



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

Parish Priest:

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Assistant Priest:

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Parish Administrator:

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Rickmansworth

Paul Forrest
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Chorleywood

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Mill End

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SAFEGUARDING REPS.

Rickmansworth Parish

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Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator

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YOUTH MINISTRY

Belinda Calen - Alpha Youth:
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Caitlin Scott - Confirmation:
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Margaret Simon - Youth

Ministry Leadership Team:

rickmansworthyouth@rcdow.org.uk

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) - 13TH DECEMBER 2020 GAUDETE SUNDAY

SUNDAY THOUGHT

On this ‘Gaudete’ (Rejoice) Sunday, other readings, and the gospel acclamation may speak more directly of joy or glad tidings than the gospel, which gives us its version of the story of John. Of course, he is often referred to as John the Baptist in Matthew, Mark and Luke but not in this gospel. Here he is clearly and simply called a ‘man’ and when he is named, it is merely ‘John’ without modifier. In this way, and in many others in this gospel, he is distinguished from Jesus.

The Fourth Gospel states clearly and unequivocally that John was not the light, but was sent from God to testify to the light. John admits that he is not the Messiah; he is not Elijah. In the Fourth Gospel John is not even the prophet. His role is to cry out in the desert ‘Make a straight way for the Lord’. Such a deflection away from any attention or claims to himself seems to reflect the interests of the evangelist more than the historical situation of his time. Indeed, there are other clues in the Fourth Gospel and other New Testament writings that tell us that John continued to have a following years, even decades, after his death. Today, we recognise that John prepared the way for Jesus.

This first chapter of the Fourth Gospel reminded the early Christian community that John was merely a precursor, a forerunner, to Jesus the Messiah. We have heard these stories so often, and frequently from the point of view of Matthew, Mark and Luke. When we read John’s Gospel on its own terms we see that John says he baptises with water. We might expect him to say, ‘but the one coming after me will baptise with the Holy Spirit’ as we hear in the other gospels. Instead John says ‘I baptise with water, but there stands among you – unknown to you....’. There is nothing in this gospel about Jesus baptising with the Holy Spirit. Instead Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Even the use of the term sin in the singular rather than the plural is deliberate. Rather than merely taking away individual sins, Jesus takes away the cosmic force of sin. The Fourth Gospel reflects a different but congruent theological thought-world than the other gospels. The differences in details may seem minute but they point to profound theological emphases. Once John points the way to Jesus, once he testifies to the Lamb of God, John in effect disappears from the gospel (beyond some minor passing references). His role is basically confined to Chapter 1 of John’s Gospel, and it consists in testifying to Jesus.

When we see how John gave testimony to Jesus we recognise him as a model for ourselves. John is not the centre of attention. When he receives attention he deflects it to Jesus. John will not even claim the title of prophet. He is merely a pointer to Jesus. After accomplishing his role John recedes into the background so that the one who is already in their midst might be made more fully known. Where do we find Jesus in our midst? Are we pointing to that reality, and testifying to it. Once having done so, do we then recede into the background?

FROM THE PARISH DIARIES

MON 14TH DECEMBER	7.30pm	Online Bible Study - The Bible Course	
THUR 17TH DECEMBER	8.00pm - 9.30pm	Online Prayer Group	

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

	Our Lady Help of Christians	St John the Evangelist	St John Fisher
SATURDAY 12TH DECEMBER	Verna Kendrick RIP		
SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	10am Roy Langdale RIP 6pm Eric Walsh RIP	10.30am Hernando Ariza RIP (Anniv.)	9am For the People of the Parish
MON 14TH DECEMBER ST JOHN OF THE CROSS, PRIEST	Derrick Edwards RIP (Anniv)		
TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER	NO MASS TODAY		
WEDNESDAY 16TH DECEMBER	9.30am Margaret Cobbold RIP		
THURSDAY 17TH DECEMBER	Czeslaw Doniewski RIP (on the day of his funeral)		
FRIDAY 18TH DECEMBER	9.30am Maria Jasiewicz RIP		
SATURDAY 19TH 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

Entrance Antiphon: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

1st Reading: Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11

Response to Psalm: My soul rejoices in my god.

2nd Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Gospel: John 1:6-8. 19-28

Communion Antiphon: Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.
Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

Next Sunday's Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38 (Gospel)

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 Westrop, 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>.

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

VERNA KENDRICK RIP

It is with sadness that we share the news of the death this past week 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. The arrangements for Verna's funeral have not yet been finalized.

JOAN TOWNEND RIP

It is with sadness that we share the news of the death this past week of Joan Townend. Joan was a long-time parishioner at Our Lady's. We extend our deepest condolences to Joan's family, at this sad and very difficult time. Joan's funeral will take place at West Herts Crematorium on Friday 18th December.

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.

ZOOM PARISH CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Ho, Ho, Ho! It's the most wonderful time of the year. Yes, we will soon be celebrating the birth of Christ, but also, we will be holding a Zoom Parish Christmas Quiz! Come along and join us for an evening of festive fun (and friendly competition ☺)! Similarly to the Zoom pub quiz we held earlier this year, we will be putting everyone into teams based on the church/Mass you usually attend to allow you to have a chat and catch up with those friendly faces you may not have seen for a while! The purpose of the evening is simply to have some fun and socialise with each other during this festive season, so we would love to see as many of you there as possible! As with last time, feel free to invite any family and friends - the more the merrier! ☺

There's also a rumour going around that there may be a competition for the most festive dressed....

Full details: Date: **Saturday 19th December**; Time: 7:30pm; Location: Zoom

We will be emailing the Zoom link to all those who confirm they will be attending, so please can you email Yasmin (yasmin_lakin@hotmail.co.uk) and Jess (jesskenny716@gmail.com) by Thursday 17th December.

To help the quizmasters and their elves plan teams, please can you include the following information in your email:

- Name(s) [including any family/friends if they are not emailing us separately]:
- Church:
- Usual Mass Time:

We will then email you all the Zoom link and your teams the night before the quiz. We look forward to seeing you at the Christmas quiz!

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSON)

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.

NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

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*

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.

SEA SUNDAY

Today is Sea Sunday, when the Church prays for all those who live and work at sea. Without them, we would not have most of the items we buy in the shops. Sea Sunday has been moved from July because of the pandemic and Stella Maris is particularly asking for donations by text or online. To donate and for more information, please visit: www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate or text 'SEA' to 70460 to donate £5. Stella Maris is dependent on voluntary donations, so please give generously. Thank you.

CAFOD COLLECTION FOR HARVEST 2020

CAFOD is very appreciative of the Harvest donations made by Catholics all across the country. Although, for reasons we all recognise, a Harvest like no Other and very much reduced from previous years, a huge effort has been made to raise much-needed funds for CAFOD's work. It won't be possible to attribute amounts to individual parishes this year because of the diverse ways in which donations were made, but for all the donations which were made CAFOD is very grateful. Thank you.

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>

CAFOD ADVENT MASS - Wednesday 16th December, 6.00pm

Invite your family and friends for our special Advent Mass. Register to join us: <https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/Eucharist>

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

NOT THE SJF CHARITY CHRISTMAS FAIR - AMAZING NEWS

You will all have heard of our lovely total of £2,313. Well, with only hours to spare, we went on to the BIG GIVE SITE, which DOUBLED our DONATION to a stunning £4,626. Praise be and alleluia. Watch for our new name and more news next week. Love and thanks to all, Mary.

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.