

Parish Newsletter

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

7th January 2024 The Epiphany of Our Lord



Many claim to believe in God. But what kind of God? Is their belief simply a notional, intellectual assent in an all-powerful being that created the cosmos. And maybe that's it? Of course - others may claim the whole of creation is a freak of nature. We have to be careful about how we believe.

It seems that many believers are simply 'theists'. They believe that God created everything, then lets us get on with it. He gave us enough skills to be getting on with, so he shouldn't need to intervene.

They do not believe that God reveals himself (which he does so powerfully in people like prophets, countless others, and uniquely in Jesus) for they say it's unfair that he reveals himself to some and not others. In fact, God tries to self-communicate with everyone – it's us who put up the barriers.

The whole point of our celebrations is that God has fully communicated himself in a unique way – in Jesus of Nazareth. And goes on creating and self-communicating. And we are called to respond in kind. To communicate and co-create with Him and follow the ways of Jesus of Nazareth. Or what is the point of Him becoming human in Jesus? We are called to follow Jesus' interior attitudes.

So we are called to respond to this God in kind. But how? By going to church ? Maybe. By praying? Possibly. By helping each other more? Surely. What about the Wise Men, using natural phenomena – astronomical signs? Was that wrong? Of course not. They literally went out of their way to respond. The shepherds had the 'super' natural phenomena of angels. St. Francis of Assisi used mother-nature, the animals and the created world. Clearly, God does not mind how, so long as we do respond.

So God desires a response. He has communicated of himself for our benefit. Uniquely at Christmas, but he goes on communicating and creating – especially in his overwhelming love and mercy.

So it's not what we believe, but HOW we believe. The Wise men were possibly kings, pagans, magicians, sorcerers. Today we might call them 'new agers' They used their own talents to respond, using what was at their disposal. What about us?



1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm: 71:1-2, 7-8, 10-13

2nd Reading Ephesians 3: 2-3, 5-6

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12



MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday 6th January

5.30pm Mass

Tom Herlihy RIP (A) – Eithne and Una

Sunday 7st December

The Epiphany of Our Lord

8.00am Mass

Jacqueline Hartnett Rip (A) – Kevin Hartnett

10.00am Mass

Parish Community

Monday 8th January 2024

The Baptism of Our Lord

8.00am Mass

Hilary Barry RIP – Eithne and Una

Tuesday 9th January

Blessed Pauline Jaricot – Co-founder of Missio

9.30am

Eucharistic Service

Wednesday 10th January

10.00am

Eucharistic Service

Thursday 11th January

9.30am

Eucharistic Service

Friday 12th January

9.30am

Eucharistic Service

Saturday 13th January

5.30pm Mass

Dec'd members of the McGrath Family– Helen Cooper

Sunday 14th January

2nd Sunday of the Year (Peace Sunday)

8.00am Mass

Parish Community

10.00am Mass

Kevin and Deidre (Ints) – Mary Rickards

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

PARISH PRIEST

Father Paul Fox
50 London Hill, Rayleigh
Essex SS6 7HP
01268 38.24.99

www.olorchurch.org
email: rayleigh@brcdt.org

Public Mass times:

Saturdays 5.30pm
Sundays 8am & 10.00am
Mondays & Tuesdays 9.30am
Wednesdays 10.00am
Thursdays & Fridays 9.30am

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 Tony Rimmer, Cassie Thompson, Patrick Flaherty, Michael Mitchell, Shelagh Duroure, Mafalda Golledge and Annie Gray whose anniversaries are at this time. **May they rest in Peace.**

✚ Please keep in your prayers Mrs. Pauline Burgess who sadly died recently. Pauline's Requiem Mass will be here at Our Lady's on February 8th at 1.15pm. May Pauline rest in Peace. ✚

✚ Please also keep in your prayers Mr. David Gooch who sadly died last Saturday. David's funeral will be on February 15th at 11.30am here at Our Lady's. Please also keep Catherine and all the family in your prayers. May David rest in Peace. ✚

This Sunday 7th at the 10am Mass we will have the Rite of Welcome for those on the RCIA programme as they prepare to be received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church this Easter. Please keep them in your prayers.

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 Flowers. In memory of Mervyn and Teresa Ryder; Pat and Tom Herlihy, Walenty Krolkowski, Barbara and Ken Dewar, Emma Louise Lucibello, Dan Abel, John Warren, Alfred Porwol, 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.

Wednesday Coffee Mornings this Wednesday January 10th after the 10.00am Eucharistic Service.

Sunday Coffee Morning

Next Sunday 14th January after the 10am Mass will be run by the Knights of St. Columba.



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.

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@syp.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.

Missio Contributions. Just a note to say that I have this morning banked **£89.39** into the Missio account.

These contributions were received after the final report was signed off by Fr Paul and submitted to Missio 1st week in December.

Nevertheless, a significant and a very good start to 2024.

Thank you. Angela and I wish you and your family a very Happy New Year.

God Bless, Jovito

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

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

A FIRE IN MY HEART - A CONVERSATION WITH BIBLICAL FRIENDS: On Saturday 3rd February from 11 am until 2 pm (coffee at 10.30 am), at the church of Christ the Eternal High Priest in Gidea Park (RM2 6DH), Fr Adrian Graffy, parish priest and member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, will be in conversation with professor Nuria Calduch-Benages, secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, and Carlos Castillo Mattasoglio, archbishop of Lima, Peru. The event coordinator is Fr Javier Ruiz-Ortiz, vice-rector of Allen Hall. The speakers will be present in-person, but this free event is also live-streamed on www.whatgoodnews.org If attending in person please book your place at gideapark@brcdt.org The event is under the auspices of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain.

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

Good Counsel Network.

“On Friday 12th January, the eve of the 27th anniversary of the founding of The Good Counsel Network, please pray and fast for the end of abortion in this Country.

Through God’s grace we have seen thousands of Mothers in our counselling centre continue their pregnancies in very difficult circumstances. Please help us to help save lives with your prayers, fasting and support. www.GoodCounselNetwork.com”

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 issyording@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
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- **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



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

**PASTORAL LETTER from Bishop Alan
for the Solemnity of the Epiphany 2024**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On this Feast of the Epiphany we celebrate the revelation in Christ of God's eternal plan of salvation for everyone and we, like St Paul, are called to make the Light of all Peoples known to others. How we do that changes in every era.

Five years ago, in Advent 2018, we published the **Diocesan Vision: Shaping Our Future**. It remains prominently on our website and we owe it to all those who took part in the Stewards of the Gospel process to see that vision come to fulfilment.

Shaping Our Future is a discerned response to God's love for us. It came out of a process where clergy, religious and lay people came together to pray, think, discuss and reflect about how best to evangelise our diocese in the future.

My prayers and continued discernment have served to reinforce my commitment to implement the Vision Document: Shaping Our Future. I recognise that in the years spent in the grip of the pandemic, followed by difficult times in a cost-of-living crisis, parishioners and clergy have all borne a heavy burden.

In that context, I have given much consideration as to how far and how fast to push the implementation of Shaping Our Future and up to now I have taken a light touch in deference to the toll recent times have had on everyone.

In 2024, I am changing that light touch to a more urgent exhortation to implement the Vision. I want everyone: clergy, religious and lay people to help me to move forward with this.

During the latter part of 2023, I held several meetings with different groups of people and I was reminded that radical decisions need to be made now. As Pope Francis has said: *"we are not living in an era of change but a change of era"*.

Since publication of Shaping Our Future, the Vatican published a 2020 document entitled: *"The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish in the Service of the Evangelising Mission of the Church"*. It reflected many of our own conclusions about the very real and present need to change the way we do things.

I am also minded that since the publication of that document the Universal Church, under the guidance of the Holy Father, has embarked on a Synodal Journey emphasising the need for change and the need for co-responsibility between clergy and lay people. This echoes much of what is in Shaping Our Future when it stressed the importance

of us all working together to evangelise. I want to go further than I have done thus far by echoing the words from the Vatican document-
“The current canonical norms leave it to the diocesan Bishop to decide on the establishment of a Pastoral Council in Parishes, but in any case, they may ordinarily be considered as highly recommended... . Pope Francis [also reminds us that] the purpose of such a Council ‘should not be ecclesiastical organisation but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone’”.

The same document also reminds us that pastoral councils can be used flexibly within parish partnerships, “It is possible... to establish a single Pastoral Council for several parishes”.

All of us should long for the *“missionary aspiration of reaching everyone”*- How we organise ourselves and how we convey the Good News of Jesus Christ in East London and Essex must meet the challenges of the new era. I ask you all to rise to that challenge with me during 2024 and beyond.

I remain extremely grateful to all who contributed to the Vision Document: Shaping Our Future and bringing us to this moment in the history of the Diocese. We live in a rapidly changing world - since the Vision document was published some clergy and Stewards of the Gospel have moved parishes, retired or died; numbers attending Mass and many other circumstances have changed post pandemic.

So I am now asking that in your parish partnership, you build on whatever work was done before the pandemic and adapt that work to the context of current circumstances which have undoubtedly made the implementation more urgent.

I ask everyone to share in the recognition that change is necessary; and “we have always done it like that”, is not a reason for continuing to do things that way. In the words of Cardinal Newman “To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.”

In the next days I will be writing to your Parish Priest asking him to join me in this endeavour and I will provide instructions and guidance on how he should work with you to that end. As your bishop I commend the Vision Document: Shaping Our Future to you and ask you to implement it in your parish and parish partnership, working together to face the challenges of our changing world.

In today’s first reading St Paul says that “This mystery ... was unknown to... past generations.” Let us not let Christ, the Light of all Nations, remain unknown in this one!

Yours in Christ and Mary,

+Alan Williams, sm,

Bishop of Brentwood