

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

4th January 2026 2nd Sunday after Christmas Psalter Week 1



Bella Roma. Magnificent. I studied there for 6 years. Wonderful, but demanding. Academics, books, journals, ideas, theories – it goes on. Heads crammed with knowledge, all allowing us to sound clever. All good and important stuff – but isn't Christianity more?

Maybe years of working with people with various kinds of disabilities, plus mental health issues, and working in a prison more recently has enabled me toward to deeper understanding and appreciation of what Christianity really is.

It seems that to be a Christian, we need to have met someone who is already – "Christian". To see Christ everywhere. In everyone. Possibly all based on personal experience. Christianity needs to be experienced for itself. Christ is passed on "personally" – not so much through books etc. To follow Christ is to have met someone who shines with a Christ-like freedom, a joy, an energy, a vitality – and let them rub off on you. Then you in turn, rub off on someone else, so faith is passed on. Caught, not taught.

This stuff cannot be theologized or sermonized. It is simply a way of living. Way bigger than Rome's heady academics. It's personal and will imply healthy and right relationships – it's never private.

So words and ideas can never be enough. St. John is very clear about the word becoming flesh. This is surely why the word became flesh - flesh implies relationships, anything personal, unity, solidarity, mercy, companionship, community – love. The nitty-gritty of everyday life. People to people. Do academics substitute for that?

Jesus came as the Christ, the Son of God, to dwell amongst us, so as we could follow him, his humanity, to catch on to his inner attitudes and teachings and live them out. Not treat them as some kind of hypothesis or idea, and certainly not just to worship him. He dwelt amongst us so we could be like Him. Or we strip the whole essence of Christmas of all its power and meaning. Talk about keeping Christ "out" of Christmas! We are called to be like Jesus Christ as best as we can. Do others catch on to our Christ-like ways? Are we making sure Christ stays in Christmas through our attitudes and behaviours? How do others see us?

Do we have, or know anyone with Christ-like ways? Do we have the humility to let their Christianity catch on in us? Or does the need to be clever and smart get in the way? Does pride interfere? To let it genuinely catch on, transforms ours, and others' lives forever. Worth it?

1st Reading: Sirach 24: 1-2, 8-12

Psalm: 147: 12-13. 14-15.19-20

2nd Reading: Ephesians 1:3-6,15-18

Gospel: John 1: 1-18



MASS INTENTIONS

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| Saturday 3rd January | |
| 5.30pm Mass | Susan Brady RIP (Anniversary) – Ann Coady |
| Sunday 4th January | 2nd Sunday after Christmas |
| 8.00am Mass | Eileen McCullough RIP – Helen Culf |
| 10.00am Mass | Parish Community |
| Monday 5th January | |
| 9.30am Mass | Pat Hampton RIP – Eithne Herlihy |
| Tuesday 6th January | The Epiphany |
| 7.30am Mass | Parish Community |
| 9.30am Mass | John and Madge Murphy RIP – Rita Gurney |
| 8.00pm Mass | Len Wiley RIP – The Stevens Family |
| Wednesday 7th January | |
| 10.00am Mass | Gwyn Derrick RIP - SVP |
| Thursday 8th January | |
| 9.30am Mass | Paul Gurney RIP – Rita Gurney |
| Friday 9th January | |
| 9.30pm Mass | Mary Renihan RIP – Mary Butterworth |
| Saturday 10th January | |
| 5.30pm Mass | Parish Community |
| Sunday 11th January | The Baptism of the Lord |
| 8.00am Mass | Tom Herlihy RIP (Anniversary) – Eithne and Una |
| 10.00am Mass | Len Wiley RIP – The Butler 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

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| 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 |
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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 23



ANNIVERSARIES Kindly pray for all those whose anniversaries are at this time.

Especially.....John Enever, Shirley Strauss, David Gooch, Marie Murphy and Laszlo Hidveghy. **May they rest in Peace.**

† Please pray for Gwyn Derrick who died recently. Also for his family and friends. Gwyn's Requiem Mass will be on Monday 12th January at 1pm. May Gwyn 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.

Thank You to all who have been so considerate to me over Christmas with your gifts, cards, and some of the lovely messages I have received. I really am very moved and grateful. May we all have a Happy and Blessed New Year. Thanks again. Fr. Paul

Please note: Tuesday 6th is the Feast of the Epiphany, a Holy Day of obligation. Masses are as detailed.

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.

Pope John Paul 2nd 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.

A huge Thank You to everyone who has attended the Wednesday coffee mornings this year .

You have raised £343.07 for Father Gerry in Uganda and the AMAZING total of £883.19 for the local Food Bank.

Every good wish for 2026 from the Wednesday coffee morning team.



Christmas Flowers in memory of:

† Walenty Krolkowski; 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 Timothey 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!

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](http://www(tpc.academy) for further details and to register an interest for future events.

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.

St John Bosco Children's Camp – an amazing volunteer opportunity for this summer. If you are in school year 12 or student age (or any age over 17!) you are very welcome to apply at www.boscocamp.co.uk. The application process includes references and a DBS check, which we can help with, as well as a training and support before and during Camp. The Camp provides over 100 children a week with a summer holiday – for many their only holiday. As a volunteer you use your skills in assisting with different sporting and fun activities, as well as the practical aspects of camp life. **Volunteer for 25th July – 1st August or 1st – 8th August.** The Camp is a special work of Caritas Diocese of Brentwood, and also seeks financial donations – all information on the website.

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

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

