



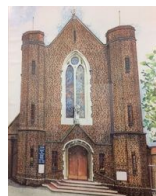
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward

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PARISH NEWSLETTER

13TH / 14TH SEPTEMBER 2025

THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (C) - Mass Book Pg 191

(Numbers 21:4b-9, Phillipians 2:6-11, John 3:13-17)

Today, instead of the usual 'green' Sunday, we celebrate a feast that, because it is to do with Christ himself, takes precedence over the ordinary Sunday celebration. This feast is known as the 'Exaltation of the Holy Cross'. Historically, it commemorates the consecration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 335, and the showing of a relic of the true cross as part of the celebrations. That relic itself had been discovered during excavations prior to the construction of the new church, built on the orders of emperor Constantine and overseen by his mother St Helena. A significant moment in Constantine's own journey to the Christian faith was a vision on the eve of a battle in which he saw a cross of light in the sky, accompanied by the words 'in this sign conquer'.

Today's feast is, however, more than the commemoration of past events. It invites us to consider the place of the cross in our lives. Last week's gospel included Jesus' invitation to take up our cross and come after him. Indeed, this is the only way to be a disciple, and thus the only way to authentically bear the identity 'Christian'. The life we are called to as members of his body is truly cross-shaped. The great adventure of the spiritual life involves learning, and taking deep into our hearts, the lesson of the cross. To understand the paradox that only in giving ourselves away in love, totally and selflessly, can we receive the gifts that allow us to become fully who we are made to be.

In the face of the constant temptation to make our lives about ourselves, we need to hold on to the cross of Christ, turn to it often. The cross is not a mere symbol of our faith; it is at the heart of everything we do. We make the sign of the cross whilst professing our faith in the God who is Father



Son and Holy Spirit. In this way, God's Trinitarian identity is inseparable from the supreme manifestation of God's love. To make the sign of the cross publicly, whether at the start of a meal in a restaurant, or before a sporting contest that is being televised to millions, is a great witness. There is much to be said for the practice of wearing a cross – visibly as a witness, but also as a reminder to ourselves that we have already been claimed by Christ and received the sign of the cross in baptism. The same goes for crosses – crucifixes – displayed prominently in our homes. We can make the sign of the cross at the beginning and end of the day as a way of consecrating the day to the Lord and seeking his protection. You can make the sign of the cross and bless yourself with holy water each time you go from your home out into the world just as we do coming through the door of God's house. Why not cross yourself before using the computer if you find yourself easily distracted from your work or tempted in other ways. Cross yourself when getting into the car or beginning a journey. Even before a football match! None of this is superstitious – or at least, it is not meant to be: the sign of the cross is one of the most powerful prayers we can make, for by it we proclaim that we are firmly on the side of God, that we wish to do his will, share his victory, and live with him forever. In this sign conquer! God bless, Fr Matthew

STAY AND PRAY: Most weeks during term time a year group from St Joseph's Primary School joins us at a weekday Mass. For this academic year these 'Stay and Pray' Masses will be on Thursdays (rather than Tuesdays). These Masses are not live-streamed. All are welcome.

PARKING: Due to the limited number of parking spaces at church, those who can walk, or who can walk from a nearby public car park, are encouraged to do so. It is assumed that anyone parking in the church car park will be there for the whole of Mass, therefore it is acceptable to double park; however if you are blocking someone in, please move as soon as you can after Mass is finished. Those attending Mass on Sundays are permitted to park in the school staff car park. Please do not block driveways on Champion Road, including the Presbytery driveway, as free access in and out is required at all times, even during Mass.

BUILDING UPDATE: Copies of Fr Matthew's letter to the parish from last week are available in the porch, or online at stjosephschurchupminster.com/our-future

ADVANCE NOTICE: Later this month there will be a three-day conference for all the clergy of the diocese. Consequently there will be no Mass or holy hour on Wednesday 24th September, and the Thursday Mass will be moved to the evening.

SUNDAY COFFEE: This time of fellowship and refreshment between our Sunday morning Masses has now resumed. Do come along, whether after the 9am or before the 11am. 6.30pm Mass goers are welcome to drop in as well! Each week a different parish group hosts the coffee morning – an opportunity to talk to members and find out what they do.

PARISH WALKING PILGRIMAGE TO BRENTWOOD: To mark the Jubilee Year, with it's theme 'Pilgrims of Hope', as a parish we will undertake a walking pilgrimage to the mother church of our diocese. This will take place on Sunday 5th October and we will aim to set off about 12.30pm, stopping on the way for lunch. More details to follow but please save the date.

SECOND COLLECTION: Please note that there will be a second collection after all masses this weekend 13th/14th September in aid of The Catholic Education Service. There will also be a second collection after all masses next weekend 20th / 21st September in aid of Evangelii Gaudium Day.

FIRST COMMUNION: Registration is now open for our First Holy Communion programme, for those in school year 3 or above. Please register your child's details at tinyurl.com/stjfhc as soon as possible.

CHURCH CLEANERS: We are in need of more church cleaners. If you could help please contact the presbytery on 01708-222432.

LADIES' NIGHT: Thursday 9th October at 7pm in the Social Centre. Please join us for our first ladies' night when we can enjoy an evening spent with friends. All welcome and if you are new to the parish do come along where you will find a very warm welcome. Light refreshments provided and the bar will be open where you can buy your drinks. If you would like more information speak to Bernadette in the Repository at weekend Masses or Frances Chalk.

ST THOMAS MORE ALUMNI LAST EVER ANNUAL DINNER -

SATURDAY 11TH OCTOBER: After 27 years the organisation for former pupils and staff members of St Thomas More High School in Westcliff has decided to hold one last Annual Dinner. It will take place in the school on Saturday 11th October. Guest Speaker will be Tony McDonald (headteacher 1981-85) and the cost for a four-course meal will be £30. Full details are available on the Alumni website: www.stmalumni.co.uk

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 13th Sept 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, BP, D ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Ann Cremin RIP
Sun 14th Sept 9.00am 11.00am	THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS People of the parish Liam O'Flaherty RIP (McCarthy)
Mon 15th Sept 9.15am	OUR LADY OF SORROWS John Gibbs RIP B'day (Gibbs / Quinn)
Tues 16th Sept 9.15am	SS CORNELIUS, P & CYPRIAN, BP, M Carmel Armstrong RIP (Butler)
Wed 17th Sept 9.15am 12 noon—1pm	Carmel Armstrong RIP (Slattery) ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 18th Sept 9.15am	Lynn's Intentions (Slattery)
Frid 19th Sept 9.15am	Patricia Danagher RIP (Darvill Family)
Sat 20th Sept 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	ST ANDREW KIM TAE-GON, PR, PAUL CHONG HA-SANG AND COMPANIONS, MM ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi's Intentions (Lucy)
Sun 21st Sept 9.00am 11.00am	TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR People of the parish Carmel Armstrong RIP (Hayward)

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**