



### 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

#### Parish Priest:

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#### Assistant Priest:

Fr Matteo Di Giuseppe  
[matteodigiuseppe@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:matteodigiuseppe@rcdow.org.uk)

#### Parish Administrator:

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[rickmansworth@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:rickmansworth@rcdow.org.uk)

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 @ChessValleyRC

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#### Livestreaming:

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

### SAFEGUARDING REPS.

#### Rickmansworth Parish

Carol Bartlett 01923 773841  
[rickmansworthsg2@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:rickmansworthsg2@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

#### Mill End Parish

Matt McKiernan 01923 493747  
[millendsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:millendsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

#### Chorleywood Parish

Peter Mackie 07802 229337  
[chorleywoodsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:chorleywoodsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

#### Diocesan Safeguarding

Coordinator 0207 798 9356

### YOUTH MINISTRY

Margaret Simon - Youth Ministry  
Leadership Team:  
[rickmansworth@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:rickmansworth@rcdow.org.uk)

Jaison Jeyaventhana - Youth Choir  
Director [rickyouthchoir@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:rickyouthchoir@rcdow.org.uk)

## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT (YEAR B) - 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024

### THE STRUGGLE OF PRAYER

Christian prayer, like all Christian life, is not a “walk in the park”. None of the great people of prayer that we meet in the Bible and in the history of the Church found prayer “comfortable”. Yes, one can pray like a parrot — blah, blah, blah — but this is not prayer. Prayer certainly gives great peace, through inner struggles which can accompany even long periods of life. Praying is not something easy, and this is why we flee from it. Every time we want to pray, we are immediately reminded of many other activities, which at that moment seem more important and more urgent. This happens to me too. We flee from prayer; I don’t know why, but that is how it is. Almost always, after putting off prayer, we realize that those things were not essential at all, and that we may have wasted time. This is how the Enemy deceives us.

All Godly men and women report not only the joy of prayer, but also the tediousness and fatigue it can bring: at times it is a difficult struggle to keep to the time and ways of praying. Some saints continued it for years without finding any satisfaction in it. Silence, prayer and concentration are difficult exercises, and sometimes human nature rebels. We would rather be anywhere else in the world, but not there, praying. Those who want to pray must remember that faith is not easy, and sometimes it moves forward in almost total darkness, without points of reference. There are moments in the life of faith that are dark, and therefore some saints call this “the dark night”, because we hear nothing. But I continue to pray.

The Catechism lists a long series of enemies of prayer, those that make it difficult to pray, that put us in difficulty (cf. nn. 2726-2728). Some doubt that prayer can truly reach the Almighty: why does God remain silent? If God is Almighty, he could say a couple of words and end the matter. Faced with the elusiveness of the divine, others suspect that prayer is merely a psychological operation; something that may be useful, but is not true: and one could even be a practitioner without being a believer; and so on.

However, the worst enemies of prayer are found within us. The Catechism describes them in this way: “*Discouragement during periods of dryness; sadness that, because we have ‘great possessions’, we have not given all to the Lord; disappointment over not being heard according to our own will; wounded pride, stiffened by the indignity that is ours as sinners; our resistance to the idea that prayer is a free and unmerited gift*” (2728). This is clearly a summary list that could be lengthened.

What should be done in the time of temptation, when everything seems to waver? If we look at the history of spirituality, we immediately see that the masters of the soul were very clear about the situation we have described. To overcome it, each of them offered some contribution: a word of wisdom, or a suggestion for facing moments fraught with difficulty. It is not a question of systematically developed theories, no, but of advice born of experience, which shows the importance of resisting and persevering in prayer.

For example, the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola is a short book of great wisdom that teaches how to put one’s life in order. It makes us understand that the Christian vocation is militancy, it is the decision to stand under the banner of Jesus Christ and not under that of the devil, trying to do good even when it becomes difficult.

In times of trial, it is good to remember that we are not alone, that someone is at our side, watching over and protecting us. St Anthony Abbot’s biographer, Saint Athanasius, recounts one of the worst episodes in the life of the hermit saint when he was about 35, a time of middle age that for many people involves a crisis. Anthony was disturbed by the ordeal, but he resisted. When calm finally returned, he turned to his Lord with an almost reproachful tone: “*But Lord, where were you? Why did you not come immediately to put an end to my suffering?*” And Jesus answered: “*Anthony, I was there. But I was waiting to see you fight*” (Life of Anthony, 10). Fighting in prayer. Very often, prayer is combat.

*Extract from Pope Francis’ Catechesis on Prayer,  
For the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent in the Year of Prayer*

## FROM THE PARISH DIARIES

<b>SUN 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY</b>	10.00am 11.00am	Tea & Coffee after Mass First Holy Communions	St John Fisher Our Lady Help of Christians
<b>WED 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY</b>	2.15pm 7.30pm	Faith & Friendship Group - Hall Annual Parishes Meeting	Our Lady Help of Christians via Zoom
<b>THU 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY</b>	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
<b>FRI 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY</b>	7.00pm	Stations of the Cross	St John Fisher
<b>SAT 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY</b>	10.00am	Readers Day of Recollection - Hall	Our Lady Help of Christians
<b>SUN 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY</b>	9.30am	SVP Coffee Morning - Hall	Our Lady Help of Christians

## MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

	Our Lady Help of Christians	St John the Evangelist	St John Fisher
<b>SATURDAY</b> 17 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY	<b>9.30am</b> For the sick and housebound of the Parishes	<b>6pm</b> Rosa Azilli RIP (Anniv.)	
<b>SUNDAY</b> 18 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY <i>FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT</i>	<b>8.30am</b> Sheila Sharp RIP (Anniv.) <b>11am</b> Michael Townend RIP <b>6pm</b> Bridie Stevenson RIP	<b>10.30am</b> For the People of the Parishes	<b>9am</b> Malcolm Stacey RIP
<b>MONDAY</b> 19 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY	<b>9.30am</b> For peace in the Holy Land		
<b>TUESDAY</b> 20 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY	<b>9.30am</b> William Fowler RIP		<b>9.30am</b> For the sick and housebound of the Parishes
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> 21 <sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY	<b>9.30am</b> Deacon Stephen Pickard RIP	<b>9.30am</b> For the sick and housebound of the Parishes	
<b>THU 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY</b> <i>THE CHAIR OF St PETER</i> <i>THE APOSTLE</i>	<b>9.30am</b> Terrence O'Neill RIP		
<b>FRIDAY</b> 23 <sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY	<b>9.30am</b> For the sick and housebound of the Parishes		
<b>SATURDAY</b> 24 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY	<b>9.30am</b> Deacon Stephen Pickard RIP	<b>6pm</b> For the People of the Parishes	
<b>SUNDAY</b> 25 <sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY <i>SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT</i>	<b>8.30am</b> Special Intention <b>11am</b> Phoebe's first baby <b>6pm</b> Janet Goodair RIP	<b>10.30am</b> For the People of the Parishes	<b>9am</b> Margaret Wheeldon RIP
<b>SANCTUARY LAMPS</b>		This week our Blessed Sacrament Sanctuary Lamp burns for the intentions of R.S.	

### 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, Louise Borg and Sean

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

**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, Derek Treanor and Edith Moid

## NOTICES FOR ALL THREE PARISHES

### MARGUERITE WATKINS RIP

The funeral of Marguerite Watkins will take place at Our Lady Help of Christians at 11.00am on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February, followed by committal at Chorleywood Lawn Cemetery. We commend her to the love and mercy of the Lord and pray for her family at this sad and difficult time.

### PLANNED GIVING APPEAL

Over the coming weeks across our parishes we will be having a Planned Giving Campaign. This is a chance for all of us to review our commitment to our parish in supporting the mission of the Church with the time, talents and financial blessings that God has given us. Over these weeks we ask that all parishioners prayerfully reflect on the information we share with you, so we can live out our calling as stewards of our parishes and ensure the Catholic faith continues to grow in Rickmansworth, Mill End and Chorleywood in the years ahead. We thank you for your support.

### ANNUAL PARISHES MEETING

The APM this year will take place online via Zoom and will be a combined meeting across the parishes. It will take place on **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February at 7.30pm**. All parishioners are encouraged to join us if possible to hear what is going on in our parishes. The details for the APM on Zoom are as follows: Meeting ID: 899 2181 5624 Passcode: 551968

### CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY (FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY) – LENT APPEAL

This Lent, your donations to CAFOD's Family Fast Day appeal will help hardworking people like James the fisherman in Liberia with resources, tools and training to feed their families for good. Give today using the envelope or online at [cafod.org.uk](http://cafod.org.uk) and please join us in praying with James that our sisters and brothers around the world have what they need to feed their families. Use the envelope in church or give online at [cafod.org.uk](http://cafod.org.uk). To find out about volunteering opportunities with CAFOD visit [Volunteer \(cafod.org.uk\)](http://Volunteer(cafod.org.uk))

### CARDINAL'S LENTEN APPEAL 2024

If you can, please show your support for the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal. All funds raised go towards projects across our Diocese. Each year, the Diocese uses donations made to support the work of our services, such as Marriage & Family Life; Youth Ministry, and Education. Funds are also used to support the work of Caritas Westminster, who work for and with some of the most vulnerable people in our Diocese. His Eminence, Cardinal Nichols, has expressed his gratitude to everyone who supports the Appeal, with whatever they can afford. So, please take a donation envelope today, for more information. You can use the QR code to make your donation online. Thank you for your generosity.

### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The praying of Lenten Stations of the Cross will once again circulate around the three parishes on a Friday at 7.00pm as follows: St John Fisher, Chorleywood: 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 15<sup>th</sup> March; St John the Evangelist, Mill End: 1<sup>st</sup> March, 22<sup>nd</sup> March; Our Lady's, Rickmansworth: 8<sup>th</sup> March, 29<sup>th</sup> March. The devotions will be led by parishioners. We hope that many parishioners from across the three parishes will come and join us for this important aspect of our Lenten spirituality

### WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The WDP service for 2024 has been prepared by the Christian women of Palestine, with the theme, 'I beg you, bear with one another in love.' The service for the Rickmansworth area will take place at 2.00pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March at Our Lady Help of Christians, and will be followed by refreshments. All are welcome to attend, and we encourage parishioners to support this short service which is an opportunity to meet with our local Christian communities in a spirit of prayerful and convivial fellowship. If anyone needs a lift, please contact Geraldine (07725 748490) or Cristina (07470 266284).

### KAIROS ONLINE PRAYER GROUP

Will meet at 7.30pm on the last Tuesday of every month. The first online Prayer Group for 2024 will be on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February. For more information or to join the online Prayer Group then please contact Anne Lorrimer-Roberts ([anne@themessagemachine.com](mailto:anne@themessagemachine.com)) or Paul Forrest ([pga.forrest@btinternet.com](mailto:pga.forrest@btinternet.com)).

### FAITH & FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Will meet at 2.15pm on the following Wednesdays: 21<sup>st</sup> February and 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> March. These meetings will be following a DVD reflecting on The Nicene Creed.

### 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](mailto: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.

### FAIRTRADE EASTER EGGS [www.meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/collections/real-easter-egg](http://www.meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/collections/real-easter-egg)

Easter is very early this year. However, as in previous years we are still planning to order some "Real Easter Eggs" – the only Easter egg which is both Fairtrade chocolate, supports charitable projects and has an Easter story in the box. They are no longer available in the shops so if you would like to order an egg for collection from Helen Nolan (near Tesco Express) or local delivery within Rickmansworth, please email [helenvnolan@ntlworld.com](mailto:helenvnolan@ntlworld.com) or ring or message 01923 499523 / 07980 600549.

## 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.

### 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.

### 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 2pm 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](mailto: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, long-life orange juice and toilet rolls.**

### 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.

## OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS - NOTICES

### COFFEE MORNINGS

Please join us in the hall after the 8.30am Mass on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February for our SVP Coffee Morning. There will also be a coffee morning after Mass on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Donations go to Our Lady's Building Fund.

### 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*

## ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - NOTICES

### COFFEE AND TEA AFTER 10.30AM MASS

Tea and coffee is available in the parish hall after the 10.30am Mass each Sunday. Do please come and join us for a cuppa and a chat.

### 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](mailto:liztownsenduk@gmail.com)

## ST JOHN FISHER - NOTICES

### TEA & COFFEE

Please join us for a cup of tea or coffee after Mass today. Everyone is welcome.

### OFFERTORY COLLECTION

We would like to restart counting the offertory collection straight after Mass on a Sunday. In order to do this we need volunteers who would be willing to spend about 10 minutes straight after Mass counting the collection and getting it ready for banking. If you are able to help with this or would like more information about what is involved, please speak to Fr Andrew or Carolyn Opie for more details.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 7.30pm Annual Parishes Meeting (via Zoom)  
Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 10am Readers Day of Recollection at Our Lady's, Rickmansworth  
Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 10am Eucharistic Ministers Day of Recollection at St John the Evangelist, Mill End  
Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> - Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April Week of Guided Prayer  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 12pm Marian Procession at Our Lady's, Rickmansworth  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 12pm New Parishioners Lunch