

WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

*Parish Priest: Fr. Norbert Fernandes Assistant Priest: Fr. Martin Tate
Parish Secretary: Kathryn Hubbard*

Fifth Sunday of Lent 13th March 2016 (page 176 of Mass book)

Stones are very prominent in today's Gospel reading from St. John! The passage has influenced the way we speak about 'casting the first stone' and is a huge challenge to us as 'religious' people and especially as followers of Christ. The crowd wants the poor woman to be put to death by having stones hurled at her. They shame her by dragging her before the Lord and put him on the spot by asking his opinion. Jesus seems more bothered by writing on the ground with his finger and chooses a few words to confound the mob: 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' We are told by St. John that they started to leave one by one, beginning with the eldest. The final encounter displays pure mercy as Jesus says quite explicitly that he does not condemn the lady and asks her to go away and sin no more. What an amazing conclusion!

Jesus reveals the pure mercy of God. Jesus does not condemn but offers forgiveness. Jesus always lives out what he asks of us. For us as human beings it is hard to hold in balance the teaching which comes from the Bible (or the Church) with the reality of the situations in which we - or others - find our/themselves. There is such tension. When we succeed in being faithful, a danger is to fall into the trap of condemning others. We can use words which destroy someone's character or inflict deep pain. At times it is possible to feel that we are beyond God's forgiving reach because of a major sin committed which we just cannot forget. This passage challenges us to open up ourselves to the rich mercy of Father, Son and Spirit revealed in Jesus and, in turn, to offer it to those around us. Can we be like him who is the Face of the Father's mercy? Let's try!

Today another stone is being pondered as we welcome Cardinal Vincent Nichols to St. Bonaventure's to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the Laying of the Foundation Stone. This was the first church to be built in Welwyn Garden City which has such strong Christian foundations. Jesus in Scripture refers to himself as the cornerstone, so stones do not have to be bad! Indeed we are called to be the living stones of the Church. Some churches have a decorative stone which indicates the date and the Bishop who laid it. Others, like St. Bonaventure's, have the stone concealed. We do know that the Foundation Stone was laid on 10th March, 1926. From this first church have come Our Lady Queen of Apostles and Holy Family; the three form a strong Catholic community which is vibrant and engages with our Garden City. May God's eternal mercy touch us today and bring us all many blessings!

Fr.. Norbert

PALM SUNDAY Next Sunday is Palm Sunday marking the beginning of Holy Week. Holy Family's 9.30am Mass will start in the car park of The Hedgehog next door. Our Lady's 11.30am Mass will begin outside the Hall. *Obviously it all depends on the weather!*

EASTER VIGIL MUSIC There will be a practice for all singers and musicians who would like to take part in the Easter Vigil for our three parishes. The rehearsal will be on Monday 21st March 7 - 8pm at Our Lady's.

ALTAR SERVERS' LISTS for Easter are now in each sacristy. Please sign up and note when the practices will take place. Thank you.

PASSION PLAY at Holy Trinity and St. Augustine of Canterbury Church, London Road, Baldock SG6LQ on Saturday 19th March at 3pm and 7.45pm. Caramba Theatre Company will put on the performances which last an hour and a quarter. There is no entrance fee but donations welcome. (website www.caramba-theatre.co.uk)

FR. MARC FASSIER Fr. Marc from St. Denis in Paris will be spending Holy Week and Easter with us in Welwyn Garden City; he arrives on Saturday 19th March. He is working on his doctoral thesis and is coming for some peace and quiet!

SPECIAL NEEDS MASS Our thanks to all who helped with the Mass last week and those who prepared the reception which was much appreciated.

FIRST CONFESSIONS Congratulations to the children of St. Bonaventure's and Holy Family who made their First Confession yesterday. We are grateful to the parents and catechists of our three churches for all the hard work they have put into preparing our children for Reconciliation.

POLISH BLESSING OF FOOD Tradycyjne Swiecenie Pokarmow odbędzie się w kościele Our Lady's, Welwyn Garden City, w Wielka Sobota 26.03. o godzinie 16.00 Serdecznie zapraszamy. The traditional Blessing of Easter Food will be in Our Lady's on Holy Saturday (26th March) at 4pm. Baskets of food are placed around the sanctuary and blessed. Last year around 250 people came. The Service lasts half an hour and you do not need to be Polish to attend!

YEAR OF MERCY PILGRIMAGE TO OUR LADY'S St. Philip Howard Primary School will be coming on Tuesday 15th March from 10.15am.

LENT There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for 30 minutes on Mondays at Our Lady's after 9.30 Mass, at Holy Family on Thursdays after 9.30 Mass (during Confessions) and at St. Bonaventure's on Saturdays after 10am Mass (during Confessions). The Stations of the Cross will be at Holy Family on Wednesdays after 9.30 Mass, at St. Bonaventure's on Fridays after 9.30 Mass and at Our Lady's on Fridays after 7pm Mass. The Lenten Reconciliation Service will be on Tuesday 22nd March at 8pm at Our Lady's.

CONFIRMATION Next session on Sunday 20th March at 7.15pm in Holy Family's Parish Room. *Our thanks to the young people for leading the Stations of the Cross so beautifully and prayerfully a week ago.*

RCIA The next session is on Monday 14th at 7.30pm in Our Lady's sacristy. The Group will have an Afternoon of Prayer at St. Edmund's, Ware next Sunday (20th). Please keep them in your prayers as they get ready for Easter and the Sacraments.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PARENTS of our three churches have their next meeting on Wednesday 16th March at 7.30pm in Our Lady's Church.

MINIBUS OUTING for anybody with limited mobility SUNDAY 10th April to St Paul's Walden Bury Open Garden. Entrance £5. Pick up from home 1.30 - 2.30pm. Tel. Kay on 01707 335633

KATHLEEN (SHEILA) ROBINSON RIP The Funeral Mass will be at St. Bonaventure's on Friday 18th March at 9.30am.

SCHOOL FORMS Fr. Norbert will be available in Our Lady's Church for signing the Certificate of Catholicity Forms for parents applying to a Catholic School for Nursery on Tuesday 15th March 3.30 - 5.30pm. Parents should phone Kathryn Hubbard on 01707 322579 to book an appointment. On the day of the appointment, parent/s should come with their child and the necessary form together with the additional yellow form available at the back of our churches and wait in the church until called. A reminder that the forms can only be signed for practising Catholic families.

WORLD YOUTH DAY Time is running out! Young people of our parishes aged 16 - 30 are asked to think about joining the Deanery coach to Krakow in the summer (Sunday 24th July - 2nd August). 2 - 3 million young people will gather with Pope Francis and it will definitely be a memorable and unique experience. Why not be one of them?! (The cost of a place is £750). Our Finance Committees have agreed to subsidise the first 20 young people by £300 each. Please speak to Fr. Norbert if you are interested in going. Booking forms and brochures are at the back of our churches.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY There will be an extra Mass at 7pm at Our Lady's on Thursday 17th March to mark St. Patrick's Day. Bishop Paul will be the main celebrant. There will be a 'Get-together' in the Hall afterwards with savouries, sweets, Irish coffee and a quiz. All welcome.

EASTER TRIDUUM Bishop Paul will be with us in the Garden City for the Easter Services.

HOLY FAMILY EASTER SPRING CLEAN Volunteers are required to get our church ready for Easter. The Easter Spring clean takes place on Monday 21st March between 1.30pm and 3.30pm. Please come along and participate in this very important task.

HOLY FAMILY CAFOD GROUP Easter Raffle Tickets will be on sale for the CAFOD Easter raffle from 9th - 27th March and draw will take place on Sunday 27th after the 9.30am Mass in the parish room. Prizes are: Easter cake bottle of Prosecco, an Easter egg and a flower arrangement.

THANK YOU A big thank you from HCPT group 183. The total raised from the recent collection was an amazing £1272.67. Many thanks for your support and generosity.

THE HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL would like to invite our Parish Community to come to our Yr3/4 Easter Production which retells the events of Holy Week. The times of the productions are Tuesday 22nd March at 9.30am or Wednesday 23rd March at 6.30pm. We hope to see you there.

RAISING MONEY TO EQUIP THE NEW SANCTUARY PLANNED FOR ISABEL HOSPICE On Sunday 3rd April Sue Jeppesen, Lay Chaplain from Isabel Hospice, is being sponsored to raise money to equip the new planned Sanctuary by walking to and attending as many different Church Services as possible around Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. She is starting with the 8am Mass at St Bonaventure's and ending with the 6pm Service at St Mary's Hatfield Hyde. If we are able to fund this project we can then offer a very valuable and much needed quiet peaceful space for our patients, families and staff to use.

If you would like to contribute and support this Chaplaincy Team venture, we would be very grateful. Envelopes will be available in our 3 churches on Sunday 3rd April.

LENTEN LUNCHESS We are coming to the end of Lent and we would be delighted to see you at our last Lenten Lunch on Saturday 19th between 12noon and 1.30pm at Our Lady's. We serve delicious soup, roll and cheese and this week we will be having buttered hot cross buns. Please come and support our last lunch of the season.

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 Our Lady's
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 Website: www.ourlady-parish.info

Kathryn Hubbard 01707 322579
 parishsec@stbonaventure.org.uk
 St. Bonaventure's
 81 Parkway AL8 6JF
 Website: www.stbonaventure.org.uk

Fr. Martin 01707 327434
 welwyngdncitydigs@rcdow.org.uk
 Holy Family Church
 194 Knightsfield AL8 7RQ

OUR LADY'S PARISH CENTRE
 Bookings should be made with Phil
 Johnson 01707 377442

CHILDREN'S EASTER WORKSHOP AT ST. BONAVENTURE'S There will be an Easter Workshop for children on Tuesday 22nd March from 3.45pm - 5.30pm. Come and help plant our outdoor Easter Garden, make your own garden, make some Easter things, join in an Easter egg hunt, prepare for our Way of the Cross, have a 'Happy Easter Tea' and listen to an Easter story. We ask for a donation of £2 per child to cover some of our costs. Please bring a small amount of food. Parents are very welcome.

CONFESSIONS	Holy Family:	Thursday 10am - 10.30am
	St. Bonaventure:	Saturday 10.30am - 11am
	Our Lady's:	Saturday 5pm - 5.30pm

MASS TIMES

14 Monday	9.30am	Mass	Our Lady's	Lent feria
15 Tuesday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Lent feria
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
16 Wednesday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	Lent feria
17 Thursday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	St. Patrick
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
18 Friday	9.30am	Funeral Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	Lent feria
19 Saturday	10am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	St. Joseph

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

19 Saturday	6pm	Mass	Our Lady's
20 Sunday	8am	Mass	St. Bonaventure
	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family
	10.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure
	11.30am	Mass	Our Lady's
	6pm	Mass	Holy Family



CHAPLAIN TO THE Q.E.II AND LISTER HOSPITALS: If you are going into hospital you can contact the R.C. Chaplain: Jacqueline Humphreys on 07884187463