



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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SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (YEAR A) – 26th JULY 2020

A MESSAGE FROM FR SHAUN

No doubt you have heard the expression “You can’t take it with you.” It means that we leave this world the way we came into it – without even the clothes on our backs. But the truth is there are some things you can take with you into eternal life. They’re just not material things. And that’s what Jesus is talking about in the treasure parables. Real treasure is what has eternal value – it’s what you can take with you.

One way to think about this is in terms of relationships. St Paul teaches us that there are three things which last: faith, hope and love, and that the greatest is love. Love is the greatest because it’s the only one of the three which is eternal. Faith will give way to sight, hope will give way to joy, but love is forever. We will carry our relationships with God and with our loved ones into the Kingdom with us.

So how do we “buy” the treasure of love? The currency that best buys eternal treasure is time. So that the way we invest in the Kingdom is to spend quality time with the people we hope to be with in heaven – starting with God. Quality time with God means making generous space for him in our lives – time for prayer and stillness and reflection. We also need to spend quality time with those with whom we are in significant relationships: spouse children, parents

and loved ones. Of course to do this might require a sacrifice of other things that take up our time – but that’s the point of Jesus’ parable in the Gospel today. We have to give something to buy something greater. We trade the earthly treasures for the heavenly treasures. We give up our over-reliance on what we can’t take with us to gain what we can take with us.

Just like the merchant in the parable, or the person who sells everything else to buy the field, we are called to recognize the treasure that God offers, and to respond appropriately. The parables show that it would be foolish for us to respond with half-measures to the Good News of God’s love.

After two Sundays with just one Sunday Mass, I am delighted that this weekend we are able to add a second Mass to our schedule, with a Sunday evening Mass at 6.00pm at Our Lady’s. This is part of our phased return to the celebration of public Masses. The taskforces for St John Fisher, Chorleywood and St John’s, Mill End have both begun their work of assessing how we can re-open both of these churches in September for the celebration of Mass in a way which is both safe and sustainable. We know that coronavirus is going to be with us for some considerable time to come, so it would be unwise to forage ahead with the reopening of these churches before we are sure that we can do so safely and with a team of volunteer stewards committed to this critical role for the long term. Before any church can re-open for individual prayer or for celebration of Mass a thorough risk assessment has to be completed and returned to the Diocese. The risk assessment covers every aspect of how to safely re-open a church – the implementation of social distancing, the marking of a one way system throughout the church, the provision of all the necessary signage and sanitizing equipment and PPE required, the creation of a rota of volunteers, which is sustainable and not likely to become burdensome because too few people are involved.

All of this, and more, is currently being worked on by the two taskforces in line with our clear aspiration to re-open St John Fisher and St John the Evangelist for the celebration of Mass from mid-September.

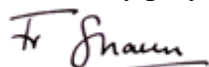
Even with three churches open the numbers able to attend Mass each week will be a small fraction of our normal capacity, due to the essential social distancing measures we are obliged to apply in our efforts to keep our churches COVID safe environments. It is for this reason that I have asked the Finance, Operations and Premises Committees of the three parishes to give careful consideration to the possibility of installing professional live-streaming at Our Lady's, with all three parishes sharing the costs fairly, on a *per capita* basis.

Some parishioners may feel that we are moving more slowly than other parishes with regard to re-opening for the celebration of Mass. My number one priority is your safety. I make no apology for that. Only after a few weeks of reopening for Mass across the diocese, the feedback is that many priests are concerned about the long-term sustainability of their initial Mass schedules. I am prepared to add further Masses when I have been assured that we can do so in a way that is:

1. **Safe:** I will always place the safety of our parishioners first.
2. **Systematic:** I am committed to your safety by implementing systems that honour the guidelines received by the government and the diocese.
3. **Sustainable:** I want to offer Mass times that are sustainable throughout this time. According to the guidance, Masses will have to be cancelled, even at last minute, without the sustained generosity of parishioners.

Implementing these principles is precisely the work being undertaken by each parish's respective taskforces. Coronavirus is going to remain a life-threatening disease for some time to come. We are all hoping and praying for a vaccine, but even in the best case scenario we cannot lower our guard until we are through the winter of 2020/21. We must proceed on that basis. I want to see our churches open as much as you do. And I want to assure you of my determination to bring about a phased reopening that is **safe, systematic, and sustainable**.

With every prayer and blessing



Parish Priest

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

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SATURDAY 25TH JULY ST JAMES, APOSTLE	John Finnegan RIP
SUNDAY 26TH JULY 17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	10.00am: Kevin Bowes RIP 6.00pm: For the People of the Parish
MONDAY 27TH JULY	Gemma Ryland RIP
TUESDAY 28TH JULY	Canon Vincent Berry RIP
WEDNESDAY 29TH JULY ST MARTHA	For the Nolan family (Intentions)
THURSDAY 30TH JULY	Fr Anthony Conlon RIP
FRIDAY 31ST JULY ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA	For the sick and the housebound of the parish
SATURDAY 1ST AUGUST ST ALPHONSUS LIGOURI	For NHS frontline and staff and care workers
SUNDAY 2ND AUGUST 18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	10.00am: Malcolm Stacey RIP (Anniversary) 6.00pm: For the People of the Parish

THE BOOKING OF MASSES

Currently we are celebrating one Sunday Masses at Our Lady's at 10am and 6.00pm (Sunday evening). Places are limited and so you are invited to book online via the **EVENTS** page of Our Lady's website. Please note that you are booking **A PEW** not individual seats. Please read the instructions on the booking page carefully and provide all the information requested. If you successfully book a pew we ask that, out of courtesy to others, you do not book again for at least three weeks. If you know of a parishioner who does not have internet access but wishes to attend a Mass, please do let us know so that we can arrange this. So that the stewards can seat you safely we ask that you please arrive **no earlier than 20 minutes and no later than 5 minutes before the time the Mass is due to start.** **Government Advisory:** Certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID19, including people aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions. Individuals who fall within this group are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household. Shielded patients are currently advised not to meet more than one person from outside of their own household, and therefore not currently advised to attend places of worship.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2020

This past week an important letter from me concerning the delayed First Holy Communion from May 2020 was emailed to all the 2020 First Communion parents. If you have a child who is in the 2020 First Communion programme and you did not receive this email, please contact me as soon as possible. Details of arrangements for the 2021 First Communion preparation will be shared in the autumn.

Fr Shaun

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE – ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/22 – UPDATED INFORMATION

I have decided that no further stickers will be given out for those applying for a place in a Catholic School for the academic year 2021/22. The assessment of whether a CCP can be issued will now be made in the following ways:

Secondary Transfer: Only the Sundays from the **beginning of October 2019 until and including Sunday 15th March 2020** will be assessed. Further, given the unprecedented nature of the situation, I will be reducing the requirement from 70% attendance to 65% attendance. This will mean that you will need **16** out of a possible **24** stickers in order for a CCP to be issued. In September 2020, I will set out the arrangements for the signing of CCPs in October 2020.

Nursery/Reception (*this does not include St John's school, Mill End, where a CCP is no longer a requirement*): Only the Sundays from the **beginning of December 2019 until and including Sunday 15th March 2020** will be assessed. Again, the requirement of 70% attendance will be reduced to 65% attendance. This will mean that you will need **10** out of a possible **15** stickers in order for a CCP to be issued. In November 2020, I will set out arrangements for the signing of CCPs in November 2020.

Fr Shaun

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY AND ONLINE BIBLE REFLECTION AND PRAYER

A new series of Online Bible Study and Bible Reflection and Prayer is now underway. We are studying, reflecting on and praying with the Book of Psalms. 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.. Fr Shaun will lead this via 'Zoom', following up-to-date security measures. It will last about an hour. Please, contact Fr Shaun 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

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

SVP TWINNAGE ANNUAL CAMPAIGN – GIVE THE GIFT OF A CHILD'S EDUCATION

Chess Valley SVP wishes to promote the SVP's annual campaign for the **Vidya Jyothi Education Scheme**. Meaning "Knowledge and Light", the VJES enables children from poor families in India of all faiths and none to attend school and get an education to provide a vital pathway out of poverty for them and their families. By sponsoring a primary school student you will help to cover their school fees, uniforms, books, transport and food. Anyone can donate – SVP conferences and members, parishioners, friends, family etc. You can sponsor one student for one year with a **one-off payment of £15**. Further information about the scheme is on <https://www.svp.org.uk/twinnage-and-overseas-aid/student-sponsorship/vidya-jyothi>. For queries contact info@svp.org.uk. The deadline for this year's campaign is **1st August**.

HOW TO STAY CONNECTED WITH IMPORTANT PARISH UPDATES AND INFORMATION

We have been sending emails to all parishioners who have given us their contact details, to communicate important updates and information, such as how to book a place for Mass. If you have not been receiving these and would like to receive them, can you please email Fr Damian, asking to be put on the email list: damianryan@rcdow.org.uk

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: anne.jaxachamiec@btinternet.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.

CAFOD

CAFOD has joined with the UK Disasters Emergencies Committee to help millions of people whose lives are at risk, as coronavirus spreads across refugee camps and countries suffering conflict. You can donate at cafod.org.uk/coronavirus to help CAFOD scale up its coronavirus response through our global Church family. Or use CAFOD's Summer of Hope fundraising ideas with your family and friends to transform lockdown and raise money for the appeal: cafod.org.uk/summerofhope

This Sunday's Readings

1 Kings 3:5. 7-12; Romans 8: 28-30; Matthew 13: 44-52 (Gospel)

Next Sunday's Readings (18th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

Isaiah 55: 1-3; Romans 8:35.37-39; Matthew 14: 13-21 (Gospel)

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, Maureen Douglas and Josie Westhrop.

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