

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*

Nativity of the Lord 25th December 2020

It's Christmas! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has entered our world in space and time. He is here! St. Matthew's Gospel emphasises that the Child is Emmanuel, God-with-us; St. Luke tells us he is Saviour; St. John that he is the Word-made-Flesh. So we have to get our minds mulling over this wonderful news that God has come so close to us in a real human being who IS God and that we can join him through the forgiving, saving love offered. Definitely worth celebrating!

Last week when I wrote my piece for the newsletter, who would have thought that another level of 'Tier' would break into our lives? FOUR! Our lives have been impacted by the devastation of Covid-19; now mutations threaten. The pain and hopelessness which can set in have disrupted our lives again. It is possible that soon after Christmas we might find that a new form of lockdown takes over and we might have to re-order our way of living again. This news is as the weather has been - dark clouds overwhelming us in the days leading up to Christmas and cold, icy rain pelting us! Such a contrast to the Light of the World who warms us and offers a future.

My own thought is that we should keep focusing on the first paragraph above. Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Saviour of the World comes to earth and fills us with healing, peace and forgiveness. He has altered the course of history, giving us a vision of humanity beyond anything we could imagine. God became one of us so that we might share in the divine life of God. God builds bridges so that no chasm is insurmountable with his help.

Christmas gives me a chance to say a huge 'Thank you' to the many people who offer support, encouragement and give of their time in a variety of ways.

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Fr. Tony and I are so appreciative, especially in these challenging times. We have had to be Church but in ways we never thought possible! The usual ministries and normal activities of parish life have been put on hold or stripped away for necessary reasons. Even though the Parish Office has not formally been open, I am grateful to Kathryn Hubbard for being available. Novel approaches especially through the stewarding at Mass with sanitising, track and trace etc would have been unthinkable last year. Our churches still look beautiful and are much loved. Outreach to the less fortunate members of our community has been as generous as ever through the Giving Tree, the Christmas Hampers and the work of the SVP, not to mention the hidden kindnesses shown to neighbours and those in need. I'd like to express my personal gratitude to Fr. Tony for all he has done in serving you and assisting me. We also are overwhelmed by the generosity shown us through cards, gifts and good wishes.

However Christmas is for you, let's be united in loving prayer. May God bless you, your families and the whole community. May this celebration of the Nativity of the Lord open us up to a vision of life, love and faith beyond measure. HAPPY CHRISTMAS! With much love, *Fr. Norbert*

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/>

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.

OUR LADY'S CHAPEL looks out onto the car park of the new Parish Hall which means that people can come to the windows and look into the Chapel and see the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady's statue. The Sanctuary Lamp lights up the Tabernacle. This is possible 24 hours a day as the curtains are not drawn shut. Not ideal in the cold, but a possible place to offer a (quick) prayer.

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 seen on next page.

This week Masses have been celebrated for: Derek Relph RIP and Deborah Martin RIP, Noel Boland RIP Anniv and Birthday, Simon Francis Int, Alec and Mary Noonan's Int, Cyril Fernandes RIP, Nora O'Loughlin RIP, Raymond Walsh RIP, Eddie Devine RIP 2nd Anniv, Gay Sealey Int. *All the Christmas Masses are For the People - your intentions.*

SACRAMENTS

We are now in Tier 4 with further restrictions:.

Baptism is permitted with only **6** present, including the child.

Weddings are possible (in limited circumstances) with **6** present.

Funerals can take place with **30** mourners maximum.

Confirmation. Dates have been set for 2021 for the group from 2020.

Preparation for Sacraments in 2021 will be published in the New Year. *Don't worry. You and/or your children will not miss out!*

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF OUR PARISHES 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.

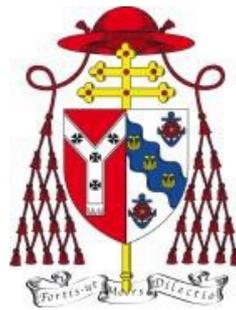
SIGNED MASSES On the first Sunday of the month at 4.30pm, there will be a signed Mass streamed with a split screen: Shell Roca, Director of the Deaf Service, will respond in sign as Fr. Norbert celebrates the Mass in sign. This will be in place of the monthly Mass from the Cathedral. All welcome to follow and please give the details to any deaf or hard of hearing people you know. There is a Signed Mass for Christmas on WGC YouTube Channel going out at 8pm Christmas Eve and there will be an Epiphany Mass going out on Sunday 3rd January at 4.30pm (anticipating Wednesday 6th)

PRIEST'S REFERENCE FORMS Parents who will need a 'Certificate of Catholicity' for Reception class or Nursery should 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.

CHILDREN'S VIRTUAL NATIVITY Please contact either Sarah Cafferty on david.cafferty@ntlworld.com or Eddy Galucci on eddyandreka@hotmail.co.uk for the link. Safeguarding guidelines have been followed at all times.

ST ALBANS The Catholic Mass at St. Albans Cathedral has resumed. It takes place at 12 noon. Admission to the Cathedral Mass does not require ticketing and there is social distancing in a very big space in the nave. All welcome. *There will not be a Catholic Mass on Christmas Day or New Year's Day at St. Albans Cathedral.*

**ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE.
WESTMINSTER. LONDON. SW1P 1QJ**



**Pastoral Letter for the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
26/27 December 2020**

These days we hear a great deal about ecology, and rightly so. We must take care of the created world in its beauty and resources.

Interestingly, the word 'ecology' comes from a Greek word meaning 'home' or 'place to live'. So, it is a word that can be applied not only to the natural world but also to our homes and to the Church. It is a good word to have in mind as we celebrate this Feast of the Holy Family.

This year has been so difficult for many families. Home life has been tested, and financial worries burden many. Separation from loved ones has been painful and many have lost loved ones in death, with little chance to grieve them fully. So, the Prayers of the Mass today are vital. In them, we seek God's blessing on our families and homes, that they may be places of kindness and joy. The reading from St Paul to the Colossians spelt out what that means in practice: compassion, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. Then he added, 'Over these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love.'

But St Paul is applying these words first of all to the Church, to us, chosen by God to be a witness in the world to God's love and compassion. St Paul adds: 'And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful' (Colossians 3:15).

Today, then, we can think and pray not only about our own families but also about the family of the Church. We can ask for God's blessing on this family, this 'ecology' in which we live, the 'ecology' of the Church.

Over these last months, the life of the Church has been under strain. We have been unable to come together to express our faith as a full community. Often, we have not been able to enter into the mystery of Christ celebrated in the sacraments. We pray that slowly this will return as the threat of the COVID-19 virus is overcome.

Over these last months, the life of the Church has been stained by the emergence of the picture of the abuse inflicted on children and vulnerable people in the Church over the last fifty years. We know, with the benefit of hindsight, that bishops and leaders, including myself, have made mistakes. I deeply regret them. We are continually learning from them.

In this moment of strain and stain, we take our lead from the Gospel. Like Anna and Simeon, we fix our eyes on the Lord, on the child Jesus. With them, we say: 'My eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see' (Luke 2:30). We know that the Lord never forsakes the Church, his own Body. He remains with us always. Our strength, our renewal, comes from him.

There is a quotation of which I am very fond:

'Christ dwelt for nine months in the tabernacle of Mary's womb. He dwells until the end of the ages in the tabernacle of the Church's faith. He will dwell forever in the knowledge and love of each faithful soul' (Blessed Isaac of Stella).

This is our reassurance. In turning every day to him, in welcoming him into our lives with humility and love, we rise from our prayer refreshed and renewed, wanting to do his will and to give him our thanks.

There is another figure on whom we can fix our eyes: St Joseph. He is there, in the background, protecting the child entrusted to his care. We turn to him as protector of the family of the Church, too.

Pope Francis has declared a year dedicated to St Joseph, from 8 December 2020 to 8 December 2021. He says: 'Each of us can discover in Joseph - the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence - an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble' (Patris Corde - With a Father's Love - Pope Francis). Let's do that. Let's ask St Joseph to keep a watchful eye on this family of the Church, to intercede on our behalf.

A tradition I treasure is that of always having a statue of St Joseph in the kitchen, so often the heart of the home. I recommend this to you. Bring St Joseph into your kitchen. Then he will be before your eyes each day, as protector and guide in these difficult times.

Pope Francis writes: "Joseph teaches us that faith in God includes believing he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture".

As we come to the end of this year, a year of such pain and difficulty, try to see this 'bigger picture': that our lives are in the hands of God; that our Church is constantly consoled by the presence of the Holy Spirit; that our world is God's work of art. As we enter the New Year, we place all this before the Lord, knowing that He, who 'steers our course', will bring each one of us, and the whole of creation, to completion, in the fullness of time.

May God bless you all.

Yours devotedly,
Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
25TH DECEMBER**

Saturday 26th December ST. STEPHEN *First Martyr and Patron Saint of Altar Servers*

Acts 6:8-10, &:54-59 As Stephen is martyred he gazes into heaven and sees the glory of God

Matthew 10:17-22 You will be handed over and have to bear witness.

Sunday 27th December FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6, 12-14 Parents and children

Colossians 3:12-21 Community and family

Luke 2:22-40 Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Monday 28th December Holy Innocents

1 John 1:5-2:2 Jesus is the sacrifice that takes our sins away

Matthew 2:13-18 The slaughter of the Innocents

Tuesday 29th December St. Thomas of Canterbury (1118-1170) *Archbishop murdered in Canterbury Cathedral. Patron Saint of Parish clergy.*

Colossians 1:24-29 Paul's sufferings united with Christ and with the Church

Luke 22:24-30 True service

Wednesday 30th December Sixth Day in Octave of Christmas

1 John 2:12-17 John writes about forgiveness

Luke 2:36-40 Anna in the Temple

Thursday 31st December Seventh Day in Octave of Christmas

1 John 2:18-21 The truth about Christ

John 1:1-18 'In the beginning was the Word...'

Friday 1st January 2021 MARY MOTHER OF GOD

Numbers 6:22-27 Blessings

Galatians 4:4-7 God sent his Son, born of a woman

Luke 2:16-21 Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart

**PLEASE READ THE NEXT TWO PAGES FOR DETAILS OF
MASSES OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR**

(Note that there are a few additions to last week's publication)

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SCHEDULE OF MASSES OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

MASSES ON CHRISTMAS EVE

OUR LADY'S 3pm, 5pm and 9pm.

HOLY FAMILY 4pm, 6.30pm and 10pm



MASSES ON CHRISTMAS DAY

OUR LADY'S 9am and 11am

HOLY FAMILY 8am and 10am

There isn't a booking system. It is imperative that you give yourself time to arrive early and give details to the stewards. When the church is full to capacity, you may have to stand outside.

At all these Masses the Scriptures are the same: Isaiah 9:1-7 and Luke 2:1-20. Congregational singing is not allowed. The simpler form of Mass continues. No heating in church during Mass. Now that we are in Tier 4, it is even more important for everyone to keep a safe distance, wear masks and do all that is possible to prevent transmission of the coronavirus.

STREAMED CHRISTMAS MASSES

On our YouTube Channel there is a 'Night Mass' going out at 6pm on Christmas Eve and a 'Day Mass' available from 10am Christmas Day (with different Scriptures, Prayers and Carols). There is also a Signed Mass available from 8pm on Christmas Eve.

SATURDAY 26TH DECEMBER St. Stephen's Day

10am Holy Family

6pm Our Lady's

SUNDAY 27TH DECEMBER FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

10am Our Lady's

6pm Holy Family

Also, Streamed Mass at 10am.

MONDAY 28TH DECEMBER The Holy Innocents

10am Our Lady's

TUESDAY 29TH DECEMBER St. Thomas of Canterbury

10am Holy Family

WEDNESDAY 30TH DECEMBER

No public Mass

THURSDAY 31ST DECEMBER

10am Holy Family

FRIDAY 1ST JANUARY 2021 THE MOTHERHOOD OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

10am Our Lady's

SATURDAY 2ND JANUARY St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen

10am Holy Family

6pm Our Lady's

SUNDAY 3RD JANUARY SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

10am Our Lady's

6pm Holy Family

Also, Streamed Mass at 10am.

MONDAY 4TH JANUARY

7pm Our Lady's

TUESDAY 5TH JANUARY

9.30am Holy Family

WEDNESDAY 6TH JANUARY THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

9.30am Holy Family

7pm Our Lady's

Also, Streamed Mass at 7am

THURSDAY 7TH JANUARY

9.30am Holy Family



FRIDAY 8TH JANUARY 7pm Our Lady's