

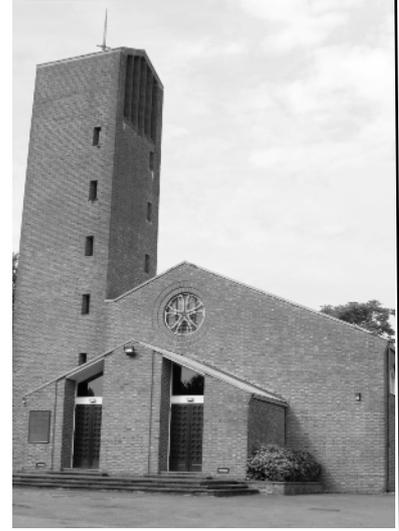
WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

*Parish Priest: Fr. Norbert Fernandes Assistant Priest: Fr. Tony Thomas
Parish Secretary: Kathryn Hubbard*

Seventh Sunday of the Year 23rd February page 139 of Mass book

I want today to highlight some snippets from our Scriptures this final weekend before we embark on the Season of Lent. The Church has certainly chosen passages with power and challenge! The words from Leviticus ‘You must love your neighbour as yourself’ were so important to Jesus that he incorporated them into his Great Command of Love. Do you love yourself? Is that easy? Can you love your neighbour in that way? With Lent approaching, what are some practical ways of letting this quality of life/love be shared with others? Charity, kindness forgiveness, patience...?

‘...you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.’ St. Paul’s community in Corinth has been caught up in faction-fighting with slogans being used; the Apostle is so upset by this that he has to remind the people of the source of their faith and in whom they put their trust - Christ! The word ‘belonging’ might give the impression of ‘possession’ in a negative way. However, Paul is convinced that we have been chosen by the Lord and adopted as God’s children; hence we *belong* to God. Lent is very much a time of focusing on Baptism through which this amazing bond with Jesus Christ is sealed. In our parishes there are many preparing to join the Church in this way. Nevertheless Lent offers most of us the opportunity to reflect on the gift already received and to be renewed, strengthened and nurtured in the living out of this relationship.

Finally - and this is the most mind-blowing aspect of our Christian faith - ‘...love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...’ (Matthew). *We* are to love our enemies wanting what is good for them; *we* are to pray for those who persecute us. We can’t just skate over these words! We must look to Jesus Christ himself to see these in action: he gives us an insight into how we can imitate God himself whose love has no bounds and who never holds back on pouring our generous love on creation. Who are the people in my life I need to consider? Who has hurt me? Who makes life a trial for me? Who do I find it impossible to forgive? God really does want us to be like him and never gives up on us! Might Lent 2020 be a turning point in our lives?

May these final days before Lent begins give you a chance to ponder big questions of the world and your life. Let each of us ask for the inspiration to choose a Lenten promise which will make us better people for the sake of our world. If you have time, read and re-read the profound words of today’s psalm in the light of your own life. God bless you. ***Fr. Norbert***

ASH WEDNESDAY is on 26th February and will mark our entry into the Season of Lent. Masses with the distribution of ashes will be at 9.30am at Holy Family, 12noon at St. Bonaventure's and 7pm at Our Lady's. Please remember Ash Wednesday is a Day of Fasting and Abstinence.

LENT During Lent there will be **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** for half an hour on a Monday after 9.30 Mass at Our Lady's (except 2nd March), on a Thursday after 9.30 Mass at Holy Family and on a Saturday after 10am Mass at St. Bonaventure's. There will be **Stations of the Cross** on a Wednesday after 9.30 Mass at Holy Family, on a Friday after 9.30 Mass at St. Bonaventure's and on a Friday after 7pm Mass at Our Lady's (except 13th March). The **Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)** will be available on Thursdays at Holy Family Church 10.00 - 10.30am and on Saturdays - at St. Bonaventure's 10.30 - 11am and at Our Lady's 5.00 - 5.30pm. There will be priests also available at Our Lady's on Friday 20th March after Stations of the Cross and the Holy Week Service on Tuesday 7th April at 8pm at Our Lady's. Don't forget the **First Friday early morning Masses** at St. Bonaventure's at 6.30 followed by breakfast (6th March and 3rd April).

CARDINAL'S LENTEN APPEAL If you would like to support this charity Lent 2020, there are special envelopes available. The money raised will fund initiatives in Marriage and Family Life, Evangelisation through support given to young people in their faith and Service in Society especially in regard to those who have to make use of food banks because they cannot feed their children properly.

DEANERY GATHERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE will take place on Friday 13th March at Our Lady's. Young people from a number of Confirmation groups from parishes in the Stevenage Deanery will come with their catechists for 7pm which will be followed by the usual 'Restoration Holy Hour' which will end around 8.45pm. There will be refreshments at the back of the church to round off the evening. The event has been promoted by the Westminster Youth Ministry through its 'Summit' outreach programme and there will be some input from the WYM as well as from the group usually leading. There will still be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Scripture, prayer, music and silence ending with Benediction.

JIMMY BYRNE RIP Jimmy's Funeral Mass will be at Our Lady's on Monday 2nd March at 10am. *There will not be 9.30 Mass or Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament that morning.*

MARGARET MORRIN RIP Margaret's Funeral Mass will be at Our Lady's on Tuesday 3rd March at 2pm. **NUALA AUSTIN RIP** Nuala's Funeral Service will be at St. Bonaventure's on Thursday 5th March at 12noon. **LEONARD BONNER RIP** Leonard's Funeral Mass will be at Holy Family on Wednesday 18th March at 12.30pm.

BIBLE STUDY UPDATE Fr Tony writes: 'On Thursday this week we held the third session of our bible study programme called. This session covered the 'Patriarchs' – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph – who were the forefathers of Israel. An overriding theme was trust in God. For instance, we looked at the call of Abraham, which climaxed in God asking Abraham to trust him by offering up his son Isaac. Throughout the whole of the bible, God repeatedly asks the question, 'Do you trust in me?' We might ask ourselves: what does trust in God look like, as demonstrated by Abraham? And: how might God be calling us to trust in him today?

MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR MARRIAGE The annual Mass will be at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 30th May 2019 at 3pm. The Cardinal will be inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese who are celebrating their 5th, 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60) wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2020. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please give Fr. Norbert the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number, if no email). Fr. Norbert will then send them on.

SPECIAL NEEDS MASS will be on Saturday 7th March at 6pm at Our Lady's followed by bingo and a Lenten quiz. Please bring food to share. The Deputy Mayor Peter Hebden is planning to attend. All are welcome.

CWL LENTEN LUNCHESS starting on Friday 12noon -1.30pm. At Salvation Army Hall, next to Our Lady's Church. Do come along.

COMMUNION DRESSES Birdcage Bridal Boutique in Welwyn Garden City have in a beautiful array of first Communion dresses and accessories. Please contact Anne-Marie or Bethany on 01707 394411

ST. PATRICK'S DAY There will be refreshments after 9.30 Mass at St. Bonaventure's on 17th March. Mass at Our Lady's will be at 7pm as usual.

RCIA for those preparing to join the Catholic Church at Easter. The Group will be presented at Mass this weekend and then on Saturday 29th February they will be presented to the Cardinal and Bishops of our Diocese at the Rite of Election at 3pm. The Group will meet this Monday (24th) at 7.30pm at Our Lady's.

CONFIRMATION The next evening session will be on Sunday 8th March at 7.15pm in Holy Family Church. The young people will be attending the 'Summit' Deanery Youth Gathering in Our Lady's on Friday 13th March arriving at 6.45pm. The following Sunday's session on 15th March will be in Our Lady's Church at 7.15pm.

FIRST CONFESSION/HOLY COMMUNION The next meeting for parents of First Communion children from our three churches will be on Wednesday 4th March at 7.30pm in Our Lady's Church. Our children will be making their First Confessions as follows: St. Bonaventure's on Saturday 7th March 10.30 for 11am, Holy Family on the same day at 2pm and Our Lady's on Saturday 14th March at 11am. *Please keep them and families in your prayers.*

MARRIAGE Any couples who wish to get married in Welwyn Garden City or elsewhere should contact Fr. Norbert. The Marriage Preparation Day will be on Saturday 28th March. Couples marrying in 2020 or 2021 are invited.

CALLING EUROPEAN CITIZENS! Bishop Paul McAleenan has asked us to publicise the following: All EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK are required by the government to apply through its Settlement Scheme to continue living, working and accessing services here. The deadline for applications is 30 June 2021. Details and links to the application process can be found at: gov.uk/eusettledstatus Please bring this to the attention of friends, family members and fellow parishioners who may need to apply. Information on assistance for those who may have difficulty applying is available at: gov.uk/help-eu-settlement-scheme. The Catholic Church in England and Wales stands in solidarity with all European citizens who have made their homes here. They are a valued part of our parishes, schools and communities.

ASSISI 2020 Brochures and booking forms are now available at the back of our churches. The pilgrimage will be from Sunday 24th May until Friday 29th May 2020. *There are 8 places left* so if you are interested, please return your booking form to Pax Travel as soon as possible. If anyone needs an electronic version, please let Fr. Norbert know.

OBERRAMMERGAU Wednesday 9th - Friday 11th September, 2020. The brochures and booking forms are at the back of our churches. Let Fr. Norbert know if you require an electronic version. Europe was affected by a terrible plague at the beginning of the 17th century. In 1633 the people of the village of Oberammergau in Germany prayed and promised that if the plague left their village, a play commemorating the Passion of Jesus Christ would be performed every ten years. Their prayers were answered and the first Passion Play was performed in 1634. *There are 12 places left on this pilgrimage so if interested sign up as soon as possible!*

INTER FAITH On Tuesday 3 March from 10am to 4pm at the Focolare Centre the Hertfordshire Inter Faith Group will be hosting a conference entitled 'Stronger Together' where high-profile faith leaders will explore how we create stronger, cohesive communities. The main speaker will be the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire. The day is free and includes lunch but places must be booked via <https://hertsinterfaithconference-stronger-together.eventbrite.co.uk> and on Tuesday 10 March 7 - 9.30pm at Hatfield Fire Station AL10 0DA the local inter faith group will be holding the second of their Rites of Passage evenings when the topic will be 'Initiation' where we will learn how people make their adult commitment to their beliefs.

SOUL FOOD nourishing the spiritual life of the frail older person. Many older people are well able to care for their own spiritual lives- and help others! But how do we nourish those who are becoming too frail physically or mentally to nourish themselves? On Thursday 26th March there will be a meeting in the Focolare centre to consider this. Details on the poster at the back of the church or contact anne.horsman@btinternet.com/07771931063.

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 Our Lady's Church
 141 Woodhall Lane AL7 3TP

Kathryn Hubbard 01707 322579
parishsec@stbonaventure.org.uk
 St. Bonaventure's Church
 81 Parkway AL8 6JF

Fr. Tony 01707 327434
welwyngdncitydigs@rcdow.org.uk
 Holy Family Church
 194 Knightsfield AL8 7RQ

CONFESSIONS
 Holy Family: Thursday **10am-10.30am**
 St. Bonaventure: Saturday **10.30am -11am**
 Our Lady's: Saturday **5pm -5.30pm.**

You can read the newsletter on the Website www.wgc-catholics.org.uk

LIVING SIMPLY GROUP asks us this Lent to 'consider what your contribution could be both to help the climate and nature emergency and to walk closer with those most affected by it as well as with Jesus. 5 ideas to get you started: 1) Try swapping your favourite meat, dairy and fish dishes for more plant-based ones. Bbcgoodfood.com has some great recipes. 2) Drive less and walk more. Try taking the bus or train for long distances, walk or cycle locally. Or if you must drive then try car sharing. 3) Buy second hand and repair. You can pick up great quality, unique items in the pentiful charity shops in the town. Or try the repair drop-ins in Hitchin to fix your item rather than throw it away. 4) Eat seasonally and locally. Eating within the seasonal rhythm of nature gives us better tasting food and cuts our carbon foot-print. 5) Go single use plastic-free. Buy a reusable coffee cup and water bottle to refill as you go and reduce the harmful plastic that ends up in our oceans.'

ST ALBANS Every Friday at St. Albans Abbey-Cathedral a Catholic Mass is celebrated at 12 noon. You are all welcome. Fr. Norbert will be celebrant on 27th March.

MASS TIMES

24 Monday	9.30am	Mass	Our Lady's	feria
25 Tuesday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	feria
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
26 Ash Wednesday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	
	12noon	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
27 Thursday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	Lent feria
28 Friday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Lent feria
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
229 Saturday	10am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Lent feria

First Sunday of Lent

29 Saturday	6pm	Mass	Our Lady's
01 Sunday	8am	Mass	St. Bonaventure
	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family
	10.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure
	11.30am	Mass	Our Lady's
	6pm	Mass	Holy Family



CHAPLAIN TO THE Q.E.II AND LISTER HOSPITALS: If you are going into hospital and need a Catholic Chaplain contact **Chaplaincy Office Tel: 01438 285138 (24/7)**
Urgent need: 01438 314 333 via text message: 07876 526935.