

# ST JOSEPH'S EUCHARISTIC SHRINE



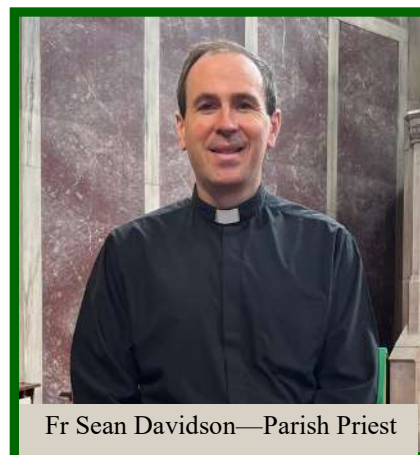
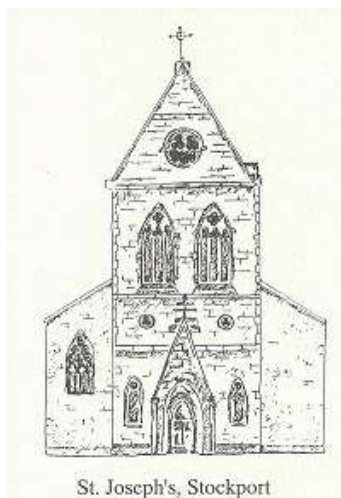
DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY



DEDICATED AS A EUCHARISTIC SHRINE BY BISHOP MARK DAVIES IN OCTOBER 2022



# ST JOSEPH'S EUCHARISTIC SHRINE



Welcome to St Joseph's Eucharistic Shrine.

This beautiful Grade II listed church was designed by Matthew Ellison Hadfield, in the Gothic Revival style, and was built between 1861 and 1862.

St Joseph's parish has a rich history. In the first half of the 19th century, Catholics in Stockport were once again free to practise their faith. In the early 1800's they celebrated Mass in a small chapel in Edgeley.

However, due to an influx of Irish Catholics who came here to work in the surrounding Stockport Mills, the Catholic Mission in the town grew rapidly. Fundraising for a church in the town centre began but was difficult because of rising poverty among the population.

All obstacles were eventually overcome, and on the 25th June 1862 Saint Joseph's church was opened within the Diocese of Shrewsbury. St Joseph's Church was in the care of the Sacred Heart Fathers for many years.

On 1st September 2022, Fr Sean Davidson became the resident Parish Priest. We pray that with the help of the Lord's grace we will be able to restore this 160-year-old church to its former beauty for the glory and honour of God.

As you spend time as a pilgrim in this sacred place, at whatever stage you may be on your journey with the Lord, may you experience the presence and love of the Lord Jesus.

In the words of Pope Leo XIV (Regina Caeli-Sun 17th May 2026)

“The divine life, which we received in Baptism and which constantly draws us to the heights, toward the Father, can grow in and around us and spread the precious fruits of communion and peace in the world.”



# THE SANCTUARY WINDOW



TOP LEFT – ARCHANGEL GABRIEL

TOP MIDDLE – BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

TOP RIGHT – ARCHANGEL RAPHAEL

LOWER LEFT – JOSEPH OF THE OLD COVENANT

LOWER MIDDLE – ST JOSEPH

LOWER RIGHT – JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA



# ARCHANGEL GABRIEL

In the top left window is the image of the Archangel Gabriel. Underneath him is written '*Ego sum Gabriel.*' The white lily he holds is symbolic of the purity of the most Blessed Virgin Mary to whom he addresses his Annunciation. In the Litany of Loreto we call her mother most pure. She is going to conceive Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, while remaining forever a perpetual virgin.

In his hand the banner reads '*Ave Maria Gratia Plena*' which is translated in English as 'Hail Mary full of grace'. This expression which we find in the Gospel of Luke in the original Greek language means that she had been filled with grace at a certain moment in the past but in a way which has continuous effects into the present.

Mary was conceived without original sin. The only obstacle to the flow of God's grace in the souls of His beloved children is sin. Therefore, being without sin, she was never for a moment deprived of any grace. She was bathed in the highest outpouring of the light and love of God from the first moment of her existence.

The grace that was in her from the start continued to grow and grow ever more intense, making her by the time of the Annunciation a most worthy mother of the Son of God. She was full to overflowing with love, with all that is beautiful, holy, and pleasing to the Most High. The words of a traditional Irish hymn to Mary sum up the purity and beauty of her soul: "O Lily of the Valley, O Mystic Rose, what tree, or flower, e'en the fairest, is half so fair as thee?"

As we ponder the purity of Mary and our own high calling to strive for holy purity, we are reminded that the daily praying of the Holy Rosary is the means which the Church gives us to attain purity of heart.



# BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The central window at the top shows the Most Blessed Virgin Mary carrying the Christ Child. Our Lady holds Jesus with love and also shows Him to us.

Written under her is '*Spiritus Sanctus supervenient te.*' This means: 'the Holy Spirit will come upon you.' This is taken from the infancy narratives in the Gospel of Luke and the following line in the Gospel is: 'and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.'

This was Gabriel's response to Mary when she asked how she would conceive, indicative that she had already made some resolution to retain her virginity. Otherwise, it would have been evident how a young woman betrothed to be married would conceive. The Church Fathers explain that in spite of the marriage to Joseph which had been arranged, Mary already had the intuition and inspiration that she was to remain a perpetual virgin.

The word 'overshadow' used by the angel in the Greek text is *episkiazo* which is the very same word which was used to describe the cloud overshadowing the tabernacle in the book of Exodus. Moses had been instructed to build a tent structure with a most holy place inside it. The inmost part of the tabernacle was known as the Holy of Holies in which was placed the Ark of the Covenant. Inside the Ark, among other things, was contained some of the Manna, the bread which fell from heaven when the people were journeying through the wilderness.

In the outer part of the tabernacle called the Holy Place, there was a table, upon which was kept the Bread of the Presence. This was a mysterious bread that had to be always present, with a constant flame burning beside it. In the Manna and the Bread from Heaven we find two clear Eucharistic signs pointing towards the New Covenant. The perpetual flame in the tabernacle reminds us of the sanctuary lamp that must forever burn in our churches whenever the Blessed Sacrament is present.

Once Moses had constructed that holy edifice the cloud came from heaven and overshadowed it. The cloud, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, journeyed with them, as the tabernacle journeyed with them through the desert and finally into the Promised Land of Israel.

The contents of the tabernacle would one day be placed in the holiest part of the Temple of Jerusalem several hundred years later.



This all points towards Mary who is the new and true Ark of the Covenant. In her was found the true Manna from heaven. She is the true tabernacle, the place where the Holy Spirit came down, in order to give us the Bread of the Presence, the Bread from Heaven.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a town whose name in Hebrew means “House of Bread.” From birth He was destined to become the Bread of Life, the Bread of the Divine Presence to feed humanity. As we journey through the spiritual desert of this world, He is the Bread from Heaven who comes down upon our altars each day to console us and to keep us from growing weary as we make the arduous pilgrimage to the eternal Promised Land.

Mary, during her pregnancy was the first tabernacle, and then in Bethlehem she became the first monstrance. Monstrance comes from the Latin word meaning ‘to show.’ Mary showed Jesus to the shepherds and to the wise men, as they knelt down in adoration before Him.

So many people come to this church which is a Eucharistic Shrine in order to adore Jesus in the monstrance. It is the very same Jesus whom we adore in that sacred white Host, whom Mary once carried in her arms.

At the very top of the stained-glass windows, you will see an image of the Holy Spirit. The Dove descending reminds us of those words ‘*Spiritus Sanctus supervenient te.*’ The Holy Spirit who came first upon Mary, comes down anew at every Mass in order to work the wonder of transubstantiation.

In the Eucharistic prayer we ask the Spirit of Love to deepen His presence within us, thus uniting together in love all the members of the Church. We receive the one Body of Christ, and we ask the Holy Spirit to make us into one body in Christ united always in charity and mutual respect. If we have harmed this unity in love in any way, it would be good to ask the Holy Spirit to heal all wounds of division.



Bearing grudges against others can also cause division and sin within us. Let us listen to the voice of Jesus who says to us,

“Forgive and you will be forgiven.”

(Luke 6:37)

# ARCHANGEL RAPHAEL



The Archangel Raphael is in the top right-hand corner. He is best known for his appearance in the book of Tobit. Here he is shown with Tobias, who is depicted as a child despite the fact that in the book of Tobit he is old enough to marry. (This is a common though curious feature of much art depicting Tobias around the world.)

Raphael instructed Tobias to perform a certain ritual using a fish, which he holds in the image here. This ritual would lead to the healing of his father's blindness. There is a happy ending for Tobias when he meets the woman who God had prepared him to marry. It's a beautiful little love story.

It is difficult to read, but the inscription on the banner which Raphael is holding, reads: '*Unus ex septem qui adstamus ante dominum.*' translated literally as 'One of the seven who stand in the presence of the Lord'. This was how the archangel revealed himself in the book of Tobit. Similarly, Gabriel would one day say to Zechariah 'I am Gabriel who stand in the presence of the Lord'.

We learn from this that even when archangels are on a mission to souls in the world, they still stand in the presence of the Lord. Their minds remain fixed upon God. We should strive to do likewise. In the constant busyness of our lives, as we live out our own mission, let us not lose sight of the fact that we are always in His presence. We live under His benevolent gaze of love. God is always with us and in us, and He is in us in a very special way if we are in a state of sanctifying grace.



He has come to dwell in us through the sacraments in the most intimate way possible. Remaining ever aware of His presence within us we will treat our bodies with the reverence they deserve as temples of the Holy Spirit.

# JOSEPH OF THE OLD COVENANT



What is depicted in the lower windows was a fascinating idea conceived by the one who designed them many decades ago. They are called the windows of the “three Josephs.”

The first Joseph on the bottom left is the son of Jacob whom we read about in the book of Genesis. He was thrown down a well by his envious brothers and then sold off into slavery. By God’s providence, he somehow mysteriously ended up becoming the Prime Minister of Egypt.

Written underneath him are the words, “*Ite ad Joseph*” which means ‘Go to Joseph’. In one hand he holds a sceptre; in the other he holds bread. This reminds us that the Bible says that Pharaoh made Joseph the “Lord of his house and ruler of all he possessed.” (Genesis 41:40-41). Or it could be translated as “custodian of his household and the prince of all he possessed.”

Joseph was renowned for not only predicting that a great famine was on the way, but for also having the foresight to prepare for it. He arranged for many storehouses to be filled with grains of wheat.

When many people were in danger of starving to death in the surrounding nations, Joseph was able to feed them. In the end, even his own contrite brothers would have to go down to Egypt to beg for bread, finally discovering what had become of their brother. This story is represented by the bread shown in his hand in the window, while his authority over the vast treasury of Egypt is represented by the sceptre.



Interestingly, Joseph became the Prime Minister of Egypt at the age of thirty. This is the biblical age of responsibility. It is also when David became King and Jesus took up his ministry. St John the Baptist would have been a similar age when he took up his ministry also. Thirty is the age when the Lord asks certain people to take up their God-given mission in life.

# ST JOSEPH

Looking at the lower middle window, we come to St Joseph, the patron of this Eucharistic Shrine, who also carries the lovely lily of purity. We are reminded that we can have our souls restored to the beautiful state of baptismal purity every time we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

St Joseph had to be immaculately pure because he lived with Jesus, the all-holy Son of God and with Mary who was purer than the angels. In such daily company it would not have been fitting for Joseph to be anything less than spotless in purity. When God gives a mission, he always gives more than enough grace to fulfil that mission. St Joseph must have been given exceptional gifts of sanctity since he was called to such a unique and exalted vocation.

Under his image are the words '*Joseph virum Mariae, Custos domus Dei*', 'Joseph husband of Mary, custodian of the House of God.' The Litany of St Joseph calls Joseph 'lord' of His House, that is, the one who governs the House of God on earth.



In the tradition of the Church which is represented in these windows, there is a play on words in relation to the old and the new Joseph. Just as the old Joseph was made the custodian and ruler of Pharaoh's house, God makes St Joseph the custodian and ruler of His household on earth. His treasure, what is most precious to God is His own Son and the Blessed Virgin Mary. His two greatest treasures are entrusted to St Joseph who had authority over the Holy Family. Jesus was always obedient to him. The angels tremble in reverence before the Son of God, and yet Joseph had to command the same Son of God.

As one Eucharistic saint once put it: Joshua commanded the sun to stand still in the sky in the Old Testament; Joseph commanded the Sun of Justice, Christ our Lord and He stood still before him. The humility of St Joseph was equal to the sublimity of his dignity as the man closest to Christ.



We often call St Joseph the "shadow" of the Eternal Father. The Eternal Father guides and protects the life and wellbeing of His beloved Son through St Joseph. This emphasises the fact that St Joseph must have had profound union with the will of God the Father in order to have been entrusted with such a mission.

Just as the old Joseph stored up wheat so that the world might have bread to eat, the new Joseph protected He who is the Bread of Life. When Jesus' life was in danger as a little one, Joseph protected Him and looked after Him, and then worked hard to nurture Him all throughout his childhood and youth. We might say that he was storing up grain to feed the world, preparing the world to be fed with the Bread of Life. Thanks to the Eucharist, the nations do not experience spiritual starvation.

In the Old Testament in a time of crisis the people were told to 'Go to Joseph'. We also apply this to the Joseph of the New Testament. There are so many extraordinary graces that people testify to having received after going to St Joseph in pilgrimage or by doing a novena to him. Whenever we have a serious problem we 'Go to Joseph.' We turn to him with confidence, trusting in his extremely powerful intercession. Can God the Father refuse the prayers of one who saved His Son's life on earth? Can God the Son refuse the prayers of the one with whom he spent so many treasured moments and with whom he had such a profound bond of family love? Can the Holy Spirit refuse the prayers of the one who took such reverent and loving care of Mary, his masterpiece of holiness?



# JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

Finally, the last of the three Josephs is Joseph of Arimathea. He holds in his hand the sacred linen which he provided in order to cover the Body of Jesus for burial. He also provided the tomb where Jesus was buried.

We believe that Joseph's linen would go on to one day be known as the Shroud of Turin. This sacred linen which is entirely inexplicable to science bears the marks of Christ's holy Body. It is actually considered to be a relic of the moment of the Resurrection. The image on the shroud is an imprint of the flash of light, or rather what seems to have been more like an explosion of light which occurred at the moment of the Resurrection of the Lord. It permits us to meditate on what happened to Christ's Body in the Crucifixion. The marks of His Crucifixion are forever embedded into the fabric of the Turin Shroud in a manner which baffles those who study it scientifically.

Under the image of Joseph of Arimathea are the words '*Petiit Corpus Jesu.*' which means 'he asked for the Body of Jesus.' The word for 'petition' comes from that Latin word *petiit*, which can also mean to beg for something.

We know that Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked if he could give Jesus a dignified burial. During the public life of Christ, along with Nicodemus, he seems to have been too fearful to show himself a believer in Christ. Yet, for some strange reason, once Jesus had been executed, both finally showed themselves to be on the side of Christ. Cometh the hour, cometh the man. Tradition maintains that both men eventually became saints.

In pondering this window, we focus on the fact that he asked for, or begged for, the Body of Jesus. We come to this church to worship the Body of Jesus in the Eucharist. We come here to adore him lovingly in the monstrance and to receive Him reverently at Mass. So, we too are asking for the Body of Jesus in coming to visit this Eucharistic Shrine.

Bishop Mark has designated St Joseph's as a place to pray for vocations to the sacred priesthood. Our mission is to ask the Lord each day to send us holy vocations to the priesthood and to sanctify our priests and seminarians.



Whenever we pray for vocations to the priesthood, what we are really praying for is the Body of Jesus. We are asking God to grant that we will never be deprived of Holy Mass. We are asking that we will always have enough priests to keep our churches open, enabling us to continuously have the joy of the tabernacle, the joy of Eucharistic Adoration available to us every day.

In the prayer of the Our Father we say the words ‘Give us this day our daily bread’. The word ‘daily’ is a legitimate translation. On one level we are indeed asking God to look after our daily needs, but the word for ‘daily’ in the original Greek text is mysterious. The word is ‘*epiousion*’ which is an extremely rare word in ancient literature and which literally means ‘super-substantial.’ ‘Give us this day our supersubstantial bread’ was how it was translated by St Jerome in the Latin Bible hundreds of years ago.

Dr Brant Pitre, in his excellent book *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*, explains that we might even translate this petition as: ‘Give us this day our supernatural bread.’ We are asking God to give us that mysterious Bread, that Food which is above and beyond merely natural food. We are begging for the supernatural Bread from Heaven which is the Body of Christ.

When we make our petitions in our daily praying of the Our Father, and especially when we pray it in this church, let us dwell upon those words, ‘Give us this day our daily bread.’ We can slowly make that prayer accompanied by the intention of asking God to send us vocations. If we obtain an abundance of holy priestly vocations for our diocese, we will never be deprived of the supernatural Bread which is the Body of Jesus. For without a priest to serve in our parish, there will be no Mass.



*“The priest is not a priest for himself—He is for you.”*  
*St John Vianney— Patron Saint of Parish Priests*

# OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

**What other images can be seen in the window?**

**What might they symbolise?**

At the very top of the window, the Holy Spirit represented in the form of a dove, is surrounded by red glass, possibly symbolising the blood of Jesus shed for our salvation. This window shaped like a four-leaf clover has a golden chain or rope encircling it.



In Christian art a golden rope or chain can symbolise several different things such as divine connection and heavenly authority. A golden chain represents the link between God and humanity by grace.

In the Bible, wisdom and virtue are described as “a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.” (Proverbs 1:9) The colour gold is associated with divine glory and eternal reward, symbolising the promise of heaven and eternal life in Jesus.

The Latin root for the word religion is *religare* which means to bind or tie fast. Through the faithful practice of religion we are bound to God and He binds himself to us in a covenant of love.

Purple is often the colour associated with royalty. This colour is used as the background behind Our Lady and our St Joseph reminding us of their royal lineage descending from King David.

There are two crowns directly below the image of the Holy Spirit. One could represent the Coronation of Our Lady as Queen of Heaven and Earth. The other for Christ the King. In adoration, we are asking Jesus to take up His Eucharistic reign of love in our hearts and in the world.

The *fleur-de-lis* symbolises the lily of purity.

Finally, there are what looks like twelve roses at the bottom of the window around the pillars. Roses are synonymous with Our Lady and the Rosary. Twelve could represent the twelve apostles and the continuous support they received from Our Lady after the Ascension of Christ and as they went on to spread the Gospel and build up the Church.



As you explore this beautiful church further you will also notice the lovely statues.



In the Marian Chapel, Our Lady presents the Christ Child to us. As the Mother of God and Mother of the Church, her maternal love draws us into closer union with Jesus' Sacred Heart, whose statue is on the opposite side of the altar.



At the rear of the church, in the old baptistry area, you will find St Joseph the patron saint of this Eucharistic Shrine. This part of the church is in great need of restoration. As you pray before the statue of St Joseph, please ask him to intercede for all of the needs of this church which bears his name.

St Patrick's statue reminds us of those first pilgrims from Ireland whose firm faith helped to rebuild the Catholic Church in this land after centuries of persecution. In spite of their extreme poverty - coming here around the time of the famine - they succeeded in building this wonderful church.



Let us pray for the repose of the souls of all of the benefactors of St Joseph's down through the generations.

# OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

There is also a statue of St Therese of Lisieux at the back of the church. This contemplative soul had a special mission to pray for the sanctification of priests, the same mission which Bishop Mark Davies has entrusted to this church dedicated to continuous silent Eucharistic Adoration and contemplation.



The large Crucifix beside her statue reminds us of the centrality of the mystery of Christ's passion and death to all that happens in the Catholic Church. The sacrifice of the Cross is made mysteriously present at every Mass and it is the wellspring of all of the graces we receive.

Finally, you will notice the beautiful Stations of the Cross which adorn the church walls. Let them inspire you during your time of prayer and as you return home to follow in Christ's footsteps, taking up your own personal cross with peace in your heart. May your own personal journey with the Lord be richly blessed and help you to be renewed in faith, hope, and love.



# FUTURE RESTORATION

Restoration work on St Joseph's Church is well under way. With thanks to the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, and the successful 'Sponsor a Slate' donations, much of the roof work has now been done. Once the church is entirely watertight the interior restoration can begin. There is much to do and depending on how successful our fundraising is we hope to even one day add more stained-glass windows in the sanctuary.

We are in great need of donations in order to make this happen and we continue to offer Mass each week for our benefactors.

Thank you to all who have helped and who continue to help us to restore this 160 year old church to its former beauty.



## PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Eternal Father,

we thank you for every priest

who has faithfully given his life

for the salvation of his brothers and sisters.

We give thanks for those priests

who have brought to us your Word of truth,

The grace of the Sacraments,

and above all,

the supreme gift of the Holy Eucharist.

Father through your Son Jesus Christ,

who called the Apostles to follow Him,

we ask you to raise up new and generous vocations

to the priesthood in our time.

Send forth the Holy Spirit

to open the hearts of a new generation to your call,

and enable them not to be afraid,

but to recognise the joy of giving their whole lives in love

through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord,

who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Amen





# CORPUS CHRISTI

## ST JOSEPH'S EUCHARISTIC SHRINE



# EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

MONDAY—FRIDAY

7AM—9PM



"COME TO ME ALL YOU WHO LABOUR AND ARE OVERBURDENED, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

(MATTHEW 11:28)



# ST JOSEPH PRAY FOR US



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