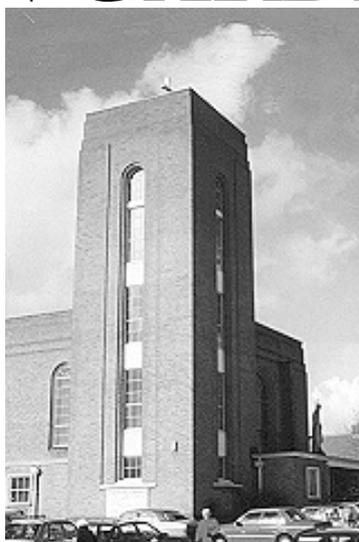


WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

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

Twelfth Sunday of the Year 21st June 2020

We dip back into the Sunday readings for Ordinary Time today; next week St. Peter and St. Paul will take precedence.

In our First Reading, the prophet Jeremiah (in around 605 BC) has reached almost breaking-point: he had been beaten publicly and placed in stocks. He despairs wondering whether his life was worth living and his words are filled with anguish. Yet in the midst of so much suffering and humiliation, he places his trust in God and today's passage has a proclamation of thanks to God for delivering him from evil people; it is almost as if he anticipates in reality the vindication he will receive from God. In our lives, especially at the present moment, these words of Jeremiah are powerful. We have faced many trials and have probably felt it to be so unfair. Maybe we have wondered 'What next? Can we take anymore?' Jeremiah stands out as a powerful beacon of hope. It is crucial to speak the truth before God and recognise our desperate situations; nevertheless to be bold enough to admit that there are blessings, allows light to shine in the midst of darkness. We are now only half-way through this prophetic book and Jeremiah still has much to experience; but his tenacity makes all the difference. Let us not give up but press on.

St. Paul writes to the Romans in our Second Reading. There are so many balances: on the one hand, sin, death, and Adam - on the other, gift, divine grace and Jesus Christ (the New Adam). At the heart of St. Paul's hypothesis is his strong belief that Christ can and does make a difference in steering us away from disobedience to God towards a life of fulfilment and joy as we try to keep the commandments which help us on our way to heaven. Our destination is life to be lived with God for ever; we need to leave behind the 'Fall' whereby humanity defied God and went its own way. Do you think this language sounds strange?

next page

Nowadays we focus so much on the freedom to make our own decisions and resent being told what to do. St. Paul is convinced that if we look to Jesus, we see in him a vision of humanity freely open to God's will and delighting in carrying it out no matter how hard this might be. In Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross we are opened up to loving obedience to the Father for the sake of the creation he cherishes. St. Paul wants us to know that the free gift of grace in Jesus Christ is the tipping point far outweighing the burden of sin so that with his help we can and will triumph. Another cause for hope and encouragement as we encounter crisis in our world and feel helpless.

Finally, our Gospel passage from St. Matthew has Jesus addressing his followers who will in time face persecution. 'Do not be afraid...do not be afraid...there is no need to be afraid...' Get the message?! Jesus is in relationship with a God who knows us inside out - every hair on our heads has been counted. This God truly wants all to be saved from destruction of body and soul - that is why he sent us Jesus. So do not worry! This news originally was heard by a small number of people in a particular place, in a moment of history. NOW this news should be brought into the open and proclaimed from the rooftops. We MUST declare ourselves for Jesus before others; he will speak on our behalf in his Father's presence. How can we do this? Loving service of others is powerful witness to Christ. Readiness to forgive and to be open to forgiveness provides strong testimony. Showing who and what really matters in life and revealing this every day in decisions we take and carry out - all of these demonstrate a faith in the Lord and a willingness to share that with others.

As we begin another week, we have been at it for so long with very little rest. Those who work from home, while saving on travel time, have probably become more available to 'work' - which can be relentless. Some of you have been juggling with keeping the family going as well as your own job - challenging at the best of times. Many of you are venturing out after weeks of lockdown, shielding and isolation; it must be liberation on the one hand and yet there is apprehension. Then there are the keyworkers who continue to give for the sake of others. Keep in mind Jeremiah. Don't forget St. Paul. Especially let others know about Jesus who is your inspiration! A time of refreshment will come.

Fr. Tony and I continue to pray for you. God bless you all.

With love and prayers, *Fr. Norbert*

LIVESTREAMING

We are live-streaming using the YouTube channel:

[youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches](https://www.youtube.com/c/WelwynGardenCityCatholicChurches)

FATHER'S DAY is on Sunday 21st June. God bless each and every father and honorary dad!

FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/Welwyn-Garden-City-Catholic-Churches-113038463699672/>

We have a Facebook page for our three parishes. Please search for 'Welwyn Garden City Catholic Churches' to find us. There are Gospel reflections, the latest news, live rosaries and so on. Do 'like' this page so that any updates appear in your own news feed, and share it with your friends too!

MASS ON RADIO

If you are aware of someone not on the internet who would like to follow Mass, RTE Radio broadcasts Mass on 252 Longwave. For those who have a digital radio, Radio Maria broadcasts in London on DAB+ and in the Cambridge area on DAB.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Children's Liturgy Team at Our Lady's will have a session on Zoom for children this Sunday after the streamed Mass goes out. There will be a song with actions, Gospel reading and an activity. For more information, please contact Sarah (david.cafferty@ntlworld.com) or Eddy (eddyga@hotmail.com). Whichever parish you attend, why not give it a go?

MASS INTENTIONS Fr. Norbert and Fr. Tony are celebrating the Mass Intentions week by week. On Sundays the Mass is offered for the 'People of our Parishes'. If anyone wants Mass offered for a particular intention, please let Fr. Norbert know. Donations for the Masses can be made at a later stage.

This week Masses have been celebrated for Liya Ignatius (Birthday Intention), Flynn Family Intention, Janina Sobiak RIP, Mary Davin RIP, Celia Rochford RIP, Matthew Sawyer RIP 1st Anniv, Mary McEvoy RIP, Trudy King RIP, Kay and Andrew Cunningham RIP, Alan Livett RIP

PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY

Martin Fogarty RIP

Trudy King RIP

Mary Davin RIP

As well as praying for the repose of the souls of all who have died, let us remember the many bereaved families at this sad time of pandemic.

BAPTISMS, CONFIRMATIONS, FIRST COMMUNIONS are now on hold until the situation changes.

Please keep in your prayers adults and children who were due to be baptised at Easter as well as the babies whose Baptisms have been postponed, the young people who were meant to be confirmed and the children who would have made their First Holy Communion in our three churches. There are couples whose Weddings have had to be rescheduled for later in the year or next year. May God watch over them all and their loved ones.

OPENING OF CHURCHES In response to the permission for churches to open for private prayer, we are going to take things gently. Our churches will be open as follows:
St. Bonaventure: Tuesday 23rd June 9.30 - 10.30am.
Holy Family: Thursday 25th June 9.30 - 10.30am.
Our Lady's: Friday 26th June 7 - 8pm

To meet the regulations, there will *only be quiet, private prayer* allowed. There will be stewards at the entrance of the church and at the exit which will be a different door so that movement is only in one direction. Hands will be sanitised on entry and departure. A further steward will be in the church to give support. We have created distancing by blocking off and bunching up benches. This inevitably has reduced the number of places available. In **St. Bonaventure's** only **8 individuals, couples or families** can be in at once, in **Holy Family** this will be **17** and in **Our Lady's** **20**. If the church is full, then people will have to wait outside. After the particular hour of prayer the benches will be sanitised and the church prepared for the following week. This week we will review how the system has proceeded. There will NOT be the opportunity for Confession in the church. Remember the toilets are not available.

Our aim is to make sure that at all times people are safe, distanced and able with confidence to pray. If you are unwell, a vulnerable person, shielding, or at risk because of your age, it is worth considering whether it would be the right thing to come to church. At each time of opening, Fr. Tony and Fr. Norbert intend to be there.

If you are willing in the near future to be a steward, please give your name to Fr. Norbert and a rota will be formed according to the number of volunteers.

We do not know when public celebrations of Mass will be allowed. Streamed Masses will definitely continue. Thank you for your prayers and your patience!

HOT OFF THE PRESS!

Funeral Services with very limited numbers are now permitted in church, *that is without Mass or singing*. There will still be the possibility of graveside or crematorium services. Guidelines are starting to be relaxed slightly.

It looks as though **Wedding Services** without Mass, music or hymns might soon be allowed - with only a handful of people present. We await further developments.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES Some parishioners contribute regularly through standing orders; for this we are grateful. A number of parishioners have asked about their planned giving envelopes and weekly collection contributions. We have set up for each of our parishes Virgin Money Giving pages which allow you to make a donation which can also be GiftAided. This can also be done on your mobile phone. The links are on the parish website. We wish to thank those of you who will be able to offer support in this way. We are also acutely aware of the financial hardship which the present circumstances of pandemic have created for so many and respect totally the fact that some of you are now unable to make contributions. God bless you all.

HELP DURING TIME OF CORONAVIRUS We now have a team of people who are happy to do shopping, collect prescriptions, chat on the phone, etc. If you need any such help, please do contact Fr Tony, and he will put you in contact with someone who can assist you. Fr Tony can be reached on 01707 327434, or at tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk.

FOOD BANK New Zion Christian Fellowship continues its Food Bank every Wednesday 9 - 11am. Unfortunately with our churches now closed, we cannot collect items each week. If you are able to drop off non-perishable food for the needy members of our community, New Zion is happy to receive contributions from 8am on a Wednesday. The address is 140 Cole Green Lane AL7 3JE. If anyone would like to make a financial contribution to the Food Bank, please email foodbank@newzioncf.net and you will be given details as to how to make a donation.

ST. BONAVENTURE'S STONE CROSS Back in January the Health and Safety review of our churches revealed that the stone cross at the top of St. Bonaventure's has moved and the recommendation was for it to be stabilised and strengthened. The work is being carried out.

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH TOWER Work has progressed well in recent weeks and is complete. The scaffolding has gone. The Tower should be weather-proofed for another 50 years!!

NEW PARISH CENTRE The builders have been able to continue with the work these last few months and our new Parish Centre is taking shape inside with the underfloor heating in place, the walls plastered and the grounds being landscaped. It looks splendid and should be completed by the end of July.

SPECIAL MASSES will be livestreamed from Cathedrals in this country every Thursday evening at 7 o'clock for the intentions of frontline workers in the NHS and care homes, for the sick and their families. This week from Norwich Cathedral, celebrated by Bishop Alan Hopes of East Anglia.

www.clicktopray.org is a free app which links you with thousands of people on the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and is co-ordinated by the Jesuits. Each day there are phrases or inspirational thoughts to accompany you in your prayer.

ANGELS Angels appear in many religions, but what are they and how do they manifest themselves? The local interfaith group will have a Zoom meeting on Tuesday 23rd June 2.30 - 3.30pm. There will be speakers from a number of different faiths including Methodist Minister Bruce Anderson, Tap Bali, Amin Khan, Reynold Rosenberg AND our own Fr. Tony! For joining details contact theresa.whifg@gmail.com

ANNIVERSARIES OF PRIESTHOOD Fr. Tony will celebrate his fourth anniversary of Priesthood this Thursday (25th). Congratulations!

ORDINATIONS ABROAD Three of the seminarians from Seville who have stayed with us in Welwyn Garden City are due to be ordained priests on Saturday 20th June - Fran Trigo, Fran Lopez and Ruben Perez. As things stand the celebrations are going ahead with reduced numbers of people. Remy Pignall who has come to us many times from the Diocese of St. Denis in Paris should have been ordained priest at the end of June; his big day has been rescheduled for some time in September. Please keep them all in your prayers. Their time with us has been important in their formation. We have been enriched too by their presence.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 21ST JUNE

Why not take out your Bible and reflect on these passages? Or do a Google search!

Saturday 20th June Immaculate Heart of Mary

2 Chronicles 24:17-25 The people abandon the Temple of the Lord

Luke 2:41-51 'Mary stored up all these things in her heart'

Sunday 21st June TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jeremiah 20:10-13 'The Lord is at my side, a mighty hero.'

Romans 5:12-15 Divine grace is a free gift through Jesus Christ

Matthew 10:26-33 'Do not be afraid'

Monday 22nd June ST. THOMAS MORE (1477-1535) and ST. JOHN FISHER

(1469-1535) The former was Lord Chancellor and was martyred on 6th July, dying 'the king's good servant but God's first'. The latter was Bishop of Rochester and was made a Cardinal a month before his execution on 22nd June.

2 Maccabees 6:18, 21, 24-31 Eleazar dies 'leaving his death as an example of nobility and a record of virtue'.

Matthew 24:4-13 'They will hand you over to be tortured and put to death'

Tuesday 23rd June St. Etheldreda (Audrey) (died 679) *Abbess of monastery of men and women on site of present day Ely Cathedral.*

2 Kings 19:9-11, 14-21, 31-36 Sennacherib lays siege to Jerusalem

Matthew 7:6, 12-14 'It is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life.'

Wednesday 24th June NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Isaiah 49:1-6 'The Lord called me before I was born'

Acts 13:22-26 The coming of Jesus was heralded by John

Luke 1:57-66, 80 The birth of John

Thursday 25th June

2 Kings 24:8-17 The first deportation to Babylon

Matthew 7:21-29 Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount

Friday 26th June

2 Kings 25:1-12 King Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem

Matthew 8:1-4 A leper says to Jesus, 'If you want to, you can cure me.'