

ST JOSEPH, UPTON UPON SEVERN, WITH OUR LADY AND ST ALPHONSUS, BLACKMORE PARK

This parish forms part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity No. 234216

Parish Priest: Fr. Nazarius Mgungwe (01684 574250 – resident at St Joseph’s, Malvern)

Fr Hugh Sinclair (retired – 01684 592602 – resident at St Joseph’s, Upton)

Deacon: Rev’d. Seán Duffy (07913 163696)

The Parish Account name is: *Blackmore Park and Upton*

St Joseph’s Church, 9 School Lane, Upton upon Severn, Worcs. WR8 0LA.

Our Blessed Lady and St Alphonsus, Blackmore Park, Hanley Swan, Worcs. WR8 0EA

Hospital Chaplains: Worcester Royal, Newtown and South Bank: 01905 963712

Parish Website: stjosephupton.co.uk

Confession: Fr Hugh hears confessions before 4pm Mass on Saturdays; or by appointment

Mass Times:

Sat 21 Mar 4.00pm Blackmore Park Emma White – R.I.P.

Sun 22 Mar 9.00am Upton

Tues 24 Mar 9.30am Upton

Thurs 26 Mar 10.00am Blackmore Park (Exposition from 9.15am)

Fri 27 Mar 9.30am Upton

Sat 28 Mar 4.00pm Blackmore Park

5th Sunday in Lent

Please remember the clocks “Spring” forward one hour next Saturday night (29/03)

Sun 29 Mar 9.00am Upton

Palm Sunday

Stations of the Cross – after Mass on Thursdays and Fridays

Last weekend’s collection for the **Cathedral Maintenance Fund** raised £123.12; and the collection for the **CAFOD Fast Day** a splendid £278.88 – Thank you.



Archbishop Bernard has written a Pastoral Letter to us for the 5th Sunday in Lent – a copy of which can be found attached to the online version of this Newsletter or by clicking on his Coat of Arms.

Fr Naz wrote to each of us last week asking our help in forming a **Pastoral Advisory Council** for the combined parish of Our Lady & St Alphonsus, Blackmore Park with St Joseph’s, Upton – a copy of his letter can be found online attached to this Newsletter. Nomination slips for membership of the Council – and the box to put them in – are at the back of the church.

The series of five Lenten Reflections – **The Beatitudes – A Way of Christian Living** – concludes this week at St Joseph’s, Malvern on **Tuesday 24th March** with the focus, ‘Blessed are the merciful’ – refreshments from 6.30pm for a 7.15pm start – concluding at 8pm.



Our Lenten Lunches conclude this **Friday (27/03) from 12-1.30pm** in the Upton Baptist Church. Do come along if you can and share in some soup and Good Company – All in aid of **The Friends of the Holy Land**



Lent Penitential Service with the opportunity for individual confession: **St Joseph’s, Malvern this Friday 27/03 at 7pm.**

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Sat 28 March	4.00pm	Blackmore Park	Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord
Sun 29 March	9.00am	Upton	
	10.45am	Churches Together in Upton	Palm Sunday procession from ‘The Pepper Pot’ to St Peter’s Parish Church, followed by a service and shared lunch
Tues 31 March	9.30am	Upton	
Thurs 02 April	7.00pm	Upton	Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper & Commissioning of all Eucharistic Ministers
Fri 03 April	3.00pm	Upton	Solemn Commemoration of the Passion of the Lord
Fri 03 April	6.30pm	Blackmore Park	Stations of the Cross
Sat 04 April	8.30pm	Blackmore Park	The Easter Vigil and Mass of Easter Night
Sun 05 April	10.00am	Upton	Easter Sunday

A Sign-up Sheet for having your foot washed and other ministries is at the back of the Church.

Please pray for the sick of the Parish and all who are housebound; and for the needs of the **Malvern Hills Food Bank** – listed on the noticeboard and at: <https://malvernhills.foodbank.org.uk/support-us/donate-food>

Health & Safety: If at any time you come across anything which is a danger to the public, in either of the Churches or grounds, please contact our Parish Health & Safety Representative Mark Fisher (07960 077117) or, if he is not available, Deacon Seán. Thank you.

Emergency contacts: Anne Rasile 01684 310317; St Wulstan’s, Little Malvern 01684 574658; St George’s Worcester 01905 963712

The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance & the National & Archdiocese’s policies & procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representative is Kevin Douglas. He can be contacted at: sg.stjoseph.malvern@rcaob.org.uk / 01886 832468 or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240 or safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk, if you have any concern.



PASTORAL LETTER
OF THE
MOST REVEREND BERNARD LONGLEY
ARCHBISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM
FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT, 21/22 MARCH 2026

I am the resurrection and the life.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we welcome the Spring equinox when the hours of daylight begin to exceed those of darkness and night, the Church's calendar also marks a turning-point. The first four weeks of Lent have already passed quickly and in the coming two weeks, which the Church sometimes calls Passiontide, we begin to reflect more intensely in our prayers and liturgy on the Passion of Our Lord.

With Easter a fortnight away, we still have time to re-focus our Lenten efforts. There is no need to dwell on the opportunities we have missed this Lent for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Instead, we can choose today how to make the very best use of the time that is left to us, so that our celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord will be all the more joyful and fruitful.

In our prayer we can make a real effort to see every experience of Our Lord's passion as a gesture of his love for us - his betrayal by Judas - his abandonment by Peter - his trial and scourging - his entrusting of Our Lady to us as our mother - and his death on the cross. The sufferings of Christ are all expressions of God's infinite love for us. This is the *generous love* - in St John Henry Newman's words – *that He...the double agony in man for man should undergo.*

What can we offer in return? The best offerings we can make this Passiontide are acceptance and accompaniment of our Saviour on the painful but life-giving journey ahead. We can begin by accepting our lives as they are just now – the extraordinary gift of a generous God Who has made us to know, love and serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him in the next.

We can accompany our Saviour especially in those who suffer at this time within our own communities – and because of the unpredictable and destructive wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. We can echo in our prayer the recent words of Pope Leo: *On behalf of the Christians of the Middle East, and of all women and men of good will, I appeal to those responsible for this conflict: cease fire! May paths of dialogue be reopened! Violence can never lead to the justice, stability and peace for which the peoples are waiting.*

As Catholics we must cherish life. Our Lord has told us: *I am the way the truth and the life...I am the resurrection and the life.* Within our own Archdiocese we have been blessed for many years by the work and witness for life of the late Professor Jack Scarisbrick, who died recently – and who, together with his wife Nuala, founded the Life charity. Their example reminds us of how much good can be achieved in the span of a single lifetime.

Today's Gospel story encourages us on our pilgrim way through Lent. The turning-point for Lazarus is a foretaste of the Resurrection. Brought back to life, he was restored to his grieving sisters – and then, according to an Orthodox tradition, he travelled to Cyprus with Paul and Barnabas. St John's Gospel tells us that many of the Jews came to believe in Jesus because of Lazarus and his testimony.

The turning-points in our own lives may be far less dramatic – but the impact of our witness can be just as important. For all of us, Baptism or Reception into the Catholic Church are themselves the beginning of a new life of faith – and it was truly uplifting to welcome the greater number of catechumens and candidates coming forward in the Cathedral for this year's Rite of Election.

Another turning-point for many of our young people may be the recognition of a vocation - to ordained ministry or consecrated life. I ask the young people in your congregation: is Our Lord calling you to witness to him, as the resurrection and the life, by offering yourself in life-long service among the People of God?

Cardinal Newman heard the crucified Christ calling him through the experiences of his own life. In a beautiful reflection, from his sermon entitled the *Tears of Christ at the Grave of Lazarus*, he wrote: *Wherever faith in Christ is, there is Christ Himself. He said to Martha, "Believest thou this?" Wherever there is a heart to answer, "Lord, I believe," there Christ is present. Blessed be His name! nothing can rob us of this consolation: we will be as certain, through His grace, that He is standing over us in love, as though we saw Him. We will not, after our experience of Lazarus's history, doubt an instant that He is thoughtful about us.*

With my prayers for a blessed Holy Week - in company with our Saviour - and a joyful Easter to come.

Yours devotedly in Christ

+ *Bernard Longley*

✠Bernard Longley
Archbishop of Birmingham

Given at Birmingham on 17 March 2026 and appointed to be read in all Churches and Chapels of the Archdiocese on the Fifth Sunday of Lent (21/22 March 2026)

FORMING A PASTORAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC)

Friday, 13 March 2026

Dear Parishioners of Our Lady & St Alphonsus, Blackmore and St Joseph's, Upton

Shaping Our Future Together: The Pastoral Advisory Council

As our vibrant communities continue to grow and evolve, we are at a pivotal moment. To ensure we are truly listening to the Holy Spirit and the needs of every parishioner, we are officially beginning the process of forming a **Pastoral Advisory Council (PAC)** for our linked parish.

Why do we need a Council?

The mission of the Church doesn't rest solely on the shoulders of the clergy; it is a shared responsibility of the entire "People of God." The Vision Statement of the Archdiocese of Birmingham encourages all of us to be missionary disciples who work together co-responsibly in vibrant communities of faith. A Pastoral Advisory Council provides a formal structure for **consultation and collaboration**. It ensures that the wisdom, professional skills, and diverse perspectives of our lay community are directly integrated into the life and direction of our parishes.

What is the Role of the Advisory Council?

The PAC is not a "*board of directors*," but rather a visionary body in support of the Parish Priest rooted in prayer. Its primary roles include:

- **Visioning & Planning:** Identifying the long-term spiritual and social needs of Blackmore and Upton and helping to set pastoral priorities.
- **A Sounding Board:** Serving as a consultative body for the Parish Priest, offering honest feedback and diverse insights on parish initiatives.
- **Fostering Unity:** Bridging the gap between our two distinct communities to ensure we work in harmony while respecting our individual identities.
- **Empowering Ministry:** Growing and supporting parish groups—from liturgy, Sacramental programmes, Extra-ordinary Ministers of Communion, Readers, reaching out to young families, social justice and maintenance.

How Can You Help?

Be on the lookout for individuals who are committed to the life of the Church, who possess a "listening heart," and are willing to contribute their time to help our parish thrive. Whether people have a background in management, education, community service, or simply a deep love for our faith, their voice matters.

"The Church is not a museum, but a garden that needs to be cultivated." — *Pope Francis*

This weekend and next identifying members of the PAC will begin with the process of nominations. Slips of paper will be available to kick off the process.

I ask you to please join in prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we take this exciting step forward together.

Yours faithfully,



Fr Nazarius Mgungwe
PARISH PRIEST - BLACKMORE AND UPTON