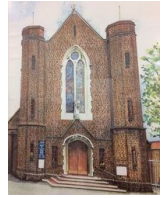




St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi
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PARISH NEWSLETTER

1ST / 2ND MARCH 2025

EIGHTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (C) - Mass Book Pg 144

(Sirach 27:4-7, 1 Corinthians 15:54-58, Luke 6:39-45)

On Wednesday we begin the season of Lent with the customary gesture of humility and sorrow for all that separates us from God: ashes received on our foreheads that serve as a reminder of our mortality, as they also point us to the hope we have in Christ whose victory we celebrate at the end of this season.



Lent is a time of preparation: originally, for those to be baptised at Easter, then more widely for the whole church, for whom Easter is both our greatest festival and also an opportunity to renew our baptismal faith and commitment to discipleship.

I am often asked 'what should I do for Lent?' or 'what should I give up?'. It's sometimes suggested that we should consider *taking* something up for Lent, rather than giving something up: my response to this is that it isn't a case of either/or. We can (and perhaps should) do both. A helpful way to approach Lent is by considering the three traditional practices which are presented in the gospel reading for Ash Wednesday: self-denial, prayer and works of charity.

Lent isn't *just* about 'giving things up'; but including this in our Lenten discipline has a long tradition and real purpose. It is not simply a test of our will-power, or about improving our health. It is really about 'self-denial' in the fullest sense of that expression: denying ourselves something we don't need, as a sign and reminder of the need to deny ourselves that central place in our lives that belongs to God. It is also considered a form of 'penance', a sign of our sorrow for sin and recognition of our need for ongoing conversion. What we give up matters less than the fact that we are doing something that we will notice. There is a custom of exempting Sundays (or at least Laetare

Sunday) and the highest feast days from the Lenten fast, but equally there is a custom of keeping a more rigorous fast on certain days (e.g. Fridays). Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are the strictest fast days in the calendar, when we are expected both to abstain from meat and to restrict the amount we eat, though not in a way that would risk our health.

Alongside fasting or self-denial, it is good to think of committing to some additional time of prayer and/or taking on some additional form of devotion or spiritual reading. Suggestions include attending weekday mass, visiting the church especially during times of eucharistic adoration, praying the rosary, stations of the cross, or part of the divine office (any of these can be by ourselves or with others), or reading a portion of scripture each day.

The third dimension is works of charity. Typically, this involves some form of alms-giving, perhaps through an established charity such as Cafod or Aid to the Church in Need or Missio. It can also be a gift of time, perhaps by helping a neighbour in practical ways or simply providing companionship.

None of these things are only for Lent, but Lent is a privileged time to grow more fully into what we are made to be by doing more, and above all by recognising our need of God and the assistance of divine grace in order to become the saints we are called to be. It is a time of training and discipline - a 'campaign of Christian service' to use the imagery from the collect for Ash Wednesday - that can only be of benefit to us: so let us make the most of this opportunity.

God bless, Fr Matthew.

ASH WEDNESDAY: Mass will be celebrated with imposition of ashes at 9.15 am and 8pm. There will be a Mass for St Joseph's School during the day. This is a day of fasting (i.e. restricting the amount we eat) and abstinence (i.e. no meat) to begin our Lenten journey.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: This Friday our shared participation in the Way of the Cross will take place here at St Joseph's, at 7.30pm. The following week (14th March) it will be over the road at St Laurence's.

PILGRIMS OF HOPE/ AMBASSADORS OF HOPE: Fr Mark at Mary's in Hornchurch will give a talk on Thursday 3rd April in the church at 7pm entitled '*Pilgrims of hope/ Ambassadors of Hope*' as he explores how we might understand and enter the Jubilee year more fully and become beacons of hope for others.

SIDE DOOR: For some time the button to open the side door automatically from the outside has been defective. This has now been fixed, with a new button in a more useful location. Therefore anyone using the side door, including those needing level access for wheelchairs, mobility scooters or buggies, or anyone with hands full, can press the button (inside or outside) and wait for the door to open by itself. The door will close by itself after a while, unless there is someone/ something in its path. It is still possible to open the door manually in the usual way.

MUSIC FEEDBACK: A small number of people have got in touch following a trial of reduced music at the Saturday vigil Mass. The responses have largely been to request that we continue with this arrangement. This means that there is a choice of Mass styles within our weekend timetable, though it also means a degree of compromise for anyone whose preferred style of Mass doesn't coincide with their preferred time. Suggestions of hymns are always welcome, recognising that individual preferences can vary a great deal. During Lent we will adopt a simpler musical setting for the Sunday morning Masses as last year.

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE WEEKEND: Beginning Experience is a special residential weekend programme for widowed, separated and divorced people, which helps participants with natural feelings of grief and loss. The weekend is led by trained volunteers, who have experienced having to adjust to life as single people again. This next programme will be held on 4-6 April at the Sion Community, Essex; for further details please contact: Mary: 07730 884315, or email BeginningExperience.SoE@gmail.com.

JOIN CAFOD'S BIG LENT WALK IN THE JUBILEE YEAR: You are invited to join CAFOD's Big Lent Walk and journey together with Catholics in England, Wales and Scotland as Pilgrims of Hope in this Jubilee Year - walking 200km over 40 days during Lent. Journey to one of the churches or shrines designated as places of pilgrimage in our diocese as part of your Big Lent Walk. Every £1 you raise will support communities like Lokho's in Kenya, experiencing the worst impact of the climate crisis, to rebuild their lives in hope. Sign up here: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/>

INTER FAITH DIALOGUE: An edited recording of the talk given by Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald at Gidea Park parish is now available on the website www.whatgoodnews.org The Cardinal explained how the Second Vatican Council encourages dialogue with people of other faiths, and described especially the contribution of Pope Francis to this work.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 1st March 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ST DAVID, BP ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS People of the parish
Sun 2nd March 9.00am 11.00am	EIGHTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR For the intentions of Ronald Robinson (Christine) Hanna Tarkowska RIP Anniv. (Berry)
Mon 3rd March 9.15am	ST ANNE LINE, M John McTighe RIP (Maguire)
Tues 4th March 9.15am	Frank Holt RIP (Maplesden)
Wed 5th March 9.15am 12 noon—1pm 8pm	ASH WEDNESDAY John Joe Kelliher RIP (Catton) ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Sarfraz Qureshi RIP
Thur 6th March 9.15am 2pm	THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY Vincent Brady RIP (Manning) Funeral mass —Joseph Stedmon
Frid 7th March 9.15am 12.15pm	FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY For the intentions of Felicity Bemand-Qureshi Funeral mass—Juliana Skelker
Sat 8th March 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Maisie Moss RIP (Stanley)
Sun 9th March 9.00am 11.00am	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT People of the parish Kathy Faulks & Colin Martin RIP Anniv. (O'Donnell)

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**