

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

**Third Sunday of Advent – Year B –
Divine Office Wk 3 – 12th / 13th December 2020**



Lost, the stranger drove up to a deserted farmhouse to ask directions. He came across an elderly woman sitting in the entrance, and a man working in the yard, whistling. The whistling was loud, disjointed and out of tune. Aggravated by this whistling, he asked him why he whistled so. “See that lovely lady, that’s my wife of 52 years, she’s recently gone blind. It terrified her. So I thought, if I keep whistling, she’ll know I’m around, it gives her the assurance she badly needs.”

John the Baptist wants to offer us God’s assurance. Not his own. So he points away from himself to Jesus, telling us he is not Him. His growing popularity could have seduced him to point to himself as great. But he knows the truth.

And knowing the truth, he is arguably and strangely abrasive, impatient, tactless, tunnel-visioned, and maybe not possessing the greatest verbal and relational skills. Confrontational, talk of retribution, justice and God’s wrath. Possibly moralistic and harsh. But this ‘out of tune whistling’ points to Our Lord’s assurance, not his. Maybe this is why Jesus says of him, “the least in heaven is greater than he.”

John is not yet the reconciler, the healer, the lover, the man of compassion, tenderness, tolerance and patience. It can take later-life enlightenment to really take these energies on in a big way. This is where Jesus takes John’s message forward, puts the whistling ‘in tune’. John is right, as far as he goes. He clears the way for Jesus and “literally” exits. Now there is freedom for the bigger message.

Much of religion, sad to say, has followed in many of John’s ways and not the ways taken forward by Jesus. Exclusivity, impatience, intolerance, too much focus on retribution and following “correct” rules with too little focus on life-giving relationships. Mercy can be severely lacking; too quick in defining who’s in and out, up or down, who can receive and who can’t, and so on. Honestly! As if we really know! Maybe that is why much religion is laughed at and frowned upon today. Maybe that is why in many places Christmas is losing the Christ.

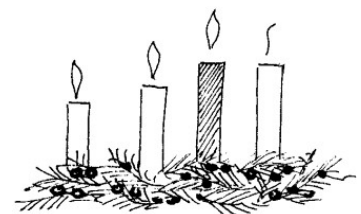
Our religions are meant to heal, reconcile, demonstrate authentic compassion and God’s endless mercy. That is why it is good news. Anything else is simply a lie.

Do we follow only the Baptist? Or are we finally and hopefully - “Christians”?

God Bless, Fr. Paul.

NEXT WEEKEND

*We welcome Sarah, Matt, Scott and Carol, our RCIA candidates,
who will be received into the Church at 9.30am Mass.
Please keep them in your prayers.*



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

MASS INTENTIONS	
Saturday 12th Dec.	Online Mass - Parish Community Ints
5.30pm Mass	Con Parker RIP (Pat & Mary Rickard)
Sunday 13th	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
9.30am Mass	Michael Barry RIP (Shirley McCamley)
Monday 14th	St John of the Cross
	Hazel McClurg RIP (The Bunker family)
Tuesday 15th	
	Maura Houchin RIP (Sally McNamara)
Wednesday 16th	
10am Mass	Doreen Derrick RIP (Shirley McCamley & family)
Thursday 17th	
	Mike Barry RIP (Hilary Barry)
Friday 18th	
10am Mass	Jim Mitchener RIP (Mitchener family)
Saturday 19th	
5.30pm Mass	Parish Community Ints
Sunday 20th Dec.	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
9.30am Mass	Mike Barry RIP (Hilary Barry)

<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

Public Mass times:

Saturdays 5.30pm

Sundays 9.30am

Wednesdays & Fridays 10.00am

Wash your hands, cover your face, make space.



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 MUST be adhered to all times

Please follow only the directions of the Stewards.

The church will be both cleaned and sanitised regularly.

CHRISTMAS MASSES – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY



Christmas Eve Masses as follows:-

Christmas Eve 6pm (Family Mass) Owing to the Covid restrictions on numbers, this will be STRICTLY for families (including grandparents) with children. Adults with no children will be asked to attend one of the alternative Christmas Masses.

Christmas Eve 8pm (this will be the Mass of Midnight brought forward).

To book your place at either of the above Christmas Eve Masses (which seems to be the fairest way of operating) please email rayleigh@dioceseofbrentwood.org or contact the Presbytery with the number of people in your party, their names, ages and a contact phone number and be clear which Mass you would like to come to.

Thank you to all those who have already made a request – we will be in contact to confirm these in due course.

Booked places are now as of this weekend **almost full** .

Christmas Day Masses as follows:-

Christmas Day 8am

Christmas Day 10am

These Masses will operate as normal, on a first come, first served basis with the usual covid restrictions in place.

✠ ✠ PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS...

Bill Hall (husband of Pat Hall who herself died just a few weeks ago) who died last week. Please keep Belinda and the family in your prayers

Also Bob Walker who died on Tuesday 24th November. His Requiem Mass (family and invited guests only) will be held at 11am on Tuesday, December 22, followed by burial at Hall Road Cemetery, Rochford. Please keep Joan and the family in your prayers.

May they rest in peace. ✠ ✠

ONLINE MASS

Is available to view on the parish website (www.olorchurch.org)
or via the parish "Ransomers" facebook page.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Donations towards the cost of flowers to decorate the Church at Christmas will be gratefully received. Please leave at the Presbytery or in the wall collection box at the back of Church.

Many Thanks, from the Flower Team.

FREE!! KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS POSTERS

These have been kindly provided by the Knights of St. Columba.

Copies available from the Church Porch and also on the shelf outside the Presbytery – or print one off (full size version at end of newsletter) and display at home.



ADVENT CAROL CONCERT ONLINE – available throughout Advent

You are warmly invited to pull up a chair with a cup of tea – or beverage of your choice – and join us from the Walsingham House at Abbotswick chapel as we present a beautiful concert of carols and readings for Advent, led by very talented young musicians. The direct link is www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rQteQkyUx0 and you will find more information at www.bcys.net/events/adventcarols – including a booklet with the words of the carols, so you can sing along at home!

The concert is **free** and donations are welcome to support the work of the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service and the Trussell Trust (who support and run foodbanks across the Diocese).

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 Katie Bundy, Joan Denny, Dorothy Whitty, June Turner, Finbarr McQuaid and Elisabeth O'Shea whose anniversaries occur about this time.

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).

BCCS - VIRTUAL TREE OF ANGELS

This November, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society is pleased to launch their virtual Tree of Angels initiative which will allow you to light up an angel on a virtual Christmas tree in memory of a loved one who has died while making a donation to the work of 'bccs'.

Please visit <https://www.bccs.org.uk/christmas/tree-angels> where you can read more about this initiative or click directly onto the Tree of Angels portal here <https://visufund.com/tree-of-angels> to make your dedication and secure donation.

If you have any questions about lighting an angel, please contact Julie jabbott@bccs.org.uk

Our Lady of Ransom School - September 2021 Admissions – Meetings for Prospective Parents

We are very sad that we are unable to welcome prospective parents and children to school this term. Instead we have created a new webpage so that we can share all of the necessary information and hopefully convey why the children, parents and staff are so proud to be members of the Our Lady of Ransom family.



Please share this link with anybody that you know who might be interested in applying for a place in our Reception classes for September 2021.

<https://sites.google.com/olorcps.net/welcometoolor/home>

FOODBANK

The Hopeworx (Castle Road) Foodbank collection box is now situated behind the tills at Sainsburys, Rayleigh Weir – please support this if you are able. (<http://www.hopeworx.org.uk/foodhub.html>)



CHRISTMAS HAMPER COLLECTIONS

They are now specifically collecting the following items to make up Christmas hampers:

Christmas cake – sponge, fruit or log, Christmas pudding (can be chocolate), mince pies, tinned fruit, custard, large tin of ham, salmon, selection boxes / fudge / christmas sweets, large packet of crisps/ savouries cheese twists / twiglets / cheeselets, nuts / popcorn, box of biscuits or shortbread, 1 litre carton juice.

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.

OLOR REPOSITORY – Christmas Cards, Catholic Diaries, Church Art and Advent Calendars etc

Will be on sale in the Bethany room whenever possible when the church is open. Face Masks in Christmas Fabrics are also available.

ENTRY will be via the door at the front of the church, as usual, but payment and EXIT will be via the sacristy door. Payment will be by cash or cheque (made payable to OLOR or Our Lady of Ransom). Please remember to COVER YOUR FACE, SANITISE YOUR HANDS AND KEEP YOUR DISTANCE. Chairs are positioned around the tables to enable distancing and the number of people allowed in the room at any one time may be limited to ensure safety. Thank you in advance for your understanding in these difficult circumstances.

If there is no-one there to help you, please leave payment in the Church wall box marked Repository (by the front door).

All the Christmas Repository items that are for sale are also available to view online on the “Ransomers Recipes and Christmas Love” Facebook page with details of how to purchase.

CAFOD World Gifts

World Gifts, CAFOD's range of virtual gifts, make a real difference to families living in poverty across the world. While we have the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown here, we can still be good neighbours to our sisters and brothers overseas by giving World Gifts as Christmas presents to family and friends. The Keep Clean Kit gift for £6 and the Vegetable Garden gift for £10 are just two gifts that will help vulnerable families affected by the pandemic to protect and feed themselves. Let's spread joy and hope around the world this Christmas.

Visit cafod.org.uk/worldgifts.



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.

SEA SUNDAY

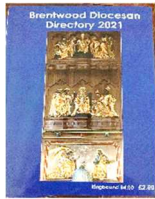
Next week is Sea Sunday, when the Church prays for all those who live and work at sea.

For an appeal from Bishop Paul Mason, and a video showing some of what Stella Maris does, please visit www.Stellamaris.org.uk/SeaSunday

Sea Sunday has been moved from July because of the pandemic and Stella Maris is particularly asking for donations by text or online. To donate and for more information, please visit: www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate or text “SEA” to 70460 to donate £5. Stella Maris is dependent on voluntary donations, so please give generously. Thankyou.

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



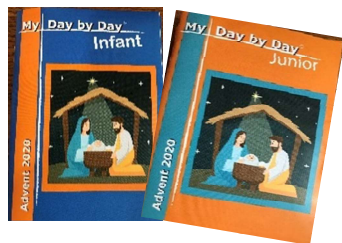
MY DAY BY DAY

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



LIVING FAITH (Oct – Dec)

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



INFANT & JUNIOR ADVENT DAY BY DAY BOOKLETS

also available – Donations 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.

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.***

For Gift Aid enquiries the email address is olorgiftaid@hotmail.com
and the phone number is 01268 772998

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.

GIFT AID ENVELOPES ARE NOW AVAILABLE

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

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

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!

[essex.police.uk/
befraudsmart](http://essex.police.uk/befraudsmart)



Essex Police Fraud Alert System

18

4th December 2020

RESIDENTS WARNED OF FAKE BT CALLS

Residents are warned to be alert to a spate of calls claiming to be BT outreach that result in a computer takeover by the criminals.

Essex Police is aware of reports by residents that have received a call claiming to be from BT and stating that there is either an issue with the broadband in the area, or that the residents internet access is due to be cut off unless they follow the callers instructions.

The criminals use this cover in order to request that the resident downloads a program that will allow them access to the computer—this will allow them to remotely control the computer, meaning they are able to change passwords and view banking information.

When dealing with companies over the phone remember to Take Five:

- **Stop** - Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **Challenge** - Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you
- **Protect** - Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud



If you want to check whether the call is genuine, remember to call back after five minutes or, if possible, on a different phone. **Always** use a trusted number, and not a number provided by the caller. A number of reports have stated that the caller has provided another fake number designed to continue the scam.



If you believe criminals have accessed your computer, take it to a trusted computer expert and explain the situation.

Then report to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk



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 or call 0300 123 2040

Keep up to date with fraud and
do **even more** Online at essex.police.uk



PEACE & JOY
at

CHRISTMAS



KEEP CHRIST IN
CHRISTMAS

© Knights of St. Columba, Province 21. 1 Albert Street, Burnley, BB11 3BY

READINGS AT MASS – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First reading – Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11

He has sent me to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. 'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels. 'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.'

Psalm Luke 1: 46-50. 53-54

My soul rejoices in my God.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord,
My spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
 2. The Almighty works marvels for me
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him. *(R.)*
 3. He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy. *(R.)*
-



Second reading - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

May you all be kept safe for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil. May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Alleluia, alleluia!

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor.

Alleluia!

Gospel - John 1:6-8,19-28

'There stands among you the one coming after me'

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.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

