

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*

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time 14th February 2021

It's Valentine's Day! It's the last Sunday before Lent begins...so Carnival time! Shrove Tuesday is coming up and then it'll be Ash Wednesday. How different to last year! For those involved in Education half-term has begun. Hopefully a time of rest and refreshment but not many outings which can be planned or activities organised. This Lent calls on us to be imaginative with our time and the extras we take on.

Valentine's Day gives people an opportunity to demonstrate their love for one another through cards, gifts and meals. Lent offers us a whole season to get more in touch with the God who cherishes us with sacrificial, forgiving love. Why not let every meal be a reminder of God's love, the Last Supper and those less fortunate than us who could benefit from our charity? Carnival is exuberant in so many countries before the rigour of Lent sets in. As we approach the Church's penitential season of preparation for Easter, why don't we consider the blessings we have received, the people who are gifts to us in so many ways and the joy they bring us? Ashes are a sign of turning back, our refocusing on God. Maybe we might ponder what has gone wrong, the burdens which are holding us back and ask for the power of grace to inspire our return to God? In thinking about rest and refreshment, with the pandemic continuing to challenge us and everyone else, let us look outside as nature comes back to life with springtime setting in. God's creation opens us up to the hope of new life breaking in and restoration!

Here in our parishes Lent will feel strange but will still have its significance. We will not be able to linger in quiet prayer in church as we might have done in the past. Stations of the Cross straight after Mass will not be possible. We will however be putting Stations on the YouTube Channel and Facebook page, hopefully starting this week.

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If you have a crucifix at home, look at it often and reflect on the journey Jesus willingly made and ask him to accompany you in the long coronavirus marathon which humanity is caught up in. There are many charities which will benefit from the sacrifices we make, especially CAFOD which supports people in developing countries - more details in the newsletter next week. One element of our Lenten practices is fasting - not just giving up things to save money for the poor and destitute - but the learning to say 'No!' even to good things, training ourselves with self-discipline. This can be hard but encourages us the more readily to say 'Yes!' to God instead.

On this last Sunday before Lent begins, let us with one voice call out to the Lord just as the leper did in the Gospel reading: 'If you want to you can cure me!' (There are many ways in which we need healing from the Lord.) In a moment of silence, listen to the divine voice responding: 'Of course I want to...' Feel Jesus breaking into your life.

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

Places of Worship can remain open. We continue with our schedule of Masses:

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

ASH WEDNESDAY (17th)

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

Thursday

9.30am Mass at Holy Family

Friday

7pm Mass at Our Lady's

The new strain of coronavirus is a worry and we still want to ensure the safety of all coming to church and of our stewards. Here are some extra changes we have made in our churches:

1. Creating greater distance between people in the pews.
2. Having more protection for the stewards by their being behind a table as people arrive and as they leave.
3. The distribution of Holy Communion will be more measured, with distancing between the 'bubbles' that come up.
4. It is even more important for people arriving at the doors of the church to keep extra space between them and those in front and those behind.
5. Socialising outside the church before or after Mass should NOT happen for everyone's well-being and safety.
6. Church heaters will switch off 5 minutes before Mass begins and more ventilation will be absolutely necessary.

CONFESSION Only by appointment - Fr. Tony on 01707 327434 or Fr. Norbert on 01707 323234. All necessary precautions have to be undertaken in terms of distancing and the safety of priest and penitent.

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. 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 below.

This week Masses have been celebrated for: Jimmy Byrne RIP, Hannah Byrne RIP, Paul Guerin RIP 40th Anniv, John McShane RIP Anniv, Philomena Spranklen RIP, Valerie Grice RIP 6th Anniv, Teresa Fernandes RIP 9th Anniv, Danel Belategi RIP

ASH WEDNESDAY marking the start of Lent will this year be on 17th February. There will be 9.30am Mass at Holy Family and 7pm Mass at Our Lady's. The Bishops' Conference has advised that ashes can only be given by being sprinkled on the head (and not in the usual way as a Sign of the Cross on the forehead). Consequently, here in Welwyn Garden City the ashes will be given to those who wish to receive them after Holy Communion has been distributed as people leave the church. There will be a streamed Mass on the YouTube channel available from 7am. Ash Wednesday is a Day of Fasting and Abstinence.

VIRTUAL COFFEE MORNING Do you miss catching up with fellow parishioners after Mass? During this lockdown there's a Virtual Coffee Morning on Thursdays at 10.30am. Simply make yourself a coffee, sign on to Zoom and catch up with some familiar faces or make new friends. Please email Fr Tony (tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk) for the Zoom meeting details. We hope to see you there!

LENTEN COURSE: NO GREATER LOVE Filmed on location in the Holy Land, No Greater Love is a biblical pilgrimage that reveals Christ's amazing love for us. Best-selling author Edward Sri guides you through the last hours of Christ's life. You will walk step-by-step with Jesus from the garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary. Every step of the way, Old Testament prophecies, messianic expectations, biblical symbolism, and historical context shed light on the mystery of Christ's suffering and death. Experience a deeper understanding and appreciation of God's immeasurable and unconditional love for you—grow closer to Jesus than you ever have before. (Here is a trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kQlQ1_Z6Qk&feature=emb_logo).

The course will run for five Thursdays, beginning on 25th February, at 7.45pm on Zoom. Please email Fr Tony (tonythomas@rcdow.org.uk) to book your place. All welcome!

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. We are NOT going to have the Planned Giving Boxes of Envelopes for the coming year. Please consider changing to standing order as a way of giving.

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.

PRIEST'S REFERENCE FORMS Parents who will need a 'Certificate of Catholicity' for school 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.

LAPTOP AND TABLET COMPUTERS FOR HOME LEARNING

As we all know, there is a currently big demand for computers that children and young people can use for home learning while schools are closed. The Welwyn Garden City SVP is therefore appealing to parishioners for donations of second-hand laptop and tablet computers which they can pass on to our schools, Our Lady's and Holy Family. Please contact Mary Dunne at marydunne22@yahoo.com if you have a laptop or tablet to donate. Please note that schools, in conjunction with the local authority, have systems to 'cleanse' these devices of all data before they are ready to be used by children.

The specifications should be as follows:

Chromebooks: any specification will be fine

iPads: anything iPad Air 2 or newer

Windows laptops: at least Windows 10, at least Core i3 + processor, at least 4GB ram +, any hard drive size

Many thanks.

ST ALBANS The Catholic Mass at St. Albans Cathedral takes place at 12 noon every Friday. Admission to the Cathedral Mass does not require ticketing and there is social distancing in a very big space in the nave. All welcome!

CAFOD Daily Walk? Something positive this Lent.

Could you walk 10000 Steps either on one day or everyday this Lent? The walk could be a sign of your solidarity with all those who do not have access to a safe water source and who have to walk for water each day. Find out more or sign up online at cafod.org.uk/walk and go the distance this Lent and help to end water poverty. Thank you for your ongoing support,

One minute film also available here: [Walk for Water video: Walk for Water: Abdella's journey | CAFOD - YouTube](#)

PARISH DIARIES 2021 We have received copies of the Parish Diary for our parishes. The diaries are useful for knowing all the feast days of the year! If you would like a copy (they are free) please email your name and address to parishsec@stbonaventure.org.uk and a copy will be posted/delivered to you.

CALENDAR UPDATE Luke has completed his charity calendar project.

Thanks for everybody's support we have raised £250 for CAFOD which Luke is really happy with as the pandemic made it far more difficult.



Pastoral Letter for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

13-14 February 2021

Shortly it will be Ash Wednesday, a day rich in associations and symbolism. It marks the beginning of Lent, a time for turning again to the practice of our faith, in prayer, self-denial (fasting) and practical generosity (almsgiving). Ash Wednesday is the doorway into this season of renewal.

As we cross this threshold we customarily receive ashes on our foreheads, in the sign of the cross. This is a public mark of our turning again to God, seeking his mercy, forgiveness and help. We use these words: 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return'. Yes, we cannot pretend otherwise. Or: 'Repent, and believe in the Gospel'. Yes, we seek the one thing that is absolutely necessary: the grace of God.

This year receiving ashes in church is going to be difficult. Yes, our churches are safe if the protective measures are fulfilled. But we must all be very careful about travelling too far. Some churches will of course be open for the celebration of Mass as usual. But I have asked them not to make extra provision for Ash Wednesday. We must be so careful and cooperative in the measures we must take, to protect ourselves and to protect others.

I now want to emphasise an important point. Receiving ashes is an outward sign of an inner step, a movement of the heart towards our beloved Lord. This year I invite you to concentrate much more on this inner, spiritual movement than on its outward manifestation in the imposition of ashes.

My suggestion is this: celebrate Ash Wednesday at home, with your family, in the household or 'support bubble' of which you are a part. Gather for a while. Read the prayer which I offer. Bless each other by making the sign of the cross on each other's forehead. Spend some time praying in a way that you know. But please, make this a prayer of your heart for God's mercy upon this world struggling to cope with the terrible pandemic and the devastation it is bringing.

Here is a prayer:

'Lord God, with all our hearts we beseech you: have mercy on your people; spare your people; strengthen all people in the struggle against the havoc of this pandemic. Lord our God, without you we are so weak and our courage so limited. Give us your strength; give us your love; give us wisdom and skill to continue this fight. Spare your people, O Lord we pray. Comfort those who mourn and gather into your kingdom all who have died. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, who died and rose to life, who lives and reigns with you, for ever and ever. Amen.'

Then, bless each other, using one of the two traditional formulas I have quoted earlier in this letter. Then continue with your own prayers. A pattern is suggested at the end of this letter.

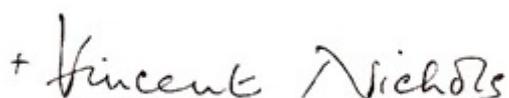
As a child, my mother or father used to come to my bedside each night to settle me for sleep. I was kissed goodnight and then, either my Mum or Dad would make the sign of the cross on my forehead. They gave me their blessing. This brought me such security. I remember it to this day. Then I slept in peace.

So please do not hesitate, within your household or 'bubble', to bless each other on this Ash Wednesday. We do well to remember together our need of the good Lord. Together, and through each other, he wants to comfort and reassure us of his loving presence. If, on this day, we set aside every pretence that we can do everything of ourselves, then we create in our hearts and lives the space for God's grace and strength to find a home in us.

This is the great invitation of Ash Wednesday and of the weeks of Lent which follow. Please do take up this invitation. Open your hearts to the gift of God's presence to support, comfort and strengthen you. This year, it may be best to do this, not by going to church, but by sharing the prayer, the blessing and this moment of dedication within the love of your family and friends.

Please do include me in your prayers, too.

May God bless you all,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vincent Nichols".

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Archbishop of Westminster

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Ash Wednesday at Home

1. Gather together and start with the Sign of the Cross.
2. Read the Gospel for today. It is from St Matthew's Gospel, 6.1-6 and 16-18.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you give alms, your left hand must not know what your right hand is doing; your almsgiving must be secret, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you pray go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.'

3. Say together the prayer given in this Pastoral Letter.
4. Make the Sign of the Cross on each other's forehead, using the words you choose.
5. Pray together: the Our Father; the Hail Mary; each one with his or her own prayer or intention.
6. Conclude with the 'Glory be to the Father...'
7. Give each other a sign of peace.

So Lent begins!

SACRAMENTS

Current regulations (as of 15th January 2021)

Baptism is NOT permitted outside of communal worship.

Weddings are possible (in limited circumstances) with 6 present. If you are planning to get married this year or next in WGC or beyond, please let Fr. Norbert know so that the necessary preparation and paperwork can be organised.

Funerals can take place with 30 mourners maximum.

Confirmation 2020 Sadly we have had to postpone these celebrations.

SACRAMENTS 2021

On the Parish Website, you will find forms to download. Please email to norbertfernandes@rcdow.org.uk

First Holy Communion (and Confession) - Children should be at least in Year 3

Confirmation - Young people should be at least in Year 9

Adults for the Sacraments

Adults who wish to join the Catholic Church through Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion or Adults already baptised in a Christian Church who wish to be received into the Catholic Church or Catholic Adults who missed out on Confirmation when younger.

Our plan is to use the Season of Lent to do the preparation and celebrate the Sacraments soon after Easter. (Dates haven't yet been decided) It is not ideal but this past year has had so many ups and downs with dates due to lockdown and worries about the coronavirus. We do not want to put extra pressure on families or individuals at a time of much uncertainty. We want adults and children to share in the life of the Church through the Sacraments.

Most of the preparation will be done at home with families/individuals and there will be Zoom plenary sessions to keep everyone in touch. We will do all we can to keep people safe and not be at risk whilst encouraging formation for the Sacraments. At this stage we need to know names and details so we can be in touch. Please return the forms to Fr. Norbert as soon as possible. Email addresses are really important. Thank you for your co-operation. Let's do our best!

**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
14TH FEBRUARY**

Saturday 13th February

Genesis 3:9-24 God's conversation with Adam and Eve after the Fall

Mark 8:1-10 The feeding of the four thousand

Sunday 14th February SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46 Leprosy

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 Paul wants the people to model themselves on him as his life is modelled on Christ

Mark 1:40-45 The leper says to Jesus: 'If you want to, you can cure me.'

Monday 15th February

Genesis 4:1-15,25 Cain and Abel

Mark 8:11-13 The Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign from heaven

Tuesday 16th February

Genesis 6:5-8, 7:1-5,10 Noah and the Ark

Mark 8:14-21 The disciples are asked many questions by the Lord

Wednesday 17th February ASH WEDNESDAY

Joel 2:12-18 'Come back to me with all your heart!'

2 Corinthians 5:20 - 6:2 'Now is the favourable time; this is the day of salvation'

Matthew 6:1-6,16-18 Almsgiving, prayer and fasting - God's sees what is done in secret

Thursday 18th February

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Choices - choose life!

Luke 9:22-25 We must take up our crosses every day and follow Jesus

Friday 19th February

Isaiah 58:1-9 The right kind of fast...letting God's light shine

Matthew 9:14-15 Questions about fasting