

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

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SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT (A)

Sunday, 1 March 2026

Spiritual Reflection:

With Lent well underway, with its emphasis on prayer, fasting and almsgiving, the liturgy of the Word leads us to contemplate not a penitential theme but rather a glimpse of the glory of Jesus. It's as if we have only just started running a marathon and the crowd start cheering as if we were passing the finishing post. Too much, too soon! Yet, from the beginning catechumens, those seeking baptism on Holy Saturday, would be encouraged to contemplate this remarkable event in Jesus' life. The Transfiguration was a moment when the Father permitted three favoured disciples to glimpse the true glory and power of Jesus as the Eternal Son of the Father. It is also a peep, if you like, into our destiny as children of God and the gift of eternal life, the hope of the life to come.



An early Christian homily captured beautifully this living hope: 'Just as the body of the Lord was glorified on the mountain when it was transfigured in the glory of God and in infinite light, so the bodies of the

saints will be glorified and shine like lightening. “The glory which you have given to me I have given to them”. As countless candles are lit from a single flame, so the bodies of all Christ’s members will be what Christ is. Our human nature is transformed into the fullness of God; it becomes wholly fire and light’. Jesus revealed who he was, and who we would become in Christ. He was revealing what had already begun and giving us a vision that would forever change the way we think about our dignity and destiny.

Jesus revealed before mortal eyes the transcendent truth of who he is, and who Peter, James and John - and each one of us - would become in him. We can rely on Peter’s witness of his experience of Christ’s Transfiguration which assures us of hope of eternal life:

‘For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitness of his majesty. He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.’ (2 Peter. 1:16-18)

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we commence this second week of our holy Lenten Season; ask yourself, have you remained faithful to the resolutions that you made on Ash Wednesday? It’s so easy to fall by the wayside very quickly. But that doesn’t mean that we have to give up. Lent can be a truly positive experience; a time of growth and understanding of the Lord Jesus. We have to remember where this journey is leading us; ultimately to the greatest event this world has ever known. Jesus Christ, who died on Good Friday, rose triumphantly on Easter Day. Sin and death was conquered; and the Lord invites each one of us personally to share in that New Life, which we call our Catholic Faith. How we prepare for that is up to us. No one can do this for us. Prayer, fasting, works of charity are all well and good, but if there is no real intention behind them it becomes only lipservice. Conversion-Change of Heart is what the Lord calls each one of us to.

LENT
Pray + Fast + Give

SET YOURSELF LITTLE TARGETS: Morning and Evening Prayers; reading a passage from the Bible; attending an additional Mass during the week; attending Holy Hour; praying the Stations of the Cross; praying the

Rosary, or even a decade of the Rosary each day; reading a chapter of a spiritual book. My dear friends, you can choose any of these throughout the week. But please don't let this Lent pass you by.

SERIES OF LENTEN LECTURES: I would like to thank all those who attended the first of this year's Lenten Lectures given by Abbot Hugh Allan. He certainly gave us plenty to think about with regards to being Catholic and our belief. Monsignor Kevin Hale, our Diocesan Vicar General will give the next lecture on ***Wednesday, 4th March at 7.30pm*** in the Parish Hall (see theme below). The theme of the talks this year is: **"What does it truly mean to be Catholic"**

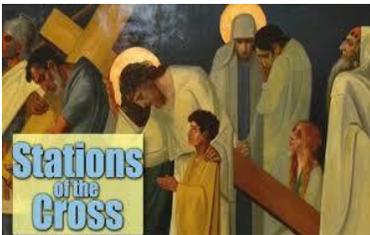


Talk 2: Wednesday, 4th March - Rev Msgr Kevin W Hale, VG. Being Catholic and the call to holiness as seen in the lives of some recently canonised saints.

Talk 3: Wednesday, 11th March - Mr Mauro Iannicelli. Prayer as the Foundation of our Catholic Life.

Talk 4: Wednesday, 18th 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!



TRADITIONAL DEVOTIONS FOR LENT - STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Will take place each ***Friday Evening of Lent at 7.00pm***, also on ***Sunday afternoon at 5.00pm***. This Lenten Devotion retraces the last day of Jesus' life on Good Friday. Step by step we journey with the Lord as he makes his way to Calvary and His Crucifixion. This is

a beautiful spiritual journey, that we are privileged to make with Our Blessed Lord. Because Jesus is making this sacrifice of his own life on behalf of the whole of sinful humanity. He truly becomes the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." If you have never prayed this devotion before, I really would encourage everyone to at least come on one occasion and join us for this devotion.

FIRST RECONCILIATION: The children who are preparing for their First Holy Communion will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time next ***Saturday, 7th March***. This is an extremely important day for the children, and I ask that their parents also be



present. The Reconciliation Service will take place at **10.15am** in the Cathedral. Children will meet in their Communion Groups at **9.30am**. There will be various priests to help celebrate the Sacrament, and I advocate that all parents also avail themselves of the Sacrament of Confession. If you haven't celebrated the Sacrament for a long time, the priests will help you.



THE RITE OF ELECTION: Last Sunday we had twelve Catechumens and Candidates for the Easter Sacraments presented at the Rite of Election from our Cathedral Parish. All in all, a record number of 320 from all over the Diocese of Brentwood were presented to Bishop Alan. I would like to commend all our catechumens and candidates to your prayers over this Lenten Season, as they continue in their final preparations for the reception of the Easter Sacraments. This is truly a great moment in their lives of faith, when they become one with us through faith and of course, receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist for the first time.

NEW ENQUIRERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2026: Each year we run the RCIA Journey of Faith Programme. If you know of anyone who may be interested in learning more about the Roman Catholic Faith, possibly with the view of receiving the Easter Sacraments, please contact Fr John at Clergy House Tel No: 01277 265235. Fr John will be only too happy to explain what is involved in the RCIA Programme and the commitment in faith that is involved.

RCIA PROGRAMME - JOURNEY OF FAITH:

Continues this *Thursday, 5 March 2026*.
Theme: *The Paschal - How We Celebrate*.
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.



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

May God bless you all.

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

PARISH FINANCES: First and foremost, I would like to thank all our parishioners who donate financially to the parish on a weekly basis; for those who Gift Aid and use the Envelope System; for those who use the Online banking system, and the Card Swipe & QR Code Systems. Your



weekly contribution is always gratefully received and goes towards the upkeep of this very large plant of the Cathedral, Parish Hall & Clergy House. As you will know from your own domestic situations, the utilities are a constant drain on weekly income, especially during the winter months.

Thankfully, our Parish Christmas Bazaar this year, helped to defray some of the costs. Unfortunately, the Clergy House Boiler broke down and was condemned by the heating engineer, which meant we had to invest in a new boiler. (It couldn't have come at a worse time, just over a month ago, when we were having minus 8-degree temperatures, it took ten days before a new boiler was up and running). I have also tried to keep the Cathedral as warm as possible during these winter months, but as you can appreciate, it's a huge space to heat, and takes a long time to warm up. I am including a breakdown of many of the regular payments that must be made; and various other outgoings over the past six months, which gives you some idea of how your contributions are being spent regularly. I should point out that the largest outgoing bill each month is paid to the Diocese for the upkeep and running of Cathedral House and all the staff who work there. This is called the Diocesan Quota, and every parish must pay an amount monthly. All the Curial Departments, work to ensure the smooth running of the diocese and are at the service of all the parishes. As you can appreciate (and I'm always aware of your generosity already), every penny is accounted for, and with inflation affecting us all, your weekly contribution is vital in keeping everything functioning. If you belong to the Gift Aid Scheme, and perhaps, haven't increased your weekly offering in many years, would you kindly think about doing so. Also, if you don't already belong to the Gift Aid Scheme, would you seriously consider doing so; Gift Aid forms can be found in the Narthex of the Cathedral.



ITEMISED EXPENDITURE:

Monthly: Diocesan Quota - £5,320.15; Clergy House & Cathedral Cleaning - £857.00; Hall Cleaning - £240.00; Garden Maintenance (Cathedral & Holy Cross) - £320.00; Website Maintenance - £215.00; Water Bill (6 months) Cathedral & Halls - £1,190.00, Electricity (Cathedral, Holy Cross, Clergy Hse & Halls) - £1,300.00; Gas (Cathedral, Holy Cross, Clergy Hse & Halls) - £2,724.00.

One Off Payments: Cathedral Light Bulb Replacement - £2,500.00; New Boiler for Clergy House - £6,200.00.

Renewal of Annual Contracts: Maintenance of Audio System - £440.00; Parish Hall Boiler Service - £310.00; Smoke Alarm Maintenance - £300.00; CCTV & Intruder Alarm Maintenance - £380.00; Brentwood Council Domestic Waste Contract - £499.00; Annual Photocopiers Maintenance Contract - £1,200.00

Ad Hoc Payments: Repair to Parish Hall Heating - £120.00; Stationery - Photocopying Paper £252.00; Tree Maintenance Holy Cross - £480.00; Toilet Unblockage Cathedral (3 callouts) £320.00; Replacement Pumps for Parish Halls Boiler - £864.00; Cathedral Roof Repairs - £894.00; Tree Pruning - Cemetery Front & Back (Dead & Poisoned Trees Removal) - £2,814.00.

As you can see, there is and has been a heavy layout over the past several months. Please do keep these figures in mind when you make your weekly offering. Thank you. My grateful thanks to our Finance Committee, and our Gift Aid Organisers who do so much for the Parish.



MISSIO If you have not yet returned your Missio box, could you please do so, before Easter Sunday, either to the narthex or Clergy House. Thank you.

Also, the Spring edition of **Mission Today Magazine** is available in the Narthex. Please do take a copy.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CHILDREN'S LITURGY GROUP TEAM - The Children's Liturgy group would be pleased to welcome new team members to join the rota to help lead the Liturgy for the children at the 9.30am Mass. No advance preparation is required, as each week's liturgy is prepared by the team leader.

Team members play an important role in keeping the children safe, leading by example and encouraging them to take an active part in the group. This voluntary role requires an enhanced DBS check. If you are able to help and would like to know more, please contact Jane Davenport, via Clergy House.

THE CAFOD LENTEN WALK: Continues this Sunday after 9.30am Mass. We meet outside the Parish Hall and each walk lasts approximately 1hr. Please do join us, even if you can only attend for one week and please come prepared with suitable clothing, in case of bad weather. Our parish is registered on the CAFOD website under 'Big Lent Walk'.

PARISH CAFOD WATER APPEAL: We are nearly there! £3,715 has been raised so far. To help us reach our target of £4,500, we would like to ask for your help. An idea has been put forward, to produce a recipe booklet, containing recipes that represent our Parish communities. So, if you have a favourite family recipe (savoury or sweet), please put it in an envelope and post it through the letterbox at Clergy House by ***Monday, 9th March.*** If we receive enough, we plan to have it printed in time to go on sale at Easter. If anyone has any contacts who could help with the printing, please let us know.

CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY - As we fast this Lent, so many of our neighbours around the world, will also go without food - but not by choice. The current worldwide climate crisis is pushing people to the brink. Whether through too much rain or drought, the result is the same - families go hungry.

As Jesus called us to 'Love your neighbour as yourself', please donate whatever you can, this Lent - either by taking a Fast Day envelope or via the QR code, or the CAFOD website.

NEW HALL SCHOOL CHOIRS: will be joining the Cathedral Choir at the 11:30 mass on ***Sunday, 8th March.*** The music will include Vierne's 'Messe solennelle' and Howell's 'Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks'. Please do join us for this special service.

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 CAFOD and Love in Action. Next week will be the turn of the Spanish Speaker Community. All are welcome, so please do join us.

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.

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 details 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.

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.

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, Margaret F, Rebecca Florendo, Angela Gavin, Brian Hodgkins, Deacon Nicholas Holmes, Wong Su Hwa, Jess, Lisa Landy, Suzie Law, Lawrence, Peter Madden, Romek Matyszczczyk, 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.

May God bless you all.

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

LOURDES WITH OUR DIOCESE: Would you like to join our bishop and parishioners and clergy from around the diocese on our annual pilgrimage

to Lourdes this summer? The dates are **Friday, 17th - Friday, 24th July**. Please visit <https://tangney-tours.com/brentwood> for further information and to book, or contact Deirdre Pembroke, lourdes@brcdt.org.

PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK SHRINE & CO MAYO: Led by Bishop Alan. **Monday, 15th June 2026**. £799.00 pps. Price includes flight from London Stansted, 10kg hold luggage, 4 nights' in Knock House Hotel (Dinner, Bed & Breakfast). Also, all entertainment, excursions and transport. Visit Knock Shrine, Ballintubber Abbey, Fr. Peyton Centre & Kylemore Abbey. Single supplement on Enquiry. Contact 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

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**.

PROJECT 58.7 FEEDING THE HOMELESS - LOCAL SUPPORT - For almost 6 years a solid group of volunteers from Brentwood Cathedral and St Joseph's Hutton, and lately some from Billericay parish as well, have been providing food for the homeless. Our group of local volunteers help by cooking a main meal or pudding, or by supplying fruit/yogurts or by delivering everything to a venue in Basildon. Volunteers are on the rota roughly once a month and according to your preferences and the days/dates you are available. The volunteer group are great at swapping and helping each other when unexpected things happen! We have a fund to help cover the cost of expenses. If you are interested to know more about what is involved, please contact Maddy on 07710 187 292.

SVP AND CAFOD WORK EXPERIENCE - The St Vincent de Paul Society and CAFOD are working together to offer a week of free residential work experience for 20 young adults in England and Wales. The experience will run from **Sunday, 21st - Friday, 26th June** in London. Candidates must be aged 18-25 years old, but priority will be given to those in their first or second year at university. Application forms are available via the QR code and the deadline is **Monday, 6 April**. For any queries, please contact KeziaH@svp.org.uk



A DAY WITH MARY is taking place at Westminster Cathedral on **Saturday, 14th March 2026 (9.45am to 5.00pm)**. Further information is available at <https://www adaywithmary.org/> or <https://eventcatholic.com/>

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

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