What is the meaning of the Feast of Christmas? For some, it has little meaning beyond eating, drinking and the "Gavin and Stacey" special. For others, Christmas is a sentimental event that is best enjoyed by small children. But the adult understanding is that Christmas reminds us that God calls us out of isolation and narcissism and into a mature, meaningful relationship with Him and with each other. This meaning is the reason why we will gather to celebrate as a community in these coming days. No longer looking obsessively at ourselves, but looking at each other, recognising each other as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

Our meaning is to be found in that small bundle of shivering flesh lying in a manger. God has given himself away so completely that we meet him here in poverty and weakness, with no trumpeting splendour, no clouds of glory.

We are so obsessed about being successful and having the right image, about being in control, that we find it hard to imagine that power could show itself in any other way than the ways we are used to. But this festival tells us exactly what Good Friday and Easter tells us: that God fulfils what he wants to do by emptying himself of His own life, giving away all that He is in love.

This is how he is: he acts by giving away all we might expect to find in him of strength, status and success as we understand them. That is nowhere to be seen. All we see is a baby. This is divine love in weak human flesh. This is the meaning of everything. The universe lives by a love that refuses to manipulate us or bully us. Instead, we live by the love of the cradle and the cross.
Contrary to popular belief, there is nothing sentimental about the baby Jesus. He challenges us to live in the truth, to live in reality, to live by the Spirit. To stop looking at distorted images of ourselves and to recognise that our dignity and value come from being children of God. To see ourselves as we are really meant to be. To see those around us who are wounded and hurting and bring them to life.

May the gift of the Christ Child bring you, your families and friends a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

Fr Martin

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS SERVICE will be held today Sunday 22nd December at 4.00 p.m. The main celebrant will be Bishop Alan Williams. This is a beautiful meditation on the birth of Christ through profound readings, joyful carols and inspiring choral music from the Cathedral choir. This is the perfect way to reflect on the radiant meaning of Christmas. All welcome.

FLASH MOB CHOIR/ORCHESTRA: In addition to the Flash Mob leading the music at the 7.00 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve, there is an opportunity for young singers to lead the music at the 5.00 p.m. Mass. We are looking for children and young people to lead the carols from the microphone in small groups. Please arrive by 4.30 p.m. and join us near the organ if you would like to take part.

THIS NEWSLETTER COVERS THREE WEEKENDS so please keep your copy handy for the coming weeks. It is also available on the Brentwood Cathedral website.

SINCERE THANKS TO JULIA BLENCOWE for the beautiful picture on the cover of this newsletter. Julia writes ‘Tomorrow Mary and Joseph will get to Bethlehem and will start to look for a place to stay. In the distance are the lights of the small town and to the right, dawn is nearly breaking.

Mary and Joseph keep warm by the fire as the nights are cold. A bright star is nearly over Bethlehem. The fire gives warmth and light. The Light of the World will soon be born and the fire Love will enter our world in human form.

Moses experienced the presence of God when he saw the Burning Bush. Here Joseph reaches out to that light and warmth and to God, but Mary holds her hands to her womb where Jesus lies waiting to be born.

Our Lord said that he had come to bring fire on earth. The Holy Spirit is likened to fire. We are to be baptised with fire and the Holy Spirit. Our pilgrim journey continues, may we be filled with that light and fire, and may Christ come to birth within us. May his Kingdom come.’

BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC CHILDREN’S SOCIETY CRIB DONATIONS We are called to prepare for the coming of the Lord. We reflect on the messages of repentance and forgiveness that John the Baptist preached as he prepared the way for Jesus. During this second week of Advent, we are asked to call on God to move us to action for He will answer if we do so.

The pressures on young people have never been greater and the scale of the mental health issues they face is enormous. The Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society works on the frontline of dealing with this and we thank you for your support.

THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED over the Christmas period from Monday 23rd December and will re-open again on Thursday 2nd January.

CATHEDRAL PARISH DIARIES 2020 are now available in the narthex and at the back of the Church at Holy Cross. A donation of £1 each would be most welcome and can be put into the wall safe marked ‘For the Poor’. Thank you.

AT THE BEGINNING OF JANUARY we have the privilege of welcoming to the Cathedral parish Michael Barwick, in his fifth year of training for the priesthood at St Mary’s College, Oscott, Birmingham. Michael will be on pastoral placement with us for three weeks at the beginning of January. Please make him feel very welcome. Pray for him, for all who are presently training for the priesthood and that more men may discern their personal vocation to serve God and His Church as priests.

HOLY HOUR will recommence on Monday 6th January at 7.30 p.m.

CHORAL VESPERS will recommence on Wednesday 8th January at 6.30 p.m.

MASS TIMES, MASS INTENTIONS, CATHEDRAL DIARY and ANNIVERSARIES for each week can be found on the noticeboard in the Cathedral narthex and at the back of Holy Cross and can also be found on the parish website.

PLEASE PRAY for the repose of the souls of Florence Sandle and Ray Smith who died recently. Florence’s funeral service will be celebrated in the Cathedral on Wednesday 8th January at 11.00 a.m. Ray’s funeral service will be celebrated at Bentley Crematorium on Monday 6th January at 1.30 p.m. May they rest in the peace of Christ.
THANK YOU for the collection on the weekend of 14th/15th December: £3,436.68 of which £2,450.12 was Gift Aided. Thank you for your continued generosity, for Gift Aiding your offerings and for your support of the parish.

COFFEE AFTER 9.30 am MASS today will be hosted by the PACE group; there will be no coffee the following week and the week after that will be hosted again by the PACE Team.

WE WELCOME INTO OUR PARISH COMMUNITY Anya Hillier who was baptised recently in the Cathedral; please remember her and her parents “the first and best teachers of their children in the ways of Faith”.

OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS go to Kelsey Harwood and Daniel Mackie who were married recently in the Cathedral. May the Lord who has sealed their marriage grant them the graces to live their high calling with profound joy, serenity and love.

ALTAR SERVERS A big thank you from Eddie to all the altar servers and their parents for their support and generosity.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY A Quiz Night, organised by PACE and raising funds for Caritas Anchor House, is set for Friday 31st January 2020. Further details to follow but keep the date and get your teams together!

MOTHERS PRAYERS will now resume after Christmas on Wednesday 8th January at 10.00 a.m. in Clergy House. All are welcome; please join us.

250 CLUB RENEWALS - Renewals are due now and new members are very welcome to join. For those paying by ongoing standing order either monthly or annually, no action is required. If you pay in one annual instalment by cash, cheque or direct credit online, this will be due by 31st January please. If I have your email address, you should have already received a renewal form from me. Alternatively, forms are available in the narthex, by email or I can arrange to post one to you. New and renewal forms, along with payment, can be returned to Clergy House for my attention. Should you receive an email in error, please advise me so that I can remove you from the mailing list. Please also contact me if you are unsure how to make your payment or have any other queries. Thank you for your continued support. Pat Austin - email pat@familyaustin.co.uk or call 01277 824363 / 07733 103588.

PARISH WELCOME SUPPER This will be held on the evening of Friday 7th February 2020 at 7.00 p.m. to welcome all newcomers who have joined our Parish in the last 18 months. Come and join the clergy and representatives of our many Parish groups for an informal supper to get to know more fellow parishioners. The supper will be in the parish Hall and is being organised by the Parish Pastoral Council. If you are new to the Parish, or know someone who is, and interested in coming to this free event, please put your name and contact details on the sign-up sheet, which can be found in the Narthex and at the back of Holy Cross Church, by 24th January.

2020 MASS REGISTRATION CARDS Would you like your child to start at a Catholic school in 2021? If so you will need to apply for a place at a Catholic Infant, Primary or Secondary school in the Autumn of 2020 and you will need to ensure that you pick up a Mass Registration Card from the Cathedral narthex or at the back of Holy Cross Church and get this signed by a member of clergy each week at the end of Sunday Mass. You will need to show this card if you want a Certificate of Catholic Practice to include with your child’s application for the Catholic school of your choice.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK: Please pray for all our sick and housebound parishioners and friends, including: Bridget Barron, Hermine Bayley, Phil Carr, David, Patricia Decup, Julian Goode, Concetta Hall, Ann Hurcombe, Wong Su Hwa, Jess, Brian Kelleher, Veronica Kelleher, Lawrence, Tony Maule, Dennis Menezes, Kath Murnane, Michael Murphy, Harry Newman, Barney O'Driscoll, Siobhan O'Leary, Steven Poole, Anne Rowe, Helena Rowe, Robin Shenton, David Spring, Tim, TCT, Louisa Whiteman, and all our sick in Marillac, Maccles, Brentwood Community, The Beeches, Queens, Nuffield and Hartwood Hospitals and St Francis Hospice.

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK is available to anyone who is gravely ill or about to have an operation. If you would like to receive this sacrament then please speak to a member of the clergy or ring the office on 265235.

SICK AND HOUSEBOUND PARISHIONERS If you know anyone who is unable to come to Mass but would still like to receive Holy Communion in their home, please contact Clergy House so we can add them to our Sick visits list.

GENERAL NEWS

BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2020: The new Diocesan Directories are now available in the narthex and at Holy Cross (£2.80 each). Please place money in the wall safe marked ‘Booklets/Publications’. Thank you.

YEAR OF THE GOD WHO SPEAKS – THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW Fr Adrian Graffy will lead an exploration of the Gospel of Matthew, the lectionary gospel for Sundays in 2020, from 7.00 until 8.30 p.m. on Wednesday 15th (changed from
22nd January, and Wednesday 29th January at the Catholic Church of Christ the Eternal High Priest, Gidea Park. Admission is free, but please book your place by email to GPstudydays@gmail.com. Copies of the recently published 'Revised New Jerusalem Bible' will be on sale for £30 (reduced from the normal price of £39.99). Full details and video of earlier talks available on www.whatgoodnews.org.

SUMMER LOURDES 2020 with the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service. Open to anyone currently in school year 10-13. We travel on Saturday 25th July, return Saturday 1st August. Cost £600 includes return coach travel, hotel accommodation, insurance and all meals in Lourdes. This amazing experience comes just once a year – full details are at https://bcys.net/events/summer-lourdes-2020-pilgrimage/. Applications close on January 10th 2020; places will be allocated on 14th January and no deposit is required until then. Bursary support is available for those in financial hardship.

BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC CHILDREN’S SOCIETY Children and families from Essex and East London have direct therapeutic support to our highly experienced counselling team. We provide support directly to children, adolescents on a 1:1 basis or the whole family. We help children with various reasons including anxiety, emotional health, bereavement, behaviour, bullying, family separation and illness. Sessions take place during the day or after school at our counselling suites at our offices in Rayleigh. There is a sessional charge but support may be given if required. If you feel your child may benefit from our services or you would like more information, please contact Sarah D’Lima at sdlima@bccs.or.uk or call 01268 947061.

COMMUNION DRESSES AND ACCESSORIES for sale on Saturday 25th January 10.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. at St Augustine’s church hall, Beardsley Drive, Chelmsford CM1 6GQ and Saturday 8th February 11.00 a.m. – 1.30 p.m. in the Cathedral small hall. For more information please call Pat on 07968 314995.

PILGRIMAGE TO ROME 1st to the 6th June 2020. Staying in central Rome. The cost includes transport in this country (airport transfer from/to Chingford) and Italy, return flights, Bed and Breakfast accommodation with some other meals included, a fully escorted itinerary including Mass each day and tickets for an audience with the Holy Father, and all Mass offerings and tips. £795 in shared accommodation; £895 for single rooms. For more information please call Siobhan on 07932 634589 or e-mail siobhan@parker-travel.com.

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SERVICE TIMES, MASS INTENTIONS and PARISH DIARY

Saturday 21st December through to Sunday 29th December 2019

Saturday
21 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral George Whiteman R.I.P.
11.00 – 12 Noon Cathedral Sacrament of Reconciliation
12.30 p.m. Cathedral Baptism of Coralie, Clara and Kaiya Sullivan
6.30 p.m. Holy Cross Intentions of the Durso Family

Sunday
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A) (Expectant Mothers)
22 December 8.00 a.m. Cathedral Lewis and Mary Frances Taylor (F)
9.30 a.m. Cathedral Gerard Peelo R.I.P.
10.00 a.m. Marillac Rt Rev Arthur Doubleday (F)
11.30 a.m. Cathedral Chris Buckley R.I.P.
4.00 p.m. Cathedral Nine Lessons and Carols Service
6.30 p.m. Cathedral Anniversary of SVP Foundation (Brentwood)

Monday
23 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Robert David Smith R.I.P.

Tuesday
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
24 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Vincent and Mary Cassidy R.I.P.
5.00 p.m. Cathedral David Squires R.I.P.
7.00 p.m. Cathedral Children of the Parish
10.00 p.m. Cathedral People of the Parish

Wednesday
CHRISTMAS DAY
HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION
25 December 8.00 a.m. Cathedral John Cremin R.I.P.
9.30 a.m. Cathedral Ros Kelk R.I.P.
10.30 a.m. Holy Cross Intentions of Pauline Brillus
11.30 a.m. Cathedral Intentions of Adam Donnelly
NO EVENING MASS TODAY

Thursday
ST STEPHEN, The First Martyr
26 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Peggy and Derry Edwards R.I.P.
NO GRANGE MASS TODAY
Friday 27 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Hugh McShene R.I.P.

Saturday 28 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Dennis Filler R.I.P.
11.00 – 12 Noon Cathedral Sacrament of Reconciliation
6.30 p.m. Holy Cross People of the Parish

Sunday 29 December 8.00 a.m. Cathedral Dennis Filler R.I.P.
9.30 a.m. Cathedral Intentions of Margaret Walker
10.00 a.m. Marillac Tom Joe Brogan R.I.P.
11.30 a.m. Cathedral Intentions of Joe and Sarah Gallagher and family
6.30 p.m. Cathedral Faye Andrews R.I.P.

Saturday 28th December 2019 through to Sunday 5th January 2020

Saturday 28 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Dennis Filler R.I.P.
11.00 – 12 Noon Cathedral Sacrament of Reconciliation
6.30 p.m. Holy Cross People of the Parish

Sunday 29 December 8.00 a.m. Cathedral Dennis Filler R.I.P.
9.30 a.m. Cathedral Intentions of Margaret Walker
10.00 a.m. Marillac Tom Joe Brogan R.I.P.
11.30 a.m. Cathedral Intentions of Joe and Sarah Gallagher and family
6.30 p.m. Cathedral Faye Andrews R.I.P.

Monday 30 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Laura Packer R.I.P.
11.00 a.m. Cathedral Concert by Visiting Choir from Holland

Tuesday 31 December 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Bernie McMahon R.I.P.

Wednesday 1 January 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Malcolm Clarke R.I.P.
8.00 p.m. Cathedral Youth Mass

Thursday 2 January 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Douglas Sankey R.I.P.

Friday 3 January 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Lyndsey Galligan McLoughlin R.I.P.
1.00 p.m. Halls ‘All Are Welcome’ Meeting

Saturday 4 January 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Bridget Gallagher R.I.P.
11.00 – 12 Noon Cathedral Sacrament of Reconciliation
6.30 p.m. Holy Cross Intentions of Brian and Veronica Kelliher (65th Wedding Anniversary)

Sunday 5 January

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION
8.00 a.m. Cathedral People of the Parish
9.30 a.m. Cathedral Betty and Arthur De’Ath R.I.P.
10.00 a.m. Marillac Mary Hughes (F)
11.30 a.m. Cathedral Eddie McFadden R.I.P.
6.30 p.m. Cathedral Intentions of Laura

Saturday 4th January through to Sunday 12th January 2020

Saturday 4 January 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Bridget Gallagher R.I.P.
11.00 – 12 Noon Cathedral Sacrament of Reconciliation
6.30 p.m. Holy Cross Intentions of Brian and Veronica Kelliher (65th Wedding Anniversary)

Sunday 5 January

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD
HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION
8.00 a.m. Cathedral People of the Parish
9.30 a.m. Cathedral Betty and Arthur De’Ath R.I.P.
10.00 a.m. Marillac Mary Hughes (F)
11.30 a.m. Cathedral Eddie McFadden R.I.P.
6.30 p.m. Cathedral Intentions of Laura

Monday 6 January 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Betty Synan R.I.P.
7.30 p.m. Cathedral Holy Hour

Tuesday

Thursday 2 January 9.15 a.m. Cathedral Kathleen Theresa West (F)
Wednesday
8 January
9.15 a.m. Cathedral Ruth Pettigrew R.I.P.
11.00 a.m. Cathedral Funeral Service for the late Florence Sandle R.I.P.
6.30 p.m. Cathedral Choral Vespers

Thursday
9 January
9.15 a.m. Cathedral Betty Gaze OFS R.I.P.
5.30 p.m. Grange Mary Hughes (F)
7.45 p.m. Conf Centre Marriage Preparation Course (1 of 5)

Friday
10 January
9.15 a.m. Cathedral Gerry Canavan R.I.P.
6.15 p.m. Cathedral ‘Choral Vespers’

Saturday
11 January
9.15 a.m. Cathedral John McDowell R.I.P.
9.15 a.m. Cathedral First Holy Communion Programme – Session 5
11.00 – 12 Noon Cathedral Sacrament of Reconciliation
4.00 p.m. Cathedral Rehearsal for the ‘PS150 Group’

Musicians
6.30 p.m. Holy Cross Myra and Arthur Ingram R.I.P.

Sunday
12 January
THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (A)
8.00 a.m. Cathedral Peter Fox R.I.P.
9.30 a.m. Cathedral Michael Pompilii R.I.P.
10.00 a.m. Marillac Intentions of Francis Joseph Kane
11.30 a.m. Cathedral Elizabeth Jennings R.I.P.
4.00 p.m. Conf Centre Baptism Preparation Course (1 of 5)
6.30 p.m. Cathedral People of the Parish

Saturday 29th December 2019 through to Sunday 5th January 2020

CATHEDRAL ANNIVERSARIES: Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Bridget McMahon, George Dobson, Theresa Shortall, Rita Gladwell, Peter Moss, Tarik Iskander, Margaret Styles, Cara Payne, Doris Allum, John Jeewoonerain, Bob McMillan, Gerald Healy, Thomas Sumner, Thomas Sinclair, William Payne, J Downey, Joseph Wisely, William Underwood, Barbara Norman, Gladys Dodimeade, Nilda Shean and Dennis Filler.

ANNIVERSARIES
BRENTWOOD CATHEDRAL and HOLY CROSS
Saturday 21st December through to Sunday 28th December 2019


HOLY CROSS ANNIVERSARIES: Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Scarlett Adams, Cornelius Gallagher, David Fleming, Elizabeth Durso, Thomas Crawshaw, William Murrell, Mary Donnelly, Brigitta Dyer, Egbert King, Willie Mateer, Eugene McMahon, George Dobson, Mary Coe, Ellen May Young, Mary Madeline Nightingale, Michael McCool, Arthur De’Ath, Arthur Campbell, Alice Moss and Trevor Yates.

Saturday 29th December 2019 through to Sunday 5th January 2020

CATHEDRAL ANNIVERSARIES: Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Bridget McMahon, Sheila Cremin, Jo Tiernan, Anne Rowntree, John Barrett, Margaret Berg, Gerald Williams, Bertha Lawlor, Henry Searle, Jamie Mumford, Margaret Costello, David Foster, Nora Loughrey, Martin Cosgrove, Ivy Bird, Charles Ayley, Charles Devereux-Cooke, Mary Kelly, Thomas Kenny, Irene Archard, Agnes Browne., Florence Bohannon, Margaret Uniacke, Frederick Metcalfe, Patrick Mooney, Ellen Baker, Christopher Udal, Mary Moriarty, Frances Tanner, Faye Andrews, Johanna Dowling, Dennis Hulls, Paul Heath, Kitty Wilson, Lee...
Sargent, Violet Pearce, Adelina Sidoli, Peter Mooney, Sr Agatha Whelan OSU, Patrick Murphy, George Manning, Christina Conlon, Lilian Kershaw, Maggie Nolan, Maureen Keogh, Madeleine Barnes, Margaret Warner, Arthur Alderton, Honora Long, Dolores Robinson, Alexander Winberg, William Morecroft, Violet Fitzgerald, Ted Tiernan, Gertrude Sommerford, Michael Bartley, Mary Keene, Anne McDavitt, Gwen Kelleher, John Leahy and John Leavy.

**HOLY CROSS ANNIVERSARIES:** Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Mary Coe, Margaret Berg, Sarah Brawley, Richard Motley, Kathleen Garnier, John Guilfoyle, Paddy Day, Eddie Midmore, Frederick Carter, Anna Paffett, Mary Crawshaw, Ellen Fleming, Mary Fisher, Alice Hopkins, Mary Kyndt, Madeleine Barnes, Alan Cunningham and Gertrude Sommerford.

**Saturday 6th January through to Sunday 13th January 2020**

**CATHEDRAL ANNIVERSARIES:** Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Michael Bartley, Mary Keene, Anne McDavitt, Gwen Kelleher, John Leahy, John Leavy, Thomas Clarke, Johanna Maher, Danny Burn, Susannah and Thomas Concannon, Nora Howley, Theresa Roxborough, Sister Margaret Joseph, William Gillett, Agnes Payne, Mary O’Donovan, Agnes Claridge, Margaret Collins, Lydia Porter, Antony Birch, Mary Ellen Corcoran, William Crossan, Tony Sharpen, Peggy Patience, Harry Ellis, Julia Tolan, Maisie Dunn, Isabelle Flynn, Ellen Edwards, Ethel Richards, Hubert Lassey, Peter Simona, Paul Charlick, Mary Baker, Reanne Sheward, Eliza Cross, George Dobson, John Kyne, Richard Calvert, Myra Ingram, Gerry Canavan, John Herbert Vaughan, Anne Whiting, Michael Pompili, Denis McNamara, John Berry, Barbara Glancy, Florence O’Brien, Peter Greenwood, Maurice Faulkner, Annie Underhill, Grace Ruston, Louis Moulding, Elizabeth Lovewell, James Nolan and Massimo Giuseppe Di Stasio Campbell.

**HOLY CROSS ANNIVERSARIES:** Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Ellen Carter, Mary Daly, Sheila Hargreaves, Madge Baker, Frank Timmins, Mercedes Payne, Julia Bunn, Cecilia Payne, Myra Ingram, James Doyle, John McCann, Herbert Mantell, Helen Elliot and Mary O’Brien.