



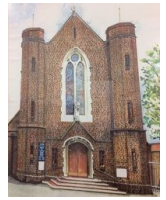
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

3RD / 4TH FEBRUARY 2023

FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (B) - Mass Book Pg 61

(Job 7:1-4.6-7, 1 Corinthians 9:16-19.22-23, Mark 1:29-39)

At long last the work to create our Centenary Prayer Garden has begun, and all being well it will be possible to bless and inaugurate this area next Sunday, which coincides with the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, principal patroness of our diocese.

Since this is a space set aside principally for prayer, it is a good opportunity to consider what prayer actually is. Prayer is something very personal. The gospel for this Sunday tells us that 'long before dawn, Jesus got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there.' Prayer is often described as a conversation with God. Nothing is more natural for Jesus, the Son of God, than to speak with his divine Father. Not only is it natural, it is also necessary. That may surprise us, since Jesus is already perfectly one with the Father. But Jesus delights in simply 'being' with his Father, and knows that he must take extra steps to protect this time given how easily his every moment could be consumed by the needs of the people seeking his help.

For us, then, prayer is not just a matter of bringing our petitions to a distant God. It is about being drawn into this communion which is the essence of God himself. Jesus invites us into this intimate relationship and wants us to know and love the Father as he knows and loves the Father.

How can we pray? There are many approaches to prayer – using the scriptures, using traditional prayers of the church, speaking from the heart as to a close friend, using our imagination to place ourselves in the scene in the gospels, spending time before the Blessed Sacrament or a sacred image, repeating a simple phrase such as 'Jesus have mercy on me.' One of the best pieces of advice is to "pray as you can, not as you can't". Another is, simply, to give it a go!

Prayer is personal, but we never pray alone, for we always pray as members of the Body of Christ, joined to our head. The Holy Spirit will pray in us when we do not know how to pray or what to pray for. That is why formal liturgical prayers such as the collect at Mass are typically addressed to the Father and conclude in some form such as 'through Christ, in union with the Holy Spirit'. The Mass is a prayer and indeed the greatest prayer there is, for our own offering of worship is joined to Christ's offering of himself as the perfect sacrifice that reconciles the human race to God. That is why we offer Mass for particular intentions – not excluding all the other intentions that are on our hearts as we come together to worship God.

As members of the body of Christ we pray with and for one another, and can ask each other for prayers as well. In a mysterious way the act of praying unites us more closely with others who are praying, with the person we are praying for, and with Christ. To some it may seem a futile act or just a last resort, but it is in fact a beautiful expression of our common humanity when we pray for other people. Prayer is not an attempt to change God's mind, but to align ourselves more fully with his, to make us more like him. Within our parish we have a group who meet regularly on a Tuesday evening to pray for the needs of our parish including those who have left prayer requests on the prayer board in church. Sometimes, we pray at a distance, but it is also possible to pray for someone with them. Any of us can pray for and/or with someone, but some members of the prayer group have received training in prayer ministry so that they can approach this with particular sensitivity. A number of people received prayer ministry during our parish mission week, and as a fruit of the mission we have begun offering prayer ministry after the weekend Masses on the first weekend of every month – including this weekend. If there is anything on your heart that you would find it useful to share with someone else, who is not there to fix your problems but simply to pray with and for you, then please feel able to approach one of our prayer ministry pairs in the side chapels after Mass. It is entirely up to you how much you want to share, and everything will be kept in confidence. I will also be happy to offer the sacrament of reconciliation and/or anointing of the sick during this time.

Asking others to pray for us is of course not limited to those on earth – part of the richness of our Catholic tradition is the awareness that all those who have gone before us are also part of the body of Christ. The prayers of those who have reached the perfection of heaven – those we call saints – are especially powerful. None more so than our Blessed Lady, the disciple closest to her son who intercedes for all her children with a mother's love.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

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.

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.

CONFIRMATION GROUP: At the 6.30pm Mass this Saturday we welcome the group of young people who have begun their preparation for confirmation at Pentecost, as they are formally enrolled as candidates.

RIP NOTICE: Please pray for the repose of the soul of Derek Cavalier who died recently. Derek's funeral will be here on Monday 5th February at 11.30am and his body will be received into the church on Sunday 4th February at 5pm.

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 Catenians.

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

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION GROUP: At the 11am Mass this Sunday our first communion children, who recently made their first reconciliation and have now begun the second stage of their preparation thinking about the eucharist, will receive a lighted candle as a reminder of the light of faith received in baptism, and their own calling to shine as lights in the world.

CWL TABLE TOP SALE: Catholic Women's League, Upminster are holding a NEW or NEWLY NEW table top sale on Wednesday 21 February from 12am in the Social Club (117 St Mary's Lane). Do you have anything to donate? (we have a big cupboard) perhaps a Christmas Gift that you do not want or like. All proceeds to CWL funds.

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 to those who have already volunteered in response to last week's appeal; we could still do with a few more to share the workload.

NATIONAL MARRIAGE WEEK: If you are married or preparing for marriage, you might be interested to read some of the articles on the Bishops' Conference website on living the vocation of marriage: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/marriage-week-2024/> Marriage Week runs from 7th - 14th February (finishing with Valentine's Day, though it is also Ash Wednesday this year!). There will be a blessing at all Masses next weekend for those preparing for marriage. Anyone celebrating a significant anniversary this year is asked to let Fr Matthew know, so that you can receive an invitation for the Mass of Thanksgiving at Brentwood Cathedral on Saturday 13th July.

LENT: The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which falls on 14th February. Morning Mass will be at 9.15am as usual, and there will be an evening Mass at 8pm. On Fridays in Lent we will have the Stations of the Cross at 7.30pm, alternating with St Lawrence's and beginning here on Friday 16th February.

APPRENTICESHIPS AT WALSINGHAM HOUSE: Walsingham House are offering a two year apprenticeship course in Youth Ministry and Chaplaincy (Yr13 school leavers). Participants will live and work at Walsingham House, running retreats for young people across the diocese whilst studying with St Mary's University, Twickenham. For more information please email clairebailey@brcd.org

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

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 11.00am 5pm	FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR Edward Powell RIP Anniv. (Margaret) People of the parish Reception of the body of Derek Cavalier
Mon 5th Feb 9.15am 11.30am	ST AGATHA, V, M Grace Robinson RIP Anniv. (Hayward / Finigan) Funeral—Derek Cavalier
Tues 6th Feb 9.15am	ST PAUL MIKI AND COMPS, MM Deceased members of the Regan Family (Regan)
Wed 7th Feb 9.15am 12 noon—1pm	Joyce Jones RIP (Carter / Jones) ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 8th Feb 9.15am	John Clinton's Intentions
Frid 9th Feb 9.15am	John Foy RIP (Private)
Sat 10th Feb 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ST SCHOLASTICA, V ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS John Quinn RIP Anniv. (Gibbs/Quinn)
Sun 11th Feb 9.00am 11.00am	SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR People of the parish Robin Clist RIP (Family)

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**