

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

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## FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (A)

Sunday, 22 March 2026

### Spiritual Reflection:

Today's Gospel reading is intended to lead us more deeply into our baptism. It is important to realise that Lazarus was brought back to life - he was not resuscitated. This is not the same as resurrection, which in Scripture means a person being brought back to life in a brand-new body! Lazarus would have had to go through death again at some later stage. However, his being brought back to life is a revelation of the power of Jesus over life and death and is an intimation of the resurrection life that will be ours once the death and resurrection of Jesus himself has occurred.



There are a few things that stand out in John's account of the raising of Lazarus. In the first place, after hearing of the sickness of Lazarus, Jesus delayed his visit by a few days - was he waiting for Lazarus to die precisely so that he could reveal his authority of death? This appears to have been Jesus' intention, and the conversation with Lazarus' sisters would seem to confirm this. Jesus wanted to encourage them to look towards him as the source of life and resurrection.

The second thing that stands out is the profound concern and even distress of Jesus. There is mention also of a deep sigh that 'came straight from the heart'. On the one hand, we are seeing here the profound concern of Jesus over the state of the human race. It was through the fall of humanity, and their sin, that people fell under the power of death. However, this does not simply mean physical death. The human race also became spiritually dead, cut off from God, and held in some sort of bondage to the Evil One. It was precisely from this condition that Jesus came into our world to deliver and redeem us.

At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus entered a confrontation with the Evil One himself. In that battle, Jesus claimed Lazarus back from the hold the enemy had over him. The whole event is an anticipation of Jesus' own death & resurrection. By dying Jesus broke the enemy's hold over humanity, and by rising established a new life and existence for us all.

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Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

Today we enter Passiontide, commencing on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, and concluding on Holy Saturday. Traditionally, the final two weeks of Lent in the Roman Rite are used as an immediate preparation for the sorrowful events of the Easter drama. It is a period to focus more on the Passion and death of



Jesus and so accompany him on his way to Calvary. You will notice that all the statues and images have been draped in purple; this prepares us for the journey into Holy Week, where we will retrace step by step Our Lord's last days before his Passion, Death & Resurrection. This sacred time in the Liturgical Calendar of the Church, is given to us to focus our attention of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. The saving action of Our Lord's self-sacrifice for the whole of sinful humanity on Good Friday is the means whereby Salvation is achieved for each one of us. I would like to seriously encourage all our parishioners to enter the true spirit of this Holy Season. Walk with the Lord in these days ahead, stand at the foot of the Cross, and rejoice with Mary & the Apostles on Easter Day.



**RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS - JOURNEY OF FAITH:** We have nearly completed our Journey of Faith Programme for 2025/26. It has been a real joy and privilege being able to share with our 12 Catechumens & Candidates the tenets of our Roman Catholic Faith. This Easter Vigil five Catechumens will be Baptised by Bishop Alan, and seven Candidates will

be received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. They will all receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist This is the high point of the Church's liturgical year. I ask for your continued prayers for our new Catholics-to-be, over these final days of Lent. May the Lord lead them forth to the Joy of the Easter Sacraments.

Those to be Baptised: Sonia Copson, Louis Hopkins, Sam Mayhew, Kalcho Yankov, Richie Savage.

Those to be Received: Thomas Bunting, Edward Lander, David Elisha, Michel Cravid, Paul Hewlett, Blanka Vitez, Danielle Osborne.

RCIA FINAL SESSION: will take place on **Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00pm** in the Cathedral. This is when we have a conducted Tour of the Cathedral pointing out all the aspects of the origins of Churches & Cathedrals, their meaning and significance.

Just reminder to our Candidates, that the Parish Lenten Penitential Service will be held on **Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> March at 7.30pm** This will be the first time you will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There will be several visiting priests to hear confessions.

**NEW RCIA PROGRAMME COMMENCING SEPTEMBER 2026:** If anyone is interested in joining the new RCIA Programme commencing in September, please kindly speak to Fr John, Tel No: 01277 265 235. It is always good to have a large group of enquirers. It is a systematic programme, covering all areas of the Roman Catholic Faith. We use the Creed as the basis for all instruction, and cover areas of the Old & New Testaments, Catholic Teaching and Tradition, The Sacraments, The Person of Jesus Christ, The Trinity, The Pascal Mystery, The role of Our Blessed Lady, The four last things, Sacramentals & the Saints, Catholic Moral Teaching, Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession), How to Pray, Extensive Tour of the Church.



**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:** Lent is a Penitential Season; we are all encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). Fulfilling our Easter Duties has always been a part of the Church's tradition. I seriously urge all parishioners to attend our Parish

Penitential Service on **Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> March at 7.30pm**, there will be visiting priest to assist and help with the celebration of the Sacrament. Also, Fr Aaron Kelly will be with us for Holy Week and will celebrate the Sacrament after every Mass. There will also be a Polish priest who will be able to hear confessions in Polish. If you haven't been to confession for a long time, please think seriously about attending this Penance Service.

We all need the Lord's loving and merciful forgiveness, and we should never fear God's Love. Please come and join us in preparing yourself spiritually for the great solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection on Easter Day.



**THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS:** This is the traditional devotion for Catholics during the Lenten Season. In these final 2 weeks I would like to encourage all our parishioners to attend the Stations of the Cross. This is the last Journey that Jesus made on Good Friday, from his condemnation by Pilate to this Crucifixion on Calvary. This gives us the opportunity to associate ourselves with the sacrificial offering Jesus made to His Father in Heaven; the gift of his own life offered up on behalf of the whole of humanity. The Lord's action on the Cross, the self-sacrifice to his Father is the most powerful image we possess of the Saving Action of the Cross - 'Ave crux spes unica - Hail Cross our only Hope.' Stations are on ***Fridays at 7.00pm and Sundays at 5.00pm***

**ENTERING INTO HOLY WEEK:**

Next ***Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March***, marks the beginning of Holy Week with our Palm Sunday celebrations. Holy Week is the high point of the Church's Liturgical Year. It plots the final days of Our Lord's life, from his triumphant entry



into Jerusalem, to the Last Supper, washing the disciples' feet, instituting the Holy Eucharist, his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, his mock trial and condemnation to death by Pilate, his carrying of the Cross & Crucifixion, being placed in the Tomb. And ultimately, his triumph over sin and death in the Resurrection on Easter Day. This incredible drama will be celebrated in every parish throughout the world. It allows us to Journey with Christ through these days ahead, not as some casual onlooker, but as a real companion of Christ, walking with him along the Via Crucis, standing with Our Blessed Lady & St John at the foot of the Cross, and rejoicing with Our Lady & the Apostles on Easter Day with the Risen Lord. I encourage every one of our parishioners to really enter the spirit of Holy Week this year. The Sacred Triduum commences on Holy Thursday with the ***Mass of the Last Supper at 8.00pm***. The ***Good Friday Liturgy*** with St John's Passion and the Veneration of the Cross will be at ***3.00pm***. And the First Mass of Easter and the Resurrection of the Lord, ***The Easter Vigil*** at ***7.30pm***.

**ELECTRONIC EASTER OFFERING:** This year envelopes will be available for you to make your Easter offering, which, as you know, is an opportunity in every Catholic church for parishioners to make an Easter gift to your Parish Priests, which goes to make up their salary for the year. It is possible to use the QR codes on the notice board in the Narthex. Plus, the Donation Station, which hopefully will be up and running. You can also make your Easter offering electronically. You just need to transfer the money to the parish account with the reference 'Easter Offering'; please also quote your Gift Aid Number.

*EASTER OFFERING*



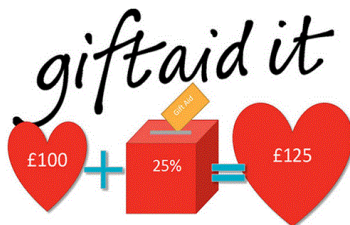
NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
GIFT AID NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

The details of the bank account are:  
Sort Code: 40-13-22  
Account Number: 30217492 (EASTER OFFERING + GIFT Aid No...)  
Account Name: Brentwood Cathedral



**PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE:** During Holy Week & Easter we welcome to our Parish Fr Bryce Beaumann & Deacon Michael Figura. Could I call upon your charity and please request a few desserts during their stay? It's always wonderful to welcome Student Priests & Deacons from PNAC. Fr Bryce's parents will also be travelling to the UK from the US to be with him and us for Holy Week & Easter. All of our visitors will arrive next weekend.

**GIFT AID ENVELOPES & THE NEW TAX YEAR:** For those parishioners who use the Gift Aid envelopes, the boxes will be available in the Narthex over the next week. Please try to collect them as soon as possible as the new tax year begins soon. As you can appreciate, your weekly contribution supports the Cathedral Parish.



A plant this size of Cathedral, Halls & Clergy House, (and we must also still maintain the Warley site), is extremely costly. Every home has experienced increased costs to domestic bills, and with the increase of gas, electric & water bills, everyone feels the pinch. But you are also aware the Church has always lived off the charity of the faithful people of God. I thank you all most sincerely for your ongoing support. Please continue to be generous in your weekly offering to God & the Church. With grateful thanks. Fr John.

**PARISH REPOSITORY:** There are some beautiful religious Easter cards available in the card stand in the Narthex. Also, there are a variety of new religious items, statues, rosaries, holy pictures, and medals; New Sunday Missals for those who wish to follow the readings at Holy Mass. As the First Holy Communion season takes place during the month of May, there will be a variety of First Holy Communion cards and gifts available from next weekend.



**LENTEN LECTURES:** I would like to thank all our guest speakers this year: Abbot Hugh Allan, Monsignor Kevin Hale, Mr Mauro Iannicelli, Monsignor John Armitage. They all gave us different aspects of what it truly means to be Catholic. All the Lenten Talks are now uploaded to the Cathedral Parish website. It was wonderful to see so many people from all over the diocese in attendance, and especially large numbers from the Cathedral Parish. It has been a truly

wonderful input into the Holy Lenten season. Thank you to all who supported the talks.

**GET YOUR EASTER CHICKS:** Some of the Mercy Sisters from St Joseph's Convent have been knitting some small Easter Chicks with a Cadbury's Cream inside, these will be available this weekend at £2 each, which goes towards Church funds. I would like to thank Sr Martina for organising this, and the other sisters, for all their hard work in knitting these little chicks over the past weeks. Please pick one up for your child.



**RETURNING TO THE PRACTICE OF THE FAITH:** The most wonderful thing about the life of faith, is that it is never too late to return to the practice of the faith. And practice means being present each week and participating in the Eucharistic Celebration.

As the great Catholic author Matthew Kelly said in his recent book 'Thirty-three days to Eucharistic Glory "Those who believe, don't leave!"' This Lent may be an opportunity for you to return to the practice of your faith. It is our faith that truly gives meaning to the whole journey of life itself. Please think about 'Coming Home.'

May God bless you all.

**BRITISH SUMMER TIME BEGINS** - A reminder that the clocks will go forward one hour at 2.00am on **Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March.**

**REQUIEM MASS FOR MARGARET MACLEAY** will take place in The Cathedral at **12.00 Noon on Monday, 23 March**, followed by cremation at Bentley Crematorium

**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. Replacement boxes are available for collection from the Narthex.

**FOOD BANK COLLECTION - This weekend.** 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.

**COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS TODAY:** will be hosted by the Brownies. Next week will be the turn of the Missio 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.

**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.

**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.***

**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.

**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.

**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/>

**THANKSGIVING MASS FOR JOHN MCCORMACK, CHAIR OF BRENTWOOD GUILD OF ST STEPHEN**  
**11.30am on Saturday 25 April 2026** at St Joseph The Worker, Hutton Presiding: Fr Gary Dench. All servers are welcome. Please RSVP by **Sunday 12 April 2026** to [johnmccormack528@gmail.com](mailto:johnmccormack528@gmail.com)

**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, 17<sup>th</sup> - Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> 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 JUNIOR SCHOOL** has started work has now on our Prayer Garden - a space we hope will become a place of peace, reflection, and prayer for all who visit. If you feel able, we would warmly welcome donations of **evergreen plants, evergreen trees or climbers**. These living gifts will help create a garden that remains full of life and beauty throughout the seasons. Thank you in advance for your kindness and support.

**VACANCIES:**

**EXPERIENCED KS2 TEACHER - ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHINGFORD:** For September 2026. further information & application forms, visit <http://www.stmaryschingford.com> or contact Mrs Sharkey, School Office on 0208 529 4723 or email: [jsharkey7.320@lgflmail.org](mailto:jsharkey7.320@lgflmail.org). Candidates must be supportive of our Catholic ethos. Successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. Closing date: *Monday, 13 April* (12.00 Noon)

**EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONER - ST HELEN'S CATHOLIC INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL:** We are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic and well-motivated person to join our staff in September 2026 to work in our new School-Based Nursery. 8.15am - 3.10pm (term-time only). Please contact the school office for further information and an application pack: [office@st-helens-inf.essex.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-helens-inf.essex.sch.uk) Deadline: *Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026*

**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
			

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