

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

14th December 2025

Advent 3 A

Psalter Week 3



“So, girls and boys” said the teacher, “can any of you mention something of extreme importance that did not exist 50 years ago?” Little Tommy put up his hand and eagerly shouted, “Me!”.

We all want to feel important at times. But any true following of Christ means that somewhere around the middle of life we must learn to start letting go of these needs for importance. Or life will do it for us, and that will hurt, and hurt badly. John the Baptist lets go of his popularity and power to make way for the Christ. This is his brilliance. He could have used it for his own ends. Maybe this is partly why Jesus refers to him as “no greater than John has ever been seen”. He is clearly a man for God and a man for truth.

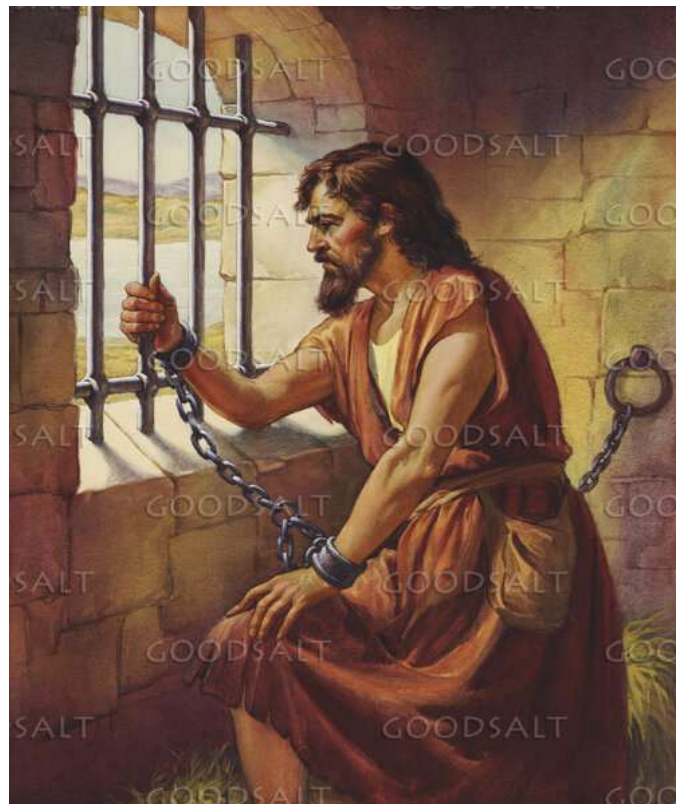
Yet with all that, as brilliant as John is, he is not sure Jesus is the one who is coming. He knows however that “one” is coming. This is quite possibly because he wanted to see a little more “retribution, exclusivity and punishment” talk. But Jesus talks equally of reconciliation, compassion, tenderness, forgiveness and healing – all possibly leaving John a little confused.

Maybe a slightly confused John. But then we look at John’s ways. Arguably he is abrasive, impatient, tactless, maybe tunnel-visioned, maybe not possessing the greatest verbal and relational skills. Heavy on confrontation, retribution, justice and God’s wrath. Possibly overly moralistic and harsh. Maybe this is why Jesus then says, “the least in heaven is greater than he”.

John is not yet the reconciler, the healer, the man of compassion, tenderness, mercy, tolerance and patience. It often takes later life enlightenment to really take these qualities on, at least in a bigger way. This is where Jesus takes John’s message forward. John is speaking from great experience and knowledge. John is right, but only as far as he goes. John clears the way for Jesus so there is freedom for the bigger message. John “literally” gets out of the way. He lets go of who he is, along with his mission, to make way for Jesus.

Much of religion, sad to say, has followed in much of John’s ways and not the ways taken forward by Jesus. Exclusivity; impatience, retribution and intolerance. So much focus on retribution and following the “right” rules with too little focus on life-giving relationships; too much lacking mercy; defining who’s in and out, up and down, who can receive and who can’t, and so on. How dare we! As if we really know! Maybe that is, at least, partly why much religion is frowned upon today.

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 a fraud – bad news. Gospel means “good news”. Are we “John the Baptists”, following John alone? Or are we finally and hopefully, “Christians?”



1st Reading: Isaiah 35: 1-6a, 10

Psalms: 146: 6c-7. 8-9a. 9b-10

2nd Reading: James 5:7-10

Gospel: Matthew 11: 2-11

MASS INTENTIONS	
Saturday 13th December	
5.30pm Mass	Theresa Steward RIP (Anniversary) – Gemma Copestick
Sunday 14th December	3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday)
8.00am Mass	Bishop Thomas McMahon RIP
10.00am Mass	Parish Community
Monday 15th December	
9.30am Mass	Pat Thomas RIP – Pat and Mary Rickard
Tuesday 16th December	
9.30am Mass	John Kelly RIP – Rita Gurney
Wednesday 17th December	
10.00am Mass	Pauline Burgess RIP (Anniversary) – Barry Burgess
Thursday 18th December	
9.30am Mass	Fr. Derek Lance RIP
Friday 19th December	
9.30am Mass	Julia Mear RIP (Anniversary) – Mary Rickards
Saturday 20th December	
5.30pm Mass	Pauline Burgess RIP – Yvonne Burfield
Sunday 21st December	4th Sunday of Advent
8.00am Mass	Joseph Brady RIP – Kathy Hoare
10.00am Mass	Parish Community

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>
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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.....Catherine Bundy, Dorothy Whitty, June Turner, Elspeth O'Sullivan, Finbarr McQuaid, Annie Reidy, Pauline Burgess, Elisabeth O'Shea and Frances Tibbs. **May they rest in Peace.**

† Please pray for Len Wiley who died recently, for his wife Frances, and all the family and friends. May Len 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

Copies of the newsletter are placed on the noticeboard inside the church porch, and parts of the newsletter inside the noticeboard outside the church. Please leave these as they are so as others may see them for quick reference. 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: following a large number of requests, the Christmas Eve Family Mass will now be at 5pm; and the Vigil Mass at 8pm. There will be NO Midnight Mass.

Pope John Paul 11 Hall Bookings -

Please contact Paul Roseman on 07470 691902 for any Hall Booking requests, thank you.

Wheelchairs and Strollers: Do you have any unwanted or no longer needed? Or any walking aids? 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.

Wednesday Coffee Morning

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

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

Sunday Coffee Morning -

If you are interested in running a coffee morning after Sunday 10am Mass, for a Charity of your choice, please inform the staff in the presbytery office. Thank you.

Coffee Morning this Sunday, the 14th December, is being hosted by the Knights of St Columba.



Repository. Christmas is soon here. Advent Calendars are on sale. Boxes of 18 cards- £4.25. Packs of 12 and 10 cards respectively, plus single cards are available. All very reasonable prices. Also, cards and gift items for Confirmation.

Children's Liturgy

Children's Liturgy 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!)

Christmas Eve Family Mass-we are looking for adult volunteers to assist with organising costumes and practice. If you enjoy participating in the Christmas Eve family mass, please consider volunteering (ahead) to join a small group and help share a little of the preparation! Everyone is busy at that time of year, so the more it can be shared the better for everybody! Please message 07801 888787 if you can help a little or have any questions! Thank you!

Christmas Eve Family Mass- Nativity tableau

All children who would like to join in our nativity tableau, for the Gospel at our Christmas Eve Family Mass, please come and put your name down and find a costume from our parish supply, on one of the first 2 dates below! All are welcome! We will then have a last practice/run throughs for all involved on the

21st December- practice for all involved (church, after 10 am mass)

Look forward to seeing you - thank you!

FLOWERS TO DECORATE THE CHURCH AT CHRISTMAS

We would be grateful to receive donations for flowers to decorate the Church at Christmas. You may wish to donate in memory of a loved one. Envelopes are available in the porch. Please write your name and your dedication on the envelope, enclose the donation and post through the presbytery letterbox. Thank you.

Olive Wood Carvings from the Holy Land, to support the Christian Community in Bethlehem, on sale the weekend of 3rd - 4th January 2026 after each Mass. Please support this enterprise, helping struggling families and people in the place of Our Lord's birth. Thank you.

From Fr. Damien of the Marist Fathers: I wish to hereby acknowledge having received the cheque of £637.57 you sent after the appeal I made in your parish on the weekend of 18th-19th October 2025. I am grateful to you and the whole parish community of Rayleigh for the generous donations to support the missionary work of Marist Fathers in the world. My time with your community was memorable and I appreciated the fraternal hospitality and the spirit of the dynamic Christian community. Thank you.

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

Missio Red Boxes

If you have a Missio Red Box at home, it is now time for collection. If your box is normally collected by one of our promoters, they will be in touch with you soon, but if your box hasn't been collected for some time, please let me know - we have fewer promoters than previously, but I will make sure to arrange collection.

You can also bring your boxes to hand to me (usually 5.30 pm Mass) or leave in the Sacristy or back of the church for my attention. Any queries, please contact me - Katherine Abel 0790 6844 284 email warren_katherine@hotmail.com

Thank you for your ongoing and generous support to the important work of Missio. God Bless.

The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London is holding a Divine Mercy Advent Reflection on Saturday 20 December from 1 pm - 4:30 pm at St Mary Mother of God, 213 Hornchurch Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4TF The Retreat will include teachings on the Message of Mercy, Stations of the Cross, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. All Welcome. Please call millie on 07957594646 for more information.

Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus! You are warmly welcomed to an evening of praise and worship, including mass and adoration. Save the dates:

Friday 16th of January and Friday 13th of February 2026. Time: 7:00pm to 9:00pm, including refreshments after.

Venue: The Blessed Sacrament Church, 116 Melbourne Avenue, CM12DU, Chelmsford. Bring your friends!

Organised by the CDSC (Charismatic Diocesan Service of Communion).

Headteacher vacancy at Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Benfleet, Essex, required for April 2026 – Due to the current headteacher taking the decision to retire from the post, an exciting opportunity has arisen for an inspirational, ambitious and innovative Headteacher to join the team at Holy Family Catholic Primary School. Further information and application documents can be found on the following websites – [HFCPS Website - Job Vacancies](#) and [Vacancies – Assisi Catholic Trust](#).

The Governing Body of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Canvey Island, is looking for new Foundation Governors in this exciting time of improvement and change in the life of their school. If you are interested, please contact the Chair of Governors, Joanna, on: jfleming@stjosephscanvey.net.

THE PALMER CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Aldborough Road South, Seven Kings, Ilford, IG3 8EU

Calling all Canon Palmer Catholic School Alumni to come to our 65th Anniversary on Friday 9th January 2026 at 2pm. Visit our website at www.tpc.academy for further details and to register an interest for future events.

St. Peter's Catholic Primary School, Billericay are seeking to appoint an Administration Assistant to join our School Office team.

For more information about the position and to apply, please visit:-

<https://www.essexschoolsjobs.co.uk/Vacancies/Details.aspx?VacancyId=115226>

Closing date is Midday on Monday 5th January 2026.

Visits to the school are welcomed and can be arranged by contacting the school office by phone 01277 653770 or email on admin@st-peters-pri.essex.sch.uk

Volunteer Request from OLOR Primary School

As we develop our sensory garden there are a few jobs that we need specialist skills for. Would anyone be willing to give up a few hours to help lay some paving slabs underneath our pergola. We have the slabs already and can purchase any sand or cement etc that is required. If you can assist us, please contact the school office on 01268 785741. Thank you.

Walsingham House Team 26/27: applications are now open for the Walsingham House Team 26/27. Being on the team is a wonderful opportunity to work with young people from across the diocese, live in community and to share and deepen our faith. Applications are open to those aged 18-23 (current Yr13 and above). For more information including the application form please see the website <https://bcys.net/whabbotswick/be-on-team/> or email michaelkearns@brcdt.org. Applications close on Friday 16th January 2026.

Education Support Administrator- Cathedral House

A vacancy has arisen to provide administrative and general departmental support to School Advisors across the Education Department of the Diocese.

The post will be part-time, working 22 hours per week – 4 days per week working from 9 am until 3 pm with half an hour for lunch. **Term time only**

Location- Cathedral House- please note this is an office-based role.

Salary £14.50 per hour

The closing date for applications is 5pm on 16th February 2026 and we will then invite suitable applicants to interview.

If you have any queries or if you would like to apply, please send your CV by email to hr@brcdt.org

The Governors of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Hornchurch, are seeking to appoint an inspirational and dedicated Head Teacher from April 2026. Closing date: Friday 9th January 2026 at 5pm / Interview Date: Friday 23rd January 2026. Enquiries can be made by email to admin@stmcps.co.uk, or phone 01708 448430.

Headteacher - St Peter's Primary School, Romford

Deadline for applications: 12:00 (noon), Tuesday 6th January 2026

Starting date April 2026

Headteacher - Holy Family Primary School, Benfleet

Deadline for applications: 09:00, Wednesday 28th January 2026

Starting date September 2026 or earlier



➡ Got pipes? We've got pews!

Choir Needs You (Yes, You!)

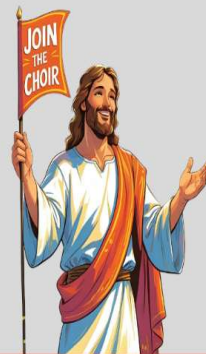
We rehearse most Thursdays at 7:30 pm for about an hour ,
just enough time to feel holy and hit a high note.

We sing hymns and heavenly hits by Mozart, Bach, Bruckner, Mendelssohn, Esquivel, and more.

We only sing twice a month, so your social life is safe.

Basses, tenors, and altos :we're especially after you.

Sopranos, we love you too, but you're not an endangered species.



CONTACT THE BATON DIVA:

ISOBEL KENNEDY
07795 821705



St Vincent's

a place of help, hope and opportunity

Food Donations needed

UHT Milk

Pasta sauces

Tinned Meat

Mayo

Butter

Nappies

Wet wipes

Crisps/ biscuits

Tuna Crackers

Pot Noodles

Instant Noodles

Tea, Sugar &

Coffee

Jams & Spreads

Tins of veggie

food (macaroni

cheese/ veggie

ravioli etc)

Tinned Tomato

Cereal

Pasta

Toiletries

St Vincent's Centre, Victoria Business Park, Short
Street, SS2 5BY, Phone: 01702592980

Email: nesperm@svp.org.uk

Charity No: 1053992

