

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*

30th Sunday of the Year 25th October 2020

Fifty years ago on this day (25th October), Pope Paul VI canonised the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Men and women, priests, religious and lay were declared to be Saints, our forebears who we are convinced share in Christ's glory in heaven. I remember as a boy going with school friends and their parents to Aylesford where there was a great torchlight vigil and Mass. We travelled in the boot of an estate car...not possible in this age! Perhaps it was on the day itself but definitely to mark the canonisation.

In Penal Times, to be a Catholic in public and especially to be a priest was a crime and resulted in a barbarous form of execution. Mass was celebrated in secret and there were houses which had hiding holes for priests. It was a turbulent time in the history of our country and there was a similar persecution of the Reformers in Queen Mary's reign. Nowadays, thank goodness, the relationship between Catholics and Protestants in our land is stronger, deeper and filled with mutual support. We are aware of our common Baptism in Jesus Christ and the need society has for a shared witness to Jesus Christ and the values and ideals of his Kingdom.

In our Gospel reading today from St. Matthew, Jesus is put on the spot again and quizzed about the greatest commandment. His response as always confounds the questioners! Love God. Love your neighbour as yourself. That's it! Is it easy to say I love God when I am sick, worried or uncertain about the future? Do I love myself as I am? How natural is it to love my neighbour? The Lord shows us how to get all three in harmony by his own example. Remember that being aware of the poor, the destitute, the suffering AND coming to their assistance can be an expression of my love for God. When we come to the end of the Church's Year, we'll be given the scene of the Last Judgement in St. Matthew and the words 'Whatever you did to the least of my brothers (and sisters)

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you did to me.’ As Christians, we strive to live out our Faith. Through our Baptism the Lord is so connected to us that he reaches out to others through us. The power of the Spirit fills us, inspiring words and actions to build up the Kingdom. How does that happen in your own life?

Just for a moment, let us return to the Martyrs. They died for the Mass as a celebration of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary, believing him truly to be present in Bread and Wine consecrated to be his Body and Blood. They strove to keep to the Tradition that Christ gave the role of Pope to safeguard the unity of the Church and to be a guide in faith and morals. (This would be defined centuries later). At present, the ability to attend Mass is not possible for some of you. We had the months of lockdown when none of you could come to Mass. We might face the same in the near future - who knows? And yet, through the medium of the internet with streaming and Zoom and the like, it is possible to ‘attend’ Mass, to be close to the Lord in his Passion, Death and Resurrection. Many of you have told me how you still feel connected and belong. Surely this is communion at another level and sustains when the reality of receiving the Lord in Holy Communion cannot take place? NOW is the time to reflect on who/what is at the heart of the Mass - JESUS CHRIST in his love for the Father and humanity. Reflect on how you can bear witness to this self-same love in the everyday and let it become a continuing reality in your life.

For many this is half-term week. If you are involved in Education, I hope you have a time of refreshment after these challenging weeks. For children and young people, keep an eye out for those who look after you and care for you with love. For adults who have responsibility for the younger members of our community, may it be a time to enjoy their company! God bless you all.

Fr. Tony and I continue our prayers for you. With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

DON'T FORGET THE CLOCKS GO BACK ONE HOUR THIS WEEKEND (night of 24th into 25th) British Summer Time has come to an end. Enjoy an extra hour of rest!

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. 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: Summer Minnette RIP 10th Anniv, Margaret Killough RIP, Eddie Wisden RIP 2nd Anniv, Rosario Torrisi RIP Anniv, Sam Bick RIP, Michael Maher RIP.

LATELY DEAD Please pray for the repose of the souls of Margaret Provan and Jo Parlow (Tim Parlow's mother) who died recently.

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!*

In regard to 2021 First Holy Communion and First Confession, Confirmation and adults for the Sacraments through the RCIA, we will wait until the New Year to find the best approach and will keep you informed through the newsletter.

BAPTISMS of babies and infants can now be arranged. Please contact Fr. Tony or Fr. Norbert directly to make arrangements. No more than 6 people can be present.

CONFIRMATIONS (from last year's group) will take place at Our Lady's in November at 7pm Mass on Mondays (9th and 16th) and Fridays (13th and 20th).

FIRST COMMUNIONS Congratulations to the children who received Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion these past weekends. Our thanks to their catechists and all who helped with the celebrations.

WEDDINGS can take place with no more than 15 people present.

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

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.

BLESSING OF GRAVES The Bishops have issued very strict guidelines regarding the Blessing of Grave. It looks as though we will not be able to do this as in the past. Fr. Tony and Fr. Norbert will, however, visit Hatfield Hyde, Hatfield Lawn and Welwyn New Cemeteries during the month of November to bless graves. Unfortunately this will have to be done in a low-key way. Thank you for your understanding.

NOVEMBER DEAD LIST Please write down the names of loved ones who have died and give the lists to Fr. Norbert and Fr. Tony in sealed envelopes *with NO money*. ONLY the priest will put these envelopes in the container to avoid possible contamination. The envelopes will be left near the altars in our churches during the month of November. The deceased will be remembered in prayer every day.

ALL SOULS DAY Monday 2nd November. We are going to have Mass in each of our churches that day: 9.30am in Holy Family, 12 noon in St. Bonaventure's and 7pm in Our Lady's. We want to keep the tradition of praying for the dead on this day. Obviously, we will need stewards and cleaners. So please volunteer!

This also an opportunity to try having public Mass in St. Bonaventure's as a one-off on this occasion. For St. Bonaventure's, those planning to come will have to contact Fr. Norbert to 'book' a place. It is a bit like a jigsaw and we will have to see how many we can accommodate according to 'bubbles' while keeping everyone safe and COVID-19 secure. Some of you can easily attend Mass at the other churches, so please open up the possibility to those who have not been able to come thus far. We ask you to arrive 15 minutes before and to be aware that there will have to be a limit on those attending; hence the 'booking' of Mass.

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.

PRIEST'S REFERENCE FORMS With the Secondary School transfer process unfolding, many parents will need a 'Certificate of Catholicity'. Please download the form on this website called 'Request for a Certificate of Catholicity'. Fill it in and return to Fr. Norbert who will then contact each family to arrange for a Certificate to be issued. Not long to go. *Please don't wait until the last moment. 31st October is deadline!*

METANOIA *Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.*

On Thursday evening we had the latest session in our online course, 'Metanoia'. Each week in the newsletter, we will print a summary of the week's teaching, along with a brief spiritual reflection on the same theme.

Summary: There is a paradox in the life of a Christian: In order to live, one must die. If one hopes to become great, one must first become little. Jesus says from the beginning that if people want to follow him, then they must deny themselves and pick up their cross. Self-denial, difficulties, crosses and suffering are a constitutive part of the Christian life. They are not optional. In a world of supreme extravagance, choosing less or going without is countercultural, but being a Christian is always supposed to be countercultural.

Reflection: Take a moment to think about some of the difficulties and crosses in your life. If you are able, ask for the abandonment to accept this cross. Ask Jesus to be with you and to strengthen you as you carry this cross for love of him.

FR. TONY ON THE RUN? On 27th November, Fr Tony is going to run a 'Virtual Runner' half-marathon (<https://www.virtualrunneruk.com/>) at Panshanger Park, to raise funds for the Welwyn Garden City Society of St Vincent de Paul. As you know, the SVP does wonderful work supporting elderly and vulnerable members of our community, and any sponsorship money raised will help them in particular during this year's challenging Christmas season. If you would like to support Fr Tony and the SVP, please go to this JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/tony-thomas-876>

SVP REQUEST for household items. The SVP is trying to source furniture/household items for a lady setting up home, having moved out of the YMCA. She needs the following items: fridge, freezer, cooker, washing machine, tumble dryer, bedside drawers, TV, TV stand. If you are able to donate any items, or can suggest where they could be obtained, please contact Fr Tony (01707 327434). Any help would be greatly appreciated.

SVP The Welwyn Garden City St Vincent St Paul Society does wonderful work in our local community, supporting people in any kind of need. They currently assist 70 Friends in a variety of ways. A full summary of the SVP's work can be found in their annual report, which is below.

Normally the SVP hold an annual collection at Mass, but because of COVID the collection will not take place this year. However, the SVP's work continues and requests for their support are still being made in these challenging times. If you would like to make a contribution to support the SVP, in lieu of their annual collection, please send a cheque payable to 'St Bonaventure's SVP' to Fr Tony at Holy Family Church (194 Knightsfield, AL8 7RQ). Many thanks.

St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) Welwyn Garden City

Our Vision, which is inspired by Christ's message to love our neighbour as ourselves, is for individuals and families who are in any form of need to have hope and a sense of dignity, worth, well-being and peace of mind.

Our Purpose in WGC is to support those in need in our parish through person-to-person contact. We are divided into two main groups, namely: Full Members and Auxiliary Members and we refer to those we visit as Friends.

- *Full Members* try to visit at least one Friend a week and to attend the fortnightly meeting held in the parish hall of St Bonaventure's Church; at these meetings we discuss how best to use our efforts and financial resources to help our Friends in the most effective and cost efficient way.

- *Auxiliary Members* provide valuable support with our social activities, with fund-raising, with providing transport and with church collections on our behalf.

Our Conference currently has seven Full Members and 10 Auxiliary Members. We were delighted to welcome Fr Tony Thomas as our Spiritual Director this year.

In WGC Members visit Friends either in their own homes, in hospital, in care homes or in a hospice; they accompany Friends to health appointments, take Holy Communion, help with shopping and generally assist in a practical way. This year we were able to offer assistance in the way of furniture, clothes, electrical appliances, food and food vouchers, money, fuel grants, transport and toys.

However, kindly remember that Members do not assume the role of Professional Carers nor of Medical Professionals, and should not be regarded as such. During the 12 months ending March 2020, Members made a total of 684 visits keeping in touch with approximately 70 Friends.

Apart from personal contact with Friends, our Conference is involved in various annual activities, some of which this year included: refreshments following the Mass for the Anointing of the Sick on 6th April 2019, contributing financially in sending

young people to St. John Bosco Summer Camp in August 2019, supporting an SVP conference in India and distributing Christmas hampers. The SVP is a voluntary organisation and as such our income is generated from Members' contributions, donations from the public and one annual parish collection. This income is used to help SVP Friends and families in need.

Should you require any information or more details on the work we do or, indeed, would like to join our Conference, please contact Janet Lewis on 01707 326456.

We thank you and ask for God's blessing for your kind generosity in supporting our work. (APRIL 2020)

PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF MASS IN WELWYN GARDEN CITY 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 *Please note that at present we cannot use the heating during Mass in our churches because they have strong blowers and would transmit any airborne virus. We apologise for this. Best to wrap up well if the weather turns much colder.*

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). For those who have downloaded the Government Covid-19 App, please use the QR Code which has been created (one for each church). Stewards sanitise hands on entry. Face masks are mandatory. 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. 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 reminded by our Bishops that people should not gather outside church in a social way before or after Mass as this may be a source of further contagion.

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. 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.

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!

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING 25TH OCTOBER

Saturday 24th October

Ephesians 4:7-16 Each one of us has been given a share of grace

Luke 13:1-9 The fruits of repentance

Sunday 25th October THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Exodus 22:20-26 Compassion for the poor and strangers

1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 'It was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the Gospel.'

Matthew 22:34-40 'Love God...Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Monday 26th October

Ephesians 4:32 - 5:8 'Try to imitate God...be like children of light.'

Luke 13:10-17 Jesus heals on the sabbath

Tuesday 27th October

Ephesians 5:21-33 'Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her'

Luke 13:18-21 'What is the kingdom of God like?'

Wednesday 28th October ST. SIMON *the Zealot* & ST. JUDE *patron saint of lost and desperate causes. Apostles*

Ephesians 2:19-22 'You are being built into a house where God lives.'

Luke 6:12-16 Jesus spends a night in prayer and then chooses the Twelve

Thursday 29th October Blessed Martyrs of Douai *More than 160 priests who studied at Douai College and were martyred in England during penal times*

Ephesians 6:10-20 'Put on God's armour!'

Luke 13:31-35 Jesus' lament over Jerusalem

Friday 30th October

Philippians 1:1-11 'My prayer is that your love for one another will increase...'

Luke 14:1-6 Another healing on the sabbath