

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

14th September 2025 The Exultation of the Holy Cross Psalter Week 3



A typhoid inoculation before going abroad. A few days later I was unwell and told that I was having a small dose of typhoid as homeopathic medicine. The injection gave me just enough of the disease to experience it, so develop bodily resistance to it, and healing will happen should typhoid occur in a bigger way while abroad. Have you ever been through this? Maybe other inoculations do the same. What about a fear-of-snake inoculation!!

Do you like snakes? Poisonous ones...urgh! Visceral fear. God tells Moses in the first reading to put a bronze snake (serpent) on a standard, so all who look on it may be cured. A bronze snake, representing those awful biting poisonous reptiles that are killing people- we cringe and squirm - yet this would be the very thing that would heal them. Amazing. In other words, gazing upon the very thing that is the problem, or the wound, the pain and suffering, becomes our transformational healing experience. Pure homeopathy. "No pain, no gain" is, possibly, a slightly less mature more superficial way to appreciate this.

To experience salvation, in many ways, is to have been led into a darkness we want to overcome. To unlock the problems from within. The answers to our problems are possibly already there, until we gaze into this darkness, we will never find the resolutions and unlock things from the inside. We remain bitter...

Gazing at the cross. Jesus, the stand-in for all our sins, stupidities and darkness - such an incredible form of prayer. It softens our hearts towards God, each other, and ourselves – especially those who suffer – which is everyone. No-one is immune to suffering. Prayerfully gazing at it, NOT some superstitious wearing of it or using it as a good-luck charm.

As we gaze upon the cross, we look, we weep, we grieve, we mourn. From there true transformation and healing will happen. This is arguably a form of homeopathy mentioned above.

Some may call it "grief work", moving into the mystery that pain is – never denying the pain, never avoiding the pain, but gazing at it, into it, the cross, which is our own pain, our sin, our darkness. Then, after a while, we are lifted-up.

This is the Exultation of the Cross. It is said that transformation at deeper levels happens through the cross, not through concepts or ideas. In other words, not in the head. The cross. It is Christianity's unique revelation – you couldn't make it up. The entire biblical tradition and any authentic prayer journey lead us to this singular conclusion. No matter who we are, we can all be used as instruments of healing and transformation. The essential and paradoxical mystery of the Cross is Christianity's unique revelation. Are we prepared for that kind of prayer journey?

Jesus becomes the cursed one, to free us from cursing others; he became the lie (sin) so we stop believing in the lie and believing in ridiculous sinful ways; he became the victim so we would stop creating victims. This comes from a true and prayerful gazing at the cross. He makes the truth so overwhelmingly obvious from the cross. Now we see how wrong so many of us, as well as so many people are about who's right or wrong, about sin and judgement, about who's in and out, who's up or down.

So, we exult in the Cross. The homeopathic medicine of the Cross. No rational, logical mind could ever come to this of itself, that is why it is Revelation, it is given from outside human history. It needs faith. Do we gaze at the cross as prayer? What effect does it have on us?

1st Reading: Numbers 21: 4b-9

Psalms: 78: 1-2. 34-35. 36-37. 38

2nd Reading: Philippians 2: 6-11

Gospel: John 3: 13-17



| MASS INTENTIONS | |
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| Saturday 13th September | St. John Chrysostom |
| 5.30pm Mass | Parish Community |
| Sunday 14th September | The Exultation of the Holy Cross |
| 8.00am Mass | Prayer Board Intentions |
| 10.00am Mass | John Brosnan RIP – Sharon Brosnan |
| Monday 15th September | Our Lady of Sorrows |
| 9.30am Mass | Holy Souls RIP |
| Tuesday 16th September | SS. Cornelius and Cyprian |
| 9.30am Mass | Pat Wood RIP – Norah Parker |
| Wednesday 17th September | |
| 10.00am Mass | Mary and Trevor Rickards (Ints) – SVP Conference, Rayleigh |
| Thursday 18th September | |
| 9.30am Mass | Cecilia Macaulay (Ints) |
| Friday 19th September | |
| 9.30am Mass | Fr. John Lane RIP |
| Saturday 20th September | SS. Andrew Kim Tae-Gon, Paul Chong Has-ang and Companions |
| 5.30pm Mass | John Amey RIP (Anniversary) – Maria Amey |
| Sunday 21st September | 25th Sunday of the Year (Evangelii Gaudium Sunday) |
| 8.00am Mass | Parish Community |
| 10.00am Mass | James Rickards and Family (Ints) – Colin and Marie Griffin |

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

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| <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> |
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The Sacrament of Reconciliation: 4.30pm – 5pm Saturday evenings (not in the confessional box) *Please be aware - Times and days of weekday Masses are subject to change.*
Our Parish is part of The Brentwood Diocesan Trust, Registered Charity Number 234092



ANNIVERSARIES Kindly pray for all those whose anniversaries are at this time.
Especially Daniel Scott and Monica Stokes.

May they rest in Peace.

† Please remember Kathleen Smart in your prayers. Kathleen, who used to be a member of our Parish, died recently. Kathleen's Requiem Mass will be on September 29th at 11.30am. May she rest in peace. †

† Please also remember in your prayer Steve Howlland who died recently. We also keep in prayer his wife, Samantha, and his young children Caiden and Elody. Steve's Requiem Mass will be on October 2nd at 12 noon. May he rest in peace. †

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

A copy of the newsletter is placed on the noticeboard for quick reference. Please leave it attached to the noticeboard for others to see. Thank you.

Holy Communion, when receiving, please consume the Sacred Host IMMEDIATELY. The Sacred Host should be consumed before receiving the Sacred Blood from the Chalice, if you do not receive from the Chalice, then consume the Sacred Host straight away in front of the Altar. Thank you.

Church Car Park: anyone who wishes to leave their car in the church car park overnight, or especially over several nights, **must check with the Parish Office first.** This is for reasons such as funeral guests having priority parking during funerals, other celebrations occurring requiring parking. Thank you.

Printed Parish Newsletters – Reminder: printed newsletters are left outside the Presbytery for those who have **NO ACCESS** to electronic newsletters. In good conscience, please honour this request. Thank you.

Please note that the live streaming of services is now back in action.

SCAMS: Please be aware that scams are happening. Scammers tend to tell you that they have been watching or tracking your bank account usage /internet usage/driving, over a period of time, and there is a problem or an issue. Of course, it's a total lie. It really is. They can scare you in pretending to be your bank, the police, DVLC, solicitors, parcel deliveries – all sorts. Also, in telling you they have been watching you, which is quite unsettling in itself, they will try and push and pressurize you into agreeing to their terms/fake fines. They also catch people on the total unawares. Their phone numbers of course are often cloned, “unknown” or “anonymous”, ie. you can't ring them back. Please remember they are very sophisticated in their knowledge and ability to try and win you over. You tend to know when you have beaten them as they hang up quickly. Sometimes it helps if YOU ask THEM where THEY are based, and you will call them back (or call in to see THEM). Sorry if all this disturbs in any way, but there is little way of softening this harsh reality. This is as it is. Please be as alert as you can. These people seem to have little conscience, and it is all utterly evil. Again, please be careful. Thank you.

RCIA. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult. A programme where all are welcome to come along and learn more about what it means to be a Catholic Christian. We start on Monday 22nd September 2025 at 8pm in the Bethany Room.

Perhaps you are completely new to Christianity, or maybe you left the Church as a younger person and now want to return to the Catholic faith. Alternatively, you may just want to informally ask questions to deepen your understanding.

Whatever your circumstances, you are welcome to come along and learn more about what it means to be a Catholic Christian.

Please come along to find out more. You do not have to make any commitments at this point. However, if you are not part of the Catholic tradition, and you decide during the programme you would like to commit yourself to the Catholic faith, you may be received into the Catholic Church at Easter in April 2026.

Wheelchairs and Strollers: Do you have any unwanted or no longer needed? Until recently we had a supply for people to take and use as needed. They are now all taken. If you have any that you are happy to donate, please let us know by calling the Parish Office. Thank you.

Our Lady Help of Christians and St Helen

Our parish will be making our annual pilgrimage to Lourdes Wednesday 15 October 2025 - Saturday 18th October 2025 inclusive staying at the Hotel Grande Moderne, closest to the Sanctuaries. Full board basis. Flying from Stanstead direct to Lourdes (Tarbes). Luxury coach transfers included in France. We have a few spaces available and any of your parishioners would be made very welcome. The price is £650 pp based on two sharing a double room. Excludes travel insurance. Any information please contact me on 07979746707 Sue Baillie

Wednesday Coffee Morning

The next Coffee Morning will be on Wednesday, September 17th after the 10.00am Mass.

If you wish to help about once each month, we very much need you, so come along come along and make yourself known. We'd love to see you.

If you are interested in running a coffee morning after Sunday : Mass, for a Charity of your choice, please inform the staff in the presbytery office. Thank you.



Children's Liturgy

Children's Liturgy resumes Sunday 14th September, at 10am mass, for children aged 3 years old to school year 6) There are 2 groups - preschool to school year 2, and school years 3-6).

Parents are welcome to settle the youngest children coming for the first few times, aiming towards them coming independently.

Children do not need to bring anything to the session- any materials needed will be provided. (If your child has special needs, please make leaders aware beforehand - we welcome everyone!)

Schoolchildren's education is being affected because parents can't afford hygiene products and are too embarrassed to send their children to school. Some children are also experiencing similar embarrassment because they ARE being sent to school but in unwashed uniform.

Please consider donating these items, washing powder/liquid or feminine hygiene items to the Food Bank collection in the porch of our church. Thank you.

.HARP- We are very short of items that we give to people who use our services. Here is the list: Sleeping bags; Hand warmer; Foil blanket, take away cups; Ladies small underwear

Men's boxers small and medium; Leggings; Socks; Deodorants.

If you can help, please do let us know, we are happy to come and collect the items or you can donate to the Bradbury Centre 103-107 York Road, Southend-On-Sea, SS1 2DL.

Thank you for all your support.

Gift Aid

It is important that we have the current address for anyone who has joined the parish Gift Aid scheme. If you have moved since you signed up to Gift Aid, please email your new address to Sandra Cowdrey, our Gift Aid Organizer, at olorgiftaid@hotmail.com

St. Vincent's Centre Southend... is holding an Afternoon Tea at the Roslin Beach Hotel on Monday 8th December at 1.30pm. Tickets are £37.50 and booking is essential. Please email NesperM@svp.org.uk to reserve your place.

Various events are also held to raise funds to help those in need. Afternoon teas, dinners, plus other events. Interested?

Please visit: Nesperm@svp.org.uk **07549128877** or **01702 592980**. Thank you.



Our church choir needs your voice!

COME AND JOIN OUR CHOIR

We hold a choir practice on most Thursdays at 7.30pm for an hour or so.
We sing all the church hits from your Hymn book but also beautiful pieces from Mozart, Bruckner, Bach, Mendelssohn, Esquivel and other beloved composers!
We only sing twice a month, so the commitment is not great and there is a fantastic view from the choir loft.



Just come up to the choir loft after 10am Mass on a Sunday when we are singing

CONTACT: ISOBEL KENNEDY
07795 821705

MARRIAGE HELP - Retrouvaille helps couples find hope and healing for their marriage. Next date: 17th-19th Oct. www.retrouvaille.org.uk Tel: 0788 7296983

Brentwood Catholic Youth Service – Youth Gather, 25th – 26th October

Youth Gather is a weekend of faith, fun and friendship – with speakers, workshops, prayer and outdoor activities, meeting friends old and new, and all while sharing in and celebrating our Catholic faith. There will be coaches offering transport from around the Diocese included in the cost, as well as all meals, cabin accommodation and activities. This event is for year 9 and above. Apply now at www.bcys.net/events

The SVP Conference ,Rayleigh

September Awareness Month

The Month of September is the Awareness Month for the SVP.
The Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul is on Saturday 27th September,
We will celebrate with Mass at 5.30pm.

The SVP will be hosting a Coffee Morning after 10AM
Mass on Sunday 21st September.

Could I please draw your attention to the Food Bank donations Box in the Church entrance. The Food Bank is at present receiving a reduction in donations of surplus foods from Supermarkets and individuals mainly due to the economic climate.

So, if you can contribute in any way, no matter how small, this will help those families who are struggling to make ends meet.

You have always given the SVP great support and I am sure you will continue to do so.

The members of the SVP Rayleigh will be wearing lanyards during the Month of September to make Parishioners aware of them as you may wish to learn more about the SVP work.
Speak to them about any problems or concerns with strictest confidence.

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

Thank you all once again.

Pat Rickard,
President
SVP Conference Rayleigh

What Good News Study Day Vatican II and its Popes Celebrating sixty years of the Council

The vast majority of Catholics are unaware of the story of Vatican II and its importance. This study day considers the contribution of a series of Popes to the work of the Council. A further study day will be given by Dr Peter de Mey on 11th October addressing the topic 'From Vatican II to a Synodal Church'.

Fr Adrian Graffy is parish priest in East London, and a Member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

Saturday 20th September 2025 11 am – 2 pm (10.00-13.00 GMT)

Those interested are invited to attend in person. Tea and coffee will be available in the hall from 10.30. Please bring a packed lunch. Easy access on the Elizabeth Line, five-minute walk to church. Please note that the event will not be live streamed, but will be available after the day free of charge at

www.whatgoodnews.org

**Catholic Church of Christ the Eternal High Priest
410 Brentwood Road Gidea Park RM2 6DH**

Artificial Intelligence and Catholic Social Teaching

AI is a new, exciting, and fast developing tool that is being used in most aspects of society. But are there drawbacks of this new technology that contradict the moral teachings of the Church? Join us on Thursday 9th October 2025 in Sacred Heart Church Hall as we discuss AI through the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching - the positives, the negatives, and what it could mean for the future of humanity. Please contact southend@brcdt.org if you have any questions. Please also see the article at the end of the newsletter from the Bishops' Conference.

Pope John Paul 11 Hall Bookings -

Please contact Paul Roseman on 07470691902 for any Hall Booking requests, thank you.

Maranatha

The next session of Maranatha will be held at the Sion Community, Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, CM15 9BX on Thursday, 18th September. This will be our last session of Maranatha at the Sion Community, however we are looking at ways to continue in the New Year 2026. In the meantime we look forward to welcoming you on Thursday 18th for prayer, praise, Mass and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. May God bless you all.

St Thomas More Alumni LAST EVER Annual Dinner - Saturday 11th October

After 27 years the organisation for former pupils and staff members of St Thomas More High School in Westcliff has decided to hold one last Annual Dinner. It will take place in the school on Saturday 11th October. Guest Speaker will be Tony McDonald (headteacher 1981-85) and the cost for a four-course meal will be £30. Full details are available on the Alumni website: www.stmalumni.co.uk

ST BERNARD'S HIGH SCHOOL YEAR 6 OPEN MORNINGS

Monday 29th September to Thursday 2nd October 2024 from 9.30am to 10.30am

*Invitation by appointments only, please contact the school reception to book Office@stbernards.southend.sch.uk
Tel: 01702 343583 www.stbernardswestcliff.org.uk*

Letter from HARP

02.09.2025

Dear Everyone at Our Lady of Ransom Church,

Thank you so much for your donation of toiletries and a suitcase that was donated to our Bradbury Centre in York Road.

HARP is Southend's leading homelessness charity. We provide housing, advice and support to over 1,000 people each year who are either experiencing homelessness or are at risk of losing their home. We help them lay foundations to rebuild their lives and end the need for rough sleeping for good.

Here are some figures from August, so you can see how your support helps us.

In August we saw a total of 40 new service users. 6 of them were sleeping rough, 5 at risk, 5 sofa surfing and 24 did not want to disclose. All 40 received specialist advice on their situation.

We helped a total of 502 people in the month

We housed 339 individuals in HARP accommodation, 15 entered a HARP property from elsewhere and 3 people moved on from HARP to live independently.

We had 666 visitors from 131 individuals at the Day Centre.

Thank you again.



Kind regards

Charlotte Stein

HARP

Silent Weekend Retreat "Be Holy, for I am holy" at Sion Catholic Community, Brentwood.

Dates: Friday 10th - Sunday 12th October 2025.

Our theme focuses on the universal call to holiness. We are ALL called to be saints whatever rank or status. We may assume that this is a vocation reserved to the chosen few without understanding that each and every one of us is called to be holy and live a life of holiness. But what does living a life of holiness mean? How can we embrace this call and learn to live it as a reality?

Our guest speaker for the weekend is Fr Emmanuel Mansford, CFR (Franciscan Friars of the Renewal).

This silent weekend retreat offers us the opportunity to spend time with the Lord in quiet prayer and reflection. 40-HOURS of CONTINUOUS Adoration, guidance & ministry included. For more information or to book, visit <https://sioncommunity.org.uk/adults/#SilentRetreat> or email admin@sioncommunity.org.uk

Summary of the Document from The Bishops' of England and Wales Conference on AI

Dangers and progress

Specifically, the document lists not only the risks but also the progress associated with AI, which it encourages as "part of the collaboration of man and woman with God" [2]. However, it does not avoid the concerns that come with all innovations, whose effects are still unpredictable.

Distinguishing between AI and human intelligence

Several paragraphs of the Note are devoted to the distinction between AI and human intelligence. Quoting Pope Francis, the document affirms that "the very use of the word 'intelligence' in connection to AI 'can prove misleading'... in light of this, AI should not be seen as *an artificial form* of human intelligence, but as *a product* of it" [35]. "Like any product of human ingenuity, AI can also be directed toward positive or negative ends" [40]. "AI 'could introduce important innovations'" [48] but it also risks aggravating situations of discrimination, poverty, "digital divide," and social inequalities [52]. "the concentration of the power over mainstream AI applications in the hands of a few powerful companies raises significant ethical concerns," including "the risk that AI could be manipulated for personal or corporate gain or to direct public opinion for the benefit of a specific industry" [53].

War

With reference to war, "Antiqua et Nova" stresses that autonomous and lethal weapons systems capable of "identifying and striking targets without direct human intervention are a 'cause for grave ethical concern'" [100]. It notes that Pope Francis has called for their use to be banned since they pose "an 'existential risk' by having the potential to act in ways that could threaten the survival of entire regions or even of humanity itself" [101]. "This danger demands serious attention," the document says, "reflecting the long-standing concern about technologies that grant war 'an uncontrollable destructive power over great numbers of innocent civilians,' without even sparing children" [101].

Human relations

On human relations, the document notes that AI can lead to "harmful isolation" [58], that "anthropomorphizing AI" poses problems for children's growth [60] and that misrepresenting AI as a person is "a grave ethical violation" if this is done "for fraudulent purposes." Similarly, "using AI to deceive in other contexts—such as education or in human relationships, including the sphere of sexuality—is also to be considered immoral and requires careful oversight" [62].

Economy and labour

The same vigilance is called for in the economic-financial sphere. "Antiqua et Nova" notes that, especially in the field of labour, "while AI promises to boost productivity... current approaches to the technology can paradoxically *deskill* workers, subject them to automated surveillance, and relegate them to rigid and repetitive tasks" [67].

Health

The Note also dedicates ample space to the issue of healthcare. Recalling the "immense potential" in various applications in the medical field, it warns that if AI were to replace the doctor-patient relationship, it would risk "worsening the loneliness that often accompanies illness" [73]. It also warns that "the integration of AI into healthcare also poses the risk of amplifying other existing disparities in access to medical care," with the risk of "reinforcing a 'medicine for the rich' model, where those with financial means benefit from advanced

preventative tools and personalized health information while others struggle to access even basic services" [76].

Education

In the field of education, "Antiqua et Nova" notes that "AI presents both opportunities and challenges." If used prudently, AI can improve access to education and offer "immediate feedback" to students [80]. One problem is that many programmes "merely provide answers instead of prompting students to arrive at answers themselves or write text for themselves"; which can lead to a failure to develop critical thinking skills [82]. The note also warns of the "biased or fabricated information" and "fake news" some programmes can generate [84].

Fake News and Deepfakes

On the subject of fake news, the document warns of the serious risk of AI "generating manipulated content and false information" [85], which becomes worse when it is spread with the aim of deceiving or causing harm [87]. "Antiqua et Nova" insists that "Those who produce and share AI-generated content should always exercise diligence in verifying the truth of what they disseminate and, in all cases, should avoid the sharing of words and images that are degrading of human beings, that promote hatred and intolerance, that debase the goodness and intimacy of human sexuality or that exploit the weak and vulnerable" [89].

Privacy and control

On privacy and control, the Note points out that some types of data can go so far as to touch "upon the individual's interiority, perhaps even their conscience" [90], with the danger of everything becoming "a kind of spectacle to be examined and inspected" [92]. Digital surveillance "can also be misused to exert control over the lives of believers and how they express their faith" [90].

Common home

On the topic of the care of creation, "Antiqua et Nova" says, "AI has many promising applications for improving our relationship with our 'common home'" [95]. "At the same time, current AI models and the hardware required to support them consume vast amounts of energy and water, significantly contributing to CO2 emissions and straining resources" [96].

The relationship with God

Finally, the Note warns against the risk of humanity becoming "enslaved to its own work" [105]. Artificial intelligence, "Antiqua et Nova" insists, "should be used only as a tool to complement human intelligence rather than replace its richness" [112].