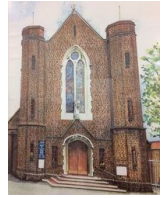




St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

12TH / 13TH APRIL 2025

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD pg 184

Erik Varden, Bishop of Trondheim in Norway and previously Abbot of Mount St Bernard's in Leicestershire, writes in his excellent book published for this Lent, *Healing Wounds*, of a parish where the parishioners had objected to putting up a crucifix on the grounds that it would be too depressing to look at. The cross is, of course, utterly unpleasant. It was designed to inflict a hideous death upon those the Roman empire considered deserving of it. But, says Bishop Varden, if we insist on averting our gaze for this reason, we have not recognised what it signifies with an outlook of faith. Our church is blessed with a large sanctuary crucifix that tends towards a more realistic depiction of Christ's suffering. It may be that we find it difficult to look at. In fact, we should. But, to quote Varden again, 'faith teaches us to see in the Cross not just scandal and pain, but the love of which the Cross is the sign. Love underlies Jesus's sacrifice, still unexhausted. In this fact there is sweetness.' This is why the darkest day of the year, when humanity put its God to death, is rightly called Good Friday. Some might still say that after the resurrection we have no need of an image such as this: Christ no longer hangs lifeless on the cross. The drama of this Holy Week teaches us, however, that the cross and the empty tomb, the dying and rising of Jesus, cannot be separated. He is our Passover; the Paschal celebration takes us from the Upper Room, in which the sacrifice of the new covenant is instituted, to the hill of Calvary where this sacrifice is offered for all time, and to the Garden where we discover that through this perfect



offering all things have indeed been made new. As we contemplate the cross, we become more acutely aware of God's mercy, and our need of it. We are deeply involved in this story, which is brought into our present moment every single time we celebrate Mass. In these coming days we allow the events of this great week to unfold in 'real time'. It is good for us to be present, not as bystanders, but as those who are drawn into this mystery through our participation in the distinctive liturgies of this great week.

Holy Week begins with the commemoration of Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem. This was a deliberate and bold statement about his identity and messianic task. Like the crowds we greet him with the palms that give this Sunday its name. But soon our focus shifts to the events that unfold later this week. We easily become part of the crowd that calls for his blood (and do join in with those parts of the Passion narrative that are spoken by the crowd). But lest we forget what it is all about, in St Luke's account of the Passion there is one moment filled with hope, a promise of that gift of divine mercy which is the heart of the gospel: Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom – today you will be with me in paradise.

Next week we will rejoice in the resurrection. Lent will be over; the time of feasting and celebration will be here. Christ's victory is our victory. But the only way to Easter is by way of the cross. To fully appreciate the joy of Easter, we need to understand why we need to be reconciled to God, from what we need to be set free, and the love that stops at nothing to bring us to share in fullness of life. We need to become more like that repentant thief, who perceived that Jesus was doing something for him in that moment. That is why Easter is celebrated not as a stand-alone feast but as part of the three days we call the Sacred Triduum: three days centred on the sacrifice of the cross, which becomes the means of our salvation. What follows is an introduction to the principal celebrations of these days, which are in a sense three 'acts' of a single celebration, and I encourage everyone who can to come to all three liturgies.

We begin on Holy or **Maundy Thursday** with the **Mass of the Lord's Supper** at 8pm. *(NB there is no morning Mass on this day)*. We recall the new commandment given by our Lord, to 'love one another as I have loved you' as the celebrant, imitating the action of Christ in whose person he acts, washes the feet of those he is called to serve. At this Mass we give thanks for the institution of the Eucharist as the means by which Christ's sacrifice is continually made present for us. The Mass concludes with the transfer of the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of

Repose. This procession recalls Jesus' journey to the Garden of Gethsemane, and like the disciples we are invited to watch and pray with Jesus for a while (hopefully staying awake!). Even if you are unable to attend the Mass, you are encouraged to visit our Lord at the Altar of Repose later in the evening and spend some time with him in prayer. This vigil of prayer concludes with Night Prayer at midnight.

On **Good Friday** we commemorate the day of our Lord's crucifixion. The **solemn Liturgy of the Passion** takes place at **3pm**. This is not a Mass, but communion is distributed from the sacrament reserved following the previous night's Mass of the Lord's Supper. This ancient liturgy includes the reading of the Passion from John's Gospel, prayers of intercession for the whole world, and the veneration of the cross, when we honour the wood on which our saviour hung and worship him who died for our salvation. This is both a collective and individual act; we are invited to approach the cross as individual sinners, saddened by the knowledge of the suffering caused by our sins, but also giving thanks for the love that is so powerfully demonstrated. Traditionally the cross is venerated with a kiss but it is acceptable to make some other gesture if you prefer. The tabernacle is empty today, but it is customary to genuflect before the crucifix after its unveiling at the solemn liturgy. If you cannot attend the afternoon liturgy, or if you would like to begin or end the day with a further time of prayer, you are invited to join in praying the Divine Office at 8.15am, and/or the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary at 7.30pm. Children and families (as well as people of all ages) are invited to take part in the Stations of the Cross at 9am. This is followed by the Churches Together Walk of Witness (see notice).

Holy Saturday (despite the popular way of referring to the holiday weekend, 'Easter Saturday' is actually the Saturday after Easter) is a day of emptiness and preparation until the evening when we celebrate the great **Easter Vigil**, the highpoint of the liturgical year. This takes place after nightfall at **9pm** (*NB there is no 6.30pm Mass or holy hour, though I will be available for confessions at the usual time*). We begin outside, weather permitting, with the blessing of a new fire from which a new Paschal Candle is lit symbolising the light of Christ. Lent is over, Easter has begun. The celebrant sings the praises of God, honouring the candle as a symbol of the resurrection. We then hear a number of readings from the Old Testament and New Testament culminating in the Gospel. Recalling the link between Easter and the sacrament of rebirth, the font is blessed ready for the newest members of Christ's church to be joined to him in the sacraments of initiation, as we all renew our baptismal promises. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, as at every Mass,

the entire Paschal Mystery is commemorated and the risen Christ, our victorious Passover lamb, comes among us to give us life and feed us. At this most sacred time, do please keep silence when leaving and arriving for these liturgies. We should also try and keep, as far as we can, a spirit of recollection at other times during the week, aided by the fasting and abstinence customary on Good Friday. May this be a very holy week indeed and may we thus journey through the cross to reach the glorious celebration of Christ's victory over death.

God bless, Fr Matthew

EASTER SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION: Please pray for Niall and Nina, who are to be received into the full communion of the Catholic church, and Hiren, Jace, Arvy, Violet, Arthur, Olivia and George who are to be baptised during Eastertide, also for Callum baptised this weekend.

RECONCILIATION SERVICE/CONFESSIONS: To prepare for the celebration of Easter there will be a reconciliation service here on **Tuesday 15th April** starting **7.30pm** with a time of penitential reflection and an opportunity for individual confession with visiting priests. There is a similar service at the Cathedral on Monday 14th (7.30pm). There are opportunities for individual confession at other times: after the morning Mass on Monday and Tuesday, during a Holy Hour on Wednesday evening (7.30pm), on Saturday evening (5.30pm) or at other times on request.

CHRISM MASS: On Wednesday, priests of the diocese gather in the Cathedral in Brentwood for the Mass of Chrism: the annual renewal of our commitment to priestly service and the occasion when the three holy oils (of catechumens, used in baptism; of the sick; and the sacred chrism, used in baptism, confirmation and ordination) are consecrated. Please pray for the priests of the diocese on this day. You are welcome to attend this Mass which begins at 11am at the Cathedral. There is no Holy Hour this Wednesday lunchtime (there is an evening Holy Hour instead, from 7.30pm).

HOLY WEEK POSTERS: Please take one of the Holy Week posters, which are produced each year nationally by the Knights of St Columba, and display it prominently as a witness to the importance of this great week. Please only take one per household.

SERVERS: Do please come and serve for any or all of the Holy Week liturgies, and aim to arrive in the sacristy in good time to be briefed.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR CHILDREN: People of all ages are invited to join in the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday morning at 9am, at which the reflections on the events of Good Friday will be aimed especially at younger members of our parish family.

WALK OF WITNESS: The annual Churches Together Walk of Witness will take place on Good Friday starting at the Methodist Church (past the railway station) at 10am – refreshments available beforehand. The procession concludes with a service in the park or Trinity URC depending on the weather. Our parish has usually provided a number of stewards – if you can assist, you are asked to attend a briefing in the Social Centre this Sunday (13th) at 10.30am.

WASHING OF FEET: If you would like to be one of the 12 whose feet are washed at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday, please speak to Fr Matthew this weekend, or to the welcomers at Mass on Thursday. Please ensure that whatever you wear on your feet can be removed without too much difficulty (just one foot!).

GIFT AID ENVELOPES: We are in a new tax year. For those who use weekly giving envelopes, the boxes for the new year are now available in the porch for collection. For those who give regularly by standing order, we are not automatically providing a box of special collection envelopes as fewer people are using them. However a personal set of special collection envelopes can be made available on request. There is a supply of unnumbered envelopes in the porch which can be used for special collections – simply add your Gift Aid number (or name & postcode).

HOLY PLACES COLLECTION: On Good Friday a special collection is taken up throughout the Church to assist the Christian communities in the Holy Land, whose needs are especially great at the present time. Please Gift Aid your donation if you can.

EASTER OFFERING: The collection at the Easter Masses traditionally forms an important part of the priest's income. Anything placed in the offertory on Easter Day, or anything otherwise clearly marked as the Easter Offering (cash, online or card) will be included in this; however standing order giving is always applied to the parish. Your Easter offering can be Gift Aided in the usual way.

VACANCIES IN DIOCESAN SCHOOLS: <https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/vacancies/school-vacancies/>

TERMINALLY ILL ADULTS BILL: The Pastoral Letter on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill from Cardinal Vincent Nichols on behalf of the Bishops of England and Wales can be found on the Bishops' Conference website cbcew.org.uk. We are encouraged to contact members of parliament prior to the third reading of the bill later this month. New postcards are available in the porch to facilitate this.

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

EASTER VIGIL READINGS: The Readings are a high point in the celebration of the Easter Vigil. In order to assist priests and people in managing these readings, Fr Adrian Gaffy has prepared commentaries on each of them. Go to www.whatgoodnews.org Click on Scripture Readings, and follow the links.

CAFOD MYANMAR EARTHQUAKE APPEAL: Following the devastating earthquake in Myanmar, CAFOD is responding through the Catholic Church there to support families affected by the disaster. Your donations will provide essentials like water, food, solar lights, and mosquito nets. Please give to CAFOD's Myanmar Earthquake Appeal in church or you can donate online at cafod.org.uk/myanmar or by calling 0303 303 3030. You can also text EARTHQUAKE to 70450 to donate £10.

DOMINIC ARGENT-HALL—FRENCH SUPPER NIGHT THANK YOU: We have received a letter of thanks from Medecins Sans Frontieres for the donation of £395 raised through Dominic's French night. Thank you to everybody who supported this cause.

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

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SICK: Michael Coady, Reuben Jack Dodd (Lacey), Emilia Gunn, Deborah & Paul Bussutil, Christopher Noel Ashford, Joan Spoor, Liam O'Byrne, Tom Martin, Maureen Peek, Frances Oskis, Joseph Furzer, Martyn Oliver, James Nickelson, Len Rawlings, Stella Rogers, Wenda Cordell, Irene Stubbings, Janet Martin, Tony White, Nora Delor, Maureen Pain, Ian Laidlaw, Julie Cordell, Stella Owen, Patrick Rodgers, Mary Smith, Frank Hamilton, Christine Sejas, Anna Gawlik, Maureen Anderson, Patricia Mylod, Lisa Bostock, Jason Hamilton-Ramm, Thomas Presland and Pat Danagher

RIP NOTICES: Please pay for the repose of the souls of Marco Rasile, James Kearns and Maureen Springham who died recently. James' funeral will be held at South Essex Crematorium at 11.40am on Wednesday 23rd April 2025. May they all rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES: Patricia Sharp, Geoffrey Marlow, Willoughby Tayler, Norman Gower, Audrey Potter, Krystyna Wojtecka, George Clark, Eileen O'Brien, Nora Maguire, Alice Hooper, James Woolward, Terence Mahoney, Peggie Atkinson, Maureen Bradford, Ann Fennell, William Crowley, Eileen Hall, Mary Stannard, Gladys Hallahan, Cecilia Fletcher, Hilary Dingli., Anthony Roberts, Sr Dolores McGoldrick, Patrick Carter, Eileen Neal, Gwendoline Sena, Barry Farrelly, Patrick Horrigan, Annette Stokes, Robert Sexton, Patrick Coleman, Charles Cantwell, Rose Coult, Mary Catherine Smith, Jennie Murphy, Alice Coward, Edith Romer, Albert Jung, Ellen Whitby, Sheila Corcoran, Jacqueline Willis, Josephine Brown, Wyn Diamond, Giuseppe Pettenuzzo, George Jones, James McNamara, Anne Steward, Norah Carroll, Sheila Walker, Louise Silverlock, Thomas Feeney, Jack Horgan, Bryan O'Lochlen, Fumiko Jenkins, Orene Dobinson, Mary Moran, Grace Geeves, Maureen Connolly, Michael Jones, Andrew Horti, Winifred Ketterer, Margaret Houlden, William Keefe, Doreen George, Charlotte Regan, Horace Ellis, Gwendoline Rainbird, Edmund Skinner, John Thompson Baker, Christine Norley, Molly Kenny, John Chambers, Richard Jenkins, June Blake, Emily Hoare, Atina Duncan, Edith Hess, Doris Marquis, Michael Quirke, Gladys Lyden, Frank Everett, James Hamilton, Francis Connolly, Christine Hale, Brian Best, Eddie O'Donnell, Phyllis Lock, Joyce Dampster, Kathleen Allen, Paul Sears, Norah Madden, William Dailey, Iveron Stone and Ethel Cameron. May they all rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

USEFUL INFORMATION

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 switch-board.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 12th April 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	SATURDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Mr & Mrs Proto Pacheco
Sun 13th April 9.00am 11.00am	PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD People of the parish Pat Ives RIP (CWL)
Mon 14th April 9.15am	MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK Grace Wingrove RIP B'day (Cunningham)
Tues 15th April 9.15am 7.30pm	TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK Kathleen Dennehy RIP (Regan) Reconciliation Service
Wed 16th April 9.15am 7.30pm –8.30pm	WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK John & Ellen Maplesden RIP ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 17th April 8pm	MAUNDY THURSDAY Mass of the Lord's Supper For vocations
Frid 18th April 8.15am 9am 3pm 7.30pm	GOOD FRIDAY Morning Prayer and Office of Readings Stations of the Cross for Children Liturgy of the Passion Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
Sat 19th April 9.15am 9pm	HOLY SATURDAY Morning Prayer and Office of Readings Easter Vigil Intentions of those being received and baptised.
Sunday 20th April 9am 11am	EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD People of the parish Patrick & Mary O'Donnell RIP Anniv. (Mary)

**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**