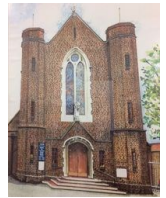




St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi
Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward
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PARISH NEWSLETTER

22ND / 23RD FEBRUARY 2025

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (C) - Mass Book Pg 141

(1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23, 1 Corinthians 15:45-49, Luke 6:27-38)

What is the hardest commandment? Surely it is the one given to us in today's gospel – to love your enemies. Its often said, Jesus told us to love our enemies but he didn't tell us we have to like them! But if we truly understood what love was, then we would find this commandment even more challenging. Love is not a matter of finding someone congenial. Its not about how we feel about a person. It is about consciously and deliberately willing the good of the other person, for the sake of that person.



Love is integral to our existence as human beings. It is how we are made and how we are meant to be. Each of us is individually willed and made by God. We are made out of love not out of necessity – for in willing our existence God is willing us the greatest good possible, purely for our own sake. God is not merely one who loves, even perfectly. We say that God *is* love – and therefore as creatures made in God's image and likeness, love must be at the very core of who we are. We are made out of love, and we are made for love.

Love always involves another. The God who is love, is also the perfect communion of Father Son and Holy Spirit. From the very beginning God decreed that man should not be alone, and made us as male and female. Our bodies bear witness to this basic fact of our existence.

We bear God's image most clearly, and therefore are most fully what we are meant to be, when we deliberately seek the good of the other for their sake. And that last part is very important. Today's gospel emphasises lack of self-interest. If we do something for another, thinking of what benefit we might get in return, then it isn't really love.

Love without self-interest can't be justified in terms of evolutionary benefit or a survival instinct. It is a higher quality, the thing that sets humanity apart from the other creatures that inhabit our world. It is the hallmark of our existence as a unity of body and soul, uniquely bearing God's likeness.

Love – or charity – is in fact the third theological virtue alongside Faith and Hope. St Paul reminds us that Love is the greatest of these three. We will not need faith when we have the certainty that comes from seeing God face to face, nor will we need to hope for heaven when we have reached our longed-for home. But Love is the very nature of God, and the essence of that life we will share for eternity.

Though made in the image and likeness of the God, this likeness is distorted by our tendency to do the opposite of what true love entails. We fail to love not only when we actively hate another person but also when we are calculating, or even unconsciously thinking in terms of how we might benefit from seeking another person's good. Jesus teaches us the way to become what we are meant to be. The path of virtue, not merely following rules. This life is a preparation for heaven, where everything will be finally perfected, including us. In this life we need to grow in holiness, becoming what we are meant to be. Love is something we can learn, by seeing how others display love, especially within our own families from earliest childhood. But more than this, like all of the virtues it is a habit, something we acquire not just by learning about it, but by doing it: and the family is a privileged place to practise love. That is why we call the family a school of love. But it is principally the work of divine grace, restoring the divine likeness within us, that makes genuine love possible. To allow the divine image to shine out more clearly in us, we must not neglect prayer which is itself an act of love, for it aligns us to God's will. Prayer leads us to become more loving, of God and our neighbour – even our enemies. We must remember that each person is a person for whom Jesus died, and someone he dearly wants to share his life with for eternity. And so we must seek God's help to love them as he loves us and as he loves them.

God bless, Fr Matthew.

PALM CROSSES: The ashes we receive on Ash Wednesday are made with the previous year's palm crosses. Please bring any palm crosses you may have to church next weekend. Ash Wednesday is 5th March and Mass will be at 9.15am and 8pm.

RIP NOTICES: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Elizabeth Joan Walsh, Juliana Skelker, Joseph Stedmon, Sheila Kathleen Furey and Pat Scott who died recently. Elizabeth's funeral will be held here at St Joseph's on Wednesday 26th February at 1pm. Juliana's funeral will be held here at St Joseph's on Friday 7th March at 11am and Joseph's funeral will be held here on Thursday 6th March at 2pm and Sheila's funeral will be held here on Thursday 13th March at 12.30pm. Pat was a member of our parish for many years but moved away to be near family. May Elizabeth, Juliana, Joseph, Sheila and Pat rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

THE DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE 2025: Join Bishop Alan in Lourdes from Friday 18 to Friday 25 July. We can support those with medical needs. For further information, please 'phone Tangney Tours on 01732 886 666 or book online: www.tangney-tours.com/diocese-pilgrimages/diocese-brentwood/

DBS & ONLINE UPDATE SERVICE: For all parish volunteers with a DBS in place: **important information:** The online update service has recently changed their renewal process with no prior warning. **Renew your subscription:** A subscription to the update service lasts for one year. You can renew your subscription through the update service up to 30 days before your current subscription—you cannot renew on the last day of your subscription. Sign into the update service to renew your subscription. If you do not you will need to apply for a new DBS and then register for the update service again. Please contact Kathleen O'Donnell if you have any queries.

DOM's FRENCH SUPPER 8pm Sat 1st Mar 2025: in the Social Club in aid of Medecins sans Frontieres UK. £15 per head. Two courses: main (pork in cider) and dessert. I can provide a veggie/vegan main for no more than 8 diners. To attend please leave names and money in an envelope marked 'French Supper' with Parish Office or email me: dom.argenthall@btinternet.com **THE LIST CLOSSES MONDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2025 TO FINALISE CATERING REQUIREMENTS**

SAVE THE DATE' SOCIAL CLUB EVENTS: Thurs 27th Feb - Last few tickets for CAFOD Sip & Paint: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/stjosephscatholicclubupminster/1531787> Sat 8th March - CAFOD Disco and Karaoke Party Night with DJ Freckle aka Chris Graves: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/stjosephscatholicclubupminster/1569816> - tickets selling fast! **6 NATIONS:** The Club will be open from 4pm on Sat 22nd Feb & Sat 15th March. This is show the 4:45pm England games. All welcome. More details on our socials: https://linkpop.com/stjosephs_cc

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 22nd Feb

5.30pm—6.15pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

People of the parish

6.30pm

Sun 23rd Feb

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

9.00am

Ngoni Wilfred Pawadyira RIP 1st Anniv. (Folk Group)

11.00am

Michael Cooper RIP Anniv. (Cooper Family)

Mon 24th Feb

9.15am

For the intentions of Chris Draper (Draper)

Tues 25th Feb

9.15am

Anne-Marie & David Roberts RIP (Bernadette) (With our year 3 children)

Wed 26th Feb

9.15am

For the intentions of Donald and his family (Slawek)

1pm

Funeral—Elizabeth Joan Walsh

12 noon—1pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

Thur 27th Feb

9.15am

For the intentions of Fr Matthew (Kee)

Frid 28th Feb

9.15am

Annie & Paddy Doherty RIP Anniv. (Etchells)

Sat 1st March

ST DAVID, BP

5.30pm—6.15pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

6.30pm

People of the parish

Sun 2nd March

EIGHTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

9.00am

For the intentions of Ronald Robinson (Christine)

11.00am

Hanna Tarkowska RIP Anniv. (Berry)

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