

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

**Second Sunday after Christmas – Year B –
Divine Office Wk 2 – 2nd / 3rd January 2021**



Bella Roma. Magnificent. Six years of study there. Wonderful, but demanding. Academics, books, journals, ideas, theories – it goes on. Heads crammed with knowledge, sounding clever. All good stuff, but isn't Christianity more?

Maybe years of working with people with disabilities, mental health issues, and working in prison has helped toward a bigger understanding about what Christianity really is.

It seems that to be a Christian, we need to have met someone who is already - "Christian". It is based on personal experience. We must experience Christianity for ourselves. Christ is passed on "personally". To become a genuine follower of Christ is to have met someone who shines with a Christ-like freedom, a joy, an energy, a vitality – and let them rub off on you. Contagious. You catch on to it, it rubs off on to you, then you on to someone else - faith is caught, not taught.

This stuff cannot be "theologised", or sermonised. It is simply a way of living. Way bigger and beyond Rome's academics. It's personal, always about healthy and right relationships - never private.

So words and ideas can never be enough. That's why the "word became flesh". It's all about the flesh - relationships, unity, solidarity, mercy, companionship, togetherness, community – love. Can academics or theories substitute for that?

Once we see people who have "caught on" to this bigger Christianity, once we draw close to them and let their ways rub off on us, why would we settle for anything less? It's too good to be true.

Jesus came as the Christ, the Son of God to 'dwell amongst us' so as we could follow him, follow his humanity, catch on to his inner attitudes and his teachings and live them out. Not treat them as some kind of hypotheses, academic theories or ideas, and certainly not just to worship him. He dwelt amongst us, so as we could live like him. Or we strip Christmas of all its power and meaning and keep Christ out of Christmas. We are called to be like Jesus Christ as best as we can. Do others catch on to our Christ-like ways? Have we truly put Christ back into Christmas?

Do we have, or do we know anyone with Christ-like ways? Do we have the humility to let their Christianity catch-on in us? Or does 'being clever' get in the way? Pride? To let it genuinely catch on could transform ours, and others' lives - for ever.

God Bless, Fr. Paul.



**CHRISTMAS FLOWERS in Church
are in Memory of Mike & Kath Geeson
and Tom & Pat Herlihy.**

Thank you also to all those that made anonymous donations.

The Flower Team

This week Fr Paul will say Mass for the following intentions:-

MASS INTENTIONS	
Saturday 2nd Jan.	
5.30pm Mass	Con Parker RIP (Patricia Holohan)
Sunday 3rd Second Sunday after Christmas	
9.30am Mass	Parish Community Ints
Monday 4th	
	Michael Barry RIP (Lorrna Warren)
Tuesday 5th	
	Jim Comiskey RIP (Valerie Gumley)
Wednesday 6th The Epiphany of the Lord	
10am Mass	Con Parker RIP (Shirley McCamley & Family)
Thursday 7th	
	Michael Barry RIP (Patricia Holohan)
Friday 8th	
10am Mass	Tom Herlihy RIP (Eithne & Una)
Saturday 9th	
5.30pm Mass	Pat and Bill Hall RIP (Belinda Lucas)
Sunday 10th Jan. The Baptism of the Lord	
9.30am Mass	Parish Community Ints

<p>PARISH PRIEST Father Paul Fox 50 London Hill, Rayleigh Essex SS6 7HP 01268 742229 www.olorchurch.org email: rayleigh@dioceseofbrentwood.org</p>	<p><u>Public Mass times:</u> Saturdays 5.30pm Sundays 9.30am Wednesdays 10.00am Fridays 10.00am <i>Please be aware - Times and days of Masses are subject to change.</i></p>
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Our Parish is part of The Brentwood Diocesan Trust, Registered Charity Number 234092

THE BISHOP'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/christmas-pledge-gods-love-world-gods-hope-world/

and pastoral letter are available on the diocesan website

www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/personal-knowledge-jesus-brings-salvation-peace/

PARISH DIARIES 2021 - Now available from the church porch – suggested donation 20p

MANY THANKS FOR ALL THE MASS INTENTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Please note: At present we have a large number of outstanding Mass Intentions, which takes us to early March.



PLEASE PRAY

For all the sick members of our Parish and all our relatives and friends.

† ANNIVERSARIES †

Kindly pray for Mel Francke, Andrew Stock, Tony Rimmer and Cassie Thompson whose anniversaries occur about this time.

† † PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS...

Len Smith (father of Debbie Smith) who died on 26th December. Please keep Debbie and her family in your prayers.

Also Betty Lowe who died on Monday 21st December. Please keep Betty and the family in your prayers. May they rest in peace. † †

OFFERTORY CONTRIBUTIONS

Please continue to support the parish financially with your weekly contributions – please email Fr Paul if you would like the parish bank account details to set up a standing order or to make a bacs donation.

Thank you to those that have already made arrangements - ***Please make it clear whether it is an Offertory / Other donation on your payment reference and if you are already a gift-aider please quote your gift aid number.***

GIFT AID ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE

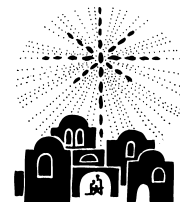
Please contact Sandra our Gift Aid Co-ordinator (olorgiftaid@hotmail.com / 01268 772998) to arrange delivery/ collection of these / if you have any Gift Aid enquiries.

Where possible it is easier if donations are made by standing order quoting your gift aid number.

At the bottom of the parish website there is a pink “gift aid it” logo which, if you click on it, takes you to another parish web page which goes into more detail and has some frequently asked questions.

CRIB OFFERINGS

The Crib offerings this year will be donated to the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society. Please keep the families and children they support in your prayers this Christmas.



CONFESSIONS

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions) is available – but needs to be offered openly (ie. not in the traditional Confessional Box). If you wish for the Sacrament, please make a personal time by calling Fr. Paul. (The request itself is treated confidentially).

Public Masses:

Please **do not come** if you have symptoms, sniffles, sneezes, coughs, immunity issues etc.
Use common sense and think of others.

Remember to wear a mask and SANITISE hands on entering the church.

Social Distance regulations MUST be adhered to all times

Please follow only the directions of the Stewards.

The church will be both cleaned and sanitised regularly.

Wash your hands, cover your face, make space.



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

NEWSLETTERS

Just a few printed newsletters will be left on the shelf outside the presbytery. These are primarily designated for anyone who has no email access.

If you are able to print off newsletters yourselves and deliver to anyone who can't get out, that would be a great act of charity. Thank you.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive the newsletter by email each week, please in the first instance email a request to the parish office (rayleigh@dioceseofbrentwood.org) and ask to be added onto the distribution list.

The newsletter will be emailed by the Saturday morning.



CAN THE SVP HELP?

Whilst our activities and support have been adversely affected by the Coronavirus pandemic the SVP remains available to offer help, where current regulations permit.

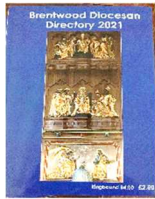
Should you need support, please contact **Colin Griffin** (tel. No. 01268 772322) or any other SVP member. Your call will be treated with complete confidentiality.

2021 DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES

The Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2021 is planned for Sunday 25 – Friday 30 July. However, because of Covid-19 it is not possible to know yet whether a pilgrimage will be practical or in what form. Therefore, any decisions and announcements regarding the Diocesan Pilgrimage, and our young people intending to travel with the BCYS, will be made in January. Until then, do keep the dates for the pilgrimage in your diaries.

MASS CARDS, SYMPATHY CARDS AND OTHER CARDS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS...

- normally sold in the Repository - these can now be obtained at the presbytery. Please contact Fr. Paul to arrange a convenient time to come, choose, collect and pay for the cards.



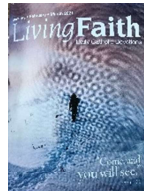
2021 Brentwood Diocesan Directories

are now available from the Presbytery- £2.80



MY DAY BY DAY

Booklets for
Advent and
January
are available
priced £1 each.



LIVING FAITH (Jan – March)

Popular booklet with a thought for
every day for the next three months.
Limited number available....
Voluntary donations for
the booklets welcome

If you would like to collect these from the Presbytery please contact Fr Paul.

If you usually purchase these but are unable to collect or arrange for one to be collected for you, then we can arrange delivery.

ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELLOR'S (ACC) COVID-19 CRISIS COUNSELLING SUPPORT SERVICE

ACC have set up a new service – a Covid 19 Crisis Counselling Support Service (CCSS) for NHS frontline staff, People working in a residential care home setting being directly impacted by caring for people who have Covid-19 and people who have been bereaved during the COVID-19 epidemic in the U.K.
The crisis counselling support service offers up to ten sessions of counselling on a no fee basis.



To find out more please visit ACC's website www.acc-uk.org or if you don't have access to a computer, please ring 024 7644 9694.

ABUSE: Victim Support – Safe Spaces

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been, or feels, they have experienced abuse through their relationship with the Catholic Church of England and Wales.

Telephone 0300 303 1056

Email: safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk

LiveChat at www.SafeSpacesEnglandWales.org.uk



SOME USEFUL NUMBERS THAT MAY HELP YOU, YOUR FAMILIES OR NEIGHBOURS.



ABUSE AND OTHER HELPLINES – USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police - call 999 – if you cannot respond due to danger, tap the mobile handset or cough, then when prompted press 55 (this takes you straight through to the police)

Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 200 0247
www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Men's advice line 0808 801 0327 www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Rape Crisis 0808 9999 www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Respect phoneline 0808 999 4040 www.respectphoneline.org.uk

Karma Nirvana – a national honour based abuse helpline 0808 5999 247
support@karmanirvana.org.uk

Stay Safe East 0208 519 7241 (focus on people with disabilities) Text 07587 134122

NSPCC 0808 800 5000 Email help@nspcc.org.uk

Childline 0800 1111

Child Exploitation and Online Protection www.thinkuknow.co.uk

This site offers help for parents and children (at their level) from 4 years old upwards.

Coronavirus-related scams / Fraud or Attempted Fraud

For the latest information go to <http://actionfraud.police.uk/news>

If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call Essex Police on 101. Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

Suspicious emails NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) report@phishing.gov.uk

SUPPORT -

Anxiety Call 08444 775774

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) Call 0845 390 6232
email – support@ocdaction.org.uk skype 0303 040 1112

ISOLATED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS - HOW TO OBTAIN HELP

The source of your support depends on which category of 'shielding' you fall into.

Category 1 - you have been contacted by the NHS and told to remain at home for 12 weeks. You are being supported directly from the government. If you were not contacted by the NHS and told this then you do not fall into this category.

Category 2 - anyone over the age of 70, plus anyone under the age of 70 with certain serious health conditions plus pregnant women - you are being supported by Essex County Council through their Essex Welfare Service. Please contact them on 0300 303 9988.

Category 3 - Everyone else.

You are supported by the **new helpline** set up by Rochford District Council in partnership with local faith groups, churches and voluntary organisations. If you have no friends or family close by and you need support during this crisis, or are feeling isolated, please call **01268 779999**.



Be
Fraud
Smart!

[www.essex.police.uk/
be-fraud-smart](https://www.essex.police.uk/be-fraud-smart)



Essex Police Fraud Alert System

19

11th December 2020

BEWARE OF VACCINATION SCAMS

With the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine beginning this week, residents are warned of criminals seeking to exploit the pandemic further.



Fake Text Messages & Calls

Basildon has been one of the worst affected areas in Essex for Coronavirus and as a result, scammers have been targeting residents with fake text messages. Essex Trading Standards have warned that the messages ask residents to click a link in order to book their vaccination, before proceeding to take personal details and payment requests.

The Covid-19 vaccination is free and you will never be asked for payment.

In other parts of the country, people have also received phone calls to book non-existent 'vaccine appointments'. They are asked to confirm their booking by pressing a number on their phone which results in them being billed by their provider.

'VIP' vaccine tickets

Phishing scams continue to circulate, many now claiming to offer 'VIP' vaccination tickets that will allegedly put people at the head of the vaccination queue—for a price. Similar to the scams that have been seen throughout the pandemic, they will often ask you to click on a link or provide personal/banking details to pay for the ticket.



Remember—if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!

The vaccine is currently being offered to those most at risk, particularly the elderly.
Please pass this information on to anyone you think may be vulnerable to these scams.



If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call Essex Police on 101
Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting Action Fraud at [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or call 0300 123 2040

Keep up to date with fraud and
do **even more** Online at [essex.police.uk](https://www.essex.police.uk)



**Pastoral Letter for the Feast of the Holy Family
of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

(26/27th December 2020)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we continue to celebrate the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy and blessed Christmas.

For many of us the past year has been marked by difficulty and distress. Opportunities for Christmas family gatherings have been very restricted and some of us have unwelcome memories of enduring a pandemic that has yet to run its course.

In his Gospel Saint John reminds us of the necessity of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ- “God so loved the world that He sent His only Son” and that love continues in the midst of human confusion and suffering. Faithful disciples of Christ - the Saints of the Church - are people who witness to the gifts of God even in unpromising times.

All human beings need to meet Christ. In today’s Gospel Simeon and Anna encounter the Christ child and his family. They learn what so many have learned over the centuries; personal knowledge of Jesus brings salvation and peace. Simeon and Anna are moved to praise God as they rejoice in the light and glory of Christ.

In his recent Apostolic Letter about the place of Saint Joseph in the Church Pope Francis speaks of the courage of Joseph in the face of adverse events - “The Holy Family had to face concrete problems like every other family, like so many of our migrant brothers and sisters who, today too, risk their lives to escape misfortune and hunger. In this regard, I can consider Saint Joseph the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty”.

It may be that words of encouragement and consolation are difficult to hear this Christmas. During the pandemic we have become acutely aware of the fragility of human life but those who believe in Christ look for the gifts of God which are freely given despite the almost impossible circumstances we can find ourselves in.

In his reading today Saint Paul describes what happens when we allow ourselves to be loved by God. Followers of Christ live out compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Christ’s love clothes us with rich gifts; joy and gratitude find their home within us. Joseph - a pre-eminent follower of Christ - became a true father to his foster son through these virtues.

As we move forward we can thank God for medical workers and many others who care for us when we are ill and whose work has produced vaccines that hold out so much hope. We can be grateful for these gifts of God but Pope Francis encourages us, above all, to ask for “the grace of graces: our own conversion” during the coming New Year.

The Holy Father ends his letter with a short but powerful prayer:-

*Blessed Joseph, to us too,
Show yourself a father
And guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
And defend us from every evil. Amen*

With continued prayers,
Yours in Christ, Mary and Joseph,

+Alan Williams, sm
Bishop of Brentwood

READINGS AT MASS – Second Sunday after Christmas

First reading – Ecclesiasticus 24:1-2, 8-12

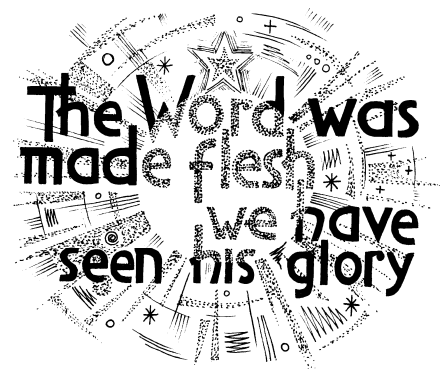
From eternity, in the beginning, God created wisdom

Wisdom speaks her own praises, in the midst of her people she glories in herself. She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High, she glories in herself in the presence of the Mighty One; 'Then the creator of all things instructed me, and he who created me fixed a place for my tent. He said, "Pitch your tent in Jacob, make Israel your inheritance." From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall remain. I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle, and thus was I established on Zion. In the beloved city he has given me rest, and in Jerusalem I wield my authority. I have taken root in a privileged people, in the Lord's property, in his inheritance.'

Psalm 147

The Word was made flesh, and lived among us.

1. O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
Zion, praise your God!
He has strengthened the bars of your gates,
he has blessed the children within you. (R.)
 2. He established peace on your borders,
he feeds you with finest wheat.
He sends out his word to the earth
and swiftly runs his command. (R.)
 3. He makes his word known to Jacob,
to Israel his laws and decrees.
He has not dealt thus with other nations
he has not taught them his decrees. (R.)
-



Second reading - Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18

Before the world was made, God chose us in Christ

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.
Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ,
to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence,
determining that we should become his adopted sons, through Jesus Christ
for his own kind purposes,
to make us praise the glory of his grace,
his free gift to us in the Beloved.

That will explain why I, having once heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the love that you show towards all the saints, have never failed to remember you in my prayers and to thank God for you. May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Glory be to you, O Christ, proclaimed to the pagans.

Glory be to you, O Christ, believed in by the world.

Alleluia!

Gospel - John 1:1-18

The Word was made flesh, and lived among us

In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower. A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself. The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. John appears as his witness. He proclaims: 'This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me ranks before me because he existed before me.' Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received – yes, grace in return for grace, since, though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

