

The Parish of Holy Cross and St Luke's

Tracyes Road, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6JJ

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Parish Priest

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Parish Deacons

Rev. Michael Smith

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The Brentwood Diocesan Trust Registered Charity No. 234092

Weekend Mass Times

Saturday 5.30pm, Sunday 9.00am, Sunday 11.00am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

After Saturday 5.30pm Mass, prior to Sunday 9.00am Mass, and by appointment

Parish Schools

Holy Cross Preschool, Holycrosspreschool50@gmail.com, Natalie

Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, 01279 424452, Headteacher: Mrs Alison Kerrell

St. Luke's Catholic Primary Academy (part of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust), 01279 423499, Executive Headteacher: Mr Ian Kendall

St. Mark's West Essex Catholic Academy, 01God279 421267, Headteacher: Mr John Taylor

Safeguarding

For any safeguarding concerns, please contact Rev. Anthony Rowley by email only (please see above).

Hall Hire

For any enquires to hire the hall, please contact Sheila Underdown by text only, on 07590533511

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear brothers and sisters.

There are hundreds of images of the Assumption, from delicate icons to the magnificent paintings. If you want to enter this feast more deeply, simply Google "Assumption of Mary" and let the beauty of Christian imagination speak to you. In almost every painting, cherubs and angels bear Mary upward into the joy of heaven, reunited with her Son something she deserved more than anyone, not only for the immense suffering she endured, but because she was the first and most faithful disciple of Jesus.

Catholic tradition allows two legitimate understandings of Mary's Assumption: that Mary died and was raised before being assumed into heaven, or that she was taken up bodily without first dying.

The Church has never defined which occurred. Eastern Catholics celebrate the feast as her Dormition, her “falling asleep”. Ancient Christian writings reflect this mystery with tenderness. The De Obitu S. Dominae (6th century) describes Mary rising to heaven in a white cloud. An even earlier text, The Book of Mary’s Repose, survives in an Ethiopic translation from the 4th century. The feast itself appears in Rome in the 8th century under Pope Sergius. Across the centuries, Christians of many traditions Eastern, Western, Oriental, Orthodox, and Anglican - have honoured this mystery. It was finally defined dogmatically by Pope Pius XII on 1 November 1950.

I count it a great privilege to have walked the road in Ephesus where Mary, John in whose care Jesus placed her, and Paul once walked. I visited the house where Mary is believed to have lived until her Dormition. Some traditions even place her Assumption there. Standing in that quiet place, one senses that God truly planned her journey from her Immaculate Conception to her Assumption, and that her destiny foreshadows ours. What God accomplished in Mary, He desires in part for us (as in my homily).

In many countries, the Assumption is a major feast and even a public holiday. I was in Lourdes in 2018 when 20,000 pilgrims, especially French families, came to celebrate the feast as it fell on a Sunday. Later that day, thousands gathered for Mass in the fields, and 25,000 filled the underground basilica to capacity. It was breathtaking, a living testament of faith and gratitude to the Mother of God.

The Assumption teaches us that we participate, body and soul in the struggles of life, and that as a whole person we will share in Christ’s victory over death, when we arise one the last day. Mary shows us the future God desires for us. It tells us that our bodies matter, our choices matter, our discipleship matters, and that nothing lived in love is ever lost.

So let us ask Mary, assumed into heaven, to obtain for us the grace, to discipline ourselves, spiritually and physically, and to live as disciples who hope one day to join her in the glory prepared for us.

And perhaps most of all, let us allow this feast to awaken hope in us, because if God has already done such wonders in Mary, then He has not finished with us. Her rising is the first light of our own destiny. Her glory is the door God opens for every faithful heart. Her Assumption is God whispering to the Church: “Lift up your eyes. This is where the story leads.”

May that hope steady us in our trials, strengthen us in our discipleship, and remind us that heaven is not far away. It is already reaching for us just as it reached for her.

God Bless you all Deacon Michael

Saturday 15 th August 5.30pm Vigil for The Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary (Christopher McGurr RIP)
Sunday 16 th August 9.00am The Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary (Vivian Maddison's Ints)
Sunday 16 th August 11.00am The Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary (For all parishioners)
Monday 17 th August 10.00am Feria (Vincent Farrelly RIP)
Tuesday 18 th August 2026 9.00am Feria (Sue Karolak RIP) Followed by Holy Hour
Wednesday 19 th August 2026 9.00am Feria (Elsie Ovenden RIP)
Thursday 20 th August 2026 9.00am St Bernard (Holy Souls) followed by Holy Hour
Friday 21 st July 2026 10.00am St Pius X (Those in our book of Remembrance)
Saturday 22 nd August 5.30pm Vigil for 21 st Sunday in Ordinary Time (For all Parishioners)
Sunday 23 rd August 9.00am 21 st Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday 23 rd August 9.00am 21 st Sunday in Ordinary Time (Helen Kluza and Jan Wookiskawsku RIP)

Liturgy of the Word

Response to the Psalm: On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir

Collection: £512.94p

Baptism Key Dates

Next Baptism Registration Meeting: Monday 7th September 2026, 6pm.

Next Baptism Catechetical Talk: Monday 14th September 2025, 6pm.

Legion of Mary Legion of Mary meet up every Wednesday at 10.30am. New members always welcome. For more information, please contact Steven on 07930304001.

First Holy Communion

The programme will begin on 5th September where pictures will be given out that will be needed for the programme, this will be every week. Enrolment is online through the Parish website. The cut-off date for this is 27th September. All work must be completed before then. You and your child will be expected to attend Mass each week. There will be a meeting with Fr Bernard, Dn Tony and Dn Michael. Parents Meeting 8th January, the lesson will begin 22nd January, then February 27th, March 20th, March 26th, April 17th. The communion Mass will be in May.

RCIA

We will be starting the new RCIA course in September on Thursday 3rd at 6pm. This is an introductory session and a chance to register your interest. If you are an adult and are not a Catholic, then this is your opportunity to explore the Catholic faith with no commitment. There may be others who have been baptised, and you are more than welcome to join the course and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at Easter.

Confirmation

For anyone who is in year 9 and under the age of 18 you may wish to be confirmed. Details about the course for next year will be available later in the year as soon as we know when the bishop's visitation is going to be.

Holy Hour

Just to remind you that we do have a Holy Hour on a Tuesday and Thursday after the 9am Mass, please however check the newsletter as due to other things it may have to be cancelled. We begin with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a Rosary. Then we have the Divine Mercy at about 10am followed by Benediction. If you are free, you are warmly invited to join us.

GIFT Conference: September 19th 9.30am-5pm at the Most Holy Redeemer Church, Billericay

- Are you disillusioned with your existing First Holy Communion Programme?
- Would you like to place families at the heart of parish renewal and support them to engage and connect with their faith?
- Does the idea of approaching sacramental preparation in a fruit-bearing way excite and inspire you?

Join us for this **one-day conference** which explores the GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) model of family catechesis. GIFT re-imagines how parishes can accompany and encourage families in their

faith journey and prepare them for the sacraments.

Whether you have already started your GIFT journey or are looking for a different way to support your families, this conference will share what the GIFT model could look like in your parish and explore why it is transformative for the Church.

You and your catechists can book a place by following this link:

<https://brushfire.com/divinerenovationministry-uk/GIFTConference/627818>

VISIT OF STATUE OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA - The Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, accompanied by relics of Saints Francisco and Jacinta will be coming to Brentwood Cathedral on **Saturday 12th September 2026**- the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary [Patronal Feast of the Society of Mary].

A message from Claire Simms, Elsie Ovenden's daughter. Thank you to each and every one of you that have reached out to me this week and to my siblings and Emily too with all your wonderful messages, visits, phone calls, cards, gifts and the million hugs that have been very welcome.

The Funeral arrangements for Elsie Ovenden

Tuesday 1st of September 2026 at Our Lady of Fatima RC Church Howard way Harlow CM2 two NS at 11 am followed by cremation at Parndon Wood cemetery.