

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

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FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

Sunday, 1 February 2026

Spiritual Reflection:

The Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes surpass even the Ten Commandments. They are the Magna Carta, the New Commandments, not etched on stone but written on our hearts. The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' teaching. They are the fulfilment of the teaching of the



Torah, the most beautiful manifesto of what it means to live on earth as a new creation. They reveal that the kingdom of heaven isn't about power or strength or land or wealth or possession but rather that the kingdom of heaven is within us. The kingdom of heaven is an attitude, a way of the heart, a way of thinking and acting which is shocking, radical and life changing.

The Beatitudes can be said to reveal the face of Christ because he lived them perfectly. They are the pathway to happiness and true fulfilment. In short, the Beatitudes are beautiful. Do you know them off

by heart? Have you secured them in your memory? Are they on the tip of your tongue? Here's another question: are you happy? And another one: do you want to live a happy life? If you do, and God knows we all do, there is only one way and this is to live the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes show us the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of every human act. We are called to beatitude by the Beatitudes and one day beholding the beatific vision. As St. Augustine so beautifully and eloquently expressed it: 'There we shall rest and see, we shall see and love, we shall love and praise. Behold what will be at the end without end. For what other end do we have, if not to reach the kingdom which has not ended?' We are put in this world to know, love and serve God, and at the end of our lives enter the joy of eternal life, where death is not the end, but the beginning.

When we put into practice the light yoke and burden of the Beatitudes, we begin to taste the eternal life to which we are called. For in the kingdom of heaven, we encounter the poor in spirit, those who mourned but now know the joy of Christ, the meek and not the prideful and haughty, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who whilst on earth hungered and thirsted for righteousness.

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Dear Friends in Christ,

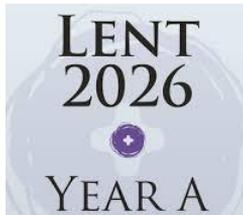
You will have seen the Parish Crib has remained in the Cathedral over the past weeks. Traditionally, the last chapter of the Nativity Narrative takes place on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (**Monday, 2 February**), known as Candlemas. Commemorating the occasion when the Virgin Mary, accompanied by St Joseph, in obedience to Jewish law, went to the Temple in Jerusalem both to be purified 40 days after the birth of her son, Jesus, and to present him to God as her firstborn (Luke 2:22-38).



So, the Presentation is a proclamation of Christ – Messiah and Priest, Lord and Saviour. He is the light who came into this world to dispel sin and darkness. For this reason, traditionally at least since the seventh century, candles have been blessed at Mass this day that will be used throughout the year, hence coining the term “Candlemas.” After the Gospel on the feast, we will bless candles.

**YOUR CRIB OFFERINGS:** All your donations at the Cribs will go towards the work of the Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society. This is one of the

main forms of fund-raising for the BCCS. The Society usually sees about 5,000 clients every year from our diocese. Much of this work is done throughout Catholic Schools. The Crib will remain up until the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord **Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February** and the Special Annual Crib Collection for BCCS will take place this weekend **31<sup>st</sup> January & 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026**. Thanking you all in anticipation.



**SERIES OF LENTEN TALKS:** As we are about to enter the month of February, and Ash Wednesday is only a few weeks away - **18<sup>th</sup> February**. It gives me great pleasure to inform you that I have secured four speakers this year for our Lenten Talks. The theme of our talks this year is: ***What does it truly mean to be Catholic?***

**Talk 1: Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February** - Abbot Hugh Allan, O Praem. *“I Believe...” Living and Proclaiming the Catholic Faith.*

**Talk 2: Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March** - Rev Msgr Kevin W Hale, VG. *Being Catholic and the call to holiness as seen in the lives of some recently canonised saints.*

**Talk 3: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March** - Mr Mauro Iannicelli. *Prayer as the Foundation of our Catholic Life.*

**Talk 4: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March** - Rev Msgr John Armitage. *The uniqueness of Catholicism for British Society.*

All the Lenten Talks will take place in the Parish Hall, commencing at **7.30pm**. Please do avail yourselves of the opportunity to hear these gifted speakers. What better way to truly enter the Holy Lenten Season!

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2026:** This is just a reminder to parents, that the next communion session for the children will be on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> February, commencing at 9.30am. It is imperative that all children are present for all the Communion Sessions. If a child is seriously ill, please contact Fr John directly Tel No: 01277 265 235. In the last session we talked about Baptism, and how we become members of God’s Family. The children’s homework was to talk about their Baptism with their parents, and to look at photos, and their baptismal candle, and their baptismal



robe, sharing how important a day it was in the life each family. Please keep these children in your prayers over the following months.

**PARISH REPOSITORY:** This is our little religious shop on the Narthex of the Cathedral. We have a selection of religious good and cards for all occasions. Prayer Books, Children's Books, rosaries, statues, medals, holy pictures. Also we are able to order in anything you request, either speak to Margaret Walker, or one of the Repository helpers on duty at the various masses each week.

**IRREGULAR MARRIAGES:** An Irregular Marriage is one that has taken place outside of the Catholic Church without dispensation. For example: Marriages in hotels, and secular venues, on beaches or Las Vegas; marriage in a non-Catholic Church without dispensation from the Bishop. These marriages are not recognised by the Catholic Church, and therefore are non sacramental & irregular. But there is a facility in the Church to rectify these situations called a Convalidation (this is a strictly private facility that is offered by the church). As marriage and family life is what I specialised in while studying Canon Law, if anyone wishes to speak to me confidentially, please don't hesitate to contact me at Clergy House: Tel No: 01277 265 235

**RCIA PROGRAMME - JOURNEY OF**

**FAITH:** Continues *Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026*. Please do keep our twelve enquirers in your thoughts and prayers, especially as they make the very important decision to be received into full communion with the Roman Catholic faith at Easter 2026. Theme: *Sacramentals: Devotions, Benediction, The Rosary, Stations of the Cross, The Saints*. Just a reminder to our Catechumens and Candidates that the forms need to be returned to Father John by the end of the week. The Rite of Election, where all Catechumens and Candidates are presented to the Bishop, takes place on the ***First Sunday of Lent, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 at 3.00pm***.



**CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME** - Continues today from 4.00pm - 6.15pm in the Parish Hall.



**BAPTISMS:** If there are parents wishing to have their children baptised at Brentwood Cathedral, could you kindly contact the Parish Office as soon as possible. For first time parents there is a Baptismal Preparation

Programme run by Fr Matúš. Baptisms take place on Saturdays at 11.00am & 12.00 Noon, and Sundays at 1.00pm.

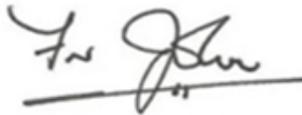
**FUNERAL SERVICE FOR JULIAN GOODE R.I.P.** will take place in The Cathedral at ***11.30am on Wednesday, 4 February***, followed by a private burial.

**BCYS MONTHLY YOUTH MASS** will be held on ***Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> February***. 6.00pm in the Parish Hall, followed by Mass in The Cathedral at 7.30pm. All young people are very welcome.

**THE NEXT CHAPTER OF CANONS MASS** will take place in the Cathedral on ***Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February at 10.30am***. All are very welcome to attend. Please note, this Mass will be in place of the 9.15am morning Mass.

**LUNCHTIME MUSIC RECITAL** Please join us on ***Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February*** at ***1.00 p.m.*** for a piano recital to be given by Anastasiia Matsko.

May God bless you all.

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

**CREDIT CARD PAYMENT TERMINAL** - While the credit card terminal is being repaired, I would ask that you please use the QR codes (which are posted on the noticeboard in the Narthex) to make your donations. Thank you.

**NOTICES FOR THE NEWSLETTER** - If anyone has any items they would like included in the weekly newsletter, please send the details to the Parish Office by Wednesday lunchtime.

**COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS TODAY** will be hosted by The Friday Lunches Group. Next week will be the turn of the Altar Servers. All are welcome, so please do join us.

**THANK YOU FROM BREDA BOWER** - Thank you to the parishioners who attended the coffee morning last Sunday to help me celebrate my 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Your cards and gifts are really appreciated. Donations of £70 will be given to the Food Bank. Breda Bower

**THE FRIDAY FRIENDSHIP LUNCH** Every Friday all are welcome to come along to the parish hall (***12 noon - 2.00pm***) for a soup lunch, cakes and drinks and most importantly, friendly faces and an opportunity to meet up with others.

**CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP** will meet again on *Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> February from 7.00pm - 8.30pm*. Everyone is welcome so please do feel free to join us for prayer and praise.

**MASS TIMES** in the Cathedral:

**SATURDAY VIGIL MASS** at 6.30pm

**SUNDAY:** 8.00am / 9.30am / 11.30am & 6.30pm

**WEEKDAY MASSES** Monday to Friday at 9.15am

**SATURDAY:** 9.15am

**THE HOLY HOUR** of prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament takes place on a **Monday evening from 6.30 - 7.30pm**. and will be preceded by the *ROSARY for Ukraine and peace in our world at 6.10 p.m.*

**PILGRIMS OF HOPE PRAYER GROUP** - Why not join the parish Pilgrims of Hope prayer group? It couldn't be easier. The group pray **every Monday evening at 8.00pm**. 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.

**SICK & HOUSEBOUND PARISHIONERS:** If there are any sick of housebound parishioners that would like a visit from one of the priests please contact Clergy House Tel No: 01277 265 235. We can also arrange for Holy Communion to be brought to your homes on a regular basis.

**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 01277 265 235.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** is available in the Cathedral on Saturdays from 10.00 - 11.00am. Confessions in Italian are also offered.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK** and housebound parishioners and friends, including: Sylvia Allum, Merle Anderson, Suzie Anderson, Alistair Bailey, Yvonne Ball, Hermine Bayley, Heidi Brenke, Eda Bright, Roisin Cassels, Esmeralda Chester, Keith Chester, Dermot Dalton, David, Iris Davis, Patricia Decup, Sheila Deed, Charlotte Donnelly, Margaret F, Rebecca Florendo, Angela Gavin, Brian Hodgkins, Deacon Nicholas Holmes, Wong Su Hwa, Jess, Lisa Landy, Suzie Law, Lawrence, Peter Madden, Romek Matyszczyk, Tony Maule, John McCarthy, Carmel Micallef, Stephanie Murray, Harry Newman, Barney O'Driscoll, Joe O'Herlihy, Liam O'Herlihy, Steven Poole, Margaret Ross, Geraldine Sheehan, Robin Shenton, David

Spring, Mary Stretch, Tim, TCT, Siobhan Vaughan, Michael Wilson, Kalcho Yankov and all our sick.

**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.

**LOURDES WITH OUR DIOCESE:** Join Bishop Alan and pilgrims from across our diocese in Lourdes next summer: *Friday 17<sup>th</sup> - Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2026*. Booking details will be available shortly.

**ST JOHN BOSCO CHILDREN'S CAMP - an amazing volunteer opportunity for this summer.** If you are in school year 12 or student age (or any age over 17!) you are very welcome to apply at [www.boscocamp.co.uk](http://www.boscocamp.co.uk). The application process includes references and a DBS check, which we can help with, as well as a training and support before and during Camp. The Camp provides over 100 children a week with a summer holiday - for many their only holiday. As a volunteer you use your skills in assisting with different sporting and fun activities, as well as the practical aspects of camp life. **Volunteer for Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> July - Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> August or Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> - Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> August.** The Camp is a special work of Caritas Diocese of Brentwood, and also seeks financial donations - all information on the website.

### **ST HELEN'S CATHOLIC INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL: NURSERY OPENING**

Our infant school is actively seeking support from the local community to resource its new nursery, ready for its opening in September 2026. The school now has an Amazon Wishlist which is solely dedicated to resourcing the nursery. If you would like to show your support to the exciting addition to our infant school and parish community, the link to the list is: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/registries/gl/owner-view/CE4GY31VU4JM?ref=gr\\_universal\\_landing\\_ggr](https://www.amazon.co.uk/registries/gl/owner-view/CE4GY31VU4JM?ref=gr_universal_landing_ggr)

**ST HELEN'S CATHOLIC INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL: NURSERY APPLICATIONS 2026-27** The nursery admission round is now open for parents of children to apply for a nursery place for the academic year that starts in September 2026. The application form is available on the school website and applications must be made directly to the school. The closing date for applications is: *Friday, 20th March 2026*.

**VACANCY: PARISH FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR - SOUTHEND** A vacancy has arisen for a Parish Finance Administrator. All applicants should have good administrative and finance skills, although training will be given. The post

will be part-time working 6 hours per week - (working pattern tbc) and the salary is £12.60 per hour.

The closing date for applications is **Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026**  
Please send any queries or CVs by email to [southend@brcdt.org](mailto:southend@brcdt.org)

**VACANCY: EXAM INVIGILATOR - SHENFIELD HIGH SCHOOL** is looking for flexible, reliable people to join our Exam Invigilation Team and support students during exams. The role offers flexible hours at peak times throughout the academic year and is a great way to give back to your local school. No experience required – full training provided.

For more information about the role, please visit [www.shenfield.essex.sch.uk/about-us/vacancies](http://www.shenfield.essex.sch.uk/about-us/vacancies) alternatively please contact [e.kirk@shenfield.essex.sch.uk](mailto:e.kirk@shenfield.essex.sch.uk)

**RETRouvaille MARRIAGE HELP** - Retrouvaille helps couples find hope and healing for their marriage. Next date: **Thursday, 12 February**.  
[www.retrouvaille.org.uk](http://www.retrouvaille.org.uk) Tel: 07887 296983

**BCCS AFTERNOON TEA** - The Brentwood Catholic Children Society is delighted to kick off the year with an invitation to Afternoon Tea. Hosted in the opulent surroundings of the Roslin Beach Hotel in Southend-on-Sea on **Tuesday 17th February 2026 (13:30-15:30)**.

Tickets are £35 per person - for more information or to book your place search [//www.bccs.org.uk/get-involved/events/](http://www.bccs.org.uk/get-involved/events/) or contact Julie Abbott on 07912277413 or [jabbott@bccs.org.uk](mailto:jabbott@bccs.org.uk)

**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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Brentwood Diocesan Trust – Registered Charity No. 234092