

WELWYN GARDEN CITY



ST. BONAVENTURE



**OUR LADY,
QUEEN OF APOSTLES**



HOLY FAMILY

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Parish Secretary: Kathryn Hubbard*

Sixth Sunday of Easter (page 274) 1st May 2016

Cardinal's Pastoral Letter on 'The Joy of Love', (Amoris Laetitia)

Just three weeks ago, Pope Francis made public his Apostolic Exhortation on love in the family, entitled 'The Joy of Love'. It followed wide consultation and two Synods of Bishops. Many have started reading it and find it quite remarkable. I heard from one husband who found his wife in tears. He asked her why. She said she was weeping because the words of Pope Francis touched her so deeply.

This Exhortation embraces many topics; it also embraces the reality of our lives. Pope Francis talks to us as if he had his arms around us. He speaks of the beauty of love, reflecting on the words of St Paul that love is patient and kind, not jealous or boastful, arrogant or rude, never rejoicing in what is wrong, but hoping and enduring all things (1 Cor. 13. 4-7). He writes of how this love finds its place in family life and grows through many crises and difficulties. Indeed he speaks of love as a craft, something at which we have to work hard, with care, understanding and perseverance. Love is always a journey, in all true friendship and especially in family life. It was these reflections that brought tears of recognition to the eyes of that good woman.

The Holy Father spells out three reasons why this sensitive appreciation of the journey of love is so crucial.

Firstly, he tells us how important it is to prepare for this journey. This begins within a person's own experience of family life. Then, as young people grow, this preparation continues with clear guidance and a vision of the dignity of love. The Pope reminds us of the importance of 'positive and prudent' sex education (280) and says that 'it is always irresponsible to invite adolescents to toy with their bodies and their desires as if they possessed the maturity, values, mutual commitment and goals proper to marriage' (283). He lays great stress on the importance of the ways in which we prepare couples for marriage itself.

Secondly, Pope Francis speaks very realistically about the problems which we face on this journey of love. He appeals again and again that we learn to help each other and work always for the strengthening of marriage and family life.

Thirdly, he explains that we always have to work out, step by step, the journey that we are on. He puts this very simply: 'No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed' (352). At every stage of this journey he asks that we never lose sight of our true goal, and never give up on it.

That goal is expressed in the vision of faithful married love, which he describes as a place where God truly dwells and a true and precious pathway to holiness on which we are never without His presence. Family love, he says, is 'a God enlightened space' (317) always to be revered and nurtured. For this reason he insists that we must never stop proposing 'the full ideal of marriage, God's plan in all its grandeur' (307).

Pope Francis speaks so sensitively about all these matters. While expressing beautifully God's plan for marriage, he wants the Church to be like a 'field hospital', with a particular concern for all those who, as he puts it, are in 'situations which do not yet or no longer correspond to her teaching on marriage' (292). This is the most sensitive part of his message. He presents afresh the clear teaching of the Church about marriage and reminds us persistently of the truth of the endless mercy of God for each one of us.

At this point, it is so important not to reduce this great Exhortation to being simply about whether people who have been divorced and remarried can go forward to receive Holy Communion. The quest is much wider. It is a quest for every person to understand much more deeply their situation before God. When we hide nothing from the Lord, when we reflect carefully in prayer, when we open our hearts to the wonder of God's plan for our happiness, we begin to sense the call of our conscience, that inner core and sanctuary where God's voice echoes within us. Here we are led both to a painful admission of our past failings and to a careful consideration of what the next step in our journey might be. Such considerations, which the Holy Father speaks of as discernment, are always best carried out in thoughtful dialogue with an experienced guide, usually a priest.

I thank God that this great Exhortation has come to us during the Year of Mercy when so many people are turning again to Confession, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. That is a good place and a good time to start this discernment, accompanied by a priest. Pope Francis puts it like this: 'I encourage the faithful who find themselves in complicated situations to speak confidently with their pastors or with other lay people whose lives are committed to the Lord. They may not always encounter in them a confirmation of their own ideas or desires, but they will surely receive some light to help them better understand their situation and discover a path to personal growth' (312). Love in the family is 'a never-ending vocation' (325), 'a shepherding in mercy' (322), across the generations. Indeed it is the first way in which God's love is made real in our world and by which the Gospel of Hope is proclaimed in situations that can be demanding and harsh.

Our study of this Exhortation will take time and effort. For all of us it will be a great source of joy and encouragement. Please do read it, at home, together with loved ones. You too may share its beauty in tears of joy.

BILLY JOYCE RIP Billy's Funeral Mass will be at Our Lady's on Monday 16th May at 12.30pm. **MAY DEVOTIONS** to Our Lady after Monday's 10am Mass on the Bank Holiday (2nd May). All welcome. **ASCENSION OF THE LORD** will be celebrated in this country next Sunday and NOT on Thursday.

CONFIRMATION Bishop Paul McAleenan will celebrate Confirmation this Friday (6th) at 7.30pm at Our Lady's. Please pray for the young people of our three churches who will be confirmed, for their sponsors and their families. Our thanks to the catechists who have prepared them for this Sacrament.

WATFORD ASCENT GROUP will be coming through the Doors of Mercy on Tuesday (3rd) They will arrive at 12 noon. Mass will be around 12.30pm. Lunch in the Pomegranate Café. Exposition and Confessions 2.15 - 3.15pm. Tea and departure at by 4pm. Parishioners are welcome to join the Watford Group.

HCPT GROUP 183 will be having their reunion on Sunday 8th May. After 11.30am Mass they will gather in the Hall.

EARLY MASS 6.30am Mass is this Friday 6th May at St. Bonaventure's. All welcome!

MASS WITH THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK organised by the SVP will be in Our Lady's on Saturday 21st May at 12 noon. All are welcome to come to this Mass and if you wish to come and are in need of a lift please fill in your name and phone no. on the list at the back of church. **PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL** will be meeting in Our Lady's Sacristy on Monday 9th May at 7.30pm. Minutes of the last meeting are available at the back of our churches. If you would like any matters raised, please send them into Fr. Norbert. On Monday 19th September there will be an Open Parish Meeting at 7.30pm in Our Lady's Hall for our three churches at which the accounts of the three churches will be presented and various updates given. You are all welcome. Please keep this date free.

THE CAFOD GROUP will be meeting on Tuesday 3rd May at 7.30pm in the parish room at Holy Family. Anyone who would like to join us will be very welcome.

The Holy Family CAFOD group will be holding a cake sale on Sunday 9th May after 9.30am Mass. As always we rely on the support of our generous parishioners.

THE 400 CLUB will be collecting subscriptions after all the weekend Masses this Saturday and Sunday and to invite any new members who may wish to join. The results of the March draw were: 1st prize number 069 £100 Mrs S. Rand, 2nd prize number 205 £50 Mrs A. O'Keefe, 3rd prize number 102 £25 Mrs S. Nichols.

DVD'S The DVD of the 90th anniversary is ready if anyone would like one, the cost is £5 per copy. DVD'S of the Padua Pilgrimage are still available. Please phone Martin 07768650660.

WORLD YOUTH DAY 24th July - 2nd August in Krakow, Poland. Steveange Deanery is definitely on for Krakow! Brochures and booking forms are at the back of our churches. The price is £750 including a deposit of £80. Here in WGC our finance committees have agreed to subsidise each young person by £300. So sign up! The next gathering of the group from the Deanery is on Friday 13th May at 8pm in Our Lady's Hall. The young people will put on a fundraising Quiz Night on Friday 8th July at 7.45pm.

AYLESFORD Parish Pilgrimage for the Year of Mercy to Aylesford, Kent on Saturday 14th May. The coach will leave Our Lady's at 9am. There will be the Rosary Way at Aylesford, picnic lunch (bring all you need!), Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Mass. We should be back by 6pm. The cost will be £10 for adults and £5 for children. Please sign up your name on a list at the back of our churches. Ten places left!

NEED A CLEANER? Then phone Elizabeth Anderson on 01707 883770 or 07980 887231 or Angela Edwards on 01707 690157 (evenings) or 07879610109.

Need a Mobile Hairdresser or a Decorator /Handy man? Competitive rates offered. Contact Tracey (MOBILE HAIRDRESSER) 07581212941 Jamie (DECORATOR/HANDY MAN) 07572527731.

FUNDRAISING AFTERNOON TEA with classical soprano and champagne on Saturday 7th May 3-5 pm at Tewin Memorial Hall, Tewin AL6 0JX. In aid of The Saxum Project in the Holy Land – a unique place being created to aid the spiritual experience and formation of pilgrims who are visiting the places where Our Lord walked. Visit www.saxum.org. Tickets are £20. For more details contact Pauline McCarthy on 01992 423657

ST. THOMAS BECKET The relics of St. Thomas Becket will be coming to England from Hungary for a week long pilgrimage and tour of the country. There will be a Mass of Welcome at Westminster Cathedral on Monday 23rd May at 5.30pm to which all are invited.

MINIBUS OUTING for anybody with restricted mobility **TUESDAY 10th MAY** to D e Havilland Aircraft Museum at London Colney. Admission £7.25. Door to door transport. Wheelchair users welcome. Telephone Kay 01707 335633.

HEALTHWISE is coming to the Pomegranate Cafe Woodhall Lane, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3TP Wednesday 4 May 2016 from 10:30am - 11:30am

Fr. Norbert 01707 323234
 welwyngdncityeast@rcdow.org.uk
 Our Lady's Church
 141 Woodhall Lane AL7 3TP

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

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
Website for our 3 parishes
www.wgc-catholics.org.uk

INTERFAITH EVENTS Ladies Lunches have moved to a new venue: The Focolare Centre for Unity and will be meeting on Tuesday 10th May from 12.30 until 2pm.

On Thursday 12 May from 7.15pm - 9.30pm there is an invitation to all faith communities to share Common Ground Between Faiths through story and festivals at the Quaker Meeting House in Handside Lane.

QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY TEA The Christian Churches in WGC are going to put on an afternoon tea in Howardsgate on Sunday 12th June 3 - 5pm followed by a 'Songs of Praise'. There will be tea and cakes, bouncy castles, games and face painting. Help will be needed for this event which will be our way of marking this great occasion and reaching out to the wider community. Various permissions are required for an event like this and these are in the process of being sorted out. More details in due course but keep the date free!

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

MASS TIMES

02 Monday	10am	Mass	Our Lady's	St. Athanasius
03 Tuesday	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	SS Philip and James
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
04 Wednesday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	The English Martyrs
05 Thursday	9.30am	Mass	Holy Family	Easter feria
06 Friday	6.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	
	9.30am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Easter feria
	7pm	Mass	Our Lady's	
07 Saturday	10am	Mass	St. Bonaventure	Easter feria

Ascension of the Lord

07 Saturday	6pm	Mass	Our Lady's
08 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