



St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

10TH/ 11TH MAY 2025

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (C) - Mass Book Pg 262

(Acts 13:14, 43b-52, Revelation 7:9, 13a, 14b-17, John 10:27-30)

HABEMUS PAPAM—LEO XIV

At this point in Eastertide we move away from the post-resurrection gospels and contemplate earlier teaching in the light of the Resurrection. On the fourth Sunday of Easter we always hear a passage from the Good Shepherd discourse in John's gospel. It's resonance with Easter is clear: the best-known verse (which we hear in Year B) is perhaps the one in which Jesus declares 'the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep' (John 10.11). In the shorter passage given to us today, when Jesus returns to the theme a little later, he tells his listeners 'I give them eternal life, and they will never perish' – the shepherd lays down his life precisely to give us life without end.



Alongside this Easter emphasis on eternal life, today's passage highlights a particular connection between the shepherd and his flock – his voice, which the sheep hear, and respond to, because the shepherd knows the sheep and the sheep know and trust the shepherd. Good Shepherd Sunday is the Day of Prayer for Vocations – with vocations to the priesthood and religious life especially in mind. The link between priestly ministry and shepherding is apparent in the word 'pastor' (which means shepherd). We recall the instruction Jesus gave Peter at their breakfast meeting on the shore of the sea of Galilee: feed my sheep. From Pope to parish priest, we are ordained to be shepherds of Christ's flock. Shepherding includes the sacramental ministry which is the *raison d'être* for the priest's existence: feeding the sheep with the food of eternal life, and making Christ's gift of himself a present reality.

The word 'vocation' is linked to the word 'voice'. In order to be an effective shepherd after the pattern of the Good Shepherd, the priest must listen to that voice, and respond with generosity: not just hearing and heeding the

call to ordination, but in every moment. And that is true of all of us, whatever our particular calling in the world and in the church, as followers of Christ joined to him in holy baptism. To be able to hear his voice, we must be close to him in prayer. For the voice of the shepherd is easily crowded out by other noise. What, in particular, is asked of us this Sunday? As the cards produced by our diocesan vocation office remind us, Our Lord himself tells us to pray, that God may give us the priests we need. We should take this task seriously: making it a specific intention for our prayers. Asking God for something is, however, never merely passive. We pray, so that we may be more fully aligned to God's will. In praying for more priests we also seek greater generosity on our own part in responding to God's will, after the example of our mother Mary. We pray for a greater awareness of the centrality of the sacraments in the life of the church, like those martyrs of the reformation period who were ready to give their lives (as priests and laypeople) to ensure the flame of faith would not die out in this land. We pray that our own lives may be a good example of courageous selflessness that may inspire those around us to ask 'what does God want of me?' rather than 'what do I want to be?'. And please pray for your priests, and the bishops of the church – including our new Pope – that they may always hear that voice.

Another detail from today's gospel. Israel had long seen God as a shepherd figure: an image expressed in the psalms and prophets. In identifying himself as the Good Shepherd Jesus is therefore making a bold claim, not only that he is the promised successor to the shepherd-king David, but that he is truly God, tending to his flock. To underscore the point, he states, 'I and the Father are one'. This was not missed by his listeners, who immediately after this take up stones to throw at him. In the light of Easter, we understand that our task above all is to proclaim Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, to be Our Lord and God, to follow him, and identify ourselves without hesitation as his, that others may come to hear his voice and receive his gift of life.

God bless, Fr Matthew

SECOND COLLECTION VOCATIONS GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY:

This Sunday is Good Shepherd Sunday, or the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Please pray for vocations to the priesthood for our diocese and for those currently training for the priesthood. The second collection supports the education and formation of our seminarians.

FIRST COMMUNION CELEBRATIONS: Please pray for those members of our parish family who are to receive Our Lord in the eucharist for the first time this Sunday afternoon and next Sunday.

CONFIRMATION GROUP: Please pray for the young people of our parish preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation at Pentecost. They will take part in the Rite of Election with the Bishop in Brentwood Cathedral this Sunday afternoon, and will mark this parish's choice of them as candidates for confirmation at the vigil Mass next Saturday. Confirmation itself will take place at the vigil Mass for the Solemnity of Pentecost.

EASTERTIDE MEAL & FAITH TALK: This year marks the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, which give rise to the Nicene Creed we recite at Mass week-by-week. To celebrate the season of Easter and this anniversary you are invited to a shared meal, which will be followed by a talk on the background to the Creed and its significance to our faith. This will be on Tuesday 1st July.

MARRIAGE MASS: Bishop Alan will be celebrating the annual Mass of Thanksgiving for Marriage and Family Life in Brentwood Cathedral on Saturday 21st June. If you are celebrating a significant wedding anniversary this year and would like to receive an invitation to this Mass please contact the parish office.

RAINHAM FOODBANK: A big thank you. Since the start of Lent to Easter Sunday, you have given 105Kg of groceries and toiletries to Rainham foodbank. Please remember, the foodbank cannot accept donations of alcohol, perishable or out of date items and baby milk products. Thank you again for your generous donations.

VOCATIONS WEEKEND FOR WOMEN (20s and 30s): Discerning God's Call in your life 23rd - 25th May, Liverpool. The weekend is organised by the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ). Jesus invites each of us to 'Come and See' - this weekend will give the opportunity to explore the vocation to religious life and to reflect on God's call to you. If you are wondering if God is calling you to religious life and would like to find out more why not come along? You are welcome to stay for the weekend or just come along on Saturday for the day. There will be opportunity for prayer, reflection and input, chance to ask questions and to meet others who are also wondering where God is calling them. For more information contact Sr Lynne fcJ at fcjvocationeurope@gmail.com or visit our website www.fcjsisters.org To register: <https://bit.ly/FCJVocationWeekend>

SION COMMUNITY 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS: Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th September 2025. Saturday starts with an open house at 10am followed by a 40th anniversary mass at Brentwood Cathedral at 12 noon. There will then be a 40th anniversary event including lunch at 1.30pm and departures at 5pm. On Sunday the open house will be from 11.30am—1.30pm. At 2pm Mgr Pat Lynch will be having a 50th Jubilee mass (location to be confirmed). Afternoon tea will be served at 3.30pm and departures at 5pm.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 10th May 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	SATURDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS James Sweeney RIP (Eleanor & Clare)
Sun 11th May 9.00am 11.00am	FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER People of the parish Alf Driscoll RIP Anniv. (Family)
Mon 12th May 9.15am	ST JOHN HOUGHTON, PR M Private Intention (Bernadette)
Tues 13th May 9.15am 12 noon	ST ERCONWALD, BP Int. Pope Leo XIV (With our Year 4 children) Funeral Mass—Maureen Springham
Wed 14th May 9.15am 12 noon—1pm	ST MATTHIAS, AP Mike Bowes RIP (Gabrielle Murphy) ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 15th May 9.15am	THURSDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER Deceased members of the Moyles Family (Bridget)
Frid 16th May 9.15am	FRIDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER Michael Bowes RIP (Fowley)
Sat 17th May 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	SATURDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Edward Horigan RIP Anniv. (Family)
Sun 18th May 9.00am 11.00am	FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER People of the parish Bridget & James Gillan RIP (Gillan)

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* **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**