



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



ChessValleyParishes

Livestreaming:

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

SAFEGUARDING REPS.

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Diocesan Safeguarding

Coordinator 0207 798 9356

YOUTH MINISTRY

Margaret Simon - Youth Ministry
Leadership Team:
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Jaison Jeyaventhana - Youth Choir
Director rickyouthchoir@rcdow.org.uk

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) - 10TH DECEMBER 2023

THE BLESSING

Today we reflect on an essential dimension of prayer: blessing. In the creation accounts (cf. Gen 1-2), God continually blesses life. He blesses the animals; he blesses the man and the woman; finally, he blesses the Sabbath, the day of rest and the enjoyment of all of creation. In the first pages of the Bible, God blesses, but men give blessings as well, and soon they discover that the blessing possesses a special power that accompanies those who receive it throughout their entire life, and disposes man's heart to allow God to change it. Shortly thereafter, the beauty that God had imprinted within his work will change, and the human being will become a fallen creature, capable of spreading evil and death in the world; but nothing will ever take away God's original imprint, an imprint of goodness that God placed in the world, in human nature, in all of us: the capacity to bless and the fact of being blessed.

God's great blessing is Jesus Christ; his Son is God's greatest gift for all of humanity. He is the blessing that saved us all. Saint Paul proclaims: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved"* (Eph 1:3-6). There is no sin that can completely erase the image of Christ present in each one of us. Sin can disfigure it, but not remove it from God's mercy. God is patient, hoping that [the sinner's] heart will eventually open and change. God is like a good father and like a good mother: they never stop loving their child, no matter what he or she may do wrong, always.

Many mothers queue up to see their imprisoned child: they do not stop loving their child and they know that the people passing by on the bus are thinking: "Ah, that is a prisoner's mother". They go ahead, because their child is more important than their embarrassment. Thus, we are more important to God than all of the sins that we can commit, because he is a father, he is a mother, he is pure love, he has blessed us forever. And he will never stop blessing us. It is an impressive experience to read these biblical texts of blessing in a prison. To let these people feel that they are still blessed, notwithstanding their grave errors, that the heavenly Father continues to desire their good and to hope that they will open themselves to the good. Even if their closest relatives have abandoned them, they are always children to God. For God's grace changes lives: he takes us as we are, but he never leaves us as we are.

To God who blesses, we too respond by blessing — God has taught us how to bless and we must bless — through the prayer of praise, of adoration, of thanksgiving. The Catechism writes: *"The prayer of blessing is man's response to God's gifts: because God blesses, the human heart can in return bless the One who is the source of every blessing"* (n. 2626). We cannot just bless this God who blesses us; we must bless everyone in him, all people, bless God and bless our brothers and sisters, bless the world: this is the root of Christian meekness, the ability to feel blessed and the ability to bless. If we were all to do this, wars would surely not exist. This world needs blessings, and we can give blessings and receive blessings. The Father loves us, and the only thing that remains for us is the joy of blessing him, and of learning from him not to curse, but to bless. Each of us can think: do I have the habit of cursing? Ask the Lord for the grace to change this habit because we have a blessed heart and curses cannot come out of a blessed heart. May the Lord teach us never to curse, but to bless.

*Extract from Pope Francis' Catechesis on Prayer,
For the Second Week of Advent in the Year of Prayer*

FROM THE PARISH DIARIES

SUN 10TH DECEMBER	11.30am	Christmas Fair - Hall	St John the Evangelist
TUE 12TH DECEMBER	4.30pm 7.00pm	Youth Choir Prayer & Life Workshop - Hall Upstairs	St John the Evangelist Our Lady Help of Christians
THU 14TH 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
SUN 17TH DECEMBER	3.00pm	Christmas Carol Service	St John the Evangelist

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

	Our Lady Help of Christians	St John the Evangelist	St John Fisher
SATURDAY 9 TH DECEMBER	9.30am For GIFT Families	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
MONDAY 11 TH DECEMBER	9.30am Ina Murphy RIP (Anniv.)		
TUESDAY 12 TH DECEMBER	9.30am Adam & Ola Budzynski RIP		9.30am Colin Dowling RIP
WED 13TH DECEMBER <i>ST LUCY, VIRGIN</i>	NO MASS TODAY	9.30am Philomena Roche RIP	
THU 14TH DECEMBER <i>ST JOHN OF THE CROSS</i>	9.30am Andrea, Liz & Max (Ints.)		
FRIDAY 15 TH DECEMBER	9.30am Stephen Bowmer RIP		
SATURDAY 16 TH DECEMBER	9.30am For the sick and housebound of the parishes	6pm Special Intention	
SUNDAY 17 TH DECEMBER <i>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (GAUDETE SUNDAY)</i>	8.30am For the People of the Parishes 11am Patrick Mantle RIP (Anniv.) 6pm Justin & Diane Quinn (Ints.)	10.30am Pascal Rock RIP (Anniv.)	9am Edward (Ted) Rogers RIP (Anniv.)
SANCTUARY LAMPS	This week our Sanctuary Lamp (Our Lady's) burns for a private 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.

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, Sean and Louise Borg

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

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

Our joint parishes Carol Service will this year take place on Sunday 17th December 3pm at St John's Church, Mill End. Contributions from musicians across the parishes, as well as the singing of Carols and reflection on readings will be followed by Mulled wine and mince pies in the Parish Centre. There will be a collection at the end of the Service for the work of Aid to the Church in Need. All are welcome and do bring a friend!

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.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

The offerings at the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses are 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 Andrew and Fr Matteo. 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. If you use Planned Giving Envelopes please use the one marked Christmas Offering. There are also blue one-off gift aid envelopes available. Thank you

RIGHT TO LIFE UPDATE

Lord Moylan's Foetal Sentience Committee Bill (one of three pro-life bills) has just received a First Reading in the House of Lords. Should the bill become law it would permit the creation of a committee that operates on an ongoing basis as a source of evidence-based, scientific expertise on the sentience (capacity to have feelings) of the human foetus and would advise the Government on the formulation of relevant policy and legislation. This Bill will ensure that the humanity of the unborn child is put firmly on the radar and debated extensively in Parliament, the media and wider society. See <https://righttolife.org.uk/news> for further information

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 Jaison 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.

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

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.

DIOCESAN NOTICES

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION IN WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

Tickets are now on sale for our annual Christmas concerts which celebrate the mystery of Christ's Incarnation in carols and readings performed by the world-famous Westminster Cathedral Choir, orchestra, and celebrity readers, on 19 and 20 December at 7.30pm. We encourage everybody to purchase tickets quickly before these popular events are sold out. Tickets can be purchased directly from Ticketmaster; go to www.ticketmaster.co.uk and type in Westminster Cathedral when prompted.

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.

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

REGISTRATION

We encourage all parishioners to register for the parish using the Churchsuite system, available via the website under 'Register with the parishes'. As part of the registration system you will also be sent an updated skills audit. Please do complete this to help us find a way that you can invest in your parish using your gifts and in the time available to you.

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

CHRISTMAS FAIR - THANK YOU!

Huge thanks to everyone who supported our wonderful Christmas Fair from volunteers to boutique stall holders to everyone who attended. A special thanks to Nina and the Social Committee for their co-ordination of the event. Not only was it a great atmosphere and community event but we raised a fantastic £1,270.20 for the parish building fund.

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. Many thanks

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - NOTICES

CHRISTMAS FAIR

Our Christmas Fair will be taking place this Sunday after the 10.30am Mass.

CHRISTMAS EVE 5.30PM MASS CHILDREN'S NATIVITY

Children wishing to take part in the presentation of the Nativity story should come to the hall at 5.00pm for a rehearsal.

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

APF/MISSIO/RED BOX HOLDERS.

Please could I have your red boxes and envelope donations by this 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 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

Sunday 21st - Friday 26th April - Week of Guided Prayer