

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

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THE TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A) Sunday, 27 September 2026

Spiritual Reflection:

As we rapidly approach the month of October, it is worth looking for a link in the sequence of readings to see if they may suggest an ongoing theme for the month. One element that might prove to be fruitful regarding a unifying link between the readings is that earlier in Matthew chapter 21, Jesus entered the Temple! The words spoken by Jesus today are spoken in the temple. How might this fact cloud the way we understand what Jesus is saying? Jesus says: 'What do you think? A man had two sons...' Would these words mean something different for us if they had not been spoken in the temple?

Let's think for a moment about the nature of the temple. The people of Israel had built the temple to be the Holy of Holies, the place of God, and the Ark of the Covenant. The temple too was the place from which proceeded the word and will of God - the seat of authority among the Jews. Indeed, it was also the place where some years ago Jesus himself had gone as a twelve-year old boy to seek the Father's will in the Father's house.



On this occasion, Jesus has not come into the temple to seek to know the Father's will. Jesus has entered the temple for a different reason - a reason Matthew really wants to understand. God had left the temple when it came under the destructive armies of the Babylonians, and ever since the time of the Babylonian Exile, the people of Israel had been waiting for God's glory to return to the temple. They had been waiting for over 400 years! For those with eyes to see, Jesus the long-awaited return of God to the temple has been fulfilled!



But the very ones who were supposed to help people know the will and mind of God - the religious leaders - had failed to recognise the significance of this moment. It is Jesus, not the Pharisees and Sadducees, who speaks with God's authority. The simple challenge Jesus

gives the religious authorities through the parable reveals their lack of concern with truth, for they seek only to justify their own faithful behaviour.

I come to you, Jesus, as the source of truth for me, and to seek your will each day.

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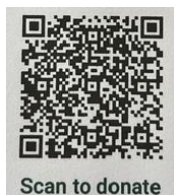
Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

As you may be aware, one of our parishioners, Eugene O'Riordan is walking the whole of the Camino as a Pilgrim. Eugene has been keeping me updated over the past weeks. He has reached over the halfway point of the 530 miles. Thousands of people walk the Camino each year from all over Europe, arriving in Santiago di Compostela the Shrine of St James the Apostle. People walk for all sorts of reasons, but it is very much a Pilgrimage; and a pilgrimage is a journey of faith and discovery. Prior to leaving, Eugene very kindly offered to Walk for the Intentions of the Parish, and the ongoing work that we have begun in the parish cemetery. (Picture - Cathedral of Santiago di Compostela)



As you know, many of the trees in the front part of cemetery are diseased with Sooty Bark. We must still remove some more trees and the next visit by the arborist is 9<sup>th</sup> October. Once the trees have been removed, and the stumps ground down, we can think about planting new trees in the Cemetery. My sincere thanks to all those parishioners who have made promises to sponsor the new trees. We will plant well established trees, rather than saplings.

Message from Eugene “*Good Morning Fr John and People of the Cathedral Parish. A brief update. Myself and my fellow peregrino have reached the City of Leon, with its beautiful Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption. We are now over halfway to Santiago di Compostella intending, hopefully, to continue onto Cape Finisterre. We have met some wonderful people, seen some incredible churches and sights, along with a few unwanted blisters. As the saying goes ‘you get the Camino you need, not the Camino you want.’ See you at the end of October. Thank you very much to those who have donated. It means a great deal. God Bless you All. Eugene.*”



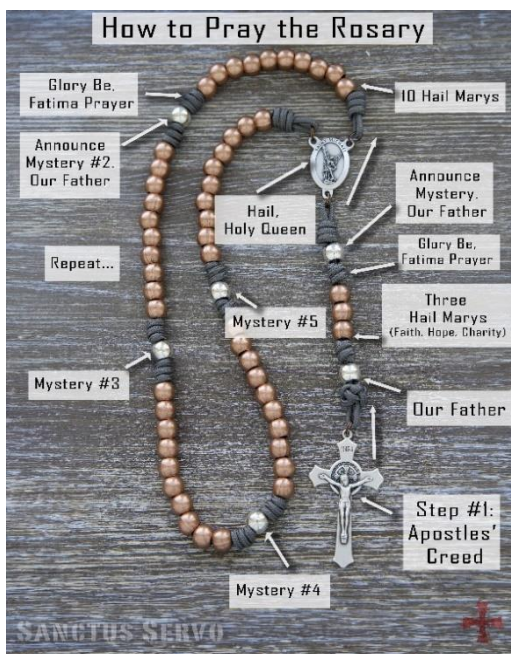
Scan to donate

If any parishioners would like to donate towards the Tree Project in the Cemetery, Eugene would be grateful for your sponsorship. A donation box has been placed in the Cathedral for parishioners who would like to make a donation. Alternatively, please donate via the JustGiving link or QR code.

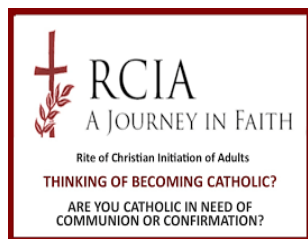
[https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eugeneoridan?utm\\_medium=CF&utm\\_source=CL](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/eugeneoridan?utm_medium=CF&utm_source=CL)

### OCTOBER, THE MONTH OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY:

As we are about to enter the month of October, which is dedicated to Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, here is a little background history to the Feast. The Rosary—and, more specifically, Our Lady of the Rosary—is credited with victory in a number of the battles that those feasts celebrate. Chief among these is the Battle of Lepanto (October 7, 1571), in which a Christian fleet defeated a superior Ottoman Muslim fleet and stopped the westward expansion of Islam in the Mediterranean. In honour of the victory, Pope Pius V instituted the Feast of Our Lady of Victory, which is still celebrated today as the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7). And, in 1883, when Pope Leo XIII officially dedicated the month of October to the Holy Rosary, he referred to the battle and the feast. The best way to celebrate the Month of the Holy Rosary is, of course, to pray the rosary daily; a decade of the rosary



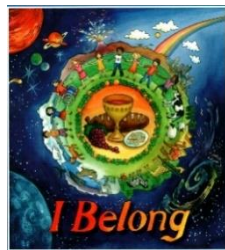
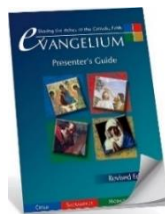
will be prayed at the end of each of our weekday masses; please come along and join us. Parents, please help your children of pray at least a decade of the rosary each day, they can do as their night-time prayers.



**RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:** I am very pleased to announce that twelve enquirers tuned up last week to begin the RCIA Journey of Faith programme. **It's still not too late to join us!** 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

**265 235.** He will be only too happy to sit down and explain the whole RCIA programme and how the it works. There are many non-Catholic spouses who attend Mass on a regular basis with their families, would you consider joining the programme?

The Programme continues next *Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, at 7.00pm at Clergy House.* **Theme: Sin and its effects - Original Sin.** 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.

**CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME:** If you have signed up for the Confirmation Programme this year, you are expected to attend weekly Mass. This is not optional; we have noticed that for some, the weekly Mass Registration Card is very sporadic in attendance, and for some there are several



weeks missing. This is an extremely serious concern. If you are not willing to commit to one hour a week for Holy Mass, please think seriously about preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. It can always be postponed to a later date; there is no fixed age for Confirmation. The return of the Registration Form, Retreat Registration and 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. This is a real family occasion for the whole parish community. If you could all think seriously about gifts and items for donation this year.

Toiletries, Cosmetics, Perfumes, New Cuddly Toys with labels, Chocolates & Sweets, Fancy Goods, Children's Toys, BOTTLES of Wine & Spirits, Good Bric-a-Brac. There will be a Cake Stall, Refreshments, Fr Christmas Grotto, Face Painting for children. Thank you! Also, 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!**

DO YOU HAVE ANY WOOL? Sr Martina from St Josphe's Convent would be grateful to anyone who may have some spare wool at home, you can drop it off at Clergy House or St Joseph's Convent. 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, 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 to 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. Application for Secondary School (Year 7), 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, please 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.



**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 & 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.

HARVEST FAST DAY - FRIDAY, 2 OCTOBER There will be a second collection for CAFOD after all Masses next weekend (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> October).

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.

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

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.

## 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, 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.

SACRED HEART OF MARY GIRLS' SCHOOL OPEN EVENING on Wednesday, *7<sup>th</sup> October* from 6.00pm - 8.00pm, with Headteacher's address at 7.30pm

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.

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, 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

VACANCIES - WALSINGHAM HOUSE MANAGER - To ensure the smooth and efficient running of Walsingham House at Abbotswick, as an inspiring, faith-filled retreat house welcoming over 5,000 young people each year.

Based at Walsingham House, with travel to retreat locations and BCYS events, as needed. 35hrs per week (incl. significant evening and weekend work). Salary- £30 - 32K depending on prior experience (ideally this is a "live in" role, with a one-bedroom flat provided, however it is not essential). The closing date for applications is *Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2026*.

More information is available on the BCYS website ([www.bcys.net/news/vacancies/](http://www.bcys.net/news/vacancies/)) as well as on our social media accounts. Also, we warmly welcome visitors, so please contact Claire Bailey ([clairebailey@brcdt.org](mailto:clairebailey@brcdt.org)) if you would like to arrange to come and see Walsingham House and the work that we do before applying.

**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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