



St John The Evangelist
Berry Lane, Rickmansworth, WD3 7HG



Our Lady Help of Christians
5 Park Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1HU



St John Fisher
Hill Cottage, Shire Lane, Chorleywood, WD3 5NH

<https://www.churchservices.tv/rickmansworth>

ENCOUNTERING JESUS, SERVING OTHERS

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) - 20TH DECEMBER 2020

SUNDAY THOUGHT

It's easy to paint an idealised picture about the Annunciation - where the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she is to give birth to a son, as a virgin, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The story is so familiar that it's easy to ignore the very human elements of the event. Mary was betrothed to be married to Joseph. She was probably in her early teens, which was normal at that time. She was from a small village where everyone knew everything about one another's business. Mary was a virgin. When the angel Gabriel appeared to her and said, 'You are to conceive and bear a son ...' (Luke 1: 31), this was not normal, or expected. Yes, Isaiah (7:14) prophesied that a virgin would give birth to a son, and he would be called Emmanuel, a name or, more accurately, a "title", which means 'God-is-with-us'. But this prophecy hadn't really been understood or internalised by the mainstream Jewish leaders and people. They were expecting a Messiah, sure, but a messiah born of a virgin? No. So, Mary hadn't grown up with that understanding, necessarily. And it wasn't as if Mary had grown up hearing other stories of how virgins became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. She certainly wasn't expecting to become pregnant as a virgin. The townspeople certainly weren't expecting anyone claiming to be a virgin, to become pregnant, and then expect them to understand and believe that a miracle has happened. When Mary said, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' we could understand this also to mean her saying 'what am I going to tell the good and faithful Jewish people of my village, who are going to assume that I have been unfaithful to Joseph?' She was aware that saying "Yes" to this, that she was going to become, even amongst many of the good townspeople, and people of her synagogue, an outcast. People would always, at the back of their minds at least, think cynically, 'There she goes, the faithful Jewish woman who miraculously became pregnant as a virgin.' And what would they think about Jesus himself? The Messiah? Well, they rejected him when he came back as an adult to preach to them, so probably not!

In our lives, making decisive choices about how we live as Catholics leads us into the same experience as Mary at the Annunciation. When we seriously, as adults, put Jesus at the centre of our lives, we are going to challenge the assumptions of society. And maybe not only society, but our family, our friends, even fellow churchgoers perhaps. When Jesus turns our life upside down, as he did to Mary, we don't have a "logical" explanation for it. God changes our life, and gives his mercy, purpose, meaning, a peace, a joy, and a love, that nothing else can give. People may say, 'how can that person claim to be religious, when I know who they really are?' Saying "Yes" to Jesus, putting him above our family, our spouse, significant other, our children, and parents, and being faithful to that "yes", means that we give birth to him, and bring God's presence into the world. You may say 'I'm not that religious'. Well, Mary was a virgin. She didn't know what it was like to be with a man. You may not know what it's like to live your Catholic faith fully. But saying "yes" today can mean that you, like Mary, can give birth to God in your heart and in the world.

SAFEGUARDING REPS.

Rickmansworth Parish

Caroline Mathie
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Carol Bartlett
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Mill End Parish

Matt McKiernan 01923 493747
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Chorleywood Parish

Laura Turnbull 01923 897899
chorleywoodsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk

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Coordinator** 0207 798 9356

YOUTH MINISTRY

Belinda Calen - Alpha Youth:
rickmansworthalphayouth@rcdow.org.uk

Caitlin Scott - Confirmation:
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Margaret Simon - Youth
Ministry Leadership Team:
rickmansworthyouth@rcdow.org.uk

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

	Our Lady Help of Christians	St John the Evangelist	St John Fisher
SATURDAY 19 TH DECEMBER	Kath, Joe & Family (Ints.)		
SUNDAY 20TH DECEMBER FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	10am Mary Furey & Family (Ints.) 6pm For the People of the Parish	10.30am Nicky McAleavy RIP	9am John & Mary Harris RIP
MONDAY 21 ST DECEMBER	Roberts Family (Ints.)		
TUESDAY 22 ND DECEMBER	Luigi Torlini RIP		
WEDNESDAY 23 RD DECEMBER	9.30am Joan Townend RIP		
THURSDAY 24 TH DECEMBER <i>CHRISTMAS EVE</i>	6pm Thomas White RIP 11.30pm For the People of the Parish	5.30pm For the People of the Parish 10.30pm For the People of the Parish	8pm For the People of the Parish
FRIDAY 25TH DECEMBER <i>THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)</i>	8.30am Joan Townend RIP 11am Karen MacMillan (Ints.)	10.30am Robert Gibson RIP	9am For the People of the Parish
SAT 26TH DECEMBER <i>ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR</i>	Laurence Rooney RIP (Anniv.)		
SUNDAY 27TH DECEMBER THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH	10am Patrick Rooney RIP 6pm Patricia Davitt & Family (Ints.)	10.30am For the People of the Parish	9am For the People of the Parish

Entrance Antiphon: Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

1st Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16

Response to Psalm: I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

2nd Reading: Romans 16:25-27

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

Communion Antiphon: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Next Sunday's Readings: Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3, Hebrews 11:8. 11-12. 17-19, Luke 2:22-40

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISHES

Our Lady Help of Christians: Kathleen Collins, Brenda Reynolds, Neville Mathews, Agnes Harper, Eileen Durkan, Ginny Goodgol, Maria Wallis, Heather Kean, John Caneparo, Henry Cutting, Nalene Nixon, Pam Bell, Maureen Douglas, Josie Westhrop, Gillian Loose and Peter Knight.

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

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, Ann Penn, Paddy Goble and Pam Fitzpatrick.

NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

CHRISTMAS MASSES

Please check the *Advent & Christmas* tab on the three parish websites for the times of our Christmas Masses. If you wish to attend any Mass across our parishes on Christmas Eve or Christmas (as well as any Sunday) it is necessary to book places online via the *Events* tab on our websites. Places are limited and our Christmas Masses are quickly filling up, so you are advised to book your place(s) soon to avoid disappointment. If you are unsuccessful in booking a place, please remember that you can join us for the Christmas Masses at Our Lady's via livestream at <https://www.churchservices.tv/rickmanworth>.

CAN'T COME TO MASS ON CHRISTMAS DAY?

Although the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days has been set aside during these times of restrictions, many people will be saddened at being unable to go to Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day due to restrictions. However, did you know that the Church has traditionally set aside eight days, from **25th December** to **1st January**, for celebration of the Solemnity of Christmas: it is called The Christmas Octave? You are welcome to come to Mass during the Octave to celebrate Christmas at Mass. Alternatively, to help you celebrate the Christmas Octave at home, each day during the Octave there will be a new web page with prayers, Scripture readings, reflections and suggested activities, on the following link: <https://rcdow.org.uk/faith/news/every-day-is-christmas---a-journey-through-the-christmas-octave-2020/>

NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS – OUR LADY'S

There will be a 10.00am Mass at Our Lady's on New Year's Day to celebrate the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God and to ask for God's blessing on 2021. Admission to this Mass will be by online booking only. If you wish to attend please book places via the **EVENTS** tab of the Rickmansworth parish website. Booking opens on **Monday 21st December**. The Mass will be livestreamed.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

The offerings at the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses is your personal gift to your priests. The Christmas and Easter offerings, together with the stole fees and Mass stipends form the personal income paid by the parishes to Fr Shaun and Fr Damian. These monies are paid into the respective three parishes' accounts and are then paid to the priests as a monthly salary or stipend. If you wish to make a Christmas offering, you can do so via BACS using your respective parish bank details. Please mark your gift as **CHRISTMAS OFFERING**. You can also now make a Christmas Offering via Virgin Money Giving, please leave a message to show this donation is for your Christmas Offering. You will find the parish bank details and a link to the Virgin Money Giving site on the **Donate to your Parish** tab of your respective parish website. If you use Planned Giving Envelopes please use the one marked Christmas Offering. Thank you.

THANK YOU

The Parish Team would like to thank parishioners for their cards, gifts and good wishes this Christmas. Your thoughtfulness and generosity are very much appreciated.

VERNA KENDRICK RIP

It is with sadness that we share the news of the death of Verna Kendrick. Verna was a long-time parishioner at Our Lady's. We extend our deepest condolences to Verna's husband, David, at this sad and very difficult time. Verna's funeral will take place at St Wilfrid's Church, Gateshead on **Monday 21st December** at **10.00am**, followed by burial at Heworth Cemetery.

SUNDAY'S PRAISE AND WORSHIP GATHERING

Just a quick note to say this Sunday's Praise and Worship gathering will not take place, as planned. My apologies, but due to family commitments, we are now unable to host one this week. We will aim however to hold another one very soon and try to sing some Christmas carols. Wishing you all a lovely Christmas in the meantime, *Katy Pione*

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

Although it isn't currently possible for the priests to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the confessional, both Fr Shaun and Fr Damian are available for the celebration of the sacrament by individual appointment. The celebration would take place, outside of Mass time, either in the garden (weather permitting) or in an empty church. Any parishioners wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation should contact Fr Shaun or Fr Damian to arrange a mutually convenient time.

UPDATED - IMPORTANT INFORMATION - MASS ATTENDANCE STICKERS AND CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE (CCP) OF 2022 SECONDARY TRANSFER AND NURSERY / RECEPTION 2022

With the Sunday Mass Obligation currently suspended and the ability of families to attend Mass in the parish each Sunday being very restricted due to social distancing measures, it is currently not possible to provide Mass attendance cards and stickers to families with a child making secondary transfer in 2022 or seeking a nursery or reception place in a catholic primary school in 2022. There currently seems to be a level of uncertainty about if, and on what criteria, priests are going to be asked to complete CCPs for 2022 admissions. For the time being, all parents with a child who will be seeking a place in a Catholic Secondary school in 2022 or a nursery or reception place in a Catholic primary school (other than St John's, Mill End or St Anthony's, Watford which do not require a CCP) should email me at shaunchurch@rcdow.org.uk, providing the following information:

- Name of the child (first name and surname)
- Parents/Guardians names (first name and surname)
- Address at which you reside
- Telephone contact details

I will retain this information and keep a careful eye on Diocesan guidance with regard to the issuing of CCPs for 2022 admissions in the light of the prevailing restrictions caused by the pandemic. *Fr Shaun*

NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

COVID19 VACCINES

In September 2020 the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales issued a statement COVID-19 and Vaccination (24th September 2020). In the light of the recent breakthrough in vaccine development the Bishop's Conference has now issued a follow up statement. The development of a vaccine against COVID-19 presents an important breakthrough in protecting others as well as oneself from the virus; a virus which has not only caused a global pandemic and led to a huge loss of life but has also placed a great burden on healthcare workers and systems. Each of us has a duty to protect others from infection with its danger of serious illness, and for some, death. A vaccine is the most effective way to achieve this unless one decides to self-isolate. At present, debate concerns the use of the vaccines developed by Pfizer & BioNTech, Moderna, and Astra Zeneca. Some have questioned the use of the Astra Zeneca vaccine since it has been developed from cell-lines originating from the cells of an aborted foetus in 1983. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Academy of Life have expressed the view that one may in good conscience and for a grave reason receive a vaccine sourced in this way, provided that there is a sufficient moral distance between the present administration of the vaccine and the original wrongful action. **In the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bishops' Conference has judged that this grave reason exists and that one does not sin by receiving the vaccine.** Both the Pfizer & BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have a different source since they are mRNA-based vaccines. On 2 December 2020, the Pfizer & BioNTech vaccine was approved for use in the UK. Each Catholic must educate his or her conscience on this matter and decide what to do, also bearing in mind that a vaccine must be safe, effective, and universally available, especially to the poor of the world. Catholics may in good conscience receive any of these vaccines for the good of others and themselves. In good conscience, one may refuse a particular vaccine but continues to have a duty to protect others from infection.

VINNIE PACKS

The St Vincent de Paul Society have assembled nearly 12,000 packs for the homeless and have distributed them throughout England and Wales. Each Vinnie Pack contains a thermal hat, thermal gloves two pairs of thermal socks, toothpaste, toothbrush, wet wipes, Pavement magazine, pen and information sheet and 5,000 of the packs have a reusable face mask included. The contents of each Vinnie Pack cost around £3.50 and donations to sponsor packs would be most welcome. Donations can be transferred to SVP Vinnie Packs, a/c 46088237 sort code 60-60-04 or cheques made out to SVP can be sent to Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ . Any assistance is really appreciated.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

For Christmas gifts for family, friends, and those who may go without, CAFOD World Gifts offer a set of 40 charitable gifts ranging in value from £4 for a bee to £4,000 for an entire Health Centre. You can select them to contribute to any of five 'funds' covering education, animals and farming, healthcare, emergency support and water supply. Please, go to <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/World-Gifts>

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 - barbarajohnson48@gmail.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.

WESTMINSTER DIOCESE JOB VACANCIES

Please visit our website at <https://jobs.rcdow.org.uk/> where you can view the latest vacancies.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS - NOTICES

FOR THE MISSIONS

Please keep saving your stamps for the Missions. For the time being, please keep them at home, do not bring them to the church porch. Thank you, *Sheila Harrington*.

ST JOHN FISHER - NOTICES

CONTINUING TO CARE

NOT THE FAIR has now been renamed as CONTINUING TO CARE for the Cardinal Hume Centre for the Homeless, Christmas 2020 - New Year 2021. We still have many new and second hand gifts and stocking fillers, a few plants, jewellery, 5 reams of printing paper, Christmas decorations, all sorts of stuff!! Phone me, please, to make an individual appointment to come and see. So many continued thanks for your amazing support and wishing you all a peaceful and blessed Christmas. With love, Mary 284975.

APF/MISSIO BOX HOLDERS

Many congratulations to you all! In spite of mission one quarter's collection because of Covid, you have still collected £26 more than last year. Total received £566.25 + £58 gift aid, £624.25. Truly wonderful, thank you all. Mary.