

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

21st December 2025

Advent 4 A

Psalter Week 4



Six-year-old Billy was in the restaurant with his parents and asked if he could say grace. Bowing their heads Billy said, *God is good. God is great. Thank you, God, for the food, and I would thank you even more if I could have ice-cream. And peace to the world. Amen.* Customers around affectionately laughed. Except one elderly woman who remarked: “what’s wrong with this country, children don’t even know how to pray. Fancy asking God for ice-cream, really!” Hearing this Billy burst out crying. “Is God angry with me, what did I do wrong”, he asked through his tears? His mum and dad consoled and reassured him, giving the odd angry glare at the woman. As they were consoling him, an elderly man approached. Winking at little Billy he said he happened to know that God thought it was a great prayer. “Really?” said Billy. “Cross my heart,” said the man. Then gently pointing to the woman he said “it’s too bad *she* never asks God for ice cream. A little ice-cream is good for the soul”. Winking again, he walked away. His parents bought Billy some ice cream. Billy stared at the ice-cream, picked up the plate, and without a word, placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile he told her, “This is for you. Ice-cream is good for the soul, and my soul is good already”.

I have offered this delightful and humorous story before, it is worth re-telling and re-telling as it asks the all-important questions – what really is good for our soul? Where are our lives really going? What truly moves our soul? What moves the deeper parts of me? Will this Christmas affect us deeply in a new way? Or will it be just another Christmas - business as usual? Do we listen to the movements in our souls? This is the stuff of prayer. Joseph and Mary listened to their souls, the deeper resonances going on inside, and they had no one in authority to talk to, to check the validity of their intuitions. They simply trusted their deeper intuitions. The Angel Gabriel will have spoken to Mary’s soul. Today we see Joseph trusting in his dreams, suggesting he was listening to his deeper intuitions. His soul. No rationale, no logic explains all this – only faith. And with this, the honourable, upright and just man, Joseph, goes beyond the law. He doesn’t walk away from Mary - he should have according to strict law - but stays and shares her worries and concerns. And all because of faith. Authentic faith allows us to do amazing things; we can even amaze ourselves.

Do we listen to our deeper resonances, our souls, where God may be speaking? And find meaning to our lives? Will this Christmas be a little different, all for the good? And the New Year? All because we have listened, and paid attention.

**May I wish you all every Blessing,
Joy, Peace and all good for a
Graced Christmas.**

**And of course, we pray that the
New year will be Blessed and
Graced for us all in so many ways.**

1st Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14

Psalms: 24: 1-2. 3-4b. 5-6

2nd Reading: Romans: 1: 1-7

Gospel: Matthew 1: 18-24



MASS INTENTIONS	
Saturday 20th December	
5.30pm Mass	Pauline Burgess RIP – Yvonne Burfield
Sunday 21st December	4th Sunday of Advent (Day of Prayer for Expectant Mothers)
8.00am Mass	Joseph Brady RIP – Kathy Hoare
10.00am Mass	Parish Community
Monday 22nd December	
9.30am Mass	Margaret Rohan RIP – Mary Rickards
Tuesday 23rd December	
9.30am Mass	Geoffrey Williams RIP (Anniversary) – The Williams Family
Wednesday 24th December	
<u>5.00pm Family Mass</u>	Emma Louise Lucibello RIP – Susan and Damian Lucibello
<u>8.00pm Vigil Mass</u>	Gloria Ray RIP (Anniversary) – The Ray Family
Thursday 25th December	The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Day)
<u>8.00am Mass</u>	Parish Community
<u>10.00am Mass</u>	James Rickards RIP – Mary Rickards
Friday 26^h December	St. Stephen
<u>12.00pm Mass</u>	Len Wiley RIP - SVP
Saturday 27th December	St. John
5.30pm Mass	Parish Community
Sunday 28th December	The Holy Family of Jesus, Joseph and Mary
8.00am Mass	Bridie Bell (Ints) – Marie Smith
10.00am Mass	Len Wiley RIP – The Curnock 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>
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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.....Lorraine Elmer, Betty Lowe, Mike Geeson, Connie Brilus,

Frances Hidveghy and Gloria Ray. **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. †

† Please also keep in your prayers Mary Renihan who died recently at Rosedale Court. Please also pray for her family and friends. May Mary 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.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions) will also be available on:

Sunday 21st December 12.00pm -1.00pm

Monday 22nd December 5pm - 6pm

Tuesday 23rd December 10.30am - 11.30am

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 Wednesday Coffee morning will be on the 7th January 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 on Sunday 21st December will be hosted by the Yr 6 children from OLOR school to fundraise for their leavers' celebrations.

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.

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, see below. 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.

Christmas Flowers in memory of:

† James Rickards; Barbara and Ken Dewar; Emma Louise Lucibello;
the Buckmaster and Sugrue Families; Pauline Burgess; Tom and Pat
Herlihy; Mike, Michael, John and Alison Healey; Terence, Thomas,
Annie May and Timothy Mahoney; Reg Cannell and Paul Gurney.
May they all rest in peace. †
And thanks for anonymous donations received as well.

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!

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. A missionary from Bethlehem, The Holy Land, will visit us on that weekend to briefly talk about the Holy

Land and sell religious articles made from Olive Wood (Crucifixes / Rosaries / Nativity Scenes / Statues) to help and support the poor Christian families. Any help you could give to them it will be highly appreciated. **Please support this enterprise, helping struggling families and people in the place of Our Lord's birth. 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.

Retrouvaille helps marriages. It can bring hope and healing to relationships.

Next date: 12th February 2026.

www.retrouvaille.org.uk Tel: 07887 296983

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.

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@stmcp.s.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

Parish Administrator- Our Lady of Good Counsel- Wickford

A vacancy has arisen for a Parish Administrator, with financial experience, to provide administrative and financial support to the Parish Office by implementing and maintaining office systems, processes and procedures and delivering a welcoming, appropriate service to those attending the parish office.

The post will be part-time working 16 hours per week – (working pattern to be agreed with the parish priest).

The salary is £12.60 per hour

The closing date for applications is 12pm on 9th January 2026 and we will then invite suitable applicants to interview.

If you have any queries or if you would like to apply, please complete the Diocesan application form and email to hr@brcdt.org



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	Tea, Sugar &
Pasta sauces	Coffee
Tinned Meat	Jams & Spreads
Mayo	Tins of veggie
Butter	food (macaroni
Nappies	cheese/ veggie
Wet wipes	ravioli etc)
Crisps/ biscuits	Tinned Tomato
Tuna Crackers	Cereal
Pot Noodles	Pasta
Instant Noodles	Toiletries

St Vincent's Centre, Victoria Business Park, Short
Street, SS2 5BY, Phone: 01702592980
Email: nesperm@svp.org.uk
Charity No: 1053992