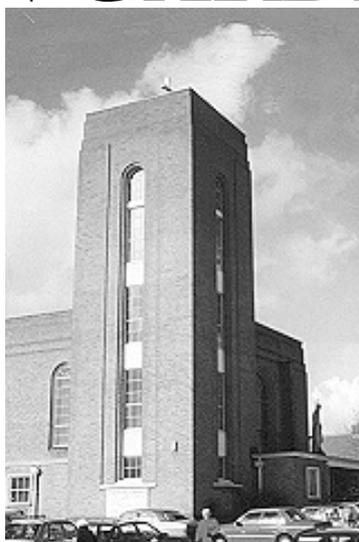


WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

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

Fifteenth Sunday of the Year 12th July 2020

So, we begin public celebrations of Mass! Very different for Fr. Tony and for me; a whole new experience for you. I am sure there will be teething problems and we don't know what numbers will be like but it is a start. The opening of churches for private prayer has given us an insight into what works, what is required what is not needed. Now the Divine Liturgy in a fresh format will be a next step to 'the new normal'.

In our Gospel reading today, St. Matthew opens us up to the story-telling skills of Jesus as we are invited to listen to a parable. The account of the Sower who scatters his seed in every direction puts us in touch with the mystery of the Kingdom - God breaks into our lives and calls us to himself; God-in-Jesus reveals transforming power and sheer love, drawing us closer to the realisation of his plan. Jesus' audience would have understood the imagery; they needed time and reflection to grasp the impact of the Lord's teaching. That is a lesson for us! If we already think we've got the answer, we are going to be disappointed. When we stop opening our ears, minds and hearts to the Lord, we create a barrier to the fruitfulness and efficacy of God's Word. When the penny drops, action is essential!

As I ponder the parable, I consider how much seed is lost and the many obstacles to its growth. However, the farmer doesn't see it in this way. He is confident; he trusts that his investment will bring a bountiful reward. The Sower has such a positive attitude to his task and never gives up on the hope that rich soil is waiting to germinate his seed. At this time, we are taking a small step forward in having public Masses again. We know God is with us. We have carried heavy burdens supported by the Lord. Now we trace an unknown path. Let each of us hold firmly the hand of God which leads. Let us fix our gaze ahead and discern where we are heading - perhaps into mist for a while?

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When we have to stop and catch our breath because we feel the pace is too fast, that's okay; if we want to forge ahead and feel held back by circumstances, people or bureaucracy, we just have to be patient. This is a shared endeavour and we want to include as many as possible.

Maybe many of you are waiting, building up strength and courage for the next stage? Perhaps you have come to the decision (or have been told) that you are not well enough to come out? Are there going to be people coming back who have not been to church for ages? We definitely have to be there for them as they take tentative steps forward. I am sure in our churches there will be newcomers who have bravely walked in to find out more. In Jesus' time, such people were never disappointed. They found that Jesus understood them and really wanted them close to him as members of his Kingdom. Our community must be that Christ-centred source of love and life which then bubbles up and overflows to the whole of humanity! Oh no! That sounds like hard work...demanding...beyond me! Well, the Lord has chosen each one of us, empowering us for the task at hand. Let us allow him to use us. He knows what he's doing and he desires that our energy be thrown into establishing the Kingdom. This is surely a reminder and gentle prod to trust him too!

Have a good week. Please pray for Fr. Tony and me; we keep you very much in our prayers too. With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Fr. Norbert writes: Fr. Tony and I have spent some time reflecting on how we can respond to the Government's permission for Mass to be celebrated in public in the light of the guidelines published by the Bishops' Conference. It is complicated and a minefield of restrictions! I had hoped to have outdoor Mass but there has been so much rain recently!

At the heart of everything is keeping people safe and confident in coming to church. Moreover, we want to make Mass available and accessible to as many people as possible.

So we have taken the decision for two weeks to trial the following:

Saturday 11th/18th July

10am Mass at Holy Family

6pm Mass at Our Lady's

Sunday 12th /19th July

10am Mass at Our Lady's

6pm Mass at Holy Family

Monday 13th/20th July

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

Tuesday 14th/21st July

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Thursday 16th/23rd July

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Friday 17th/24th July

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

St. Bonaventure's - as a building - is small and would not hold many people in present circumstances. We reckon Holy Family would take around 70 people and Our Lady's 80. Both churches also have car parks which is an important consideration.

The Bishops have made it very clear that the Sunday Obligation to attend Mass has been suspended and they ask people to consider coming to ONE MASS PER WEEK to allow others a chance to attend Mass. So, if a weekday morning works well, come on Tuesday or Thursday. If you can come after the working day, choose Monday or Friday evening. If these days are out of the question, then opt for a weekend Mass. But please only ONE. The Cardinal speaks of Catholics having to make a 'sacrifice' in the current situation. This will have to be the case here in Welwyn Garden City.

Mass will be different! As you arrive there will be stewards outside to make sure people respect distancing and to take contact details (name and phone number which will be held securely for 21 days). Stewards will sanitise hands on entry. More stewards will lead you to places. People will have to sit in their 'bubbles', that is as couples, families or households. We have single chairs for individuals. We ask that you only sit or stand in your place and do not use the kneeler. Once the church has reached its capacity, we would not be allowed to admit any more. Parents are asked to keep a watchful eye on their children at all times. Remember toilets will not be available. The galleries in both churches will not be open. There will not be Mass-books or printed newsletters. Give yourselves time to park and prepare to enter the church - arrive EARLY!

The structure of the Mass will be simplified so that people are not in an enclosed place for longer than 30 minutes: no singing or music, no 2nd Reading or Bidding Prayers, no Gloria or Creed, no collection, Offertory procession or Sign of Peace, no Communion from the Chalice, no altar servers, no lighting of votive candles. At the time of Holy Communion, the priest will say to the whole congregation 'The Body of Christ' to which you will all respond 'Amen'. Only the priest will receive at that point. After the Blessing and Dismissal, stewards will guide people from their benches to the front of the sanctuary, keeping distance at all times. Those who wish to receive Holy Communion may only receive in the hand with no words uttered by priest or communicant and then you will leave the church - in Holy Family by the doors either side of the sanctuary, and in Our Lady's by the side door on the left and by the 'Holy

Door' at the back on the right. Even those not receiving Holy Communion must follow this flow. As you exit the church, the stewards will sanitise your hands. We have been told that you cannot congregate outside but must make your way home. We ask you to respect the stewards who are your fellow parishioners and will be doing their best to facilitate the whole process.

Only the priest will prepare the vessels for Mass and the ciboria (with hosts) will have their lids on until Holy Communion is distributed at the end.

After each Mass there will have to be cleaning teams to sanitise everything which has had human contact and to prepare the church for the next Mass. Any property left behind will be disposed of. Priests have been told not to greet their people for the sake of everyone's protection. We have purchased masks, plastic aprons and gloves for stewards and cleaners as well as sufficient sanitising and cleaning materials. You do not have to wear a mask. If you want to, bring your own.

So there we are!! In the course of a week a huge number of people will be able to have access to Mass in Welwyn Garden City. We hope that anyone entering our churches will trust that Fr. Tony and I have done all we can to keep you safe and have a holy encounter with the Lord in the Eucharist. We will review at the end of the two-week trial. We think that this schedule is sustainable for a longer period and allows for one priest to keep things going should the other be unwell or take a break. In the meantime, there will still be Wednesday's Facebook Mass at 9.30am and Sunday's 'full' Mass streamed at 10 o'clock (but recorded earlier!) Some of you may not feel ready to return because of health issues or because you care for someone who is vulnerable. Others might still be afraid and this is totally understandable.

If you think you have the virus, please do NOT come and put others at risk. COVID 19 symptoms: a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature), a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual), a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

At each Mass we will need 8 stewards and a team of cleaners. That is a big ask. Think carefully about the day and time of Mass and see what you can offer. We really need YOUR help. Send your name to Fr. Tony or me and we will put together a rota. It would really help at this initial stage if you could commit to these first two weeks; that will help establish a routine and identify any issues which should be addressed.

CONFESSION The Cardinal reminds all Catholics that in order to receive Holy Communion, a ‘good’ Act of Contrition will suffice and then to find an opportunity at a later stage to go to Confession. On the days when public Mass is celebrated, Fr. Tony and Fr. Norbert will NOT be able to hear Confessions before or after Mass. However, ring Fr. Tony on 01707 327434 or Fr. Norbert on 01707 323234 if you would like to make an appointment for Confession. The Sacrament will be outside the church building with priest and penitent standing; every attempt will be made to keep distance and reduce the risk of infection either way, while respecting the confidentiality of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The church will NOT be open for prayer after. We ask you to have patience and generosity of spirit if things get complicated time-wise!

STREAMED MASS

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

We continue to stream Mass on Sunday at 10am and Wednesday at 9.30am.

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

Our thanks to the team for the Children’s Liturgy over the months. This has concluded with public Mass now possible.

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. The intentions will not be announced at Mass but will be published in the newsletter as below.

This week Masses have been celebrated for Michael Maher RIP Anniv, Liliana Scotto Lavina RIP, Sally Rand’s Int, Fr. Bill East RIP, Jerry Slattery RIP, Simon Edwards RIP, Jane Vine RIP, Alice Finn Int, Patrick McEvoy RIP, Philip and Joan McEvoy RIP

PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY

John Patrick West RIP

Alice Beckett RIP John Beckett's mother

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 will be celebrated in due course, when permission is given.

WEDDINGS are allowed, with limited numbers present.

FUNERALS with very limited numbers will be permitted in church. There will still be the possibility of graveside or crematorium services.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES You will note that with public Masses starting again this weekend, we will not be having a collection. Coins and notes are a possible source of infection and transmission of the coronavirus and we do not want to put collectors and counters at risk. Please consider using the Virgin Money Giving links on the parish website. If you would like to set up a standing order, please contact Fr. Norbert and the appropriate forms will be emailed or posted to you. We realise that things are very challenging financially at present and do not want to put any extra burden on you. However, for those in a position to contribute to our churches, we ask that you consider the best way of giving. Our thanks to you for your generosity and co-operation.

HELP DURING TIME OF CORONAVIRUS We 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. 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.

FILIPINO AND AFRICAN MASSES Last Saturday's Mass would have been led for us by our Filipino community and this Sunday's Mass would have been led by the African Community. On the YouTube channel you will find songs and slides from Masses in the past.

ST. ALBANS MASS In our part of Hertfordshire we have such an outstanding and historical building as St. Albans Abbey / Cathedral. It was founded in the 8th Century and is the Shrine of Britain's first saint and martyr, and is the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in this country. The other very unusual aspect of the life of this Church of England Abbey is that Catholic Mass is celebrated there every week. There is no other example of this anywhere in the UK. It has taken place ever since 1983. Worship will resume again and the next Catholic Mass will be celebrated on Friday 17th July at 12 noon in the Nave. Why not give it a try? The celebration is a very prayerful occasion. Because the Nave is so extensive there is no problem about distancing. Just enter by the Welcome Entrance.

GARDENS, DREAMS AND VISIONS To mark the Centenary of the founding of Welwyn Garden City, Kadam Dance and Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group present the Garden of the World, a series of talks and performances inspired by gardens and expressed through dance, music and poetry. The events will run every Tuesday at 8 pm on Zoom from 14th July to 18th August 2020. The series opens with 'A Garden City – Vision and Reality', a talk by Tony Skottowe (Chair, Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust).

Time: Jul 14, 2020 8 PM London

Link to join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/94776211237>

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 12TH JULY

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

Saturday 11th July ST. BENEDICT (480 - 547) *Abbot and Patron of Europe*

Proverbs 2:1-9 The Lord is the giver of wisdom.

Matthew 19:27-29 Peter asks Jesus, 'What about us?'

Sunday 12th July FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 55:10-11 God's Word carries out what it was sent to do.

Romans 8:18-23 Creation is groaning in one great act of giving birth.

Matthew 13:1-13 The parable of the Sower and the seed

Monday 13th July St. Henry (973 - 1024) *Holy Roman Emperor who encouraged missionary activity*

Isaiah 1:10-17 'Cease to do evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed.'

Matthew 10:34 - 11:1 The challenge of being Jesus' disciple

Tuesday 14th July St. Camillus (1550 - 1614) *From a noble Italian family. Became a soldier with a taste for gambling and riotous living. Conversion experience led him to devote his life to caring for the sick. As a priest he founded the 'Camillians' to continue his work.*

Isaiah 7:1-9 'Pay attention, keep calm, have no fear' !

Matthew 11:20-24 Jesus reproaches the towns which refuse to repent

Wednesday 15th July St. Bonaventure (1218 - 1274) *Franciscan, Bishop and Doctor of the Church.*

Isaiah 10:5-7, 13-16 The arrogance of Assyria

Matthew 11:25-27 'I bless you, Father...'

Thursday 16th July Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Isaiah 26:7-9, 12, 16-19 'O Lord, you are giving us peace'

Matthew 11:28-30 'Come to me...'

Friday 17th July

Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8 King Hezekiah is told, 'Put your affairs in order!'

Matthew 12:1-8 'What I want is mercy, not sacrifice'