

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

Canon John J Harvey
Cathedral Dean

Father Matúš Meleg
Assistant Priest

Clergy House: 01277 265235

Deacon Paul Conrad: 07812 455060

Deacon Nicholas Holmes: 01277 373788

Deacon Joseph Manuel-Mokwenye:
deaconjosephmanuel-mokwenye@brcdt.org

Email: cathedral@brcdt.org

Website: www.brentwoodcathedral.org.uk

THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

Sunday, 12 July 2026

Spiritual Reflection:

The parable of the Sower is an important one to understand. In St. Mark's version Jesus describes it as the key or doorway into all the parables: 'Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? A problem with this or any other parable is familiarity; many have heard it since they were children and conclude they have understood its meaning and there are no more treasures to mine. When we are familiar with something we stop looking at it closely.



Ironically, this way of thinking reflects the teaching which underpins the parable. For the parable is all about the battle not just for our hearts, but also our minds. It speaks about the daily struggle to fight the good fight of faith and the way we respond to the word of God (the seed). In fact, the soil in the parable can be interpreted as a metaphor for the soil of our mind and the importance for it to be a

healthy environment in which the good seed of God’s word can flourish. Of course, we need to meet God halfway by reading his Word and allowing him to root out the thorns and thistles and other impediments to the seed’s healthy growth.

The question facing us every day is: how can our minds be rich, fertile and productive soil in which God’s word can take root? Of course, if we don’t carve out a time and place to read, study and contemplate Scriptures, our minds cannot be renewed, refreshed and enlightened by it. We remain barren soil. This can be challenging, for many of us time is one of our most precious commodities. However, we all know that we make time for what we want to make time for.

We cannot understand God’s Word without the help, action and movement of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was given so that we would understand the things of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit reignites our love for the Scriptures so that they come alive and we develop a thirst to read them and a hunger to hear and understand them.

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Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,



As we rapidly approach the end of the academic year, I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my sincere and grateful thanks to all our Catholic Schools here in Brentwood, and the great contribution they make in Catholic Education. We are extremely fortunate to have so many schools, whose professional expertise has enriched the life of the parish community for a very long time. I thank the Ursuline Sisters and the Mercy Sisters here in Brentwood, who did so much over the past 100 years in Catholic Education.

Personal congratulations go to Dr Richard Wilkin who will be retiring as Headteacher of the Ursuline School after 12 years as its head. During those years Richard has led the school in academic excellence as one of the best schools in Essex, and throughout England. We thank you Richard for your great contribution and leadership over the past 12 years and wish you a very happy retirement.



**URSULINE CONVENT HIGH SCHOOL:** Congratulations also go to Felicity Scott, one of our own parishioners, who was recently appointed as the new Headteacher at the Ursuline School. Felicity grew up in the Brentwood Parish and has been at the Ursuline School for nearly twelve years. This is an excellent appointment, and we are all supportive of her as she takes up the baton from Richard as new Headteacher. We wish her every happiness and success.

**ST HELEN'S JUNIOR SCHOOL:** A big thank you to Mr Liam Daly and all his staff at St Helen's Junior School for everything they have done for our children over the past twelve months. It's always wonderful to see how the children grow and mature in each year of the Juniors. We thank all the Year Six children for everything they have contributed to the school over the past several years; they are now preparing for the transition to Secondary Education.



**ST HELEN'S INFANT SCHOOL:** A very big thank you to Mrs Amanda McAuliffe and her staff for all they have done and achieved over the past year at the Infant School. Personal congratulations to Mrs McAuliffe who won the Essex Headteacher of the Year Award for 2026. A truly well-deserved award. We are also very fortunate, as from September there will be a new pre-school opening on the Infant School Site. A big thank you to all who were involved in obtaining the various permissions for this pre-school project to go ahead.

**URSULINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL:** Thank you to Mrs Pauline Wilson MBE and all her Staff at the Ursuline Prep School. Once again, it's wonderful to see how these young boys and girls grow in knowledge and excellence throughout their Infant and Junior School life. I wish a happy holiday to all our teachers. Make sure you get plenty of rest and relaxation over the summer recess.

**URGENT APPEAL FOR SOME NEW CATECHISTS:** Victoria Campling has kindly offered to help in passing on the baton with the training of some new Catechists and giving them all the information necessary to run a programme. I now appeal to the whole Parish Community for some volunteers to come forward and become Catechists for this Programme. The more the merrier, and it will really assist the programme and the numbers of children we have. It is extremely rewarding helping the children grow in their faith. If there are any teachers who would be willing to assist as Catechists, I



would be extremely grateful. If we don't have Catechists, then unfortunately we don't have a programme to run. Please do think about this request; this is a truly wonderful way of serving the parish community. My philosophy as a priest has always been: "If everyone does a little, a lot gets done." If you are willing and interested, please contact Fr John directly at Clergy House, he will be only too willing to give you any information you need in making a decision: Telephone No - 01277 265235 or email [Frjohnharvey@brcdt.org](mailto:Frjohnharvey@brcdt.org).

**ANY MORE VOLUNTEERS FOR THIS IMPORTANT MINISTRY?**

**CHILDREN'S LITURGY** Today's Children's Liturgy will be the last session of the term. I would like to thank our team of catechists who share the gospel with our young children each week. The group will re-commence after the summer holiday on *Sunday, 13th September*.



**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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. The new Programme will commence with an Introduction and Information Evening at 7.00pm on *Thursday, 17 September*, in Clergy House.

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 how it works. There are many non-Catholic spouses who attend Mass on a regular basis with their families, would you consider joining the programme in September?

### IMPORTANT NEWS - SOOTY BARK DISEASE:

UPDATE: The arborist who is looking after the disposal of the diseased trees, will remove several more over the next couple of weeks. He has recently given me a list of prices for well-established trees, and has recommended that in order to keep in line



with the trees adjacent to the Cathedral on the approach into the main car park, we use London Plain & English Oak. These are strong trees and are used to hardy conditions and city traffic. Each well-established tree will probably cost in the region of between £150 - £200. We have now reached capacity for the number of trees that can be planted and I would like to thank all those parishioners who have been so generous in your response to replant in the cemetery. Here in the England, we have a great love of our trees, and we are always being encouraged to plant more to help the environment. Each tree planted will be in remembrance of deceased loved ones; and a little wooden commemorative plaque will be placed at the base of each tree in remembrance of the deceased loved one. The planting of the new trees will not take place until the end of September as they will need plenty of water during the autumn and winter period.

**WE HAVE NOW REACHED CAPACITY FOR THE NUMBER OF NEW TREES WE CAN PLANT. NO MORE REQUESTS PLEASE!**



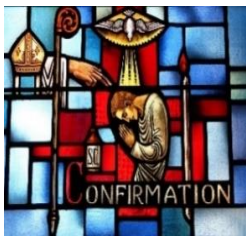
FROM OUR GIFT AID ORGANISER: Our Parish Gift Aid Organisers are Michael & Amy Edwards. I would encourage all parishioners to join the Parish Gift Aid Scheme. If you are a Taxpayer, it's a painless process, all we need is your name

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!

### PARISH CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME - 2026/2027:

Following the introductory meeting on *Monday, 29 June*, 19 candidates have signed up for this year's programme. Just a reminder that the deadline for registration is next *Sunday, 19 July* and the programme will begin on *Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> November*.





## 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 parish community to see if there is any more interest in the programme and receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation?

WORLD APOSTOLATE OF FATIMA: On *Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> September* the Diocese of Brentwood will host the Visitation of the National Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima and the relics of Saints Jacinta & Francisco. This will be a Day of Prayer & Devotions, with the opportunity for the veneration of the relics. Bishop Alan accompanied by Priests of the Diocese will concelebrate Holy Mass, this will be followed by the Consecration Prayer of the Diocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by Bishop Alan.



As this is a Day of Prayer, we ask all participants to bring a packed lunch. Teas and coffees will be available in the Parish Hall. Following lunch, there will be a Holy Hour with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with recitation of the Chaplet of Adoration and Reparation. Communal Recitation and reflection on the Joyful Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. The Divine Mercy Chaplet will be prayed, and then a Docu-film and Talk in the Parish Hall on “Fatima Message for the World.” Finally, the Enrolment and Investiture of the Brown Scapular will be facilitated in the Parish Hall. I encourage our parishioners to participate in this wonderful and unique day of prayer here at the Cathedral.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS TODAY: will be hosted by the Altar Servers. Next week will be the turn of the PACE Group. All are welcome, so please do join us!

PARISH OFFICE - will be closed for a few days from *Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> - Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> July* inclusive. Re-opening on *Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> July*.

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.

**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.

**WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A READER AT MASS?** We are looking for new people to join the readers rota for all weekend Masses. If you are able to assist and would like to find out more, please contact Alix Holmes at [alixholmes22@gmail.com](mailto:alixholmes22@gmail.com).

**MISSIO** If you have not yet returned your Missio box, could you please do so before the end of August, 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 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 are available by the collection box. Thank you for your generosity.

**ST. JOHN BOSCO CHILDREN'S CAMP: FINAL PLACES** The camp is held near Brentwood and includes activities such archery, fishing, Aqua Park visit, football, kayaking and much more. Last few places are available for children currently in school years 5 - 7 (i.e. aged 9 - 12 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026) to spend a week at camp. Week One 25th July - 1st August or Week Two 1st - 8th August. The camp is run with a

Catholic ethos and is for all children, especially those who may not otherwise have a summer holiday. Suggested donation £200, but fully funded places are also available thanks to generous grants. All application details are at [www.boscocamp.co.uk](http://www.boscocamp.co.uk)

**BCCS - EXCLUSIVE AND PERSONAL TOUR OF INGATESTONE HALL** The tour is conducted by the Petre family, offering unbeatable insight of the past and present of this Grade I listed building and gardens. Followed by a hot drink and homemade biscuit. *Thursday, 3rd September, 11.00am - 3.30pm.* The event was over-subscribed last year so get your tickets fast - entry is £25 per person - book online today: [//www.bccs.org.uk/get-involved/events-campaigns/](http://www.bccs.org.uk/get-involved/events-campaigns/)

Please note, due to the age of the building, there is no disabled access to the upper floor, and some of the lower floor and grounds are uneven and so not suitable for those who have mobility issues.

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, UPMINSTER - HEADTEACHER** Required from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2027. Further information and an application pack are available from the school website: <https://st-josephs-upminster.net>. Closing date: *5pm on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September* with interviews (provisionally) on *Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026*.

**ALPHA 2026 AT ST JOSEPH THE WORKER, HUTTON** Imagine being able to ask those questions that have been on your mind and in your heart about faith. Now, imagine doing that with a glass of wine in your hand or a lemonade, sharing a meal, enjoying good conversation surrounded by a lovely group of similarly interested people. That's Alpha - and you are invited.

Alpha is an opportunity to explore the fundamentals of Christian faith in a relaxed and welcoming environment. It is suitable for Catholics wanting to renew their faith, non - Catholics who want to find out about the Christian faith, those of any faith or none.

In St Joseph the Worker Church Hall on *Wednesdays 7.15pm - 9.00pm from 16 September to 02 December.*

Email [alphahutton@gmail.com](mailto:alphahutton@gmail.com) for more information or to sign up. Looking forward to seeing you there!



**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 |
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*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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