

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

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## PALM SUNDAY (A)

### Sunday, 29 March 2026

Spiritual Reflection:  
2026

Palm Sunday

We are about to embark upon our Holy Week 2026. Journeying with Our Blessed Lord and accompanying Him in faith and love, through his Pasion & Death, and, to share in the triumph of Resurrection Faith on Easter Day.



Our Palm Sunday celebration reminds us of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the Holy City, to cries of 'Hosanna to the Son of David'. This, of course, is overshadowed by the religious authorities and crowds, who in a few days' time will be baying for his blood with the words, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' This Palm Sunday sets the scene for the rest of our Holy Week.



THE SACRED TRIDUUM: The three Holy Days - are seen as one continuous celebration of faith.  
HOLY THURSDAY: 8.00pm. We celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper where the institution of the Holy Eucharist took place; the eternal gift the Lord gave to the Apostles on the night

before he died. He journeyed to Gethsemane where he prays to the Father. The arrest takes place in the garden; and the Apostles flee in fear. There will be watching at the Altar of Repose, until 11.00pm.

**GOOD FRIDAY: 3.00pm.** This Sacred and Solemn day recalls the cruel treatment of Jesus by his accusers and the Romans, the scourging at the pillar, the crowning with thorns, his condemnation through false evidence brought against him. Pilate washes his hands of Jesus, and he begins the journey up the Hill of Calvary to his brutal Crucifixion & Death. The beautiful, reverential and loving act of coming to the Cross is the central feature of Good Friday and shows our Love for Our Lord.

**HOLY SATURDAY: 7.30pm.** Commences with the silence of the Tomb. And yet God raises Jesus out of death. We celebrate the first Mass of Easter at our Vigil Celebration. Jesus triumphs over sin and death and invites us to share in the New Life of Resurrection faith. *Resurrexit sicut dixit. Alleluia!*

**THE EASTER VIGIL:** This year will commence at 7.30pm. We start outside with the lighting and blessing of the Easter Fire, we bless and light the Easter Candle, and process into the dark Cathedral with the Deacon singing 'Lumen Christi' - 'The Light of Christ'. The Vigil is the high point of the Church's liturgical year; it retraces the story of Salvation History commencing with Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, Romans & this year St Matthew's Gospel. At the Easter Vigil there will be five Baptisms and seven receptions.



**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.

This has been a momentous journey for all our Catechumens and Candidates, please keep them in your prayers during this Holy Week. It will be a great joy to welcome them into the Catholic Church here at the Cathedral Parish. Rehearsal for the Easter Vigil will take place for the Catechumens and Candidates on *Holy Saturday Morning at 11.00am*

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Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

On behalf of Fr Matúš and myself, I would like to invite each one of you to enter fully into the beauty and drama of this Holy Week. It is the most Sacred Week of the Church's Liturgical year. It is a journey of faith, when we accompany Our Lord Jesus Christ on the final days of his earthly life, through His Passion, Death & to the Glory of Resurrection on Easter Day. The Church gives us this Sacred time to deepen our faith and love in the Lord.



## LENTE RECONCILIATION SERVICE

PARISH LENTEN PENITENTIAL SERVICE: *Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> March 7.30pm.* As part of our spiritual preparation for Easter, and as the Church requests us to fulfil our Easter Duties, our Lenten Penitential

Service affords us the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of God's forgiving love through Confession. Every single person needs the Sacrament, because it acknowledges that we are not perfect individuals, and the Lord is always calling us home, and, like the Prodigal Son, we are received by God as we celebrate his unconditional and loving forgiveness through the Sacrament. There will be six priests available for Confession. Please, I urge you to come and share in this beautiful sacrament. If it has been a long time since your last celebrated the Sacrament, the clergy are only too happy to help and assist you.

THE MASS OF CHRISM: Takes place on *Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> April at 11.00am.* This beautiful celebration is for the whole Diocese of Brentwood and takes place here at the Cathedral. It is where our Bishop Alan Williams, and all the priests and people gather for the Blessing of the New Sacred Holy Oils; and where all the priests renew their Priestly Vows and Commitment to the Priesthood. This is a joyful celebration, and I encourage all our parishioners to come and share with us. It's a wonderful way to begin the Sacred Triduum (The Three Holy Days) and truly enter the spirit of this Sacred Time.



May God Bless you All This Holy Week

## EASTER OFFERING



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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

**YOUR EASTER OFFERTORY:** Is your personal gift to Fr John & Fr Matúš and goes to make up a major part of their annual salary. Thanking you always for your generosity!

**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 Priest. You can also make your Easter Offering

electronically. We just need to transfer the money to the parish account with the reference 'Easter Offering'; please also quote your Gift Aid Number. Bank account details are:

Sort Code: 40-13-22

Account Number: 30217492 (EASTER OFFERING + GIFT Aid No)

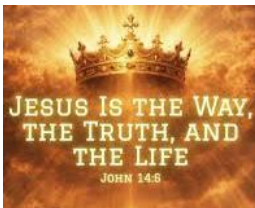
Account Name: Brentwood Cathedral.

## EASTER SUNDAY MASSES 2026:

Please note that the Easter Vigil Mass will take place on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm - The First Mass of Easter, All Welcome!

Easter Sunday Masses will be at 8.00am, 9.30am, 11.30am, & 6.30pm

THANK YOU VERY MUCH: Today there will be a retiring collection for Flowers for Easter. As you know, there have been no flowers throughout the Lenten Season, and it will be wonderful to see a blaze of colour at our Easter Masses. If you would like to make a donation towards the flowers, this can also be Gift Aided. We will receive donations up to the *Maundy Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April*. I would like to thank all the ladies in our flower team who produce such wonderful flower arrangements throughout the year. The Flowers for Easter will be arranged on Holy Saturday morning.



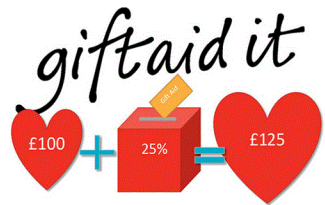
EASTER MONDAY: *6<sup>th</sup> April*, Holy Mass will be celebrated at *10.00am*. The Octave of Eastertide celebrates the triumph of Jesus Christ over sin and death; the Resurrection becomes the key and central feature of the life of faith. The Holy Mass gives us the opportunity to participate and celebrate in the Paschal Mystery won for us on

the Altar of the Cross. Please come and join us.

### 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 (as well as the Warley site, which we must still maintain), is extremely costly. Every home has experienced increased costs to domestic bills, and with the increase of gas, electric & water bills, everyone is feeling 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 & Confirmation Season takes place during the month of May, there will also be a

variety of First Holy Communion & Confirmation cards available.

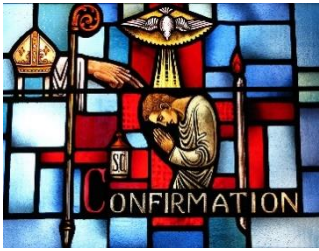
### NEW RCIA PROGRAMME COMMENCING SEPTEMBER 2026:

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.



There has been a real upsurge in interest in the Roman Catholic Church. This year we had record numbers at the Rite of Election. I have already had several enquiries for the September Programme. If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining the programme, please direct them to Fr John.



## CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME FOR ADULTS

2026/2027: For whatever reason, sometimes young people do not always complete a Confirmation Programme during their adolescent and teenage years but often return to the practice of the faith as adults. I have had several requests for an Adult Confirmation Programme and I am hoping to

begin this later in the year. Could I make a request to the whole parish community to see if there is any more interest in the programme and receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation? Fr Matúš runs the Teenage Programme.

MISSIO If you have not yet returned your Missio box, could you please do so, urgently, either to the Narthex or Clergy House. Thank you. Replacement boxes are available for collection from the Narthex.

FOODBANK COLLECTION Thank you to all our parishioners and St Helen's Junior School for donations to the Foodbank last weekend. We donated 189.10Kgs of essential supplies and cash and cheques amounting to £945.82. I have been advised that online donations will take this amount to over £1,000. This is a great result to help people who need our support.

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 key 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 would like to know more, please contact Jane Davenport, via Clergy House.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS TODAY: will be hosted by the Missio Group. No coffee after 9.30am Mass on Easter Sunday, but the following week, will be the turn of the Catenians. All are welcome, so please do join us.

THE FRIDAY FRIENDSHIP SOUP LUNCHESES have now finished, but will resume from Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> April. All are welcome to come along to the parish hall (12 noon - 2.00 p.m.) for sandwiches, 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.

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.

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 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.

**SACRED HEART OF MARY GIRLS' SCHOOL UPMINSTER** is looking for a proactive Business Manager to play a pivotal role in our school community. Full time - 36 hours per week. Starting June 2026. For more information and to arrange a visit, please contact [joakes@mary.havering.sch.uk](mailto:joakes@mary.havering.sch.uk). Deadline: Friday, 10 April 2026

**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:



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