

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

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## THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A) Sunday, 20 September 2026

### Spiritual Reflection:

Isaiah called upon God's people to 'seek the Lord' by turning away from their sins and turning back to God. He did so because he knew that they felt unable to turn back to God since they did not believe that he would forgive their sins. They had to learn that God is merciful to those who repent and is rich in granting forgiveness. They needed to abandon their wrong way of thinking about God and adopt a new way of thinking; 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.'

The first workers hired by the landowner to work in his vineyard were resentful when he did not pay them more than the workers who had worked fewer hours. They failed to comprehend that out of generosity the landowner had both hired them and paid all of them a full days' wages in order that they could return home with sufficient money to feed their families. Had he not hired them, they and their families would have been left without food. They wrongly judged the landowner to be unjust and were completely blind to his generosity. Jesus' parables show that they needed to abandon their wrong way of thinking and to see the landowner with new eyes.



We too need to be renewed in our thinking: 'Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. The light of God's Word must dispel our misconceptions and wrong ways of thinking about God: that he will never hear my prayers; that my sins are too great to be forgiven; that God does not find me acceptable; or that he does not really care about me. These ways of thinking can go very deep in us, preventing us from experiencing God's mercy and love.

As we read God's Word, it exposes misconceptions and wrong ways of thinking. It instructs us in the truth about God and ourselves. Ask God to renew your thinking and to give you 'the mind of Christ.'

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Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,



I would just like to comment on the incredible response to the Day with Mary last Saturday. The visit to our diocese of the National Statue of Our Lady of Fatima and the relics of Saints Francisco & Jacinta was a truly wonderful and spiritual day for the hundreds of people who attended. Bishop Alan celebrated the Holy Mass with the Crowning of Our Lady's Statue. People came from all over the diocese, and participated in the day of prayer, with Litanies, the Rosary, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; Confessions lasted about three hours. There was a wonderful Film Show on the Apparitions at Fatima and a lengthy talk on Fatima. Finally, there was the enrolment with the Brown

Scapular. The feedback has been truly wonderful; those parishioners who attended were really pleased with how the day went. The Organising Committee who travelled and set up the day were absolutely delighted with everything that took place. I would like to thank all the ladies who helped with refreshments in the parish hall, it was truly appreciated.

#### RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

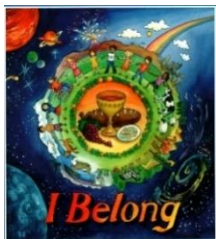
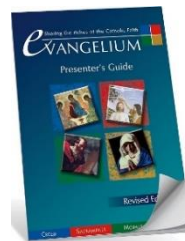
I am calling the whole parish to see if there are any more people who may be interested in learning more about the Roman Catholic faith, possibly with the view of receiving the Easter Sacraments next Easter 2027. The RCIA is a programme of systematic instruction of all aspects of Catholicism. Examining 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.

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?

The Programme commenced this week with an information evening last Thursday at Clergy House. It's still not too late to join the programme. There is a workbook that we use called Evangelium which costs £10.00 you will also receive a programme of dates and the titles of each session throughout the programme. The sessions usually last for about an hour and a quarter. There will be an opportunity for questions. If it helps you, please bring along a note pad and pen.



**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 2026), 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. A Parents' Information Evening will take place on ***Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> October at 7.00pm*** in the Cathedral. We will need a copy of your child's Baptismal Certificate.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CATECHISTS:** I would like to thank those who turned up for the First Holy Communion Catechists Meeting last Wednesday and thank you also to Victoria Campling who explained the whole process involved in preparing the children for the Sacraments of

Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. When the Programme begins in January 2027, our Catechists will be ready and prepared for the various classes of children. The Catechists give of their own time freely to assist and help the children. I'm truly grateful for the wonderful service this offers not only to the children but to the whole community. Thank you! Fr. John



**PARISH CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME:** Fr 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*

Forward planning is extremely important. I would like to thank all those who attended the Bazaar Committee meeting last Friday, and special thanks to those who gave apologies but continued to offer their services at the bazaar. After the wonderful success of the previous two Bazaars, I would like to continue in this vein. This is 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 do consider the bazaar.



If you could all think seriously about gifts and items for donation this year. Toiletries, cosmetics, perfumes, cuddly toys, chocolates & sweets, fancy goods, children's toys, BOTTLES of wine & spirits, good Bric-a-Brac; there will be a cake stall and refreshments, Fr Christmas Grotto and face painting for children. Thank you! There will also be a GRAND DRAW, with many prizes. Last year all the prizes were donated by the Parish. If you can donate a 50-inch colour TV, crate of wine, brand new electrical goods, M&S Christmas Hamper, and any other hampers, theatre tickets, restaurant vouchers, M&S vouchers, beauty vouchers, and of course anything else you consider worthy as a Grand Draw Prize. I thank you all in anticipation. We will start collecting from the beginning of October. NO FOOD ITEMS OR CLOTHING THANK YOU!



**APPLICATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES 2027:** At this time of the year parents are seeking school places for their children, whether it be for Reception, or entry for Junior or Secondary School places. It is a really important time for choices, but also as Roman Catholics, it is about our commitment in faith. Every Priest will tell you the same story each year, how in September the numbers swell in the congregation when it's time for School

Applications, and then diminish once a form has been signed by the Parish Priest. Personally, I have always tried to give people the benefit of doubt and have encouraged our parents to continue in the practice of their faith and fulfil that promise made on the day of their child's baptism. It always comes back to personal integrity and honesty before God. For example, if a parent states they are a weekly mass goer, and in fact, do not attend Mass, what kind of moral example is that to a child; all it shows the child is that you can lie to get what you want. Personally, I wouldn't like that to be the example that I set before my child, if I had children. As stated, honesty, truthfulness and integrity are the order of the day. Secondary School (Year 7) Applications for Secondary School places opened on the 12<sup>th</sup> September and must be submitted to Essex County by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2026.

Fr John will be available on the *Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October* between the hours of 4.00pm - 7.00pm for the Signing of Forms.

**At this meeting the Certificate of Catholic Practice will only be signed by Fr John for those who are practicing Catholics (Weekly attendance at Holy Mass).** This means your child's attendance as well. If you are not a regular practicing Catholic, please follow the instructions below:

- a) Fr John will know those families who have been practicing their faith by coming to Sunday Mass. These families will receive a Certificate of Catholic Practice
- b) If you have not been practicing your faith, or have only just returned to church, please do not approach Fr John for a Certificate of Catholic Practice, as he will not be able to provide you with this document, instead apply directly to the Catholic School of your choice.
- c) If you are applying for a non-Catholic school that requires evidence of religious practice and you have been practicing your faith, please simply apply directly to the non-Catholic School of your choice.

- d) Please note that Fr John will not supply additional references or documentation to parents who may go to appeal for a place at a non-Catholic school.

Primary School Applications begin after the Secondary ones are completed. Please watch this space for details.

**CONGRATULATIONS:** To William Blohm & Charlotte Mahoney who were married at the Cathedral on *Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September*. We wish William & Charlotte a long and happy marriage as they embark on their journey of married love. Ad multos annos!

**MARRIAGES FOR 2027:** If there are any parishioners who are planning of getting married in 2027 could they kindly notify Clergy House as soon as possible. For Marriages taking place at the Cathedral, we need six-months' notice, and for marriage abroad nine months' notice, this is to ensure all the paperwork and marriage preparation can take place. For more information, please contact Clergy House Tel No: 01277 265235

**IRREGULAR MARRIAGES:** An

Irregular Marriage is one that has taken place outside of the Roman Catholic Faith e.g. A Marriage in a Non-Catholic Church without dispensation; a marriage in a secular venue, A marriage in Las Vegas or on a Beach, a marriage in a



Register Office. By virtue of your Catholic baptism, any marriage that takes place outside of the Catholic Faith is only recognised by the Civil Authorities and not by the Catholic Church. The Church has the means to rectify this irregular situation, which is called **CONVALIDATION**. The couple will need to see the priest privately and complete all the relevant documentation ensuring the freedom for marriage. The Convalidation is a Private Ceremony where the couple will exchange their Consent and Marriage Vows before God and the Church thus validating their Marriage. This is a strictly private and confidential service that the Church offers to rectify an irregular marriage. If you would like to know more about this, please contact one of the priests at Clergy House Tel No: 01277 265235.

**MEMORIAL MASS** for the Late Sean O'Connell will be held in The Cathedral at *12.00 Noon on Monday, 21 September*.

**EVANGELII GAUDIUM SUNDAY** Today is Evangelii Gaudium Sunday and there will be a second collection at all Masses this weekend.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 MASS TODAY: will be hosted by the Spanish Speaker Community. Next week will be the turn of Love in Action. All are welcome. Please do join us!



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.

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.

THE FRIDAY FRIENDSHIP LUNCH Every *Friday from 12.00 Noon - 2.00pm in the parish hall*. Join us 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 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

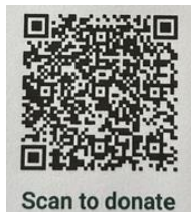
SUNDAY: 8.00am / 9.30am / 11.30am & 6.30pm

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, 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

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. Please donate

via the Justgiving link or QR code.

[https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eugene-oriordan?utm\\_medium=CF&utm\\_source=CL](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eugene-oriordan?utm_medium=CF&utm_source=CL)

MISSIO RED BOXES Thank you those who returned their Red Box for counting. You will find your box on the shelf in the narthex. There are also plenty of spare boxes for anyone who would like to take one. If you still have a box at home, please bring it in for counting. Thanks

## GENERAL NEWS

#### ST HELEN'S JUNIOR SCHOOL - DONATIONS FOR THE PRAYER GARDEN

Would any parishioners be able to donate yellow, blue or white spring flower bulbs for our St Helen's Garden of Prayer and Peace, please? All donations, big or small, would be gratefully received and would help us to create a beautiful and peaceful space for our school community. Thank you so much for your support.

#### BRENTWOOD URSULINE CONVENT HIGH SCHOOL: YEAR 7 OPEN EVENING

for prospective students and their families. *Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> September 6.30pm - 9.00pm* with Headteacher's talks at 6.30pm & 7.30pm. Alternatively, *Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> & Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 9.10am - 11.00am* (by appointment only)

JOHN PAYNE CATHOLIC SCHOOL OPEN EVENING from 5.30pm - 8.00pm on *Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> October*, with Headteacher's talks at 5.45pm, 6.45pm and 7.45pm.

CAMPION SCHOOL SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING at 4.30pm on *Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> October*, with Headteacher's talk at 4.30pm & 6.00pm.

**'ENVIRONMENT, LAUDATO SI' - CARITAS BRENTWOOD EVENT** Join us at 9.45am on *Saturday, 26th September* at Brentwood Cathedral for a talk from Fr Matthias Baidoo on Catholic Social Teaching, followed by parishioners from St Teresa of Lisieux Parish, Lexden. With opportunities to explore lived experiences and how we can put our faith into action. Register for free: <https://caritas-environment.eventbrite.co.uk>

**ST. MARGARET'S, CANNING TOWN - 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY MASS** The parish of St Margaret's Canning Town, wish to invite any former parishioners to the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass to be celebrated in the grounds of St Helen's School, Falcon Street, E13 entrance at 12.00 Noon on *Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> September*. Seating is limited so if you would like to sit, we would advise bring a chair.

**KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBA ANNUAL LECTURE** on *Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> October at 8.00pm*, Chelmsford Knights of St. Columba will be presenting their Annual Lecture on the topic "Why Youth Ministry". The speaker will be Claire Bailey, Diocese of Brentwood's Director of Youth Ministry, who will talk about Christian Youth Work, how it is undertaken and what it aims to achieve. It will interest anyone working with young people, volunteers or professionals, in schools, parishes or youth services, but also anyone involved with Religious Education or pastoral care. However, anyone with an interest in the future of the Church's young generation will learn a great deal from Claire's talk.

The talk will be at St. Augustine's Church, Springfield, CM1 6GQ and there is ample parking at the church.

**CAMPION SCHOOL QUIZ NIGHT** on *Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> October*. Doors open 7.00pm and quiz starts at 7.30pm. Teams of 10 (max). £5 per person, BYO drinks and nibbles. For details of how to pay and to register your team, email [pachair@thecampionschool.org.uk](mailto:pachair@thecampionschool.org.uk).

**GRAYS - 140<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY** - Next month, St. Thomas' Church and school will be celebrating 140 years of serving the community, and everyone is invited to join the Mass, celebrated by Bishop Alan on the *Saturday, 10th October at 5:00pm*.

In addition, if anyone has any images or memories that they would like to share, please do send them to the parish.

**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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