

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

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## THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (A)

Sunday, 8 March 2026

### Spiritual Reflection:

The woman at the well was thirsty for truth. We don't know her name, but we do know she was a Gentile from Samaria. Her conversation with Jesus is the longest one-to-one chat recorded in the whole Bible. The conversation began at noon, in the heat of the day. Jesus' question to her, profound in its irony, 'Will you give me a drink?' gets the chat underway. Jesus, never one to be bound by cultural norms, turns the world upside down. Jews weren't supposed to speak to Samaritans. Men weren't permitted to address women without their husbands present. Rabbis had no business speaking to ladies of a certain reputation and this lady definitely had form.

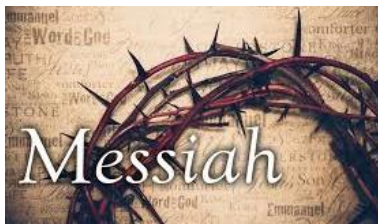


The Samaritan lady, more accustomed to the cultural norm, questions Jesus' wisdom in asking her for a drink: 'You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman,' she reminds him. 'How can you ask me for a

drink?’ This is a conversation about two different worlds - the everyday versus the everlasting. Water does quench our thirst, but Jesus was talking about a different thirst

and a different kind of water. Jesus’ cutting to the chase reveals the way the Holy Spirit works in our lives - he always convinces and convicts us of the darkness so that we may be healed by the light.

Just like the Holy Spirit, Jesus is direct and forthright: ‘The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you have now is not your husband’. Five marriages didn’t make her a sinner. Due to warfare, famine, disease and injury, men in those days dropped like flies. A widow became a beggar, a prostitute or another man’s wife. Each time, this Samaritan woman had chosen the best option. It was sharing her bed with a sixth man who wasn’t her husband that was the problem.

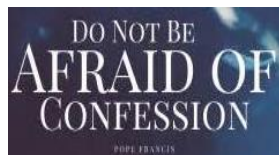


Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah, the Christ, and the woman begins her journey of conversion. In a society which considered women to be less than second-class citizens Jesus chose a woman to have this most profound theological / spiritual conversation. There is a way in

which we all have this conversation with Christ because we all identify an interior ache or longing which can only be satisfied by the living water of the living God. We drink from this cup of salvation every time we drink the blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

Lent is a Penitential Season, meaning that as Roman Catholics we should avail ourselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is our obligation, at least once a year to fulfil our Easter Duties; what this means is going to Confession between Ash Wednesday & Trinity Sunday. When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he continued to instruct the Apostles, he gave them the divine power for the forgiveness of sins in his name, and from the beginning of Christianity the Church has celebrated the Sacrament of Penance.



There is not one single person on the face of this planet who is perfect, and sin is the conscious decision by an individual to go against what is right and continue to do what is wrong. When we deliberately know something is wrong and still carry on doing it, ‘This is Sin’. Mortal Sin is a violation of the Commandments of God. The Catechism of the

Catholic Church teaches, “Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God’s law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to Him” (#1855). Therefore, sacramental absolution is necessary to forgive mortal sin, to restore the sanctifying grace in a person’s soul, and to reconcile the person fully with God and neighbour.

While confession is necessary for the forgiveness of mortal sin, it is also a most important means of grace and a good spiritual practice for the forgiveness of venial sin. Sadly, over the past 40 years or so, fewer of the faithful celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is a beautiful Sacrament. To know that we can come to Almighty God in an act of humility, and receive His unconditional loving forgiveness, is one of the Church’s greatest gifts to the faithful. But people often say they are frightened to celebrate the Sacrament. Why would you be frightened to receive God’s Love? We have all probably been on the receiving end of human forgiveness, either from our parents or loved ones; what greater joy than to receive God’s forgiveness!



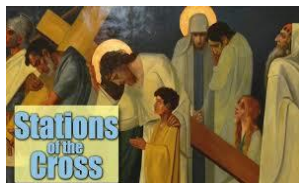
There will be a Parish Lenten Penitential Service on **Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> March at 7.30pm** with visiting priests to hear Confessions. If it’s been a long time since you last went to Confession, please make a very special effort

to celebrate the Sacrament in preparation for Easter & the Resurrection of the Lord. What greater act of love could we show to Jesus than being washed clean of our sins.

**FIRST RECONCILIATION:** On Saturday the children from our First Holy Communion Programme celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. This was truly a momentous moment in these children’s lives. I commend the children and their families to your ongoing prayers that they continue in their preparations for First Holy Communion in May 2026.

**RCIA - 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](tel:01277265235). Fr John will be only too happy to explain what is involved in the RCIA Programme and the commitment in faith that is involved.





**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.



**SERIES OF LENTEN LECTURES:** I would like to thank all those who attended the second of this year's Lenten Lectures given by Msgr Kevin Hale. Mr Mauro Iannicelli will give the next lecture on ***Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> 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"**

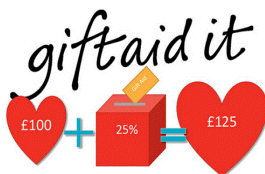
**Talk 3: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March** - Mr Mauro Iannicelli. Prayer as the Foundation of our Catholic Life.

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

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!

**PARISH REPOSITORY:** We have a little Parish Religious Shop providing all sort of religious goods. Cards for all occasions; statues, rosaries, children's books, missals, medals prayers, cards, First Holy Communion gifts & cards, Confirmation cards. As the Feast of St Patrick is rapidly approaching, there are plenty of St Patrick's greeting cards. There are also a variety of Mother's Day and Easter cards. If you wish to order anything through the Parish Repository each Saturday / Sunday, please see Margaret Walker or one of the helpers at the various masses.

**PARISH GIFT AID SCHEME:** Do you belong to the Parish Gift Aid Scheme? If you are a Taxpayer, and you make a weekly contribution to the Parish for its upkeep, you are entitled to join the scheme,



we just need your name and address. Your weekly contribution can be made in various ways, through the Offertory plate which goes around the Cathedral at each Mass, through a Standing Order, through the Swipe Card Machine in the Narthex, or by the QR codes. Obviously, you will need to notify the Gift Aid Organiser of which method you use so we can keep a record of your donations. The Gift Aid System affords us the opportunity to claim back 25% in the pound, from the Inland Revenue, which over a year can mount up to a considerable amount helping the parish funds. So, your contribution becomes tax deductible. As we approach the end of the Fiscal Tax Year, I would ask all parishioners to seriously consider your weekly offering, and, if you do not belong to the Gift Aid Scheme already, hope you will endeavour to do so. Michael & Amy Edwards are our Gift Aid Organisers; they will give you all the help you need. Always, my grateful thanks to each one of you as you make your Weekly Offertory to God for the upkeep of the parish.



**RCIA PROGRAMME - JOURNEY OF FAITH:**

Continues this *Thursday, 12 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.

**REQUIEM MASS FOR CHARLOTTE DONNELLY** will take place in the Cathedral at *11.00am on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> March*, followed by a service at Bentley Crematorium. The mass will be livestreamed via <https://www.shealolin.co.uk/charlotte-donnelly> or please use the QR code'



May God bless you all.

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

**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.

**FOOD BANK** Our next Food Bank collection will be on the weekend of *21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> March*. Please donate food items, toiletries, cleaning materials and especially Easter treats.

If you are a Tax payer and give cash or a cheque, please consider signing up to the Foodbank Gift Aid (separate from cathedral Gift Aid) forms available by the collection box. Thank you for your generosity.

**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. It has been suggested, 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, 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

**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 Spanish Speaker Community. Next week will be the turn of the Confirmation Group. 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.

**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.**

**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

**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 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.

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

**MARTÍN PALMERI'S 'MAGNIFICAT'** - Please join us for Brentwood & Ingatestone Choral Society's performance of Martín Palmeri's 'Magnificat' conducted by Art Wangcharoensab. This is the UK premiere of this fantastic tango-inspired choral piece and the composer himself will be at the piano!

***Saturday, 28th March, 7.00pm*** in The Wessex Auditorium, Brentwood School. Tickets are available via the website:

<https://www.brentwoodandingatestonechoral.org.uk/tickets/>

**PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK SHRINE & CO. MAYO LED BY BISHOP ALAN WILLIAMS**

***Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026 to Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026.*** 4 nights in Knock House Hotel, with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Visit Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick, Ballintubber Abbey, Fr. Peyton Centre. Price of £799.00 per person. The package includes: Return flight from London Stansted, 10kg check in bag, 4 nights Dinner, B&B in Knock House Hotel, all entertainment, excursions and guided tours. Assistance from Knock Pilgrimages representative. Single room supplement £250.00. Maximum 3. Contact: Patricia on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175 557 or at [knockpilgrimages@gmail.com](mailto:knockpilgrimages@gmail.com)

**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](mailto:lourdes@brcdt.org).

**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.***

**BRENTWOOD URSULINE** are pleased to share that they were awarded an 'outstanding' judgement from their recent Catholic Schools Inspection.

Overall effective: Outstanding  
Catholic Life and Mission: Outstanding  
Religious Education: Outstanding  
Collective Worship: Outstanding

To read the full report, please go to: [www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk](http://www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk)

**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, 21<sup>st</sup> - Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:KeziaH@svp.org.uk)



### **VACANCIES:**

#### **DEPUTY HEADTEACHER - ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, STANFORD-LE-HOPE**

Deadlines: Thursday 12th March 2026

#### **CLASS TEACHER - ST ANTONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, WOODFORD GREEN**

Deadline: 12:00 noon Thursday, 19th March 2026

#### **DEPUTY HEADTEACHER - OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHELMSFORD**

Deadline: 12:00 noon Friday, 20th March 2026

#### **ECT FOR ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St Peter's Primary School, Goresbrook Road, Dagenham are seeking to appoint an ECT in September 2026. The closing date is Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Please call the school office for an application pack Tel.0208 270 6524, email:- [office@st-peter.bardagelea.org.uk](mailto:office@st-peter.bardagelea.org.uk). School visits are welcomed.

**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 Giftpaid-it*

If you are unable to donate with Giftpaid-It then please use the codes below.

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