



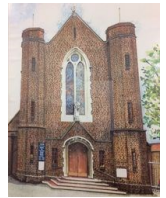
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

23RD & 24TH DECEMBER 2023 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT Mass book page 32

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30TH / 31ST DECEMBER 2023 THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH, Mass book page 41

Over the past couple of weeks I've seen the nativity story retold by various groups of children from our schools in songs, readings and drama. It is a familiar story but one which we should not tire of hearing. This is a wonderful part of our preparation for Christmas, and on the fourth Sunday of Advent, which this year quickly merges into Christmas Eve, our focus is on the last stage of God's preparation, and the first chapter of the Christmas story: the nine hidden months Our Lord spent in his mother's womb after Mary had consented to her part in God's plan, communicated by the Archangel Gabriel.

This story is the reason why we decorate our homes, exchange gifts and cards, and come together for special meals. It describes an event – a real event in history – that has had an impact like no other. The one whose birth is celebrated around the world at Christmas – even by people who celebrate without really being aware of what it is all about – is no ordinary human baby. Fully human, yes, but also the Son of God. To use the language of St John, the eternal Word of God, who is God, through whom all of creation came into being, has now become part of creation. He does so in order to close the gap between God and his creatures. By sharing our humanity, it becomes possible for us to share his divinity. That is the extraordinary truth we celebrate at Christmas. As a great feast – second only to Easter – we celebrate not just for one day, but for a whole season taking us up to the feast of the Epiphany and concluding with the Baptism of The Lord. Even then, we continue in a lower-key way (keeping the crib up) until Our Lord's Presentation in the Temple forty days after his birth.

It's hard to resist the Christmas celebrations spilling into Advent, but hopefully we can still do the Christmas season justice! The days

following Christmas include a number of feasts that gain extra significance from their closeness to Christmas: the first martyr Stephen, the evangelist John, those innocent children caught up in Herod's attempts to destroy any rival. Exactly a week after Christmas we celebrate the beginning of a new calendar year, but we also honour Mary as the Mother of God: a title which highlights the wonderful truth that the Son of God has a human mother; God himself has become a tiny baby utterly dependent on his mother. This same God who became small for our sake, placed in an animal's feeding trough, becomes even smaller as he is placed in our hands or on our tongues as the Bread of Life. There is no greater gift, and nothing more magnificent that we could feast on than this, and it is not just for one day!

As I mentioned in my earlier Advent message, there is darkness as well as light in the Christmas story. Our Lord comes precisely to bring the light of God into a world that has gone astray. The darkness that is present in the Christmas story is no less present in our world today, but the light of God is also just as present, shining through the church and the witness of his followers. God's peace is not merely an absence of conflict, it is a peace that comes from all things being ordered according to the will of God. Only then do they – we – fulfil God's purposes for them and attain that good for which they were made. We pray for true and lasting peace in our world and especially in the Holy Land, as well as Ukraine and elsewhere, and we pray for the victims of war. Let us pray too for all those for whom Christmas is a challenging time, through bereavement, sickness, homelessness, family difficulties, or worries about work and money. You are not alone. Finally, if you are travelling over the Christmas period, I wish you safe travels, and if you are visiting Upminster or coming home for Christmas, then welcome (back).

I wish you all a very blessed Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

God bless,

Fr Matthew

MIDNIGHT MASS: The parish choir will be leading the music at the 11pm 'Midnight' Mass on Christmas Eve, with carols from 10.30pm. This service (carols and Mass) will be live-streamed on our parish Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/stjosephschurchupminster>) for the benefit of those who are housebound or are attending a different Mass for Christmas. All ages welcome.

THANK YOU: On behalf of the whole parish, heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed in particular ways to the life of our parish over the past year, and who have made our Christmas celebrations so special. This includes those who assist in our worship, as servers, readers, musicians and extraordinary ministers of holy communion, those who welcome us to Mass or provide hospitality after, and those who prepare and adorn our church for worship, as cleaners, flower arrangers, and by taking care of brass, altar linens and servers albs – as well as those who organise the rotas for these things. Those who prepare children, young people and parents for the sacraments of baptism, first communion and confirmation, and lead our children in the celebration of their own Liturgy of the Word. Those who visit the sick and the housebound, and those who provide food and company to those who come to the Wednesday lunches. Those who support the church and wider community through parish groups: the St Vincent de Paul group, the Catenians, the Catholic Women's League, the Knights of St Columba, Mothers' Prayers, the Prayer Group, our school PFA and the Catholic Club. Those who have helped with special events, especially in the past year our Centenary Festival and Parish Mission. Those who assist with various tasks behind the scenes, relating to admin, communications and finance as well as maintaining our buildings and grounds and other tasks which may go unnoticed (but which would be noticed if they didn't happen!). Not forgetting those who work and volunteer in our parish schools. Thank you!

CHRISTMAS OFFERING: By long established custom the Christmas offering is a gift to the parish priest, and is much appreciated as a significant part of his income for the year. Your gift can be gift-aided in the usual way, as it has to go through the parish accounts like any collection. To avoid any confusion, the collection taken up at the normal Sunday Masses this weekend, as well as standing orders and online/contactless donations for parish funds all go towards the running costs of the parish in the usual way. Anything placed in the collection taken up at the Masses on Christmas Eve (5pm onwards) or Christmas Day, as well as anything marked Christmas Offering passed on by other means, will be counted as part of the Christmas Offering for Fr Matthew.

MASS TIMES & EUCHARISTIC ADORATION: Please note that some of the weekday Mass times in the period covered by this newsletter differ from usual. Also, there will be no lunchtime Holy Hour on Wednesday 27th December.

RIP: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Claire Argent-Hall, John Foy, and Frank and Marion Dearson, as well as Stella, mother of Esther McCall. Frank and Marion Dearson's funeral has been arranged for 11.30am on Thursday 4th January. John Foy's funeral has been arranged for 12 noon on Wednesday 10th January with reception of the body on Tuesday 9th January at 4.30pm. Clare-Argent Hall's funeral will be here on Tuesday 16th January at 11am. May Frank, Marion, Stella, John and Clare rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

ANGELUS CARDS: On this Fourth Sunday of Advent when we think of the beginning of the incarnation, cards will be distributed with the text of the Angelus, the daily prayer which commemorates that pivotal moment in our salvation. This prayer is recited at the beginning of our weekday Masses and you might like to use it at home. If you can, you might pray it in the morning (6am is traditional! – or you might pray with those gathered in church at 9.15am) as well as noon and 6pm.

2024 PARISH DIARIES: These are now available for sale in the porch. After a long price freeze, we've decided to increase the cost to £1 each. We have had to change supplier, which means we have been able to include some traditional prayers as a handy reference. Thanks to the advertisers who have supported the cost of printing the diary, all of the income from diary sales comes to the parish. You can pay at the repository when open, or via the 'Papers' wall slot, or using the 'Papers, candles etc' option on the self-service screen.

2024 DIOCESAN DIRECTORIES: These are on sale, priced at £2.95. You can pay in the same way as for diaries.

CRIB COLLECTION: You are invited to make an offering when you visit the crib to support the work of Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, a charity which provides various forms of support for children and their families. You can also give using the self-service screen in the porch. For more information, to give online or become a supporter please visit bccs.org.uk.

PARISH OFFICE: The parish office will be closed until 2nd January.

NEW YEAR'S DAY: Mass will be at 7pm (no morning Mass).

LUNCHTIME RECITAL—TRAJECTI VOCES: Please join us to listen to Trajecti Voces, a Choir from Holland giving a seasonal lunchtime recital at 12 noon on Saturday 30th December in the Cathedral.

ST JOSEPHS KNITTING & CRAFT GROUP: Please note that our next meeting will be on Monday 8th January from 12.30pm -2.30pm in the social centre.

TREE RECYCLING: Saint Francis Hospice are once again running their Christmas tree recycling scheme in Havering. Trees will be collected from 11th January (after the Christmas season has finished). Register and make a donation online.

ST JOSEPH'S CLUB: Please note that the Social club will be open on Christmas Eve from 6.30pm—9.30pm and will then close until Thursday 4th January 2024.

FRIDAY ABSTINENCE: Our Bishops have clarified that the usual practice of abstaining from meat does not apply on the Friday after Christmas.

RAINHAM FOODBANK: Thank you for your generous donations this year. During the last 3 weeks alone St Joseph's Church has been able to give more than 100kg of food and groceries due to your continued generosity. Please be advised that we cannot accept donations of alcoholic beverages.

40YRS OF WALSINGHAM HOUSE TEAMS: 2024 marks 40 years of retreat teams at Walsingham House. There will be a celebration Mass with Bishop Alan on Saturday 31st August 2024 at Walsingham House at Abbotswick. Please save the date as it would be wonderful to see Walsingham House and BCYS alumni and friends gather together to mark this milestone. More information to follow in the new year.

TE DEUM AND VENI CREATOR: There is a tradition of giving thanks for the past year by reciting the *Te Deum Laudamus* on New Year's Eve, and the *Veni Creator Spiritus* on New Year's Day to ask for the help of the Holy Spirit in the year ahead. We will pray these prayers at the end of Mass on the appropriate days. In the traditional (but often misunderstood) language of the church, these acts are opportunities to gain an indulgence, that is, an extra outpouring of divine mercy and grace that helps our growth in holiness, when joined to confession, reception of holy communion, prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father and a desire to live a virtuous life.

BCYS YOUNG ADULT RETREAT – Saturday 6th January 2024. A full day retreat for those aged 18 – 27 (having left school), at our beautiful retreat house Walsingham House at Abbotswick. Explore your faith, be inspired to put your faith into action, learn, ask questions and pray, all with other young adults. There is a small cost of just £10 to cover the day, with lunch and refreshments provided. For more information and to apply, please visit www.bcys.net/events/youngadults/

CAFOD's ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CRISIS APPEAL: Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at cafod.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers.

VOLUNTEER AT WALSINGHAM HOUSE: for the academic year 2024/2025 – applications are now open for anyone currently in year 13 or above and we are happy to answer any questions that young people or parents might have. All information for the above can be found on our website – www.bcys.net

BCYS YOUTH MASS: First Thursday of the Month, 6pm at Brentwood Cathedral. Beginning with pizza & refreshments with a workshop or speaker in the Parish Hall from 6pm, Youth Mass will then be celebrated in the Cathedral at 7:30pm. Absolutely everyone is welcome, please bring instruments, and sing, serve or read if you wish! No need to book, but do let us know if you have a group coming – just email info@bcys.net—the celebrant and preacher for January's youth Mass will be Fr Matthew!

RETRouvaille: Do you need help in your marriage? Retrouvaille has helped many couples find new hope, nourishment and growth in their marriages. If you want to uncover or reawaken the love, trust and commitment that brought you together and work through difficult times in your marriage, contact Retrouvaille confidentially for more information about our 2024 programmes. There is no group therapy or group work. Our next programme commences with a Virtual weekend on 8 - 11 February 2024 or there is a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024. Call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443, email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK: Michael Coady, Reuben Jack Dodd (Lacey), Emilia Gunn, Deborah & Paul Bussutil, Christopher Noel Ashford, Joan Spoor, Margaret Munnely, Liam O'Byrne, Tom Martin, Maureen Peek, Frances Oskis, Maggie Ollington, Maureen Springham, Joseph Furzer, Martyn Oliver, James Nickelson, Len Rawlings, Stella Rogers, Wenda Cordell, Irene Stubbings, Janet Martin, Tony White, Nora Delor, Maureen Pain, Ian Laidlaw, Julie Cordell, Stella Owen, Patrick Rodgers, Mary Smith, Frank Hamilton, Christine Sejas, Anna Gawlik, Maureen Anderson, Patricia Mylod and Lisa Bostock.

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES: William Smith, Alex Hendry, Laurence O'Brien, Magdalene McGhie, Rosemary Underwood, Catherine Dupree, Geoffrey Marshall, Julia Farrier, John Redfern, Henry Jarvis, Gladys Morgan, Herbert Joyce, John Winn, James Cavanagh, Patrick O'Malley, Fr Drea, Desmond Sheridan, Fr Healy, John Young, Nora Fleming, Fred McCardle, Julia Walsh, Philip Broughton, Marion Abdilla, Katlyn Donovan, Julia Rix, James Sena, Albert Wills, Ron Panzavecchia, Nellie Durey, Joseph Cosgrave, Derek Cox, James Balfe, Bernard John Barrett, Diane Romano, Frances Rose Edwards, Ron Howard, Fr Frank Kerrigan, Ellen Biggs, Tom Connolly, Mary Cosgrave, Ellen Lockey, Honora Ferriter, Jean Rover, Mary Willsmer, Joseph McEnnerney, John Garwood, Thomas McKenzie, Mary Allistone, Patrick Ruane, Aida Kidd, Marion Lamont, Wilfred Mowat, Ellen Davis, Anthony Januszka, Kathleen Connolly, Stanley Armstrong, Denis Scott, John Coppin, Joanne Cozens, John McKeown, Louis Precieux, Peter Watson, Eva Furze, Irene Roberts, Mary Bardwell, Edna Stanley, Ruby Cullen, Mignon (Mitzi) Williams, Margaret Newman, Mary Cagney, Mary Parsons, Pamela Martin, George Kinghorn, Mary Clarke, Rosie Stacey, Eileen Milne, Mary Harkins, Michael & Bridie Tuohy, Elizabeth Loughhead, Paddy Keating, Nevill Mattis, Denis Healy, Vittoria Maria Rossi, Mary Lacey, Wiktor Wojtecki, Reginald Harvey, Doris Skinner, Bridget Sutherland, Florence Burt, Maria Seddon, Hannah Eustace, Emily Haran, Jennifer Browning, Christopher Pennell, Anthony Brady, Nellie Murphy, Ben Archer, Margaret Coleman, Margaret Main & Sylvia Sarson. May they all rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR NEXT WEEK

Sun 31st Dec <i>9am</i> <i>11am</i>	THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH Leonard James White RIP Anniv. Joan Sullivan & Anne McMahon RIP
Mon 1st Jan <i>7pm</i>	SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD Madeleine Moreton RIP Anniv. (Williamson)
Tues 2nd Jan <i>9.15am</i>	SS BASIL THE GREAT & GREGORY NAZIANZEN Enid & John Mangham RIP Anniv. (Bernadette)
Wed 3rd Jan <i>9.15am</i>	Joe Sullivan RIP (Tim Regan & Family)
Thur 4th Jan <i>9.15am</i>	Frank Lawrenson RIP Anniv. (Mason)
Frid 5th Jan <i>9.15am</i>	Fred Regan RIP (Foley Family)
Sat 6th Jan <i>5.30pm—6.15pm</i> <i>6.30pm</i>	ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS People of the parish
Sun 7th Jan <i>9.00am</i> <i>11.00am</i>	THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD Morgan Madden RIP Anniv. (Mary-Anne) Jean Marlborough RIP (Street)

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 23rd Dec

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

For the intentions of Rita Cuthert (Butler)

Sun 24th Dec

9.00am

11.00am

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Catherine Sweeney RIP Anniv. (Jane)

People of the parish

NATIVITY OF THE LORD

For the intentions of Sam & Winnie

Private Intention

People of the parish

Mon 25th Dec

8am

10am

CHRISTMAS DAY

Irene & Ronald Robinson's Intentions

Former priests of the parish

Tues 26th Dec

9.15am

ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

Private Intention (Bemand-Qureshi)

Wed 27th Dec

9.15am

ST JOHN, AP, EV

Gerry Collins RIP Anniv. (Pavitt)

Thur 28th Dec

9.15am

THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MM

Rev. Fr Peter Edwards RIP

Frid 29th Dec

9.15am

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

Private Intention (Bemand-Qureshi)

Sat 30th Dec

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

People of the parish

USEFUL INFORMATION

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION & CONFESSIONS: Saturday evening 5.30-6.15pm and Wednesday 12 noon-1pm. Confessions also available on request when Fr Matthew is available or by appointment.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS: Mon-Fri 9am-12.30pm (except Wednesdays).

Fr Matthew (emergencies—voice only): 020 3332 0486

St Joseph's School - School office 01708-220277

Sacred Heart of Mary School - School office 01708-222660

Baptisms & weddings - please speak to Fr Matthew after Mass

Repository: Saturdays before & after Mass, and Sundays after the 9am Mass until 10.55am

Queen's Hospital: If someone staying in the hospital would like Holy Communion, please contact the lay chaplaincy coordinator Helen Miranda on 01708 477890. In an emergency ask the ward staff to request the on-call Catholic priest via switchboard.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU ARE AWARE OF THE POSITION OF THE EMERGENCY FIRE EXIT DOORS IN THE CHURCH, AND PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL MOBILE TELEPHONES ARE SILENCED BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS