



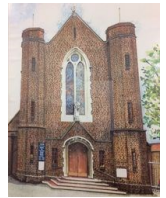
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

16TH / 17TH MARCH 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (B) - Mass Book Pg 86

(Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 5:7-9, John 12:20-30)

As we journey closer to the celebration of Easter, our focus shifts from the desert to the cross. The final two weeks of Lent are traditionally marked by another form of self-denial: denying ourselves the sacred images that adorn the church and aid our prayers. As with other forms of Lenten abstinence, it helps us appreciate even more what has been taken temporarily from us, as well as teaching us that every good thing is good because God has made it so.

During Lent I have been leading us on a journey through the Our Father, the model prayer given to us by Our Lord. Today we turn to the final pair of petitions: Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Perhaps these requests strike us as a little odd. Surely God isn't the one tempting us, and surely he doesn't need telling to keep us from evil. But, on the other hand, if there is some benefit to us in facing temptation, is it right that we ask God not to let it happen?

Pope Francis, in his own reflections on the Our Father, has suggested we understand it as pleading with God not to abandon us in the time of temptation. Though I think there is a lot to be said for sticking with words we are familiar with when such a deeply-ingrained prayer is concerned, a slightly different translation has been adopted in France and Italy which reflects this understanding: something like 'do not let us fall into temptation.' In relation to this change the Pope commented "I'm the one who falls. But it's not God who pushes me into temptation to see how I fall. No, a father does not do this. A father helps us up immediately."

This petition recognises that we are engaged in a spiritual battle, and also that we are not alone in this struggle. We always begin Lent with the account of Our Lord's temptation in the desert. St Luke describes the Holy Spirit *leading* Jesus into the desert *to be tempted*. Jesus shares our experience of being tempted and he is able to help us when we face temptation, if we ask him. The more seriously we approach the Christian life, the more likely it is we will be faced with temptation. God will not necessarily take temptations away from us in answer to this petition – when St Paul pleaded with God to take away a 'thorn in the flesh' that he had struggled with, God's response was not to remove it but to promise "My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (1 Corinthians 12.9)

The greatest temptation of all is to give up on the mercy of God. Either thinking that we are beyond forgiveness, or that God doesn't really care what we do. One of the names given to the Devil, as well as the Tempter, is the Accuser. Our Lord also refers to him as the 'Father of Lies'. There is some advice attributed to St Teresa of Avila that is worth keeping in mind: when the Devil reminds you of your past, remind him of his future. *Our* future is not determined by our past, but by our willingness to be saved. As we consider the final petition we should keep in mind that evil is not a thing as such, but an absence of good. Moreover it is not an abstract idea but something rooted in a rebellion against God, beginning with the fall of the angels, who in turn led our first parents into sin. But God, in his infinite love, does not leave things there. As with every petition in the Our Father, 'deliver us from evil' is not just a plea for protection in the present, but also an expression of our confident hope of heaven grounded in the victory that has already been won – a victory that is ours not because we win the battle ourselves, but because we are one with Christ. The Our Father begins with an expression of our filial relationship with God, and ends with an expression of trust: trusting that whatever may come our way, he will not abandon us, and when trials have passed we can be sure that everlasting joy will be ours.

God bless, Fr Matthew

PRAYER GARDEN: Our Centenary Prayer Garden is now complete and following a blessing last weekend (fittingly, on Mothering Sunday) it is open for use by parishioners and by the school. You are welcome to spend time in the prayer garden when it is open to the public outside of school hours. In time, there will be some planters and benches which St Joseph's School are going to provide.

FR JOHN TAYLOR RIP: The funeral Mass for our former parish priest Fr John is taking place at Our Lady of Light, Clacton on this Wednesday 20th March at 12 noon. For those with places on the parish coach, please arrive here in good time for a prompt 10am departure. It is unlikely there will be space in our church car park for those coming on the coach. There will be refreshments after the Mass so the coach will leave Clacton some time after 3pm, arriving here 4.30-5pm. For those unable to travel, Fr Dominic will be celebrating the 12.15 Mass at St Edward's Romford that day for Fr John. There will be a memorial Mass for him in this parish on a weekday evening after Easter.

HOLY HOUR: There will be no holy hour this Wednesday as Fr Matthew will be taking part in Fr John's funeral that day. There is also no holy hour on the Wednesday of Holy Week due to the Chrism Mass taking place in the Cathedral that day.

SCRUTINIES: As part of the Lenten preparation for Baptism at Easter, our two adult baptism candidates Roxanne and Sandra are celebrating the rites known as the 'scrutinies' on three consecutive weeks in the middle of Lent. At the Masses where this takes place (after the homily) the year A readings are used rather than the year B readings used at other Masses. For the third and scrutiny this week we hear the gospel of the raising of Lazarus (John 11). Please pray that they (and all of us) may receive the grace of true conversion and faith in Christ who has promised eternal life to all who believe in him.

FIRST COMMUNION GROUP: This weekend our children preparing for first communion will be present at the 11am Mass on Sunday and will receive a cross as a symbol of our faith in Jesus Christ. Please pray for them and their families.

OUR CATHOLIC FAITH: This week our faith study group will meet on Tuesday evening instead of Thursday for the final session before Easter.

HOLY WEEK: Lent culminates next week in the annual celebration of the redemption accomplished for us by Our Lord's suffering, death and resurrection. Next weekend we celebrate Palm Sunday. We will commemorate Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem with the blessing of palms at all three Masses. Children's liturgy will take place as usual at 9am. At the start of the 11am Mass there will be a longer procession from the school playground, weather permitting. During the three days or 'sacred triduum' of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday we enter into the drama of our salvation in 'real time'. The principal liturgies are the Mass of the Lord's Supper at 8pm on Maundy Thursday (28th March); the Liturgy of the Passion at 3pm on Good Friday (29th March); and the Easter Vigil at 8pm on Holy Saturday (30th March). NB the 8pm Easter Vigil is instead of the usual 6.30pm Mass on Holy Saturday but the Sunday Masses take place as usual on the morning of Easter Day (31st March). For the full Holy Week programme see our website or next week's newsletter.

RECONCILIATION SERVICE: There will be a reconciliation service here on Tuesday of Holy Week (26th March) starting 7.30pm with a time of penitential reflection and an opportunity for individual confession with visiting priests. Additionally there are reconciliation services this week at the Cathedral (Monday 7.30pm) and St Mary's Hornchurch (Tuesday 7pm).

DOM'S BRITISH SUPPER NIGHT 8PM SAT 13 APR 2024 IN ST JOSEPH SOCIAL CLUB: If you would like to attend please post an envelope at the presbytery containing the exact money or a cheque payable to D ARGENT-HALL and a list of names for your table. A two course meal will be served. Please indicate who would like a vegetarian version of the main course. The price is £10 per head. Drinks may be bought from the club's bar which operates a cashless payment system.

CDOT VOICES SPRING CONCERT: CDOT Voices returns to St Peter's with guests from TOPS Choir. Saturday 23rd March at 7.30pm. Tickets - Adults - £10. Children - £2 under 5s free. Light refreshments and raffle. Tickets from Bernadette on 07825235717 or from the Repository (only 50 tickets on sale initially).

EASTER FLOWERS: You are invited to make a contribution to the Easter flowers, perhaps in memory of a loved one. Donations may be posted through the presbytery door (include gift aid number where possible) or made via the donation screen in the porch. The CWL lunch club will be closed on 27th, March for Holy week. We will be open as normal on 3rd, April. Wishing you all a blessed and peaceful Easter.

CWL LUNCH CLUB: The CWL lunch club will be closed on 27th March for Holy week. We will be open as normal on 3rd April. Wishing you all a blessed and peaceful Easter.

VOICES FOR EASTER: New this year, the characters will be portrayed by different actors rather than as a one-man show. Wednesday 20th March at 8pm. in the North St. Halls. RM11 1QX. Tickets, including complimentary seasonal refreshment, available on the door £8. All profits support The Hornchurch Passion Play.

ST VINCENTS CHARITY SHOP UPMINSTER: We are in need of donations anything from clothing, bric a brac, electrical items, books, dvd's, cd's & toys. All donations very much appreciated please bring them along to the shop.

CLAIRE RAMM THANK YOU: Thank you for all the prayers and messages of support I received. It really lifted my spirits and helped me on the road to recovery. A mass of thanksgiving will be offered for you all on Wednesday 24th April at 9.15am.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 16th March

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

For recovery from anxiety (Anon)

Sun 17th March

9.00am

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

People of the parish

11.00am

Kathy Faulks RIP Anniv. (O'Donnell)

Mon 18th March

9.15am

Thanksgiving for the Holy Family (OFC Brentwood)

Tues 19th March

9.15am

ST JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Past & Present parishioners of St Joseph's

Wed 20th March

9.15am

Maria Chainey RIP B'Day (Paul)

12 noon—1pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

Thur 21st March

9.15am

Kath Dobson RIP (Dennehy)

Frid 22nd March

9.15am

Dr K J James RIP (Bemand-Qureshi)

7.30pm

Stations of the Cross—**St Laurence's Church**

Sat 23rd March

5.30pm—6.15pm

6.30pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

People of the parish

Sun 24th March

9.00am

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Mary-Anne Madden's 70th B'Day Intentions (Margaret)

11.00am

Patrick & David Walsh RIP Anniv. (Margaret)

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