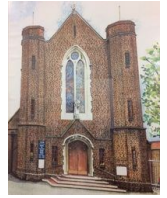




St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi
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PARISH NEWSLETTER

18TH / 19TH APRIL 2026

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (A) - Mass Book Pg 258

(Acts 2:14, 22-23, 1 Peter 1:17-21, Luke 24:13-35)

One of the puzzling aspects of the appearances of the Risen Lord to his disciples, is their inability to recognise him, even though they had spent a great deal of time in his company, listening to his every word, watching his every action. In one TV dramatisation of the passion, different actors were used to portray the risen Lord in order to get this aspect of the Easter story across. The American Bishop Robert Barron offers an interesting speculation as to why the two disciples walking to Emmaus, in the gospel we hear today, fail to recognise the risen Lord: it is because they are walking the wrong way.

To leave the intense atmosphere of Jerusalem for somewhere safer seems to be a sensible and pragmatic decision. But what are they walking away from? The city of the temple, the visible sign of God's covenant with his people; the city where Christ became the sacrifice of the new covenant; the place of the upper room, where he instituted the eucharist, and the place where his followers assembled amidst the confusion following Good Friday. Above all, it was in Jerusalem that Jesus rose from the tomb and first appeared to his followers. Jerusalem represents that crucible of self-denial and self-emptying in which the hope and joy of Easter, the promise of the Resurrection and the assurance of God's enduring love for us were forged.

The disciples are walking the wrong way, and that is why they cannot see the Risen Lord when he comes to meet them. They know all the facts and are, ironically, able to tell this stranger about everything that had happened in Jerusalem, but until they have faith, they cannot make the necessary connections. Jesus unfolds the scriptures for them, patiently explaining all the passages which teach that the Messiah sent by God must come as a suffering servant, carrying the sins of the people on his shoulders; that he must suffer and die, before rising. The incarnate Word of God breaks open

the written word – what a scripture lesson that must have been. But this Word, for them, is not yet alive. The Word prepares them, but only the physical, sacramental reminder of Jesus sacrificial love in the breaking of bread can open their eyes. Then, everything clicks into place. They not only recognise Jesus, but also understand, and so they return to Jerusalem, fearful no longer but full of joy, ready imitate the pattern of sacrificial love revealed in the eucharist and on the cross.

In the Eucharist, with hearts already burning from hearing his Word, we too come into the presence of the risen Lord. This is truly the source and summit of our lives. We must learn to recognise – really recognise – the presence of Christ here, offered on the altar, hidden under the forms of bread and wine and given to us as spiritual food; present among us just as he was to those two disciples at Emmaus. And we must be shaped by what we see: imitating the self-giving, self-sacrificial love of Christ. Through baptism we all have a share in the priesthood of Christ – that means we are all able to offer sacrifice, for that is what a priest does; but the sacrifice we offer is ourselves. We give ourselves completely to God, in thanksgiving for all that he has given to us. And what we give to him, he returns in abundance; for in giving ourselves to him, we receive the fullness of life for which we were created; a share in his divine glory for eternity.

Like these two disciples on the road to Emmaus, fleeing Jerusalem, we can be fearful at times; when we truly know Christ, then we will know with deep certainty that here is no power in the whole of creation greater than the loving-mercy of God. Heeding the call of Christ, we will walk towards, not away from, our heavenly homeland and the fellowship of the saints. And we will live out our own vocation to proclaim the good news. Let us take to heart the phrase beloved of Pope St John Paul II, mindful of so many things that unsettle us – ‘be not afraid!’

God bless.

Fr Matthew

GIFT AID BOXES: These are now available for collection in the church porch.

RIP: Please pray for the repose of the soul of Anne O’Sullivan who has died. Anne’s funeral will be held here on Thursday 23rd April at 2pm. May Anne rest in the eternal peace of Christ.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MUSIC GROUP: Our new group will be supporting the music at the 6.30pm Mass this Saturday (i.e. 18th April). New members welcome. Meet at 5.30pm in the Youth Room (through the Prayer Garden) and stay for the evening Mass. Come and sing or bring an instrument.

NEW ALTAR SERVERS: Training will begin (for those who have already made their first communion) on Saturday 1st May after the 6.30pm Mass. If you haven't done so yet, please email Fr Matthew with your child's details. The sessions, over three weeks, last about half an hour and parents should stay.

THE LEGACY OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI: As we mark 800 years since the death of St Francis (3rd October 1226), Fr Alban McCoy OFM Con will speak about how Francis changed the Church of his day, and can help us to renew the Church in our own times. The event will take place in the hall at the Catholic Church of Christ the Eternal High Priest, Gidea Park (RM2 6DH) from 11 am until 1 pm on Saturday 2nd May. Refreshments available from 10.30. Everyone is welcome to this free event, which is also available by live stream on www.whatgoodnews.org No booking necessary.

GARDEN VOLUNTEERS FOR WALSINGHAM HOUSE AT ABBOTSWICK: Walsingham House at Abbotswick is set in 14 acres of land which require a lot of care. There is an amazing team of grounds volunteers who help every Tuesday to maintain the gardens and keep everything thriving. It would be wonderful to extend the team, so if you have some free time on a Tuesday, whether it's an hour or two or a whole day and would like to get involved please contact clairebailey@brcdt.org or just come along on a Tuesday morning and get involved!

VACANCY ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, BILLERICAY: We are seeking to appoint a Classroom Teacher for September 2026. The role would suit an experienced teacher or an ECT (mentor provided). For more information about the position and to apply, please visit:- <https://www.essexschoolsjobs.co.uk/Vacancies/Details.aspx?VacancyId=118041> Closing date is Midday on Friday 24th April 2026. Visits to the school are welcomed and can be arranged by contacting the school office by phone 01277 653770 or email on admin@st-peters-pri.essex.sch.uk

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.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 18th April	SATURDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF EASTER
5.30pm—6.15pm	ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
6.30pm	People of the parish
Sun 19th April	THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
9.00am	Michael Cooper RIP (Cooper Family)
11.00am	Linda Travell RIP, Anniv & Birthday (Sammon)
Mon 20th April	MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF EASTER
9.15am	Maureen Springham RIP (Brian)
Tues 21st April	TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF EASTER
9.15am	Margaret Hallahan RIP (Lynch)
Wed 22nd April	WEDNESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF EASTER
9.15am	Mary-Anne Madden RIP (Margaret)
12 noon—1pm	ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
Thur 23rd April	ST GEORGE, M
9.15am	For the intentions of Anna Sullivan (with out year 1 children)
2pm	Funeral Mass—Ann O'Sullivan
Frid 24th April	ST MELLITUS, Bp
9.15am	For the intentions of Dwayne (mum)
Sat 25th April	ST MARK, Ev
5.30pm—6.15pm	ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS
6.30pm	Denis Sullivan RIP B'day (Kevin)
Sun 26th April	FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
9.00am	People of the parish
11.00am	Robin Clist RIP (Family)

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**