.uk/event/why-do-people-no-longer-go-to-church-wed-22-jan-2025/>

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.

VACANCIES The Ursuline Preparatory School, Ilford are seeking a Year 5 Class Teacher and a Director of Learning and Teaching. For further information, visit www.urspsi.org.uk/school_careers.asp Closing date for applications is **Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 12 Noon**.

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