The Nativity at Night by Geertgen tot Sint Jans in the National Gallery, London, is a visual meditation on the words of the prophet Isaiah, “on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone”. This light shines from a mewling baby who is none other than the “only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth”. His divine radiance cannot be consumed by the darkness of sin and death. Before His glowing presence all creation falls silent in wonder and adoration.

The Covid-19 pandemic has cast deep shadows over all our lives this past year. None more so than the some 65,000 men and women in this country alone for whom this virus proved deadly and who have left behind families who grieve their loved one’s absence this Christmas. We remember them in prayer.

Isolation, fear and anxiety during these past months have also contributed to the deterioration of the mental well-being of many people. For others the dark shadows have made them fearful for their livelihoods and financial security. At the same time, relationships have been tested and, sadly, some have splintered and even cracked apart. As our emotional resilience has weakened, so some people have become more vulnerable to destructive addictions and cynical attitudes.
No vaccine can cure humanity of this darkness. Only the light of Christ can penetrate this darkness and reveal to us our spiritual and moral nobility. By imitating Jesus we learn to pray, to be silent and come to know His peace. We learn to be fully alive to the practice of the virtues, with the courage that it takes to live in the truth and to speak it. When we willingly accept and return the Father’s love and show this love to our neighbours, be they friend or foe, then Christ’s light shines in our lives and we challenge the darkness, within and around us.

Only when we stand in the light of the Christ child are we able to become heralds of hope to those who remain trapped in the shadow of darkness. We understand that the light of Christmas Night becomes the new dawn of Easter Sunday where we are bathed in the future glory of eternal life. In the words of the poet, John Donne: ‘His Christmas Day and His Good Friday are but the morning and evening of one and the same day.’

Although we may not be able to congregate and worship together as in previous years, the light of the Christ Child still has the power to warm our hearts and illuminate our minds. Be assured that the whole parish family will be very much lifted in prayer to the Lord by Fr Martin, Fr Gary and Deacons Paul, Quentin and Simon during these coming days.

May the light of the Christ Child shine upon you, your families and friends this Christmas. May His light be your hope and protection.

**CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS** are your personal gift to the priests of the parish. If you are a tax payer, you can Gift Aid your offering. Envelopes are available at the Cathedral entrances. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

---

**If you have been allocated a seat(s) for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses, please be aware of the following:**

If you or any of your household are unwell or display Covid symptoms, please do not come to the Cathedral where you may put other people’s health at risk.

Please wear a face mask and make sure that it is covering your mouth and nose.

Please hand sanitise.

Please use the Track and Trace QR code if you have the NHS app.

You will have your temperature taken before you enter the Cathedral.

Please respectfully follow the guidance of the ushers.

Please note that the toilets in the Cathedral will not be open.

**IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED A SEAT ALLOCATION PLEASE DO NOT COME TO THE CATHEDRAL ON CHRISTMAS EVE OR CHRISTMAS DAY.**

However, we remind all parishioners that the Feast of Christmas lasts for eight days, the Octave of Christmas. Mass on each of those days is indeed a Christmas Mass. Therefore, we encourage you to celebrate the birth of Christ by attending Mass during the sacred Octave when Mass times will be:

- **Saturday 26th**: 6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass
- **Sunday 27th Feast of the Holy Family**: 8.00 a.m., 9.30 a.m., 11.30 a.m. & 6.30 p.m.
- **Monday 28th The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**: 10.00 a.m.
- **Tuesday 29th**: 10.00 a.m.
- **Wednesday 30th**: 10.00 a.m.
- **Thursday 31st**: 10.00 a.m.
- **Friday 1st Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God**: 10.00 a.m.
Saturday 2nd 6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass  
Sunday 3rd Second Sunday after the Nativity:  
8.00 a.m., 9.30 a.m., 11.30 a.m. & 6.30 p.m. 

Please note the Cathedral will not be open for individual prayer during Christmas week.

GENERAL PARISH NEWS

ADVENT PARISH FOODBANK COLLECTION Thank you for your generosity; we had 5 cars full of donations as well as £520 which the foodbank will use to buy items that cannot be donated (such as baby food). It really will help make a real difference to those struggling to make ends meet this Christmas.

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS have sadly been cancelled this year due to the present restrictions.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYER The Cathedral will be open from 10.00 a.m. until 3.00 p.m. every weekday for private prayer.

Please note that the Cathedral will be closed for Individual prayer from 21st - 24th December to allow for the cleaning, flower arranging and preparations for the Christmas Masses to take place in a secure fashion and also for the week following Christmas.

PLEASE PRAY for the repose of the soul of Michael Murphy, Charles Forde, David Millane and Valerie Neill 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.

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.

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 to the Cathedral parish at this time.
THE CHRISTMAS GOSPELS: Fr Adrian Graffy, parish priest and member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, has prepared a series of reflections on the ‘Christmas gospels’, the gospel passages read from 17th December until 6th January. Video of the talks can be accessed by going to www.whatgoodnews.org.

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.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK and housebound parishioners and friends, including: Bridget Barron, Hermine Bayley, Madeleine Bevan, Julia Blencowe, Phil Carr, Matthew Conrad, 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, Stephanie Murray, Harry Newman, Barney O’Driscoll, Siobhan O’Leary, Steven Poole, Anne Rowe, Helena Rowe, Geraldine Sheehan, Robin Shenton, Stanley Smith, David Spring, Tim, TCT, Louisa Whiteman, and all our sick in Marillac, Maccalls, 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: Mary McNamara, John Blackwell, Edward Regan, Margaret Lawless, John Pritchard, Gladys Poskitt, Antonia Mitchell, Bridget Flynn, Gemma Edgar, Mrs E M Jeffries, Mrs Hardingham, Les Hooley, Sister M Willis, Marjorie Wager, Jim Doran, Keith Codd, Gerard Donegan, James O’Flynn, Brother Felini OFM, Michael Hoey, Sydney Hearn, Frances Dobson, George Whiteman, Agnes Cronin, William Garvan, Mary Groves, William Hollis, Bridget Coyne, Shirley de Prazer, Barry Munns, Patricia Cull, Henry Coldham, Cornelius Gallagher, Thomas McElwaine, Ernest Colmer, Mary and Edward Sullivan, Thomas Bartley, Marjorie Smythe, Michael Eustace, Alfred Dubock, Margaret Queally, Edward Appleton, Joseph Pepper, Thomas Regan, Mary Ann Regan, Agnes Cheater, Fr Francis Greenan, Rev William Mills, William Gilsenan, Bert Sewell, Patricia Lines, Hazel Clarke, John Kelleher, Mary Gillet, Joseph Wynn, Joe Fitzpatrick, George Page, Charles McElwaine, Heliodor Kruzycki, Lea Clara Jones, Margaret Mouzon, Jean Allen, Mary Ball, George Dobson, Theresa Shortall, Rita Gladwell, Peter Moss, Tarik Iskander, Margaret Styles, Cara Payne, Doris Allum, John Jeewoonerain, Bob McMilloan, Gerald Healy, Thomas Sumner, Thomas Sinclair, William Payne, J Downey, Joseph Wisely, William Underwood, Barbara Norman, Gladys Doddimeade, Nilda Shean, Dennis Filler, 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 McInlave, Patrick Mooney, Ellen Baker, Christopher Udall, 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, 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,...
HOLY CROSS ANNIVERSARIES: Please remember the following, whose anniversaries occur at this time: Arthur Campbell, Alice Moss, Trevor Yates, 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, Gertrude Sommerford, Ellen Carter, Mary Daly, Sheila Hargreaves, Madge Baker, Frank Timmins, Mercedes Payne, Julia Bunn, Cecilia Payne and Myra Ingram.

Follow Brentwood Cathedral

Brentwood Diocesan Trust - Registered Charity No. 234092