



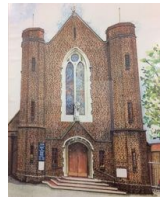
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

29TH / 30TH MARCH 2025

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (C) - Mass Book Pg 168

(Joshua 5:9a-12, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Luke 15:1-3, 11-32)

Today we are invited to rejoice that in Jerusalem (symbolising the Church) we have a mother who nurtures and feeds us. This note of joy is reflected in the distinctive liturgical colour, a lightening of the penitential purple used in Lent. The desire to give thanks for the maternal care of the church also aligns with (and historically, precedes) our wish today to honour and give thanks for our earthly mothers. By extension we also recognise the role of other maternal figures such as godmothers, grandmothers and aunts, and those dedicated to a spiritual motherhood of prayer and service. And of course, our Lord's own mother, given as a mother to all who are counted as his brothers and sisters by faith.

The gospel today (except for the celebration of the second Scrutiny at 11am) presents God as an indulgent, loving, even reckless Father – for that is the meaning of the word 'prodigal' which applies no less to the Father than to the Son. 'Reckless' in his desire to embrace his wayward son back into the fold, no matter what his pride and dignity have suffered. The highest expressions of paternal and maternal love are contained within the perfection of God who is love, and who made each one of us out of love, for love. We are called to be signs of his love in the world but when we are drawn to another path, focusing on gratifying our own desires rather than living generously for others, we only have to come to a moment of awakening and take the first step back to God. No matter how far we have gone down that path, and no matter how often, God runs to meet us with arms open wide. The eternal Son of God shared our humanity precisely to bridge the gap that our sinful, selfish pride opens up, and make that journey back to God possible. His Church exists above all as that channel of divine grace and mercy that allows us to be fully alive once more, no longer bound by choices we have made in the past,



or weighed down by feelings of guilt and shame. St Cyprian of Carthage said in the third century 'whoever has God as Father has the Church as Mother'. Through the sacraments the Church brings us to new birth, feeds us, heals us, forgives us, strengthens us, equips us for our particular vocation – a true mother. Our love for holy church may be clouded by an awareness of her shortcomings as a human institution (as, let us not forget, a hospital for sinners as well as a school for saints), but the church is something much greater than a human institution. It is truly the body of Christ, inseparably joined to her head and receiving life from him, and a sign of the heavenly city where we shall enjoy perfect communion with God and one another for eternity, the darkness of sin and suffering giving way to the perfect light of Christ.

The contrast of light and dark, sight and blindness is found in the gospel used for the second scrutiny (celebrated at the 11am Mass: p.172 onwards). A man born blind is healed by our Lord. Gradually his restored physical sight is accompanied by the spiritual sight that allows him to recognise Christ for who he truly is; whilst the Pharisees remain wilfully blind to that truth. As we pray for our own catechumen, and all through the universal church preparing for the new birth of baptism at Easter, we pray that with them we may have the grace of being able to see the deepest truths of our faith and the meaning of our existence with clear vision and so walk always as children of the light.

A blessed Mothering Sunday to all, and a special remembrance in our prayers for all mothers living and departed, as well as those for whom this day is difficult.

God bless, Fr Matthew.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER: The main timings for the Easter Triduum are as follows: Holy (Maundy) Thursday Mass at 8pm; Good Friday Liturgy at 3pm; Holy Saturday Easter Vigil at 9pm. Please note that Easter Vigil is later than last year because Easter occurs later in the year, and the vigil cannot start until after nightfall. Mass times on Easter Day as usual.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY: Thanks to a wonderful team of Catechists we are able to offer a children's liturgy during the 9am Mass every Sunday in term time. However as numbers increase, it is essential that we have additional adults (with a diocesan DBS certificate) to ensure we operate with appropriate ratios and don't have to turn children away. If you think you can help, please email the parish office or speak to one of the existing leaders/helpers. It needn't be every week!

RIP JOHN MYLOD: Please pray for the repose of the soul of John Mylod who died recently. His funeral will be held here on Thursday 10th April at 10.30am. May John rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: This Friday our Lenten devotion takes place at St Laurence's Church at 7.30pm

FIRST COMMUNION GROUP: Next Sunday our first communion children will come together for the 11am Mass for the presentation of crosses.

THIS WEEK: There is no holy hour on Wednesday 2nd April, or Saturday 5th April. Thank you to the priests of the Missionaries of La Salette at St Cedd's Goodmayes who are kindly covering some Masses this week. The church will close earlier than usual in the second half of the week.

MOTHERING SUNDAY: Spring flowers will be blessed at each Mass this weekend. Children will be invited to take them for the mothers, and any that are left will be offered to people of all ages who may wish to give them as a sign of appreciation to a mother, aunt, godmother or grandmother, or perhaps to place at a grave or at the feet of Our Lady.

GIFT AID ENVELOPES: This is the last weekend of the tax year. For those who use weekly giving envelopes, the boxes for the coming tax year should be available in the porch for collection next weekend. For those who give by standing order, a personal set of special collection envelopes can be made available on request, or feel free to use older envelopes. There is a supply of envelopes in the porch which can be used for special collections – simply add your Gift Aid number (or name & postcode). Gift aid declarations can be made at any point in the year: download the form from our website or collect one from the porch or parish office.

OFFERTORY TOKENS: For those who give online, by standing order or using the card machine, tokens are available (the supply has been replenished) which mean you have something to place in the collection bag and feel that your gift is symbolically presented at the altar. These are entirely optional and the tokens are reused each week.

CWL LUNCH CLUB: The CWL Wednesday lunch club will be closed for one day only on Wednesday 16th, April for Holy week.

SAVE THE DATE—DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM: Saturday 24th May 2025. More details to follow.

CHURCHES TOGETHER GOOD FRIDAY PROCESSION: Friday 18th April . Procession from Methodist Church, Hall Lane 10am. Service Upminster Park, Corbets Tey Road 10.30. Alternative venue Trinity United Reform Church, Station Road. In preparation for the required stewarding there will be training at St Joseph's Social Centre at 10.30 on Sundays 6th and 13th April. Could all who volunteered previously attend, including the volunteers from last year. If St Joseph's people are trained they can pair up with others who volunteer on the day.

DIOCESAN SCHOOL VACANCIES: www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/vacancies/schoolvacancies/

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 29th March 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	SATURDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Patrick & David Walsh RIP Anniv. (Margaret)
Sun 30th March 9.00am 11.00am	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT People of the parish Irene Robinson's Intentions (Christine)
Mon 31st March 9.15am	MONDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT Josie Walsh RIP (Bridget)
Tues 1st April 9.15am	TUESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT Sean O'Sullivan RIP (Regan) (With our Reception children)
Wed 2nd April 9.15am 12 noon—1pm	WEDNESDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT Pat & Denis Scott RIP (Ridley) NO ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 3rd April 9.15am	THURSDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT Tim Dennehy RIP (Regan)
Frid 4th April 9.15am	FRIDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT
Sat 5th April 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	SATURDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT NO ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Lyn Oliver RIP (Taylor Family)
Sun 6th April 9.00am 11.00am	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT People of the parish Pat Ives RIP (O'Brien)

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