

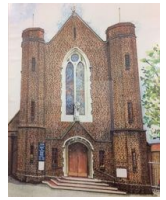


# St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi

Parish Secretary: Rachel Hayward



## PARISH NEWSLETTER

28TH / 29TH MARCH 2026

**PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD (pg 176)**

(Isaiah 50:4-7, Philipians 2:6-11, Matthew 26:14-27:66)

Just before moving to Upminster I had the privilege of experiencing the Oberammergau Passion Play, which for centuries has taken place every 10 years as one community's act of gratitude for being spared the worst effects of the plague. Closer to home at the end of this week our local community will come together to stage the Hornchurch Passion Play, which in its first incarnation took place here at St Joseph's and still involves a number of parishioners. This is of course not a work of fiction like other plays, but the dramatisation of the most important event in human history. A performance of the passion of Our Lord should not leave the audience unchanged. At Mass today, we have an opportunity to hear St Matthew's version of these events, to prepare us for the week ahead.



Each and every time we celebrate Mass, the past events of our salvation are mysteriously brought into our present. Once a year, however, we come a little closer and experience these events unfolding as it were in real time. The liturgies of holy week have a dramatic quality and include elements of reenactment. But it is above all an offering of worship in which Christ himself is present in our midst as both priest and sacrificial offering.

We begin this week by recalling our Lord's entry into Jerusalem: a bold statement of intent which sets the tone for all that follows, the events we hear retold in the long passion Gospel read at this mass. One moment we are greeting him with palms held aloft: the next, we find

ourselves calling for his blood. A reminder that we can be as fickle as the crowd, and easily lose sight of what we are called to be.

Next week we will rejoice in the resurrection. Lent will be over; the time of feasting and celebration will be here. But to fully appreciate the joy of Easter, we need to reach it by way of the cross. 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. The key to understanding what we are celebrating this week is the word 'Paschal'. More than simply a synonym for Easter, it reminds us of the essential link between our redemption and the Passover. It's no coincidence that all this took place during the greatest festival in the Jewish calendar, for the original Passover, the moment of Israel's liberation from Egypt, is a sign of that still greater moment of liberation when the whole human race was set free from slavery to sin and death. Jesus is the Paschal lamb, the sacrifice offered once and for all inaugurating a new and everlasting covenant between God and his people.

We call this period between our Lord's entry into Jerusalem and his glorious resurrection 'Holy Week' because God the Holy Trinity is the principal actor in all that unfolds. Through the dying and rising of the son of God, holiness is restored to a creation that had lost its way. This week is also an opportunity to rekindle our own desire for holiness – the vocation given to us in baptism when God's image and likeness was restored in us through the font. Let us ask ourselves: How can I make this week holy? How can I open myself more completely to the Grace that makes me holy as God intends me to be?

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. Additionally, you might find it beneficial to prepare by celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation, either at the Reconciliation Service on Tuesday evening (7.30pm) or at other points during the week; on Wednesday evening (7.45pm) there will be a talk on the Holy Week liturgies followed by a time of prayer and another opportunity for confession.

We begin the Triduum 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 or visit the church to pray quietly before the cross in the evening. 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 below).

**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 high point of the liturgical year. This takes place after nightfall at **8.30pm** (*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

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**EASTER SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION:** Please pray for those who are to be baptised, received into the Church, and/or confirmed at the Easter Vigil: Dominion, Redeemer, Goodness, Treasure, Christiana, Westley, Callie-Mae, Lauren, Toks, Adesola, Akintide, Victoria, Amy, Sam, Lucy, John; also for the children of our First Communion group who are to be baptised: Isabel, Daisy-Grace, Betsy, Cooper, Kingsley, Clayton and Rose.

**RECONCILIATION SERVICE:** To prepare for the celebration of Easter there will be a reconciliation service here on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March starting 7.30pm with a time of penitential reflection and an opportunity for individual confession with visiting priests. There are opportunities for individual confession at other times: after the morning Mass on Monday and Tuesday, during adoration after the talk on Wednesday evening (7.45pm), 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. There is no holy hour this Wednesday lunchtime.

**LIVE STREAM:** The Holy Week liturgies will be live streamed at <https://is.gd/sjuptv>

**HORNCHURCH PASSION PLAY:** 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.

**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.

**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 from four points of the compass: feel free to choose which is most convenient. The assembly points are the Methodist Church on Hall Lane, St Joseph's Church, the Clock House, and the Baptist Church on Springfield Gardens. This because a request for a brief road closure was refused, and the pavement is not wide enough for a single large procession. The processions will converge and lead into a service in the park or Trinity URC depending on the weather. Departure from all four points will be at 10am—10.15am for an Ecumenical service in the park 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!)

**LENT APPEALS:** Almsgiving is a key part of our Lenten observance, and this year we have promoted two charities: CAFOD, providing aid overseas, and 'Your Place' (formerly Caritas Anchor House) addressing homelessness locally. You can contribute to either cause using the giving screens in the porch. Additionally, a collection will be taken up during the offertory at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday which will be shared between the two charities. This follows an old custom, linked to the 'new commandment' given at the last supper. Please identify your gift with your Gift Aid number if possible.

**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.

**RAINHAM FOODBANK:** In only 5 weeks you have given 102Kg of non-perishable items. A big thank you for your generosity in these hard times.

**MARY- ANNE MADDEN THANK YOU:** Thank you to everyone who came to Mary-Anne's funeral and made it such a joyous occasion for her Irish relatives and your warm welcome for them. They have been overwhelmed by your prayers and support for her during her illness. A Mass will be offered for your intentions.

**LADIES NIGHT—THURSDAY 9TH APRIL 7.15pm:** Come and join us for an evening where we chat and nibble! If you are new to the parish this is an opportunity to meet new friends. It will be good to see you if you can make it. More info from Bernadette in the Repository or Frances 07765 206738.

**BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC YOUTH SERVICE, LOURDES PILGRIMAGE:** A few last-minute places are still available for the BCYS Lourdes pilgrimage this July, for anyone in school year 10+. A powerful experience of faith, service, and community. Funding available. All information can be found at [www.bcys.net/events/sl26](http://www.bcys.net/events/sl26)

**RHODES DANCE CLUB:** ages 5-11 every Saturday starting on 18/4 from 9.15-11.30am at St Joseph's primary school. Please email [rhodesdanceclub@gmail.com](mailto:rhodesdanceclub@gmail.com) to book your child's place.

**SIP & PAINT FUNDRAISER IN AID OF THE LISA DI PALMA FOUNDATION:** Wednesday 15th April, 7pm, St Joseph's Social Centre, 117 St Mary's Lane, Upminster. Evening includes: guided step by step painting session with Dani from Paint Circle, all materials provided & complimentary drink. £30pp. Please book via the following link <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/stjosephscatholicclubupminster>

**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.

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

**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.



**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>

**THANK YOU FROM CAFOD:** Thank you for your generous support this Lent – your kindness is helping families like Shorai's in Zimbabwe and Rejoice's in South Sudan grow food, even in the face of drought and floods. You have shown what it means to love your neighbour this Lent – fasting, praying and giving so families can put food on the table. Find out how your donations are helping to build a better world at [cafod.org.uk/thankyou](http://cafod.org.uk/thankyou)

**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).

#### 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 28th March 5.30pm—6.15pm 6.30pm	<b>SATURDAY OF THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT</b> <b>ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS</b> People of the parish
Sun 29th March LORD 9.00am 11.00am	<b>PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD</b> Shane O'Neill RIP (Campbell) Sheila Higgs RIP (Burgess)
Mon 30th March 9.15am	<b>MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK</b> Thanksgiving (Regan Family)
Tues 31st March 9.15am 11am 7.30pm	<b>TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK</b> Bridget O'Sullivan RIP (Fowley) Funeral Mass—Patricia Merrigan Reconciliation Service
Wed 1st April 9.15am	<b>WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK</b> Penny Cassidy RIP (Duffey)
Thur 2nd April <u>8pm</u>	<b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> <b>Mass of the Lord's Supper</b> Phil Reid RIP (O'Malley)
Frid 3rd April 8.15am 9am <u>3pm</u>	<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> Morning Prayer and Office of Readings Stations of the Cross for Children <b>Liturgy of the Passion</b>
Sat 4th April 9.15am <u>8.30pm</u>	<b>HOLY SATURDAY</b> Morning Prayer and Office of Readings <b>Easter Vigil</b> Intentions of parishioners and those newly baptised
Sunday 5th April 9am 11am	<b>EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD</b> Stephen Czudej RIP (Maude Family) Leonard James White RIP Birthday (Pain)

Facebook: [stjosephschurchupminster](https://www.facebook.com/stjosephschurchupminster) Web: [www.stjosephschurchupminster.com](http://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**