

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

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TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

Sunday, 21 June 2026

Spiritual Reflection:

The phrase 'Do not be afraid' occurs 365 times in the Bible. 'Do not be afraid' was also the clarion call of St. John Paul II. Today's Gospel addresses a certain kind of fear: we could call it the fear of witness or testimony. Since the beginning, the Church has lived through times of terrible persecution. Believers under Nero and Diocletian were subject to all manner of torture and suffering for giving witness to their faith. Nero lit up the Roman sky with burning bodies of crucified believers; Diocletian was merciless, completely focused on eradicating Christians from the face of the earth.

The phrase
"do not be afraid"
is written in the
bible 365 times.
That's a daily
reminder from
God to live
every day being
fearless.

In our own time too, in countries like Syria and Iraq, Chaldean/Syrian Christians are subject to constant fear and intimidation. The martyrdom of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya in February 2015 shocked the world. Before the execution, the kidnapped workers were invited to renounce their faith, but they refused. They were heard to pray 'Lord Jesus help me' before they were beheaded in such brutal fashion.

Among their number was Matthew Ayairga from Chad. He wasn't a Christian and was invited by his executioners to embrace Islam. He refused. They said to him: 'Do you reject Christ?' The witness of the other men so moved him that he said: 'Their God is my God' He was then beheaded. These men are martyrs for the faith, outstanding witnesses for Christ. We salute them and thank God for them, as we do for men and women around the world who suffer persecution, fear and intimidation because of their faith.



Pope Francis said: 'As we recall these brothers who died only because they confessed Christ, I ask that we encourage each other to go forward with this ecumenism, which is giving us strength, the ecumenism of blood. The martyrs belong to all Christians.' The blood of the martyrs is the seed of love, unity and brotherhood, and bears witness that every believer is called to give testimony for Christ.

Not many of us will be called to proclaim the name of Jesus. We aren't zealots or fanatics: we are simply men and women who are always prepared respectfully and with love in our hearts to share the reason for our love and joy.

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY To all dads. We wish them all a very Happy Father's Day this weekend. This is our opportunity to show them our appreciation and love, for all they do for us. Let us also remember our dear fathers who are now with God. May they rest in peace in heaven. Children, please collect a Special Father's Day Card for your dads.



REV MR ANDREI ILLES: Is an Ordained Deacon studying at the Beda College in Rome. Some of you may remember Deacon Andrei on pastoral placement last summer in the Cathedral Parish. He will be Ordained to the Sacred Priesthood on Saturday, 4th July at 11.00am at Brentwood Cathedral by Bishop Alan. Deacon Andrei is originally from Romania and was a nurse for 15 years before his studies for the priesthood. As the ordination is at the Cathedral this is an open invitation to the parish

community for anyone to attend. If you've never been to an ordination before it is a very beautiful ceremony. Deacon Andrei is very happy for as many parishioners as possible to attend. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers over the next few weeks in his preparations to the Sacred Priesthood.

Unfortunately, we have very few seminarians studying for the Diocese of Brentwood. As you know it takes several years for someone to train for the sacred priesthood. With only a couple of seminarians, we are not going to have any ordinations for several years. The age of the Diocesan Clergy is now very top heavy, and within the next ten years, many priests are due for retirement. Sadly, there are very few men putting themselves forward these days. I would ask every parishioner to pray for Vocations to the Priesthood & Religious Life, and as I have stated on many occasions, "If there is no priest, there is no Mass!"

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF

ADULTS: 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 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 and explain to all enquirers how the programme works. The New Programme will commence in September. There are many non-Catholic spouses who attend Mass on a regular basis with their families, would you consider joining the programme in September?



NEW ALTAR SERVERS: As we have just celebrated First Holy Communion with our young boys and girls, I would like to extend an invitation to any of them who may be interested in becoming Altar Servers.

This is a truly wonderful ministry in the church, and it allows young boys and girls to really understand the ministry of service at a very young age. We are very fortunate to have a lot of young servers at the Cathedral Parish, but new servers are always welcome. Please see Fr John, Fr Matus or Thomas Bridge. We will arrange training for new altar servers.

IMPORTANT NEWS - SOOTY BARK DISEASE: We have recently been contacted by Essex County Council to inform us that many of the Sycamore Trees at the front of the Parish Cemetery have Sooty Bark Disease - this has been spreading from one tree to another over a long period of time, and the fungus slowly killing the trees. Already you can see the black mould & fungus attacking the trees. Therefore, because of the proximity of the trees to Ingrave Road and Cathedral Place they have given us about a month to begin the process of the removing the diseased trees. This is going to be very expensive, but **HAS BECOME AN URGENT MATTER OF PRIORITY.** I recently had a meeting with the arborist, and he confirmed the worst regarding the disease. If the trees are not removed, it will just keep on spreading and affect the whole cemetery. This is quite heart breaking, because here in England we truly appreciate and value the beauty of our trees. I have arranged to meet with the Council Officials who ordered the removal of the trees. Looking forward, we would like to replant a series of trees to replace the diseased ones. The arborist has offered to help recommend strong healthy trees and plant them for us. I would like to put in some well-established trees, but these are not cheap. If there are any parishioners who would like a tree planted in the cemetery in remembrance of a deceased loved one, would you seriously consider purchasing one of the new trees please. No decision has been made as to how many new trees need to be planted, but please think seriously about this, and keep an eye on the Parish Newsletter over the next weeks, and I will give more information about the types of trees to be planted and their costings. A little wooden commemorative plaque will be placed at the base of each tree in remembrance of the deceased loved one.



IF THERE ARE ANY PARISHIONERS WHO WOULD SERIOUSLY LIKE TO SPONSOR A NEW TREE, COULD YOU KINDLY SUBMIT YOUR NAME TO THERESA IN THE PARISH OFFICE. TEL 01277 265235

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME: We are always looking for new helpers and Catechists. If you feel you would like to assist and help in this very important ministry in the parish, please see Fr John or Victoria Campling. Obviously, forward planning is extremely important; the new programme for 2026/27 will commence in September with an open parents meeting and registration, Manifestly, the prerequisites for the programme are that your child will be in Year 4 in Primary School, that you live in the Cathedral Parish of St Mary & St Helen, and that you are a weekly practicing Roman Catholic - this is extremely important as none of the programme will make any sense whatsoever if a person is not practicing their faith. If anyone has any problems with these requirements, please see one of the priests.

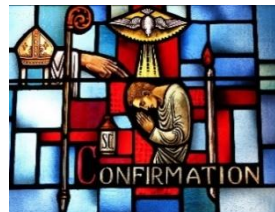


FROM OUR GIFT AID ORGANISER: Our Parish Gift Aid Organisers are Michael & Amy Edwards. I would encourage all parishioners to join the Parish Gift Aid Scheme. If you are a Taxpayer, it's a painless process, all we need is your name and address, there are Gift

Aid Application Forms in the Narthex of the Cathedral and Michael and Amy will be only too willing to give you all the information and help you need. Through the Gift Aid Scheme, we can claim back 25 pence in every pound donated to the church, when you use your envelopes or pay by Standing Order. Please think about joining, and a very big thank you to those who already belong!

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 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?



PARISH CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME - 2026/2027:

There will be an introductory meeting in the Parish Hall at 6.30pm on Monday, 29 June for students from years 10-13 and their parents, who are interested in joining this year's programme. Total

commitment to the practice of the faith is required, meaning weekly attendance at Holy Mass. Each candidate will receive their own personal attendance card to be signed each week by one of the priests or Deacons.

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 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!



RESUIESCAT IN PACE: In your mercy, please pray for the repose of the soul of Kathleen Lillis (Mother of Michelle Arthur), who passed away recently. Kathleen was one of our oldest parishioners, 97 years of age, and up until the last couple of weeks was active and regularly attended our weekday and Sunday Masses. The family would like to thank parishioners for the many cards and expressions of sympathy they have received and we extend our condolences to them in this great time of loss. Kathleen's Requiem Mass will take place on *Monday, 6th July at 11.00am with burial at London Road Cemetery at 12.30pm.*

DAY FOR LIFE 2026 Today, we mark the Day for Life under the theme "The Wonder of the Child in the Womb." The theme also recognises the loss of children who died before birth and the grief of their parents. The Bishop's message and prayers can be found on the Day for Life website: www.dayforlife.org. There will be a second collection at all Masses this weekend, which will go towards the Day for Life Fund. This distributes grants to organisations that promote respect for life from conception until natural death. You can also donate online via the Day for Life website."

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS TODAY: will be hosted by the Friday Lunches Group. Next week will be the turn of CAFOD. 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.

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.

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

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.

FLEADH MASS will be held in The Cathedral at 6.30pm on *Saturday, 27th June 2026, 6.30pm*, when we will be joined by some of the Fleadh musicians.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE MASS in The Cathedral at 3.00pm on *Saturday, 11th July*. If you are married or engaged to be married, please join us as we celebrate the great vocation of married life.

FOOD BANK: Next Food Bank collection will be the weekend 11th/12th July. Please donate food items, toiletries or cleaning materials. 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.

THANK YOU FROM STEPHEN KING - "I would like to thank everyone who came to my farewell reception and/or contributed to my leaving gifts. It was lovely that a good number of people were able to stay after the 11.30am Mass and partake in the occasion. Thank you to everyone for your support and encouragement during my time at Brentwood Cathedral, where you will still see me sometimes - the next being the 11.30am Masses on 5th and 12th July. Thank you also to those who arranged the catering on the day, and a particular to the two people who know that Scottish shortbread goes down very well with me!"

CAMPION SCHOOL OPEN EVENING - YEAR 5 STUDENTS - The Campion School warmly invites parents/carers and year 5 boys to an Open Evening on *Thursday, 25th June* from *4.30 pm to 7 pm*. Headteacher's talk will be at 4.30pm and 6.30pm. Please visit school website for more details www.thecampionschool.org.uk

HUTTON PARISH BBQ AT HUTTON HALL SUNDAY, 28TH JUNE 2026 - Join us in the stunning grounds of Hutton Hall for a wonderful afternoon of food, friendship and summer fun at our Parish BBQ. There will be delicious food, refreshments, games, laughter and a great chance to spend time together. It promises to be a lovely occasion for all ages and a wonderful way to celebrate the summer together. Adults £10, Children £5. Ticket includes a hot dog/burger and drink. We will be running our own bar this year, with beer, wine, soft drinks, and Pimm's prepared by Fr Gary. Don't forget to bring your own chairs, picnic rug and games. Tickets are available from the St Joseph's parish office at hutton@brcdt.org. We hope to see you there!

VACANCIES

HEADTEACHER - ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHINGFORD
Deadline for application: *09:00 am Friday, 26th June 2026*

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION - DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD
Deadline for applications: *5pm, Monday, 29th June 2026*

HEADTEACHER, ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL - To start January 2027 (or sooner, by agreement). Candidates must be supportive of our Catholic ethos. Successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. For further information and an application form, please visit <http://www.stmaryschingford.com> or contact Mrs Lockwood, School Office on 0208 529 4723 or clockwood5.320@lgflmail.org.

**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 application form (available
from the website www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk). Deadline: *Friday,
17th July 2026*. Please contact the school for further information.

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

Brentwood Diocesan Trust – Registered Charity No. 234092