

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

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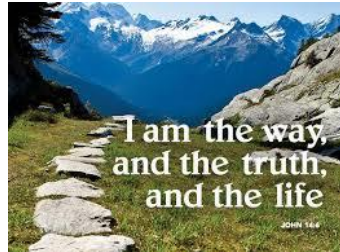
Website: www.brentwoodcathedral.org.uk

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (A)

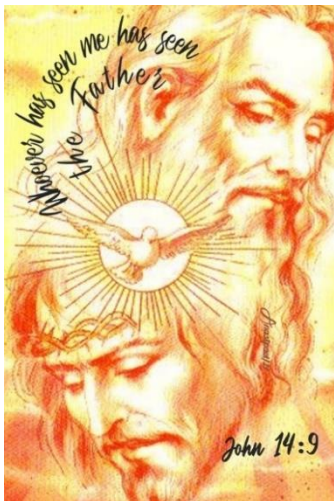
Sunday, 3 May 2026

Spiritual Reflection:

Jesus knew his disciples were unhappy at the prospect of his leaving them. To alleviate their sorrow, he told them: 'Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me'. By believing in him their hearts would find peace. They would have peace by believing in Jesus because they would come to the Father: 'no one comes to the Father, but by me'. They would know the Father, 'If you had known me, you would have known my Father also', and they would see him: 'He who has seen me has seen the Father'. The disciples had to make a choice. Would they believe in Jesus and find their peace, or would they remain with troubled hearts?



Like the disciples, we often live troubled lives. We are so absorbed by everything we must do or cope with that we often forget the truth that our destiny is heaven. This should be the true source of our joy. We were created by the Father to be his children. Our first sin took us out of the plan God designed for our good and blessing. Out of love for us, Jesus came to bring us back into the Father's original plan.



By his life, suffering, death and resurrection. Jesus reconciled us to the Father. He took away the sins that separated us from him. He opened the gates of heaven, closed against us by our sin, so we could enter heaven itself. Jesus gives us the power to become children of God and to be receivers of the Spirit, so that we can live in God's presence all our days and then, after our death, be with God forever and live in his light and love.

We are on a journey to the Father. On faith, we should keep our eyes fixed on heaven, longing and thirsting for it. Christ has prepared a place for us in His Father's house. This hope can overcome all the troubles that burden our hearts and fill them with confidence, joy and peace.

Father, I thank you for creating me to live forever in your presence. In Jesus I can come to you freely. I can know you as my Father and see you face to face. Teach me to put my faith in the truth of the gospel and the hope and life it brings.

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

The month of May is traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mother of God. Honouring Mary during May began as early as the 13th century, when specific days in May were devoted to Mary. May is also associated with spring and new life, which Mary represents as the mother of Jesus, who gave the world new life through his death and resurrection. In 1815, Pope Pius VII encouraged May devotions by granting an indulgence to those who honoured Mary with special prayers during May.

In 1859, Pope Pius IX made the indulgence plenary. Then, in 1945, Pope Pius XII made the observance of Mary in May, official.



As Roman Catholics we give the highest honour and devotion to Our Blessed Lady. The famous poet Wordsworth said: "Mary is humanity's solitary boast." In Mary's humble acceptance to God's

request for her to become the Mother of His Son, Mary's "Yes" changed the whole course of human history. As she was conceived without the stain of Original Sin, it is only right and fitting that she was Assumed by God into Heaven at her dormition.

Traditionally, we Catholics are encouraged to pray the Holy Rosary daily throughout the month of May. If that is too much for you, why not pray a decade of the rosary each day. Always have a special intention in mind: praying for a loved one, praying for a deceased member of the family, praying for a special intention, praying for someone who is sick. Here at the Cathedral, at the end of each of our weekday Masses - Monday to Saturday, we will pray a decade of the Rosary. I encourage parents to pray a decade of the rosary with your children in their night-time prayers.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME: The final formal class for the First Holy Communion Programme took place on 18 April. Parents, could I ask you to ensure that your children have completed all the various home exercises, especially if you have missed any of the sessions. I would like to take this public opportunity of expressing my sincere and grateful thanks to our Catechists, who give of their time freely to help

the children prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.

First Holy Communion Celebrations will take place on:

Saturday, 9th May, 11.00am. Rehearsal - Wednesday, 6th May, 6.00pm

Saturday, 9th May, 2.00pm. Rehearsal - Wednesday, 6th May, 7.00pm

Saturday, 16th May, 11.00am. Rehearsal - Wednesday, 13th May, 6.00pm.

Please keep all the children and their families in your prayers at this very important time of final preparations to receive Jesus in Holy Communion.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

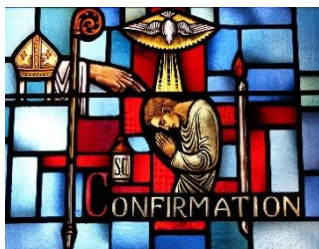
As we have just completed this year's RCIA programme. I am calling the whole parish once again to see if there are any parishioners who may be interested in learning more about the Roman Catholic faith, possibly with the view of receiving the Easter Sacraments next Easter 2027. The RCIA is



The RCIA is

a programme of systematic instruction of all aspects of Catholicism. Examining the Sacred Scriptures - Old & New Testaments. Understanding the whole concept of God. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ - the Lord's Mission and Teachings. The Gift of the Holy Spirit - Pentecost. The Sacramental Life of the Church - The 7 Sacraments (with special emphasis on the Eucharist). What is the Church - Origins, and the church in 21st Century. The Laws of the Church - Canon Law. The Four Last things - Death Judgement, Hell & Heaven. Sacramentals - The Rosary, Benedictions, the Lives of the Saints, other Catholic Devotions. The Role of the Virgin Mary in God's plan of Salvation. "Lord, teach us how to pray." - Many different kinds of Prayer. The Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. The Paschal Mystery. Journey through Holy Week.

If you know anyone who may be interested in learning about the faith, please give them this information, and ask them to contact Fr John - Tel No: 01277 265235. He will be only too happy to sit down and explain the whole RCIA programme to you and explain to all enquirers how the programme works. The New Programme will commence in September.



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. I am hoping to begin an Adult Confirmation Programme 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.

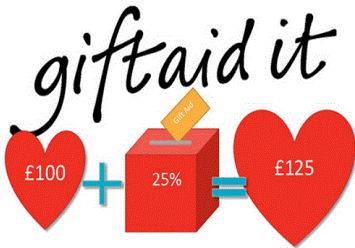
ADULT CONFIRMATION GROUP: For those already preparing to receive Adult Confirmation in May. Our next session will take place on Wednesday, 13th May (Not Wednesday, 6th May) at 7.00pm in Clergy House. Theme: Baptism and Confirmation.

**CONFIRMATION
2026**

CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME: The final formal session of this year's programme took place on 19th April. Rehearsal & Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will take place on Wednesday, 20th May at 6.30pm. It is customary before any big event in the life of faith

that we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I encourage all our Confirmandi to avail yourselves of the Sacrament.

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be conferred by Bishop Alan on Pentecost Sunday, 24th May 2026 at the 11.30am Mass. Please keep all our Confirmandi in your prayers over these next weeks in the final preparations for the celebration of the Sacrament.



GIFT AID ENVELOPES & THE NEW TAX

YEAR: For those parishioners who use the Gift Aid Envelopes, the outstanding envelope boxes are still available in the Narthex. Please try to collect them as soon as possible as the new Tax Year has begun. We can claim back 25p in the pound of your contribution. 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 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 Cards available in the Card stand in the Narthex for all occasions. 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 rapidly approaches, there are a variety of First Holy Communion & Confirmation cards available in the Card Stand in the Narthex. There will be a variety of repository goods available at the rehearsals this week. It's always nice to receive a religious item at First Holy Communion and Confirmation.



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF THE SOULS OF:-

DOUGLAS TIERNEY whose funeral will take place in The Cathedral on *Friday, 8 May at 2.00pm.*

ANNE ANDERSON, whose Requiem will be held in The Cathedral on *Monday, 18th May at 11.00am*

FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES 2026: This is a call to all who are preparing for Marriage this year 2026, whether here at the Cathedral or abroad. Could I ask you all to ensure that your documentation is completed at least two months before the wedding, especially for those marrying abroad. All documents need to be returned to Fr John or Fr Matúš so that they can be processed expeditiously. Please ensure that Marriage Preparation Course is completed through Marriage Care; new Baptismal Certificates no older than six months have been obtained; Statutory Declarations of Freedom have been signed by a Notary. The Chancery is always closed during the month of August, so it is imperative that all documentation is received prior to then. Thank you!



May God bless you all.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS TODAY: will be hosted by the SVP. Next week will be the turn of Pace. All are welcome, so please do join us.

THE FRIDAY FRIENDSHIP LUNCHES: All are welcome to come along to the parish hall every Friday (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 or 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, 15th June 2026 to Friday, 19th 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

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.

MONTHLY YOUTH MASS will be held on *Thursday, 7th May*, 6.00pm in the Parish Hall, followed by Mass in The Cathedral at 7.30pm. All young people are very welcome.

CAR PARK Could I please ask anyone who uses the car park to be considerate of all users. In recent weeks, parking, particularly for Sunday morning Masses, has been very difficult to manage with drivers parking where they shouldn't and blocking essential access points. We must always ensure there is clear access for emergency vehicles. If you are able to park elsewhere and walk, you might consider leaving the spaces within the car park for those who need them the most. Also, the Council Car Park at Brentwood Town Hall is free on Sundays.

WALSINGHAM HOUSE TEAM APPLICATIONS - Applications are open for those finishing Year 13 or university who are interested in a year of volunteering at Walsingham House. It is a unique opportunity to grow in faith, serve others and gain key life skills along the way! For further information, please email clairebailey@brcdt.org.

DIOCESAN WALSINGHAM PILGRIMAGE - SATURDAY, 23RD MAY
Representatives from the BCYS will be joining the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham, and we would like to invite other young people to join and assist with the liturgy. please contact gabriellaskinner@brcdt.org if you are interested.

A DAY WITH MARY PILGRIMAGES 2026
Pilgrimage to Italy (*Tuesday, 1st to Thursday, 10th September 2026*).
Closing date 23 June 2026.
Further information is available at <https://www adaywithmary.org/>

ST JOHN BOSCO CHILDREN'S CAMP, SUMMER 2026. Applications are now open for children currently in school year 5 - 7 (i.e. aged 9-12 in August 2026) to spend a week at camp. 25th July - 1st August or 1st - 8th August. Activities include archery, fishing, AquaPark visit, football, kayaking and much more. The camp is especially for children who may not otherwise have a summer holiday. Suggested donation £200, but full bursaries are available. All application details are at <https://boscocamp.co.uk>. Places are likely to go quickly - early applications are encouraged.

GARDEN VOLUNTEERS FOR WALSINGHAM HOUSE AT ABBOTSWICK:
Walsingham House at Abbotswick is set in 14 acres of land which require a lot of care. There is an amazing team of grounds volunteers who help every Tuesday to maintain the gardens and keep everything thriving. It would be wonderful to extend the team, so if you have some free time on a Tuesday, whether it's an hour or two or a whole day and would like to get involved please contact clairebailey@brcdt.org or just come along on a Tuesday morning and get involved!

MASS FOR MIGRANTS - You are warmly invited to join the Dioceses of Brentwood, Southwark, and Westminster for the 20th annual Mass for Migrants on Bank Holiday *Monday, 4 May 2026*, at St Antony of Padua Catholic Church. The celebration will begin at 12.00 pm with a procession of banners.

This year, the Mass is hosted by the Diocese of Brentwood. Celebrated for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker, the Mass is prepared by the Caritas and Ethnic Chaplaincies of the three dioceses and gives thanks for the contributions made to faith, life and work in the UK by all those who have come from other countries to make their home here.

The preacher will be Archbishop Richard Moth, and the celebrant will be Bishop Alan Williams, SM.

BRENTWOOD URSULINE - MUSICAL APTITUDE ASSESSMENTS FOR MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS & PLACES - YEAR 7 ADMISSION SEPTEMBER 2027 is offering 17 of the Year 7 places for admission in September 2027, on the basis of musical aptitude.

Parents wishing to apply should submit the appropriate form (available to download from the website www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk or direct from the school). Completed forms must be sent to the school by Friday, 17th July 2026. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

WORLD YOUTH DAY 2027 (SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA) - Be part of something extraordinary at World Youth Day 2027 in Seoul, South Korea. Travel with the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service to join hundreds of thousands of young Catholics from around the world, gathered with Pope Leo for this global celebration of faith. Open to those currently in Year 13 and above. Details and applications: www.bcys.net/events/wyd27

VACANCIES:-

DEPUTY HEADTEACHER - ST HELEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA

Required for September 2026. *Further details available from Diocese of Brentwood website (www.dioceseofbrentwood.net).* Deadline for applications: 9:00 am, *Monday, 11th May 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 Gifaid-it

If you are unable to donate with Gifaid-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