

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*

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time 7th February 2021

It is nearly two years since some of us were able to make the Camino to Santiago de Compostela in the Spanish north-west . We trekked 100km in order to receive the ‘passport’ and a special certificate. There was solidarity among our group of walkers, some of whom were seasoned marathon runners and others pure novices. I still remember being told afterwards that some of *you* thought that there was no way *I* would make it! There were days when members of the group skipped breakfast in order to get a head-start over others. Sometimes the day’s route was short and made us imagine it would be a doddle. We soon were overcome by the power of the hot sun and aching muscles taking over because of a steep climb! The intense joy we all felt at our achievement was memorable: clapping and cheering as we toasted each person arriving in Santiago; there were tears of happiness and such elation. An amazing party rounded off our pilgrimage!

I have been thinking a lot about this experience in recent days as I go for my walks around Welwyn Garden City. Obviously it’s not the hot Spanish weather and certainly not such a distance! I have heard the birds singing everywhere! They always seem to create a harmonious sound as they call out from roof tops and any ledge where they can rest. There are red kites soaring to great heights as well as the small blue tits playing in the gardens. Isn’t God’s Creation marvellous? The trees are preparing the buds to open and hopefully in no time there will be blossom and new life emerging. We have been promised more snow by the weather forecasters and that will present obstacles as well as beauty.

In another month we will reach the first anniversary of the ordeal of lockdown. What a year! This year has certainly challenged us. No week has been easy; challenges,

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issues and planning for the future have confronted us. As with the 100km walk, solidarity has been crucial - we are not on our own. The frontline workers, giving of themselves. The resilience of the older generation who have faced other historic crises is admirable. Neighbours keep an eye out for one another. There has been, and still is, enormous generosity. We are all helping one another in this trying period. There has been a huge surge of cases of people's mental health being affected - young and old. Mutual support, patience and listening so important. We will have to keep at it in the weeks and months to come! What a celebration we long for! The building up of dreams and aspirations, the hugs and embraces we so want to give and receive. And yet we soldier on day by day and yearn for a destination safe and secure.

In our Gospel reading today from St. Mark, Jesus is with people in variety of situations and places. He leaves the synagogue, going to Simon Peter's house. There is healing and the presence of a multitude at the door seeking strength and comfort. He finds time to be 'alone' with his Father. The disciples find him, alerting him to the fact that *everyone* is looking for him. Jesus then heads off to other places to carry out his mission bringing a taste of salvation to humanity. Jesus is with *us* everywhere. He makes known Divine Presence whether we are alone or with others. His mission is to us and to others. He is in harmony with his Father and is ready to be with us as we are but calling us towards the wonder of God's Kingdom. It is a long journey with stops and starts, with hills and ravines, with blistering sunshine and icy cold. Let's not be afraid but walk with him. Let us have confidence that he is here with us now, lavishing upon us grace and love.

Fr. Tony and I continue to pray for you. God bless you and have a good week. 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

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: Joe Faller RIP, Maria Theresa Villapando intention, Christine Thompson RIP, Alex Devenyi RIP, Augustus Joachim RIP, Jean Winter RIP Anniv, Piotr Caban RIP Anniv.

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 (by one of the priests) after Holy Communion has been distributed by the other priest 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. Next Signed Mass on 7th February.

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.

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!

CARITAS VOLUNTEER FAIR "Step Forward in Love"

Online Event Wednesday 10th February from 11am -1pm

Whether you want to try volunteering for the first time or are looking for a new role, come and find out what volunteering opportunities are out there at the moment.

Please register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/caritas-volunteer-fair-tickets-135713539851>

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.

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 or post to 141 Woodhall Lane, Welwyn Garden City AL7 3TP.

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
7TH FEBRUARY**

Saturday 6th February St. Paul Miki (1564-1597) and his Companions *Many martyrs young and old, religious and lay who died in Nagasaki, Japan*

Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21 'Let us offer God an unending sacrifice of praise.'

Mark 6:30-34 Jesus takes pity on the crowd.

Sunday 7th February FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Job 7:1-4, 6-7 Job is weighed down by suffering

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23 Paul's duty and responsibility to preach the Gospel

Mark 1:29-39 Jesus' ministry continues

Monday 8th February St. Josephine Bakhita (1869 - 1947) *From Sudan. When young she was kidnapped, sold as a slave. Rescued and brought to Italy. Joined the Canossian Sisters.*

Genesis 1:1-19 Creation

Mark 6:53 - 56 People come to Jesus for healing

Tuesday 9th February

Genesis 1:20 - 2:4 First account of creation of humanity

Mark 7:1-13 Dispute over keeping rules and regulations

Wednesday 10th February St. Scholastica (480 - 547) *Nun and twin sister of St. Benedict*

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-17 The Lord fashions man from the dust of the earth

Mark 7:14-23 'Listen to this!'

Thursday 11th February Our Lady of Lourdes

Genesis 2:18-25 Creation of woman

Mark 7:24-30 A woman begs Jesus to heal her daughter

Friday 12th February

Genesis 3:1-8 The Fall Mark 7:31-37 'Ephphatha! Be opened!'