



St John The Evangelist

Berry Lane, Rickmansworth, WD3 7HG
<https://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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 @ChessValleyRC

 ChessValleyParishes

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Livestreaming:

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

SAFEGUARDING REPS.

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Coordinator 0207 798 9356

YOUTH MINISTRY

Margaret Simon - Youth Ministry
Leadership Team:
rickmansworth@rcdow.org.uk

Jaison Jeyaventhana - Youth Choir
Director rickyouthchoir@rcdow.org.uk

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) - 3RD DECEMBER 2023

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Today, I would like to focus on the prayer of thanksgiving. And I take my cue from an episode recounted by the Evangelist Luke. While Jesus was on the way, ten lepers approached Him, begging: “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” (17:13). From a distance, Jesus invited them to present themselves to the priests, who were designated by law to certify any healings that had occurred. Jesus said nothing else. He listened to their prayer, he heard their cry for mercy, and he sent them immediately to the priests. While they were on their way, all 10 of them were cured. But only one in the group, returned to thank Jesus and to praise God for the grace received.

This narrative, so to speak, divides the world in two: those who do not give thanks and those who do; those who take everything as if it is owed them, and those who welcome everything as a gift, as grace. The Catechism says: “every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving” (n. 2638). The prayer of thanksgiving always begins from here: from the recognition that grace precedes us. We were thought of before we learned how to think; we were loved before we learned how to love; we were desired before our hearts conceived a desire. If we view life like this, then “thank you” becomes the driving force of our day. And how often we even forget to say, “thank you”.

Thanksgiving was the name given to the most essential Sacrament there is: the Eucharist. The Greek word means precisely this: thanksgiving. Christians, as all believers, bless God for the gift of life. To live is above all to have received life. All of us are born because someone wanted us to have life. And this is only the first of a long series of debts that we incur by living. Debts of gratitude. During our lives, more than one person has gazed on us with pure eyes, gratuitously. Often, these people are educators, catechists, persons who carried out their roles above and beyond what was required of them. And they stirred gratitude within us.

This “thank you” that we must say continually, grows in the encounter with Jesus. The Gospels attest that when Jesus passed by, he often stirred joy and praise to God in those who met Him. The episode of the ten lepers who are healed also suggests this. Naturally, they were all happy about having recovered their health, thus being allowed to end that unending exclusion from the community. But among them, there was one who experienced an additional joy: in addition to being healed, he rejoices at the encounter with Jesus. He is not only freed from evil, but he now possesses the certainty of being loved. This is the crux: when you thank someone, you express the certainty that you are loved. And this is a huge step: to have the certainty that you are loved. It is the discovery of love as the force that governs the world. We are no longer vagabonds wandering aimlessly here and there, no: we have a home, we dwell in Christ, and from that “dwelling” we contemplate the rest of the world which appears infinitely more beautiful to us.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, let us seek to remain always in the joy of the encounter with Jesus. Above all, let us not forget to thank: if we are bearers of gratitude, the world itself will become better, even if only a little bit, but that is enough to transmit a bit of hope. The world needs hope. And with gratitude, with this attitude of thanksgiving, we transmit a bit of hope. Everything is united and everything is connected, and each one can do their part wherever they are. The path to happiness is the one that Saint Paul described at the end of one of his letters: “Pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit” (1Thess 5:17- 19). Do not quench the Spirit, what a beautiful project of life! Not quenching the Spirit that we have within leads us to gratitude.

*Extract from Pope Francis’ Catechesis on Prayer,
arranged for each liturgical week
in Year of Prayer 2024*

FROM THE PARISH DIARIES

SUN 3RD DECEMBER	9.00am 11.00am 6.00pm	Advent Fayre - Hall First Communion at Mass Youth Mass & Celebration	Our Lady Help of Christians Our Lady Help of Christians Our Lady Help of Christians
MON 4TH DECEMBER	7.30pm	Catechists Training - Hall	Our Lady Help of Christians
TUE 5TH DECEMBER	4.30pm 7.00pm	Youth Choir Prayer & Life Workshop - Hall Upstairs	St John the Evangelist Our Lady Help of Christians
WED 6TH DECEMBER	2.15pm	Faith & Friendship Group - Hall	St John the Evangelist
THU 7TH DECEMBER	2.00pm 8.00pm - 9.30pm	Warm Space - Hall Life in the Spirit Prayer Group - Hall	St John the Evangelist Our Lady Help of Christians
SAT 9TH DECEMBER	9.30am	GIFT Family Day	Our Lady Help of Christians
SUN 10TH DECEMBER	11.30am	Christmas Fair - Hall	St John the Evangelist

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

	Our Lady Help of Christians	St John the Evangelist	St John Fisher
SATURDAY 2 ND DECEMBER	9.30am Maura Malone (Ints.)	6pm For the People of the Parishes	
SUNDAY 3 RD DECEMBER <i>FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	8.30am Dora, Christopher Michael & Margaret Conway RIP 11am Private Intention 6pm Daniel Corden RIP	10.30am Robert Gibson RIP	9am Richard Hale RIP (1 st Anniv.)
MONDAY 4 TH DECEMBER	9.30am For the sick and housebound of the parishes		
TUESDAY 5 TH DECEMBER	9.30am Ann Murphy RIP (13 th Anniv.)		9.30am For the sick and housebound of the parishes
WEDNESDAY 6 TH DECEMBER	9.30am Fr Tim O'Connor RIP	9.30am Gerrard Hartnett	
THU 7TH DECEMBER <i>ST AMBROSE, BISHOP</i>	9.30am For the sick and housebound of the parishes		
FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER <i>THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY</i>	9.30am For World Peace		
SATURDAY 9 TH DECEMBER	9.30am For the sick and housebound of the parishes	6pm For the People of the Parishes	
SUNDAY 10 TH DECEMBER <i>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</i>	8.30am Ann Connors RIP 11am Ernest & Joan Townend RIP 6pm For the Volunteers of the Parishes	10.30am Romana (Ints.)	9am For the Volunteers of the Parishes
SANCTUARY LAMPS	This week our Sanctuary Lamp (Our Lady's) burns for Ernest & Joan Townend RIP		

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISHES

Our Lady Help of Christians: Kathleen Collins, Neville Mathews, Agnes Harper, Ginny Goodgol, Maria Wallis, Heather Kean, Henry Cutting, Nalene Nixon, Maureen Douglas, Michael Gaukroger, Molly Gray, Leslie Edwards, Pauline Williams, Gloria Warmington, Veronica Finnegan and Sean

St John the Evangelist: Rita Murray, Alfredo Rock, Paul O'Connor and Antoinette Moss

St John Fisher: Nora O'Toole, Francis De Souza, Georgina Kelham, Pete Murray, Steve Kibbey, Matthew Leone, Jean-Pierre Roche, Angela Hoy, Kitty Finucane, Anne Trenchard, Paul Kennett, Ann & Martin Penn, Pam Fitzpatrick, Julian Harris and Derek Treanor

NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Our Advent & Christmas Leaflets are now available to take away and to share with others who may wish to join us. Within these are the Mass times over Christmas, plus details of extra confessions during Advent, and details of our joint parishes Christmas Carol Service at 3pm on Sunday 17th December.

YOUTH CHOIR

The Youth Choir (aged 8-13) sing on a Sunday once a month at Our Lady's and once a month at St John's, Mill End. There are rehearsals for the choir on a Tuesday evening each week from 4.30-5.45pm. If your child is interested in joining the choir please could you contact the parish office. If there are any adults willing to assist Jason in supervising the children during the rehearsals then please also contact the parish office for more details.

GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER (GIFT)

Our family catechesis for all those with children aged 5-11 takes place once a month. The sessions are engaging, spirit-filled and fun, and they are for all the family. We celebrate Mass, enjoy a time of fellowship and refreshment before sharing catechesis and activities on a different theme each month.

GIFT Parents As part of GIFT we also hold Faith Formation for parents on one evening each month online (Zoom). These sessions are designed to help all our parents grow in their own faith, enabling them to lead their family on their journey of faith. In our parishes participation in GIFT is also a gateway to discerning with you the readiness of your children to begin preparation for the Sacraments. If your family would like to sign up for GIFT then please email the parish office (rickmansworth@rcdow.org.uk) with the names of each of your family, the children's ages and a contact phone number. Further details will then be sent to you.

FAITH & FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Will meet at 2.15pm on Wednesday 6th December (special meeting to welcome People Connex).

6TH RICKMANSWORTH SEA SCOUT GROUP

Members of our Parish Cubs and Scouts were very pleased to once again support the work of the SVP by making up 150 Vinnie Packs ready for distribution to homeless people. We were pleased to hear that some of these have already gone out to major cities around the Country.

The Group are always pleased to welcome young people to join in with the variety of activities offered by the various sections, as well as encouraging adult volunteers to help us continue with this provision within the Parish and wider community. Further information please contact by email: info@6thRickySeaScouts.org.uk

MARY'S MEAL FOREIGN CURRENCY

Mary's Meals would like to thank everyone in the parish for their wonderful generosity in response to our Foreign Currency initiative. It raised a terrific £1051.94 which means Mary's Meals will be able to feed 55 children one good meal every school day for a whole year because of your support. Please continue to pray for the work of Mary's Meals. God bless you all.

CAFOD ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CRISIS APPEAL

Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at cafod.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers.

SPONSORED SANCTUARY LAMPS

In each of our churches 2 sanctuary lamp candles burn throughout the week – one by the tabernacle indicating the Lord's presence, and the other by the statue of Our Lady. Would you like one of these to burn in memory of a loved one, or for a particular intention? If so, we are asking for a donation of £10 per week, for your intention to be remembered and recorded in the weekly newsletter. Please hand your donation into the Parish Office or to one of the priests marked 'Sanctuary Lamp Donation', together with a note stating your particular intention, and the Church and the location of the lamp that you would like to burn for that intention.

MASS INTENTIONS

At the Altar the priest offers Mass for the good of the whole Church and for a particular intention. Do you want a Mass offered for a particular intention? Perhaps you would like a deceased friend or relative remembered, or you would like a Mass said for someone who is sick or for your own intention. For Mass to be offered it is the tradition that a stipend is donated to contribute to the upkeep of your priests. Please contact the parish office if you would like a Mass offered over the coming weeks.

DIOCESAN NOTICES

ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, MILL END - CHRISTMAS FAIR

Please come and join us for our Christmas Fair and Market on Saturday 9th December from 1pm - 4pm. Warm up with a hot chocolate or Irish Coffee, try your luck at the bottle or sweet tombola, visit Father Christmas or buy some handmade gifts.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2024

The Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes Pilgrimage will take place from 19th to 26th July 2024. Join the pilgrimage as a pilgrim. Serve the sick as a St Frai Helper (18+). Support the sick by sponsoring a St Frai helper to care for them on the pilgrimage and praying for our care team. For more information go to <https://rcdow.org.uk/pilgrimages/lourdes/> or contact the Pilgrimage Office on 020 7798 9173.

WITNESS TO HOPE

Online talks (7.30pm - 8.30pm) by Fr John Deehan focusing on the Prayers and Gospels of the Christmas Masses.

7th December: The Dawn Mass; **14th December:** The Day Mass. A donation of £5 is requested per talk. Please register with Warren Brown catadmin@rcdow.org.uk

WESTMINSTER DIOCESE JOB VACANCIES

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

NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

WARM WINTER SPACE

Chess Valley SVP will once again be providing a Warm Winter Space in the church hall at St John the Evangelist, Mill End, every Thursday afternoon between 2 to 4pm for the duration of the winter months. Hot drinks, cakes and biscuits will be provided. Please let those you feel would benefit from this know. For further information, please email chessvalleysvp@gmail.com

MILL END FOOD BANK

Chess Valley SVP will be collecting specific items needed by the food bank to supplement their food boxes. We will be monitoring what is needed by the Food Bank regularly and update this list accordingly both in the Parish newsletter and on the boxes. At present the Food bank are now short of: **Jam, custard, rice pudding, tea bags, coffee (both original and decaf), tinned fruit, fruit juice or squash, washing-up liquid, shower gel, shampoo and conditioner, chocolates, cartons of long-life milk and long-life orange juice.**

VINNIE PACKS

The SVP are distributing **over 10,000 Vinnie Packs** containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. Please could you consider sponsoring packs at a suggested donation of £4.20 per pack? Donations can be sent to **Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ** with cheques made out to SVP or by bank transfer to Nat West **sort code 60-60-04, account no. 4608 8237**. Thank you so much for your support.

CHRISTMAS DINNER ON CHRISTMAS DAY AT 12 NOON

Mill End Community Centre would like to invite anyone that is alone for Christmas Day to come and join us for Christmas Dinner with the RVS Volunteers. £10 per person. First come first served due to limited places. To book please call the Community Centre on 01923 493344. Don't be alone this Christmas.

OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS - NOTICES

STAMPS FOR THE MISSIONS

Thank you for saving your stamps for the Missions, the box is in the church porch. Please keep them coming! *Sheila H*

200 CLUB

Thank you to everyone who has just joined the 200 Club Draw and to all those who continue to support us each year. Good luck to you all. If you would still like to join from next month, it is not too late - please contact Louise on rickmansworthcof@rcdow.org who will send you the relevant details. If you asked for details, and have not yet received an email from Louise - please do get in touch as some emails sent have been returned. Many thanks

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - NOTICES

CHRISTMAS FAIR

Our Christmas Fair will be taking place on Sunday 10th December, after the 10.30am Mass. Raffle tickets are now on sale after every weekend Mass. As always, we rely on the generosity of our parishioners for donations of bottles and sweets for the tombolas, along with any unwanted gifts for the raffle - these can be left in the boxes at the back of the Church, thank you! More details to follow but please make a note in your diaries to come and support the Fair.

CHRISTMAS EVE 6PM MASS CHILDREN'S NATIVITY

We encourage children to come to the Mass dressed up as characters from the Nativity story to mark this Mass in a special way.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Can you help with our Children's liturgy team? We need adult helpers to supervise the classes. We would also like to invite secondary school age children to help run the classes, this volunteering can count towards DofE awards. All classes are pre written for catechists to follow and crafts are pre prepared. All you need to do is be at the 10.30am Sunday Mass on the day to help out with the class (over 18's need to have a DBS check). For more information or to volunteer please speak to Liz Townsend or any member of the Children's liturgy team or email liztownsenduk@gmail.com

ST JOHN FISHER - NOTICES

MARY'S OPEN GARAGE - Fundraising for The Cardinal Hume Centre for the Homeless

Our November fundraiser is now closed. Our final total was £2,350 which has been doubled up on their Big Give page to £4,700! Enormous thanks to all who helped in every way. Blessings on you all for your great kindness and love, Mary xx 284975.

APF/MISSIO/RED BOX HOLDERS.

So sorry, I am a bit late with this notice! Please could I have your red boxes and envelope donations by next Sunday, 10 December. They need our December quarter and also the end of year forms to be with them before Christmas. Very many thanks indeed to our small band of contributors, new donors would be warmly welcomed, love Mary 284975 xx.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 3rd December 9am - Advent Fayre at Our Lady's, Rickmansworth

Sunday 3rd December 6pm - Parishes Youth Mass & Celebration at Our Lady's, Rickmansworth

Sunday 10th December 11.30am - Christmas Fair at St John the Evangelist, Mill End

Sunday 17th December 3pm - Joint Parishes Christmas Carol Service at St John's, Mill End