



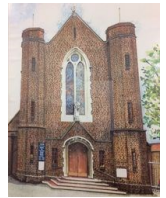
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

27TH / 28TH JANUARY 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (B) - Mass Book Pg 60

(Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13, Corinthians 1:26-31, Matthew 5:1-12)

Sometimes its hard to know exactly what to focus on in the gospel passage for the week. This Sunday's is a good example. We might naturally home in on what seems most bizarre to us: the unclean spirit protesting against the presence of the one it identifies as the 'holy one of God'. But this strange episode is bracketed by the statement, repeated by those astonished by what they have just witnessed, that this man Jesus teaches with an extraordinary authority, like no one else they have heard.

Looking at the choice of Old Testament reading can help us find a way in, for as I explained last week, it is chosen to compliment or highlight a specific aspect of the gospel or help us see the fulfilment of a prophecy. When Moses says "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself" this could apply to any number of figures that appear in the Old Testament – those who have received God's Spirit enabling them to speak words of truth to his people. But none more so that Jesus himself, who speaks as God. Looking again at the reading from Deuteronomy, we notice that the need for a prophet arises from the fear people have of hearing directly from God. The voice of God needs to be mediated in some way, spoken to us in a human voice without diminishing the message which still comes from God. Again, Jesus fulfil this in a way no other prophet or teacher can – 'unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority'.

Respected teachers rarely make themselves the focus of their message. We are rightly suspicious of those who form a 'personality cult' around themselves. Jesus is therefore unusual. 'Follow *me*' is the call he issued last week, not 'follow my teachings'. The core of Jesus' teaching is not a moral message but a call to repentance – literally to turn around, to change the direction of one's life so that God is the centre. And who tell us to do this but God himself, in our midst. For any other person to make themselves the centre of attention would be the height of arrogance and pride. But God is as central to our lives as the sun is to the solar system. Either Jesus is the greatest blasphemer and charlatan, and we who follow him and share his messianic title are utterly deluded, or he is indeed the Son of God, the only person who can rightfully call people to follow him and make him the centre of their lives. What he isn't, and can't be reduced to, is a teacher with a motivational message.

What else might we notice? Jesus' audience spoke of a 'teaching that is new'. So far the gospel (still in chapter 1 remember) hasn't included much in the way of teaching content. What Jesus has come to offer is a new life. Not simply a new way of life – a new moral code, a new set of values to live by – but a new life lived in restored friendship with God who shares the fullness of divine life with us. It is the newness of the promised land offered to a people mired in slavery who are so caught up in their limited way of life that they can barely grasp what is on offer to them. Indeed the only one who recognised Jesus with clear sight is the one who possesses angelic knowledge but has decisively rejected the possibility of divine life being shared with mere creatures and wants to keep us all enslaved. Some of those drawn to Jesus in the gospel have begun to see a glimpse of this newness, yet many find it too hard to let go of what has become entrenched in their lives. If that applies to us, and surely it applies to all of us at least in some measure, let us pray for the grace not only to recognise, but also respond whole-heartedly, to the Lord's invitation.

God bless, Fr Matthew.

WELCOME: If you are new to St Joseph's or visiting us then you are most welcome here. If you need any assistance, please speak to the welcome team in the porch, and please introduce yourself to Fr Matthew after Mass. If you would find it helpful, please ask the welcomers for a card with the order of Mass. Those who are not Catholic are invited to receive a blessing at communion time – the customary way to indicate this is to place your arm across your chest when you reach the priest or assisting minister. New parishioners are encouraged to complete a registration card, available in the porch or online via our website.

CANDLEMAS: Friday is the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, also known as the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Candlemas. Mass will be celebrated at the usual time (9.15am), beginning with the traditional Candlemass ceremonies.

ST BLAISE BLESSING: The day after Candlemas is the feast of St Blaise, Bishop and Martyr (in our diocese also the feast of local reformation martyr St Anne Line). It is customary on this day to honour St Blaise as patron of those with diseases of the throat by offering a blessing of throats using (unlit) candles. If you wish to receive this blessing please come to the confessional during holy hour next Saturday or see Fr Matthew after the evening Mass.

NEXT WEEKEND: Our Confirmation group will be attending the Saturday evening Mass to mark their formal enrolment on the confirmation programme. The First Communion group (considerably larger than the Confirmation group!) will be attending the 11am Mass on Sunday morning as part of their preparation.

CHURCH CLEANING: At the moment the church is cleaned by two volunteers who are only in a position to clean the church once a fortnight. Ideally we would clean the church every week, with a larger team to share the work. If you are in a position to offer an hour or so of your time to the church community on a monthly basis please contact the parish office. We can all play a part in tidying up any mess we notice in the church – there is a litter bin in the porch and a dustpan and brush can easily be provided. Thank you.

PRAYER MINISTRY: Members of our parish prayer ministry team will be available after mass on the first weekend of each month to listen to and pray with anyone who wishes to receive this support.

PALM CROSSES: With Ash Wednesday approaching (14th February) you are encouraged to bring palm crosses to church so that they can be burnt to make the ash used as a sign of repentance and trust in God's mercy at the beginning of Lent. Please bring your palm crosses or palm leaves and place them in the basket in the porch by Sunday 11th February

RIP NOTICES: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Patricia Burwood, Derek Cavalier and Fr's Michael Butler and John McKeon. Patricia's funeral will be at 11.30am on 30th January at South Essex Crematorium. Derek's funeral will be here on Monday 5th February at 11.30am with his body being received into the church on Sunday 4th February at 5pm. May Patricia and Derek rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

CWL WEDNESDAY LUNCH CLUB: Our next lunch club will be on 31st January in the social centre at 12pm. If you are unable to make lunch, why not join us for a cup of tea/ coffee in the morning after mass. Will be lovely to welcome both old and new friends.

SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE: Join us for tea or coffee in the social centre after the 9am Mass or before the 11am Mass. This week coffee is hosted by our parish SVP.

BCCS CRIB APPEAL: The crib will be taken down at the end of this week, once we have celebrated Candlemas. We will also be sending the proceeds of the crib collection to Brentwood Catholic Children's Society. If you haven't done so yet please consider supporting this local charity which offers much-needed support to children and young people at times of difficulty. You can give in the basket by the crib, using the donation screen in the porch, or visiting the website [bccs.org.uk](https://www.bccs.org.uk).

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CLUB: We are pleased to have been able to provide recent donations to the benefit of children and young people of the local community with the following donations: St Joseph's Primary, Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School and The Campion School (£2000 each) and the Parish (£1000). Please join our mailing list to find out about upcoming events: https://www.linkpop.com/stjosephs_cc

HCPT EASTER LOURDES VOLUNTEERS WANTED! Are you, or do you know anyone who is 18 - 30 years old and would like the opportunity to travel with The Brentwood Group on Pilgrimage to Lourdes this Easter? HCPT Group 709 are an all-adult service group who are looking for enthusiastic, hard-working individuals to join us between 1st-6th April 2024 in Lourdes to help facilitate an unforgettable week for disabled and disadvantaged children from all over the world. If you would like more information or think this is something you may want to get involved in, please contact us at group709@hcpt.org.uk or via Instagram by searching HCPT Group 709. Sign up deadline for new group members is February 7th, 2024.

SPUC: The UK's largest pro-life Youth Conference returns in 2024 to explore the "lies beneath the abortion industry" and inform participants about the dark reality behind the guise of 'choice', whilst equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to talk about pro-life issues with friends and family. The Youth Conference takes place from 24th to 26th February at Yarnfield Park Training & Conference Centre, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 0NL For more details, please visit www.spuc.org.uk/youthconference

COLD SYMPTOMS: Particularly at this time of year, with a number of vulnerable people in the parish, you are asked to be mindful of any cold or flu-like infections and consider taking precautions such as using hand sanitiser, wearing a face mask, avoiding physical contact with others and not receiving from the chalice.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 27th Jan

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

People of the parish

Sun 28th Jan

9.00am

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Henry Christopher Nye RIP Anniv. (Family)

11.00am

Denis Doherty RIP (Gillings)

Mon 29th Jan

9.15am

Jerry & Noreen Dennehy RIP Anniv. (Regan)

Tues 30th Jan

9.15am

Private Intention (Bemand-Qureshi)

Wed 31st Jan

9.15am

ST JOHN BOSCO, PR

Linda Flanagan RIP (Manning)

12 noon—1pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

Thur 1st Feb

9.15am

Irene Robinson's Intentions (Christine)

Frid 2nd Feb

9.15am

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

Pauline Clark & Walter Enns RIP Anniv. (Margaret)

Sat 3rd Feb

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

ST ANNE LINE, M

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

Jim Hiles RIP (Keefe)

Sun 4th Feb

9.00am

FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Edward Powell RIP Anniv. (Margaret)

11.00am

People of the parish

5pm

Reception of the body of Derek Cavalier

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.

Facebook: [stjosephschurchupminster](https://www.facebook.com/stjosephschurchupminster) **Web:** www.stjosephschurchupminster.com

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