

Parish Newsletter

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

24/25th December 2023 Advent 4B and Christmas



A BIG and WARM welcome with open arms to all our guests, visitors and regular parishioners to our Christmas Masses. Please feel welcomed.

It's Christmas! As if we need reminding! But how will it be different for us this year? Will this Christmas affect us deeply in a new way? Or will it be just another Christmas - business as usual? Materialistic? Arguments? Hangovers? Or do we listen to the deeper movements of our souls? This is the stuff of prayer. Mary listens to her soul, the deeper resonances going on inside her heart, and yet had no-one in authority to talk to, to check the validity of her intuitions. She simply trusted her deeper intuitions. The Angel Gabriel will have spoken to Mary's soul. Trusting in his dreams suggests Joseph was listening to his own deeper intuitions too. His soul. No rationale, no logic explains all this – only faith.

Mary listening to her own soul, her interior life must have been extraordinary. A faith which strengthens her against scandal, gossip and potential punishment through torture because she is made pregnant by "another". All her marriage preparations scuppered. Mary's faith wins through. Do we have faith that wins us through our struggles? And what about the baby in the manger?

We gaze upon this baby. Does our faith tell us it's all true? Or do we have big brains, are we super-smart, brilliant intellects, purely logical minds all of which like to intellectualise on it all and dismiss its beautiful, simple and inherent truth? That God enters into powerlessness as a defenceless baby, and dies on a cross, naked, broken, bleeding and powerless 33 years later.

In his life, He teaches us how to be human. I hope you are someone of real, authentic faith who can appreciate the truth in Christmas. God entering our humanity, our powerlessness, experiencing all we experience (except sin), as a child, as a man, to drive it home how wonderful it is to be human – even if sometimes we don't feel that way. Our humanity is sacred. The Incarnation says exactly that.

But we need authentic faith. Not just a notional belief. An authentic faith which can allow us to do some amazing things, and triumph, just as Mary and Joseph did, such that we can even amaze ourselves. Will we allow that possibility?

May I wish you all every blessing for a very happy and peaceful Christmas, and all peace and good for the New Year.

Christmas. 1st Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

Christmas. Psalm: 97:1-6

Christmas. 2nd Reading Hebrews 1:1-6

Christmas Gospel: John 1:1-18



MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday 23rd December	
5.30pm Mass	Dec'd Family/Friends of the Cook and Mead Families RIP
Sunday 24th December	
4th Sunday of Advent B	
	8.00am Mass Parish Community
	10.00 am Mass Hilary Barry RIP – Mary Hennessey
6.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass	Emma Louise Lucibello RIP – Susan and Damian
11.30pm Carols	
12.00am Midnight Mass	Parish Community
Monday 25th December	
The Nativity of Our Lord	
8.00am Mass	Jerry Flemming RIP – Rita Gurney
10.00am Mass	Hilary Barry RIP – The Curnock Family
Tuesday 26th December	
St. Stephen (First Martyr) (Boxing Day)	
<u>11.00am Mass</u>	Gloria Ray RIP (A) – The Ray Family
Wednesday 27th December	
St. John, Apostle	
10.00am Mass	Mel and Heather Francke RIP – The Francke Family
Thursday 28th December	
The Holy Innocents	
9.30am Mass	Hilary Barry RIP – Legion of Mary
Friday 29th December	
St. Thomas of Canterbury (Patron of Pastoral Clergy)	
9.30am Mass	Sarah English RIP – Joan Gardiner
Saturday 30th December	
5.30pm Mass	Dec'd members of the Schiavi Family RIP
Sunday 31st December	
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	
8.00am Mass	Parish Community
10.00am Mass	Marie Murphy RIP (A) – The Murphy Family

All Church Services are now Live Streamed. To take part please go to
<https://stream.seccomgroup.com/channel/olor>

Masses can be watched "live" or later as a recording

<p>PARISH PRIEST Father Paul Fox 50 London Hill, Rayleigh Essex SS6 7HP 01268 38.24.99 www.olorchurch.org email: rayleigh@brcdt.org</p>	<p><u>Public Mass times:</u> Saturdays 5.30pm Sundays 8am & 10.00am Mondays & Tuesdays 9.30am Wednesdays 10.00am Thursdays & Fridays 9.30am</p>
---	--

Please be aware - Times and days of weekday Masses are subject to change.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation: 4.30pm – 5pm Saturday evenings (not in the confessional box)

Our Parish is part of The Brentwood Diocesan Trust, Registered Charity Number 2340



ANNIVERSARIES Kindly pray for Frances Hidveghy, Gloria Ray, James Pamplin, John Enever and Mary Davison whose anniversaries are at this time. **May they rest in Peace.**

† Please keep in your prayers Mrs. Pauline Burgess who sadly died last Sunday evening. Please also keep Barry, Yvonne and all the family in prayer. May Pauline rest in peace. †

† Please also keep in your prayer Mr. Keith Miller who sadly died recently. Keith's funeral will be at Our Lady's on January 2nd at 1.30pm. Please also keep Kathy and his family in prayer as well. May Kieth rest in peace. †

Sacrament of Confirmation.

If you are aged 14 years or above before Easter Sunday 31st March 2024 and would like to be confirmed at Pentecost Sunday 19 May 2024, you will need to attend the Confirmation programme which will commence on Wednesday February 7th. Also, please write a letter to Fr. Paul explaining why you wish to be confirmed and he will contact you nearer the time with further details of the programme. Thank you.

NEWSLETTER ITEMS: Please ensure all items for the parish newsletter are submitted to the parish office by **11am on Thursdays** at the latest.

Christmas Carols. Please note there are Christmas Carols beginning at **11.30pm on Christmas Eve** before the Midnight Mass

Christmas Flowers. In memory of Mervyn and Teresa Ryder; Pat and Tom Herlihy, Walenty Krolkowski, Barbara and Ken Dewar, Emma Louise Lucibello, Dan Abel and John Warren and all those who have contributed anonymous donations.

Special Collection Gift Aid Envelopes:

For those making their regular donation online/by bank transfer, and would like the Gift Aid envelopes for special collections only, they will be available to collect from the church porch.

Sunday Coffee Morning

If you are interested in hosting a Coffee Morning after 10am Sunday Masses to raise money for a charity of your choice, please contact the parish office.



Kids" Bulletin A children's version of the gospel is available weekly. This can be accessed on the following website: www.thekidsbulletin.com and is aimed at primary school children. It can be downloaded and printed out.



OLOR Lourdes Pilgrimage 2024 – Monday 10th to Friday 14th June 2024

Bookings are now being accepted for next year's Lourdes pilgrimage. Flights will be from Stansted Airport using Ryanair scheduled services. Accommodation will be provided by Hotel Stella on a full-board basis for 4 nights. The cost is £560 per person, based on 2 or more sharing a room. A single room supplement of £120 applies. Due to Ryanair's flight booking policy the cost shown is subject to change. Recommended optional insurance cover can be arranged through the operators, Tangney Tours, at a cost of £41 per person.

Those still considering joining the pilgrimage or would like to know more, please contact Colin Griffin, Tel. 01268 772322, Mob. 07841 013606 or email colingriffin@outlook.com.


Children's Liturgy.

We would like to invite any adults who may have thought of getting involved in Children's Liturgy – either as assistant or leader – to have a chat with any of the team. You may like to come along and see what we do. To continue running 2 groups weekly, which is so beneficial for our lovely parish children and families, we do need a few more people to fill some slots on our rota. Perhaps you may be able to help us out one session a month?

Please think about itthank you.

REPOSITORY.



Christmas stock is on display. If you have any particular requests please let us know in good time for an order to be placed. There is a catalogue from which you are welcome to choose - however supply will depend on remaining stock availability the closer we get to Christmas. As always we shall do our best to help. 

The SVP are looking for volunteers willing to help children put their faith into action. Could this be you? *The St Vincent de Paul Society have primary school groups called Mini Vinnies, and volunteers would support teachers or youth leaders wishing to start a group in their school or parish. They will talk to children about how they can make a difference to those living in poverty and share resources to support the group. The role is flexible but does need people with some availability during school hours (at least 2 mornings or afternoons per month) who are willing to travel within the diocese (all costs are covered). If you are passionate about helping children discover how they can make a difference in their communities, please email Sarah for more information on youngvincentians@svp.org.uk. You do not have to have previous experience of working with children as all training will be given. Our next initial training day is on Tuesday 27th February 2024.*

Bishop's Certificate in Catechesis and Youth Ministry is an online course is designed to be an entry level qualification to help in the ongoing formation of adults involved in sacramental preparation (First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation) or youth ministry in the Diocese of Brentwood. It includes both the development of practical skills & the deepening of theological knowledge. For more information or to register your interest please email clairebailey@brcdt.org or see the website <https://bcys.net/bishops-cert/>

Interested in subscribing to the Catholic Universe Newspaper? Contact -

Michelle Jones

Subscriptions Manager

email: michelle.jones@universecatholicweekly.co.uk

Tel: 07436 617650

From The SVP , Rayleigh

The Members of the SVP would like to thank everyone who has supported the SVP throughout the year.

You have enabled us to support so many individuals and single parent families with Financial and Practical Support and it has made such a difference to their lives.

I would ask you to keep the SVP in your Prayers so we can continue to carry on our work of supporting those in need.

We would finally like to wish you all a Blessed and Holy Christmas and a Healthy and Happy 2024.

Pat Rickard, President SVP Conference Rayleigh. 01702 206842 or Mobile 07831 558242.

A Message from HARP: Our sincere thanks on behalf of HARP this year particularly over Harvest where we collected thousands of items to feed people living in our in our services. This included over 1000 tins of baked beans and 1500 cans of soup. This amazing support means we saved significantly on our 'food shop' and allows us to direct funds raised into providing the vital support that people need to overcome homelessness for good.

As we approach the cold months ahead we wanted to let you know that HARP is opening a winter shelter for people who are currently rough sleeping.

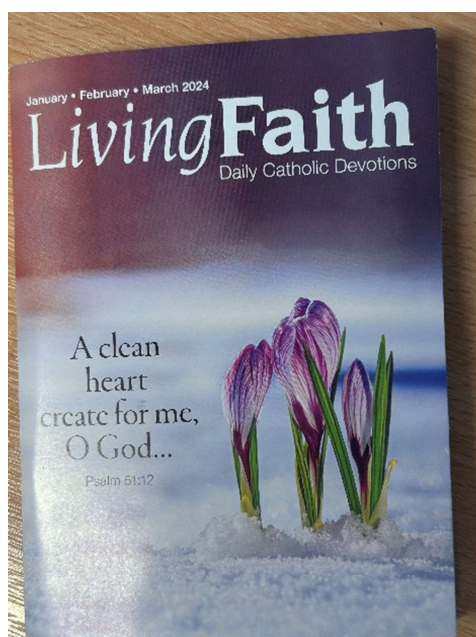
The shelter will be managed by HARP staff and volunteers and will open from 7pm every evening and close at 8.30am with people using the shelter then being encouraged to visit HARP's Bradbury Centre during the day for breakfasts, hot showers and to access other services as normal. We are working in partnership with the council on this initiative.

How can you get involved?

- We are in need of a range of items including gifts to give visitors over Christmas, but critically we need pillows, duvets, single sheets and winter clothes (medium sizes). Items can be second hand but must be clean and ready to use.
- Donate money – if you are holding a collection over Christmas we would welcome any donations so that we are able to continue to support people after the shelter has closed. To donate to our winter appeal click here – www.harpsouthend.org.uk.
- Volunteers – If anyone in your church is willing to volunteer we need people between 7 pm and midnight (or 11 pm) every night. [Click here](#) to find out more about what is involved.
- Spread the word, we could not do what we do without your support

Thank you once again for your ongoing support and any support you are able to give to this vital service this winter. Do please get in touch if you have a sizeable donation as I can arrange for a collection.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy new year



Donations welcome.

Sahara Desert Retreat in Morocco, 26 February – 11 March 2024

Including a day visiting Marrakesh and 9 full days in the Desert. With Fr Arnaud and Deacon Vladimir from St Antony's in Forest Gate. Designed for young adults, open to all adults able to hike 4 - 6 hours a day for 9 full days in the desert. £952 (plus flight). www.desert-retreat.com or phone Catherine at 07807 348223

Is God calling you to be a Priest?

There is a monthly vocations group to help those who would like to find out more about a possible vocation to the priesthood.

There will be a talk, a time of prayer and some food.

The sessions take place at Brentwood Cathedral of St Mary & St Helen,
Ingrave Road, Brentwood, CM15 8AT



Tuesday 6th Feb

Tuesday 5th Mar

Tuesday 9th Apr

Tuesday 7th May

Tuesday 4th June

If you would like to join us or to find out more please get in touch with the Vocations Promoter, Fr Mark Swires:
vocprom@dioceseofbrentwood.org

www.brentwoodvocations.org

Brentwood Youth: Walsingham House

Walsingham House volunteer team: applications for the Walsingham House at Abbotswick volunteer retreat team are now open. If you are aged between 18-23 and are considering a gap year then please consider the Walsingham House Team. The volunteer team work with around 5000 young people from across the diocese running retreats for Yr5-Yr13 students. For more information please see our website:

<https://bcys.net/whabbotswick/be-on-team/> or email clairebailey@brcdt.org

Walsingham House available for day groups: Walsingham House at Abbotswick is a beautiful setting for days of reflection, retreats or meetings. They are open to accept bookings for day groups on Wednesdays – Saturdays. For more information or to make a booking please email the Hospitality Manager, Issy, at issycordova@brcdt.org

40yrs of Walsingham House Teams: 2024 marks 40 years of retreat teams at Walsingham House. There will be a celebration Mass with Bishop Alan on Saturday 31st August 2024 at Walsingham House at Abbotswick. Please save the date as it would be

wonderful to see Walsingham House and BCYS alumni and friends gather together to mark this milestone. More information to follow in the new year.

BCYS YOUTH MASS

- YOUTH MASS takes place on the first Thursday of **every** month at Brentwood Cathedral, beginning with pizza & refreshments in the Parish Hall from 6pm, an hour of input, workshops, youth led prayer and formation from different organisations each month, and Youth Mass celebrated in the Cathedral at 7:30pm. Absolutely everyone is welcome, please bring instruments, and sing, serve or read if you wish! No need to book
-
- **BCYS SUMMER LOURDES YOUTH PILGRIMAGE – July 2024 (exact dates TBC)**
 - **Bookings are now open online for the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service pilgrimage to Lourdes in July.**

The week is spent serving the main Diocesan pilgrimage, assisting the elderly and infirm, alongside times of retreat, reconciliation, visiting the baths, taking part in the beautiful Processions, an afternoon in the mountains, party and social nights - all with other young Catholics from around our Diocese.

The pilgrimage is open to all those in school year 10 – 13, with all those of school leaver age (18+) invited to join us as young leaders (subject to attending a training weekend). All details and applications can be found on the website www.bcys.net/events/sl

Choral Director – Diocese of Brentwood Schools Singing Programme

The Diocese of Brentwood seeks to appoint an outstanding Choral Director to assist the Director of Music in the establishment and delivery of the Diocese of Brentwood Schools Singing Programme, and to continue the development of Sacred Music in the parishes of the Diocese, including the Cathedral. To deliver choral provision primarily in schools.

How to apply

For an informal discussion about the post, please contact Andrew Wright, Director of Music: music@brcdt.org

To apply for this post, applicants are asked to download and complete the Recruitment-Application-Form-March-2022 from <https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/diocese/working-for-us> and send a supporting statement of no more than two A4 pages (font size 11 minimum) which outlines:

- Why you are a suitable candidate for the post;
- Which aspects of the job description particularly attract you to the post;

These documents should be returned by email to hr@brcdt.org For more information please read: NSSP Choral Director Application Pack (002)



Retrouvaille: A Programme for Couples Struggling in their Marriages

Help Your Marriage – Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue ... or have you just stopped talking to each other? Does talking about it only make it worse? Retrouvaille is a programme to support couples who have difficulties in their marriage. It brings a positive focus, new hope and helps nourish and grow your marriage. Tens of thousands of couples headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending and using the tools provided. The programme helps spouses uncover or re-awaken the love, trust and commitment that originally brought them together. It helps them through difficult times whether they are disillusioned or in deep misery. There is no group therapy or group work. For confidential information about 'Retrouvaille' or to register for the next programme commencing with a Virtual weekend on 8 - 11 February 2024 or a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024, call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443 or email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

Retrouvaille – Do you need in your marriage? Retrouvaille has helped many couples find new hope, nourishment and growth in their marriages. If you want to uncover or reawaken the love, trust and commitment that brought you together and work through difficult times in your marriage contact Retrouvaille confidential for more information about our 2024 programmes. There is no group therapy or group work. Our next programme commences with a Virtual weekend on 8 - 11 February 2024 or there is a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024. Call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443, email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk