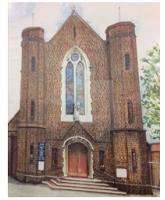




# St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi  
Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward  
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## PARISH NEWSLETTER

21ST / 22ND MARCH 2026

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (A) - Mass Book Pg 170**

(Ezekiel 37:12-14, Romans 8:8-11, John 11:1-45)

Last week we were half-way through Lent: now the end really seems to be in sight. But the most significant part of the journey still lies ahead of us. We are journeying towards Easter, when we celebrate Christ's glorious resurrection. But there is only one route to Easter: the way of the cross. Next Sunday is Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week. This week we begin the final part of Lent known as Passiontide. Liturgically, we step up our self-denial by depriving ourselves of the sacred images that adorn the church. For fifty weeks of the year these images serve as aids to our prayer; but now we strip away even what is good, to remind us that everything good is given by God not as an end in itself, but to lead us to him.

Veiling is a form of separation. And today we are reminded of the most difficult separation of all, the separation wrought by death. Our gospel today makes two things very clear to us. Death is not what God wants for us; and he has power over it.

God has made us for life. Death looms large over all of us, not so much a punishment for sin, but a consequence of it. For God is the source of life; if we reject God, then we reject the life he intends us to have. But God is also a good father, who does not want us to be cut off from him for ever. Jesus weeps in the face of death, as we all do. But these are not tears of defeat or despair. Rather, he weeps with all those who are separated by death from those they love. He weeps for the pain and suffering that humanity brought upon itself by turning its back on God, even as he is bringing about our reconciliation. He weeps tears of real sadness even as he knows that he has the power to raise Lazarus from the dead, and is shortly to defeat death once and for all through his own death and resurrection.

As with Easter itself, we know that there is no other route to eternal life than the way of the cross; the way of letting go of our desire for control, letting go of our preference for what is familiar and safe. The fourteen Stations of the Cross remain unveiled, even as everything else is covered up, in order to remind us of this essential journey. We are invited to unite our sufferings with Christ's, in order to enter more fully into the life he has made us for. Baptism, St Paul tells us, is a symbolic sharing in Christ's death, in order that we who descend into the depths with him may also rise with him to the heights of heaven. As we celebrate the third and final rite of scrutiny today we pray that those to be baptised at Easter may indeed die to sin, and live for ever in Christ, and that those who are already baptised may be more conscious of the life they now live in Christ, slaves to sin and death no longer.

God bless, Fr Matthew

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**FIRST COMMUNION GROUP:** Our children preparing for first communion will come together for the 11am Mass and will be presented with a Rosary blessed by Bishop Alan, to help them participate more fully in the mysteries of Christ born, crucified and risen for us.

**EASTER TRIDUUM:** The times for the main celebrations on the three sacred days of our redemption are as follows: Maundy Thursday (2<sup>nd</sup> April) **8pm**; Good Friday (3<sup>rd</sup> April) **3pm**; Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil – 4<sup>th</sup> April) **8.30pm**. Please note the time of the Easter Vigil, which is earlier than last year as Easter occurs earlier in the year (thus it is dark earlier). The Easter Vigil is instead of the 6.30pm Mass that day.

**PALM SUNDAY:** Next Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week. The blessing of palms will take place at all weekend Masses to commemorate Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem. The 11am Mass will begin with a procession from the junior playground, weather permitting.

**RIP:** Please pray for the repose of the souls of Patricia Merrigan, Mary-Anne Madden, Annette Dagnall and Delia Said who have died. Mary-Anne's funeral will be held here on Tuesday 24th March at 10.45am, with her body received into church at 4pm the previous evening. Patricia's funeral will be held here on Tuesday 31st March at 11am, and Annette's funeral will also be here on Thursday 9th April at 11am. Delia's funeral will be at South Essex Crematorium on Monday 23rd March at 1.30pm. May Patricia, Mary-Anne, Annette and Delia rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS:** St Joseph's Church, 7.30pm this Friday.

**CWL LUNCH CLUB:** The Wednesday lunch club will be closed for one week only on Wednesday 1st April. We will reopen on Wednesday 8th, April.

**ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CLUB:** "We Got The Funk" feat Simon Bartholomew from the Brand New Heavies (18+) - Saturday 25th April - <https://buytickets.at/stjosephscatholicclubupminster/2034562> Membership now just £5: <https://membermojo.co.uk/stjosephscc>

**CANTERBURY WALK 2026:** The Canterbury Walk 2026 will take place from Wednesday 8th April to Saturday 11th April. You can register by simply scanning the QR code or by contacting **Andrew Pearce on 07903 654288**. This pilgrimage is a chance to step away from screens, spend four days walking more than 70 miles through beautiful countryside, and enjoy the restorative benefits of being outdoors. It offers space to unwind, reflect, and reconnect—whether through quiet moments, meaningful conversations, or simply sharing the journey with others in faith.



**HORNCHURCH PASSION PLAY 2026:** Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, 7.30pm on the green by the Queens Theatre, Hornchurch, RM11 1QT. Admittance free. Be part of the story as it unfolds.

**DIOCESAN SCHOOL VACANCIES:** Class Teacher – St Antony’s Catholic Primary School, Woodford Green. Deadline for applications: 12:00 noon Thursday 19th March 2026. Deputy Headteacher – Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School, Chelmsford. Deadline for applications: 12:00 noon Friday 20th March 2026. Deputy Headteacher – St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, Tilbury. Deadline for application: 12:00 noon Friday 10th April 2026.

**LOURDES WITH OUR DIOCESE:** Would you like to join our bishop and parishioners and clergy from around the diocese on our annual pilgrimage to Lourdes this summer? The dates are Friday, 17th – Friday, 24th July. Please visit <https://tangney-tours.com/brentwood> for further information and to book, or contact Deirdre Pembroke, [lourdes@brcdt.org](mailto:lourdes@brcdt.org).

**NEW ALTAR SERVERS:** Anyone who has already made their first holy communion and is interested in joining our team of altar servers, is invited to speak to Fr Matthew and get your parents to email the parish office with your contact details and the time of Mass you usually attend.

**PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK & CO. MAYO WITH BISHOP ALAN WILLIAMS:-** Monday, 15th June 2026 to Friday, 19th June 2026. 4 nights in Knock House Hotel, with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Visit Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick, Ballintubber Abbey, Fr. Peyton Centre. £799.00 per person. Contact Patricia on 01268 762 278 / 07740 175 557 / [knockpilgrimages@gmail.com](mailto:knockpilgrimages@gmail.com)

## MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

<b>Sat 21st March</b>	<b>SATURDAY OF THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT</b>
<b>5.30pm—6.15pm</b>	<b>ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS</b>
<b>6.30pm</b>	Alan & Eileen Noyes RIP (Burgess)
<b>Sun 22nd March</b>	<b>FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b>
<b>9.00am</b>	People of the parish
<b>11.00am</b>	Patrick & David Walsh RIP Anniv. (Margaret)
<b>Mon 23rd March</b>	<b>MONDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT</b>
<b>9.15am</b>	Josephine Sheridan RIP (Pauline)
<b>4pm</b>	Reception of the body of Mary Anne Madden
<b>Tues 24th March</b>	<b>TUESDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT</b>
<b>9.15am</b>	Doreen Theodore's Intentions (Regan)
<b>10.45am</b>	Funeral Mass—Mary Anne Madden
<b>Wed 25th March</b>	<b>THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD (SOLEMNITY)</b>
<b>9.15am</b>	Onyemaechi Mbachu's Birthday Intentions
<b>12 noon—1pm</b>	<b>ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS</b>
<b>Thur 26th March</b>	<b>THURSDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT</b>
<b>9.15am</b>	Ellen Rogers RIP Anniv. (Mark)
<b>Frid 27th March</b>	<b>FRIDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT</b>
<b>9.15am</b>	Shane O'Neill RIP (Ethells)
<b>Sat 28th March</b>	<b>SATURDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT</b>
<b>5.30pm—6.15pm</b>	<b>ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS</b>
<b>6.30pm</b>	People of the parish
<b>Sun 29th March</b>	<b>PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD</b>
<b>9.00am</b>	Shane O'Neill RIP (Campbell)
<b>11.00am</b>	Sheila Higgs RIP (Burgess)

### 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

**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**