

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 31 Jan	4.00pm	Blackmore Park	4 th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sun 01 Feb	9.00am	Upton	Kevin O'Mahoney – R.I.P.
Mon 02 Feb	9.30am	Upton	<i>Presentation of the Lord - Candlemas</i> Frank Durrant – R.I.P.
Tues 03 Feb	9.30am	Upton	<i>St Blaise – blessing of the throats</i> Word & Communion Service
Thurs 05 Feb	10.00am	Blackmore Park (Exposition from 9.15am)	<i>St Agatha</i>
Fri 06 Feb	9.30am	Upton	<i>St Paul Miki & Companions</i> Joe Hogan – R.I.P.
Sat 31 Jan	4.00pm	Blackmore Park	5 th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sun 01 Feb	9.00am	Upton	

The **Pax Christi** second collection two weeks ago raised £217.80 – thank you.



Last Sunday (24/01) we concluded the **Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity** with a service of thanksgiving for the Churches Together in Upton at Upton Baptist Church. The Baptist minister, Rev'd Amy Wearing, gave a powerful reflection on Our Lord's words in Jn 17: 20-23 entitled, **Unity as Gift, Calling and Witness** – a copy is attached to the online version of this Newsletter on our website: well worth a read.

This weekend, for **Racial Justice Sunday**, we are asked to consider the theme: *"Whoever loves God must also love his brother"* (1 John 4:21): *Promoting Racial Justice in our Parishes.*" Bishop Paul McAleenan – lead Bishop for Racial Justice – says: *"Where racial justice is concerned, we must never tire of repeating what has been said before, though we always seek new ways to convey our message. Racial Justice Sunday 2026 is devoted to the promotion of racial justice in our Catholic parishes across England and Wales and society and an encouragement to be conscious of the need for justice in all its forms."* His address can be seen on our diocesan website, here: <https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/Event/racial-justice-sunday-1-february>

Candlemas – please note the additional Mass on Monday this week in celebration of the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.



Next weekend we will have an Appeal on behalf of **SURVIVE-MIVA** a UK-based lay Catholic Association and Registered Charity, no. 268745.

Founded in Liverpool in 1974, it makes grants to fund essential forms of transport for the Church's vital health outreach work and pastoral ministry in the developing world.

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://malvern hills.foodbank.org.uk/support-us/donate-food> As always, donations can be left at the back of the church, or dropped off at our local distribution point, Upton Baptist Church; or at the Malvern site – details on the website.



Booking for the **Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage, 2026** (Monday 26 to Saturday 30 May) is now open for travel and accommodation, and for volunteers. The theme for this year is: **"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee."** For more information, please visit the website: <https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/lourdes-pilgrimage>

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.

Unity as Gift, Calling and Witness

"I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

John 17:20–23 (New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)

On the night before the cross, on the edge of suffering, with betrayal already moving in the dark, Jesus does not pray for protection, power, or even perseverance. He prays for unity. Not a polite unity. Not a tidy organisational unity. Not unity enforced by agreement or sameness.

But unity that mirrors the very life of God:

"That they may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you."

Jesus places the Church inside the love that flows within the Trinity —

a unity born not from uniformity but from relationship.

And that matters deeply for us here in Upton upon Severn because Upton itself is a meeting place. This town sits where paths cross and waters gather. The River Severn, has shaped this place for centuries - sometimes gently blessing it, sometimes testing it with floods that leave marks on stone and memory. Upton knows what it means to live at the meeting point of forces larger than itself.

And perhaps that is why it is fitting that Christians here also gather from different streams.

Baptist. Anglican. Catholic.

Different histories.

Different rhythms.

Different ways of praying, preaching, singing and serving.

Yet all drawn by the same river of grace.

Unity as Gift

Jesus' prayer reminds us that unity is first God's idea, not ours. Before any church was built here, before parish lines were drawn, before traditions took root, Christ had already prayed for his people to be one. Unity is not something we manufacture; it is something we receive.

Like this town itself.

Long before any of us walked these streets, God was already at work here - in little chapels and medieval parish life, in generations who worshipped through plague and war, in reformers and revivalists and faithful ordinary saints whose names are known only to God. Just as the Severn gathers many small tributaries into one river, so Christ gathers many lives into one body.

Unity is grace before it is effort.

Unity as Calling

But Jesus does not pray this prayer as a distant hope. He places responsibility into our hands. Unity is not passive, it is lived...and that is where the prayer becomes costly, because unity asks us to move beyond comfort.

It asks churches with long roots to honour newer expressions.

It asks us to listen to ancient liturgy.

It asks structured traditions to recognise Spirit-led spontaneity.

It asks all of us to choose humility over preference.

Unity is not achieved when we erase differences, but when we hold them in love.

Like this town again.....Upton has been shaped by layers of history —
Georgian buildings beside medieval foundations, modern life woven into old streets, festival
crowds filling a place once known for quiet riverside trade.

Different eras coexisting....Different stories sharing the same ground.

And we too are called to inhabit the same spiritual landscape — not as rivals occupying
territory, but as pilgrims sharing the road. Jesus' unity is not institutional first; it is relational,
and so to "be one" means to pray for one another before we speak about one another. To bless
before we critique. To serve side by side even when we worship differently.

Unity grows wherever love chooses generosity.

Unity as Witness

Jesus then gives a startling reason for this prayer:

"So that the world may believe that you have sent me."

The credibility of the Gospel is tied to the visible love of the Church.

Not our buildings.

Not our numbers.

Not our traditions.

But our reconciled relationships.

In a fractured world, our unity becomes proclamation, and here in Upton, people notice. They
notice when churches stand together on Remembrance Sunday, when we walk the same
streets in prayer, when our support carries no denominational labels and when hospitality
crosses church doors.

Every shared act says quietly but powerfully: Christ is not divided.

The river that flows through this town does not ask where the water began. It simply carries
life wherever it goes, and when the Church flows in the same way — across boundaries,
across traditions — the town sees something of God's kingdom made visible.

Living Inside the Prayer

Jesus' prayer in John 17 is unfinished. We are still living inside it.

Not yet fully one.

Still learning.

Still healing.

Still listening.

But held — always held — in the longing of Christ.

Here in this riverside town, where history runs deep and community runs close, we are given
a holy opportunity:

To show that unity is possible without uniformity

To show that diversity can reflect God's beauty

To show that love is stronger than difference

And perhaps one day, when others tell the story of the Church in Upton upon Severn, they
will not first remember our denominational names, but instead, our shared faithfulness and
that we answered Christ's prayer in our generation in this place.

Pray with us

Would you join in praying for unity among the churches of Upton upon Severn, that we may
live more deeply into Christ's prayer for his people. As pilgrims sharing the same road, we
are invited to walk the journey together — discovering opportunities to pray, serve, and
witness side by side across our churches