



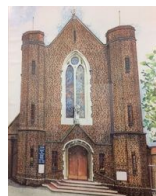
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward

upminster@brcdt.org / 01708 222432



PARISH NEWSLETTER

3RD / 4TH JANUARY 2026

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY (A) - Mass Book Pg 111

(Sirach 24:1-2,8-12, Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18, John 1:1-18)

That well known song 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' reminds us that the central event of our Saviour's birth is worth more than a single day's festivities. We might find it hard to keep going that long, especially after a December filled with preparations and social events, and many of us are only able to have a few days off work. The world is ready to move on by New Year and begin a post-festive 'virtuous' January. This Sunday invites us to look back again at that wondrous event, hearing again the opening of St John's Gospel which links the birth of Christ to creation itself and reminding us that eternity and created time have intersected. The eternal Son and Word of God, who has never not existed, is born as a human baby at a particular place and time. The word we use to describe this mystery, 'incarnation', is linked to that phrase we hear in St John's Gospel, repeated three times a day in the Angelus: 'the Word was *made flesh* and dwelt among us.'



God alone is worthy of our worship – and the child in the manger is truly God. He shares our humanity in order that we might share his divinity. It has been suggested that the increasingly bizarre gifts in 'Twelve Days' all have symbolic meanings relating to our Christian faith, a kind of hidden Catechism. The partridge in the pear tree representing the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ, and his cross. Whether or not there is anything in that theory, it remains true that there is no greater gift than this. Our response to any gift should be genuine gratitude, by which we show our appreciation of the gift and the giver. Perhaps we see thank you notes as a post-Christmas chore, or even something that is no longer necessary. But acknowledging a gift means that the giver knows it has been received. How do we thank God for the gift he has given us? The Wise Men, whose visit we celebrate this week on the feast of the Epiphany – a great feast in its own right – honoured Our Lord with symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The shepherds, we imagine, brought the gift of a lamb, also highly symbolic. As a well-known carol puts it, the best gift we can give is 'my heart' – that is, a gift of myself.

A gift that enables us to receive even more, from the giver of all that is good. This gift is expressed in different ways, but one way in particular is our participation in the eucharist – the word itself means ‘thanksgiving’ – when we unite ourselves with Our Lord’s sacrifice, the perfect offering of worship to the father which he makes on our behalf as only he can, as the one who is both God and man. Let us resolve in the year ahead to deepen our appreciation for the Eucharist even more.

On the theme of thanksgiving, I would like to express my personal gratitude for the cards, prayers, good wishes and gifts I and my family have received, and for your generosity in the Christmas offering. I would also like to express my gratitude on behalf of the whole community to all those who have worked so hard throughout the past year and especially in the run-up to Christmas, to ensure the church is clean and tidy and beautifully decorated; to assist in the liturgy as readers, servers, musicians, ministers of holy communion and welcomers; visiting the sick and the housebound; supporting the formation of our children; and taking care of the many unseen aspects of administration that keeps our parish functioning. I am grateful also for the extra help that many have offered, and for your understanding in my limitations with regard to pastoral visiting, in relation to my present mobility difficulties!

God bless, Fr Matthew

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY: On Tuesday 6th January we celebrate the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus, and his manifestation as saviour of the world. This is a Holy Day of Obligation and as such we celebrate Mass at 10am and 8pm. As is customary, chalk will be blessed and made available after each Mass for the blessing of the doors to our homes.

CRIB COLLECTION: You are encouraged to visit the crib throughout the extended Christmas period ending on the feast of Candlemas. Please pray for and support the work of Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society as you visit the crib (cash or QR code by the crib, or use the donation screens in the porch).

RIP: Please pray for the repose of the soul of Mgr David Manson, former vicar general of our diocese and dean of the Cathedral, and at the time of his sudden death parish priest of Braintree.

ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER: Please pray for the Archbishop-elect, Richard Moth, currently Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, who will succeed Cardinal Vincent Nicholls next month.

RACHEL THANK YOU: Thank you for the cards and gifts that I received for Christmas. Your generosity was very thoughtful, extremely kind and greatly appreciated.

ST JOHN BOSCO CHILDREN'S CAMP – AN AMAZING VOLUNTEER

OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS SUMMER: If you are in school year 12 or student age (or any age over 17!) you are very welcome to apply at www.boscocamp.co.uk. The application process includes references and a DBS check, which we can help with, as well as a training and support before and during Camp. The Camp provides over 100 children a week with a summer holiday – for many their only holiday. As a volunteer you use your skills in assisting with different sporting and fun activities, as well as the practical aspects of camp life. **Volunteer for 25th July – 1st August or 1st – 8th August.** The Camp is a special work of Caritas Diocese of Brentwood, and also seeks financial donations – all information on the website.

CARITAS BRENTWOOD: You are invited to join Caritas Brentwood at our upcoming 'Responding to Homelessness' event on Saturday, January 24th 2026 (10am-12:30pm). The event will be hosted by St Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish in Stratford. It will offer practical support, shared insights and meaningful discussions with local organisations, including Your Place Anchor House, Rainham Foodbank and the Basildon Night Shelter, who are all working on the frontline of homelessness. For more information and to register for free, go to: www.caritasbrentwood.org/events.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES: Join our pilgrimage to Lourdes travelling overnight by luxury coach from 9 to 14 February 2026. It is always a beautiful and deeply spiritual experience soaking in the Spirit of Jesus as we travel to honour Our Blessed Mother. Leaving Slough and Ealing Broadway on 9 Feb 2026 and departing Lourdes on 13 February for a visit to the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal in Rue de Bac, Paris on 14 February morning and arriving in London later on 14 February 2026. Full board, exciting festival devotional program, experience the Blessed Sacrament Procession of the Sick, the Candlelight Marian Rosary Procession and the International Mass on the Feast Day followed by Stations, Confessions and Adoration with Hour of Mercy. Travel, full board and program cost £590. Call Millie on 07957594646 for more info.

RETRouvaille MARRIAGE HELP: Retrouvaille helps couples find hope and healing for their marriage. Next date: Thursday 12th February.
www.retrouvaille.org.uk Tel: 07887 296983

MARANATHA! COME LORD JESUS! You are warmly welcomed to an evening of praise and worship, including mass and adoration. Friday 16th January and Friday 13th of February 2026 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at The Blessed Sacrament Church, 116 Melbourne Avenue, CM12DU, Chelmsford. Bring your friends!

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 3rd Jan

5.30pm—6.15pm ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

6.30pm Mary Dillane RIP Anniv. (Keefe)

Sun 4th Jan

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

9.00am Catherine Sweeney RIP Anniv. (Jane)

11.00am People of the parish

Mon 5th Jan

WEEKDAY OF CHRISTMAS TIME—MONDAY

12.30pm Deceased members of the Lewis Family (Lewis)

Tues 6th Jan

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

10am Sue Kelly's Intentions (St Joseph's School Governors)

8pm People of the parish

Wed 7th Jan

WEEKDAY OF CHRISTMAS TIME—WEDNESDAY

9.15am Bridget Alabi's Intentions (Alabi)

12 noon—1pm

ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

Thur 8th Jan

WEEKDAY OF CHRISTMAS TIME—THURSDAY

9.15am Eugene Ryan RIP (Brendan Ryan)

Frid 9th Jan

WEEKDAY OF CHRISTMAS TIME—FRIDAY

9.15am Private Intention

Sat 10th Jan

WEEKDAY OF CHRISTMAS TIME—SATURDAY

5.30pm—6.15pm ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

6.30pm People of the parish

Sun 11th Jan

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

9.00am The people of Russia

11.00am John Fowley RIP (Romford KSC—Cantoni)

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/pastoral need): 07356 292542

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.

St Joseph's Pre-School - (available 7.30am-6pm) 07983-859090 / 07807-700900

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**