

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

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THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (A)

Sunday, 11 January 2026

Spiritual Reflection:

Today the Season of Christmastide draws to a close and reaches a wonderful climax in a definitive event in Jesus' life: his baptism. This 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, of 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 began his public life and, in this moment, God is revealed as the Blessed Trinity.



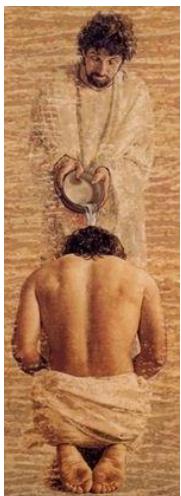
The Trinity is unique to Christianity. We are united to Muslims and Jews because we share a common belief in One God, but at this point our faiths depart sharply from one another because we believe that God is Three Persons in One God: Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Jesus' baptism was the manifestation, the epiphany, of Jesus as the Messiah 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 Son, whom I love; 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 sins of the world.'

In today's Gospel we see the 'fulfilling of righteousness.' We are witnesses of Jesus consenting to submit himself entirely to his Father's will, his death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. The coming down of the Spirit at his baptism looked forward to the Spirit coming down on us - a prelude to the new creation. We commit ourselves to enter 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,

The Baptism of the Lord, 2026



Do you know the date you were baptised? The late 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 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 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. (Picture: Baptism of Jesus, Los Angeles Cathedral)

YOUR CRIB OFFERINGS: All your donations at the Crib 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 2nd February and the Special Annual Crib Collection will take place on the weekend 31st Jan/1st Feb. Thanking you all in anticipation.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS: 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 name: Brentwood Cathedral:

Sort Code 40-13-22

Account Number: 30217492

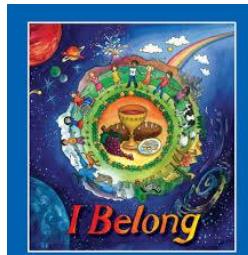
There is also the Electronic Gifting Machine in the Narthex of the Cathedral, where you can use your credit or debit card to tap (just use the heading Christmas Offering). With grateful thanks!



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS: Every year we all start off with good intentions with our New Year's resolutions; but often, and very quickly they fall by the wayside. Could I suggest we all choose one thing to focus our attention - Renewal in faith - It would be wonderful if we could truly commit ourselves to the Lord Jesus in the practice of weekly faith. It's not too much to ask to attend Holy Mass for one hour on a Saturday evening/Sunday morning. The Lord invites us to share in his life, and it's up to us if we accept or reject that invitation. But it's important to remember there are always consequences! A Happy & Blessed New Year for 2026 to you all!

RCIA PROGRAMME - JOURNEY OF FAITH: Continues *Thursday, 15th January 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 Romans Catholic faith at Easter 2026. Theme: The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME: The Parents' & Children's Meetings will take place on ***Saturday, 17th January*** commencing with ***9.15am*** Mass for all. Fr John will talk to the parents after the Mass and the children will disperse into the various groups for the first session. The children's session will end at 11.30am. It is absolutely imperative that all the children attend every session of the First Holy Communion Programme.



As you can appreciate, we only have a limited amount of time with the children at each session. If your child is unable to attend through sickness please contact Fr John personally Tel No: 01277 265 235. They will have to make up the session at a later date.

Also, the Homework Sessions will be emailed to parents. Please ensure you sit down at least once a week with your child, and share with them the homework, and talk to them about their First Holy Communion. The children will be prepared for First Reconciliation throughout Lent. Please ensure that you personally drop off and pick up your child when the session begins and ends. Thank you! Please keep all the children and their families in your prayers over the next several months.

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 & 12Noon, and Sundays at 1.00pm.



CATHEDRAL TOILET FACILITIES: SENSITIVE ISSUE:- Leading up to Christmas, we had to call out the plumber on three separate occasions because the disabled & ladies' facilities were blocked. The call out charges were extremely expensive, (£360.00) and could have been avoided if baby wipes, nappies and other things were not put down the toilets. Please only flush toilet tissue. Please may I ask all parishioners to be sensitive to everyone else using the facilities. Thank you!



PARISH FINANCES: First and foremost, I would like to thank all our parishioners who contribute on a weekly basis to the upkeep of this Cathedral Parish. This is probably one of the biggest parishes in the Diocese of Brentwood. It is not only our parish, but also the Mother Church of the Diocese. Therefore, it has a two-fold function in the Diocese. All the major diocesan events take place here at the Cathedral. As you can appreciate, the upkeep of the Cathedral and Parish Halls is wholly dependent on your Weekly Offerings. During the winter months November to April, there is a heavy drain on resources because of the various utilities, heating, lighting & water; and as you will know from your own domestic bills these are rising all the time. Thankfully, this year with our wonderful Bazaar result, this helps us to defray the utilities costs. But additional works throughout the parish, substantially affect our weekly

income. At present we are in the process of repairs to the ceiling and outside roof over the old part of the Cathedral. As a grade 2 star listed building, we have had to follow all the necessary legal requirements for works to be completed. In the Parish cemetery, you may have noticed work has been done on some of the trees. Unfortunately, there are several trees by the railings on the Ingrave Road, which are diseased, and we are seeking professional advice about their removal. There have been serious issues with the gas boilers in the Parish Halls. Above the hall we had to have the roof repaired recently, as there were significant leaks. There were potholes in both of our car parks, which have now been repaired. The list goes on and on. All these expenses come from your weekly gift offertory to the parish. Please take into consideration all these things when making your weekly offering.

LUNCHTIME RECITAL We look forward to welcoming Karolina Csathy to The Cathedral at ***1.00pm on Wednesday 14th January***, when she will give a Lunchtime Violin Recital. All are welcome, so please do join us.

BREDA BOWER celebrates a milestone birthday this month and to mark the occasion, her family invite parishioners to join them for tea/coffee/cake after 9.30am Mass on ***Sunday, 25th January***. All welcome!

May God bless you all.



COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS will be hosted by Pace and next week will be the turn of the Confirmation Group. Please do join us.

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

CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP resumes on ***Thursday, 15th January 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 6.30 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.

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 - 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 8.00pm.** 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 AND HOUSEBOUND PARISHIONERS If you know anyone who is unable to come to Mass but would 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 - 11.00am. 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.

RETRouveille MARRIAGE HELP - Retrouvaille helps couples find hope and healing for their marriage. Next date: **Thursday, 12 February.** www.retrouveille.org.uk Tel: 07887 296983

ST. HELEN'S INFANT SCHOOL PROSPECTIVE NURSERY PARENTS 2026-2027 (3 - 4 YEAR OLDS) - There will be tours of the school for prospective parents (Nursery 2026) on **Wednesday, 28th & Thursday, 29th January at 9.30am.** Please contact the school office on 01277 215 626 to book a slot or by email at admin@st-helens-inf.essex.sch.uk

MARANATHA! Come Lord Jesus! You are warmly welcomed to an evening of praise and worship, including mass and adoration. ***Friday, 16th January and Friday, 13th of February 2026*** from ***7:00pm to 9:00pm*** at The Blessed Sacrament Church, 116 Melbourne Avenue, CM12DU, Chelmsford. Bring your friends!

RESPONDING TO HOMELESSNESS You are invited to join Caritas Brentwood at our upcoming 'Responding to Homelessness' event on ***Saturday, 24th January 2026 (10am-12:30pm)***. The event will be hosted by St Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish in Stratford. It will offer practical support, shared insights and meaningful discussions with local organisations, including Your Place Anchor House, Rainham Foodbank and the Basildon Night Shelter, who are all working on the frontline of homelessness. For more information and to register for free, go to: www.caritasbrentwood.org/events

LOURDES WITH OUR DIOCESE: Join Bishop Alan and pilgrims from across our diocese in Lourdes next summer: ***Friday 17th - Friday, 24th 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. 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, 25th July - Saturday, 1st August or Saturday, 1st - Saturday, 8th August***. The Camp is a special work of Caritas Diocese of Brentwood, and also seeks financial donations - all information on the website.

VACANCIES:-

EDUCATION SUPPORT ADMINISTRATOR - CATHEDRAL HOUSE

A vacancy has arisen to provide administrative and general departmental support to School Advisors across the Education Department of the Diocese. The post will be 22 hours per week - 4 days per week from 9.00am - 3.00pm with half an hour for lunch. Term time only - Salary £14.50 per hour

The closing date for applications is ***5.00pm on Monday, 16 February 2026***. If you have any queries or would like to apply, please send your CV by email to hr@brcdt.org

WALSINGHAM HOUSE TEAM 26/27 - Applications are now open for the Walsingham House Team 26/27. Being on the team is a wonderful opportunity to work with young people from across the diocese, live in community and to share and deepen our faith. Applications are open to those aged 18-23 (current Year 13 and above).

For more information including the application form please see the website <https://bcys.net/whabbotswick/be-on-team/> or email michaelkearns@brcdt.org.

Applications close on ***Friday, 16th January 2026***.

ST. HELEN'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL - KITCHEN ASSISTANT

11am - 2pm (term-time only) from January 2026. Please contact the school office for further information and an application pack: office@st-helens-inf.essex.sch.uk Deadline: ***Friday, 16th January 2026***

THE BISHOPS' CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND CATHOLIC SCHOOL, CHELMSFORD - HEADTEACHER

Deadline: ***12.00 Noon, Friday, 16th January 2026***

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL - BENFLEET - HEADTEACHER

Deadline for applications: ***09:00, Wednesday, 28th January 2026***

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR- OUR LADY OF COMPASSION- UPTON PARK

A vacancy has arisen for a Parish Administrator to work alongside our experienced Parish Administrator, to provide administrative support services to the Parish Office and a welcoming, appropriate service to those attending the parish office. The post will be part-time working 10 hours per week - (10-12pm Monday- Friday). The salary is £13.85 per hour

The closing date for applications is ***12pm on 31st January 2026***

If you have any queries or if you would like to apply, please send your CV by email to uptonpark@brcdt.org

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
			

Brentwood Diocesan Trust – Registered Charity No. 234092