Message from Fr Martin

“So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!” Mark 13:36-17

Our preparations for Christmas may have a more restrained and cautious feel this year as we celebrate under the shadow of Covid-19. Nevertheless, we are grateful for the opportunity to find some cheer in putting up decorations, exchanging gifts, eating, drinking, and spending time with loved ones. These very human ways of preparing to celebrate Christmas remind us that in Jesus, God took human flesh and that He really did come into the reality of our human lives. He is the light that shines in the darkness. He is our hope.

Advent is also an opportunity for us to prepare spiritually - to prepare not only to celebrate Christ’s birth but also to prepare ourselves when He will come again to judge the living and the dead. St Cyril of Jerusalem reminds us of this double meaning of Advent. There is much to contemplate in His profound words:

We do not preach only one coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of divine kingdom.

At the first coming he was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At his second coming he will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming he endured the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming he will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels.
GENERAL PARISH NEWS

THE INAUGURATION OF ADVENT and NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS have sadly been cancelled this year due to the present restrictions. This will be a cause of great disappointment to many people.

It is also a cause of disappointment to Andrew Wright, the Master of Music, and the Cathedral choir who have been severely affected by the restrictions of the past months. We thank them for the sacrifices that they have made. We look forward to the day when we will hear them sing of the Lord’s goodness and our voices will, once again, be able to join with theirs.

CHRISTMAS MASSES People who have been successful in the lottery for seats at one of these Masses will have been contacted in the past to confirm that they have seats for the Mass they have requested.

Many thanks to Dr Graham Hillman who has worked tirelessly in collating all applications, allocating seats and contacting people. This has been a mammoth task, involving many hours of work and literally hundreds of emails. We thank him for his fantastic efforts.

If you have not been successful in securing a seat(s) for the Mass you applied for, we appreciate that this will be a cause of great disappointment for you and your families this year but given the social distance restrictions and the importance of minimising the risk of infection spread, we have no option but to limit the numbers of people who can attend at each Mass.

However, we remind you that Christmas does not end on 25th December but is for us the beginning of the Christmas season and our holy celebrations. Therefore, we encourage you and your families to celebrate the birth of Christ by attending Mass especially during the octave (the eight days) that follow the 25th December.

A gentle reminder that if you have not been allocated a seat(s), please do not turn up for the Christmas Masses. Only people who have been allocated a seat(s) will be admitted to a Christmas Mass.

THE CELEBRATION OF MASS Following the recent government announcement, we are delighted that public worship will once again be allowed to recommence after the current lockdown ends on 2nd December. This is wonderful news as we begin our Advent preparations to celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Saviour.

The first Mass we will celebrate in the Cathedral will be the Vigil Mass on Saturday 5th December; we very much look forward to welcoming you back through our doors again.

Please be mindful that all the previous restrictions (facemasks, hand sanitising and social distancing) remain in place. We all have a duty to be extra vigilant when in the Cathedral and have a real care for every member of the parish family.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYER will recommence from Monday 7th December and the Cathedral will be available from 10.00 a.m. until 3.00 p.m. every weekday for private prayer.

A sincere thank you to all those ushers whose presence ensured that the Cathedral was able to remain open for private prayer during this lockdown. The whole community is indebted to these men and women for being so generous with their time.

ADVENT PARISH FOODBANK COLLECTION We will be holding our Advent collection for the Foodbank on the weekend of 12/13th December; as well as general food items, seasonal items would also be most welcome at this time. In order to maintain social distance for this collection, we will arrange for a collection point to be in the car park at each Mass; a representative will be there with their boot open so donations can be put directly in the car and will then be delivered straight to the collection centre.

There will also be a collection box in the narthex for those who
prefer to donate money instead. Please be as generous as you are able to help those who are most in need in our community.

**NEW DECEMBER TIMETABLE**

Please note that from 5th December the Cathedral will be open as follows:

- **Sunday**: Masses at 8.00 a.m., 9.30 a.m., 11.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

  The Cathedral will be closed between 1.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m. for cleaning

- **Monday**: Morning Mass at 9.15 a.m.
  Individual Prayer 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

- **Tuesday**: Individual Prayer 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

- **Wednesday**: Morning Mass at 9.15 a.m.
  Individual Prayer 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

- **Thursday**: Individual Prayer 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

- **Friday**: Morning Mass at 9.15 a.m.
  Individual Prayer 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

- **Saturday**: Cathedral will be closed until 5.00 p.m. for cleaning
  Vigil Mass: 6.30 p.m.

**PLEASE PRAY** for the repose of the soul of Michael Murphy, Charles Ford, David Millane and Valerie Neil who all died recently.

*May they rest in the peace of Christ and rise again in glory.*

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** is available on request. Please do not hesitate to contact Clergy House to arrange a time to meet for confession with either Fr Martin or Fr Gary.

**NEW CONTACTLESS PAYMENT MACHINE** has been installed in the Cathedral narthex for donations. The machine is very easy to use and allows you to support the work of the Cathedral at this time by online giving. To use: *please hand sanitise and touch screen to begin.*

We are very aware of the financial uncertainty that some parishioners are facing during this difficult time of COVID-19. Sadly, as a parish we are also experiencing a significant gap in our finances which is of serious concern.

Contributions to assist the Cathedral can be made online via the Brentwood Diocesan website:

https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/donations/?parish=brentwood

If you prefer, you can make a payment directly into the parish bank account using online banking. You will need to set up the Brentwood Cathedral Parish as a payee on your online banking app or internet page. The Parish Bank details are as follows:

HSBC PLC, High Street, Brentwood, Essex
Account Name: Brentwood Cathedral
Sort Code: 40-13-22    Account Number: 30217492

If you use this method, please put your Surname and Initial as a reference. If you are part of our Gift Aid scheme, then please also add your Gift Aid number (GA); e.g. SmithJ GA 999

By entering this reference our Gift Aid Organiser will be able to make sure that your donation is increased in line with the Gift Aid regulations. If you don’t pay tax you can still set up a standing order or pay via online methods.

More information at  cathedralbrentwood.org/donations/
Thank you in advance for your generosity and any support that you can provide the Cathedral parish at this time.

REPOSITORY Unfortunately, due to the current pandemic, we are unable to provide the usual facility of offering Christmas cards for purchase from our repository this year. Please do make a special effort to purchase Christian themed cards as well as religious stamps which are now available to buy from the post office. For ease, details of Catholic charities where cards can be purchased online are as follows:

- CAFOD - www.traidcraftshop.co.uk - 0191 491 0855
- Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society - Please visit https://www.bccs.org.uk/christmas/christmas-cards
- Aid to the Church in Need - www.acnuk.org/shop - 0345 241 6068

CAFOD WORLD GIFTS As you get ready for Christmas this year, please consider buying from CAFOD World Gifts. CAFOD has a range of virtual charity gifts that will delight the people you give them to and help transform the lives of families living in poverty. More information can be found: https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/

SUSTAINABLE CHRISTMAS As we enter the Christmas period this year, why not try these sustainable Christmas gift ideas:

1) Consider gifting your loved ones an experience or a day out rather than a physical present. With the current circumstances of COVID-19, this could be a great idea as it can give loved ones something to look forward to once the restrictions are lifted.

2) Show your loved ones you care by making your own home-made gifts. This is the perfect time to impress your loved ones by getting creative, for example, you can upcycle an unused item to create something new, bake some home-made treats or knit a woolly hat or scarf.

3) If you would still like to buy presents, why not support Brentwood’s local shops, independent businesses and refill stores?

4) Did you know, consumers in the UK use around 227,000 miles of wrapping paper each year? That’s enough wrapping paper to gift-wrap the entire island of Guernsey! Consider wrapping your gifts in parcel paper and tying them with natural twine rather than tape or ribbon. A great zero-waste idea could be to wrap your gift in a scarf, which would then also become part of the present!

5) If you are planning on sending cards this year, please do support local Catholic charities such as buying Christmas cards from Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society. Sending e-cards is also a great way of sending cards to loved ones who may be self-isolating.

GREEN GUARDIANS It’s been easy lately to forget some climate change and plastic resolutions. So, a gentle reminder to perhaps lobby supermarkets to reduce plastic packaging. Consider buying a now widely available EcoEgg for laundry and maybe re-useable face masks to reduce the millions going into landfill or the oceans. In addition, let’s not forget the Foodbank and looking out for anyone who maybe struggling at this time or who may end up alone for Christmas.

MASS INTENTIONS AND ANNIVERSARIES can be found on the Brentwood Cathedral website. All intentions will be said by our Priests in private celebration of Mass during the lockdown period.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL APPLICATIONS. If you are applying for a primary or secondary Catholic school with your child starting in September 2021, please make sure that you bring your Mass registration card with you when you come to collect your Certificate of Catholic Practice. This will clearly show your practice before lockdown.

Fr Martin will be available only at the following times in Clergy House to see parents who are known to him and who are
practicing their faith every Sunday. If you have chosen not to practise your faith, please apply directly to the Catholic school of your choice.

If you are attending one of the following meetings, please note the following:

**PRIMARY SCHOOL APPLICATIONS**

*Please note these dates have changed*
Wednesday 9th December - 4.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Thursday 10th December - 4.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

i) Fr Martin will meet one parent in the Cathedral sacristy
ii) Please wear a face mask
iii) Please social distance
iv) Please hand sanitise when you enter the Cathedral and when you leave

If you have decided to apply for a non-Catholic school and it requires Fr Martin’s confirmation of the practice of your Catholic Faith, please bring the relevant document with you to the meeting.

**GENERAL NEWS**

**BCYS ADVENT CONCERT** Sunday 6th December 4.00 p.m. and throughout Advent on YouTube featuring favourite carols, with music led by Art Wangcharoensab from Brentwood Cathedral, as well as Gabi, Felishia and Erin from the BCYS and Walsingham House team, along with readings and poems; the concert will be a prayerful and delightful way to journey through Advent. And, of course, you can sing along to your heart’s content at home! Free to watch, with donations welcome; money raised will be split between the Trussell Trust, supporting food banks across the Diocese, and the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service. Full details and links: [www.bcys.net/events/adventcarols](http://www.bcys.net/events/adventcarols).

**ST HELEN’S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL** - A virtual tour of the school is now available via the school website for prospective Reception parents 2021-22. Please follow the links: About Us - Virtual Tour - Reception 2021-22. You can also find out more about the school via Twitter.

**THE DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES** 2021 is planned for Sunday 25 - Friday 30 July. However, because of Covid-19 it is not possible to know yet whether a pilgrimage will be practical or in what form. Therefore, any decisions and announcements regarding the Diocesan Pilgrimage, and our young people intending to travel with the BCYS, will be made in January. Until then, do keep the dates for the pilgrimage in your diaries.

**BRENTWOOD URSULINE CONVENT HIGH SCHOOL** have a fixed term vacancy for a Deputy Student Support Co-ordinator, term time + 2 weeks, 35 hours per week. For further information, please see the school website [www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk](http://www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk) or alternatively, please email mfreeman@buchs.co.uk.

**THE CAMPION SCHOOL** is looking to appoint a Minute Taker to work on an ‘ad hoc’ basis. Duties will consist of taking minutes for various Governor meetings throughout the year. Applicants should have strong previous minute taking experience, excellent attention to detail and strong IT Skills Word/MS Office. If you have the relevant experience and are looking for a new opportunity please contact Mrs Noddings, PA to the Headmaster on 01708 452332/cnoddings@thecampionschool.org.

**PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK** and housebound parishioners and friends, including: Bridget Barron, Hermine Bayley, Madeleine Bevan, Julia Blencowe, Phil Carr, David, Patricia Decup, Fr Stewart Foster, Julian Goode, Concetta Hall, David Hill, Ann Hurcombe, Wong Su Hwa, Jess, Brian Kelleher, Veronica Kelleher, Lawrence, Tony Maule, Kath Murnane, Harry Newman, Barney O'Driscoll, Siobhan O’Leary, Steven Poole, Anne Rowe, Helena Rowe, Geraldine Sheehan, Robin Shenton, David Spring, Tim, TCT, Louisa Whiteman, and all our sick in Marillac, Mascalis,
Brentwood Community, The Beeches, Queens, Nuffield and Hartwood Hospitals and St Francis Hospice.

CATHEDRAL ANNIVERSARIES: Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Eileen Butterwick, Kathleen O’Regan, Anne Greenaway, Patrick Roche, Geoffrey Ball, Joan Murtagh, Florence Watts, William Smythe, Mary Carter, Sister Lucy OSU, Patrick Keogh, Mrs N McMahon, Rosina Kairis, William Purdy, Stephen Delee, Doris Tweed, Julia March, June Musto, John Avis, Terrence Vaughan, Caroline Coppin, George Mills, Eily Hayes, Elizabeth O’Regan, Patrick Redmond, Peter Ball, Edward Lambert, Cornelius Cullivan, Alfred Walsh, Rita Smith, Julia Brooking, Grace Millane, Luisa Caperoe, Mary Harrington, Anna Wong, Agnes Payne, Robert Francis, John O’Donnell, Mary Slater, Mary Bamber, Monica David-Poynter, William Magorrian, Anne Morton, Pauline Court, Joseph Kwiatek, Eileen Lingard, Sister Mary Clare Joseph, Julie Ryan, James Uniack, Charles Maling, Lillian Southon, Edmund O’Regan, Aidan Calaghan, Ann Quinn, John McCann, John Sharpe, Germaine Hollingsworth, Mary Mooney, Stephen Brown, Tom Carr and John McCarthy.

HOLY CROSS ANNIVERSARIES: Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Brendan Daly, Eileen Horan, Elsie McElligott, David Bexley, Joseph Lewis, Alfred Hegarty, Michael Whelan, Michael John Small, Peter Henry Jaccottet, George Salmon and Vera Fleming.

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