



St John The Evangelist

Berry Lane, Rickmansworth, WD3 7HG
<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/millend>



Our Lady Help of Christians

5 Park Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1HU
<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/rickmansworth>



St John Fisher

Hill Cottage, Shire Lane, Chorleywood, WD3 5NH
<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/chorleywood>

ENCOUNTERING JESUS, SERVING OTHERS

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (YEAR A) – 3rd MAY 2020

A MESSAGE FROM FR SHAUN

Chapter 10 of John's Gospel is one of the most moving passages in the New Testament. It's also one of the most well-known. Perhaps the most famous part of Chapter 10 is Jesus' saying, 'I am the good shepherd'. Because the passage about the Good Shepherd is so memorable it tends to swamp the image in today's Gospel where Jesus says of "I am the gate". How many times have you seen a depiction of Jesus as the good shepherd? Probably hundreds or thousands of times. We've seen it depicted countless times in statues, paintings, stained glass and on cards. But when was the last time you saw Jesus depicted as a sheep *gate*?

Showing Jesus with a lamb draped over his shoulders creates a pleasing and comforting image. But how can you show Jesus as a gate swinging on hinges? A gate of grey, weathered wood dotted with knot holes and being swung open and shut by some gatekeeper is not as pleasing and comforting as the human image of a gentle shepherd. But perhaps it is not just the difficulty we have in picturing this that makes us think so seldom of Jesus as the gate.

The Gospel today begins with Jesus' little allegory on the kinds of people who try to enter a sheep pen. Those who climb in slyly over the back fence are crooks, but the one who walks right through the front gate is the shepherd,

whose voice the sheep both know and trust. The whole point seems to be about the people who may enter a sheep pen one way or the other. The contrast is not between the gate over against the back fence but between *who* it is that uses those various points of entry.

It's quite clear in the first six verses of Chapter 10 that Jesus is the shepherd who is loved, recognized, and trusted by both the gatekeeper and the sheep themselves. So we might expect Jesus to continue on with this line of thought. But he doesn't. Instead he identifies himself not as the *person* who walks through the gate but as the *gate* itself. How can Jesus be the gate? He just said (and will say again) that he is the one who walks *through* the gate. So how can he be the gate and the shepherd who walks through it at the same time?

In ancient Palestine it was probably quite common for the shepherd to lay himself across the entrance of the sheepfold at night, so that no sheep could escape or any wild animal get in without first getting past him. Perhaps this may explain how Jesus can so freely mix together the imagery of being at once the shepherd *and* the gate. Perhaps it was possible to be both after all. The gate is the one who lays himself down to keep what is good on the inside and to keep what is bad at bay. And whether or not the good is kept safe from the bad, the point is that it will be the gate, perhaps the very body of our Lord, which makes the difference.

So, whether we are going into the pen or out into the pastures, it is Jesus himself, and his crucified but now resurrected body, that we pass through. We are purified by this baptismal journey through death and back to life again. We are changed, altered, re-oriented, re-energized. And this rhythm of baptism's passing in and out of Jesus the gate is re-enforced also by the Mass. There again we see the body and blood of Jesus laid down for us

- the body and blood through whom we pass into newness of life but which, in the ritual act of eating and drinking, passes also through *us*!

Jesus depicts his sheep as not just entering some pen but as also being regularly led back out of that pen into creation's various pastures. This is the point where the imagery shifts on us again as the gate through whom we pass then becomes the shepherd who also accompanies us and leads us out into the world. Jesus is a two-way gate: he not only locks up behind us to keep us safe but also unlocks and swings open so that we can enter into a life flowing with more fullness than we can know.

At this difficult time of lockdown, we perhaps have a sense that the gateway to our normal lives is firmly shut. We perhaps feel, and indeed largely are, trapped inside as we wait to hear of how the restrictions upon us daily lives will be gradually eased.

So, perhaps at this time, more than ever, we need to remember that we have a living gate: a gate not made of wood and metal but of flesh and blood; a living gate which is "swung aside" not because some wood swings on hinges but because Jesus' body was killed on the wood of the cross. Having been crucified and then raised, Jesus' new body has the wondrous ability to pass through doors and, by baptism and the Eucharist, to be passed through as the gateway to new life.

And so, as we reflect on this saying of Jesus "I am the gate", perhaps our prayer for ourselves, and for each other, especially in these challenging days, might be that we find our safety, our security, our peace and our joy as we pass in and out of Jesus, the divine gate.

With every prayer and blessing



Fr Shaun
Parish Priest

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

SATURDAY 2ND MAY ST ATHANASIUS	Fr Tony Conlon RIP
SUNDAY 3RD MAY FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	For the People of the Parish
MONDAY 4TH MAY	Kitty Jubber RIP
TUESDAY 5TH MAY	Alfredo Rock (Intentions)
WEDNESDAY 6TH MAY	Michael Chang RIP
THURSDAY 7TH MAY	For the sick and housebound of the parish
FRIDAY 8TH MAY	For vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life
SATURDAY 9TH MAY	Martin Coyne RIP
SUNDAY 10TH MAY FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	For the People of the Parish

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH

Even though we are currently unable to publically gather to celebrate Mass, your financial support for our parishes is still very much needed. If you currently make your offering to the parish via planned giving envelopes or by loose plate, and if your personal circumstances allow, we invite you to consider giving to your parish by standing order. If you would like to switch to making your offering via standing order, please send an email to rickmansworth@rcdow.org.uk and a standing order form will be sent to you by email. You would then just need to complete the form and return it to your bank. If you are unable to set up a standing order or would prefer not to, there is also the possibility to financially support the parish via the *Donate to our Parish* tab on our parish websites. Thank you for your continuing support.

Mark Blayney, Carolyn Opie & Sandra Miller

Chairs of the Finance Operations and Premises Committees of the Three Parishes

FEELING DISCONNECTED?

Are you feeling disconnected from parish life? Do you miss your community, and priests? We are missing you! Please, join us, and your parish community, in our new **online parish bible study programme and prayer (Lectio Divina) group**. The programme runs in two sessions each week. We invite you to attend both Sessions each week, but even if you can only attend one or the other, we hope that you will find it helpful in this time when we cannot gather physically as a Church community.

Online Bible Study programme – Monday evenings at 7.30pm

Session One each week we will take a look at short passage of scripture (from the Acts of the Apostles) and delve into its historical and biblical context, how it would have been understood by the Early Church, what it says about God, and what it has to say to us today. No previous experience of bible study is necessary. Fr Shaun will lead this via 'Zoom', following up-to-date security measures. It will last between 45 minutes to an hour. Please, contact Fr Shaun as soon as possible if you would like to attend (shaunchurch@rcdow.org.uk).

Online Bible Reflection and Prayer – Friday evenings at 7.30pm

In Session Two we will practice the beautiful and very ancient technique of praying with the scriptures known as *Lectio Divina*, using the same passage already looked at in Session one. No previous experience of bible prayer is necessary. Fr Damian will lead this also via 'Zoom', following up-to-date security measures. Similarly, it will last between 45 minutes and an hour. If you are interested, please, contact Fr Damian (damianryan@rcdow.org.uk) by the evening of Tuesday 5th May.

FACEBOOK PAGE

There is a new Facebook page for the three parishes. The name is 'Chess Valley Parishes' – we couldn't fit the full three names into the title! We hope to post weekly videos of scripture readings and reflections, and other things you may find useful. The link is: <https://www.facebook.com/Chess-Valley-Parishes-102042071465161/>

Please, follow us to keep connected, and share with friends.

DO YOU NEED HELP? CAN YOU HELP?

Thank you to all the parishioners who have given generous offers of help to those in need in our local communities. These offers are being coordinated by our lay Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members. If you are willing to help in any way, please do contact the SLT member for your parish. Even more importantly, if you need any kind of practical help, for instance help with shopping etc or would just appreciate someone calling you for a chat and/or to pray with you on the phone from time to time (whatever your age or family circumstances), please do let us know, via the SLT member for your respective parish:

Our Lady's Rickmansworth – Paul Forrest – 07585 661573 - pga.forrest@btinternet.com

St John Fisher, Chorleywood – Anne Lorrimer-Roberts – 07887 682943 - anne@themessagemachine.com

St John the Evangelist, Mill End – Geraldine Page – 07725 748490 - geraldine.page21@gmail.com

EASTER OFFERING

A number of parishioners have been asking us about the Easter Offering collection, which we were unable to take up this year. Once the public celebration of Mass has resumed we will make Easter Offering envelopes available for anyone who wishes make an Easter Offering retrospectively.

MAGNIFICAT PRAYER RESOURCE

During this challenging time, the publishers of *Magnificat* are offering complimentary access to the online version of the resource to help people pray at home. *Magnificat* contains the readings for Sunday and daily Mass, together with simplified versions of morning and evening prayer, as well as lovely reflections and meditations. The online version of *Magnificat* can be accessed at us.magnificat.net

MICHAEL CHANG RIP

It is with sadness we share the news of the death of Michael Chang. Michael moved away from the area in the mid 1980s but before that regularly attended St John Fisher and Our Lady's. Michael's funeral will take place in Surrey on Tuesday 2nd June.

ST JOHN'S SCHOOL, SEPTEMBER 2020 RECEPTION ADMISSIONS

A limited number of places are likely to be available for Reception starting in September through the continuing interest process. If you have been allocated another school and would like to apply for a place at St John's please contact **both** the local authority and the St John's office on 01923 774004 or admin@stjohns704.herts.sch.uk.

LIVESTREAMED MASSES FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS IN NHS AND CARE HOMES

The Bishop of England and Wales have agreed that each Thursday evening, at 7pm, one of them, in turn, will celebrate Mass in his cathedral, live streamed, for all those frontline workers in the NHS and care homes, for the sick and their families. The dates, locations and live-streaming information (link in the name of the cathedral) for the next five Masses have also been announced. They are as follows:

7 May: Bishop Marcus Stock, [Leeds Cathedral](#)

14 May: Bishop Robert Byrne CO, [Newcastle Cathedral](#)

21 May: Bishop Mark Davies, [Shrewsbury Cathedral](#)

28 May: Bishop Terence Drainey, [Middlesbrough Cathedral](#)

INVITATION TO PRAY

You are warmly invited to join us every Thursday evening to pray together and have a time of fellowship. Whether you are part of the Parish Community or not we would love you to come along to our online prayer group. The evening will consist of a time for singing, reading and quiet reflection, sharing and intercessory prayer. You are welcome to join in as you feel you would like. Prayer meetings will start at 8.00pm every Thursday and finish at 9.30pm

If you would like to join us simply email the following address and we will add you to the invitation.

kenny.family@ntlworld.com

We are using a platform called 'Zoom' which is very 'user friendly' and we can support you with this if necessary. We look forward to hearing from you.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE - STICKERS

Parents who will be seeking a Certificate of Catholic Practice for September 2021 Catholic Secondary Transfer or a September 2021 place at a Catholic Nursery or in Reception year may be concerned about what will happen with regard to our sticker system during the suspension of the public celebration of Mass. **Please do not be anxious about this.** Each Sunday during the period of the suspension of the public celebration of Mass will be removed from our assessment of Sunday Mass attendance. We will only take account of the Sundays when Sunday Mass has been publically celebrated. This will mean that the suspension of Sunday Mass will have no effect upon the issuing of Certificates of Catholic Practice.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY ONLINE

If you have young children you might want to check this out. The person behind this initiative plans to post a video every Saturday evening of her leading Children's Liturgy, which you might like to use at home on Sundays, perhaps at your usual Mass times. The link is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/144030995645383/permalink/2741737595874697/>

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISHES

Our Lady Help of Christians: David Cook, Kathleen Collins, Brenda Reynolds, Neville Mathews, Agnes Harper, Eileen Durkan, Ginny Goodgol, Maria Wallis, Heather Kean, John Caneparo, Henry Cutting, Nalene Nixon, Pam Bell, Joan Townend and Maureen Douglas

St John the Evangelist: Rita Murray, Michael Dixon, Alfredo Rock and Joan Hart

St John Fisher: Nora O'Toole, Francis De Souza, Georgina Kelham, Pete Murray, Steve Kibbey, Matthew Leone, Jean-Pierre Roche, Angela Hoy, Pat Finucane, Colin Dowling, Kitty Finucane, Anne Trenchard, Vicky Williams, Paul Kennett and Ann Penn

This Sunday's Readings

Acts 2:14.36-41; 1Peter 2:20-25; John 10:1-10 (Gospel)

Next Sunday's Readings (Fifth Sunday of Easter)

Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14: 1- 12 (Gospel)

MASS ONLINE

We know that many of you are sharing in the celebration of Sunday (and weekday) Mass online, via parishes which have the facility to livestream. There is a link to all the livestreams in our Diocese on the Mass Online page of the parish websites. We invite you to participate as fully as you are able in the celebrations and at communion time to make an act of spiritual communion.

MAKING AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

The Church teaches that a deep spiritual communion is possible even when we do not share together the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. So, as you participate in Mass via live-stream, or as you have some quiet time with the scriptures of the Sunday and think of us celebrating Mass, you might like to pray this prayer based on a prayer of St Alphonsus Ligouri:

*My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of altar.
I love you above all things
and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.*

The following churches in the diocese are live streamed and can be visited online at any time using the relevant website address. Mass will be celebrated for online participation at the times listed below:

Sunday Mass

6.00pm (Sat.)	St Luke, Pinner	www.churchservices.tv/pinner
6.00pm (Sat.)	St Teresa of the Child Jesus, Borehamwood	www.churchservices.tv/borehamwood
6.30pm (Sat.)	Our Lady of Lourdes, New Southgate	www.churchservices.tv/newsouthgate
7.45am	St Monica, Palmers Green	www.churchservices.tv/palmersgreen
9.00am	St Joseph and English Martyrs, Bishops Stortford	www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford
10.00am	St Teresa of the Child Jesus, Borehamwood	www.churchservices.tv/borehamwood
10.00am	Our Lady of Lourdes, New Southgate	www.churchservices.tv/newsouthgate
10.30am	Holy Apostles, Pimlico	www.churchservices.tv/pimlico
10.30am	St James, Spanish Place	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_QES_fHotyQ0tA0pH8dTsg
11.00am	St Luke, Pinner	www.churchservices.tv/pinner
11.00am	Our Lady and St Vincent, Potters Bar	www.churchservices.tv/pottersbar
11.30am	St Mary, Hampstead	www.churchservices.tv/hampstead
12 noon	St Anselm and St Cecilia, Lincoln's Inn Fields	www.churchservices.tv/lincolnsinnfields
12.30pm	Holy Apostles, Pimlico (Spanish Mass)	www.churchservices.tv/pimlico
3.30pm	St Monica, Palmers Green (Polish Mass)	www.churchservices.tv/palmersgreen
6.30pm	St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage	www.churchservices.tv/swisscottage

Weekday Mass

Monday to Friday:

7.00am	St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage	www.churchservices.tv/swisscottage
9.15am	St Teresa of the Child Jesus, Borehamwood	www.churchservices.tv/borehamwood
9.30am	St Monica, Palmers Green	www.churchservices.tv/palmersgreen
10.00am	St Luke, Pinner	www.churchservices.tv/pinner
10.00am	Our Lady and St Vincent, Potters Bar	www.churchservices.tv/pottersbar
10.00am	Our Lady of Lourdes, New Southgate	www.churchservices.tv/newsouthgate
12.30pm*	St Anselm and St Cecilia, Lincoln's Inn Fields	www.churchservices.tv/lincolnsinnfields
6.00pm	St Anselm and St Cecilia, Lincoln's Inn Fields	www.churchservices.tv/lincolnsinnfields

* Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only

Saturday:

10.00am	St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage	www.churchservices.tv/swisscottage
10.00am	Our Lady of Lourdes, New Southgate	www.churchservices.tv/newsouthgate