



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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SS PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES (YEAR A) – 28th JUNE 2020

A MESSAGE FROM FR SHAUN

The Gospel for the Solemnity of SS Peter and Paul emphasizes the role of the Church and of Peter, the rock of her foundation, as “gate-keepers” of the Kingdom of Heaven, entrusted with its keys. “The gates of the underworld can never hold out against it.” The “underworld”: in Greek *Hades*; in Hebrew *Sheol*, is the realm of the dead. Death shall have no power over the Kingdom of Heaven and those who belong to it.

In the First Reading from Acts of the Apostles, we hear how iron gates imprison Peter in his heavily guarded cell as the Church prays fervently for him. Luke recounts Peter’s miraculous deliverance by the angel of the Lord. The chains fall from his wrists and the prison gates swing open.

Later in life, when both he and Paul were put to death under the Roman emperor Nero, it could seem that the gates of death had prevailed. But we should note Paul’s words in our Second Reading as the time of comes for him “to be gone.” He says: The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely” – through yet another set of gates – “to his heavenly kingdom.” This is the ultimate deliverance and true cause for praise and thanksgiving!

How strong is Paul’s faith! How eager is his expectation as his death draws near – knowing that the gates of the underworld will not prevail and anticipating what awaits him beyond heaven’s gates. At times, he desires it fervently. “I want to be gone and be with Christ, which would very much be the better” (Philippians 1:23)

What glory awaits us too beyond those gates!

Utterly human, SS Peter and Paul give us hope. Our faith journeys will always have many ups and downs. Yet Christ remains with us at all times to proclaim his Good News to others through us – who are his witnesses. May we experience Christ’s merciful love as surely as Peter and Paul, and run the race that invites other to follow Jesus.

On Tuesday we re-opened Our Lady’s for the first time in three months for a period of individual prayer. I am deeply grateful to the volunteer stewards and cleaners who have stepped forward to make this possible. It was lovely to see a number of parishioners taking the opportunity to come and pray once again in the church.

Also on Tuesday we had the news that, from 4th July, places of worship will be able to reopen for public worship. I have to tell you that this announcement took many priests, me included, rather by surprise. We were not expecting the Government to announce this step quite so soon after the announcement about the re-opening of churches for individual prayer.

The reopening of the church for public worship is something for which to give thanks to God. I’m sure we all feel, in different ways, a sense of loss at not being able to come to Mass in these last few months, and joy at being able to return

However, the reality is that we will not be ready to recommence the celebration of Mass as early as 4th July. We will work to ensure that Mass will resume as soon as we can be confident that we have a clear workable plan, sufficient numbers of stewards and cleaners for each Mass and the confidence that we open the church for Mass in a way that is as COVID safe as possible.

The Catholic Archbishops of England have written a message to all Catholics in England and I encourage you to read it. You will find it on a page on each parish website titled *Message from the Metropolitan Archbishops of the Catholic Church in England*. I highlight here a few points of great importance in this message:

- We will not simply be able to return the way things were before lockdown
- A significant number of churches may remain closed as they are unable to meet the necessary COVID safe requirements
- There will be a limit on the number of people who can attend Mass. This will be determined locally in accordance with distancing requirements
- When we return to Mass there will be some differences in how the celebration takes place. For the time being there will be no congregational singing and Mass will be shorter than usual.

The Cardinal has also recorded a short video in which he explains that we cannot go back to the celebration of Mass as we have previously know it. He also makes appeal to parishioners to, where possible, volunteer to help with the stewarding and cleaning which will be an essential element in the recommencement of the public celebration of Mass. The Cardinal's message is on the Diocesan website and can also be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLsYL5yggVI&feature=youtu.be> I encourage you to view it.

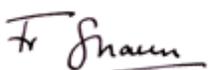
I am sure you will appreciate the logistical challenges involved in all of this for our three parishes. After discussion with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and others, we believe it is safest and more practical to resume Mass *initially* at Our Lady's, as this has the largest capacity (given that we can relay the Mass into the halls from the church). However, our clear aspiration is to open St John Fisher, Chorleywood and St John's, Mill End once we have learnt from the experience of opening Our Lady's and when we are sure that these further re-openings can be done in a safe and sustainable way. This will take at least a couple of months. For the time being there will be no public weekday Masses in any of the three parishes. However, once we have established a sustainable pattern of Sunday Masses, we hope to have some weekday evening Masses at Our Lady's, as this might be a time when more parishioners can attend. In all of this, I must stress to you that our prime consideration is to ensure the safety of every person who enters our churches.

We will not be able to open even Our Lady's for the celebration of Sunday Mass until we have established teams of stewards and cleaners for each Sunday Mass. Although we have only just begun to re-open the church for individual prayer, I am afraid that we will now have to suspend this as will need to focus all our resources, energy and the goodwill of our volunteers on ensuring we have enough volunteer stewards and cleaners for each Sunday Mass. The last opening time for individual prayer for the time being will therefore be **Sunday 5th July**.

I know that many of you are longing for the day when once again we can safely participate in person in the celebration of Mass and receive the Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. I long to see that day too! I'm sure you will appreciate that preparing for safe public worship in this new situation will require continued generosity, hard work, understanding, and patience from everyone. I believe we will be all the stronger by continuing to support each other in order to make safe public worship a different, but no less joyful, reality.

Please pray for Fr Damian and me, and all those working with us, in the challenging tasks that lie ahead.

With every prayer and blessing



Fr Shaun
Parish Priest

CHURCH OPENING TIMES FOR INDIVIDUAL PRAYER

Our Lady's is open for individual prayer at the following times each week:

Tuesday 10.00am - 11.00am

Saturday 10.00am – 11.00am

Sunday 3.00pm - 4.00pm

For the opening times for individual prayer in the other parishes of the Watford Deanery please check the *Individual Prayer Times – Watford Deanery* page on the parish websites.

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY AND ONLINE BIBLE REFLECTION AND PRAYER

We have now completed our first season of Online Bible Study and Online Bible Reflection and Prayer. These have proved a great success, with between 60 and 70 parishioners attending the Monday Online Bible Study each week and between 40 and 50 attending the Online Bible Reflection and Prayer on Fridays. Many parishioners are finding these a great way to stay connected to their faith and to their parish community. A new series begin on Monday 29th June when we will be studying, reflecting on and praying with the Book of Psalms. The series on the Psalms will last six weeks. Why not come and join us!

Online Bible Study programme – Monday evenings at 7.30pm (commencing Monday 29th June)

Each week we will study one of the Psalms and delve into its historical and biblical context, what it says about God, and what it has to say to us today about worship and life. No previous experience of bible study is necessary. Fr Shaun will lead this via 'Zoom', following up-to-date security measures. It will last about 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 (commencing Friday 3rd July)

Each week on Fridays we will practice the beautiful and very ancient technique of praying with the scriptures known as *Lectio Divina*, using the same psalm 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

TRY ALPHA ONLINE WITH US!

Alpha is a space where everyone – wherever you are in terms of your beliefs and faith (or not) – can explore the big questions of life, faith and meaning in a relaxed, non-judgemental, and fun way. People can say whatever they want. Alpha online is from the comfort of your own home and takes up less than an hour and half per week! A new Alpha series began on Tuesday 9th June, (8 - 9:15 pm). We use the internet platform "Zoom", It's not too late to join us.

Please, register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/alpha-online-at-chess-valley-rc-parishes-tickets-104322962790>

Feel free to invite as many friends as possible, near or far! If you want to know a bit more about Alpha, check out the parish Facebook and Instagram pages where you'll see some great videos from parishioners sharing a bit about their experience. You can also share these with anyone you'd like to invite to Alpha! If you have any questions, please, contact Maria Crossland: mariamcrossland@hotmail.com

ALPHA - INVITATION TO PRAY

Alpha on line launched for our three Parishes on Tuesday 9th June and runs until 18th August. We are inviting all parishioners to join the Alpha Intercessory Prayer Team to either pray from home or to join the online Zoom platform over eleven Tuesdays from 8.00-9.15pm to pray for the guests and team attending Alpha. We also invite you to pray daily for our parish community and its ongoing formation. Maybe you could consider praying the following prayer:

Thank you loving Father for all those you have called to participate in Alpha; we ask your blessing upon all, both team and guests. Without you we can do nothing, you are the Way, the Truth and the Life. Pour out your Holy Spirit and abundant blessings and gifts during this Alpha. May Alpha ignite or re-ignite the flame of faith in all hearts so that we may experience the wonder, joy and hope that being in relationship with you brings. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

Thank you, the Alpha Service Team.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP GATHERING – SUNDAY, 5TH JULY AT 5PM VIA 'ZOOM'

You are warmly invited to join us on Sunday, 5th July, for a short Praise and Worship gathering at 5pm. We will be using Zoom to sing a few uplifting hymns, listen to a short prayer and a reading or reflection, as well as catch up with fellow Parishioners. Please do not worry if you have not used Zoom before, it is very simple to set up, and pick up and we will be happy to walk you through the process ahead of time and on the day. If you would like to attend, please email Katy Pione (cepione@hotmail.co.uk) before Saturday 4th Jul so she can send you a link with the meeting invitation on it, as well as the song words. Please feel free to invite anyone who might like to attend! Look forward to seeing you then.

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

COFFEE MORNING - 9.45 -10.45 ON WEDNESDAYS DURING LOCK DOWN

You are warmly invited to Zoom and join us for a friendly get together over coffee/ tea. As you probably know on Zoom only one person at a time can speak. I therefore thought it an idea to have a loose structure to the hour. Please bring something to share maybe a funny/ sad story, a poem, review of a film / book etc. that has touched you or simply a bit about how you are coping with the lock down. There is no obligation to share so please do not hold you back from zooming along.

Please contact Anne Jaxa-Chamiec on 07810805900 or at anne.jaxachamiec@btinternet.com for a 'Zoom' invite. Thank you, Anne.

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.

WE HAVE JOINED INSTAGRAM!

Come follow the parish on our new Instagram page where we want to engage with you as parishioners, as well as those outside our parish! On a weekly basis you will see us posting the weekly readings, video reflections, a Fun Friday mini quiz (because let's face it, we all love a bit of bible trivia!) and posting plenty of other content which we would love to share with you. Our Instagram handle is @chessvalleyparishes so come and follow us (and invite your family and friends to as well) - we look forward to seeing you there, chatting with you in the comments and bringing our community together during this challenging time!

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.

CAFOD – UNITE AGAINST CORONAVIRUS

As we cope with coronavirus in the UK, we think of our sisters and brothers in developing countries who are facing this pandemic with fragile health systems, some of which have almost no intensive care beds or ventilators. Food prices have already risen with borders closing the poorest are losing their jobs and income with wholesale shutdowns. Furthermore, inadequate healthcare, lack of access to washing facilities and limited ability to social distance will result in loss of life on an intolerable scale. The likely impact will be devastating. We are one global family. In order to continue protecting and improving the lives of those in poor communities, your prayers, gifts and voices are needed now more than ever. Please visit cafod.org.uk/coronavirus to find out ways you can give, act and pray in response to this crisis.

CATHOLIC UNIVERSE AND CATHOLIC TIMES

These papers can delivered direct to your home every week, POST FREE. Please go to www.thecatholicuniverse.com or call them on 0161 820 5722 and they will arrange for you. SPECIAL OFFER 3 MONTHS :-£18.00 or 12 Months:- £72.00

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK	
SATURDAY 27TH JUNE ST JOHN SOUTHWORTH	For those persecuted because of their faith
SUNDAY 28TH JUNE SS PETER AND PAUL	For the People of the Parish
MONDAY 29TH JUNE	Paul Kennedy RIP
TUESDAY 30TH JUNE	Henry Cutting (Intentions)
WEDNESDAY 1ST JULY DEDICATION OF THE CATHEDRAL	For our Diocese
THURSDAY 2ND JULY	For the sick and housebound of the parish
FRIDAY 3RD JULY ST THOMAS, APOSTLE	Berthrand Okoro RIP
SATURDAY 4TH JULY	For vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life
SUNDAY 5TH JULY FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	For the People of the Parish Bob and Betty Livingston (Intentions)

This Sunday's Readings

Acts 12:1-11; 2 Timothy 4:6-8. 17-18; Matthew 16:13-19 (Gospel)

Next Sunday's Readings (14th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Zechariah 9:9-10, Romans 8:9. 11.13; Matthew 11: 25-30 (Gospel)