

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

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THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

Sunday, 23 August 2026

Spiritual Reflection:

In today's Gospel (Matthew 16:13-20), Jesus asks the most important question any of us will ever face: *"Who do you say I am?"* It is not enough to know what others think of Christ. Faith becomes real only when we answer Him personally, from the heart.

Peter's response, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,"* is not simply an expression of opinion but a gift of faith. Jesus reminds him that this truth has been revealed by the Father. Our own faith is also God's gift, nourished through prayer, the Scriptures, the sacraments, and the life of the Church.



Jesus then entrusts Peter with the mission of strengthening the Church. Built upon the rock of Peter's faith, the Church continues to proclaim Christ to every generation. In a world of uncertainty and changing opinions, we are invited to stand firmly on this same confession of faith.

Today, let us ask ourselves: *Who is Jesus for me?* May we, like Peter, have the courage to profess Him as the living Son of God, and may our lives bear witness to that faith in humble service, steadfast hope, and generous love.

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Dear Friends in Christ,

We are rapidly coming to the end of August. Next weekend will be the August Bank Holiday, and then at the beginning of September all our schools resume once again. I hope and pray that all families have had the opportunity for some rest and relaxation over the summer recess. We welcome back all families to the parish.

**PLEASE CAN I DRAW ATTENTION TO THE WORLD APOSTOLATE OF FATIMA WHICH TAKES PLACE ON 12<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2026**



**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 those participating 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.

**RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS - JOURNEY OF FAITH PROGRAMME:** Will commence at the beginning of September. If anyone is interested in learning more about the Roman Catholic Faith, possibly with the intention of being received into full communion with the faith at the



Easter Vigil next year 2027, please contact Fr John (Tel No: 01277 265235). He will be only too willing to explain the whole process to you. I know there are many spouses who attend Mass on a regular basis, who may not necessarily be Roman Catholic. Please consider joining our programme. The RCIA Programme will commence of *Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> September at 7.00pm at Clergy House.*

CATECHISTS FOR THE FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME. I would first and foremost like to thank those who have volunteered their time and their service to help our children prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. In September we will have a preliminary meeting to plan the programme ahead.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2026-2027: Once again we begin to prepare for the next First Holy Communion Programme. If your child is eligible to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist (Year 4 as of September 2025), please seriously think about this next step in their spiritual formation. The prerequisites are that you are practicing Roman Catholics attending weekly Sunday Mass, and that you live in the Cathedral Parish. Parents' Information Evening will take place on *Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> October at 7.00pm in the Cathedral.*

PARISH CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME: Father Matus & the Catechists have had the initial meeting with the prospective candidates and all the information has been distributed. The return of the Registration Form, Retreat Registration and the Questionnaire, plus the £150 for the Residential Retreat at Abbotswick, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November. Monies should have been returned with the Registration Forms. Your Mass Registration Card was effective from *Sunday, 5 July*, and should be signed by one of the priests or deacons weekly. Weekly practice of the faith is compulsory not optional. The first formal Session will be on *Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> November at 4.00pm in the Parish Hall.*



CATHEDRAL PARISH BAZAAR: SATURDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 11.00AM - 3.00PM I know this is only the middle of the summer, but forward planning is extremely important. I have set a date for a Bazaar Committee Meeting for *Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2026 at 7.30pm in*

*the Small Hall.* We had a truly wonderful and successful Bazaar last year - a real family occasion for the whole parish community. If you're going away on holiday, and thinking about bringing a bottle or two back,

please consider the Bazaar. Thank you! All are welcome to join us at the meeting, especially if you want to help with the Bazaar this year.

**PARISH NEWSLETTER:** If you have information for the Parish Newsletter, please submit it by Wednesday each week, as we always go to print on a Thursday. Also, you can obtain all information about the Parish on the Website: [www.brentwoodcathedral.org.uk](http://www.brentwoodcathedral.org.uk).

**COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS TODAY:** will be hosted by CAFOD. Next week will be the turn of the Friday Lunches Group. Please do join us!

**MISSIO** If you have not yet returned your Missio box, 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.

**STATUE OF ST HELEN CO-PATRON OF THE CATHEDRAL PARISH:** I would seriously like to invest in a statue of St Helen for the Cathedral. Could I ask for your comments, and whether we would be able to get sponsorship to have a statue custom made for the Cathedral? Obviously, this would be very much a parish project, and it would be wonderful to have an additional statue in the Cathedral.



**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.

**PILGRIMS OF HOPE PRAYER GROUP:** Why not join the parish Pilgrims of Hope prayer group? The group pray *every Monday evening at 8.00pm*. Prayers and reflections are shared on WhatsApp with each person praying privately wherever they are. If you'd like to join the group, please give your details to the parish secretary.

**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, Maureen Duane, 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.

**EUGENE O' O'RIORDAN - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELLA** On 1<sup>st</sup> September, Eugene and his son's father-in-law, Kevin will be setting off to travel to St. Jean pied de Port to complete the Santiago de Compostella. It's their intention to walk to Compostella, 790km, and then on to Cape Finisterre, a further 93km, to the coast. This was originally intended as a Pilgrimage/walk of remembrance for family members/friends no longer with us, but after a conversation with Canon John, it's an opportunity to raise some funds to support the felling of the diseased trees in the Cathedral cemetery, and to plant new ones to replace them. So, when they leave on 1<sup>st</sup> September, a donation box will be placed in the Cathedral for parishioners who would like to make a donation.

## GENERAL NEWS

**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. Interviews (provisionally) on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> September.

**INGATESTONE PARISH BBQ - SUNDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER** Everyone is warmly invited to the Ingatestone Parish BBQ on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> September at 12.30pm in the private North Wing Garden at Ingatestone Hall (which is not usually open to visitors). We are very grateful to the Petre family for their kindness in making this possible.

Come and enjoy good food, good company and a relaxed afternoon in a unique setting. Tickets are £25 per adult, £15 for senior citizens, and free for children.

For further information or to book, please contact Jacinta on 07949 270902.

**STOP ASSISTED SUICIDE BEING LEGALISED** - Assisted suicide campaigners have sadly brought back the Leadbeater Bill. This can be stopped if MPs vote down the Bill on *11 September*.

Right To Life UK has launched an EasyAction tool to help you email your MP to ask them to vote NO to assisted suicide in the vote in the House of Commons on *11 September*. Please take 30 seconds to email your MP today to ask them to vote NO to assisted suicide:  
<https://righttolife.org.uk/Sept11vote>

**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                                                                     |
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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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