

Understanding the Mass Parish Newsletter

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

Today our topic is the **Parish Newsletter**.

In addition to the hymn book (which was our topic last week), the welcomers who greet you when you come to church may also offer you a **parish newsletter**.

The word **parish** comes from the Old French *paroisse*, from the Ancient Greek *paroikia*, a combination of the words *pará* ("beside, by, near") and *oikos* ("house").

In the Catholic Church, parish describes both a geographical area, and also the people who live in that area, who form the community that worship together in the parish church.

We have three parishes combined together: Saint John the Evangelist (Mill End); Our Lady Help of Christians (Rickmansworth); and Saint John Fisher (Chorleywood). Our three parishes are joined with several others in a **deanery** (a larger area) called Watford Deanery (with 12 parishes in total), and are all part of the Archdiocese of Westminster.

We have a single parish newsletter for our three parishes, and it is published every week. It includes a spiritual reflection, Mass details for the week, upcoming events, and other important information, including contact details for people within the parish.

The parish newsletter is more than just news: it gives us ways to embrace our faith and our community through the events we organise and the activities we support, like the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Mill End Food Bank, Scouts, and Stamps for the Missions.

Look at this week's newsletter and circle which page you find these sections on:

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Prayers for the sick	1	2	3	4
Notices for all three parishes	1	2	3	4
Upcoming events	1	2	3	4



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

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
5TH MAY 2024

PERSEVERANCE IN LOVE

Perseverance in prayer is an invitation that comes to us from Sacred Scripture. The spiritual journey of the Russian Pilgrim begins when he comes across a phrase of Saint Paul in the First Letter to the Thessalonians: "Pray constantly, always and for everything give thanks" (cf. 5:17-18). The Apostle's words strike the man and he wonders how it is possible to pray without interruption, given that our lives are fragmented into so many different moments, which do not always make concentration possible. From this question he begins his search, which will lead him to discover what is called the prayer of the heart. It consists in repeating with faith: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!". A simple prayer that, little by little, adapts itself to the rhythm of breath and extends throughout the day.

How, then, is it possible to always preserve a state of prayer? The Catechism offers us beautiful quotations from the history of spirituality, which insist on the need for continuous prayer, that it may be the fulcrum of Christian existence.

The monk Evagrius Ponticus states: "We have not been commanded to work, to keep watch and to fast continually, but it has been laid down that we are to pray without ceasing" (CCC 2742). There is therefore an ardour in the Christian life, which must never fail. It is a little like that sacred fire that was kept in the ancient temples, that burned without interruption and that the priests had the task of keeping alive.

Saint John Chrysostom preached: "Pray even while walking in public or strolling alone, or seated in your shop, while buying or selling, or even while cooking" (CCC 2743). Little prayers: "Lord, have mercy on us", "Lord, help me". So, prayer is not in contrast with daily work; it does not contradict the many small obligations and appointments; if anything, it is the place where every action finds its meaning, its reason and its peace.

Certainly, putting these principles into practice is not easy. A father and a mother, caught up in a thousand tasks, may feel nostalgia for a time in their life in which it was easy to find regular times and spaces for prayer. Then come children, work, family life, ageing parents... One has the impression that it will never be possible to get through it all. It is good then for us to think that God, our Father, who must take care of the entire universe, always remembers each one of us. "Therefore, we too must always remember Him!"

We can also remember that in Christian monasticism, work has always been held in great esteem, not only because of the moral duty to provide for oneself and others, but also for a sort of balance, an inner balance. Work helps us to stay in touch with reality. The monk's folded hands bear the calluses of one who holds shovels and hoes. When, in the Gospel of Luke (cf. 10:38-42), Jesus tells St Martha that the only thing that is truly necessary is to listen to God, in no way does he mean to disparage the many services that she was performing with such dedication.

Work and prayer are complementary. Prayer remains as the vital backdrop of work, even in moments in which this is not explicit. It is inhuman to be so absorbed by work that you can no longer find the time for prayer.

At the same time, a prayer that alienates itself from life is not healthy. A prayer that alienates us from the concreteness of life becomes spiritualism, or worse, ritualism. Let us remember that Jesus, after revealing his glory to the disciples on Mount Tabor, did not want to prolong that moment of ecstasy, but instead came down from the mountain with them and resumed the daily journey. Because that experience had to remain in their hearts as the light and strength of their faith for the days that were soon to come of the Passion. In this way, the time dedicated to being with God revives faith, which helps us in the practicalities of living, and faith, in turn, nurtures prayer, without interruption. In this circularity between faith, life and prayer, one keeps alive that flame of Christian love that God expects of us.

Extract from Pope Francis' Catechesis on Prayer,
6th Sunday of Easter in the Year of Prayer

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