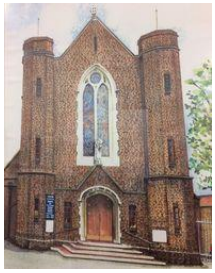
St Joseph's Catholic Church

Champion Road, Upminster

Parish Priest: Fr Matthew Bemand-Qureshi
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PARISH NEWSLETTER

14TH / 15TH NOVEMBER 2026

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR, Pg 155

(Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, Matthew 25:14-30)

This month of the holy souls prompts us to reflect on our own mortality in the light of the resurrection, as well as those already separated from us (temporarily) by death. Last week I wrote about the practice of praying for the dead – one of the spiritual acts of mercy we are called to perform – and this is something that keeps us close to our beloved dead in the weeks, months, years, even decades after they have died. But the prayers in the immediate aftermath of a death have particular significance, most notably the celebration of the funeral.

What distinguishes us from those of other traditions is that we believe prayer is efficacious and powerful even after death; nevertheless, prayer for the living is also important, especially during times of sickness and approaching death. As far as possible, we should aim to have a priest visit, at home or in hospital, to celebrate the sacrament of the sick and, if possible, hear a person's confession and give holy communion as food for the journey. The prayer known as the 'Apostolic Blessing' is a particular expression of the church's concern for a dying person. Nevertheless, it is not always possible, and your conscience should not be troubled if you haven't managed to get a priest to visit a loved one on their death bed. God's mercy flows through the sacraments but isn't limited by them; and he knows the desire for that mercy in a person's heart.

There is a great deal to process after a person has died, and I am always happy to provide what support I can. Soon decisions need to be made about funerals. We can be grateful for the compassion and expertise of our local funeral directors. One thing that can help enormously is when a person has left instructions about the funeral they would like. We can't assume that those left with the task of organising our funeral know what we would expect, especially if they are not themselves practising Catholics. For a Catholic person the natural pattern is a celebration of Mass in church followed by committal (burial or cremation, followed by interment of ashes at a later date, or even donating your body to medical science!) and this should be stated clearly (and not only in your will, which may not be consulted until it is too late). People will often say that they want a funeral to

be a celebration of life, perhaps envisaging the alternative as something bleak and depressing. We know that the Mass, and a funeral Mass especially, is the ultimate expression of hope, a celebration not only of life but of the resurrection, centred not solely on the person who has died, but on Jesus Christ in whom they live. Whilst giving thanks for that person's life, it acknowledges the reality of grief; let us not forget that Jesus wept at the death of his friend Lazarus, even knowing he was about to restore him to life. The body is always treated with great dignity and reverence even though it is no longer 'you', for it was the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are incomplete until our souls are joined once more to healed and glorified bodies in the final resurrection.

It is helpful if our funeral instructions include some hymns that we would like (not necessarily 'funeral' hymns) and readings for the liturgy of the word. On our website (under Faith & Life / Funerals) you will find the complete selection of scripture readings for funerals, and an order of service template you can use to help plan your funeral Mass. You may want to consider the traditional practice of a vigil, where your body is received into church the evening before with a short service of prayer; symbolically resting in the Father's house before being committed to its final resting place.

Please feel free to speak to me if I can be of help in any way.

God bless, Fr Matthew

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PARISH MEETING: There will be an open meeting at 7.30 pm this coming Wednesday, 18th November, in church, to which all parishioners are invited. This will be an opportunity to raise any aspect of parish life, including but not exclusively to do with our building plans, and the financial implications. This is an important meeting, but those who can't attend are invited to submit questions in writing / by email in advance. A summary of the discussion will be shared in due course.

CDOT CHRISTMAS CONCERT: Raising funds for our new parish centre. Christmas songs and carols. The choir from St. Joseph's Primary School will be joining us. Friday 27th November, 7.30 pm in the church. £10 for adults, children free. Tickets from Bernadette in the Repository or from the parish office.

LADIES NIGHT: THURSDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 7.15 PM: 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.

NEW ALTAR SERVERS: Anyone who has already made their first communion and wishes to become an altar server should ask their parent to contact Fr. Matthew. There will be a series of three training sessions after the Saturday evening Mass on 21st and 28th November and 19th December.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MUSIC GROUP: Change of date for the Young People's Music Group: Saturday 21st November, not 14th November. New members are always welcome. Meet at 5.30 pm in the Youth Room (through the Prayer Garden) and stay to sing at 6.30 pm Mass.

SECOND COLLECTION: Please note that there will be a second collection next weekend, 21st / 22nd November, in aid of World Youth Day.

RAINHAM FOODBANK: During September and October you have given 107Kg in non-perishable in-date food and groceries. Many thanks. Please continue to give generously during November and Advent.

MARANATHA EVENING: The third of these monthly evenings to be hosted at our church, led by the Brentwood Catholic Charismatic Renewal, takes place this Thursday from 7 pm-9 pm with Mass, adoration, praise and worship and reflection, with refreshments in the club afterwards. All welcome.

RIP: Please pray for the repose of the soul of Mgr. Bill Nix. His funeral Mass will be on Friday 20th November at 12.15 pm in Brentwood Cathedral, where he previously served as dean. His body will be received into the Cathedral at 5 pm the previous evening.

BISHOP TIMOTHY MENEZES: Our new Bishop will be installed and begin his ministry on Thursday 3rd December. Masses of Thanksgiving will be celebrated by Bishop Timothy around the diocese in the week following, and all are welcome. Tuesday 8th Dec: 11:00 am Brentwood Cathedral; Tuesday 8th Dec: 7:30 pm – St Antony's Forest Gate; Wednesday 9th Dec: 7:00 pm - St James the Less and St Helen, Colchester.

PILGRIM STATUE OF OUR LADY: Our parish has received a small version of the National Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima that is designed to travel around the homes of our parish 'on pilgrimage', to foster devotion to Our Lady within our homes and families. If you wish to be among the first to receive a week-long visit of the statue when we get underway at the start of Advent, please email the parish office or speak to Michelle McDonagh.

THE CAMPION SCHOOL SENIOR CITIZENS' PARTY – SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER, 2026: 12.30 pm – 5 pm with lunch served at 1.30 pm. As Christmas time approaches, The Campion School would like to invite parishioners to their Senior Citizens' Party on 13th December. If you would like to attend, please contact the parish office on 01708-222432.

BCYS NOTICES: World Youth Sunday: 22nd November: There will be a second collection for the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service, supporting events, retreats and pilgrimages for young people in Essex and East London. If you wish, you can also donate online at www.bcys.net/donate, and please do visit the website to find out more about how to get involved. **BCYS Advent Retreat at Walsingham House: 12th-13th December:** A weekend of festive fun, friendship, prayer and reflection exploring the meaning of Advent. Open to anyone in school years 10-13. All information and applications at www.bcys.net/events **BCYS SUMMER LOURDES PILGRIMAGE:** 17th-24th July 2027: Join BCYS in Lourdes for an unforgettable week of faith, friendship and service, supporting elderly and infirm pilgrims while experiencing prayer, processions, excursions and plenty of opportunities to grow in faith! Applications are open NOW for all those in school year 10 and above. All information and to apply: www.bcys.net/events

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sat 14th Nov	
5.30 pm—6.15 pm	**ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS**
6.30 pm	Joseph John Newman RIP 1st Anniv. (Family)
Sun 15th Nov	**THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**
9.00 am	People of the parish
11.00 am	Deceased members of the Mitchell & Maguire Family
Mon 16th Nov	**ST EDMUND OF CANTERBURY, Bp**
9.15 am	Sr John Vianney (Josephine Brennan) RIP (Michael & Family)
Tues 17th Nov	
9.15 am	Jenny Maplesden RIP Anniv. (Maplesden)
Wed 18th Nov	
9.15 am	Leesa Otero RIP Anniv. (Quinn)
12 noon—1 pm	**ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS**
Thur 19th Nov	
9.15 am	Margaret Fogarty RIP (Ryan Family) (With our Year 5 Children)
Frid 20th Nov	
9.15 am	Tony Stock RIP (Monica)
Sat 21st Nov	**THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**
5.30 pm— 6.15 pm	**ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS**
6.30 pm	Josie Byrne RIP (Burgess)
Sun 22nd Nov	**OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE**
9.00 am	People of the parish
11.00 am	Michael Maguire Jnr RIP Anniv. (Mum & Dad)

USEFUL INFORMATION

EUCHARISTIC 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

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

Facebook: 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