

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*

23rd Sunday of the Year 6th September 2020

‘Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.’ These are such powerful words from Jesus which St. Matthew’s community remembered and handed on to successive generations. This saying is very much related to what it means ‘to be Church’ - something I reflected on some weeks ago when Peter was called the Rock on which the Church would be built. So, it is not about numbers or buildings; it is principally about the motivation and yearning to be together, to gather, to be open and to welcome Christ.

During the period of total lockdown, for many of you ‘the Church’ was the gathering of those living with you at home, with those you ‘met’ through the internet following Mass either from Welwyn Garden City or other parts of this country, or even from more exotic places. I always enjoy hearing people tell me they have been in Toronto for Mass in the morning, visited the Philippines in the afternoon and had an audience with Pope Francis in the evening! I’m sure it was not only the novelty of discovering Mass elsewhere but something more profound - remembering that we belong, that our lives are founded on faith in Jesus Christ and that it is worth celebrating it through the Eucharist. Others of you are still having to be very careful and the internet is your source of communion. YOU too really belong and are part of the Body of Christ as his family. We have all had to seek out new ways of remaining connected and God never ceases to reach out to us.

Usually at this time of the year, we are mapping out the Sacramental Programmes with dates, sessions, retreats etc. We still have to celebrate the Sacraments for adults and children from the previous year! What is clear is that the coming year’s preparation

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will inevitably have to be different. Meetings face to face, activities and visits round the church will not be appropriate with all the restrictions we face.

I would ask parents of children of Year 3 who will make First Confession and First Holy Communion next summer to find ways of talking to your children about these Sacraments - their purpose, the impact on your own lives, the challenges. Pray with your children by reading the Bible and making time to watch streamed Mass if you feel unable to come to church. Think hard with the members of your household about what it means to be church and to invite the Lord Jesus into your family life. It would surely be a brilliant way of starting your preparation!

Young people in Year 9 who will be confirmed next year, choose your sponsor now! Talk to him or her, asking them about their faith and how it has sustained them as adults. Try to discover a saint at this stage whose name could be your Confirmation name and ask that saint to pray for you. Again, follow the streamed Mass or come if you can to public Mass. What does it mean for you to be an adult Catholic Christian? What witness to Christ can, and do, you give at school or at home? How can you support your family in 'feeling' that togetherness in the Lord?

For adults who want to join the Church through Baptism or Reception, please contact with me so that I know you are out there! The development of faith isn't only about information, it is about the growth of a living relationship with Jesus Christ as experienced in the Church. Often 'hearing' other people's stories, their questions, their insights can be so enriching. Come to Mass or watch the livestream. Discover prayers and let them become part of your life. Find a quiet moment each day to be open to the Lord's loving, peaceful, life-giving presence. And remember, it doesn't all come at once - it's a journey in faith!

So this week, keep reflecting on Jesus' words and find ways of letting them come to life even more. We cannot do it on our own; we need mutual support. Surely that is what it means to be Church! Fr. Tony and I continue to pray for you. We need your prayers too.

God bless you. With much love, ***Fr. Norbert***

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY It does not appear to be the case that guidelines regarding the Mass will change in the foreseeable future. So, for the next few months, we will keep to the schedule now established. The Sunday obligation has been dispensed so you are free to attend Mass on any day. There is space too on weekdays for people to come more than once. Mass will continue to be streamed on a Sunday at 10am.

Saturday

10am Mass at Holy Family

6pm Mass at Our Lady's

Sunday

10am Mass at Our Lady's

6pm Mass at Holy Family

Monday

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

Tuesday

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Thursday

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Friday

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

As you arrive there are 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 sanitise hands on entry. More stewards lead you to places. People must 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 are not be allowed to admit any more. Parents are asked to keep a watchful eye on their children at all times. Remember toilets are not available. The galleries in both churches will not be open. There are no Mass-books or printed newsletters. You do not have to 'book' to come, but please arrive EARLY!

The structure of the Mass has been 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 says to the whole congregation 'The Body of

Christ' to which you all respond 'Amen'. Only the priest receives at that point. After the Blessing and Dismissal, stewards 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 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 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 are doing their best to facilitate the whole process.

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

After each Mass the stewards sanitise everything which has had human contact and prepare the church for the next Mass. Any property left behind has to 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/cleaners as well as sufficient sanitising and cleaning materials.

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.

We are very grateful to the many volunteers who have helped as stewards and spent time cleaning the churches after Mass. Some have now returned to work. If any others are available on a weekday or at the weekend, please let Fr. Tony or Fr. Norbert know. Thank you.

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!

NEW HALL The ‘practical completion’ of our joint Parish Hall has happened! There has been a favourable response to the suggestion to call the building ‘The Trinity Hall’. If you have any thoughts or ideas, please let Fr. Norbert know soon. Let us hope we will be able to make use of it soon!

STREAMED MASS

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

We continue to stream Mass on Sunday at 10am

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.

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.

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 or Fr. Tony know. Donations for the Masses can be made at a later stage. The intentions will be published in the newsletter as below.

This week Masses have been celebrated for Franco Tiramani RIP, Tony McEvoy RIP, Andrzej Jurek RIP, Florencia Muceros RIP, Kathleen Cordon (sick), Rowena Edwards RIP

LATELY DEAD Please pray for the repose of the souls of Andrzej Jurek and Monica Campbell MacKnight who have died recently.

CONGRATULATIONS to Lisa Cafferkey and Roger Lake who married at St. Bonaventure’s on Saturday 5th September.

SIGNED MASSES On the first Sunday of the month at 4.30pm, there will be a signed Mass streamed with a split screen: Shell Roca, Director of the Deaf Service, will respond in sign as Fr. Norbert celebrates the Mass in sign. This will be in place of the monthly Mass from the Cathedral. All welcome to follow and please give the details to any deaf or hard of hearing people you know.

SACRAMENTS

Below is the latest information for our parishes here in Welwyn Garden City based on Government guidelines and those issued by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. *As you realise many things keep changing with very little notice, so please bear with us. Thank you for your patience!*

BAPTISMS of babies and infants can now be arranged. Please contact Fr. Tony or Fr. Norbert directly to make arrangements. No more than 30 people can be present.

CONFIRMATIONS We are waiting for the go ahead from the Cardinal for the permission to start celebrating Confirmation. We will contact candidates once we have more information.

FIRST COMMUNIONS We hope to have First Communions next month. Families will receive more information soon.

WEDDINGS can take place with no more than 30 people present.

FUNERALS with no more than 30 people present are now permitted in church.

RCIA The adults and children who were due to be baptised at the Easter Vigil and become full members of the Church will have to wait a little longer. We are trying to work out how best to celebrate these Sacraments whilst following all the guidelines.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES We are not having a collection at Mass! 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. However, the financial support of parish life is crucial and needed. Please consider using the Virgin Money Giving links on the parish website. There are standing order forms available to download on the website too. 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 you to find the best way of giving. Our thanks to you for your generosity and co-operation.

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.

ST. ALBANS CATHEDRAL Catholic Mass every Friday at 12 noon in the Nave of the Cathedral. Fr. Norbert will be the celebrant on 25th September.

WALSINGHAM On Saturday 12th September 2020, Cardinal Vincent Nichols will celebrate Mass at 3pm in honour of Our Lady of Walsingham at Westminster Cathedral in place of the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham.

Watch the livestream on the day at www.westminstercathedral.org.uk

CHRISM MASS The Holy Oils will be blessed by the Cardinal at Westminster Cathedral on Monday 14th September at 11.30am. The Oil of Catechumens prepares an adult or child for Baptism, marking them out and strengthening them. The Oil of the Sick is used to anoint those who are seriously ill or are infirm. The Oil of Chrism is used to anoint children after Baptism, for the Sacrament of Confirmation, at the Ordination of Priests and Bishops and to consecrate churches and altars. Usually the Mass has been celebrated in Holy Week with all the priests and bishops of the Diocese gathering with a multitude of people. Priests have renewed their priestly commitment. This year only the Deans of the Diocese will gather with the Cardinal. However, the Mass will be livestreamed at www.westminstercathedral.org.uk. Fr. Norbert as the Dean of Stevenage will be there and after the Mass will collect the Holy Oils and take them to the parishes of our Deanery: Royston, Baldock, Letchworth Garden City, Hitchin, Stevenage, Knebworth, Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City.

BLESSING OF GRAVES We are hoping to have the traditional Blessing of Graves in November. Obviously this will be carried out slightly differently because of the coronavirus restrictions. We will keep you informed.

SEASON OF CREATION

from 1st September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to 4th October
(Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi).

This ecumenical season is dedicated to prayer and action for the protection of creation. It is a time to renew our relationships with God our Creator, and with all creation, as we join together in prayer. We are invited to give thanks for all that God has made, repent for the damage that we have caused and commit ourselves to take action to protect the earth our common home. This year we have been made acutely aware of how interconnected we all are, and so we come together in hope that we can rebuild and heal our world.

CAFOD has produced a novena to St Francis that can be used as a beautiful song of penitence and praise, guiding us to care for the earth and for our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, especially the people of the Amazon. Visit this website for the full list of videos of the prayers <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources/Novena-to-St-Francis> or see below for two prayers each week:

1. We praise you, Lord, for all your creatures, especially for Brother Sun, who is the day through whom you give us light.” (St Francis of Assisi)

I dream that this Amazon, so beautiful and diverse, a gift from God, this earth which gives life, our life, our mother, is not transformed into a desert.” (Fr. Henri de Roziers, Pastoral Land Commission, Brazil)

Creator God, We are nourished by your radiance. Forgive us for the harm we cause your earth, the heat and drought unleashed by climate change.

St Francis, you loved our sacred world, you praised God ceaselessly for his dazzling creation. May we learn from your example.

St Francis, pray for us.

2. We praise you, Lord, for Sister Moon and the Stars, in the heavens you have made them bright, precious and fair. (St Francis of Assisi)

We want the forest to remain quiet, the sky to remain clear, the evening darkness to really fall and for the stars to be seen. (Davi Kopenawa, spokesperson for the Yanomami people of Brazil)

Creator God, your night sky offers rest and stillness, yet we flood our cities with light. Forgive us for our wasteful ways.

Brother Francis, you chose poverty not plenty, walking lightly on the earth. May we follow in your path and reduce the trace we leave.

St Francis, pray for us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR WEEK BEGINNING 6TH SEPTEMBER

Saturday 5th September

1 Corinthians 4:6-15 Complications in the Corinthian community

Luke 6:1-5 The disciples do something forbidden on the Sabbath

Sunday 6th August TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ezekiel 33:7-9 The need to repent

Romans 13:8-10 The importance of love

Matthew 18:15-20 Where two or three meet in the Lord's name...

Monday 7th September

1 Corinthians 5:1-8 Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed

Luke 6:6-11 A healing on the Sabbath

Tuesday 8th September BIRTHDAY OF OUR LADY

Micah 5:1-4 Bethlehem or Romans 8:28-30 The ones God chose

Matthew 1:18-23 Mary will give birth to a son

Wednesday 9th September

1 Corinthians 7:25-31 'Our time is growing short...'

Luke 6:20-26 The Sermon on the Plain

Thursday 10th September

1 Corinthians 8:1-7, 11-13 Paul speaks to the community about food...

Luke 6:27-38 'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.'

Friday 11th September

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-27 Paul's motivation